

End-of-Year Task List Weight Loss Program

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If you're like most people, you have a huge list of items that perpetually stay on your "To Do" list. Knowing those items are out there is like walking around with heavy weights around your ankles – you are unendingly bogged down. December is traditionally a very slow month, unless you are in retail. So, now is a great time to tackle those long-forgotten tasks with a vengeance, including dusting off your BCP!

In order to effectively move things off your "To Do" list, you must first take the time to sit down and manage your time. Take 90 minutes to create a 2008 plan of action. Find a time when you can be alone and uninterrupted, even if it means working outside of the office. While you may not need the full 90 minutes, take it anyway!

Start the session by doing absolutely nothing for five minutes. Impossible, right? Wrong. Force yourself to do *nothing* for five minutes, to clear the mental clutter from your brain. The more you let go of trying to remember all of the things you're afraid to forget, the more you will remember.

Once your mind is clear, focus on what you need to do. Begin to think about all of the tasks that need your attention. Look at your calendar and current task list(s), if you need help remembering all there is to do. However, stay focused on the things you are tasked with, not that you are worried about. There is a difference. Make a list of the tasks you are actually tasked with, and label them "Action List." You don't need to go into great detail – just jot down some quick notes. Get them out of your head and onto the paper.

After you have a completed your "Action List," consider all of the various categories the tasks fall under. Are they projects, meetings, reports, etc.? Create columns for each category, and place each item on the "Action List" onto your "Categorized List". Watch for repeating and overlapping items, and delete them when you find them. Each task should only be under one category.

Begin to prioritize the items on your "Categorized List." Do it in groups of five. To do this, look at your entire "Categorized List" and ask yourself: "What are the five most important things I need to accomplish?" Rank those five, from one to five. Ask the question again with the remaining items on your list. Continue working this way until you have prioritized your entire "Categorized List."

Your prioritized items must now make their way on to the calendar. Ask yourself: "What do I need in order to accomplish this task?", and "How much time do I need to accomplish this task?", and "When is the best time to work on this task?" Look for pre-determined meetings or appointments, and schedule these tasks first. Begin scheduling the other prioritized tasks by taking into consideration the needs of each given task.

Be careful not to put everything onto your calendar in the first week. The idea here is to stop feeling overwhelmed. Although it may feel like all of your tasks are urgent, they are not. To be most effective, plan your task list out months in advance, leaving in plenty of room for any changing demands.

Some tasks that may not be on your current agenda for 2008, but should be include:

1. Supply Chain Check-Up

Your organization likely sits in the center of a complex web of suppliers, with your suppliers on one end and your customers on the other end. The convergence of three trends has made supply chain a mission critical concern to business resilience: our enormously complex and sometimes dangerous world, the growth of the global economy, and the unwavering pursuit of efficiency within supply chains with shrinking inventories or just-in-time services. Fully integrated supply chains operate most efficiently. Understanding potential vulnerabilities can help ensure supply chain resilience when the unexpected occurs. Have you identified your key suppliers and key customers? Have you discussed your business continuity needs with them? If not, maybe this should be high on your list for 2008.

2. Review Business Continuity Awareness Program

Ensuring that everybody within your organization understands how to respond to and recover from a critical event is an ongoing process. However, general awareness of the existence of a business continuity plan and a basic understanding why the organization has a BCP is not enough. Your organization should strive to be proactive towards business continuity. A proactive organization is one in which employees take personal responsibility for identifying and reporting risks and see the need to go the extra mile to help implement aspects of the BCP.

3. Review Workplace Violence Policies

Employees are your biggest liability. Your organization should be aware of laws regarding “negligent hiring” and “negligent retention” where employers can be responsible for violence that its employees commit. Does your company have a workplace violence policy? Does your company train your managers and supervisors on workplace violence? Does your company have a termination policy? Does your company ensure all employees are treated with respect, even when being let go? Does your company have security measures in place to prevent and/or mitigate a former employee from coming back to do harm?

4. Evaluate Social Networking Channels

Social networking tools, such as LinkedIn and Spoke, are becoming mission critical for sales, customer support and general business-to-business relationships. Have you considered these areas within your business continuity plan?

5. Review Pandemic Planning

Do you know how your recovery facility providers will respond to the Pandemic? Will your staff be allowed access to work-area seats immediately or will there be some sort of health screening process which will slow down the response? If you don't already have a specific Pandemic Plan as part of your BCP, add it to the list of must-do's in 2008.

6. Review Environmental Issues

The profile of climate change continues to grow. Most experts now agree that climate change is a "clear and present danger." There are clear business continuity implications to environmental issues. Learn how your organization needs to change to address both the long-term and short-term threats that climate change poses.

7. Analyze Telecommuting Capabilities

Telecommuting is becoming widely accepted. The number of home offices across the world is burgeoning. However, telecommuting also creates many small single points of failure, which can be mission critical for key employees. Has your organization explored the pros and cons of telecommuting from a business continuity perspective?

8. Review Your Plan for Availability and Consistency

Annually, you should identify all of your mission critical systems, system backup and system recovery. These may change from year to year. In addition, review all of your financial and operational risks. Review employee safety strategies and communications. Review and analyze your system and telecommunications capabilities and accessibility. And, finally, review and analyze your alternate site location and preparedness.

We all make resolutions in January. Use December to get a jump-start on your End-of-Year Task List Weight-Loss program. This will help you make sure 2008 is a great year for you and your organization. Good luck!!

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