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**Writing Effective Performance Objectives**

**Instructor Guide and Workshop Protocol**

**September 2010**

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| **Introduction** |

Thank you for your interest in leading performance objectives writing workshops! Performance objectives are an important part of the Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) system; however, employees often struggle to write performance objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). The workshop that is described in this instructor guide has proven useful to individuals across the Intelligence Community.

The purpose of this guide is to provide a complete reference tool for leading the *Writing Effective Performance Objectives Workshop.* The associated train-the-trainer workshop will provide a thorough overview of the workshop and offer useful tips and resources so you will be well-equipped to conduct the workshop on your own. However, the critical pieces of information are also supplied in the guide and protocol information below.

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| **Workshop Overview** |

**Purpose**

Your role will be to lead a performance objective writing workshop for employees and supervisors. You will deliver a short training session on the SMART criteria and provide some additional tips (SMART “plus” ideas) on how to handle challenging examples. The majority of the workshop is focused on providing time for the participants to practice writing objectives in a group and then writing their own objectives that they can take with them and add to their performance plans when they leave the workshop.

The workshop provides both practical advice and a setting in which employees can work together, brainstorming and improving their objectives with their peers or supervisors. You will find that one of the biggest benefits to writing and improving performance objectives is having peer reviews or input from supervisors and managers as they are being written. Although there can be some frustration and venting about performance management at the start of a workshop, most employees walk away feeling more confident about the process and satisfied that they have several good objectives they can use right away.

**Performance Management**

There is no denying that there are differences of opinion about DCIPS. This happens with any performance management system. However, you are likely to get a mix of opinions in the performance objectives workshops you lead, and you’re likely to get general questions about DCIPS that go beyond performance objectives. When those questions come up, you do not want to get too side-tracked, but you do have the opportunity to provide clarifying information and build the participants’ knowledge of the intent behind performance management. The details of the process (e.g., writing and the evaluations that take time) can be viewed as a burden, but the overarching purpose of performance management is valuable for employees.

Performance management, done right, can: clarify job responsibilities and expectations, enhance productivity, develop employees’ skills and abilities through ongoing feedback and coaching, provide a basis for making human capital decisions (e.g., pay), and improve communication between employees and managers.

Unfortunately, the focus is usually on the mechanics of the process rather than the opportunity that it sets up for employees and supervisors to communicate. Employees should keep in mind that performance management is a joint responsibility. They should proactively track their accomplishments and ask for feedback or new opportunities. If there is active participation in this process on both sides, the employee should develop skills that will advance his/her career while also benefiting the organization.

The performance objectives component of DCIPS is specifically about clarifying expectations and facilitates an important conversation between the supervisor and employee during the planning process. Then, and most importantly, employees and supervisors translate their performance objectives into the key projects and day-to-day activities that will help achieve mission success. The relative progress towards ones performance objectives should be monitored by the employee and supervisor throughout the performance cycle. Given the critical importance of performance objectives and performance management in general, taking the time to write tailored objectives for each employee in an organization is a necessary step toward organizational success.

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| **Workshop Preparation** |

**Invitations for Workshop Participants**

Invitations to workshop participants should include the following information:

*Logistics:* Date, time, directions to workshop location, etc.

*List of materials to bring to the workshop:*

* Job/Position Descriptions from his/her organization
* Goals/Objectives of work units, groups, departments, directorates, and the organization or agency.
* Example past performance objectives

Include as a separate attachmentthe *Guide to Writing Effective Performance Objectives* as a read-ahead.

**Materials for Each Session:**

* Sign-in sheet with name and email
* Briefing Slides – Writing Effective Performance Objectives Workshop
* Guidebook: “Guide to Writing Effective Performance Objectives” (a few extras for participants who forget to bring them)
* Copy of performance objectives repository
* Copy of DCIPS policy guidance for reference
* Performance objectives template (either electronic version or paper copies)
* Dry Erase Board/Flip Chart with Markers
* Pens and/or pencils for participants
* Facilitator laptop
* Projector
* Snacks (if desired)

Optional:

* Computers for each participant

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| **Workshop Schedule Summary** |

**Timelines for the Workshop**

The timelines provided in the table are a guide for how long it should take to complete each major section of the workshop. If you find that your workshops require more or less time (it may depend on the number of people you have in each workshop and how experienced they are with writing objectives), adjust the timeframe when you schedule future workshops.

