Physicists/Engineers - R&D Setting

(Note: The primary value of goal setting is found in the conversation not the resulting document. In the conversation an individual and supervisor have a chance to: establish a shared understanding of what can be expected in the foreseeable future, to clarify priorities; and to identify the resources needed to reach the goals that are set.)

Goal 1. Continue analysis of data on physics project A.

a. Report progress to analysis group at an agreed upon interval.

Goal 2. Compare the suitability of one or more technical solutions to specific need X.

a. Compare the suitability of using Be, C, Fe and W as absorber for Experiment xxx dump.
b. Draft a proposal for use of a detector type D for particle ID in Experiment xxx.

Goal 3. Determine the performance and limitations of the specific proposed solution S to a particular need N.

a. Prepare prototype framuses in materials M1, M2 and M3 for thermal, mechanical, radiation tolerance, and vacuum testing.
b. Prepare a test stand for determining Young's modulus of various materials and write user documentation by ___/___/___.

Comments:

Goal 1. This goal is cast in very general terms. This reflects the broad nature of the task. The structure that makes this an acceptable goal is the self-monitoring feature of the analysis group. The specific expectation about when the data analysis can be expected is left to an agreement between the physicist and the group. This goal depends on the assumption that the particular person is handling the task well. If that were not the case, the goal might need to be written in more specific terms.

Goal 2. The goal *might* be made clearer if the implicit purpose of the comparison were made more explicit. For example, "Provide a recommendation based on the comparison of one or more …" makes it clear that the individual is expected to convert the comparisons into a determination. Of course, it might be that the recommendation is to continue searching.

Goal 3. Of the three goals, all of which could be quite workable, the third goal is the clearest expression of a work expectation. This assumes that both parties know what "prepare" entails.

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Goal 4. Draft a paper for submission summarizing the results of study X.

a. Draft the abstract of the paper for submission to Conference C. by ___/___/___.

Goal 5. Provide advice and guidance to junior colleague Smith on project Y.

a. Provide close monitoring (weekly meetings) until Smith requires less support.

Goal 6. Identify at least two new directions for self-guided research as Project Z winds down.

a. Write a summary of the possible new directions describing the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Goal 7. Assist in project reviews.

Goal 8. Prepare materials for reviews.

Comments:

Goal 4. Note: "Publication" is not set as the goal as publication depends on factors outside the control of the individual. Additional clarity comes from specifying the date when the abstract is expected.

Goal 5. As long as all parties know what "advice and guidance" are, this goal can work. Apparently, Smith will benefit from close support (weekly), at least for a while, and that expectation is spelled out.

Goal 6. This goal is very "soft" but given the nature of the task it is adequate. The added expectation of a written summary is appropriate if having a written summary advances the individual's effort to establish new research.

Goals 7 and 8. These are important activities and they should be noted in the employee's record of contributions to the lab. However, if they are not tied to a specific review, they do not need to be included in a goal statement.