

Money Matter\$ - 20 November 2025 By Standard Chartered Bank

Title: Understanding your financial motivation and acting on them

What motivates you to work and earn money?

Whether it is the basic need to put food on the table for your family or to fulfill a wish such as going for a nice holiday abroad, any reason that motivates you is an objective in itself that you can use as an incentive to act on.

An activation plan to turn your motivations into achievable objectives

But just having a vague idea of what you want to save your money for and spend it on may not be sufficient to achieve them. Your dream can be as large as having a million dollars in your account by the time you are 40 years old but if you really only have \$100 at present and you are already 30 years old, it might be a bit far-fetched unless you take some extremely drastic and risky steps.

While nothing is impossible to achieve, reality will have to take a front seat when it comes to what can be achieved. Some examples of different financial goals that many people can relate to could be saving for a house, saving for a holiday, wanting new furniture, saving for retirement and so on.

What is important here is that once you realise what it is that you want or need, you should create a plan to take action on. The goal can never be achieved unless you act on it. And not only do you need to put your action into gear, you also need to do it sensibly.

Action plans for short term goals

A short term goal can be an objective that you may want to achieve in a range of 6 months or even up to 2 or 3 years.

Let's say for example you want to get a new iPhone which is by no means cheap and can set you back at least \$1300. While the easy way out is to simply take a loan for it or purchase it with your credit card, a more sensible option is to save for this 'want' item. If you can set aside about \$200 a month for 6 months, you will be able to pay for it with well-saved cash and it will be a sweet reward for your patience. With this option, you will not incur interest charges that would come with a loan facility which may not be worth the depreciation rate.

Other short term goals could be to save for a deposit for a new car. There are many things to consider such as is the price of the car reasonable and within your repayment means? Unless you have funds to pay for a car with cash upfront, a sensible option here is to save up for the initial deposit and then take a loan for the rest of the amount. Even then, do shop around for the best rates or offers in town. Remember to exercise discipline and moderation with your choice of vehicle. Your monthly repayment should not, by any means, become a monthly burden that you cannot manage, resulting in a loan default.

Action plans for long term goals

Long term goals are different in nature and usually carry larger weight than short term goals. Examples of long term goals are purchasing of a house, children's' education, retirement or increasing investment holdings. Long term goals take anywhere from 5 to 10 years or more to achieve and require discipline that stems from your motivation to achieve it.

With a long term goal, decisions made over them are even more crucial as they affect important aspects of your life. For example purchasing your first home, may be an option not made by choice as you may need to adjust your expectations of what you can afford according to what is available in the property market. Positive reinforcement is also called for in house hunting situations whereby if finding a home becomes an urgent need due to an expanding family, then perhaps you can settle for the best alternative at the moment. With property, you can always bank on being able to resell the home when you think that you have found your dream home.

While retirement may seem far away for many, it is always one of those long term goals that is easily overlooked until late in life when the time is approaching. It is highly encouraged for all to save for their retirement and to safeguard their savings against inflation. This long term financial goal is virtually a non-negotiable and should be on everyone's financial agenda. Starting early lifts some of the weight of saving for retirement, hence it is important to put an action plan on this as soon as you are able.

Start today

Whatever your financial motivation or goal is, turn them into reality by beginning on your plans today. There is no need to wait for next month or next year because financial plans can always be changed or adjusted to suit your current financial situation.

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