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| ***Daily Set Up*** | *15 minutes* |
| **Introduction and SMART Refresher Training** | 60 minutes |
| **Break** | 10 minutes |
| **Practice Writing Performance Objectives** | 60 minutes |
| **Peer Review** | 30 minutes |
| **Final Review** | 30 minutes |
| **Group Review** | 15 minutes |
| **Summary** | 5 minutes |
| **Total Time with Participants** | 3.5 hours |

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| **Workshop Protocol** |

**Daily Set Up**

* Make sure you have all of the required materials in the room before participants arrive.
* Turn on the projector and set up the PowerPoint presentation so SLIDE 1 is showing as participants enter the room.
* If computers are being used, make sure they are turned on and the performance objective template file is open.

**Introduction and SMART Refresher Training (60 minutes)**

*At the beginning of the session, facilitator should greet each participant and ask him/her to sign the attendance sheet.*

*The facilitator opens the meeting with a quick welcome and information about restrooms and food/drinks (if available), as well as a brief explanation of what the workshop will entail, explaining that more detail will follow.*

SLIDE 2 – Welcome

**Welcome. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I work for \_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**I will be facilitating today’s workshop on writing effective performance objectives. The agenda for today is to touch on the background of why performance objectives are required, and then to teach you a process for writing SMART performance objectives and give you a chance to practice writing objectives. We will be reviewing and editing during this workshop so you should walk out of here with at least two objectives that you can use in your performance plans. Are there any questions before we begin?**

*If needed, describe how to get to the restrooms, food, drinks, etc.*

SLIDE 3 – Introduction

**Let’s go around the room and introduce ourselves. Please tell us your name and the job or position that you hold. In addition, please tell us about any of your past experiences or challenges with writing performance objectives.**

*When people mention challenges, point out which ones will be addressed during the course and take notes to make sure you highlight some of the potential solutions during the workshop or work with them directly during the writing session to address those challenges.*

*If people describe challenging experiences with objectives, you may transition to the next slide with the following:*

**As some of you have expressed, developing objectives is often difficult. The goal of this workshop is to give you some additional guidance and tools that will mitigate these challenges.**

SLIDE 4 – Workshop Goals

**The goals of this workshop are to:**

* **Teach you a step-by-step process for creating SMART objectives.** 
  + - * **We are going to write, review, and edit your objectives in the workshop today and I think you’ll see how valuable it can be to not only follow these steps, but also talk through what you’ve written with a colleague and get feedback.**
* **The workshop offers tips for addressing common challenges, and**
* **Provides several resources that you can use outside of the workshop to make writing and evaluating objectives a more straight-forward process.** 
  + - * **A few of the resources we’ll touch on are the Guide to Writing Effective Performance Objectives, the Objectives Writing Template, and I’ll tell you how to get to the Performance Objectives Repository that has some examples for you to modify and tailor to your own job.**

SLIDE 5 – Performance Management

**The Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) is a performance management system put in place to support the transformation of DoD as part of the DoD Remodeling Defense Intelligence initiative.**

**Performance management systems are meant to achieve positive outcomes for both the individual and the organization as a whole. DCIPS is meant to:**

* **Clarify job responsibilities and expectations for employees,**
* **Enhance employee productivity and the organization’s productivity overall,**
* **Develop employee’s skills and abilities through ongoing feedback and coaching (that’s why, for example, mid-point reviews are required),**
* **Provide a basis for making human capital decisions (e.g., deciding on rewards and bonuses), and**
* **Improve communication between employees and managers.**

**It is up to both employees and managers to use the system to achieve these outcomes.**

SLIDE 6 – DCIPS Background

**Performance objectives are a key component of performance management under the DCIPS program.**

**DCIPS regulations call for aligning individual performance objectives to the goals and objectives of the Intelligence Component and the National Intelligence Strategy. Therefore, we need to ensure that performance objectives meet criteria that benefit the individual, the organization, DoD, and the IC as a whole.**

SLIDE 7 – Additional Background Slide (OPTIONAL)

*If desired, you may want to add some information to the slide deck that points out any unit-specific policies regarding performance objectives. If you know this information ahead of time you can tailor the presentation to point out requirements such as:*

* *Work unit-specific policies/guidance.*
* *Work unit or higher level goals/objectives to which individuals should link their objectives.*
* *Resources the work unit has developed (e.g., example objectives).*
* *Dates/deadlines for completing performance plans.*

*Transition to the SMART Training Slide:*

**Although guidance and training exist for writing effective performance objectives, feedback from employees and supervisors indicates a desire for more assistance in developing effective performance objectives, especially with respect to:**

* **Developing a method for linking individual performance objectives to the larger mission and strategic objectives for the organization.**
* **Ensuring that performance objectives are specific to individuals yet durable enough that they will not need to be changed too frequently.**
* **Having good examples to draw from when creating performance objectives, especially examples that focus on technical knowledge and skills.**
* **Establishing standards for evaluating the attainment of objectives that distinguish meeting expectations from excellent and outstanding performance.**

