

ITIL® Poster Series #48

Advice for Objective Setting – SMART

Introduction

In the ITIL framework, objectives form an important part of the measurement approach across the service lifecycle. They are a significant part of the vision to measures chain, and setting objectives is critical to the success of processes, and lifecycle stages. This poster shows the 'dos / don'ts' of defining objectives, using the SMART approach.

SPECIFIC

Objectives should clearly state what the strategy is or is not going to achieve.

MEASURABLE

Managers should be able to assess whether the objective has been met.

ACHIEVABLE

It must be possible to meet the objective.

RELEVANT

The objective must be consistent with the culture, structure, and direction of the organization.

TIME-BOUND

The overall timing for achieving the strategy is contained in the vision statement. Each individual objective could have different timing, and if this is the case, these should be clearly stated.

DOs

Keep the number of objectives to a minimum.

Use a hierarchy of primary and secondary objectives, with each high-level objective incorporating up to three secondary objectives.

Keep them simple.

Each objective should be easy to read and understand. This will help keep the service provider focused and will also make it easier to sell the strategy to other stakeholders.

Avoid ambiguity.

The objectives should be simply stated but clear.

Be positive, but state the negative.

Objectives will state what the strategy is going to achieve, but it is sometimes clearer and less ambiguous to state what the organization is not going to achieve. This will help in setting expectations.

DON'Ts

Create an objective that is unmeasurable.

Forget to set expectations in the receivers.

Forget to make sure the objectives are owned.

Forget to consider the organizational culture your objectives have to work in.

Hope that the objectives will be communicated, you have to put the communication plan in place.

