Setting Goals and Objectives

Lesson Objective:	Comprehend how to set competent, attainable goals and objectives.
Behavioral Objectives: At the end of this segment you will be able to:	1. Discuss the importance of setting goals and objectives. 2. Define the term goal in your own words. 3. Describe the characteristics of a goal. 4. Define the term objective in your own words. 5. Describe the characteristics of objectives. 6. Explain how to set effective goals and objectives.

Overview

Do you know what your unit's goals are? What does it want to accomplish over the next year, two years, or five years? How do plan to achieve those goals? Do the unit's goals compete with wing goals, even CAP's mission?

Successful squadrons know what they want to accomplish and how, they have goals and objectives which when accomplished will get them where they want to go.   This segment will examine what goals and objectives really are, how they can help you more effectively manage your unit, and show you techniques for setting effective goals and objectives.

The Importance Of Setting Goals And Objectives

Why bother setting goals and objectives beyond accomplishing the mission? While CAP's mission should always be the primary focus of your effort, but it doesn't tell you HOW to accomplish it. Goals and objectives provide the framework that makes mission achievement possible.

Well-defined goals and objectives completely and succinctly describe the mountain to be climbed.   Those who develop the goals can share their vision with their friends, co-workers, and members who will help them accomplish these goals.

One of the best ways to share your goals, and thus your vision, is to publicize them. Putting goals on paper tends to make them more real, tangible, and achievable. Why? Because putting them in writing represents going a step beyond the wishing and dreaming stage. It represents an emotional commitment.

> **The importance of setting goals and objectives**
>
> ➢ Goals share _____.
> ➢ Setting goals and publicizing them _____.
> ➢ Goals motivate members toward _____.
> ➢ Goals and objectives provide a roadmap to _____.

Publicizing your goals also spreads the word to your people faster. It's also less direct than giving several "locker room" style speeches, giving the members space to consider the importance of the goal, without the "hard sell" from command. Imagine running around to every member of your squadron or having a meeting every week to sell unit goals and objectives. That "hard sell" can lead to resentment, not support.

By the same token, take care not to over-publicize unit goals and objectives. We've all experienced the "hard sell" by an employer or vendor to try to get us to "buy" a product, program, or service.

Another benefit to setting goals and objectives is that goals motivate members towards achievement. People are more willing to work if they know what they are working towards, and can gauge their progress. People are more apt to adjust their priorities to accommodate goals. It's the reason why people work overtime, give up time with their family, perhaps even work for less money than they are worth – the goal they have set for themselves is more important, at the time, than the other factors. Once the goal is accomplished they will shift their priorities again to accommodate a goals they think is important.

Finally, goals and objectives provide a roadmap to success. With a clear goal, you always know where you stand in relationship to its accomplishment. When you attain the goal, you have achieved success.

Definition Of A Goal

For the purpose of this discussion, we can define a goal as an end point that is broad in scope – the desired end result you want to achieve. It is something large to reach for. Some people have called it a dream with a deadline. This is a pretty good description because it identifies a goal's spirit. But goals are also specific in what they are designed to accomplish, for instance: "This squadron will own its own building within five years." It's pretty ambitious, broad in scope, yet is very definite. Anyone who reads the goal will know exactly what it means.

> **Definition of a goal**
>
> ➢ A goal is a broad-scoped end -- _____.
>
> ➢ Goals are generally _____ in nature.

Goals are also strategic in nature, that is, it has a far-reaching impact, and normally is accomplished over a fairly long period of time.

Characteristics Of Goals ("SMAC")

While saying that a goal is "a dream with a deadline" may describe a goal's spirit, it does not describe its characteristics. The difference between goals and dreams is that when one dreams there are no rules. Anything is possible. Not so with goals, they have very distinct characteristics. For goals to be effective, they must pass four tests. Goals must be:

> **Characteristics of Goals "SMAC"**
>
> ➢ S_____.
> ➢ M_____.
> ➢ A_____.
> ➢ C_____.

a. **Specific:** As mentioned before goals must be specific. The must designed to accomplish something concrete and be easy to understand.

b. **Measurable:** Goals must have a specific timeline, and people must be able to figure out how far they've come towards reaching their goals.

c. **Achievable:** For a goal to be effective it must be able to be accomplished. The goals must be within the unit's capabilities to be achieved. If the proposed goal is not attainable within the unit's capabilities, then it must either be altered to fit within the unit's capabilities or must be postponed unit the unit can attain the ability to accomplish it.

d. **Compatible:** Goals must be compatible with CAP's mission and with the goals and objectives of higher echelons, specifically the wing's. Thinks of CAP's three-faceted mission as CAP's primary goal: what CAP wants to accomplish. Unit goals must support, or at least not inhibit, emergency services, cadet programs, or aerospace education efforts. The wing also plays a role, in that it may have included the unit in some of its own goals. The unit therefore must ensure that the goals it sets for itself are not contrary to wing plans.

Let's consider some examples and nonexamples of goals.

Examples

1. *This unit will provide uniforms for all new cadets within three years.*

This goal passes the SMAC test. It is specific: the unit intends to provide uniforms for its cadets. It is measurable: it has a three-year deadline. It is achievable: Let's assume that the unit has or knows it can obtain the resources to buy uniforms. It is compatible: the goal will not inhibit CAP's primary mission, or necessarily wing goals.