SLIDE 8 – SMART Training

**As you know, standard training on writing performance objectives provides the SMART acronym for writing objectives. As a refresher, we will be reviewing parts of that training to set the stage for writing your performance objectives today.**

**At the end of our discussion of the SMART criteria you will also receive some additional strategies for creating what are called SMART “Plus” objectives, which you may have read about in the “Guide to Writing Performance Objectives” that was sent as a read-ahead.**

**These “plus” ideas extend beyond the SMART guidance and are compiled into a checklist to help you write high-quality objectives. We’ll discuss the idea of making objectives “SMART-plus” in greater detail in a few minutes.**

SLIDE 9 – What are Objectives?

**Before we discuss what makes objectives SMART, we must define what objectives are and what they aren’t.**

**Objectives are not task descriptions. Task descriptions focus on the activity and the *process* for accomplishing the activity.**

**An example of a task statement would be: “Prepares vacancy announcements using the Army Vacancy Announcement Builder.”**

**Objectives focus on the result— the outcome or what must be accomplished to achieve the mission or goal.**

**An example of an objective would be: “80% of referral lists for vacant positions are issued within 30 days of receipt of Request for Personnel Action.”**

**Keep in mind—an objective does not describe an activity. An objective describes a result, a future situation. That means we can later ask, “Did the work lead to the situation described in the objective?” If the answer is yes, the objective was achieved.**

SLIDE 10 – Types of Objectives

**There are also two different types of objectives: Recurring and Non-recurring objectives. You may or may not have seen this guidance before, but it is helpful for some jobs to make this distinction.**

**Recurring Objectives relate to work that is unforeseen in terms of volume and timing. For example, the number of reviews of responses to customer inquiries that an employee must complete depends on the number of customer inquiries received.**

**Recurring objectives often look a little more like task statements than non-recurring objectives. Non-recurring objectives have an identifiable end date, as shown in the example.**

**Both types of objectives, should meet the SMART criteria.**

*The next set of slides (9 – 13) should be an interactive discussion of the SMART criteria. Notes are available for you, but allow the participants to explain and ask questions as well. Make sure you hit the points on the slide before you move to the next letter.*

SLIDE 11 – What are SMART Objectives – Specific

**Let’s walk through the SMART criteria as a group.**

**What does the “S” stand for?** *Allow participants to answer and explain what this means. If you need to prompt them, use the notes below.*

**SMART objectives are Specific.**

**What does this mean?**

**An observable action, behavior, or achievement is described.**

**Why is this important?**

* **Evaluating performance on an objective requires that the outcome can be verified.**
* **The more specific it is, the easier it is to evaluate.**
* **And, most importantly the more specific it is, the easier it is for an employee to understand what the product or service should look like upon completion.**
* **Thus, once the employee knows what the outcome should look like he or she can focus on how to accomplish the objective effectively.**
* **For example, “Provide an assessment of the work unit’s financial situation” is vague. An improvement that would provide greater description of the end product and allow the supervisor to verify it would be, “By March 30th, produce a written report on current office expenditures within the work unit and provide concrete, realistic recommendations for cutting costs by 5%.”**

**The questions listed here can help you determine if the objective is specific.**

SLIDE 12 – What are SMART Objectives – Measurable

**How about “M”?** *Again, let the participants respond and explain. Use the notes below if necessary.*

**SMART objectives are Measurable.**

**Why is this important?**

**Impartial evaluations of whether the performance objective was achieved are difficult if specific measures are not included.**

**The measurement component of an objective should reflect the important dimensions of the product. For example, it is more important for analytic reports to reflect high-quality analytic tradecraft rather than producing high quantities of inaccurate reports over the reporting period. Figuring out meaningful measurements is more important than identifying a measurement of convenience.**

**Common types of measurement include:**

* **Quantity – amount produced (e.g., raw numbers or percentages)**
* **Quality – accuracy, effectiveness**
* **Time – within 6 months, by January 31st**
* **Cost-effectiveness – efficiency that results in time or money saved**

**Remember to set the measurement requirement at the “Successful” level of performance and allow people room to exceed the objective.**

SLIDE 13 – What are SMART Objectives – Achievable

*Let participants discuss; use notes if necessary.*

**SMART objectives are Achievable and Realistic.**

**By “achievable and realistic” we mean 3 things:**

* **The work the objective requires is within the individual’s control** 
  + - * **To clarify the “within the individual’s control” – achieving the objective does not require significant contributions from other team members.**
* **The work can be achieved with the resources available to the employee.**
* **The objective must be appropriate for the individual’s experience, skill, work level, and position within the organization.**
  + - * **For example, entry/developmental employees should not be required to brief a senior level person in the organization. However, they may be required to brief their team members.**

