

# The Business Monthly

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## Take Your Pick: Success or Disappointment

by Carolyn West Price



Resolutions. Goals. Call them what you want. The end is the same—you either accomplish something important to you...or you get disappointed. Which will it be for you?

Assuming you don't want it to be the latter, take these suggestions.

First, write down at least 10 goals. They should be realistic, quantifiable, and have a "deadline" attached to them.

For instance, you may say, "By March 1, I want to improve my inquiry follow-up procedure by creating and printing a post card with an incentive to use my company; this will be sent on the same day the call is received." Now, just do it.

Second, share this list with a group of peers, employees, friends, or a personal "coach." Not only can these people help you achieve the goals, they can help encourage you...and keep you accountable. One such group worth considering is a "Business Dialogue" group—a terrific value-added benefit to being a Chamber member. These Dialogue groups are comprised of non-competing businesses that basically serve as the board of directors for each other. Usually the meetings are

quite candid, with each member contributing his or her perspective to the issues facing other members. They are also great forums for goal sharing and keeping you on track.

Third, don't forget to include some personal goals on this list. Is there something in your personal life that you want to do...or do better or differently? Remember, having a well-balanced life should be a goal for all of us, balancing family and personal time with business. In this way, we will perform better and more enthusiastically regardless of the "hat" we're wearing.

Other low-cost goals you may choose to add to your list include: getting more publicity for "free" marketing, nurturing better relationships with key referral sources, and empowering and rewarding your staff for bringing in new business and maintaining it. Of course, to be effective, these goals need to be more specific as stated earlier. Nonetheless, they're inexpensive ways to grow your business—assuming that is an overall objective behind the madness of goal-setting anyway.

According to Executive Coach Randy Burnett, "Most people can identify goals, but achieving them

often takes personal coaching so an individual has encouragement and support—so an individual is accountable to someone other than himself."

Just remember...it's up to you whether your resolutions become reality. Identify your goals, commit to them and surround yourself with folks who'll help you achieve them. Then, at strategic benchmarks, look back at the list of goals and smile at your accomplishments. It really doesn't have to be any harder than that...but we have to start somewhere.

FYI—Join me at the Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce brown bag seminar on Thursday, Feb. 26. Call 410-825-6200.

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