

Chapter 7 ▶ Plan of Action

Now that you know more about leadership and have had several opportunities to enhance your leadership skills, it's time to put all of your knowledge and abilities to work. By now, you probably have awesome ideas about leadership and how to apply your skills and talents to work on a team, work and communicate with

others, and help give back to the community you live in. This is the planning and goal setting portion of leadership. This is where you get to use all the information you now have to better the world that we live in. This means setting S.M.A.R.T. goals and creating a plan of action to make a difference!

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Goals are vital to leadership. In order to be an effective leader, we must have a plan and goals that we strive to reach. S.M.A.R.T. goals are the best kind of goals to make. The acronym S.M.A.R.T. stands for: **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.**

SPECIFIC

A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six “W” questions:

- Who: Who is involved?
- What: What do I want to accomplish?
- Where: Where will this take place?
- When: When will this goal take place?
- Which: Which of my skills, supplies and other people may I need to accomplish this goal?
- Why: Why am I working towards meeting this goal?

EXAMPLE: A general goal would be, “create a youth leadership workshop.” A specific goal would say, “plan and host a youth leadership workshop, with the help of the youth council and my Extension Agent, on May 2nd at the fairgrounds to help the middle-school 4-Hers in my county develop better communication skills.”

MEASURABLE

When setting S.M.A.R.T. goals it is important to keep in mind how to measure them. In order to make goals measurable, we need to set bench marks to measure the progress of attaining the goal. In order to do this one may need to set target dates and deadlines. After making them it is suggested that one may want to track the dates on a calendar. These deadlines include things like reserving space for a workshop, finding ice breakers, advertising an event, creating a detailed outline of the event, working with your Leadership project leader, sending out invitations. etc. As you reach these benchmarks, you may become more and more excited as your goals are realized.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions like: How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished? What dates do I need as a deadline?

ATTAINABLE

As you identify the goals that mean the most to you and the ones that are going to help you succeed in life, you begin to figure out how to accomplish the goals. As a person who is trying to reach a S.M.A.R.T. goal, you begin to develop a positive attitude and skills to reach them. You can attain your goals when you have a plan on how to accomplish it, and also an attitude that pushes you to excel. As you work on accomplishing your goal you practice and build specific skills that aid in reaching the goal. The goals that

once seemed out of reach are now closer and more attainable, not because the goal has become smaller but because you are growing and challenging yourself while striving to attain the goal. This attitude that you develop is what makes your goal attainable.

REALISTIC

To be realistic, a goal must be something that you are both *willing* and *able* to reach. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be and if you are willing to take the steps to meeting that goal. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished may actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love.

Your goal is probably realistic if you truly *believe* that it can be accomplished. You can also compare your goal to other goals you have accomplished or ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish your goal. These considerations should help you develop realistic goals.

TIMELY

A goal should be set within a certain time frame. Without a time frame the goal becomes just another thing that you want to do someday. However, if you set a time frame on the goal, such as an ending date, there is more motivation to accomplish the goal. Once again go back to our S.M.A.R.T. goal. Instead of just saying “create a teen leader workshop”, make the goal timely by inserting a date in the goal. The goal then becomes “plan and host a youth leadership workshop, with the help of the youth council and my Extension Agent, on May 2nd at the fairgrounds to help the middle-school 4-Hers in my county develop better communication skills.” Adding “May 2nd” sets a timeframe for the goal to be reached.

* Adapted from: <http://www.topachievement.com/smart.html>

Practice writing five S.M.A.R.T. goals. They can pertain to yourself, your 4-H projects or any other activity that you are involved in.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Plan

Now that you know how to set S.M.A.R.T. goals, it's time to develop your plan of action. Here are some things to consider as you plan:

- Work with you parent/guardian or project leader on developing a plan of action.
- What do you want to do; what do you want to accomplish?
- How do you want to share what you have learned about leadership?
- What are your S.M.A.R.T. goals?
- Who will be involved in helping or as participants?
- When and where will the activities in the plan take place?
- What resources will you need?
- How will you accomplish your plan?
- What do you want to learn from implementing your plan?

Implement

After you have carefully developed a plan, the next step is to put the plan into action.

- Schedule the event/activity

- Organize the necessary resources
- Involve others in helping out
- Go over what you plan to do
- Do it!

Go out and do what you said you wanted to do to share your leadership skills with others. Don't be afraid to change and revise the plan as needed. The key is to do something; something that helps others, helps you grow personally, and helps you further develop your leadership skills!

Evaluate

At the end of you project, you should take some time to evaluate the project and plan of action. Here are some guiding questions to help you along the way:

- What went well?
- What did not go so well?
- What would you change or do different?
- What did you learn?
- How did you apply what you learned to your everyday life?

Ideas for your Learning to Lead Plan of Action

- Create a club schedule and agenda or newsletter to keep members of your club informed.
- Help new members become more familiar with 4-H by helping them understand record book, explain different events and teach them the 4-H pledge.
- Plan and organize a service project for your club.
- Teach a leadership activity or lead a recreation activity at your club meeting.
- Do a demonstration on leadership—for your club or community organization.
- Plan and organize a Cloverbud day in your county with the help of other junior leaders.
- Teach your friends at school, church or other clubs outside of 4-H what it is all about and invite them to a 4-H event.
- Create a window display or flyer to educate others in the community about 4-H.
- Be a “big brother or sister” to a younger 4-H member and teach them about the projects that they are enrolled in.
- Display your leadership project at the county fair.
- Plan and conduct an officer training for your 4-H club.
- Work towards serving as a county 4-H ambassador.
- Become an active member of the 4-H youth council in your county. If there is not a 4-H youth council, talk with your local Extension Agent about starting one.
- Attend a district or state 4-H event.



Leadership — Plan of Action

Name _____ Club _____

County _____ Years in 4-H _____ Years in Leadership Project _____ Age _____

S.M.A.R.T. Goal	Plan: What you plan to do?	Resources Needed: People and Materials	Results: What happened?	Evaluate: Evaluate your results

Leader Signature _____ Date Approved _____

County Office _____ Date Approved _____