

# Introduction to Behaviour Based Goal Setting

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## What is Behaviour-Based Goal Setting?

When we think of goal setting, we usually think of goals that envision a specific outcome. Some examples include:

- Lose 20 pounds.
- Increase income by 10%.
- Buy a larger house/newer vehicle.
- Run a marathon.
- Save money for college.

Of course, these are just a few of the more common goals that people set for themselves. But what if we based our goals on changing behaviours instead of obtaining a specific outcome? Could we modify or completely change behaviours that would lead us to the desired outcome quicker, healthier, and with less stress? Some experts certainly think so.

Many times, when we set goals, we focus on the negative, i.e. what we don't want rather than what we do want. Behaviour-based goals focus more on the behaviours we want to strengthen rather than the negative actions we want to remove. In strengthening the positive behaviours, we change the way we act and react in many situations – not just situations surrounding a goal that is outcome-based. The ripple effect of creating more positive in our lives is wide-reaching, affecting far more than just what we may have had in mind when creating the goal.

Many businesses today are focusing on behaviour-based goals rather than outcome-based goals, because of this ripple effect. Smart companies know that when behaviour changes for the positive, the employee is happier not only at work but in their personal life and family life as well. A happier employee is a more productive employee. So managers are learning to integrate behaviour-based goals at each employee review.

This type of goal-setting isn't seen just in the office, either. Personal trainers, life coaches, psychologists, therapists, and so many other professions are adding behaviour-based goal setting to their repertoire

of techniques. This helps those in these industries to help their clients reach success, whatever that may mean to them.

Goals that change behaviours can be seen as a kind of intermediate goal that helps one achieve outcome-based goals easier, faster, and with more residual positive effects. A positive behaviour that is strengthened in order to reach a goal is going to be strengthened in every situation where that behaviour is utilised.

Try setting a few behaviour-based goals of your own and you'll see that positively changing a behaviour really helps in so many different areas of your life. The results are great, and your new positive behaviours will serve you well for the rest of your life. Using Behaviour-Based Goals at Work

Setting behaviour-based goals can be its own benefit. Once you see the benefits of managing your time better, seeking out positive interactions with others, and changing your attitude to manage stress more effectively, you'll naturally want to put what you've learned into practice at work. Using behaviour-based goals at work is a great way to get ahead.

### **Manage Yourself**

When you start to take control of your behaviour, you'll notice that it becomes easier and easier to budget your time and perform under pressure. Using behaviour-based goals at work makes it much easier to manage yourself. Almost without trying, you'll find yourself getting more done and ending the day satisfied with your work. Put in the time and effort to improve yourself, and you'll see that it pays big dividends at the office.

### **Manage Others**

Another benefit of using behaviour-based goals at work is an increased ability to manage others. If you've got a good handle on how to stay positive and resolve conflicts, you'll find that your coworkers start to seek you out in order to help them through their own tough spots. Even

if you aren't in a management role officially, being able to effectively manage others is key to your advancement.

### Get Respect

Behaviour-based goals can range from improving conflict management to focusing on creating positive interactions. They'll help you become more confident, and more competent too. Your coworkers will be able to see the hard work you've put in, and they'll respect you for it. Open, effective communication is one of the cornerstones of building respectful professional relationships.

### Be a Leader

There's no doubt, effective leadership is tricky. Managing people from different backgrounds with different work styles and attitudes is a big job. In order to lead others, you need to be able to set an example. Creating behaviour-based goals and executing them is the first step to becoming a leader that people want to follow, rather than one that people only follow because they have to.

### Attain Success

All of the skills that you're building when you set behaviour-based goals are setting you up for success. It takes a lot of work to get to the top, but what a lot of people won't tell you is that the work you do on yourself is just as important as the work you do for your company. In order to be a success, you have to be relaxed, confident, and in control. Setting the right behaviour-based goals is one of the biggest steps to succeeding at work.

## Setting SMART Behaviour-Based Goals

When you're discussing goal setting, SMART has nothing to do with your intelligence. (But it is smart to use this technique!).

SMART is actually an acronym which represents the five necessary facets of setting goals, and if even one of them is omitted, your goals will be much harder to achieve. So let's get into what SMART really means!

### **S – Specific**

While behaviour-based goals can be harder to quantify than outcome-based goals, by focusing on the specific behaviours that need development or strengthening, we can see that clearly defining these behaviours is possible. For instance, "I will close or turn off all electronic notifications while working on this project", is basically stating that the habit of becoming distracted will be curbed in order to achieve more productivity.

### **M – Measurable**

To be effective, the road towards achieving a goal must be able to be measured. In the example in the above paragraph, the measure would be how much more of the project one is able to accomplish by turning off all electronic notifications.

