

**'Plan for your future because that is where
you are going to spend the rest of your life'**

– Mark Twain –

- 1 Brainstorm – be creative:** Decide what you really want. Brainstorm yourself by asking the question, 'What do I want out of life in the next five years?' Answer that question by writing down everything that comes into your head in terms of:

 - a Home/family
 - b Work
 - c Leisure and personal development
- 2 Re-examine:** Once you have generated these three lists go back and examine them for goals which are:

 - a Incompatible, for example, 'I want to be the best salesman in the company', and 'I want to spend every weekend and evening with my family'. Eliminate one or modify both goals.
 - b Unattainable, for example, 'I want to beat Pete Sampras at tennis'. Change this to, 'I want to win 90 per cent of my club tournament matches this summer'.
- 3 Rewrite in terms of outcome:** Write out your modified goals in clear specific language in terms of an outcome, for example, 'By next Christmas I will have written and had typed up a five-thousand word short story.'
- 4 Create action plans:** Write an action plan or a series of specific activities for the accomplishment of that goal. These are the steps that need to be taken to achieve that goal; again they should be specific. Try to aim for at least six activities for each goal. For example, for writing the short story, activities might be:

 - a Buy a word processor
 - b Enrolling on a course for creative writing
 - c Buying a book on creative writing
 - d Setting aside Tuesday evening for writing
 - e Arrange to meet Jim and show him the first draft on Sunday 6 September
 - f Set up a desk in the spare room
- 5 Identity obstacles:** There will be obstacles to overcome. Identify and plan for these and take the view that obstacles come to instruct. For example, obstacle: 'I might have to work late on a Tuesday'; solution: 'Alter the sales meeting to Wednesday so it will be easier to get away earlier on Tuesday.'
- 6 Build in rewards:** Work out a reward system, for example, 'If I've completed the story by Christmas I will buy myself a compact disc player.'
- 7 Visualise the end result:** Have a clear mental image of what things will be like when you achieve your goal. This acts as a motivator and helps you release energy.