Introductions and Conclusions

Directions: Review the essays below. Then, refer to the instructions in Exercise 4.

Essay 1

Using the S.M.A.R.T. Plan for Goal-Setting

Larry Elder, a popular author and host of a talk-radio program in Southern California, believes “a goal without a plan is just a wish” (Goals, 2008, para. 2). Whether you have personal, educational, or professional goals, having a well-developed plan increases the likelihood you will actually achieve those goals. One effective goal-setting plan is the S.M.A.R.T. model—an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.

First, set a goal that is *specific* [italics added] rather than general. “Earn a college degree,” for example, is too general. Use the six W’s (Top, 2008) to make the goal more specific:

Who: Joe Student

What: College degree

Where: University of Phoenix Online

When: By the fall of 2012

Which: B.S. in Business Administration

Why: To qualify for a position in management

Your goal then becomes “I, Joe Student, will earn a B.S. in Business Administration at University of Phoenix Online by the fall of 2012 to qualify for a position in management.” Information that is more specific helps you visualize your goal and stay on track.

Second, make the goal *measurable* by establishing both short-term and long-term goals (Top, 2008). “Finish General Education (G.E.) requirements by the fall of 2010” is an example of a short-term goal you must complete before you can reach your final goal. Celebrating these benchmarks along the way enhances your motivation to go on. Additionally, preparing for contingencies—finances, health, work, and so forth—that may delay reaching your goal increases your sense of empowerment. You will know what to expect, and you will be confident you can handle the emergencies.

Third, make sure the goals are *attainable*. Ask yourself whether or not you can actually reach the goal, what obstacles stand in your way, and what opportunities exist you may have overlooked in the past (Top, 2008). You may discover you can earn credit for your prior learning experience or
take CLEP (College-Level Examination Program) tests instead of completing some of the G.E. courses. You may also realize you need to apply for financial aid in order to make your goal more attainable.

Fourth, the goal must be realistic. “To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work” (Top, 2008, para.5). Ask yourself whether your ultimate goal—qualifying for a job in management—is what you really want. If you do, is earning a B.S. in business the best way to achieve your goal? Determine, moreover, how to reserve the time, energy, and family support you need to work toward the goal of earning a college degree.

Fifth, set a goal that is timely. Setting a definite timetable increases your “sense of urgency” (Top, 2008, para. 6); otherwise, it is easy to become sidetracked. If earning a college degree in four years is not feasible, give yourself additional time to reach the goal. Perhaps you will discover that completing an A.A. degree qualifies you for advancement within your organization. As you work toward your bachelor’s degree, you may also be able to work your way up the corporate ladder—again increasing your motivation to earn your bachelor’s degree.

By setting goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely and by writing down the goal-setting steps and visualizing your success, you will be well on your way to achieving your goals. You will enhance your self-esteem, create a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, and be closer to living the life you can only dream about now.

References


Essay 2

Uniforms in the Office

When most people think of uniforms, they do not visualize bankers or information technologists, but the newest trend in corporate America is wearing uniforms. Although not all companies agree on the merits of requiring employees to wear uniforms, uniforms offer more advantages than disadvantages to many organizations.

Uniforms can prevent problems created by individual interpretations of what constitutes acceptable office dress, as more and more companies show a preference for casual business attire. Uniforms also create a shared sense of identify among workers and yet “. . . ensure that [both] executives and staff convey a credible, business-like image” (Uniforms, 2003, para. 5).

Opponents, on the other hand, argue that uniforms do not create enough of a professional image for their companies. Some employees also feel that uniforms—which come in few colors and limited designs—are not as flattering as personal clothing and cannot convey the same sense of individuality and style. As more and more companies opt for uniforms, however, more choices will no doubt become available.

http://ecampus.phoenix.edu/secure/aapd/workshops/studentworkshops/basicsessay/oswbw101_3.05_appendix_c_intros_conclusions.html
According to a recent survey authorized by Uniform & Textile Services Association, uniforms serve two additional purposes to both the wearer and the public (Uniforms, 2003):

Uniforms work as a signal (transmits an image of positive personal attributes related to the uniform wearer and as symbol (employees in uniforms are perceived as a symbol of the company’s brand and therefore advance the company’s brand to their customers). (para.5)

Obviously, uniforms will not work for every company, but many organizations can benefit from adopting uniforms. For many companies, however, uniforms can prevent dress-code violations and reinforce a brand identity for both staff and customers.

Reference


Note: Because the purpose of this exercise is to analyze introductions and conclusions, certain elements of a paper—such as a title page, headings, spacing, indentation, and so forth—are not included.