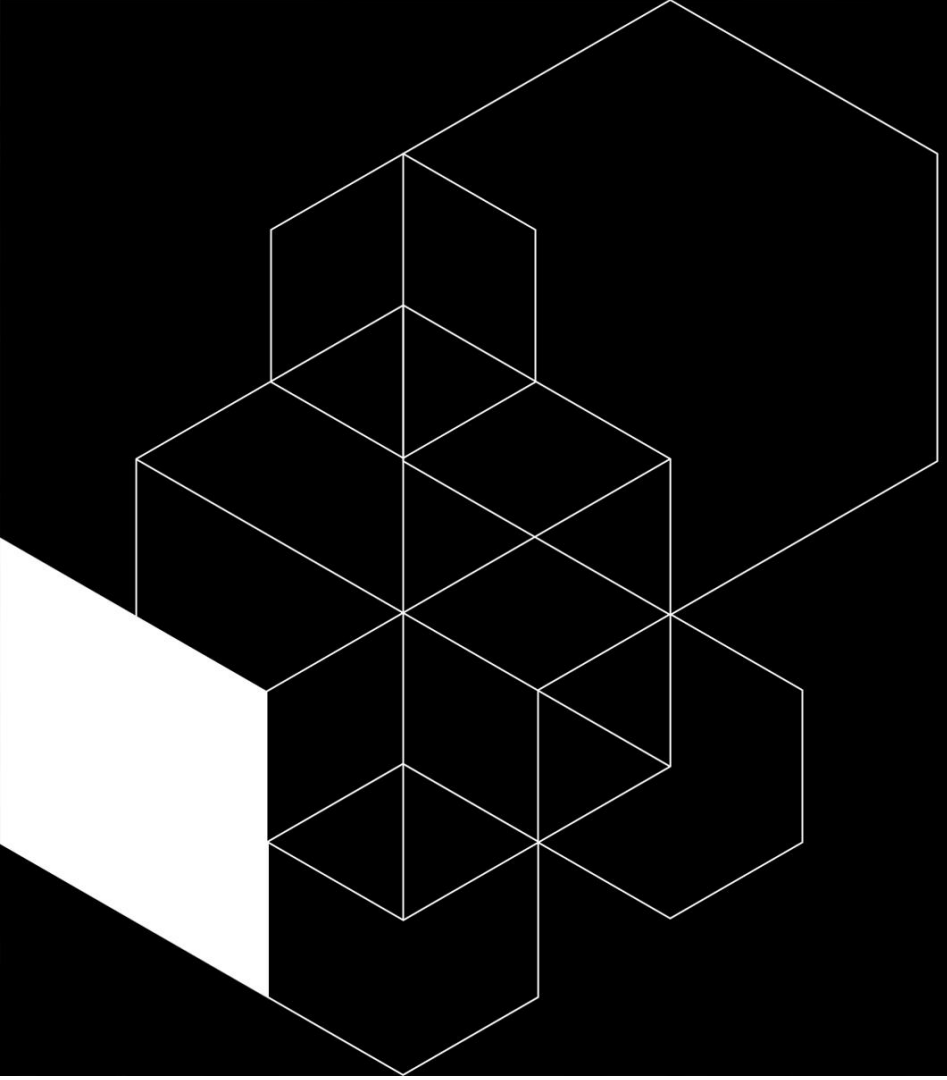


Goal Setting

Turning Projections into Projects
September, Fusion Point 2023
Ole Werner, Laëtitia Pedroso

CERN
Ideas

[redacted]

Do you already know what you want to do when you finish university ?

The importance of goal setting…

A man stopped at an intersection, pointed and asked a person standing there: “Where does this road take me?”
The answer was: “Where do you want to go?”.
The man replied: “I don’t know.”
The response was: “Then take any road, because what difference does it make?”

This applies to life, love, work, projects, sports, art, watching TV… essentially to anything!

Did you ever think about why your eyes point in the same direction as your feet?

→ So that we can see where we are going

→ So that we can reach a goal (you have to see/know what you want to reach)

What is goal setting?

- Planning something that you want to achieve.

What is the purpose of goal setting?

- It gives you direction and focus.

What kind of goals can you set?

