
SETTING OBJECTIVES

“If you don't know where you are going, it's pretty tough sledding getting there!”

Objectives

- Come from needs,
- Require discipline and thinking,
- Provide a context for what will be done,
- Communicate expectations for work (not *processes*),
- Provide a framework against which to measure accomplishments.

The book: Mager, Mager, Robert F. (1997). *Preparing Instructional Objectives*, Third Edition, Atlanta, Georgia, is highly recommended for your use.

WHY OBJECTIVES

1. With **trends** such as globalization, product diversity, technological and economic developments an almost continuous change environment gets closer. Objectives are critical.
2. Objectives make it possible for everyone to **increase efficiencies** in getting things done.

3. Clear objectives provide a reliable **base for selection** of where you are going and how you will get there.
4. Written objectives provide **benchmarks** for finding out whether the need has been satisfied.
5. Objectives that **communicate clearly** provide you with a means to organize efforts and tell others about them.

DELIVERABLES: PREPARING OBJECTIVES PROVIDES

- **Efficiencies** in meeting needs effectively and organizing efforts toward accomplishing goals
- **Communication** with customers, resource people, and management.
- The **groundwork for** effective planning and priority setting exercises.
- A credible **rationale** for out-sourcing or designing in-house instructional materials, content, or methods
- **Benchmarks** for evaluating needs assessments, training, and successes in accomplishing objectives at the personal and corporate levels.

5 STEPS IN WRITING OBJECTIVES

1. Given	Starting Point	Given Michael, an office area, marketing, six computers and a standard set of software for each,
2. Target	Who	... SMJ Enterprises Ltd will ...
3. Deliverable	What	... earn income from training courses...
4. Degree	Expectation	... enough to pay the facility lease by the end of
5. Completion	By When	... April 2014.

THE 1ST STEP - THE GIVEN STATEMENT

Spend some time laying down where the starting point is and what it contains. The box and samples below illustrate that. Keep things simple.

Example

When provided with a standard set of product descriptions from XYZ company ...

- *When provided with a standard set of carpenter's tools ...*
- *Given a product manual*
- *With a sales manual...*
- *Given a mailing list ...*
- *Given company forms...*
- *Given a properly functioning laptop and software*
- *Without a product manual...*

THE 2ND STEP - THE TARGET OR AUDIENCE

Sure, it's simple! There has to be someone who is the **target** – an individual or group.

The target, chosen carefully, is the company, person or persons who

Example

Given a mailing list from the booth at the Western Canada Totem Festival, the Weyburn team will ...

1. Have the need and who
2. The work is for.

THE 3RD STEP - THE DELIVERABLE

Now it's time to put down on paper in exceptionally clear terms exactly what the person, group or company is expected to be able to **do** at the end of the process.

People work best when they know what is coming.

Be very careful to **exclude** presentation in your objectives. That is quite different.

Example

When provided with a summary of product descriptions from various carriers, (GIVEN) producers in the XYZ agency (TARGET) are able to interpret the information to design an insurance program for a client (DELIVERABLE) ...

Wording samples – the target is able to -

... (remember, arrange, repeat, define, list, match, recognize, relate, recall, reproduce) information as included in the product catalogue for XYZ company.

... (interpret, classify, clarify, describe, restate, discuss, explain, express, report, review, select, tell) items in one's own words

...(apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, prepare, practice, schedule, solve, use) what is new.

... (break down, categorize or analyze information, compare and contrast, calculate, differentiate, appraise, examine, explain) parts and relationships.

...using product descriptions from various companies, (arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up, synthesize, write, create) something new or different (like a marketing brochure, summary chart etc.)

... (make judgments, appraise, assess, choose, compare, estimate, evaluate, rate, score, select, support) on basis of criteria presented in training.

Words to avoid	Better words
to know	to write
to understand	to recite
to really appreciate	to identify
to appreciate	to differentiate
to fully appreciate	to solve
to grasp the significance of	to construct
to enjoy	to list
to believe	to compare
to have faith in	to contrast

THE 4TH STEP - ACCEPTABLE STANDARD AND TIME

Deliverables have to be measurable at an acceptable level of performance against the standard or what is reasonable in a reasonable timeframe.

Clear and measurable objectives are worthwhile to all concerned. You will accomplish an objective when there is a projected payback or a low risk of failure.

Example

When provided with students and an accounting application software package, (GIVEN) Bert (TARGET) is able to interpret participant needs, design and deliver a training program for clients (DELIVERABLE) that results in a increase of efficiency in 4 of 5 students (STANDARD) after a classroom session of 5 or 6 hours (COMPLETION).

Samples – level of performance -

... Reproduce (*accurately to the client, individually relevant information*) included in the product catalogue for XYZ Company(*after 3-4 hours of work*) .

... To a colleague(*before the next client presentation*) interpret, and clarify similar products from various suppliers in one's own words (*in terms the client can understand*).

... (*During the next 4-5 days*) demonstrate knowledge of a new product by (*explaining it thoroughly*) to a colleague who wants to learn.

...(In 5-6 working days) using 12 product descriptions from 4 companies, assemble a product summary chart that (*can be read, understood and used*) by a first year producer.

It is generally during this phase that objective preparation gets a bad rap. In attempts to dazzle or for some other reason, writers resort to meaningless babble.

Several examples of **what not to write** follow:

The statements included below have the appearance of objectives, but contain no standards. They are not objectives.

...*manifest an increasingly comprehensive understanding...*

... *demonstrate a thorough comprehension of the life insurance industry.*

...*relate to people and demonstrate empathy...*

...*have a deep awareness and thorough grasp of mutual funds*

...producer must be able to demonstrate an ability to develop self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect...

LINK

<http://depts.washington.edu/eproject/objectives.htm>

Into your favorite search engine insert terms like

- e-learning objectives,
- Writing training objectives,
- Behavioral objectives,
- Why write objectives,
- How to write objectives

Your finds may surprise you.

Assignment

Using the format presented above prepare 10 objectives relating to your business or personal life. Send them to me email dstamand@learningdirection.com, I will critique them and return them to you.

For More Information...

Contact David St. Amand at Learning Direction today!

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