SETTING **SMART** GOALS

Many of us set resolutions every New Year's Day. But if your resolution is too broad or doesn't have a deadline, it is much easier to abandon or forget. As the saying goes, 'A goal without a plan is just a wish.'

In contrast, using a business-tested SMART goal structure can actually help you clarify your wishes, turning your goal into actionable items and providing you with an outline for success. Compare the broad goal, "I want to run a faster 5k" with the following SMART goal template example.

Many people fail in life, not for lack of ability or brains or even courage, but simply because they have never organized their energies around a goal.

—ELBERT HUBBARD

S — SPECIFIC:

Make sure your goal is simple and well-defined.

ASK YOURSELF: What will the goal accomplish? How and why will it be accomplished?

EXAMPLE: My goal is to beat my past 5k time by 5 minutes.

M — MEASURABLE:

Make sure that your goal contains criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of the goal.

ASK YOURSELF: How will I measure whether I am on track to meet my goal? (List at least two indicators.)

EXAMPLE: To reach my goal, I will run for 30 minutes, 4 times a week.

A — ACHIEVABLE:

The goal should challenge you, but be obtainable in a manageable time frame.

ASK YOURSELF: Is it possible? Do I have the resources?

EXAMPLE: I will achieve this by following a speed-training running plan.

R — RELEVANT:

Make sure the goal you've chosen matters to you.

ASK YOURSELF: What is the reason, purpose, or benefit of accomplishing the goal? Is this the right time?

EXAMPLE: I am doing this in order to improve my overall health and feel good about myself in my company 5k.

T — TIME-BASED:

Make sure to be specific when setting a target date.

ASK YOURSELF: Is this enough time to reach my goal? Did I give myself too much time for this goal?

EXAMPLE: I will accomplish my goal in 60 days.