



Nov/Dec 2008

Evaluating Last Year with 4 Questions

Dear Small Business Owner:

December is a great month to make time to evaluate how your business has been doing for the last 11 months. In many industries, the holiday season is a slower time and allows for some introspection and planning.

Here is an exercise to help you evaluate last year's performance. If you aren't currently running a business, it's a great tool for reviewing any area of life.

Plan for 1 hour some day, at a time when your mind is its freshest. Go to a quiet place; turn off all the phones and your computer monitor. Sit down with a piece of paper (not your computer because it's too easy to be distracted by email and other to-do items on your desk), and answer these 4 questions.

1. In the past 12 months, my company did these things well. List as many things as you can think of.
2. In the past 12 months, my company didn't do these things well. List as many things as you can think of.
3. In my heart I know my company would be much better off if _____. Be totally honest. No one will see this but you.
4. The things I can do to make next year better are: _____ . List only things that are under your control.



This may be difficult to do. You may get stuck and need to take a break and come back to finish it. But, get through all 4 questions. Answers to question #4 should become your goals for next year.

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The last thing to do to make this exercise effective is to call a trusted friend/advisor. Ask them to answer the 4 questions for themselves and then get together to share your answers. Agree to be in contact every couple of weeks to see how you're each doing. Accountability is absolutely necessary when attempting something different than what you've always done.

Our last newsletter was on doing complete business planning. If you haven't done that for next year yet, you can read that article here: [Business Planning You Can Actually Use](#).

I hope you can take some time off to be with family and friends over the holidays. Come back refreshed and ready to attack the next year with some fresh ideas.

Have a blessed holiday season.

Sincerely,

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