

Setting Goals and Objectives

Lesson Objective:

Lesson Objective: Comprehend how to set attainable goals and objectives.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Discuss the importance of setting goals and objectives.
2. Define the term goal in your own words.
3. Describe the characteristics of a goal.
4. Define the term objective in your own words.
5. Describe the characteristics of objectives.
6. Explain how to set effective goals and objectives.

Lesson:

Overview:

Do you know what your unit's goals are? What does the unit want to accomplish over the next year, two years, or five years? How do you plan to achieve those goals? Do the unit's goals align or compete with wing goals or CAP's mission?

Successful squadrons know what they want to accomplish. They have goals and objectives to accomplish which will get them where they want to go. This segment will examine what goals and objectives are, how they can help you more effectively manage your unit, and show you techniques for setting effective goals and objectives.

The Importance of Setting Goals and Objectives:

Why bother setting goals and objectives? Because CAP's mission should always be the primary focus of your effort, and goals and objectives provide the framework that makes mission achievement possible.

Well-defined goals and objectives provide the steps that need to be taken. Those who develop the goals can share their vision with those who will help them accomplish these goals.

One of the best ways to share your goals, and your vision is to publicize them. Putting goals on paper tends to make them more real, tangible, and achievable. Why? Because putting them in writing moves you beyond the wishing and dreaming stage. It represents a shared commitment.

The importance of setting goals and objectives

- Goals share _____.
- Setting goals and publicizing them _____ your vision.
- Goals motivate members toward _____.
- Goals and objectives provide a roadmap to _____.

Another benefit to setting goals and objectives is that they motivate members towards achievement. People are more willing to work if they know what they are working towards and can gauge their progress. People are more apt to adjust their priorities to accommodate reasonable goals. It's the reason why people work overtime, give up time with their family, and perhaps even work for less money than they are worth – the goal they have set for themselves is more important, at the time, than the other factors. Once the goal is accomplished they will shift their priorities again to accommodate a goal they think is important.

Finally, goals and objectives provide a roadmap to success. With a clear goal, you always know where you stand in relationship to its accomplishment.

Definition of a Goal:

For the purpose of this discussion, we can define a goal as an end point that is broad in scope – the desired end result you want to achieve. Some people have called it a dream with a deadline. This is a pretty good description because it identifies a goal's spirit. But goals are also specific in what they are designed to accomplish, for instance: "This squadron will own its own building within five years." It's pretty ambitious, broad in scope, yet is very definite. Anyone who reads the goal will know exactly what it means.

Definition of a goal

- A goal is a broad-scoped end – the _____ result.
- Goals are generally _____ in nature.

Goals are generally strategic in nature, that is, they have a far-reaching impact and normally are accomplished over a fairly long period of time.

Characteristics of Goals (“SMAC”):

While saying that a goal is “a dream with a deadline” may describe a goal’s spirit, it does not describe its characteristics. The difference between goals and dreams is that when one dreams there are no rules. Anything is possible. Not so with goals, they have very distinct characteristics. For goals to be effective, they must pass four tests. Goals must be:

Characteristics of Goals “SMAC”
S _____.
M _____.
A _____.
C _____.

- A. **Specific:** As mentioned before goals must be specific. They must be designed to accomplish something concrete and be easy to understand.
- B. **Measurable:** Goals must have a specific timeline, and people must be able to measure their progress towards reaching their goals.
- C. **Achievable:** For a goal to be effective it must be able to be reasonably accomplished. Goals must be within the unit’s capabilities to be achieved. If the proposed goal is not attainable within the unit’s capabilities, then it must either be modified or postponed until the unit has the ability to accomplish it.
- D. **Compatible:** Goals must be compatible with CAP’s three missions and support the goals and objectives of higher echelons, specifically the wing’s. Unit goals must support, or at least not inhibit, emergency services, cadet programs, and aerospace education efforts. Wing goals must also be considered and how the unit is included in some of these wing goals. The unit therefore must ensure that the goals it sets for itself are not contrary to wing plans or CAP’s main missions.

Let’s consider some examples and non-examples of goals.

Examples:

- A. **This unit will provide uniforms for all new cadets within three years.**
This goal passes the SMAC test. It is specific: the unit intends to provide uniforms for its cadets. It is measurable: it has a three-year deadline. It is achievable: The unit has or knows it can obtain the resources to buy uniforms. It is compatible: the goal will not inhibit CAP’s primary mission, or necessarily wing goals.
- B. **This unit will produce three Mitchell cadets over the next two years.**
This goal can also pass the SMAC test. It’s specific: three Mitchell cadets. It is measurable: a two year deadline. It is achievable: it is possible for cadets to earn the Mitchell Award in two years (assume this is a cadet or composite unit). It is compatible: It supports the cadet program and is not contrary to the mission or wing priorities.

Non-example:

A. **The unit will own its own airplane.**

This goal does not pass the SMAC test. While specific, it is not measurable. There is no deadline or milestone to show that the goal has been achieved. It's also not achievable in that while a unit can, theoretically, raise the money to purchase an airplane; all assets are owned by the Civil Air Patrol Corporation. The squadron is not a stand-alone entity, but rather a part of the corporation. So if the plane is purchased, it would be owned by Civil Air Patrol, Inc., not the squadron.

