

SET GOAL

S = Specific
M = Measuradle
A = Attainable
R = Realistic
T = Timely



Lag Goals vs Lead Actions and SMART

We all have Goals right? And for most of us we know what those Goals are, and we will have even made them SMART – right? (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely).

So why in a lot of cases do our Goals fail to get achieved?

I think the reason is that we are focusing on setting SMART Goals instead of SMART Actions to achieve the Goal. Our focus is on what I would call ‘Lag Goals’.

So what do I mean by ‘Lag Goals’?

These are Goals that happen after the actions have been done to bring them about, let me give you some examples:

I want to achieve \$100,000 in sales this month - You will only achieve the Goal after the sales have happened.

I want to reduce accidents at the site by 25% this quarter - You will only achieve the Goal after accidents are reduced.

I want to lose 10 kg in 3 months – You will only achieve the Goal after weight is lost.

Now all these Goals will meet the SMART criteria but they will only come to fruition after the event, they Lag behind the actions needed to achieve the Goals. If we focus only on these Goals we will find that it will be hit and miss whether we achieve them.

Let me give you an example, I'll use the sales Goal from above:

Our salesman Fred is given the Goal by his manager - \$100,000 in sales this month, nice and SMART.

Fred goes out and starts to have sales conversations with potential clients and is very 'busy'. At the end of the 1st week he is in at the weekly sales meeting telling his manager how well it's going and the Goal is as good as done. All looks rosy. The 2nd week a bit of doubt has crept in, things 'might' come off, lots of irons in the fire, it might happen. By the final week Fred is nowhere near his target.

So what happened? What went wrong? Fred set a good SMART Goal why didn't he achieve it?

The truth is we don't know. We could guess. Maybe he didn't close the deals. Maybe he didn't see enough people. Maybe....Maybe.... Maybe.... This

is the trouble when we focus only on the Lag Goal - by the time we get to the end, and can see our results, it's too late to do anything about it.

So what can we do differently? We can set Lead Actions instead, actions that will Lead to the Goal.

What we need to do is change the focus from SMART Goals to SMART Actions that Lead to the Goal.

Let's take the same example:

The first thing we need to look at is what Actions will Lead to fulfilling this Goal.

What is the 1st basic thing that will make the Goal happen? – Fred needs to sell! If I know that the sales team, on average, sell our products for \$20,000 at a time then I know that Fred has to make **5 sales**.

How will he make those sales? – By writing and delivering proposals to clients!! If I know that, on average, the sales team have a 1:4 conversion rate when closing sales then Fred will have to write **20 proposals**.

How will he get clients to accept proposals? – By approaching prospective clients!! Again if I know that our sales team, on average, will get 1:5 prospective clients to accept a proposal, then Fred needs to make **100 approaches**.

Now Fred's Goal looks like this:

100 x Approaches made (Lead Actions)

1:5 = 20 x Proposals written (Lead Actions)

1:4 = 5 x \$20,000 sales (Lead Actions)

\$100,000 this month (Goal)

If Fred makes the approaches he should, on average, achieve the Goal. We now have the SMART Actions that will Lead to the Goal and can now ***manage*** Fred to achieve that Goal. We can ask:

"Have you made 25 approaches this week?"

"Have you got 5 proposals out to clients this week?"

"Have you made a sale this week?"

Now these are SMART Actions!!!

Your Call to Action:

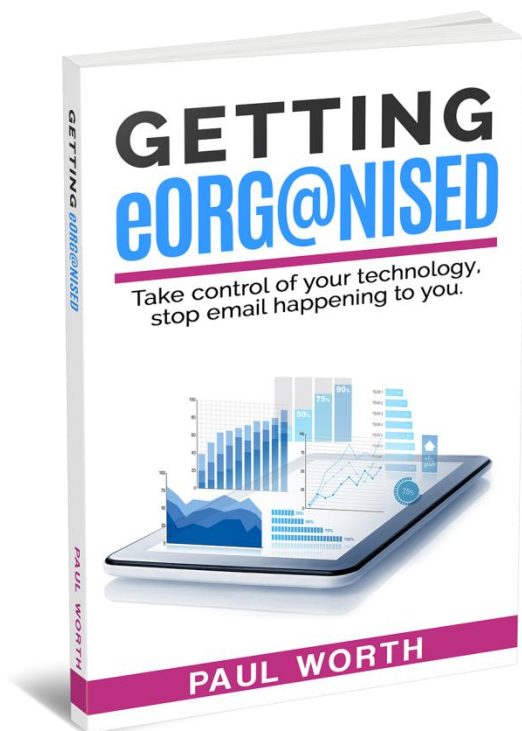
What Goal could you break down into SMART Actions? Could you then track those actions daily/weekly to ensure that you will reach your Goal? Could you now *manage* yourself to keep on track by booking a weekly review meeting?

Love to hear your thoughts.

Till next time. Cheers, Paul

PAUL WORTH is a productivity expert with over 20 years of experience in email management, through his productivity program [“eOrganising”](#), he has helped thousands of individuals and teams improve their efficiency and effectiveness in the management of their email workflow.

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