

---

Specialist Certification in Coaching for Legal Professionals

## Goal setting and action planning

---

Goal setting and action planning are essential skills for any coach, and are particularly important in the context of coaching for legal professionals. In this explanation, we will cover key terms and vocabulary related to goal setting and action planning, providing examples, practical applications, and challenges along the way.

**Goal:** A goal is a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) outcome that a client wants to achieve. Goals should be challenging yet realistic, and should be aligned with the client's values and overall objectives.

**Objective:** An objective is a broader, more general outcome that a client wants to achieve. Objectives are often broken down into smaller, more specific goals.

**SMART criteria:** SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. These criteria are used to ensure that goals are well-defined and achievable.

**Specific:** A specific goal is one that is clearly defined and unambiguous. It should answer the questions of what, why, and how.

**Measurable:** A measurable goal is one that can be quantified or qualified. This allows the client and coach to track progress and determine when the goal has been achieved.

**Achievable:** An achievable goal is one that is realistically attainable given the client's current skills, resources, and circumstances.

**Relevant:** A relevant goal is one that is aligned with the client's values, interests, and overall objectives.

**Time-bound:** A time-bound goal is one that has a specific deadline for completion. This helps to create a sense of urgency and motivation.

**Action plan:** An action plan is a detailed, step-by-step plan that outlines the specific actions that a client will take in order to achieve their goals. Action plans should be SMART, and should include specific deadlines, resources, and accountability measures.

**Milestone:** A milestone is a significant event or accomplishment that marks progress towards a goal. Milestones can be used to track progress, motivate clients, and adjust action plans as needed.

**Accountability:** Accountability refers to the process of being responsible for one's actions and progress towards goals. Accountability can be increased through regular check-ins, progress tracking, and the use of accountability partners.

**Challenge:** A challenge is a difficult task or situation that requires effort and perseverance to overcome.

Challenges can be used to stretch clients and help them grow, both personally and professionally.

Example:

Let's say a legal professional wants to improve their public speaking skills. Their goal might be to deliver a successful presentation at a conference in six months. Their action plan might include the following steps:

1. Research and attend local Toastmasters meetings to practice speaking in front of a group.
2. Identify and join a public speaking course or workshop.
3. Practice speaking in front of a mirror or recording oneself to identify and work on areas for improvement.
4. Seek feedback from colleagues, mentors, or a coach.
5. Deliver the presentation at a local meeting or event to gain experience and build confidence.
6. Review and adjust the action plan as needed based on progress and feedback.

Practical application:

In a coaching session, the coach can help the client set SMART goals and create an action plan to achieve them. The coach can also help the client identify potential challenges and develop strategies to overcome them. Additionally, the coach can hold the client accountable for their progress and help them stay motivated.

Challenge:

One challenge for coaches is helping clients set realistic and achievable goals. It can be tempting for clients to set overly ambitious goals, which can lead to frustration and disappointment. Coaches can help clients strike a balance between challenging themselves and setting realistic goals by using the SMART criteria and encouraging clients to break down larger objectives into smaller, more manageable goals.

Another challenge is helping clients stay motivated and accountable. Coaches can use a variety of techniques, such as regular check-ins, progress tracking, and the use of accountability partners, to help clients stay on track and motivated.

In conclusion, goal setting and action planning are crucial skills for coaches, and are particularly important in the context of coaching for legal professionals. By understanding key terms and vocabulary, such as goals, objectives, SMART criteria, action plans, milestones, accountability, and challenges, coaches can help clients set and achieve their desired outcomes. Through practical application and overcoming challenges, coaches can support clients in reaching their full potential and achieving success in their personal and professional lives.