

Prepare



Apply



SCALED-Up Plans

A self-help tool

Introduction

Turning a goal into an effective action plan is easier than you might think. According to the Psychologist Richard Wiseman, (2009, pp. 84-93) research shows that two simple tricks are key:

- Externalise it. That is, don't just think about it; get your ideas out of your head and onto paper or an electronic medium (it doesn't matter if you write it, draw it, use Excel, Trello or project planning software).
- Break it down. This is about using small steps as this is more manageable and less daunting. It also means you can mark off how you're doing and reward yourself as you make progress.

Other things that help include:

- Tell your family and friends what your goals are. Going public helps increase your sense of commitment and enables them to offer practical help. In fact, according to one study just knowing that there are others encouraging you on improves motivation and makes it feel like challenges are more achievable (Schall et al., 2005, as cited in Wiseman, 2009, p. 92).
- Anticipate the possible problems and plan how to deal with them. That way when you hit the inevitable 'bumps in the road' you won't be tripped up but will be ready to power through.
- Giving yourself compassion and care when things don't work out as you had hoped. Studies show that a self-compassionate response to failure is more effective than a 'judging' response. In fact, people who are self-compassionate are more likely to persist and achieve their goals than people who emotionally 'beat themselves up' (Breines & Chen, 2012, as cited in Dreisoerner et al., 2023).

This self-help tool introduces you to a powerful way of planning called 'SCALED-UP' goals, that takes 'Smart' action planning onto a new level. It will enable you to identify the 8 things that make a good goal and, as part of this, build a plan that delivers progress.



A 'SCALED-UP' goal is similar to a SMART goal (another valuable tool), but with extra powerful features from Sports Psychology (Perry, 2021, pp. 9-10.). According to Perry your goals should be:

Specific: concrete so you can visualise what success looks like.

Clear: so you can stick with the plan even if the going gets tough.

Achievable: the sweet spot between what's too easy and what's way too hard.

Layered: breaking your overall goal down small layered chunks (and time-scales) where process goals feed into performance goals. We'll show you how do this below.

Exciting: something that really will give you a kick when you achieve it.

U (you): actions which, as far as possible, are things you can influence.

Positive: an 'approach' goal about what you positively want to do, rather than what you want to avoid.

This tool is designed to...

- Enable you to write effective action plans.
- Break a plan down into small steps that take you towards your goal.
- Help you focus on the things you can influence which take you towards your ultimate goal.

Consider using this tool if you...

- Need a powerful plan that will deliver for you.
- Want to achieve a goal that requires forward planning and several steps.
- Want to build 'ownership' into your goals.



How to use this tool

First, take your goal and answer the following questions about it.

Specific:

- Can you visualise it?
- Are you able to quantify it?
- How will you know you've achieved it?
- What does success look like?

Clear:

- Is the core idea clear to you?
- Have you expressed it in a way that makes sense to you?
- Is it memorable?

Achievable:

- How big are the challenges?
- What help and resources have to draw on?
- How easy is it?
- How hard is it?
- What's the probability of hitting your goal?



Layered:

- What are the different milestones that will take you towards your goal?
- What do you need to do to reach each milestone?

Exciting:

- How much do you want to achieve this?
- How will you feel when you achieve it?
- What is it that motivates you about this?
- How much does it energise you?

U (you):

- Are the steps you've identified things you can control? E.g. learning a new skill; updating your CV or LinkedIn profile.
- Are the steps you've identified things you can influence (to some extent)? E.g. being noticed by a recruiter through attending a networking event; getting shortlisted for a job by presenting a really tailored strong application.
- Are the steps you've identified things you can't influence at all (because they are down to luck or the decisions of others)? E.g. change in Government policy; whether an employer chooses to create a job vacancy. As a rule, you should avoid relying on these.

Positive:

- Have I described my goal as something I want to move towards? For example, ‘I want to work for an ethical company that develops sustainable food solutions’.
- Have I described my goal as something I want to move away from or avoid? For example, ‘I want to avoid working for an unethical company.’ (These types of goals don’t work as well as approach goals).
- Is my goal something I want to achieve for its own sake? Intrinsically rewarding goals you believe in are more powerful and motivational than those you don’t.