Now that we've examined the nature and characteristics of goals, let's now discuss an integral component of goals: objectives. While similar in nature, goals and objectives do very specific jobs. If a goal represents a dream with a deadline, objectives represent the means to achieve the goal.

Definition of an Objective:

Basically, an objective is an action step designed to reach a goal. There are two main differences between objectives and goals. The first is that an objective is a stepping stone to support a larger effort – the goal; while goals can stand by themselves.

Objectives also differ from goals in terms of time. While goals are strategic in nature—taking a longer time to achieve and having a far-reaching impact – objectives are tactical. Objectives take less time to achieve than goals, usually weeks or months rather than years.

Definition of an objective

- An objective is an _____ intended to reach a _____.
- Objectives are _____.

Characteristics of Objectives:

Aside from scope and time-frame, objectives share similar characteristics to goals in how they are constructed. Like goals, they must pass the SMAC test. Objectives must be:

- Specific:** An objective must be specific as to what it seeks to accomplish as well as to the goal it supports.
- Measurable:** Objectives must have a specific timeline and people must be able to measure their progress.
- Achievable:** Objectives must also be achievable within the unit's capabilities and within the timeline established.

- D. **Compatible:** The objective must be compatible with the goal it is designed to support. For instance, setting the objective of eliminating unit dues for the next six months probably would not be compatible with the long-term goal of supplying every new cadet with a uniform within the next three years. The objective is not compatible because it removes a potential revenue source which would be needed to achieve the goal.

Let's examine the following examples and non-example of an objective with the goal of: establishing a program to ensure that every new cadet is provided a uniform within three years of joining.

Examples:

- A. **This unit will provide "Cadet Uniform Request" information to each eligible cadet this year to assist them with acquiring a Free Cadet Uniform through eServices.**

This objective passes the SMAC test for achieving a goal (cadets in uniforms). It is specific as to what it wants to accomplish (provide assistance with uniforms for eligible cadets). It is measurable (every eligible cadet will receive information), a timeline of (a year). It is achievable (it is possible to provide uniform request information to every eligible cadet, though every cadet may not receive a new uniform). It is compatible in that it directly supports the main goal.

- B. **The unit will obtain a secure facility to store uniforms by the end of the quarter.**

This objective also passes the SMAC test. It is specific as to what it wants to accomplish, is measurable in that it has a definite timeline. It is achievable in that it is possible to find a secure facility (converting an office into a storeroom, renting a storage locker, etc). Finally, it is compatible in that it supports the main goal by providing the means to store the uniforms cadets will receive.

Non-example:

- A. **The unit will provide every eligible cadet with at least one cadet orientation flight this year.**

Though a worthy objective, it does not pass the SMAC test. While specific, measurable, and achievable, it is not compatible with the primary goal of providing every cadet with a uniform within three years. It simply doesn't support the goal.

Setting Effective Goals and Objectives:

When formatting goals and objectives, remember that each must pass the SMAC (specific, measurable, achievable, compatible) test. If they don't, they are little more than dreams, and you'll need to adjust your goals or objectives to pass the SMAC test. This may mean only establishing milestones and deadlines. However, it can also mean rethinking what you want to accomplish in order to make the dream compatible with the mission and wing goals. Also, remember that you may need to adjust objectives to support changes to goals.

In addition, remember that goals and objectives must be reviewed and sometimes changed over the course of their achievement. Wing and unit priorities change and goals may need to be changed to accommodate new priorities.

When reviewing goals and objectives, ask three questions:

- Does the goal still fit the mission?
- If not, how should goals be changed?
- If goals change, do objectives need to be adjusted?

Setting goals and objectives is one of the most important things you can do to ensure the effectiveness of your unit. It provides the path for your members to follow, sets the vision, and gives you a measuring stick to monitor progress.

Three questions to ask:

- Does the goal still fit the _____?
- Have goals _____?
- Has the objective met the _____?

(see exercise on next page)

Exercise:

EXERCISE OBJECTIVE: To enable students to apply what they have learned from the Setting Goals and Objectives segment and complete the exercise.

NOTE: In completing the exercise students will demonstrate comprehension of how to set competent attainable goals and objectives.

In this exercise you will develop goals and objectives for your unit. Treat the exercise exactly as you would an actual planning session as if your unit will actually implement the plans you make.

- A. Develop three goals for your unit to accomplish over the next year.
Questions which must be answered for each goal:
1. Why do you feel this goal is necessary?
 2. Does it pass the SMAC test?
 - a. Specific
 - b. Measurable
 - c. Achievable
 - d. Compatible
- B. Using one of your three goals, develop three objectives to accomplish the goal.
Questions which must be answered for each objective:
1. Why is this objective critical to goal accomplishment?
 2. Does it pass the SMAC test?
 - a. Specific
 - b. Measurable
 - c. Achievable
 - d. Compatible

You instructor will discuss your results at the completion of this exercise.