

## Resolve to Be Successful in 2007 – One Day at a Time

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I am an optimist. It is a necessary trait to be in this business. I cherish beginnings because there is so much hope and promise. And, if things are done well, great success will follow! Okay, so here we are at the beginning of a promising new year – 2007. What's the secret to having a more successful year than the previous one? I suspect the answer is different for different people and I certainly don't pretend to know all the answers. But, I am happy to pass along to you the things I do know in the hope that you will be inspired to plan for a more successful year.

Life experiences have taught me that successful people don't simply let life happen to them. They plan and they act. If they need to, they adjust the plan and act. This cycle continues until the goal is achieved or discarded because circumstances changed or a new goal is needed. The same is true for successful business resiliency programs or projects.

On the topic of creating success, two recent newspaper articles spoke to me, even though they were totally unrelated to organization resiliency programs, per se. The first, an article published by the Daily Herald on 12/28/06 by staff writer Pam DeFiglio titled "One-day New Year's Resolutions," caught my eye because its premise is that if you can complete your goal in 24 hours, you'll actually do it. And, doing it will make you feel that you truly accomplished something. Having *that* feeling provides you with positive reinforcement. That means you will likely go on to make more 24-hour resolutions (goals) and be ever more successful.

The second, an article published by the Chicago Tribune on 12/31/06 by staff reporter Patrick Kampert titled "It's Never Too Late to Stop Procrastinating" reminded me of my annual resolution to manage my time more effectively in order to find a way to get more out of each day and find peace-of-mind. Sound familiar to anyone? It is no wonder with the busy lives we lead; the ever-increasing responsibilities at the office, perhaps the responsibility of taking care of children and aging parents, and then 24/365 wireless connections to anyone who wants our attention. Kampert reported some good advice: (1) figure out what not achieving your goals (or procrastinating on them) is costing you, (2) find the tiniest step you can take to get started on the project, and (3) make your goals easily achievable.

These two articles really are addressing the same issue – making New Year's resolutions (goals) that you can stick to and accomplish. Why? To be more successful! Although they started with different issues, they came to the same conclusion - take any major goal

and break it down into very small steps, doable in maybe just one day! Sounds like good project management to me. However, if you are familiar with project management methodology, this advice flies in the face of generating a project schedule that creates tasks in one- or two-week increments. If you have to track daily tasks, it could be enormously time-consuming. This is true.

My advice: *Set your goals soon and high.* For example, in September we will successfully complete an enterprise-wide full-scale simulation exercise. *Then go about the task of breaking down each goal into small (1-day) objectives.* On 1/15 determine the success criteria; on 1/16 publish the criteria to the Steering Committee for their feedback; on 1/17 determine appropriate expectations for the scenario team and the internal and external participants regarding the exercise; on 1/18 publish them to the Steering Committee for their feedback; on 1/19 receive feedback from Steering Committee and revise, etc.

Please note, I am not advocating that you determine today what you will accomplish every day this year (way too daunting, inflexible and short-sighted). What I am suggesting is that you first figure out what your success goals will be for this year, then take them each as a separate unit and conduct a work breakdown analysis for each one. Be as specific as you can. If you need to, get help to do this. What you may end up with are checklists for daily tasks and a project schedule for the one- and two-week chunks of work as seen on a GANTT chart. If you find that you come up with vague tasks such as “create a facilitator’s guide for the exercise,” break that down into its components (day tasks) such as (1) write copy (this may take you more than one day – so what copy will you write on day one, day two, etc), (2) create PowerPoint, (3) send guide to Steering Committee for review, (4) edit guide, (5) send to printer, (6) buy binders, (7) pick up guide from printer, (8) assemble guide. At the end of each day you will be able to quickly review what you set out to accomplish and plan your actions for the next day. This can be a mental activity if you work best that way, or if you really, really hate lists – but do go through the mental exercise.

Since you’ve gotten this far in reading the article, please do a favor for me. Send me your favorite suggestion(s) for achieving success in 2007. We’ll publish the best or most unusual ideas in the next issue of the Executive Report.

As you journey through the coming year, may you live with courage, love with compassion and be the voice of Peace on Earth. Happy trails to you in Oh-Seven!

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