



Failed your New Year
business development
resolutions already?

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Why not focus your energy on simply getting things done?

If we're honest, we probably make the same resolutions year on year. That's not the difficult part. It's actually making them happen that gets lost in day-to-day life.

When it comes to business development we have heard so many good intentions from professionals:

"We will definitely get that promotional and seminar programme ready to go by March, and keep it going every quarter"

"I will target 2/3 new clients in our chosen sectors on an ongoing basis"

"I will try and introduce a new service to our key clients at least one a month in 2017"

If we're honest we have probably all failed at some stage to deliver on our well intentioned business development plans and resolutions!

So what practical steps can we take to increase the likelihood of effective action? Not all of these will resonate with you – we're all motivated by different things – but if one of them does, embrace it.

Why are we doing this?

"Very few professionals or firms can clearly articulate WHY they do what they do. By WHY, I mean your purpose, cause or belief - WHY does your firm exist? WHY do you get out of bed every morning? And WHY should anyone care?"

"People don't buy WHAT you do, they buy WHY you do it." Simon Sinek



Most of us know what we *should* do – to lose weight, to get our desks organised or to win more business. But how often do you think about *why* you're doing it? Sometimes that's the thing that will get you motivated. Simon Sinek, a well-known leadership guru, recognises that the *why* is the driver – the fuel in the engine of motivation, of staff engagement and of client loyalty. So next time you're procrastinating about making a BD call, or writing an article, get in touch with *why* you're doing it. This might be as simple as recognising that you have a mortgage to pay, or being about making a difference to people. Make a to-do list that has not only the action, but the *why* listed as well.

Another way to get you motivated

If you believe the self-help movement, we should all set ourselves big, audacious goals that drive us forward. That may well work for some, but in our experience, most of us are likely to take smaller steps forward, or are risk averse. Indeed, the professions are paid to be right and cautious. Why would you change what has made you successful this far?

However, there is a way to think about what motivates you. Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) highlights that some of us are motivated by moving towards goals, and some are motivated by moving away from undesirable situations. If you're an 'away from' person, it's easy to feel like you're not doing it right. How do you know? Well ask yourself how you describe what you want from your ideal job. Do you talk about what goals you want to achieve, what you want – or do you immediately identify what it must not have? If it's the latter, don't beat yourself up – just use it. So when you're thinking about getting motivated, remind yourself what you're moving away from. This is your fuel.



Get organised

It's easy to be overwhelmed by the scale of an objective, especially when it's something we feel less comfortable with. So break it down. Project managers spend quite a while analysing and planning before any project starts. While this may seem like treading water, it can actually lead to far more constructive action when you do start. Treat business development activity as a project.

At its most simple level, this can be writing a list of tasks to be done, with an estimate of the time it would take to do. But be careful that it's not too vague. We once heard a very successful entrepreneur say that if anything is estimated to take longer than 2 hours, you're just guessing. As professionals, you will be used to monitoring your time. Aim to allocate some of those time periods to BD actions in small enough chunks to fit in, and big enough to be useful.

The next level of planning would be putting these tasks in order – this can be done by putting post-it notes on a wall (or a large PACE Pipeline!), or there are countless software solutions to help. This sort of approach can help you establish a logical order.

If your firm doesn't have a CRM system to help you plan and monitor BD actions, there are countless apps out there that you can put on both your phone and laptop, which you can use to take notes, prioritise, assign due dates and much more. Trello, for example can be effective, because it looks and acts rather like the post-it note process mentioned above. It's very intuitive and you can share information with others who might need to be involved. However, you may prefer Evernote, Todoist or one of the many others available.

Use your quieter times

You can use your organisation system to make notes of actions when you have one of those 'dead time' periods – on a train, 20 minutes between meetings and so on. Who do you need to call? What topics could you write about? Then when you've got time, pick one and do it.

Get competitive – you're used to success

Most professionals have been very successful in their academic careers. Business development is not academic and can therefore seem very daunting. However, you *can* learn how to do it and you can continue your success as a business person, as well as a lawyer, accountant etc. The thing you have to accept is that you can't achieve 100% success. In fact 60% is a great result and it's a whole lot better than nothing which is what you'll achieve if you avoid it.



The right mindset

Many professionals regard selling as somewhat grubby. But let's look at this differently.



In summary don't ever waste time making the same old New Year business development resolutions! You know what needs to be done. Put your energy into thinking how best you can make things happen.

We are all different, find out what motivates and works for you. Resolutions will then be turned into actions!



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