

# SMART Goals & Why They Are Wrong



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SMART goals have their limits. They are OK for the average. For the routine. For the norm and the unexceptional. But for leaders, goals should have a connection with a vision. And SMART goals limit vision and imagination.



# WHY SMART GOALS ARE WRONG

**So here they are - so loved by consultants everywhere.**

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime specific, bound, limited

They are OK for management consultants. And they are OK if you want to be OK. But they were ignored by Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Barack Obama, Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl, Sheikh Mohammed and all those who have had, pursued and realised dreams and visions that management consultants would have said were not ACHIEVABLE.

So that is my problem with SMART goals - the word Achievable. This words means that all SMART goals are based on given knowledge and circumstances and perceptions and as a result are appropriately dream free.

So they are not great for leaders, dreamers, world changers and entrepreneurs. And very dull stuff for speech writers too.

Would Microsoft have become Microsoft by following smart goals? What about Apple? Surely we should be aiming for the skies, for dreams deemed fanciful by the clever brains of the day? Shouldn't we follow those mad dreamers Wilberforce, Churchill, Martin Luther King and Kennedy?

At a more modest level why can't that bridge be built, that sales team hired, that production line changed or that council tax increase binned?

Or if you insist on planning, why not set the dream so stupidly high (Kennedy and his call for space exploration within 10 years) that it drags you kicking and screaming with it?

Plans are good for monitoring but they can limit you too.

Visions are just that - they are things that do not yet exist. And they need chasing.

I guess what I am trying to say, was far better said by George Bernard Shaw

***You see things; and you say "Why?" But I dream things that never were; and I say "Why not?"***



# About Peter Botting

Strategy, storytelling and speaker coaching from a TEDMED speaker coach.

Peter has been a storytelling coach for 24 years - working with politicians, political campaigns, business leaders and non-profits. Helping them to stop underselling, identify and articulate their story and then tell it effectively.

**For more information** contact

[peter@peterbotting.com](mailto:peter@peterbotting.com) / +44 777 550 4299

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