

# Resolutions for Business

**A**s February begins, many of us will be reflecting on the resolutions we made at the start of the year. Have we stuck to them? Or did they get left behind sometime in the second week of the new year? For many of us, our resolutions will focus on personal goals such as losing weight or getting fit but what about your business goals for the year ahead? This article looks at the resolutions you can make to help take your business to the next level.

The new year celebrations are behind us, Christmas is just a distant memory, and we've still got at least a month of winter left. This makes February the perfect time to review your business plans for the rest of the year. Consider 2006 – what worked well and what didn't? Your past successes and failures can act as your guide as you plan for 2007.

Write a plan – we've all heard the phrase 'fail to plan: plan to fail'. Careful planning is the key element to business success. Review your business objectives, prioritising what needs to be accomplished in the next few months. Make sure you write it all down, setting milestones and timescales. Refer back to the plan frequently to keep your business on target.

Get organised – now is a good time to go through your files, documents, and paperwork. Throw out (or recycle) anything you don't need. While you're at it, take a look at your computer desktop: if it's a mess, clear it out. Do the same with the files on your computer – especially your email. Starting with clear decks is a morale booster which helps minimise distractions and allows you to concentrate your energies on your work.

Back up plan – do you regularly back up your work and data? If you don't, you run the risk of losing records that can seriously impact upon

your business. Find a system that works best for your business – either back up to CDs, purchase a spare harddrive for storage, or consider a daily offline backup option.

Tie up loose ends – take a look through your outstanding invoices and ask yourself if you're doing enough to ensure timely payments. Is there a system in place to remind late payers? Do you issue regular statements to your debtors? How soon do you chase for late payments? Are you allowing customers too long to pay?

Act on these instructions and you will feel better placed to face the challenges of the year ahead – with a fresh approach, minimal distractions, and a clear sense of purpose about what you want to achieve for your business in 2007.

