

The “SPAGHETTI” Model for Goal/Objective Setting

“The greatest enemy of Goal Setting is the lack of a Plan, and the greatest enemy of a Plan is Lack of Action”

Let's use an example to illustrate goal/objective planning and action: Think of a **goal** as the **destination of a trip** ("Go to Hawaii"), and the **objectives** are **how** you're going to get from here to there (when will we leave, which airline will we use, where will we stay, how much money can we spend, what will I wear, what will we do once there, etc.). Each objective may have several **action steps** associated with it, as well.

Goal = Where

Objectives = How

Steps = Tasks / Action

By identifying and taking action on these specific objectives, I can achieve the vacation.

The word “spaghetti” is an acronym to illustrate the process of goal development. Specifically, what each letter stands for or represents is described below.

S—pecific. Measure your progress in numbers, percentages, milestones, dates, etc. "Learn software program" isn't specific, but "Spend five hours a week learning software program" is. "Lose weight" isn't specific, but "Lose 30 pounds at 1 pound a week" can be measured by simply stepping on the scale. "Make more calls" isn't specific, but "Make five new outbound prospecting calls a day" is.

P—otential problems. What obstacles might you encounter when working on your objective? What might come up that would prevent you from obtaining it? Consider early in the process what could go wrong. Take action to put contingency plans into place and resolve problems before they occur.

A—cceptable. The objective should be *yours*. It's all right to accept advice and suggestions from others, but you will be more motivated to do something if it's something you really want to do. Be cautious about defining success in terms of what a spouse, parent or mentor sees as success for you.

G—ift. We stay motivated to work toward our objectives when we know the rewards. What will be your reward once you've accomplished the objective? Major accomplishments deserve a special treat. Give yourself something exciting to shoot for! What is self-motivating enough to make you want to strive for it? A vacation? A night out? A massage? Rewards can also be intrinsic, such as increased self-esteem, more confidence, the pleasure of a job well done, etc. Remember, if the "why" is strong enough, the "how" becomes easier.

H—ard enough. Objectives should challenge you, but they shouldn't be a fantasy or daydream. Make them realistic so you don't set yourself up to fail, but make them hard

enough that you will have to stretch a bit. When you experience success at reaching stretch objectives, you gain more confidence to set harder ones next time.

E—valuate. Milestones along the way help you evaluate your progress. Review your objectives periodically to ensure that they continue to be realistic, timely and relevant. For example, measure your weight each week, summarize your sales calls every day or determine how many pages you wrote each day.

T—angible. Objectives must be written down or else you'll tend to edit in your head as you go along. Many people daydream about what they want to accomplish, but far fewer actually write this down. Once written, the objective becomes tangible and concrete. Written objectives are also a reminder and a historical record.

T—ime bound. Good objectives have target dates. Set time limits, and define start and stop dates. Often you will have multiple action steps, each with a target date.

I—nspirational. The objective should be uplifting and positively phrased. Have confidence in yourself! We tend to rise to the level of our own self-esteem. Picture yourself reaching your objective. Picture the result the moment you achieve your objective and how you will feel. Use positive self-talk and hear what others will say when the objective is achieved. When you're having a slow day, you can visualize that picture and get an immediate energy boost!

Illustration: Let's take the weakly stated goal, "Lose Weight," and apply the SPAGHETTI model to create an effective objective:

S—pecific: Lose 30 pounds at one pound a week for 30 weeks

P—otential problems: Nothing healthy to eat, cookies always around

A—ccepted: This matches my vision of a healthier me

G—ift: Buy new suit

H—ard enough: It's realistic, but I'll have to work at it

E—valuate: I can measure my progress by stepping on the scale every Saturday

T—angible: Write down the objective several times and post it where I can see it

T—ime bound: Starting now, ending 30 weeks from now

I—nspirational: I CAN DO IT! I will feel so good!

Set some objectives of your own.

Specific:

Potential problems:

Acceptable:

Gift:

Hard enough:

Evaluate:

Tangible:

Time bound:

Inspirational:

After you apply the SPAGHETTI model, write out your goal in paragraph form. For example: "I will (**verb**) (**measurement**) by (**date**) because (**motivation**). I will evaluate my progress by (). I will reward myself through ()."

Poor objective: "Read 100 Greatest Books Ever Written"

Better: "I will read one book each month, so that I may read 12 each year and complete the set in 10 years, ending 2017. I will be able to discuss these great works intelligently and use them as examples in my speeches. When complete, I will travel to the best place I read about in the series."

Write it out:

If you are off target, ask yourself, "Do I have all necessary resources?" "Are there obstacles in my way and how can I eliminate them?" "Is this a truly obtainable goal, or am I pressuring myself unrealistically?" "Is there someone else who could assist me in completing one or more steps?" "Am I simply procrastinating?" Post your goals within sight, so you can evaluate your progress as you go and maintain your enthusiasm.

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