How to: formulate SMART goals and objectives

The difference between goals and objectives

For any project, program or organisation it is very important to be able to formulate good goals and objectives. These make up the core of what you are trying to achieve with your work. In order to be able to formulate both, goals and objectives, well, it is important to know the difference.

Goals	Objectives
Are large and broad. This concerns the bigger picture and the end that you have in mind with your project. The focus in goals is on the long term.	Are small and specific. This concerns the means to the end. The focus in objectives is on the short term.

An example would be: the goal of my project is to broaden the knowledge on leadership of the youth of our congregation. The objectives are to provide a 10-week course on leadership with at least 10 participants and to do 1 outreach in our community with the youth through which they can apply what they learned.

SMART

For both, goals and objectives, it is important to make sure that you use the right build-up in formulation. The right words and the right build-up can have a great impact on how enthusiastic potential partners are in working together on your project. A method that helps a lot in formulation goals and objectives is the SMART-method.

Specific:
- ➤ Define your goal/objective as clear, short and simple as possible, covering what you need to say avoiding unnecessary or complex language.
- ➤ This includes the 5-W's: Who do we want to accomplish? Who is involved? Why are we doing this? Where will it be done? Which resources are needed?

Measurable:
- ➤ Measurability concerns the indicators that measure the success of your project.
- ➤ How will you indicate success? How can you measure during the implementation of the project whether you are on track? (Preferably, this includes specific numbers)

Achievable:
- ➤ Don't set the bar too high (this will disappoint stakeholders when you do not deliver what you aimed for. It is important that you formulate a goal, not a vision)
- ➤ Don't set the bar too low (you don't want to underestimate your own project)

Relevant:
- ➤ Does this goal/objective fit the other goals and overall vision of your organisation?
- ➤ Does the goal/objective support your short- and long-term plans?

Timely:
- ➤ Your goal/objective should include a certain time frame in order to maximize the effect of your project by not running it too long or too short)
- ➤ By which time do you hope to achieve your goals/objectives? (weeks/months/years)

Mind Tools Content Team (n.d.) SMART goals. Retrieved from:
https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm