

Writing a Professional Goal Action Plan

In this exercise, you'll create a **five-year professional goal action plan**. This action plan will outline the specific steps that will help you achieve your goal.

Part One:

Detailing Your Goal: Asking who, what, when, where, why, and how

What is your five-year professional goal?

Why is it important to achieve this goal?

Who can help me achieve this goal? (Family, friends, supervisor, mentor, coworkers)

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

How and when can they help me?

What education/training do I need to achieve my goal?

School _____

Course of study _____

Location _____

Transportation _____

Costs _____

What specific items or materials (computer, software, etc.) do I need to achieve my goal?

Item _____

Cost _____

How and when can I purchase the item?

Part Two:

Creating Benchmarks: How to know if you are achieving your goal

Once you set a long-term professional goal, create a series of benchmarks – or standards – by which your goal can be measured. In doing so, you will be breaking a large goal into more manageable tasks and will know on a daily basis whether you’re achieving your goal.

In four years, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?

In three years, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?

In two years, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?

In one year, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?

In six months, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?

In one month, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?

Part Three:

Focus, Review, and Reflect

It's important to review your plan on a regular basis so you know whether you're working toward or way from your goal. The more often you review your plan, the more focused you'll become.

Consider the following:

Realize the importance of a daily to-do list.

Keeping a daily to-do list is helpful when working toward a goal. All of the tasks on your to-do list should be related to meeting your benchmarks (one month, six months, etc.). Write down tasks you know you can achieve in a typical workday so you'll feel successful every day.

Celebrate success.

When you've met a benchmark – such as your one-month goal – celebrate your success in some way. This might include treating yourself to your favorite restaurant or going to a movie.

Evaluate failure.

If you are repeatedly failing to meet your benchmarks, take some time to evaluate what's keeping you from meeting these smaller goals. Is there something you could be doing differently? Are there outside factors that are affecting you? Is the long-term goal still realistic, or does it need some adjustment?