

Study Skills for Business & Management



1

Planning and goal setting



1.1 Chapter summary

By the end of this chapter, you should have an idea of the goals you want to achieve at university and a rough plan of how you are going to achieve them. More specifically you should have a list of goals across all areas of your life, the benefits of achieving these and the associated challenges. You will also have devised action plans.

1.2 The end goal

What do you want to achieve in your time at university? This is the central question behind this chapter and we hope it is one you have asked yourself already. However, many students go through university without really working out what it is they are trying to achieve. Time at university is actually very short and most of us only ever do a degree once, which means it is crucial to answer this question. Pat went to university late in life – when he was 29. Many friends who went aged 18 said they envied him going when he was older because when they had been at university, they didn't really know why they went and so didn't get anything like what they could have done from the experience. Setting goals is not easy to do and it is even harder to actually achieve them once you do know them. But first, to clarify, our definition of a goal is something you wish to achieve, see the examples given in Figure 1.1:



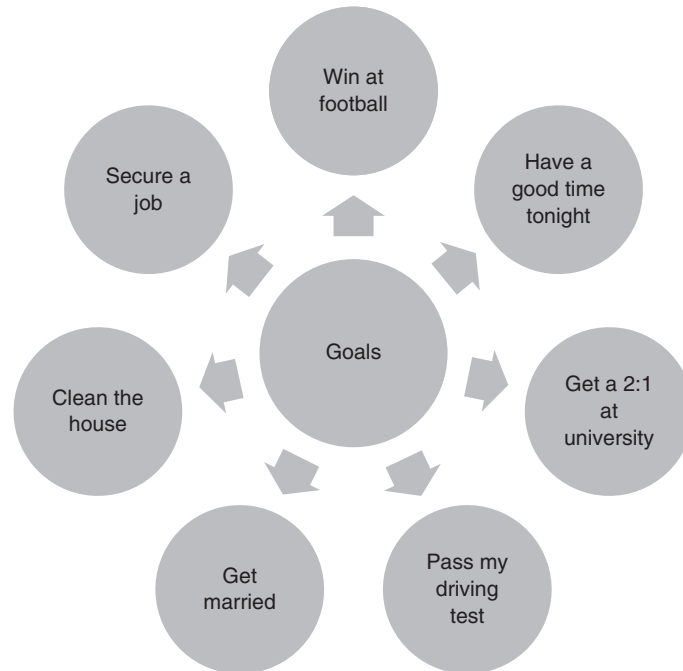


FIGURE 1.1 Examples of goals

These are all examples of goals and a few examples illustrate that we set goals all the time. Sometimes though we need to set more important, larger goals and these are the ones that require the effort of a more thorough approach which this chapter will help to explore.

1.3 How do goals work?

[Goal] theory is based on what Aristotle called *final causality*, that is, action caused by a purpose. (Locke, 1996: 118)

Essentially, goals work by directing what actions somebody needs to take. For example, if somebody wishes to pass their driving test, then they need to take a number of actions such as learn the Highway Code, pass the theory test and undertake lessons. In more detail, 'Goals affect performance by affecting the direction of action, the degree of effort exerted, and the persistence of action over time' (Locke, 1996: 120). However, just like most things, creating goals does have drawbacks:

- Having goals can become daunting and boring.
- You can become too focused on the final result.
- Goals can create a fear of failure by believing that if the goal is not achieved you will be unhappy.

The important thing to highlight is that all these drawbacks can be overcome, which allows goal setting to become a powerful tool. In fact, the immense value of goal setting is well acknowledged. Research has even specifically proven that students who set goals end up with better grades (Zimmerman et al., 1992).