### **A – Attainable**

You want your behaviour-based goal to be attainable, i.e. not so overwhelming that you start out feeling as if you can't do it. That defeats the entire purpose of the exercise. Start off with smaller goals that you know you can achieve, such as positively changing one single habit, and focus on doing that consistently before attempting to change other habits. Build on these small successes and before you know it, you'll be achieving your big goals, as well!

### **R – Realistic**

Set yourself up for success right from the beginning by setting goals that are realistic to your personality and your lifestyle. Changing your behaviours to achieve a goal will never work if you aren't realistic about

who you are, what you're capable of, and what you're willing to do. Start with easy behaviour changes that are easy for you to accomplish, and fit your lifestyle and personality. Once you've mastered those, you can ramp up to changing behaviours that might be more challenging to you.

### **T – Time-based**

Giving yourself a time limit on achieving a specific behaviour change can often spur more action toward that goal. But there's a fine line between too little and too much time. Changing behaviour patterns often takes time, so make sure that you've accounted for this.

By utilising the SMART acronym when setting behaviour-based goals, you'll find yourself much more likely to achieve them, and have measurable ways to check your progress

### **Rewards and Behaviour-Based Goals**

Even when you are focusing on behaviour-based goals, you want to start out by creating a goal that is more of a "big picture" – the end-of-the-rainbow scenario. One creative way to do this is to visualise what it is you want or need to come up with a picture that represents to you the outcome. Practice bringing up this picture in your mind, and get all of your senses involved. What types of sensory effects does this picture create for you? The more you can involve your entire brain in the process, the more realistic the big-picture goal will be.

When you've solidified your end goal, turn your attention to what types of actions you'll need to take in order to secure that goal in your future. What kinds of skills and habits will you need to form, or build, and of these, which seem inherently more difficult to you, being the unique person that you are?

One of the scientifically proven ways to increase your success in achieving your goals is by giving yourself small rewards along the way. With regard to behaviour-based goals, this might mean setting a goal

where you practice a new habit for seven days, and if you succeed in that, you give yourself a small reward.

This process is much more realistic than simply setting a goal and expecting to motivate yourself through the time, energy, and work that it will take to achieve that goal. You are much more apt to keep your momentum if you know that, periodically, you'll reward yourself for a job well done.

Rewarding yourself often will work in your favour, and will help you keep up the ambition and drive to reach the end goal, as well as keep up the positive habit changes while you're getting there.

Sometimes half the fun of goal-setting is not only visualising the end goal but thinking of creative ways to give yourself rewards along the way. Some people enjoy monetary rewards, and others might be more motivated by taking some time just for themselves in a favourite quiet place. One person might want a night out on the town, while another might reward themselves with learning a new skill. To each their own, but utilising a reward system while continuing to develop behaviour-based goals can work in all areas of one's life, whether it is business, relationships, health, or personal development!

### **Making Behaviour-Based Goals Work for You**

The easiest way to demonstrate the incredible effectiveness of behaviour-based goals work when used in tandem with outcome-based goals is to give you a short narrative of someone utilising both. To that end, let's say we have a man named Dan who owns his own business and wants to secure three or four new clients each month in order to increase his business revenue.

Up until recently, Dan has relied heavily on word-of-mouth for advertising, and he's done okay. In order to step it up a notch, he realises he'll have to do things he's not very comfortable doing – things like attending networking events and cold-calling on businesses. Doing things that he's not used to doing will call into play his self-discipline.

Dan is also aware that he is going to need to do these things repeatedly and consistently in order to secure the new business that will grow his business. For Dan, the fear of keeping his business at the same level, year after year, is more painful than stretching his skills to do the things he needs to do to secure that business growth.

In this situation, business growth is the quantifiable outcome-based goal. Increasing self-discipline and consistency are two of Dan's behaviour-based goals.

The outcome-based goal is the end-all-be-all goal. It's the prize possession, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

But the habit-changing behaviour-based goals are what will ensure Dan gets to the end of this particular rainbow (and beyond).

By strengthening his own self-discipline practice, and learning to do things over and over again in a more consistent manner, he can accomplish things like attending networking events and giving out handshakes and business cards. He'll be able to sit down at his phone, and cold call businesses who likely need his services, and set up meetings with decision makers.

By combining the outcome-based goal with a few behaviour-based goals, Dan has a much greater chance of actually achieving all of these.

In turn, he will have developed his positive habits and skill sets, and that will serve him not only for this particular goal but in many different areas of his life, for many different goals.

Hopefully, this short narrative will have shown you the beauty of combining these two valuable 'goal-setting and achieving' techniques. Utilising them both, your chances of success are much greater than using one of them alone.