



DPMAP: 21st Century Performance Management

IMCOM Update - #11

DPMAP: Writing SMART Standards - “M”

Standards should be written using the SMART criteria, providing the framework for developing effective results and expectations.

In order to help you remember the criteria for an effective performance standard, we will utilize the acronym SMART, where the letters S-M-A-R-T have a particular meaning. Not every performance standard has to have a quantitative standard assigned to it. Whenever possible, supervisors should include specific deadlines, time limitations, budget restrictions, or other standards for quality, quantity, timeliness, or cost-effectiveness.

While not every performance standard lends itself to utilizing all five aspects of the SMART criteria, supervisors should strive to include as many of the SMART elements as possible.

Let's take them one at a time...

“M” is for “Measurable.” Where is the performance target?

This criterion is the gauge for quantifying the accomplishment of the performance element. It stresses the need for criteria to measure progress toward the goal.

If you don't know how to measure your progress, you can't write a measurable goal. Writing measurable standards allows for a clearer, more objective evaluation.

Remember that it's important to avoid absolute, 100%, and backwards standards. If something absolutely, positively has to be done then think about the secondary part of the measurable. For example, instead of saying that every must pass a specific exam, consider making the required score the measurable, i.e. if everyone must score a minimum of 250 then that would be the measureable vice the requirement to pass the exam.

It's also a good idea to establish in advance what will exceed the standard. Is it 1 more, 10 more, or 100 more? By establishing a clear delineation for exceeding the standard at the beginning of the rating period both the manager and employee can manage expectations.

Until next time.....Stay Tuned and Stay Positive!