Backed by years of research data supporting its viability, goal-setting techniques work and work well. (Rubin, 2002: 26)

1.4 Creating your goals

Think of it this way: you need to figure out exactly what you want to achieve from university because you are only there for three or four years at the most which is not a lot of time in the grand scheme of things – and these days, in most countries, it will cost you and your family a *lot* of money. So, the pressure is on to make sure you get a good return on this investment. Just as importantly, you need to decide what the meaning of your university life is, what you want to spend your time on and what will make you happy. The absolute key behind goal setting is to *begin with the end in mind*. Stephen Covey explored this really well in his best-selling book, *The 7 Habits of Effective People* (2004), and Pat regularly recommends this as being the most important habit to learn. Just think about it for a moment: what is the ideal situation for you to be in 12 months from now? Tracy (2003) discusses that everybody has great potential within them and writing goals allows them to realise this by focusing their efforts. Without knowing the end in mind, you will never know when you get there (Cairo, 1998).

The most obvious goal is what grade you want to achieve by the time you finish university. From the research we did in preparing for this book – and through a general understanding of students – most aim for a 2:1. It is interesting to highlight from the research that those who achieved a first wished they spent more time socialising; whilst those who achieved a 2:1 wished they worked a little harder to get a first. It seems then that there is a slight dilemma. Do you work your socks off and try to get a first or do you work pretty hard, enjoy yourself and get a 2:1? Deciding upon this comes down to what you want out of university other than the final grade.

1.5 Areas to set goals

So how do you get started? Figure 1.2 shows the areas we think you should think of when deciding on your goals. You may well have others, but these form a good starting point.

1.5.1 Career and financial – including income, part-time jobs, summer internships

This is the most popular area where goal setting is used, especially as many organisations see the value of creating goals for employees. Undoubtedly, within your career degree, you will have some idea of your career goals. Examples might be:

- secure a placement for the third year of university
- secure a summer job
- network with people in the accounting industry

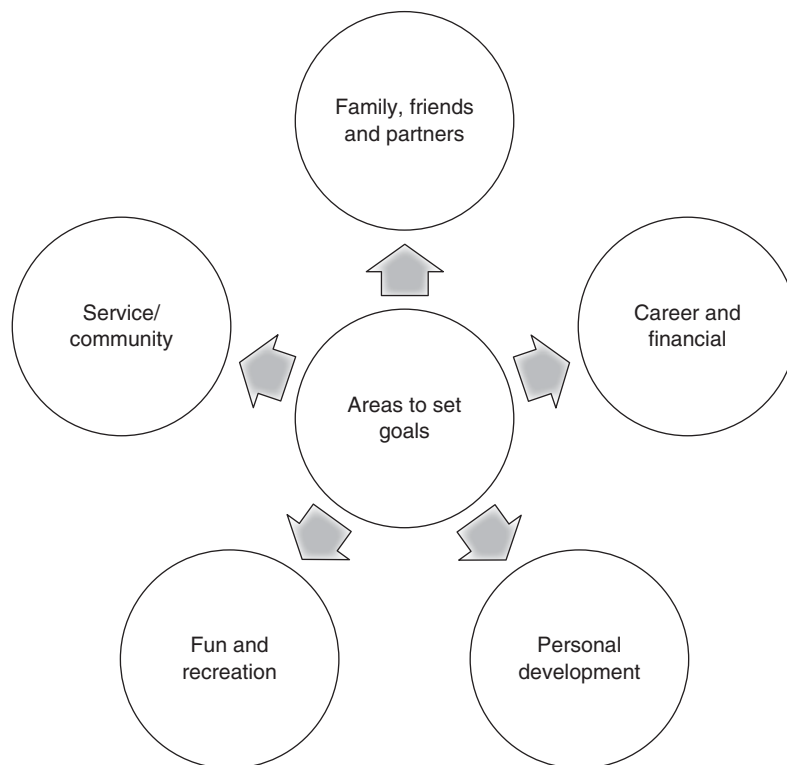


FIGURE 1.2 Areas to set goals

1.5.2 Family, friends and partners

This is an area of life where it may seem somewhat strange to set goals, however, most of us do set goals here in a subconscious way. For example, most people will say that they want to have the best possible relationship with their friends and family. The power in this area comes from moving from just having a vague subconscious idea to explicitly thinking about it and writing it down. The fact remains, we are social animals and developing social relationships has been strongly linked to happiness (Myers, 2000), so be sure to make the most out of it. Examples might be:

- make as many friends as possible
- maintain a good relationship with family
- enter into a relationship

Chris recently set himself the goal of spending more time with his family as he realised he was getting too caught up with work and other matters, which resulted in him neglecting precious time with his family.