Second, re-write your goals using the SCALED-UP approach.

Here's an example we've created.

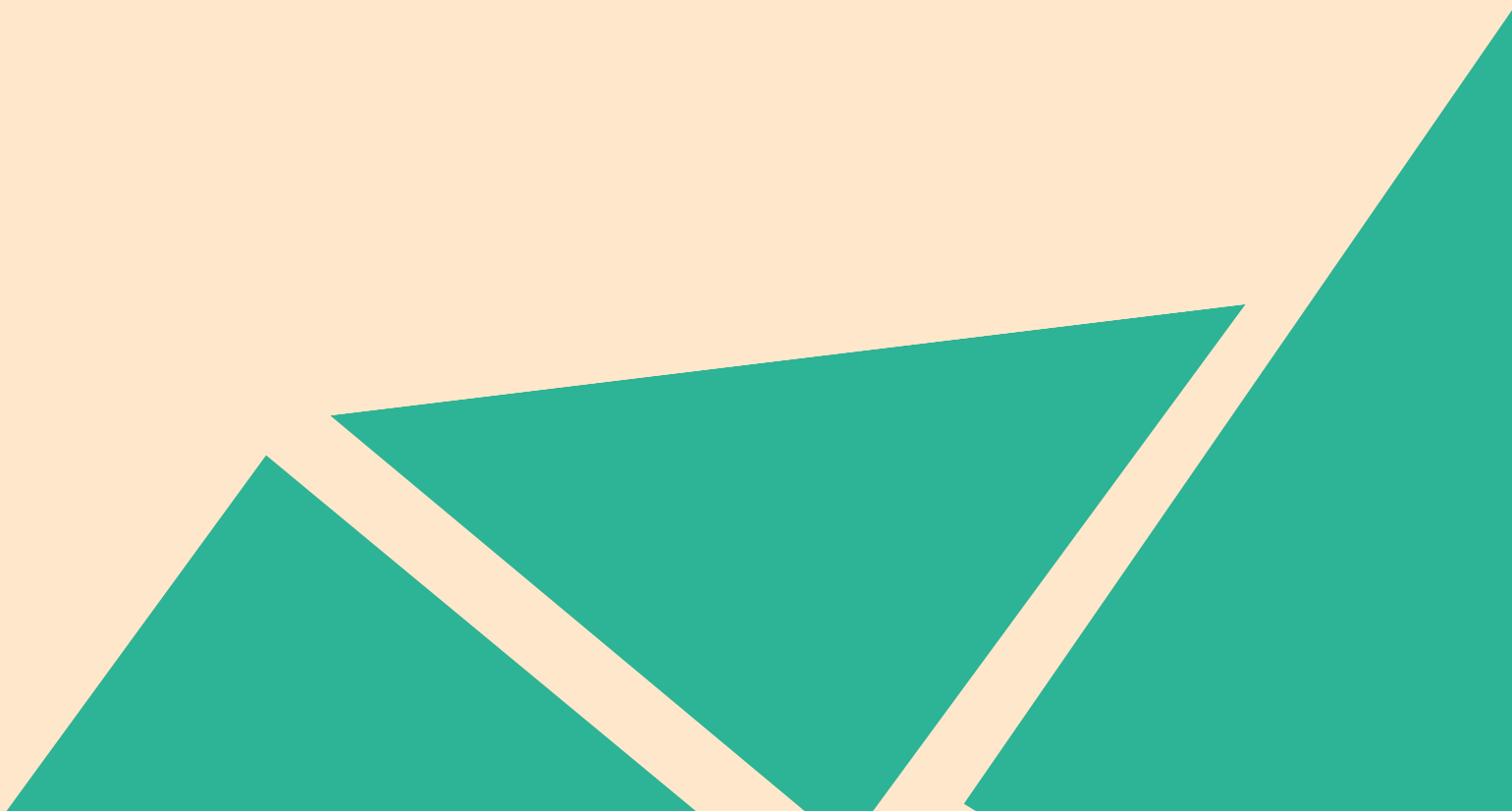
Alex's SCALED-UP Goal

Run a successful 'side-hustle' alongside my paid job, through launching an ethical online business up-cycling vintage clothes and household items that generates between £4,000 and £7,000 profit after two years that expresses my love of antiques, sense of adventure and my commitment to sustainability.