- Personal vs. Professional goals
- Fixed goals (time limit) vs. Flexible goals (no time limit)
- Long term (years-life-time)
- Medium term (months-3 years)
- Short-term (days-weeks)

Why do we NOT set goals? (even if it could help)

Typical avoidance reasons

- Seeing Pitfalls instead of possibilities.
  - I see what is missing not what I can do –> Preparation without action
- Personal value system as the pitfall to a fulfilled life.
  - Negative self-image, lacking emotional support, “want to be spontaneous”
- I do not know how to set goals for myself…
- I fear that I will be rejected because of my (choice of) goals?!
  - If you want to become a millionaire, dare to say it out
- If I don’t set goals, I don’t feel pressure.
- I fear that I will fail in achieving my goals?!
- Missing knowledge about the mechanics of goal setting.

Why can Goal Setting help?

- Taking control: increase self-reliance and self-management. ‘Making a decision feels good’.
- Better ability to distinguish between important and less important things in life or career.
- Focus sets priorities on resources so tasks can be finished. (also, friends reminding you)
- Completing tasks creates a feeling of achievement. You are now ready for the next step.

Why goals sometimes fail

- Goals are not goals unless you have written them down.
- Achieving the goal does not bring you a reward.
- The goals is so general, that achieving/not-achieving cannot be measured anyway.
- The goal is so low that achieving it does not mean much.
- There is no commitment to achieving the goal.
- Goals are constantly changed.
- Nobody knows about your goals, so you do not have any support.
- The goal is not supported by a plan/idea on what is needed in resources or time.

Pitfall: Unrealistic Goals

My Internship at the European Commission (didn't happen)

- ➔ Obligatory Internship during my masters (Behavior Change)
- ➔ CCoBI takes interns every year (also from my master's program)
- ➔ "Please apply >1 year prior to starting date"

What makes Goals unrealistic/meaningless?

- When they are **untimely** (not achievable within the time(-frame)
- When you do not have (enough) **resources**
- When you have **not defined** your goal clearly enough

Risks when you set unrealistic goals:

- feelings of failure
- lower self-image
- low self-esteem

Risk on creating a negative cycle of not wanting to set new goals at all!

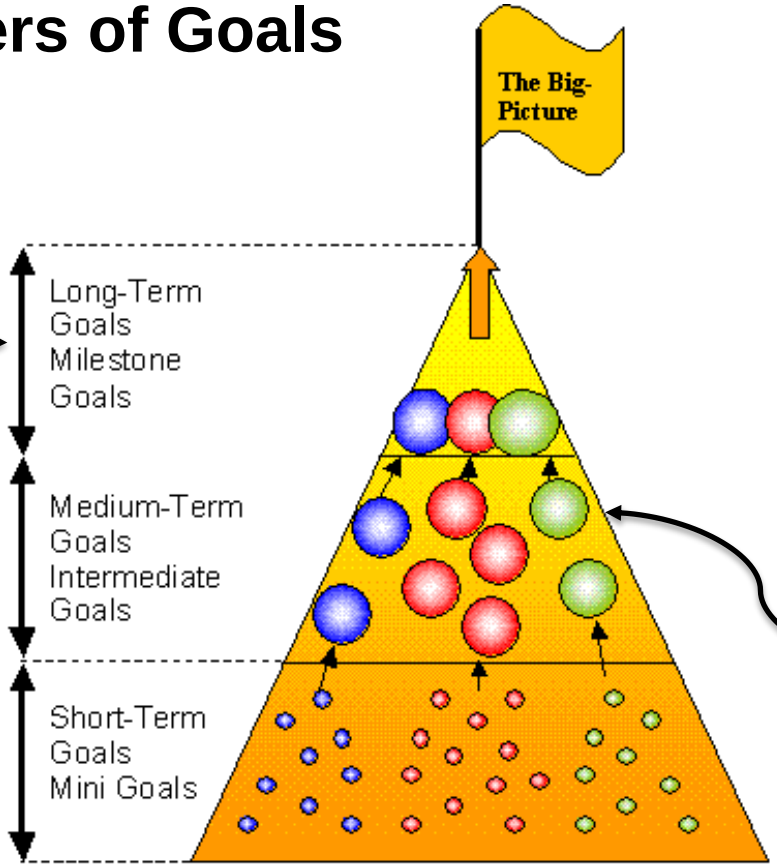
Good Goals

[redacted] is when setting goals

Setting only short/medium-term goals leads to fragmentation.
A long-term vision is crucial to setting relevant, measurable and achievable short/medium-term goals.