1.5.3 Personal development – including skills, spiritual and mental health

Personal development is absolutely key. Whatever you want to achieve, developing your knowledge and skills will help. Examples might be:

- learn how to write a CV
- keep fit
- become more dedicated to your religion

I always think that I should aim higher in life to live my mission. My main goal in life is to leave a mark – I am satisfied when someone is inspired by my actions, when I recommend something to them and that changes their life. This desire has driven me to set a number of goals which include getting 70 per cent in my dissertation as part of my wider goal to achieve a first class degree, live at least a year in another country, gain a qualification from the Chartered Institute of Marketing and learn the Russian language in a fluent manner.

Monika J. Čiurlionytė, BSc Marketing

It seems that Monika had a clear set of goals. When you read this, did you think she sounded driven? Focused? We certainly did. And it is no accident that having set out these very specific goals for herself, she achieved them.

1.5.4 Fun and recreation – including hobbies, interests, travel and sports

Strategising includes your social life. You will get bored and university is an amazing experience that you will want to enjoy. The techniques in this book will allow you to free up your time to enjoy a social life. Examples might be:

- develop your tennis skills
- establish a new society for students interested in poker
- travel across South America

1.5.5 Service/community

We thoroughly recommend students to set goals around service and community. In short, giving something back creates a sense of satisfaction and allows students to develop their skills and realise what areas interest them, e.g. HR or finance. Examples might be:

- establish a new charity
- raise £500 for charity
- become a voluntary youth worker

Charity work has been a large and important part of my life since a young age. Through the years I have been involved in various different social projects and have always tried to set achievable goals in my work. For example, I have recently set myself the goal of helping young homeless people to get back into employment and find their footing again in society. Having lived in Paris where homelessness is a very prevalent problem, I became highly sensitized to it and wanted to do something to help in areas of the UK where homelessness is a major issue. My specific aim is to grow my company, PeopleMind, with my business partner in order to create jobs and support specifically for homeless people in the Birmingham area. PeopleMind aims to create products through upcycling and involve homeless people throughout the entire process; from sourcing the materials to making the products, to manufacturing them, to selling them on.

Devon Parker, BSc International Business and French

1.5.6 Possessions

This is an area in which a lot of people do set themselves quite high goals, for example, to own a big house or a Lamborghini. However, there is a substantial amount of research to suggest that these goals are not of value (Kasser and

Ryan, 1993). The problem is that possessions do not create happiness because they only provide a short-term buzz and people then want something bigger and better.

You may think it is weird to set goals in some of these areas of your life, what goals can you set around your family and friends? The key is to remember why you are doing so, which is to ensure balance. It is so easy to get caught up in one area of your life and neglect others which are just as important. The balance of achieving these goals should allow you to be happy and just as importantly give you a sense of direction and allow you to nurture relationships with those that are close to you. This is all in the aim of realising your true potential in life and subsequently your satisfaction with life (Ryff, 1989). Balance is also a virtuous circle. For example, if you really want to secure a good degree, then balance in the area of fun and exercise will help you to achieve it. Once you have set goals in these areas of your life, you can then go back to your degree and ascertain what grade to aim for.

Knowing what areas to create goals, how do you actually go about generating them? The general advice is to think about what you wish to achieve and then write it down. This would be fine if everybody knew what they wanted, however, as you probably know, most people do not. This problem is well recognised and so a few methods have been created to help people create goals. We suggest that you maintain an open mind to these methods and have a go at all of them.

1.6 How to set goals that work

So, having explored the areas you should focus your goal setting on, we now move on to how you go about actually setting the goals.

