

Differentiating Goals and Objectives

Goals vs Objectives

When you have something you want to accomplish, it is important to set both goals and objectives. Once you learn the difference between goals and objectives, you will realize that how important it is that you have both of them. Goals without objectives can never be accomplished while objectives without goals will never get you to where you want to be. The two concepts are separate but related and will help you to be who you want to be.

Definition of Goals and Objectives

Goals are long-term aims that you want to accomplish.

Objectives are concrete attainments that can be achieved by following a certain number of steps.

Goals and objectives are often used interchangeably, but the main difference comes in their level of concreteness. Objectives are very concrete, whereas goals are less structured.

Remembering the Differences between Goals and Objectives

When you are giving a presentation to a potential or current employer, knowing the difference between goals and objectives can be crucial to the acceptance of your proposal.

Here is an easy way to remember how they differ:

Goals has the word 'go' in it. Your goals should go forward in a specific direction. However, goals are more about everything you accomplish on your journey, rather than getting to that distant point. Goals will often go into undiscovered territory and you therefore can't even know where the end will be.

Objectives has the word 'object' in it. Objects are concrete. They are something that you can hold in your hand. Because of this, your objectives can be clearly outlined with timelines, budgets, and personnel needs. Every area of each objective should be firm.

Measuring Goals and Objectives

With Goals unfortunately, there is no set way in which to measure the accomplishment of your goals. You may feel that you are closer, but since goals are de facto nebulous, you can never say for sure that you have definitively achieved them.

Objectives can be measured. Simply phrase your objective in the form of a question. For example, 'I want to accomplish x in y amount of time' becomes 'Did I accomplish x in y amount of time?' This can easily be answered in a yes or no form.

Examples of Goals and Objectives

Goals: - I want to be a better ball player - I want to learn more about Chinese history - I want to maximize my professional performance

Objectives - I want to memorize the periodic table before my next quiz - I want to increase my sales by 10% this month - I want learn to play 'Freebird' on the guitar

Summary:

1. Goals and objectives are both tools for accomplishing what you want to achieve.
2. Goals are long term and objectives are usually accomplished in the short or medium term.
3. Goals are nebulous and you can't definitively say you have accomplished one whereas the success of an objective can easily be measured.
4. Goals are hard to quantify or put in a timeline, but objectives should be given a timeline to be more effective.