**The importance of this requirement should be obvious. The primary benefit of making sure an objective is achievable is fairness to the employee. Setting requirements that exceed the expectations for one’s work level or requirements that cannot be completed with the resources available is unfair and inappropriate.**

SLIDE 14 – What are SMART Objectives – Relevant

*Let participants discuss; use notes if necessary.*

**SMART objectives are Relevant.**

**“Relevant” means that the objective is important to the employee and to the organization’s mission.**

**Why is this important?**

**Establishing relevance ensures that each employee understands how he or she contributes to larger goals and the success of the organization.**

* **Remember, this is a key reason for establishing performance objectives under DCIPS.**

**A line of sight should be drawn between the employee’s work, the work unit goals, and the organization’s mission.**

**The linkage should be explicitly written in the performance objective statement. It may be as simple as saying, “This objective supports the organization’s strategic goal of XYZ.”**

SLIDE 15 – What are SMART Objectives – Time-bound

*Let participants discuss; use notes if necessary.*

**SMART objectives are TIME-BOUND.**

**Why is this important?**

* **Sets expectations for employee**
* **Achievement of the objective can be measured against the timeframe set for completion.**

**Using specific dates such as “March 15th” is preferable to stating “within six months”. You may also use designations such as “end of the 3rd quarter of FY09” or “end of the evaluation period.”**

SLIDE 16 – How Do We Write SMART+ Objectives?

**Earlier, I mentioned that we would discuss writing SMART goals and then we would go over some additional strategies that go beyond the SMART framework.**

**The idea behind SMART- plus is to really help make writing high-quality objectives easier on employees and supervisors. Let’s review the “plus” portion of the guidance.**

**This section will integrate the SMART framework into a step-by-step process that helps someone with the performance objective development process from beginning to end. It will also highlight some other tips that will help make your objectives even more effective.**

**Why is this necessary? An objective could meet the SMART criteria but not meet its full potential, if you will. For example, every aspect of SMART might be met, but if the objective is full of acronyms it will be hard for others to understand what the objective means. Or, the objective may include very specific measurement, but it may be written so that there is no room to exceed it. The “plus” ideas help you make sure this doesn’t happen.**

SLIDE 17 – Helpful Materials and Resources

**Before you begin the process of writing, it may be helpful to compile a few resources.**

* **Your position description and duty statements can help you think through all of your responsibilities and work activities you perform.**
* **Standard operating procedures, directives, and other guidance might provide you with ideas for types of measurement to include in writing your objective.**
* **Supervisor objectives, work unit goals, organizational-level goals, and national level strategies will give you information on higher level goals to which you can link your individual objectives.**
* **The performance objectives repository is a resource that was created through USD(I) and ODNI to provide some example objectives across a variety of occupations that you can use as a resource. It is NOT meant to provide you with already written objectives that you can cut and paste. You’ll need to tailor them to your job, but this resource may be a helpful starting place.** 
  + - * **I have a copy of the objectives in this repository, but there is also a website link that I will provide at the end of the workshop.**

SLIDE 18 – Guide to Writing SMART+ Performance Objectives

**As you begin the writing process, the first step involves figuring out the part of the job on which you want focus.**

**Make a list of the most important job duties or work activities for the job. Think about activities that are performed most often, activities that are critical to achieving the mission, or activities that are key to supporting other jobs.**

**Next, choose an activity from that list for which you want to write an objective.**

**Think about the activity and what the END RESULT of the work activity should be. Write the END RESULT down first and then work on applying the SMART framework to the RESULT you selected.**

SLIDE 19 – Guide to Writing (cont.)

**SMART is a great acronym and it’s easy to remember but practically, in terms of actually writing performance objectives, beginning with S and following the order of the letters in the acronym may not the best way to approach writing the objectives.**

**After you have (1) made a list of the most important job duties or work activities for the job and (2) have selected a RESULT, you can start applying the SMART framework.**

**Instead of following the order of SMART (with S being first), try using**

**MARST:**

**M – Evaluate the end result of the work activity. Is it something observable or something that can be measured?**

* **Decide what type of measurement could be used (e.g., quality, quantity, timeliness, cost-effectiveness).**

**Sometimes it’s easier to start with the MEASURABLE aspect because if you do not know what you are going to measure and how it will be measured, the RESULT selected might not be a suitable performance objective.**

* **Do not rush through this step—explore the different ways the objective may be measured.**
* **Add the measurement information to make your “end result” into a performance objective.**

**A – Ask whether the objective is achievable. Is it doable, appropriate for the skill/work level, and within the individual’s control? Can it be exceeded?**

**R – Is the objective relevant? Does it support supervisor objectives and reflect an element of the organization’s mission?**

**S – Once the criteria has been established, detail what must be accomplished. Objectives should be as clear and specific as possible so that there is no ambiguity about what result is expected.**

**T – Add the timeline.**

SLIDE 20 – Guide to Writing (cont.)

