

GET THE JOB

Get SMART About your Job Hunt

If your objective is to find a new job, goal-setting is a great way to get there. However, not just any old goals will do the trick.

The well-known management consultant Peter Drucker taught that without planning, any action will fail. To help managers plan, he created what has become known as SMART goals. While he was developing management theory, it applies just as well to job hunting.

WHAT ARE SMART GOALS?

The acronym sets forth the characteristics that make goals successful. The “A” and the “R” has varied a bit, but a generally accepted definition is:

- S-Specific
- M-Measurable
- A-Achievable
- R-Realistic/Relevant
- T-Time-bound

SETTING SMART JOB-HUNTING GOALS

Creating SMART goals takes a little more thinking about what you want to achieve. Start by making a list of what you want to accomplish. Maybe you want to learn better cover-writing skills, update



your professional skills, contact potential references or send out job applications.

Those can all form the foundation for your SMART goals, but they are only the first step.

Let's take “update professional skills” as an example. That's a great general goal, but not a SMART goal.

Getting specific. Think

about how to make your goal quantifiable. Narrow the goal to be more specific, to deal with only one thing at a time. For example: “Learn how to use the payroll functions of the QuickBooks accounting program.”

Measuring your goal. How will you know if you've accomplished your goal? What will success look like?

Build the answers to those questions into your goals. For example: “Pass an online course in QuickBooks payroll functions by at least 85%.”

Making the goal achievable. This is the opportunity to take time to figure out the barriers to achieving your goals and how you can overcome them. The more realistic your goals are, the more likely you are to

continue working toward them. For example: “Pass an online course in QuickBooks payroll functions by at least 85% by spending at 30 minutes twice a week taking the course.”

Making the goal relevant or realistic. One of the key questions you want to ask yourself is whether the goal will help you achieve your over-arching objective. In our example, the goal is a relevant one if you are pursuing a job that requires accounting skills. However, if you are going after careers that don't typically involve accounting, this isn't a skill that is going to be relevant or realistic, even if you might enjoy learning it. Likewise, if you want to be an auditor or accounts receivable clerk, for example, learning payroll might not be as relevant as learning a different module.

Setting a time schedule. Goals can be short- or long-term. Determine the time frame you need to accomplish the goal and build that into the goal itself. For example: “Pass an online course in QuickBooks payroll functions in the next two months by at least 85% by spending at least 30 minutes twice a week taking the course.”

Once you have done this with all your job-hunting goals, you have built a road map to successfully landing a new job.