1.6.1 Envisioning

This method involves defining a vision and working your way back to set manageable goals. By a vision, we mean what would make a perfect life. You can really use your imagination in this approach: if there were simply no limits, what job would you like? Who you would like to be friends with? What would you like your body to be like? For example, to be happy by securing a good education and maintaining fun and healthy relationships with my friends. Taking this example, the goals coming out would include:

- a grade to achieve at university
- what types of fun to have
- a few goals regarding friendship

1.6.2 Happiness approach

This involves identifying what makes you happy and going after these to maintain a happy life. Generally, most people aim for happiness in their life and this method gets to the heart of what makes somebody happy. One of the best ways to do this is to list 10 or 20 things over the last month that made you happy, these can be anything from any aspect of your life. Then assess what patterns you notice, are there any common themes? You can then form an idea of what makes you happy and what to set as goals. The trick to this is to list literally whatever has made you happy. Table 1.1 gives an example:

TABLE 1.1 Examples of what made you happy this week

Received positive feedback	Went for a nice bike ride	Achieved 68% in my essay
Went bowling with friends	Completed my essay	Went to the gym
Read an interesting book	Went to London with family	Went to a nice restaurant
Relaxed at home with my family	Completed lifeguard qualification	Saw an old friend

The example above would suggest development and sociability are important aspects in life and so appropriate goals could include completing a qualification in an area of interest, actively participating in a society and joining the gym.

1.6.3 Value-based approach

This is about defining who you are and what you stand for, which ultimately determines your goals. Some helping question here are:

- What things am I proud of?
- What things make me happy in life?
- How would other people describe me?

Pat likes to use the first question when he is coaching executives, as the answers are usually insightful into what really motivates the person. Some of these questions are perhaps a little abstract, which might make you hesitant to use them. Try not to be dismissive, give things a go and if they do not work for you (having really tried), then feel free to scrap them. Hopefully, you will see that they are complementary, some of the goals you see emerging in one technique are similar to those in another.

It is difficult to generate valuable and worthy goals that you will desire to wake up for each morning and achieve. Have a brief go at the techniques

and then come back to it later on or even the next day. You may subconsciously be thinking about your goals in the break which is great, be sure to make a note of them. Tracy (2003) recommends people should spend at least one day thinking through their goals and how they are going to achieve them.

1.7 Creating the perfect goals

Generating goals can in fact be a relatively easy stage compared to making effective goals. With a push, most people can generate goals and stick to them for a couple of weeks, maybe even a month if they are driven. However, it is easy to lose motivation, which is why it is so important to create effective goals. To test whether or not they are effective, there are three key tests for your goals that we discuss below.

1.7.1 Are they challenging enough?

Once you have a complete list of your goals, reread them and think about whether or not they are challenging enough. Are you subconsciously limiting yourself? If you are aiming to get a 2:2 could you challenge yourself to get a 2:1? Do not limit your own potential! An easy way to assess this is to get your friends and family to review your goals. Do they think you are limiting yourself? Do they believe you can achieve better? If you are too embarrassed to do this, then try to think through their eyes. If they were to see your goals, what would they think?

1.7.2 Are they your goals?

This seems like a bit of a stupid question to ask, if you sat down and thought of some goals then they are obviously going to be yours. What we don't sometimes realise is that we have set goals to satisfy others. The most common example of this is family, for example, where students believe they must achieve a certain grade to satisfy their parents. Chris knows this himself, he thought he needed to get a first to make his parents happy until a week before his final exam when his dad said to him he didn't care what grade he got, he would still be happy. Pat's experience is that we are so often trying to please our parents – even late in life – whereas (as a parent himself) he knows for sure that the vast majority of parents simply want their children to be happy. This really highlights

that the only source of pressure comes from ourselves, nobody else. So the only person that should be setting your goals is you.

1.7.3 Are they SMART?

SMART goals have become universally accepted as a means to make effective goals. However, it is fair to say it has become too simplified and the very words it stands for have become distorted due to hundreds of variations (Rubin, 2002). So what exactly does SMART stand for?