**Now that you have (1) made a list of the most important job duties or work activities for the job and (2) have selected a RESULT and have applied the SMART framework in the appropriate sequence, there are a few other things to do to make sure your objectives will be SMART-plus.**

**Remember that others who may be unfamiliar with the job will be reviewing the performance objectives and ratings employees receive. It will facilitate clarity if the objective is free of jargon or acronyms.**

**Also, including a short narrative explaining the background behind the objective or some project-related information will help give further context to the performance objective. The extra information may highlight the importance of the objective to the work unit or organization and the complexity and difficulty of the work.**

**Finally, ask yourself if the objective is written at the Successful level. You may refer to the “Work Level Descriptions” table and the “Accomplishment Evaluation Criteria” in your guidebook to decide if it is written appropriately.**

**The Work Level Descriptions explain what is expected to be successful at each work level (Entry/Developmental, Full Performance, Senior, etc.)**

**The Performance Objective Evaluation Guidelines explain what successful performance on an objective would look like.**

SLIDE 21 – SMART+ Checklist

**The SMART-plus checklist is on page 13 of your guidebook. This checklist will help you review performance objectives to make sure they meet many of the criteria of being a “SMART + objective.”**

**It is not ALWAYS possible for your objectives to meet all of the criteria in the checklist, but if you systematically go through the checklist it will help you notice, where possible, what facets of your performance objectives could be improved.**

SLIDE 22 – EXAMPLE 1

*Have the participants read the example on the screen. Use the notes below to help guide the discussion of the questions on the screen.*

**Is the objective SMART-plus?**

Good:

* The objective links to implied organizational goals, although they are not spelled out specifically. (Criteria 1 & 2)
* The objective is written at an appropriate work level for a Senior level employee in this type of job as defined by the work level descriptions. (Criterion 6)
* The result is observable (SOP document) (Criterion 9), and is time-bound (1 March) (Criterion 11).
* It is not a pass/fail objective. For example, this employee can still achieve most of the objective even if the document requires more extensive editing than specified. The employee can exceed the objective by turning in a high-quality document (Criterion 13)
* The objective is results-focused. (Criterion 15)
* Acronyms are spelled out. (Criterion 16)

**Is there anything that needs to be changed?**

Issue to think about:

* “Minimal” revisions needs to be better defined.
* The final sentence should be clarified to indicate that the instructions/guidance should be *submitted* to the appropriate signature authority. The individual does not have control over whether the final signature is obtained by the required deadline.

SLIDE 23 – EXAMPLE 2

*Have the participants read the example on the screen. Use the notes below to help guide the discussion of the questions on the screen.*

**What work level would this objective apply to?**

Entry/Developmental – it specifies that direct guidance will be given in completing the objective.

**Is the objective SMART?**

Good things:

* The objective looks Relevant to the position, and it is potentially Achievable.

Issues to be addressed:

* However, it is not specific in terms of the result to be achieved. It also needs to be more specific in terms of measurement and timeframe.
  + - * For example, “contributing as a team member” needs to be clarified.
      * Wording such as “effective” and “efficient” need to be clarified.
      * The objective also needs to include a period of performance to cover the time-bound criteria.
      * The objective needs to be linked to a higher level goal.

SLIDE 24 – Group-Generated Examples

**Your task today will be to develop performance objectives on your own. Before you do that, let’s walk through an example as a group.**

**For this task you will be using the documentation you brought with you. Is there anyone who has a position description we could use as a starting place?**

*Create one example as a group – if you feel like they are not getting it, walk through a second example. [Use white dry-erase board or a flip chart to facilitate the creation of this example. Follow the flow of this slide – but indicate MARST as you complete that part of the objective.]*

* **What occupation and work level are we focused on?** *(Write this on the board.)*
* **What are some major job duties or work activities at this level?** *(Write these on the board.)*

**Let’s pick one of these as the focus of our objective.** *(Have the group pick one.)*

* **What is the outcome or result of this work activity?** *(Write this on the board.)*