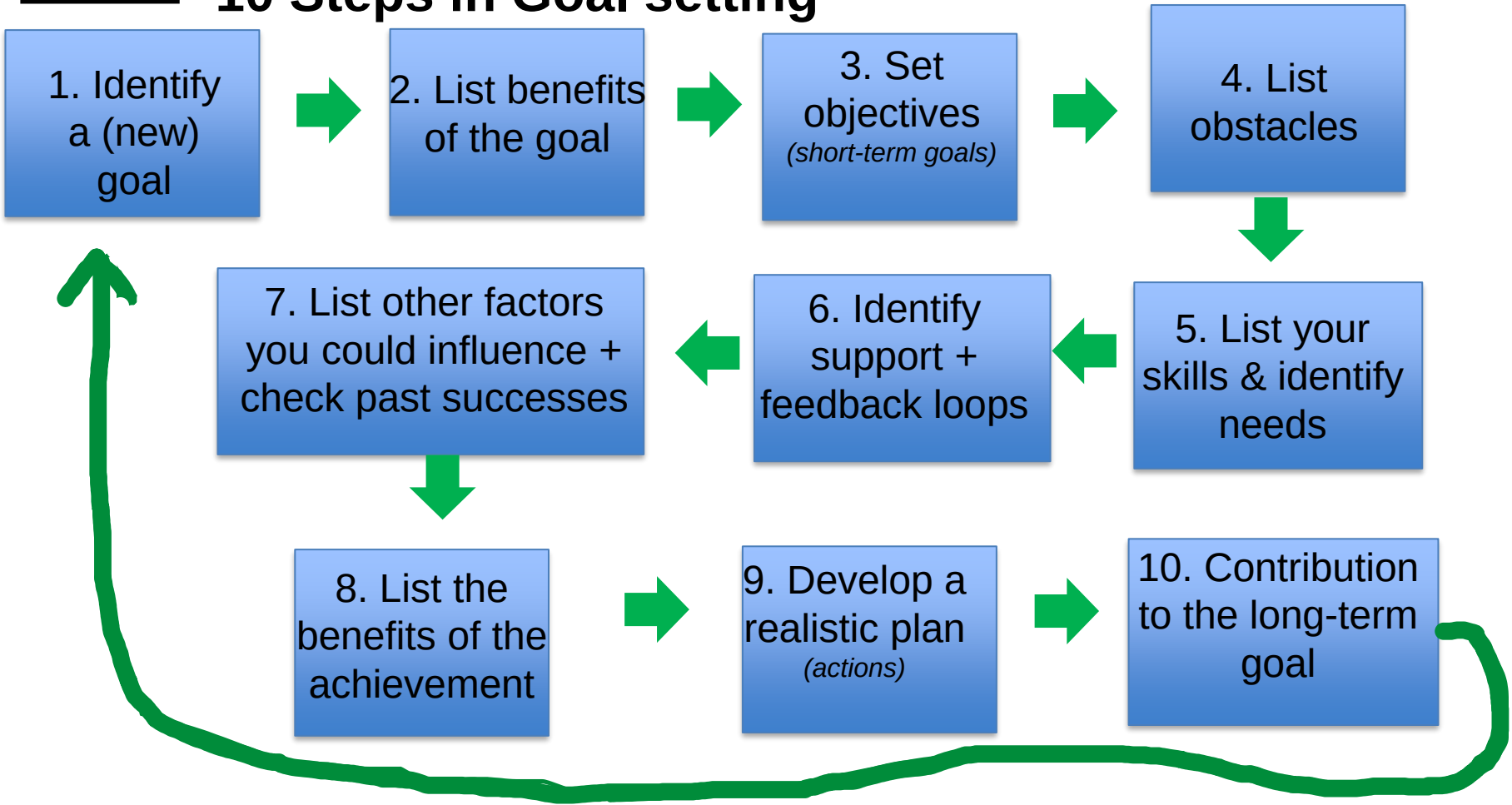
Three Layers of Goals

For Example:
- Poster
- Prototype
- Pitch