2. This unit will produce three Mitchell cadets over the next two years.

This goal can also pass the SMAC test. It's specific: three Mitchell cadets. It is measurable: a two year deadline. It is achievable: it is possible for cadets to earn the Mitchell Award in two years (assume this is a cadet or composite unit). It is compatible: It supports the cadet program and is not contrary to the mission or wing priorities.

Nonexample

1. The unit will own its own airplane.

This goal does not pass the SMAC test. While specific, it is not measurable. There is no deadline or milestone to show that the goal has been achieved. It's also not achievable in that while a unit can, theoretically, raise the money to purchase an airplane, all assets are owned by the Civil Air Patrol Corporation. The squadron is not a stand-alone entity, but rather a part of the corporation. So if the plane is purchased, it would be owned by Civil Air Patrol, Inc., not the squadron.

Now that we've examined the nature and characteristics of goals, let's now discuss an integral component of goals: objectives. While similar in nature, goals and objectives do very specific jobs. If a goal represents the dream, objectives represent the means to achieve the goal.

Definition Of An Objective

Basically, an objective is an action step designed to reach a goal. But there are two main differences between objectives and goals. The first is that an objective is designed to support a larger effort – the goal, while goals can stand by themselves.

Objectives also differ from goals in terms of time. While goals are strategic in nature—taking much time to achieve and having a far-reaching impact – objectives are tactical. This means that the objective is designed to be part of a larger project – the goal the objective supports. Objectives also take less time to achieve than goals, usually less than a year.

> **Definition of an objective**
>
> ➢ An objective is an
>   _____ intended to
>   reach a _____.
> ➢ Objectives are _____.

Characteristics Of Objectives

Aside from scope and time-frame, objectives are similar to goals in how they are constructed. Like goals, they must pass the SMAC test. Objectives must be:

a.   *Specific:* Objectives must be specific as to what it seeks to accomplish as well as to the goal it supports.

b.   *Measurable:* Objectives must have a specific timeline, people must be able to measure their progress.

c.   *Achievable:* Objectives must also be achievable, within the unit's capabilities and within the timeline established.

d.   *Compatible:* The objective must be compatible with the goal it is designed to support. For instance, setting the objective of eliminating unit dues for the next six months probably would not be compatible with the long-term goal of supplying every new cadet with a uniform within the next three years. The objective is not compatible because it removes a potential revenue source which would be needed to achieve the goal.

Let's examine the following examples and nonexample of an objective. When evaluating the objective assume that the goal is to provide every new cadet with a uniform within three years.

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Examples

1. This unit will submit Free Cadet Uniform (FCU) vouchers for each eligible cadet we recruit this year.

This objective passes the SMAC test. It is specific as to what it wants to accomplish (new uniforms). It is measurable (every eligible cadet will request a uniform using an FCU, a timeline of a year). It is achievable (it is possible to request uniforms for every eligible cadet, though every cadet may not receive a new uniform). It is compatible in that it directly supports the main goal.

2. The unit will obtain a secure facility to store uniforms by the end of the quarter.

This objective also passes the SMAC test. It is specific as to what it wants to accomplish, is measurable in that it has a definite timeline. It is achievable in that it is possible to find a secure facility (converting an office into a storeroom, renting a storage locker, etc). Finally, it is compatible in that it supports the main goal by providing the means to store the uniforms cadets will receive.

Nonexample

1. The unit will provide every eligible cadet with at least one cadet orientation flight this year.

Though a worthy objective, it does not pass the SMAC test. While specific, measurable, and achievable, it is not compatible with the primary goal of providing every cadet with a uniform within three years. It simply doesn't support the goal.

Setting Effective Goals And Objectives

When formatting a goals and objectives, remember that each must pass the SMAC (specific, measurable, achievable, compatible) test. If they don't, they are little more than dreams, and you'll have to adjust your goal or objective to have it pass the SMAC test. This may mean only giving your dream milestones and deadlines. However, it can also mean rethinking what you want to accomplish in order to make the dream compatible with the mission and other goals. Also, remember that objectives are formulated to support and achieve larger goals.

> **Three questions to ask:**
>
> ➢ Does the goal still fit the _____?
> ➢ Have goals _____?
> ➢ Has the objective met the _____?

In addition, remember that goals and objectives must be followed up and receive maintenance over the course of their achievement. Wing and unit priorities change, and goals must be changed to accommodate the adjustment of priorities.

When following up on goals and objectives, ask three questions:

➢ Does the goal still fit the mission?

➢ Have goals changed?

➢ Has the objective met the goal?

Setting goals and objectives is one of the most important things you can do to ensure the effectiveness of your unit. It provides the path for your members to follow, sets the vision, and gives you a measuring stick to monitor progress.

Setting Goals and Objectives

Exercise

EXERCISE OBJECTIVE: To enable students to apply what they have learned from the Setting Goals and Objectives segment and complete the exercise.

NOTE: In completing the exercise the students will demonstrate the mastery of behavioral objectives which will show comprehension of the objectives.

In this exercise you will develop goals and objectives for your unit. Treat the exercise exactly as you would an actual planning session; as if your unit will actually implement the plans you make.

1. Develop three goals for your unit to accomplish over the next year.

Questions which must be answered for each goal:

1. Why do you feel this goal is necessary?
2. Does it pass the SMAC test?
    a. Specific
    b. Measurable
    c. Achievable
    d. Compatible

2. Using one of your three goals, develop three objectives to accomplish the goal.

Questions which must be answered for each objective:

1. Why is this objective critical to goal accomplishment?
2. Does it pass the SMAC test?
    a. Specific
    b. Measurable
    c. Achievable
    d. Compatible