

Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry

Business Planning Tips for 2011—A Procrastinator’s Guide

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“Four Things You Can do Now to Plan for 2011—and Make it a Great Year for Your Business”

I have a friend who is a superstar of “the diving catch” ...he gets results in his business, but only by racing to get things done just before his deadlines. He will make the “diving catch” just before the ball he is about to drop hits the ground. He tells me he wishes it were different, that he could put a plan in place to make life easier...or at least more orderly. He even admits he might get better results if he did that, but he just doesn’t have time to plan.

Sound familiar? My friend is actually pretty normal. Few of us have the time, or perhaps more accurately are willing to take the time, to build a plan for our business. I guarantee that you can get better results if you take the time to step back, work on your business, set a short list of goals, and then embrace a few key tools that will help you execute against those goals. Here are four things you can do now to plan for 2011, and make it a great year for your business.

1. Take a Clarity Break – Pick a day, right now, in the next 30 days, to step away from your daily business routine to think about what you want to accomplish in the next 12 months. This will help you get centered, set your goals, and also decide what you won’t do this year.
2. Set 3-5 big goals for the year—When you are in your Clarity Break, set a short list of goals for your business for the next 12 months. A shorter list of goals is better, by the way. You will force yourself to decide what your priorities really are. Make the goals SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely). This is actually hard—being specific and defining how you will measure your performance usually is—but it is really worth it. Define an owner for each goal...someone on your team who will take the lead in making sure you go after that goal aggressively.
3. Assess your team, with next year in mind—I mean 2012. With your annual goals in mind, take a look at the seats (key positions) you will need in your business in 12 months and define what each will be responsible for at that time. Only after you have done that, ask who will be the right person for that seat. If you don’t have all the right people today, then ask yourself how you will help people on your team grow into those seats, or how you will recruit new team members with the right skills to fill those seats. This exercise is a great way to define how your organization must evolve to achieve your goals and to prosper in the long term.

4. Put yourself in a 90-day world—Set 90-day priorities and pursue them with passion. This is a short list of things you must get done in the next 90 days to move toward your annual goals. Adopt just 3-5 of these 90 day priorities, and make them SMART, with clear metrics to track your progress and one owner for each. By committing to achieve a short list of priorities every 90 days, you will gain tremendous traction as you pursue your annual goals.

Take time out to simplify and clarify what you want to achieve this year, how your team must change, and how you will execute every week and every quarter to reach those goals, and you won't need to make nearly as many "diving catches" in 2011.

About the author: Rip Tilden is a Partner with Makarios Consulting, a full service management consulting firm that works with business owners and entrepreneurs who want to grow their business and execute more effectively every day. We help you clarify your strategy, sharpen your execution, and empower your leaders to turn "can do" into "will do". Call Rip at 610-909-7580 and visit the Makarios website at www.makariosconsulting.com.