- …

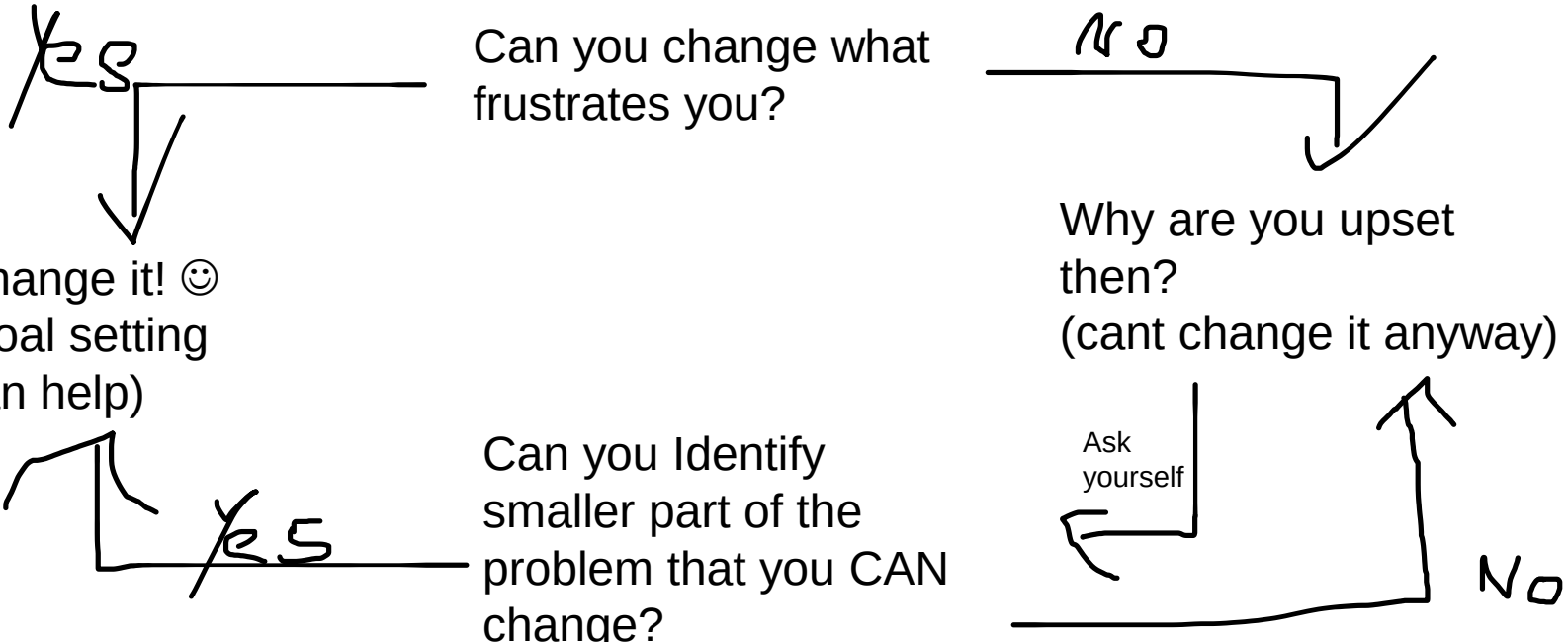


- Storyline
- Materials (analog)
- Materials (digital)

