



## **Establish Goals Now to Rev Up Your Career in 2005**

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As the year-end approaches, thoughts turn to the fresh start that 2005 offers. We start planning for the upcoming year and traditionally, set New Year's resolutions. As you make your resolutions, don't forget about your career. This is the ideal time to reflect on your professional life and set goals to rev up your career in 2005.

The key to creating effective career goals, as well as other personal goals, is to make them SMART.

- **Specific:** Your goals should be detailed, not general; there should be no question when it comes to whether or not you completed your goal. An example of a general goal would be "increase networking opportunities." A better, more specific goal would be "join local CPCU Chapter to increase networking opportunities or "attend monthly local CPCU Chapter meetings."
- **Measurable:** Your goals should be concrete. There should be a clear objective. You should be able to measure your progress towards the goal's attainment. Questions to consider include how much, how many, and how do I know when it is accomplished. An ambiguous goal is "improve writing skills." A clearer goal is "attend two business writing courses in 2005."
- **Achievable:** Your goals should be reasonable; don't set yourself up for failure. For example, a goal of obtaining a master's degree in two years could be impossible if you have a family you would like to spend time with and you plan on keeping your full-time (60 hours plus per week) job. "By the end of 2005, complete four courses towards earning masters" is a much more achievable goal.
- **Realistic:** Be honest with yourself. Think about what conditions need to exist to accomplish your goal. Don't set goals that you are unlikely to follow through with. A goal is only realistic if you truly believe that it can be accomplished.
- **Timely:** Goals need to have a due date; and that date should not be too far in the future. This structure will help you turn talking about your goals into working towards your goals. Without an end date, there is no sense of urgency, no reason to take any action today.

Revvng up your career in 2005 will take more than merely setting goals; you must achieve them to be successful. Follow these tips to increase the likelihood of their fulfillment.

- **Write down your goals.** You are more likely to accomplish your goals if you write them down; it is like making a contract with yourself.
- **Put your goals in a place where you will see them everyday.** This reminder will help you stay on task.
- **Share your goals with those around you: family, friends, mentors, co-workers.** They may be able to help you achieve your goals, but only if they know what they are.
- **Break down major goals into smaller more achievable tasks.** If your goal is "attend 2 new industry events in 2005," you can break it down into tasks such as 1) research industry events; 2) narrow down events to the top two you would like to and are able to attend based on networking opportunities, costs, educational value, etc.; 3) register for both events; 4) attend first event; and 5) attend second event.



Additionally, as you transfer birthdays, anniversaries and other dates to your new date book, mark off one night per month for career management. It is smart to continually update your resume; reevaluate your career goals; review your networking list; and stay current on the job market. Setting aside one night each month will ensure that you travel along your career path quicker and to more fulfilling destinations in 2005.

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