

Hope everyone had a great holiday and that you're totally recharged for the New Year. It's a fresh start, so let's rip into it, right? Not so fast, friends. Before we go any further it's necessary for us to take an honest, hard look at what we accomplished last year. How can we think about next year until last years' efforts have been evaluated? Self-examination is a very scary thing for some of us. How do we stack up to ourselves? It's been said many times that we are often our own worst critics.

So here's the million-dollar question...what do you expect out of your personal and business life compared to the effort you put into fulfilling your expectations?

It's time to take a long look in the mirror and do a gut check. I know it sounds painful, but it's necessary, so do it. No pain no gain! I know right now that there are three types of people reading this article...see which one you are.

Some of us want great success but are only giving minimum effort and this unfulfilled gap keeps us awake at night, frustrated and second-guessing ourselves. The good news of course is that we have all been given the opportunity to change and we can do so at any time. There are two choices available to you folks...either lower your success expectations or kick it up a gear and get at it. You'll feel better either way!

Others of you will think that this whole article is a waste of time because

you probably don't bother to set any kind of goals for yourself either personally or in your business. You're the unbelievers and I can hear you all now... "All this talk about self improvement and goal-setting and getting better year over year. Stop giving me this drivel, Haight and let me read about a good rant ya got mixed up in already...stir it up boy!" I was one of these drivers for quite awhile so I'll be patient and wait for the day when hopefully the light might come on in your heads. Until then mediocrity will be your curse, folks.

Last but certainly not least is the achievers... you know, the ones who have their ducks in a row. These readers are actually looking in the mirror on a fairly regular basis because they're liking what they see. They put a plan together and work until they achieve it. They know that their effort is in direct correlation to their outcome and they like it that way. A bump in the road is not looked on as a chance to complain and play victim, it is a complication that needs to be managed and overcome.

So what do we review from last year and what do we set as goals for next?

Owner Operators should have business goals in the following areas:

1. All variable expenses including fuel and maintenance.



Welcome to 2007

2. Gross revenue.
3. Achievement of your yearly budget.
4. Contribution to your long-term goals i.e. retirement, debt elimination etc.
5. Management of your support teams i.e. your repair facility, financial advisor/bookkeeper and carrier revenue stream.
6. Tax management.
7. Investigate the latest innovations. What did you do last year do ensure that you were aware of new opportunities to be more successful, either by lowering you operating cost or increasing your revenue?

Company Drivers might set goals including the following:

1. Gross revenue.
2. Tax management.
3. Contribution to your long-term goals (i.e. retirement, debt elimination etc.)

If this looks familiar to some of you it's because it's basically the same list I wrote about last January. A couple of old adages apply here. The first is that you cannot manage what is not measured. The second is that what gets measured will see a 10% improvement even without a formal plan of change. Simple awareness of a particular goal will open you eyes to the effect your actions have on the result.

Recognize when a situation needs to change and waste little time playing the victim game. Analyze where you're at and how you got there, then figure out what it will take to fix the problem to your satisfaction and move on.

Bet your bottom dollar that 2007 will have its challenges just as 2006 had

its unique challenges. Who do you think will stand a better chance of being in a better position when 2008 gets here and we close the books on 2007? Will it be those of you who have a plan for success or those who just roll with the punches?

When you're considering the words you have just read please take time to reflect on just why you're doing this job, anyway. All of us have loved ones and friends we depend on so it is quite normal and acceptable to think about goals in this area also. Consider the question,

"How will I strengthen my relationship with those who are most important to me and let them know how much they mean to me?"

All of you tough old truckers would be lost without your support networks, so don't take them for granted, Think it through, driver!

One parting thought for you to consider...

An old proverb goes like this...
"A plan without action is a daydream,
Action without a plan is a nightmare."

What do you think?

Feel free to drop me a line on these ideas.

Safe Trucking!

Yours truly,
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