

## Clear Out the Old and Bring in the New

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It's that time of year again. We have made our New Year's resolutions and stand firm in our commitment to absolutely, positively do things differently in the upcoming year. The success of *your* organizational goals can often be helped or hindered by the motivation your team feels – so how do you get them to transition from last year and start fresh with renewed commitment to the annual goals? How can you keep them focused and motivated, while acknowledging them as individuals with many, sometimes conflicting, roles and goals? We recommend three steps to get you headed down the right path.

### 1. Complete and acknowledge the past year

Clearly, most of us do meet many of our objectives; however, many fall by the wayside even with good intent. Our reaction too often is to simply move on to the next year and start anew. However, in order to be most effective and productive for the future, you need to finish up the prior year and acknowledge what worked and what didn't work. Have every team member, including you, create a list of all the unfinished business of 2009. Put it aside. Don't dwell on it.

- Leave old and dead ideas in the past. If you've been reworking the same plan over and over without success, why not leave it in 2009 and start with a fresh view? You will be surprised what you come up with when you leave the past in the past.
- Clean up unfinished business in your relationships. Commit to speaking with colleagues with whom you don't have a stellar relationship and work to improve the dynamics so you can each move into the New Year with a clean slate.
- Have each team member acknowledge five things they did well over the past year whether functionally or developmentally, acknowledge two big lessons learned, and acknowledge at least two other team members and their accomplishments. This can be done privately or in a group setting.
- After you complete this process, declare the year done and move on.

### 2. Recognize your team has priorities outside of the office

It can be helpful for teams to recognize that personal goals can be part of the annual goal setting process and can help create a more motivated and energized work force. Recall how you have felt when you have slipped up on a personal resolution – most of us feel tempted to trash the whole list, which is why most resolutions are non-existent by the end of Q1.

Why not encourage your team to share a personal goal with the group? A little group awareness and support can have positive carry-over into the team dynamic. If someone is trying to eat healthier, maybe the morning donuts can be substituted for a fruit tray, or if another team member is trying to make a child's weekly soccer game, end of day meetings can be shifted without others feeling resentment. A few small changes can help team members stay on track out of the office, which helps to keep everyone feeling motivated.

### 3. Encourage your team to talk to you about resource needs

Most work objectives are not a matter of one person, but a team effort with many interdependencies. An open dialogue about each team member's needs from each other, as

well as from other functional groups can lead to a great discussion about priorities and work flow. As a manager, it can highlight where you will need to source support and prioritize work in order to reach the goals.

If you follow these three suggestions for any area of your business whether it's marketing, commercial, finance, HR, corporate, or for projects large or small, it's likely you'll find a great deal more success to celebrate when the next New Year rolls around.