**Is this something that is easily observable and measurable?**

*Walk through the rest of the questions on the slide. Write the final objective on the board for the group. Repeat this process for the second example objective.*

*Ask if anyone has any questions about the process for writing performance objectives.*

**Practice Writing Performance Objectives (60 minutes)**

*Before beginning this exercise, take a 10 minute break.*

*Participants begin working to create performance objectives independently. Facilitator(s) should be on hand to help guide participants, should they need it.*

SLIDE 25 – Practice Writing Objectives

**Now that we have reviewed how to write effective performance objectives, it’s your turn to write your own performance objectives. In this part of the workshop you will need to refer to the documents you brought with you for ideas, just like we did in the objective we wrote as a group.**

*Pass out Performance Objectives Template. (Provide each individual with at least 2 copies of the template.)*

**There is a template for you to use when writing your performance objective examples. You don’t have to fill in every single box if it’s easier for you to just write the performance objective in the box instead of breaking it out above. However, some people find it useful to fill in separate boxes to make sure they have included all of the SMART criteria.**

**Do NOT answer the questions at the bottom on your own; those questions are for the peer review process that we will use after you finish the first draft of your objectives.**

**I will be here to assist you if you get stuck. My advice is to start with the Position Descriptions to identify important job duties, walk through the MARST process using the Objectives Template, and use the resources in the guidebook as needed.**

**You will have one hour to write at least two objectives before we start the peer review process.**

**Do you have any questions?**

*Walk around while they are writing and answer any questions participants may have.*

*If they are finding it difficult to write their objectives on their own, you may want to let them pair up during the writing process. It is often easier to write objectives when there is someone with whom you can talk through ideas.*

**Peer Review (30 minutes)**

*Participants will “trade” objectives and provide feedback for improvement. They will use the criteria list provided.*

SLIDE 26 – Peer Review

**Now let’s take a few minutes to swap examples. Please find someone who has a job or specialty area similar to yours. This review will help ensure that your objectives are clear to others who are reading them and that they meet the SMART criteria.**

**Use the criteria checklist provided to make edits or recommendations to the objectives you review.**

**Also ask yourself the following questions as you review:**

* **Can the objective be understood without having in-depth knowledge of the job?**
* **Is the objective appropriate for the work level?**
* **Is the objective SMART-plus?**

*Answer any questions and then tell them they will have the next 30 minutes to review.*

**Final Review (30 minutes)**

*Before returning to finalize performance objectives, give participants a 5 – 10 minute break if needed.*

**Please get together with your partner and discuss how you revised your objectives based on his or her feedback. Your goal is to come to an agreement on the wording for each objective.**

**Let’s take the next 30 minutes to discuss comments and feedback and make final revisions as necessary.**

SLIDE 27 – Final Review of Examples

**Please discuss and review your feedback on the objectives. Your goal is to come to an agreement on the wording for each objective.**

**Let’s take the next 30 minutes to discuss comments and feedback and make final revisions as necessary. You should also complete the questions at the bottom of the template to show that you reviewed the final version of the objectives.**

**Group Review (15 minutes)**

SLIDE 28 – Group Review

IF TIME ALLOWS:

**We’re going to take a few minutes to review any objectives you would like to have vetted with the group. You may have one that is particularly good you’d like to share or one that is particularly tricky or difficult to make SMART-plus and want additional ideas for improvement. Does anyone have an objective they would like to share?**

*Write the objective on the board or type it into the Objective Template and project it for everyone to see.*

* *Ask if there was a particular issue the person would like the group to address. Have the group talk through that issue.*
* *Walk through the questions on the slide before you move to the next objective.*

*Review one or two objectives as time allows.*

**Summary (5 minutes)**

SLIDE 29 – Summary and Final Questions

**The objectives you have created today should be discussed with your rater and once agreed upon can be used in your performance plan.**

* **If you have additional objectives to write, remember to use the guidebook and process we have discussed today.**
* **Another good strategy is to talk to a co-worker or supervisor about the issues or challenges you are having with a particular objective.**

**Do you have any final questions regarding the process?**

SLIDE 30 – Resources and Contact Information

**If you need additional resources in the future regarding DCIPS or would like to use the performance objectives repository available online, the websites are provided on this slide.**

**You may also contact me for questions about the workshop or to ask about additional resources.**

**Thank you for your participation!**

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| **Tailoring the Workshop** |

**Tips for Making the Workshop Your Own**

* The text provided in the workshop protocol is meant to be a comprehensive guide. However, you should feel free to use wording you are comfortable with and not memorize it word for word.
* If you are familiar with the jobs or the population that you’ll be teaching, bring examples that are related to the work they perform.
  + You may even want to modify the examples discussed in the group or use examples during your discussion of the SMART criteria that are specific to a relevant job or set of jobs.
* Add a slide after the DCIPS slide that addresses the specific organization in which you are presenting the workshop. For example, find out the organization’s mission statement and related statements on performance management within the organization. This can help highlight the value that the participants’ own organization is placing on the performance management system.
* If you think it will make the writing process easier, request that supervisors and their employees attend the same workshop so they can all work together. Rather than a peer review session you can have the reviews be conducted by the supervisors.
* Keep a list of challenges or problems participants question you about in workshops and add to the recommendations you provide during future workshops.

