**Goal Setting Theory of Motivation**

Goal-setting theory of motivation states that specific and challenging goals along with appropriate feedback contribute to higher and better task performance.

Goals indicate and give direction to an employee about what needs to be done and how much effort is required to be put in.

In the 1960s, Edwin Locke put forward the goal-setting theory of motivation. The theory states that goal setting is essentially linked to task performance.

In the goal-setting theory, goals must be set based on 5 principles. To motivate, goals must have these.

**Goal Setting Theory Principles**

7 principles of goal setting theory are;

1. Clarity.
2. Challenge.
3. Commitment.
4. Feedback.
5. Task Complexity.
6. Self-efficiency.
7. Goal commitment.

Let’s look at each of these in detail.

**1. Clarity**

Clear goals are measurable and unambiguous.

When a goal is dear and specific, with a definite time set for completion, there is less misunderstanding about what behaviors will be rewarded.

“Reduce job turnover by 15%” or “Respond to employee suggestions within 48 hours” are examples of dear goals.

**2. Challenge**

One of the most important [characteristics of goals](https://www.iedunote.com/organizational-goals) is the level of challenge.

People are often motivated by achievement, and they’ll judge a goal based on the significance of the anticipated accomplishment.

Rewards typically increase for more difficult goals. If you believe you’ll be well compensated or otherwise rewarded for achieving a challenging goal that will boost your enthusiasm and your drive to get it done.

If an assignment is easy and not viewed as very important – and if you or your employee doesn’t expect the accomplishment to be significant – then the effort may not be impressive.

**3. Commitment**

Goals must be understood and agreed upon if they are to be effective. Employees are more likely to “buy into” a goal if they feel they were part of creating that goal.

The notion of participative management rests on this idea of involving employees in setting goals and making decisions.

**4. Feedback**

In addition to selecting the right type of goal, an effective goal program must also include feedback. Feedback provides opportunities to clarify expectations, adjust goal difficulty, and gain recognition.

It’s important to provide benchmark opportunities or targets, so individuals can determine for themselves how they’re doing.

**5. Task complexity**

The last factor in the goal-setting theory introduces two more requirements for success. For goals or assignments that are highly complex, take special care to ensure that the work doesn’t become too overwhelming.

Goal-setting theory has certain eventualities such as Self-efficiency and Goal commitment.

**6. Self-efficiency**

Self-efficiency is the individual’s self-confidence and faith that he has potential.

if performing the task. Higher the level of self-efficiency, greater will be the efforts pm in by the individual when they face challenging tasks.

While lower the level of self-efficiency, less will be the efforts put in by the individual or he might even quit while meeting challenges.

**7. Goal commitment**

The goal-setting theory assumes that the individual is committed to the goal and will not leave the goal. The goal commitment is dependent on the following factors:

* Goals are made open, known and broadcasted.
* Goals should be set-self by individuals rather than designated.

The individual’s set should be consistent with [organizational goals](https://www.iedunote.com/organizational-goals) and vision.

**Features of Goal Setting Theory**

1. The willingness to work towards the attainment of the [goal is the main source of job motivation](https://www.iedunote.com/motivation-process). Clear, particular and difficult goals arc greater motivating factors than easy, general and vague goals.
2. Specific and clear goals lead to greater output and better performance. Unambiguous, measurable and clear goals accompanied by a deadline for completion avoids misunderstanding.
3. Goals should be realistic and challenging. This gives an individual a feeling of pride and triumph when he attains them, and sets him up for the attainment of the next goal. The more challenging the goal the greater is the reward generally and the more is the passion for achieving it.
4. Better and appropriate feedback of results directs the employee behavior and contributes to higher performance than an absence of feedback. Feedback is a means of gaining reputation, making clarifications and regulating goal difficulties. It helps employees to work with more involvement and leads to greater job satisfaction.
5. Employees’ participation in goal is not always desirable. Participation in setting the goal, however, makes the goal more acceptable and leads to more involvement.

**Advantages of Goal Setting Theory**

1. Goal-setting theory is a technique used to raise incentives for employees to complete work quickly effectively.
2. Goal setting leads to better performance by increasing motivation and efforts, but also through increasing and improving the feedback quality.

**Limitations of Goal Setting theory**

1. At times, the o[rganizational goals conflict with the managerial goals](https://www.iedunote.com/5-stages-conflict-process). Goal conflict has a detrimental effect on the performance if it motivates incompatible action drift.
2. Very difficult and complex goals stimulate riskier behavior.
3. If the employee lacks skills and competencies to perform actions essential for goal, then the goal-setting can fail and lead to an undermining of performance.
4. There is no evidence to prove that goal-setting improves job satisfaction.
5. If there is a conflict between managerial and overall organizational goals, goal setting may be a source of conflict.
6. This method may not work as well for complex situations, where goals may not be clearly definable.
7. There needs to be an accurate assessment of a member's ability to achieve the goal. Even if the person claims to be able to accomplish a task, the self-assessment may not be realistic. There needs to be a "back-up" person to take over if the first person cannot achieve the goal.
8. Evidence doesn't exist that goal setting theory satisfies the member.
9. The very existence of other goal setting theories cancels the exclusivity of the goal setting theory as the only theory of what motivates leadership.
10. One should ask whether there are other factors than goal identification that make an organization cohere.