

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? How?

(Note: In order to write a meaningful action plan, you must research your professional goal. For more tips on researching your career, please see our Career Development lessons.)

What is your five-year professional goal?

It is important to achieve this goal because:

Who can help me achieve me goal?

(Family members, friends, supervisor, mentor, coworkers, others?)

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 (such as a computer, software, etc.) do I need to achieve my goal?

Item _____

Cost _____

How and when I can 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 or judged. In doing so, you will be breaking a large goal into more manageable tasks and know if you are achieving your goal on a daily basis.

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 if you're working toward your goal—or away from it. The more often you review, 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 very helpful when working towards a goal. All of the tasks on your to-do list should be related towards meeting your benchmarks (one month, six month, 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, for example, your one-month goal, celebrate your success in some way. This might include treating yourself to your favorite restaurant, going to a movie, taking a bubble bath, etc.
- **Evaluate failure.**
If you are repeatedly failing to meet your benchmarks, take some time to evaluate what's keeping you from meeting those 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?