



NEW YEAR, NEW BEGINNING

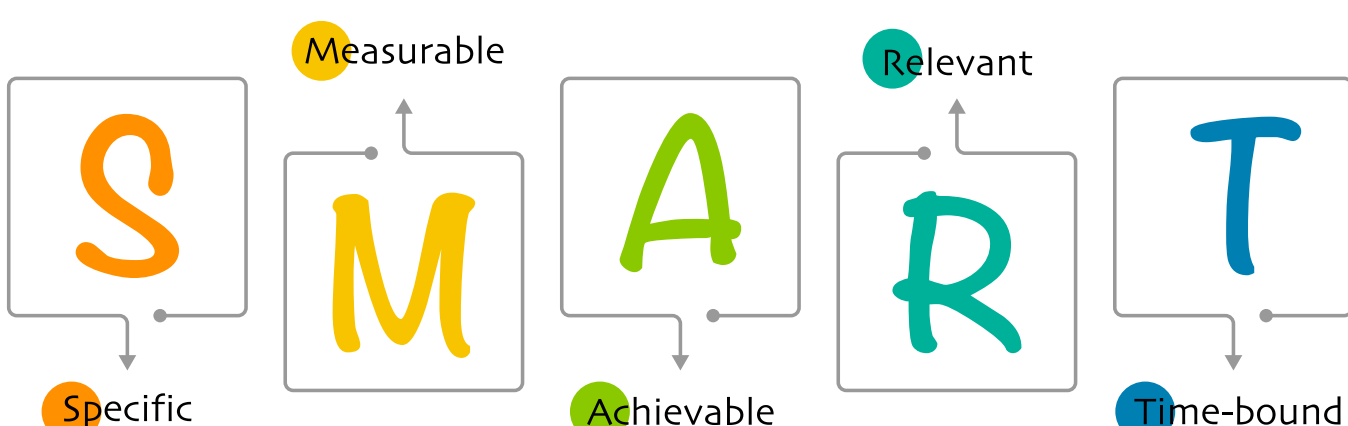
As a new year dawns, social media feeds are exploding with grand plans. From life makeovers to finally shedding those stubborn kilos, ditching the vapes or just keeping the Duolingo Owl happy ... we're all set for success

That's when we get a reality check. Within no time, most of us will be right back where we started. Why? Our ideas are simply too vast, too hazy, and too overwhelming to survive the real world.

This New Year, revolutionise your resolutions by keeping things simple and realistic.

GET SMART

You're probably brimming with passion and energy for your goals. This nifty little acronym is how you channel that drive to turn dreams into reality.



S for specific: Being vague is your worst enemy. How can you reach a destination if you don't know where it is? Being specific keeps you focused – for example, instead of "I'll exercise more", try "I'll walk around the block after supper."

M for measurable: Instead of "I want to read more in 2024", say "I'll read 5 pages of a book before bedtime each evening." This way you can keep track, hold yourself accountable, and decide where to next.

A for achievable: Consider your current circumstances, i.e. resources, time, health, etc. Be realistic about what you can actually achieve under these circumstances and tailor accordingly. Wanting to run the Comrades is an admirable goal, but walking to the shops may be more realistic right now – and that's okay.

R for relevant: Don't use generic bucket lists; make goals meaningful to you – or you won't want to keep working towards them. For example, if you're a laid-back foodie, learning to make the perfect mayonnaise is more relevant than climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.

T for time limit: Establish a timeline with deadlines for achieving your goals. For example, "In six months' time I want to do a 10km fun run", rather than "I'm going to get fit."

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS



Now that you've formulated realistic goals, make them happen by leaning on these techniques.

1. Share the load.

While you are the only person who can fulfil your resolution, it doesn't hurt to have someone who keeps you accountable. This could be a coach, a supportive friend or others with the same goal. A WhatsApp group is an easy way to keep each other honest.

2. Leave a little leeway.

As they say, life is what happens when you're making plans. Accept that sometimes you won't meet a deadline or achieve what you set out to. Instead of allowing it to derail your momentum ("I didn't have time to walk at 5PM yesterday, so why bother today?"), replace it with something you can. ("I'll dance to 2 songs after supper instead.")

3. Be kind to yourself.

Use positive reinforcement, such as self-praise or small rewards, to stay motivated. Even a simple tick-off list can be immensely satisfying. And, instead of beating yourself up for slip-ups, accept that setbacks are part of any journey. Rather than a failure that "proves" you should just give up, they're a great chance to learn and adjust your strategy.

By being SMART and approaching your resolutions with positivity and determination, you'll be well on your way to resolutionising your life – once and for all.

Need support with your ambitions? Reach out to the Employee Assistance Programme on 0800 111 011.

If your resolutions fizzle out, you need this five-point plan to realise your goals.

Think SMART. For example, if you want to get fit:

S for specific – I will jog three days a week.

M for measurable – So I can run 10km.

A for achievable – I can do this in my sneakers.

R for relevant – This will balance my hours of desk work.

T for time limit – There's a fun run in six months.

Superpower your resolutions with these steps:

1. Get a coach, friend or others with the same goal to keep you accountable.
2. Don't let slip-ups derail you – find an alternative.
3. Use positive reinforcement to stay motivated.

References

Psychology Today: How to set and accomplish your goal

BetterUp: How to set realistic goals

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Let us stay mindful of caring for one another and ourselves