Writing a Professional Goal Action Plan

In this exercise, you’ll create a **five-year professional goal action plan**. This action plan will outline the specific steps that will help you achieve your goal.

**Part One:**
**Detailing Your Goal: Asking who, what, when, where, why, and how**

What is your five-year professional goal?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Why is it important to achieve this goal?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Who can help me achieve this goal?** (Family, friends, supervisor, mentor, coworkers)
Name__________________________________________________________
Phone__________________________________________________________
Email__________________________________________________________
How and when can they help me?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**What education/training do I need to achieve my goal?**
School__________________________________________________________
Course of study__________________________________________________
Location________________________________________________________
Transportation____________________________________________________
Costs____________________________________________________________

**What specific items or materials (computer, software, etc.) do I need to achieve my goal?**
Item____________________________________________________________
Cost____________________________________________________________
How and when can I purchase the item?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Part Two:  
Creating Benchmarks: How to know if you are achieving your goal  
Once you set a long-term professional goal, create a series of benchmarks – or standards – by which your goal can be measured. In doing so, you will be breaking a large goal into more manageable tasks and will know on a daily basis whether you’re achieving your goal.

In four years, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In three years, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In two years, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In one year, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In six months, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In one month, what will I do to achieve my five-year goal?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Part Three: Focus, Review, and Reflect

It’s important to review your plan on a regular basis so you know whether you’re working toward or way from your goal. The more often you review your plan, the more focused you’ll become.

Consider the following:

**Realize the importance of a daily to-do list.**
Keeping a daily to-do list is helpful when working toward a goal. All of the tasks on your to-do list should be related to meeting your benchmarks (one month, six months, etc.). Write down tasks you know you can achieve in a typical workday so you’ll feel successful every day.

**Celebrate success.**
When you’ve met a benchmark – such as your one-month goal – celebrate your success in some way. This might include treating yourself to your favorite restaurant or going to a movie.

**Evaluate failure.**
If you are repeatedly failing to meet your benchmarks, take some time to evaluate what’s keeping you from meeting these smaller goals. Is there something you could be doing differently? Are there outside factors that are affecting you? Is the long-term goal still realistic, or does it need some adjustment?