

# Administrative Solutions

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ARI ADMIN

*Specialists in the Placement of Administrative Professionals*

## Achieving Better Execution

Executives in businesses of all sizes have experienced disappointment and frustration when trying to drive changes to achieve maximum business results. Many executives know and acknowledge that their biggest challenge is executing their plans.

Achieving Better Execution (ABE) is an ongoing series of principles that, when applied, lead to better results. I discovered these principles over 20 years as a leader of, participant in, and witness to change initiatives in companies ranging from start-ups to \$20 billion in annual sales, in many industries, private and public, and profit and nonprofit. *Implementing each principle will have a positive impact on your bottom line. Collectively, they produce dramatic results.*

### **Principle V – State your goals the SMART WAY.**

The first step in successfully executing a goal is to state it properly. You know your goal is well stated when anyone who reads it knows exactly what you are trying to accomplish and in what time frame.

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## People Changes: Problems or Positive Potential?

Businesses grow based on the energy, ideas, creativity and dedication of their people. Finding and retaining the best possible fit of people to jobs is among the top priorities of every business leader. However, changes happen. People changes, that is. Now they happen more frequently than ever, driven by a multitude of reasons in our volatile workplace,

including:

- People are moving from one job to another within the company for career advancement
- People are leaving companies for better opportunities elsewhere
- People are being fired or downsized
- People are relocating to another state or nation
- People are becoming disgruntled and quitting
- People are retiring from the workplace

People changes are further accelerated by the workforce's growing acceptance of multiple job changes as "*normal and desirable*." But for whatever reason people leave their jobs, they leave holes in the organization that must be dealt with effectively.

People changes can be approached as problems.

When they are perceived as problems, businesses seek to "*plug the holes*" in an urgent, cursory manner. An under-qualified or over-qualified person (who may or may not be successful) will be quickly recruited to step in to avoid losing momentum.

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The better a person states the goal, the easier it is to create the action plan. An acronym commonly used for stating a goal properly is **SMART** (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistically high, and **T**ime-based).

While these criteria seem simple, they are actually not easily achieved. If they were, everyone would be reaching a lot more of their goals. Very briefly, let us discuss what each of these criteria really means:



- **Specific** – You say exactly what it is you want to do. Hazy goals are doomed to failure. For example, “*We are going to establish a new training program for our supervisors by 10/1/XX.*” You are not defining what you want to train them to do.
- **Measurable** – The goal must be stated in a way that allows you to definitely know whether it has been achieved. In addition, you should be able to see whether the trend is negative so that you can modify your detailed action steps accordingly. For example, “*We are going to increase the frequency of meetings with our hourly staff.*” How often would you consider acceptable and what do you want to communicate about?
- **Attainable and Realistically High** – Goals must be lofty enough so we do not trip over them. If the goal is too low it will not stimulate anyone to put forth extra effort. On the other hand, if the goal is unrealistic no one will take it seriously.
- **Time-Based** – When do you want this goal completed by? Be honest, are there goals you have talked about for years that are still on your to-do list? It is probably because you have not committed to a deadline.

**The following is an example of a SMART goal:**

Get 10 appointments with decision-makers in the hospitality industry that employ more than 250 people and are located within 50 miles of the Miami area by the end of the quarter.

Once you have stated your goal in a manner that meets all of the **SMART** criteria, you then need to consider whether they achieve **WAY** (Written, Aligned, and Yours):

*Continued on next column –*

It is not unusual to meet people who have goals they have not communicated to anyone. Even worse, they may not be written down anywhere. In personal and organizational circumstances, it is always best to write your goals down for the following reasons:

- Helps clarify your thinking
- Keeps your goal from unconsciously being altered
- Helps strengthen commitment
- Simplifies the communication process
- Provides a framework for measurement
- Allows you to compare them to other goals

A common reason goals do not get achieved or take longer than expected is improper alignment. Goals may not be aligned for reasons that include:

- Creation by separate people or departments
- Failure to consolidate goals in one place to review congruence
- In our desire to be optimistic, we are unrealistic
- Incomplete or nonexistent action plans that underestimate what it will take to achieve our goal.
- Failure to prioritize goals, thus giving them all equal priority.