- Specific: your goal must be specific so you know when you achieved it and so you clearly understand what it is you are trying to achieve and how. A common goal is to do your best but this is a rather weak goal due to the fact that nobody knows their 'best'. The lesson is that better performance is often achieved when goals are specified (Locke, 1996).
- Measurable: can you measure what defines success? Without doing so, you will never know if you have succeeded.
- Attainable: is your goal possible with your experience and skills?
- Realistic: is your goal achievable? If a goal is not realistic then you are likely to fail, which can lead to frustration and a sense of disappointment.
- Time based: when should your goal be completed by? Without knowing this, you risk spending longer on a goal than necessary – or worse still, never finish it at all. Specifying a realistic deadline ensures focus.

We do accept the criticisms that SMART goals have generated and we agree that simply making a goal SMART is not going to work in itself, which is why we have included the other information in creating goals. However, it still has value, especially combined with all the techniques we have discussed in this chapter. For example, many students have the aim of obtaining a good degree. If this was to be redefined in the SMART way, it could be to achieve a 2:1 degree by graduation time. Pat has come to the conclusion that the most important way to test whether a goal is useful is to ask yourself whether or not you can tell if you have achieved it. Just by doing this, you will ensure that the goal is specific. Then all you need to do is put a timescale on it. But make sure you are giving yourself enough time – everyone tends to be too optimistic when it comes to working out how long things take. An experienced project manager once told Pat his rule of thumb was to take the worst case scenario for how long every stage of a project would take. Then double it! His projects always came in on time and to high quality. So you should be working to stretch yourself, but give yourself enough time to achieve quality in what you do.

As part of my degree it is mandatory that I complete an International Industrial Placement. Within the first couple of weeks of placement searching, I had heard of what sounded like my dream placement at Mattel Europa and from then on I made it my goal to be working for this company. With Mattel being my superordinate goal I then had to use SMART objectives to reach this final point. These included attending Mattel's Employer Presentation evening to find out more about what the placement encompasses and what Mattel is really all about. I also participated in interview workshops to help me when it came to the interview processes of this placement. All of these little steps eventually led me to the final interview stage of this placement and my passion about the company and setting SMART objectives throughout the course of the process meant that I managed to secure my dream placement.

Lewis Boot, BSc International Business and Management

1.8 Planning

Planning is a vital step to achieving your goals. Considering you are currently studying a business degree you will understand that new and existing businesses create plans all the time to achieve what they desire. It is the same for individuals:

Fail to plan, plan to fail.

This quote highlights the absolute importance of planning: without planning, failure is inevitable. Nonetheless, sometimes people do get lucky and without planning still manage to succeed, like the annoying person in every year who leaves everything to the last minute and still gets the top grade. Imagine if these people planned adequately, they could achieve so much more and this is what we want to help you to do. It is by no means easy to set goals and stick to them, as is evident in the fact that a great deal of people never realise their goals. The hard part is to commit to your goals and ultimately achieve them. We hope to provide you with the perfect plan to help you achieve your goals.

1.9 The perfect plan

Most advice and thinking around creating a plan revolves around creating a list of goals and actions over the short, medium and long term. This is a crucial

part of planning but there is so much more to creating the perfect plan. Our idea of the perfect plan is this:

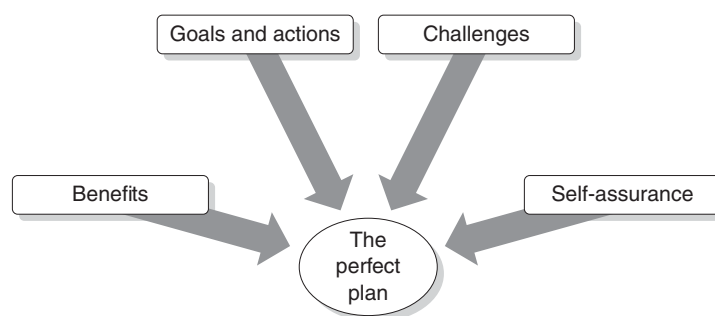


FIGURE 1.3 The perfect plan

1.9.1 Goals and actions

This is about breaking your goals down into smaller ones that give specific actions. This is at the core of any plan. It can be very daunting to look at long-term goals that don't transpire into anything today. For example, if your aim is to get a first, then what do you need to do each year or even each term to achieve this?