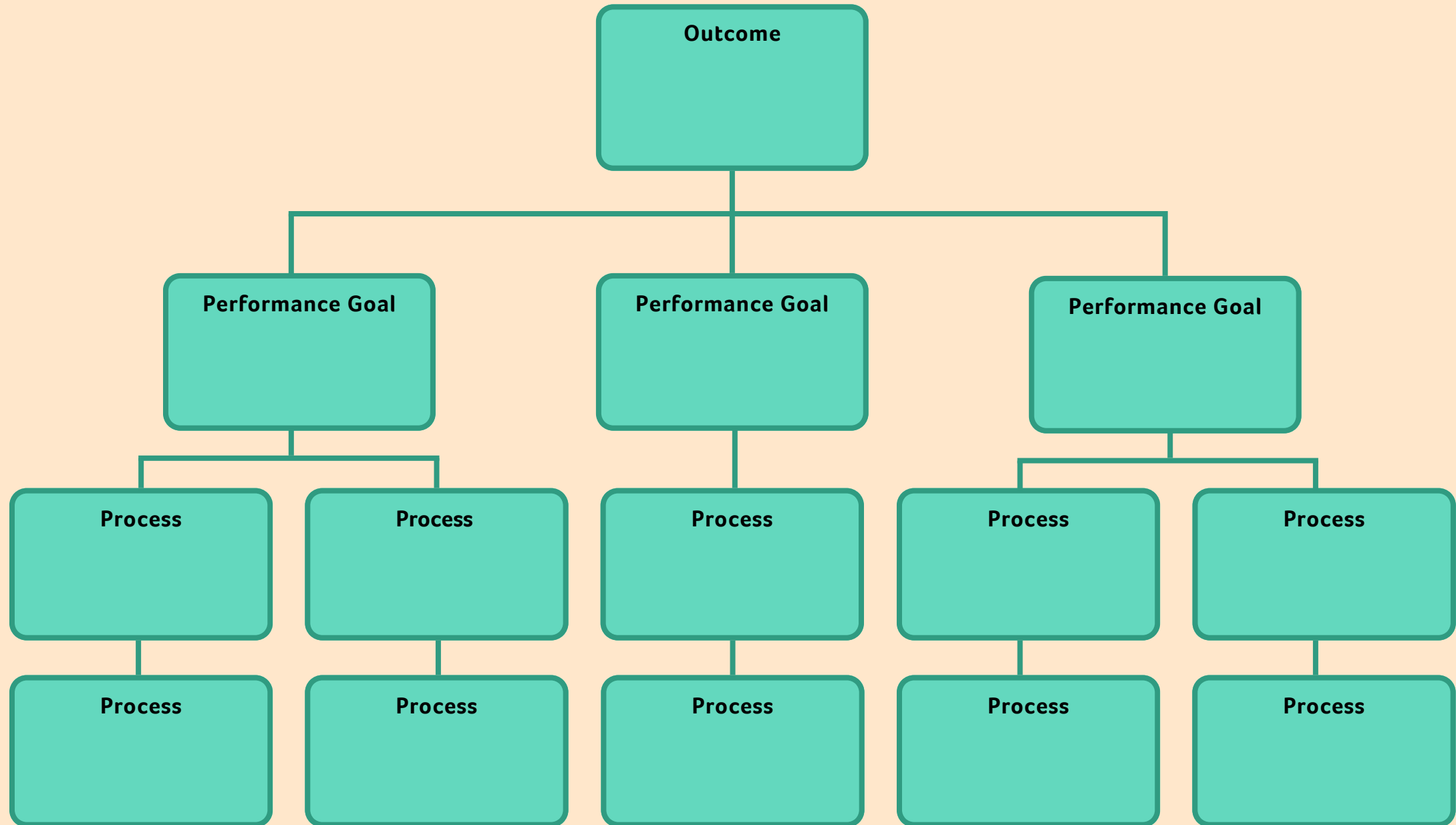
I will undertake this the following 'layered' processes: **building business links with 20+ charities and second-hand shops** (to source merchandise); **building an Instagram profile with 12,000+ followers** (to generate potential sales); **taking courses in upholstery and costume making** (to up-skill myself to repair items); **following other successful up-cyclers** on line and contributing to their social media posts (to learn tricks and increase my profile).

