



Your Small Business: Winning in the New Year

There is definitely a lot of talk about the national economy right now. Topics like falling off the fiscal cliff, raising taxes, reducing the federal deficit, and slow economic growth (2.5% growth forecast for 2013) have dominated the headlines and our thought processes.

Based on what is currently happening in our nation, it is a normal response to be cautious (maybe even downright fearful) of the future. Matter of fact, for many of us, it is so easy to become consumed with the negative aspects of our economy and the daily difficulties we face, that we miss the wonderful opportunities that are before us. The upshot is that we can become so consumed with working *IN* our business, dealing with the daily grind, that we fail to work *ON* our business as competent entrepreneurs creating a sustainable model that will thrive in most any national economy.

“You may not be able to affect the national economy, but you are able to affect your personal economy.” Zig Ziglar

To help us get out of this “wrong thinking” trap, let’s carve out a couple of hours over this first week of the New Year to think about the following steps:

Step 1: Review 2012.

Firstly, review 2012. Make a short list and think about each month. Reflect on your moments of excellence. What did you do really well? What were *YOUR* “Best Practices” for your office? Think about what worked and gave you success. What didn’t work? How were my core values reflected in my business? No need to overcomplicate this process just be honest and positive. Celebrate your good accomplishments in 2012. Learn from your poor decisions.

Step 2: Ask “What would I do with my business if I could do *anything*?”

Just brainstorm with no voice of criticism to hold you back. Write out all the ideas that come to mind. Where do you want to be with your business and your life in 5 years’ time? In 2 years’ time? At the end of 2013?

Step 3: Go back and spend a bit more time on Step 2.

Too often business owners conclude their business planning with the second best option in mind. They have a sense of what they would really like to do but end up pushing it aside. Why? Maybe they think the plan is not realistic, or perhaps they think resources are limited, or, maybe they think “I’m just too afraid.”



All of us have those concerns from time to time. But those concerns or fears should not dictate our path to success. Your passion and drive is sufficient to overcome any lack of resource. Matter of fact, any successful entrepreneur will tell you that it's your passion and drive that create your *wellspring* of resource for achieving success.

Step 4: Ask, “Where am I now?”

Look over your list and reflect on what is *really* going on. Where am I now? Do I see trends in what I have done? What happens if these trends continue? Are these trends leading me to a good place? Am I on my way to fulfilling Step 2? What is working? What is not working?

Step 5: Write down “What’s Missing” for 2013.

Make a list of the top items that are missing from your success. Think about each aspect of your business and ask yourself this question: “What’s currently missing in this area of my business, that if provided would take me to a whole new level of success?” Try to place them in order of priority.

Step 6: Decide what you will say “NO” to.

Emerson said, *“The crime which bankrupts men and nations is that of turning aside from one's main purpose to serve a job here and there.”*

Be ruthless with your “What’s Missing” list. Don’t allow the “good” or the “what’s expected” or the “mediocre” to stand in the way of achieving your great objective for 2013 and beyond.

This “new norm” for doing business has spoken. It will reward those who create distinctive and innovative solutions to the problems that buyers and sellers of businesses encounter. It rewards excellence in creative solutions and applications. It will bankrupt mediocrity!

Say “NO” to anything that takes you off track of your great goal for 2013. Saying “NO” to the non-essentials will keep you to your “True North.”

Step 7: Make an action plan for 2013.

Include your What’s Missing items. Month by month, write out a short plan as to how you will hit your 2013 goal. Have monthly goals to gauge your success. Collaborate with your team and get everyone involved. Make a short one page written Action Plan.

Step 8: Create a “Quick Win” Project.

Think of a quick win that you and your team could get excited about. Make it a practical goal that could be achieved in 90 days. There is nothing like victory, even a small one, to spur further success. Make a list of quick wins that could be achieved in a small amount of time.



There are 8,760 hours available to us in 2013. That represents 8,760 opportunities for little wins or little screw ups. The choice is ours. Spending two or three hours on the 8 steps above could really improve the quality of your business results for 2013 and beyond.

“You were born to win, but to be the winner you were born to be you must plan to win and prepare to win. Then and only then can you legitimately expect to win.” Zig Ziglar