Lastly, if a goal is yours, it is much more likely that you will be internally motivated to achieve it. It is hard to get excited about somebody else’s goals. This is primarily due to the fact that most people act based on their own self interest.

If you have goals that are not communicated succinctly to everyone who is responsible for accomplishing a part of the plan, what is the likelihood they are going to do it? People like to have purpose and know where they are going. We use goals to focus individuals and organizations in the same direction. When we achieve goals, it increases energy, which has a positive impact on results, thus further increasing energy, increasing focus on goals, increasing results, increasing energy, and so on. It is that simple!

If you want to achieve more goals, make sure that you state them in a **SMART WAY!**

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Or, businesses may permanently reallocate tasks and duties to the missing person's coworkers who are already overloaded with their own work. A habit of handling people changes in these manners risks making everyone's job either unsatisfying or humanly unachievable, and can lead to increased levels of people changes.



Many successful companies have developed the discipline of working through people changes with positive potential in focus. They see change as part of a continually recurring opportunity to rethink, redefine, reposition, and reinforce jobs that are left open. When people changes inevitably occur, the process they follow to move forward quickly and successfully can be guided by questions such as:

1. Who are the stakeholders in our company whose successes are affected by this change?
2. Including their input as a group, what do they consider the top 5 reasons the job (left open) exists?
3. Do any of our other jobs overlap with those top 5 reasons? If so, how?
4. What are 3 “*measurable accountabilities*” that the job is responsible to achieve for continued business success?
5. Given today's realities, how can this job be redefined and/or repositioned to achieve its accountabilities more effectively and efficiently?
6. What are the specific action steps the stakeholders must take – and by when – as a result of their conclusions?


We can all count on people continuing to change jobs throughout their careers in today's workplace. It's whether businesses handle people changes as problems or positive potential that will determine their success. Which is the best choice for your business?

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**Web Site Of The Month**

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If you're seeking information on volunteering opportunities, visit online sites such as [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org) or [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org), which match your interests and availability with organizations in need.

These sites also provide information on volunteer opportunities that exist online.



# ONE MINUTE IDEAS

## The US Census Bureau: Ten Principal Reasons that Businesses Fail

1. Inadequate or no management system
2. Lack of purpose, vision and mission
3. Poor planning, procedures, reporting and review processes
4. Over-dependence on specific individuals
5. Poor segmentation of markets and clients
6. Goals not established or not well-communicated
7. Lack of competitive and market intelligence
8. Inadequate set-up and working capital
9. Absence of quality programs
10. CEOs having great technical or professional skills, but insufficient business and management skills



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## *Is an Employer Limited in its ability to Fire an Employee?*

**A**lthough employment is presumed to be "at will" (meaning that the employer may fire the employee for any reason, or no reason at all), this at-will presumption is limited by a number of competing rules.

An employer may not fire an employee for discriminatory reasons, such as because of his or her race or sex. The employer also may not fire the employee because the employee has engaged in a protected activity.

Protected activities include complaining of harassment, discrimination or another violation of the law, filing a lawsuit against the employer claiming discrimination, filing a workers' compensation claim, or participating in an investigation of the employer by an administrative agency such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the Environmental Protection Agency.

An employee who can show that he or she was fired shortly after engaging in such a protected activity may be able to sue the employer for illegal retaliation.

An employer may also be limited in its ability to fire an employee by the terms of a union contract or collective bargaining agreement, or by the terms of a contract with the individual employee.

Finally, if the employer is a public entity, such as a federal, state or local government, a school district, or a government agency, the employer may be required to provide the employee with notice and an opportunity to be heard before firing the employee, and may also be required to show "just cause," such as poor performance or the violation of a work-related rule by the employee, in order to fire the employee.

Contact your legal council for more information and clarification. *This is not to be used as legal advice.*



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