

**Ken Keis and
Gord Cameron**



Plan for Success in 2003: Get S.M.A.R.T.!

Planning is the beginning of the professional managing cycle.

The next step is **organizing** the plan for its implementation.

The third step is **leading** the implementation of the plan.

The fourth step—which completes the cycle and leads back to the planning stage, to repeat the process—is **evaluating** what you did.

All four steps are critical. The most significant step to ensure success, however, is the first one: planning.

Creating the Successful Plan

A successful plan is one that articulates **what** is to be done, by **whom**, by **when**, and **how** you will measure progress/culmination.

What qualities do you need to build into your plan?

Make it S.M.A.R.T. Specific

The plan usually begins with a simple statement of what you want to achieve, now and in the future. The goal/intent statement must be specific; it must contain nouns, verbs, and numbers. Clarity is required.

Measurable

A vital component of any plan includes having the tools and techniques to measure the overall level of success you have achieved, as well as your progress en route to the goal. Measurement includes the end number (“a 20 percent increase”) and the key milestones along the way.

The most significant step to ensure success, however, is the first one: planning.

Achievable

An impossible goal is a **demotivator**, not a motivator. An unrealistic goal can negatively affect normal productivity. If staff members believe the goal is beyond their reach, they will give up before they even try. On the other hand, setting a goal that can be attained too easily is useless. The goal must be achievable, but must require effort that is out of the ordinary. That’s what a good plan is about: helping staff realize above-average results. Yard-by-yard, it’s hard, but inch-by-inch—it’s a cinch!

Relevant

Is the plan important to those who must implement it? If not, its chances of success are small; your plan may receive lip service, but little else. Creating buy-in from appropriate staff is crucial to the plan’s success.

Timed

The final element is the timeframe. It’s imperative to attach a definite time to the completion of each key measurement as the plan progresses. Timeframes create deadlines and urgency, which are sometimes needed to move a project along.

A plan begins with a statement that identifies **specifically** what will be done, by when, with consideration to what is attainable with effort and what is important to all involved in the plan’s implementation. Creating a great plan puts you firmly in the driver’s seat. Enjoy the trip! ▲

**Ken Keis and
Gordon Cameron** are senior partners in Results Consulting Group Inc.

Voice: 604 852-4347
kenkeis@uniserve.com