Third, create a detailed Layered action plan to turn your goal into reality.

For this you will need:

- An Outcome Goal = the overarching thing you're aiming at (your SCALE-UP goal).
 - Performance Goals = intermediate goals which make achieving your main goal more likely.
 - Process Goals = the things that mean you'll reach your Performance Goals.
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You can use a structure like this:



Begin by writing down your SCALED-UP goal. This will be the 'outcome' of your action plan. For instance: start your own business; get a place on a Masters next year; or a job on graduate training scheme in accountancy.

You now need to work backwards to map out the stages that come before it. What are the Performance Goals which make achieving your main goal more likely?

For instance, to get a place on a Masters you might have these performance goals: get a 2.1 or 1st overall for your degree; pick a relevant dissertation topic and get a good grade for it; undertake work experience in a relevant field; write a good application etc. In the example for Alex (shown above) the Performance Goals have been underlined to make them stand out.

Next, specify the Process Goals that will enable you to achieve your Performance Goals. These are the things that will drive your performance and position you for success. There may be more than one Process Goal for each Performance Goal. make these as concrete and specific as you can. Have a look at the illustration on the next page. Add timescales and deadlines.



Process Goals	Performance Goals	Outcome Goal
Attend all my lectures	2.1 / 1st degree	Get a place on a Masters studying 'x' at 'y' University
Take notes effectively		
Use effective revision techniques		
Literature review	Relevant dissertation topic	
Frame clear research question		
Attend Carers Volunteering Fair	Relevant work experience	
Use the Careers JobsBoard		
Read advice on Prospects.ac.uk	Well written application	
Get Career Service feedback		

Pause, Reflect, Act

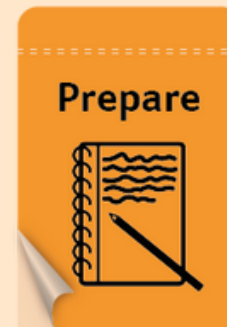
- Which goals have you chosen to create a SCALED-UP plan for?
- How was this different for you from creating a standard SMART goal?
- What are the key insights you've taken from this self-help guide?
- What actions do you need to take now to build on this exercise?
- Who could help you with this?
- Are there other related self-help tools you'd like to use as well?

NB: Because everyone is different, no one solution is a magic bullet, so please also look at our other self-help tools and use the ones that work best for you. Other action planning self-help tools include:

- **Powerful Goals** – setting goals that tap the inner-power of what motivates you.
- **Eyes on the Prize** – a way to focus your efforts so you make your goals happen.
- **The Rule of Three** – a simple method of chipping-away at a thing you're trying to achieve.
- **The Bridge of Reasons** – being clear on how something will benefit you and using this to maintain motivation.
- **Helpful Habits** – how to use daily routines to create systems to deliver your goals.

References and Resources

- Dreisoerner, A., Klaic, A., van Dick, R. et al. (2023). Self-compassion as a means to improve job-related well-being in academia. *Journal of Happiness Studies: An Interdisciplinary Forum on Subjective Well-Being*, 24(2), 409–428. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-022-00602-6>
- Wiseman, R. (2009). *59 Seconds: Think a Little Change a Lot*. Macmillan.
- Perry, J. (2021). *I Can: The Teenage Athlete's Guide to Mental Fitness*. Sequoia Books.



If you are a member of staff from another educational organisation and want to use a limited number of our self-help tools with your students, we'd love to hear from you and share good practice. We'd ask that you retain references to University of Huddersfield as a matter of courtesy and acknowledge the other sources we've used. Thank you.