Keep working your way backwards to reach some steps that you could do right now. The best example to illustrate how to do this is what grade you wish to achieve. Let us take the area of university as an example. First, you need to breakdown each year and ascertain what is expected of you. All this information will be available in your module guidelines. Create a list of all the modules that you are going to be completing throughout the year. Then list how each module is to be assessed and how much that component will contribute to the module mark, i.e. will it include 30 per cent coursework, 60 per cent exam and 10 per cent group work?

We strongly suggest you think about where you want to concentrate your efforts. Clearly, you need to put effort into all your modules but some will require far more effort than others and sometimes you need to be strategic. For example, Chris had a piece of coursework that was worth 15 per cent of a single module. After going through all the modules at the start of the year he made the conscious decision to put little effort into this coursework and instead concentrate elsewhere. In the end, he achieved 52 per cent for the assignment which was one of the lowest marks he ever got. However, in the same week he completed a double module coursework assignment in which he achieved 70 per cent. This might seem a cynical approach to take, but the lecturer is in effect telling you how much effort to put in by varying the marks

allocated to each piece of work. Be careful though – some courses require you to reach a certain standard in all the work you do so make sure you really understand the rules of the game by reading the regulations carefully.

Moving further afield from your degree, what other goals have you set yourself and what actions do you need to complete to achieve these? Once you have identified all the necessary actions, we suggest that you place an allocation of time for each step. This will force efficiency and ensure you do not spend unnecessarily longer on any given task. What is more evident is that people are too optimistic about what they can achieve in a given time period (Buehler et al., 1994), be mindful not to fall into this trap, though we will talk more about it in the time management chapter.

Finally, allocate a reward for each sub goal. Little impulse purchases such as some new clothes are good but we recommend more social rewards like going to the cinema or for a night out with friends, which create more lasting memories and happiness. But only do this as a reward to yourself for achieving a particular goal – so often we see students do this sort of thing instead of doing their work. It is never as satisfying and of course the work still needs to be done afterwards!

1.9.2 Benefits

Have a think about why it is you want to achieve your goals, i.e. what are the benefits? Without doing this you risk losing motivation when times get tough and easily forgetting why you set the goal in the first place. Samuel illustrates this brilliantly in the example below where he remembered why he wanted to achieve his goal to push him through the challenges.

I have always been strangely obsessed with entrepreneurship and really enjoy trying new things. Successfully applying to be President of Aston Entrepreneurs, and then subsequently project managing the National Student Enterprise Conference 2012 with NACUE, was a logical goal for me, but this involved managing a large number of unpaid volunteers, roughly my age, with their own individual agendas. The only way I was able to do this with success was to believe in myself and be sure of the reasons why I wanted to put myself in that position (when I was supposed to be dedicating myself to my degree), more than anything else.

Samuel Wilson, BSc International Business and Modern Languages

Try to think beyond the most immediate and obvious benefits, there might be some personal reasons for wanting to achieve your goals and even some tiny

benefits that might be generated. Murphy (2010) recommends making them heartfelt, essentially this means putting some emotion into your goals and this is what this stage helps to do. You need to relate the goal to something or somebody you care about. For example, at the start of his final year, Chris wrote out why he wanted to achieve a first class honours degree. There were the immediate benefits such as better career prospects but this really wasn't the key thing in his mind. To Chris, the benefits were more personal – wanting to make his parents proud, to increase his level of confidence, to achieve something which he could be proud of and to be the best in his year. These may seem a bit weird to other people but it worked to motivate him. Here lies a key point: these are your goals and your benefits. Whatever the benefits are for you, write them down – do not be embarrassed, shy or self-conscious. But we do strongly recommend you write them down. Just by doing so you make them more concrete and you will commit to them more than if you just have them in your head. You don't have to show them to anyone else but sometimes it is useful to do so.