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| **Common Questions and Challenges** |

The material presented below contains common questions you are likely to receive during a workshop session. For some jobs writing an objective can be relatively straightforward; however, many employees will present you with circumstances that they believe make it hard for them to write a SMART objective. The good news is that there are common themes to what many people struggle with. You will build your own bank of common questions as you conduct workshops, but the questions/challenges and potential solutions listed below will give you a head start at providing answers.

**Measurement**

* Most people assume that measurement means hard numbers or percentages.
  + Encourage employees to consider whether there is a tracking system in place to allow a rater to determine percentages or maintain a count of the numbers. If there are no mechanisms in place, then consider the burden that will be placed on the rater if this type of measurement is required.
  + Discuss other measurement options such as the quality dimensions provided on page 8 in the *Guide to Writing Effective Performance Objectives.*
* Employee does not know how many times he/she will have to do “X.”
  + Recommend writing a recurring objective instead of a non-recurring objective. For example, use phrases such as:
    - “For each request received during the rating period…” Include quality standards and turnaround times that should be met no matter how many times this activity is required during the rating period.
    - “Throughout the rating period, consistently meet X standards when performing X activity.” This is a little more subjective, but the supervisor can and should let an employee know what “consistently” means through a discussion and example illustrations of the employee’s past performance, etc.
* The measurement required for this objective is subjective.
  + Do the best you can to make it objective and then recognize that there has to be a conversation between the rater and employee about standards/expectations for more subjective requirements. Talk to the employees about meeting with his/her supervisor to clarify subjective measures and to document them as objectively as possible.

**Making the Objective Achievable**

* Employees often struggle because they think of the outcome as a final product and they may not be responsible for the final product.
  + Get the employee to talk through the pieces of the final product that are within their control. Once they identify these pieces (e.g., what they submit to their supervisor), suggest that they write the objective around those pieces of the product.
* Some employees’ work requires that they obtain information from others in order to complete a product.
  + Suggest that a caveat is built in to the objective that makes completion of the product dependent upon a timely response from the required people or organization. Also include a requirement that the employee elevate any issues with obtaining information to his/her supervisor within a given timeframe. (This holds the employee responsible for following up on information rather than just being able to say that they couldn’t complete the objective because they didn’t get the information.)
* In some cases, employees will tell you that the work is completed by a team and it is too hard to distinguish individual contributions.
  + Discuss the type of work they perform and do your best to tease out individual responsibilities that the person may have. Once you identify responsibilities within the individual’s control, write an objective for the outcome of one responsibility.
  + In some cases it may be appropriate to suggest that the individual could write an objective specifying an achievement related to his/her role that will benefit the team that works together (e.g., design a checklist for the team to use that leads to greater quality/efficiency).

**Making the Objective Relevant**

* For certain jobs it is difficult to determine how an objective links to higher level goals.
  + Suggest that the employee identify how his/her objective supports someone else’s work or objectives (e.g., their supervisor’s objectives) and then link his/her objective to the goal that the other individual’s work supports.

**Timeframe of the Work**

* Some employees work on long-term projects that they would like to have reflected in their objectives, but this work extends beyond the rating period.
  + When the final product will not be completed within the rating period, suggest that the individual write one or more objectives for milestones in the project that will occur within the rating period.

**Capturing the Work**

* Many employees write objectives that contain multiple outcomes and types of work because they are concerned about covering their entire job in 3 to 5 objectives.
  + Remind them that objectives are only part of the performance evaluation; how other aspects of the work are performed is rated using the performance elements.
  + Suggest writing a more global objective about how similar work will be completed (e.g., all reports will be written to meet X criteria instead of a single report).
  + Remind the employee that including multiple unrelated outcomes in a single objective can make the rating process more difficult (e.g., when one outcome deserves a 5 and another deserves a 3 or a 4).

**Questions to Draw Out Information about the Work Performed**

Some people get stuck in the writing process and you have to pose questions that will help them look at their work from a different perspective or in a new way. Here are some suggestions that often work.

