



Law Matters Newsletter

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Were Your Business Resolutions SMART?



Part way into January, are you keeping your New Year's Resolutions? If not, are these the same resolutions that you made last year....or the year before? Many people decide year after year for example to lose weight, but it never quite seems to happen. Similar problems can arise with business resolutions, whenever they are made.

Any coach knows that there are many reasons why business or personal resolutions are not carried out as intended. However, the reason is often that they are not SMART.

SMART Goals

This acronym was developed by Doran, and there are several slight variations of it. This is the original.

Specific – the aim should be concrete, not nebulous.

Measurable – how do you know when you have achieved the aim, or are on the way?

Attainable – the aim should take account of the resources available, including the time needed to attain it.

Relevant – will this objective lead to the desired result?

Time limited – when will this be achieved?



SO, the aim of losing weight may be sensible, but is not SMART. On the other hand, deciding to lose a stone in 6 months by eating healthier food and taking more exercise certainly is SMART.

Is This Relevant to Business?

Given that Doran's original article was entitled *There's a S.M.A.R.T. Way to Write Management Goals and Objectives*, it is much more relevant to business than to individual "life" issues.

Business goals have to be achieved by more than one person – whether the entire firm, a team or a group of individuals. Understanding of and buying into the goals are needed if they are to be achieved, and monitoring is necessary to ensure that the goals are coordinated and achieved.

The overall goals may need to be broken down into subordinate goals, and allocated to individuals or teams.

At its most basic, actions can then be allocated according to the following headings:

Action needed	Person to do it	Completion Marker	By what date	Completed
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(We sometimes use such a sheet in coaching – for a copy please email enquiries@iwanthomasassociates.co.uk)

Bearing in mind SMART goals, it is self explanatory, except for the "completion marker". Put simply, this is how you show that the action is completed. For example, the completion marker for a newsletter may be sending it to the final person on the circulation list.

Litigators have traditionally assumed a completion marker somewhere before billing the client, while many lawyers still use one that does not contemplate archiving the file. So SMART goals have a possible place in matter management as well.



Nice Acronym, but.....

Management is about getting things done, and the SMART idea is designed to increase effectiveness in doing so. Many lawyers want to spend their time lawyering, and resent badly spent management time.

So if you desire a fit and healthy firm, maybe now is the time to get SMART.

This note is written as a general guide only, and is not applicable to every firm or circumstance. It should not be relied upon as a substitute for specific business advice.

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