To identify the benefits of achieving a goal, you can try to imagine what life would be like if you achieved it. This is the power of visualisation, if people do not envision themselves then they are at serious risk of failing their goals (Murphy, 2010). Truly try to imagine what it would be like to achieve your goals. This can be very motivational and even increase your performance. For example, a study was conducted which illustrated that basketball players performed higher after they visualised scoring shots. The trick here is to really imagine what life would be like if you achieved your goals.

A word about visualisation: it might seem very strange that we are suggesting that you sit down, close your eyes and dream. But this is precisely what we want you to do. There is some great research that shows how athletes who do this can improve their performance massively without any need to go onto the field of play. We want you really to do this. To think deeply and at length about the main goal you have set yourself – the one which you are perhaps not at all sure that you can achieve. Sit quietly and imagine what it is going to be like when you achieve that goal. Do it in detail – what will you be wearing? What will you hear? What smells will there be? Who else will be there? What would happen to you and those around you? What would change?

During the challenges of his PhD, Pat used to do exactly this, imagining of what it would be like to go on to the platform and receive his doctorate. He would then visualise the steps before this (handing in the thesis, going through a viva) and then before this (finishing off chapter after chapter). He would do this often when he wondered whether he would ever finish the thesis or wasn't sure what he was supposed to be doing (and he felt both of these very

often indeed!). In the end, he finished his thesis well within the time set and with no corrections apart from spelling mistakes (which is unusual). So, just as research has shown that imagining you are throwing a basket in basketball or shooting for goal in football has some of the same benefits as actually doing it for real, imagining your way to your goal will also help a great deal.

1.9.3 The challenges

You must now anticipate the challenges and obstacles that may hinder your ability to achieve your goals and then state how you are going to overcome them. Without doing this, you are at risk of being thrown off your goals too easily once challenges arise. Table 1.2 gives some examples of challenges that you may wish to think about:

TABLE 1.2 Overcoming challenges

Challenge	Ways to overcome challenge
Boredom	Join three societies Regularly adapt study technique Work on a variety of projects
Missing friends	Spend at least an hour a day with friends Arrange to meet up after setting target workload Conduct group revision sessions
Maintaining health	Take it in turns to cook each day Go running each morning Go for a walk when taking breaks from work

Try to be as specific as possible when thinking of how to overcome challenges. For example, having fun is way too general, think of ways you can have fun such as to play football or go out to eat. A valuable method to help identify how to overcome the challenges and achieve your goals is to think about what resources you have to hand. Who can help you? What can help? What can you give them back in return?

1.9.4 Self-assurance

The final step is to create belief that you can achieve your goals, which is known as self-efficacy. Bristol (1985) believes the key to achieving any goal is to believe in yourself and we agree, no matter how good you are at anything, if you don't believe you are good enough then you will make this the reality. It comes back to the idea of:

If you believe something will happen, you will make it happen.

If you believe you will succeed at university, you will; if you believe you will fail, you will. We are sure you get the idea by now. Pat once interviewed the famous industrialist Sir John Harvey Jones who talked about his poor school exam grades:

If people tell you often enough that you are stupid, eventually you believe them. That is what happened to me.

He later found confidence in his abilities and rose to be head of one of the biggest firms in the UK and a well-respected thinker on business. But it took a great deal of effort on his part to leave the negative thoughts behind and become confident in his abilities.

A good way to do this is to think about previous times in your life where you have achieved something that illustrates your ability to achieve your current goals. For example, many of you will have completed exams at school and college, which signifies you have the ability to pass your exams at university. Alternatively, you may have previously completed a part-time job, which shows you have the ability to secure a placement or summer internship. Pat often thought about how he had completed the insanely arduous Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race or how he had overcome obstacles during his service in the army as inspiration to help him achieve his current goals.

Each area of planning is crucial. For each goal, you must plan what it is, the benefits, the challenges and create self-assurance. If one area is omitted it will adversely affect the other. For example, you could have many benefits to completing something but then be thrown off course when an unexpected challenge arises. Adversely, you could have anticipated a key challenge but in dealing with it you get too caught up and forget about the benefits and this can squash your level of motivation.

