S M A R T

| Specific | Measurable | Attainable | Relevant | Time Based |

Specific Goals
Have precise goals

Meet Murphy's Law, which claims that when something might go wrong, it will.

In the case of project planning and goal setting, consider this statement: "If there are several ways to understand the task, then someone will understand it improperly."

While setting goals, you should make them as accurate and specific as possible to avoid misinterpretation. Writing goals on paper or (even better) in an easily-accessible electronic format is also good practice. Fortunately, there are many types of project management software available to help achieve this end.

You do not need to go into every minute detail of every goal. You just have to agree on each goal's meaning. It is important that the team and the product owner understand each backlog element in an equal way.

Agree on goal meanings instead of details
You do not need to go into every minute detail of every goal. You just have to agree on each goal's meaning. It is important that the team and the product owner understand each backlog element in an equal way.

Measurable Goals
Measure your achievements

Measurable goals bring several benefits.

First, if there is a numerical measure of achievement, you know exactly at what stage of work you are and how much is left to do. Second, you know exactly how much you have done. Sometimes, it is useful reflect on achievements to boost morale.

Finally, at the end of the workday, you and your teammates will be able to calculate by what percentage you achieved your target.

The presence of metrics are important, and not only for formulation of backlog elements; they also allow the project manager to assess the size of the goal element. Although latest trends abandon numerical estimates in goal setting, it is impossible to make the process of project planning sufficiently accurate without them.

Attainable Goals
Set goals in accordance to your team members' strengths

Each person has a unique set of knowledge and skills, so it is necessary to select the appropriate goals for individual people. Referencing the skills and knowledge of the person, goals can be categorized:

Unreachable: The goals are unrealistic.
Elusive: The goals are unclear.

First of all, you should assign difficult or complicated goals to experienced and ambitious employees. The harder the goal, the greater the sense of achievement.

Good goals look like this:

Achievable: These goals correspond to the knowledge and skill level of the performer. For example, to draw the layout design of the approved site outline and brief in one day. Such tasks are necessary for respite between more difficult tasks and to develop self-confidence.

Easily accessible: These goals do not correspond to the competence of the employee. Reaching them does not give any sense of satisfaction for an employee. For example, to draw the button for a form in the specified style in a day. It is desirable to entrust such goals only to new employees to integrate them into the team.

The general conclusion is that it is necessary to alternate accessible and elusive goals. Using agile methodologies, when a team evaluates backlog items, such alternation is obtained in a natural way.

Relevant Goals
Keep goals inspiring for the team

The relevance of goals should be considered from two sides: goal relevance for the performer and for the company. Goal relevance (significance) for the team member is closely connected with his or her own set of personal motivations. For example, a research project can and should be given to an employee who enjoys learning new things, and wouldn't be great for a programmer who would rather just code.

Keep goals relevant for the whole team

Granted, when the team realizes that a goal is important, they'll put in more effort when compared to "unimportant" goals.
And what can the team do if the goal is prioritized? Focus on efficiency. "Efficiency," in this case, can be measured by a deadline, the final product, and the cost of work.

Time-Based Goals
Set concrete goal deadlines from urgency to availability

When discussing dates for goals, you should remember one more empirical law called "Parkinson's Law," which states, *"Any work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion."* If a task doesn't have a deadline, immediate tasks displace it, and the chance that somebody ever gets around to it decreases. Thus, when setting any goal, always set a deadline.

Keep operational goals small while continuing to set high goals

One of the SMART project planning tips is that operational goals and high-level goals should be clearly separated. Keep the low-level goals on which you are working small and achievable. This allows you to track the progress of the whole project and instantly make decisions based on the performance metrics.

But when setting ambitious goals, you assume that your colleagues have an ability to meet them, do not have any conflicting goals that can influence the result, and, finally, are moving in the same direction.