



SMARTIE Objectives

PROCESS GUIDE

Strong campaigns are built on a series of short and medium term SMARTIE objectives that function as intermediary steps towards a more ambitious campaign goal

"What can we do today, so that tomorrow we can do what we are unable to do today?"

Paulo Freire



Specific

Equitable



Measurable

Inclusive



Achievable

Time-bound



Resourced

Origins: This methodology originated in the world of marketing and business management, and was appropriated by activists to help them plan campaigns.

Elaborating a campaign objective might appear to be a simple task, however, it is quite common in the activist world to find poorly formulated objectives that are impossible to reach. This kind of error can have a major negative impact on the success of a campaign.

The SMARTIE tool is a way to plan short and medium-term objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable, and that increase the likelihood of a campaign's success. It's a tool that helps people involved in a campaign or action maintain their focus and align their expectations.

Campaigners should map out a strategy of short and medium-term objectives that function as intermediary steps towards an ambitious vision of the future.

Source <https://beautifultrouble.org/toolbox/tool/smart-objectives/> [retrieved on May 24, 2022]

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The formulation of a SMARTIE objective begins by determining a vision for the future, a problem and issue, which then serve as the basis for additional analyses, including: context analysis, an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), and a mapping of the actors that can support or hinder your goals (Power mapping).

The results of all these analyses will form the basis for defining a SMARTIE objective.

How to use:



Specific

An objective must be simple and well-defined, communicating what you wish to happen and avoiding dubious interpretations. This can best be achieved by using strong action verbs, such as: expose, develop, build, secure, obtain, force, compel, etc.

Some questions that can make your objective more specific are:

- What exactly are we hoping to achieve?
- Why is this important?
- What are the benefits to reaching this goal?
- How evident is the result?



Measurable

When an objective is measurable, we can monitor our actions as we progress. The possibility of measuring allows comparison, reflection, and improvement. If you can't measure, you won't be able to track your progress and evaluate your results. Some of the questions that can help with this are:

- How will we know that the change has happened?
- What are the indicators of success?
- What benefits are created, what targets are hit, what values are increased or decreased, what places/people/objects/fauna/flora are protected, what territories/rights are guaranteed?
- Can these measurements be obtained?

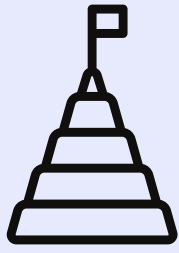


Achievable

In social change efforts, objectives can be bold and challenging, but they should never be impossible to achieve — and if the SMART logic is employed correctly, they won't be. If the objective requires resources that your group simply doesn't have, then everyone will be frustrated.

Consider the following questions:

- Has anyone ever done this successfully?
- Is this possible in the deadline we have set?
- Are all the restrictions evident? (e.g. logistic, legal, cultural)
- Can we build the sufficient power required to win?



Resourced

Can often be mistaken for Realistic or Achievable. The basic difference is that sometimes, while the objective can be achieved, it is not particularly realistic or effectively resourced, eg. due to some form of conflict between those involved, or priorities lying elsewhere. In certain cases, an internal change in the pattern of collective organisation will be necessary to turn the objective into a resourced or realistic one. You should consider these factors:

- Is your group willing to fight for this objective?
- Is this objective aligned with your group's mission and vision?
- Are any ethical principles jeopardised by this objective?
- Are there enough resources available?



Time-bound

A time limit means setting a deadline to reach the objective. This criteria can slightly overlap with Specific. Time-bound provides the necessary impetus to keep people motivated to make things happen, and the start and end periods must be achievable and realistic. This time period must not be so short that the objective is impossible to reach, nor so long that the group disintegrates over time. Deadlines create the necessary urgency and stimulate action.

Try using questions such as:

- Is there a window of opportunity within which we need to act? (e.g. before the next election, board meeting, etc.)
- When will this objective be reached?



Inclusive

Inclusive brings traditionally marginalised people and groups—particularly those most impacted—into processes, activities, and decision/policy-making in a way that shares power. There's a fine line between inclusion and tokenism. What's the difference? Power. In most cases, it's not enough to tack on "...and x number of volunteers/new hires/spokespeople should be people of colour" unless the people you're trying to include will be able to influence the work in a meaningful way. SMARTIE goals are about including marginalised communities in a way that shares power, shrinks disparities, and leads to more equitable outcomes.

While diversity is about who is present at the table, inclusion is about who is empowered to make decisions or participate in a meaningful way.

Try using questions such as:

- Do you have representation from socially and economically marginalised individuals and groups?
- Do those participants have access to power to influence things?



Equitable

The “E” stands for “Equity” as a means of addressing systemic injustice, inequity or oppression. It's important to note that equity and equality are not the same concept. For many marginalised groups and people, they may need access to more resources in order to bring them to a place of equity with non-marginalised groups. Their access to resources is not equal but the outcome is equity.

Try using questions such as:

- Will the outcomes of this goal achieve a just outcome for affected people and groups?
- Is this objective focused only on outcomes for mainstreams and not marginalised groups?
- Who is deciding what a just outcome looks like? Are they from the affected group?

Potential risks

Not all objectives will strictly follow the five criteria. Be careful with the different interpretations given to each of the tool's initials and don't let your objective lose its SMARTIE connotation. The letter A can be switched for Attainable, Assignable, Action-oriented, or Actionable, and the letter R for Realistic, Reasonable, Relevant, or Results-based. The letter I could also be switched for intersectional, for example.

The SMARTIE methodology is more suited for short and medium-term objectives. The definition of what is short and medium-term will depend on your campaign and the larger context in which it is happening. For some campaigns, short can mean a few weeks or months, while for others it can mean two or even three years.