* When people struggle with measurement:
  + “Do you have people in your work unit who perform better than others?” (They will answer yes.) Follow up with this type of question, “How do you know who is a better performer? What do they do differently?”
* When someone is struggling to focus on one aspect of the work:
  + “What is the most important part of what you just described?”
* When a participant is concerned about including something that is not done unless a request comes in to complete it or a given situation arises:
  + “Can you build in a caveat that will allow for some flexibility? For example, specify that given the opportunity to do X, you will then perform to XYZ standards within a given time period.”
* When people can’t identify a concrete result that is within their own control:
  + “Walk me through the steps that you carry out in performing that task.” When the person mentions handing something off to someone else, identify what that product is (even if it isn’t the finished product) and see if they can use that as their outcome.
* When an employee performs a task that does not have a product associated with it (e.g., attends meetings and events to build rapport and collaboration in the community):
  + “Do you provide information about the event or activity to your supervisor or anyone else?” (If yes, then perhaps they could document it in an email, memo, etc. and provide a summary and suggestions based on what was accomplished or what was learned.)
  + “Does the activity benefit other aspects of your work that you could use for measurement?” For example, an analyst may demonstrate how attending events outside of the organization has led to greater integration of perspectives in his/her writing.

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| **Resources** |

Familiarize yourself with the following resources and have them available during the workshop in case you are asked a question or need to refer a participant to more detailed information.

***Guide to Writing Effective Performance Objectives***

* This guide was created for and approved by USD(I) as a resource for writing performance objectives under the DCIPS system. It provides the step-by-step process used in the workshop and has many illustrative examples.

**Performance Objectives Repository**

* The purpose of the repository is to provide examples and ideas for the type of objectives that can be created across a wide variety of jobs and work levels.
* The repository was developed with support of USD(I) and ODNI with subject matter experts from across the Intelligence Community, including a large number of Army personnel. The examples contained in the repository are meant to be used as just that – examples. The examples should not be used to cut and paste into performance plans; rather, they must be tailored to the individual employee.
* You may want to use this to identify example objectives in advance that will apply to the occupational groups in a given workshop. It will also give you some familiarity with the types of objectives that have been written for different jobs across the community.

**Army Policy Volume 2011 DCIPS Performance Management**

* The policy can be found at: [http://www.dami.army.pentagon.mil/site/dcips/policy.aspx](https://mspmail.previsor.com/owa/redir.aspx?C=fd8d3f11b221469db527e8d76a2db884&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.dami.army.pentagon.mil%2fsite%2fdcips%2fpolicy.aspx)
* It is likely that you will get some general questions about DCIPS or the policy related to performance objectives. It is helpful to understand the policy behind the performance management process so you can handle some of the basic questions.
* Take a copy of the policy with you to the workshop so you can refer a particularly interested participant to the policy document itself, if needed.

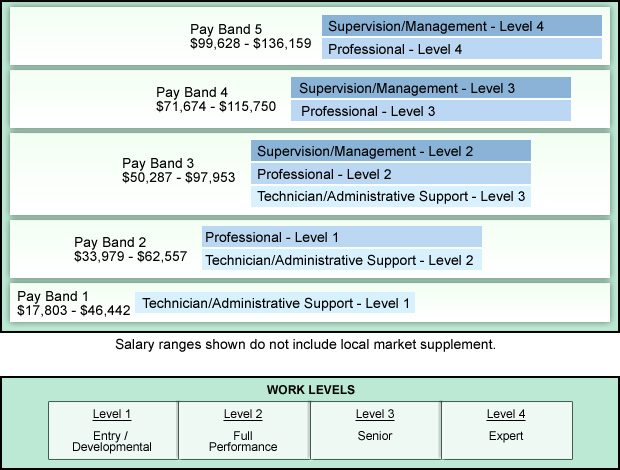
**Occupational Structure Information**

* The *Guide to Writing Effective Objectives* discusses the importance of writing an objective that is appropriate to the work level. (This is part of making the objective Achievable.) A table is presented on page 18 that describes what is typically appropriate for a given work level. However, you may also get additional questions about how work levels relate to pay bands and work categories.
* The following resources explain the occupational structure under DCIPS:

<http://dcips.mil/documents/Occupational_Structure_FS.pdf>

<http://dcips.dtic.mil/payband.html> (see graphic presented on the following page)

2010 Pay Band Structure



**Office of Personnel Management (OPM)**

* OPM has general guidance on performance management in the Federal Government. This information can be found at: <http://www.opm.gov/perform/overview.asp>