1.10 Monitoring your progress

A key argument used by people who do not like planning is that things change all the time and hence any attempt at planning is pointless. We accept the view that life moves at a very fast pace and hence plans will change. This is where the role of monitoring and reviewing comes into play. Each month we recommend you re-read your goals and determine any changes that need to be made. Things change and so do your goals, there is an issue if they are radically changing each week but minor changes are more

than acceptable, mostly even desirable. Kayes (2006) really drives this point home, sometimes people are so committed to their goals that they forget to review them, which creates dangerous consequences. Just like his true example of a group of people who aim to climb Mount Everest in the wake of a storm, which should have made them quit. They carried on regardless with disastrous consequences.

Monitoring and reviewing your progress also ensures that you do not forget about your goals. So often, we create amazing goals but then put them away in a drawer or store them on a computer never to be seen again. We suggest that you keep your goals fresh in your mind by:

- Writing them down as it helps to solidify them in the mind (King, 2001) or type them up.
- Using positive language; when writing, reviewing or speaking about your goals, be positive.
- Making your goals public by telling those close to you. This forces commitment as we generally don't want to 'fail' in front of others. It also provides some moral support when times get tough and a gentle push/moral support is needed.
- Reading them aloud each morning. If you find this weird then just read them in your head. The point is to reinforce and remind you of what you wish to achieve each day.
- Placing your goals as your wallpaper or screensaver on your phone and computer.

Goal setting and working towards your goals should not be hard work or feel like a chore. If you find you struggle when you set yourself goals, then you need to re-evaluate your goals or re-evaluate the way you are working towards your goals.

1.11 Taking it to work

When you enter your first professional job, you will inevitably have goals set by your line manager. There will also be many phases in your life when you will set yourself new goals, such as complete a Masters degree or PhD or further down the line possibly even start your own business. The techniques we have provided you with will help you achieve whatever goals you wish throughout your life through effective goal setting and planning.

When working in business and running a full service marketing agency, I have to constantly set goals and plan effectively to ensure we can deliver all projects to their desired deadlines. A key part of this is setting deadlines with clients which need to be met and

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matchmaking them with our internal resources. Once we have this information, we create in-depth plans that set out what will be completed when and manage the flow accordingly, this is done across weeks and months to paint a clear picture of the project pipeline. Of course, plans don't always remain static and we appreciate this, that's why we employ a dynamic approach when scheduling the initial work to give us a contingency time buffer. This process allows us to ensure we always meet the deadlines set by clients.

Akmal Saleem, Founder at Brand786

1.12 How to get started

1.12.1 Professional

- Try each of the goal setting techniques and see if any common goals/themes arise.
- Set yourself three goals that you wish to achieve by the time university finishes.
- Take one goal in your life and come up with a Perfect Plan to achieve it.

1.12.2 A little more interesting

- Set yourself one small goal in the area of fun and recreation, friends and family or personal development and follow the process outlined in this chapter to achieve it in the next week. This will help you to become accustomed to the process and realise its potential power.
- If you could be anybody in the world, who would you be? What steps could you take to become more like that person?
- Summarise all your goals in a one sentence vision that is fun and entertaining.

1.13 Our bookshelf

Covey, S.R. (2004) *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. London: Simon & Schuster. A great book which has detailed information on how to set goals and more importantly what goals to set for yourself. It is a detailed book and requires you to do a lot of thinking. Overall, it is a great book as proved by its worldwide success. There is quite a lot of information you can get for free from the website: www.stephencovey.com

Murphy, M. (2010) *Hard goals: the secret to getting from where you are to where you want to be*. London: McGraw-Hill.

This is a fantastic book in providing an alternative spin on goal setting and what should be classed as effective goals as opposed to the usual SMART suggestions.

Locke, A.E. and Latham, P.G. (2002) 'Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: a 35-year odyssey', *American Psychologist*, 57 (9): 705–717.

This highly readable paper summarises the life's work of these superstars of goal setting research.

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