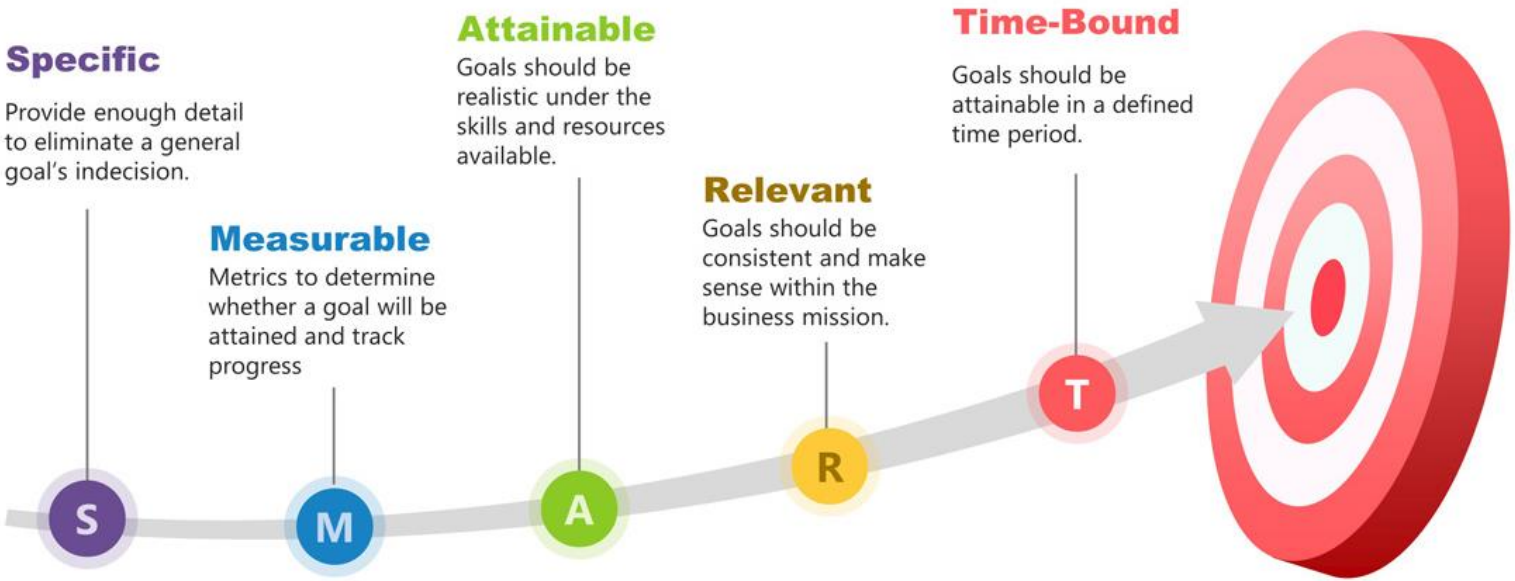
10 Steps in Goal setting



The Stoic's guide against frustration (or when goal setting can help)



SMART Goals (Doran, Miller, Cunningham, 1981)



About identifying SMART(ER) Goals

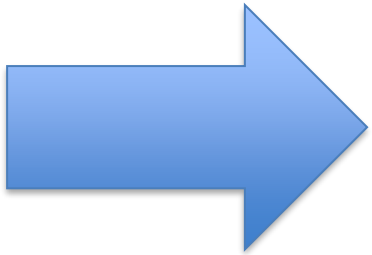
S Specific

M Measurable

A Attainable

R Realistic

T Time-bound



Beware: SMART is often used by managers simply to push productivity, not personal/professional development

S Specific

M Measurable

A Attainable

R Realistic

T Time-bound

E Ethical

R Record & Revise

Take-aways

“Plans are nothing; Planning is Everything”

- Dwight D. Eisenhower

-> To tackle big projects, planning is needed
-> A Plan has multiple layers; short-, mid-, and long-term
-> A good plan aims to be done before delivery (this case: 25th evening)
-> A good plan has room for errors (more realistic)

Final Sprint

Looking at the schedule on indico, create a SMART(ER) timeline **from today, 21.07, until the 26.07**

- Include the materials/ressources you will need
- Include “error margins”
- Divide & conquer: You are more than just 1 ☺

S **Specific (What & why)**
Not just state what you want, but also the reason for wanting it, how and by when

M **Measurable (How do we know how it is going?)**
What is the exact delta improvement you want to achieve (progress based on numbers!)

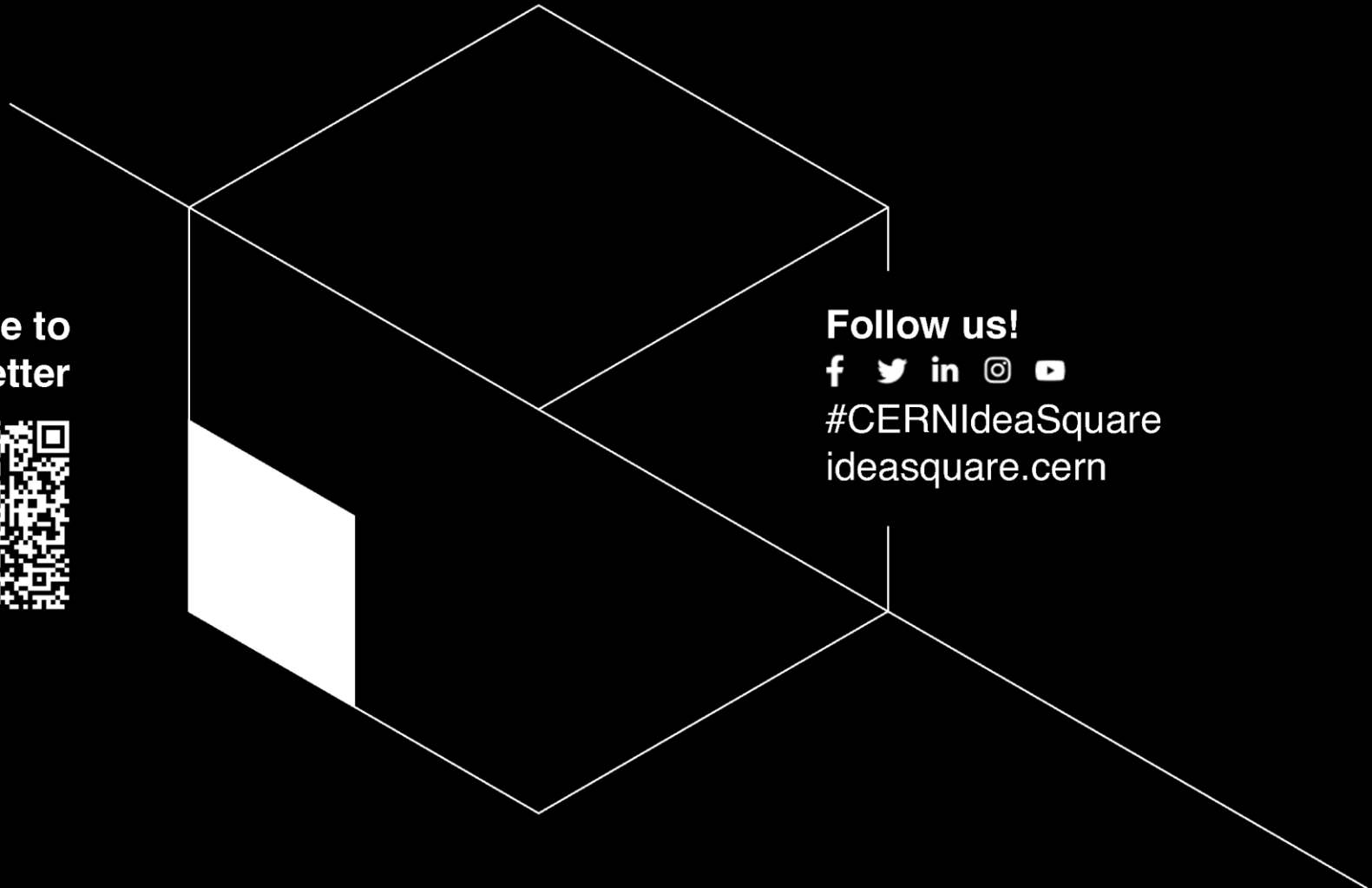
A **Attainable**
Just out of reach, but not out of sight (*visible at the horizon*)

R **Realistic**
Must be within your capacity to achieve (with help, with new skills, with support, in time) and still tied to your long-term goal

T **Time-bound** Set yourself a start and target end-date

E **Ethical**
Make sure the short/mid-term goals remain within your moral compass

R **Record & Revise**
Write goals down, so other can verify and it is easier to monitor progress.
Also: check if long-term goal remains constant and short/medium-term goals are (still) relevant



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