

For Managers, Principals, Team Leaders and Internal Consultants
Author: Henry Blatman

Issue No 16: Making 2007 your best year yet

Word count for this issue: 1196 words
Approximate time to read: 51/2 minutes

Making 2007 your best year yet

One of the most powerful things I observe in my work is the results that come from stopping. This means that a person, a group or team takes time out of the day to day to think, reflect or just communicate without any interruption.

For me, New Year presents such an opportunity and is certainly a favourite time of mine. Other than being an obvious opportunity to have a break, it's also the perfect time to build a platform for success for the year ahead. New Year is a time of renewal, reflection and for making big plans.

Over the years I've developed a very effective process (influenced by mentors) that I work through every New Year (and review throughout the year) and have now introduced to many of my clients. It has become an important part of setting up my year ahead. I urge you to give yourself a present of the time and space to work through the steps I suggest below. Use some time on the weekend, or away on holidays, or come to it after you have slowed down for a period of time.

Step 1. 'Completing' the Past Year...

It is important to have a process to "complete" the year that's just finished, and make way for the New Year. Otherwise every year rolls into the next and the distinctions and subtleties are lost. This is a 3-part process in itself that I call an "Ascent".

An Ascent begins by listing out all of your ACHIEVEMENTS (both business and personal) for this last year. When you look back on the past 12 months, what were the highlights, successes, milestones, the battles you fought and won?

Next, look back on all the challenges, disappointments and low points throughout the year, the times when things did not work out as you'd planned. From these events and experiences list your LEARNINGS. A learning, (rather than an observation), is knowledge or skills that can be translated into an alternative course of action to get a different result next time.

The third and final part of the “Ascent” process is to list out your INTENTIONS for the coming year. What specifically are your “Intentions” for the 12 months ahead...the things, events and outcomes you’d like to become a reality? Have you included some fun and laughs?

Step 2. Plan for Your Rejuvenation...

I’m certain of one thing. As the leader of your business or team, in an increasingly complex business environment, you can only perform at your best when you are operating with high levels of energy. It’s important that you build in some daily, weekly and monthly disciplines, (and suggest that members of your team do the same), that maintain balance in your life and keep your energy levels up where they need to be. Have you included some of these activities in your intentions in Step 1?

Step 3. Your Personal Development Plan – Part A

Charlie (Tremendous) Jones, one of the World’s greatest motivational speakers has a saying : “The only difference between you now, and you in 10 years time, will be the people you meet and the books you read.” In other words, you are a product of your environment. The people you surround yourself with, the friends and colleagues you spend time with, the courses and seminars you attend, and the books you read will shape who you are, how you think and how you act. Ultimately they’ll shape the quality of, and the amount that you learn. The greater your learnings the greater will be your opportunities. Have you included some of these activities in your intentions in Step 1?

Step 4. Quick Strategic Checklist

Most strategic objectives that my clients have can be summarised under the following headings:

- Building the skills and capabilities of our people
- High level of client satisfaction
- Improving production/operational/productivity performance
- Getting more and better business

Go through each of these strategic objectives and give yourself a score out of ten (10) on how you think you are performing in each of these areas. Ask your staff and clients to check your thinking. Consider having a third party conduct surveys for an independent view. Once assessed, look at what action will have the greatest impact and complete an action plan with your team. A one-page action plan is all that is necessary. Have you included some of these activities in your intentions in step 1?

Step 5. Start the year off right...

You’ve just completed a very full on year in business, the team has headed off to the four corners of the globe for a few weeks holiday, everyone has switched off from thinking about business...and before you know it, here you are in January, back in the office ready to start another year.

What are you going to do to start the year off on the right foot? To reconnect everyone with what matters most to you and the business this year? How do you ensure that January and even February don’t just get absorbed into the holiday season? Set a meeting date where you sit with your team and communicate the intentions that you have for the business in the coming year and what you expect of them. Identify any issues or humps that are likely to

be encountered and involve them in making decisions on what action to take (See Step 4 above). If you start your year with such a meeting you are sending a clear message about how you expect the year to develop. The messages you are sending out are ones of clarity of direction, teamwork, commitment, involvement and most importantly, the willingness to take action.

Step 6. Your Personal Development Plan – Part B

Have you asked your team how they rate you as a manager or leader? Most managers are willing to rate their team members', (some are tardy and that is another issue), and give them feedback to make them accountable for their performance. It does take some courage to make yourself vulnerable as a manager, however, if you are not willing to be accountable for your performance as a leader is it fair to expect that of others? See sample appraisal: <http://www.icleadership.com.au/docs/ManagerFeedback.pdf>

Step 7 Intentions + Commitment = Improved Results

When you have written your thoughts down, communicate them with another person. Ask this person if you could meet with them regularly during the year to check on your progress (If you can't find such a confidante, engage a business performance coach).

Once your intentions are clear, ensure that you make a commitment to their achievement. Both the acts of writing down your thoughts and communicating them to someone else are the first steps in demonstrating commitment to yourself and your goals. How else can you ensure you stay committed?

There is nothing more powerful than making conscious choices. Life will 'just happen', but not necessarily how you really want it, unless you are continually making conscious choices.

Regardless of what you believe or celebrate at this time of year, the best gift that you can give yourself is the time and space to think, reflect and create your own future.

(Also see: <http://www.icleadership.com.au/docs/Be-your-Best-5.pdf> for more on the importance of commitment).

© 2006 Henry Blatman, All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the **be your best** online report in whole or in part, as long as you include complete attribution, including live web site link. Please have the attribution read as follows:

"By Henry Blatman of ic leadership. Please visit Henry's web site at www.icleadership.com.au for additional articles and resources on implementing change in your business.

Henry Blatman
Leadership and Performance Coach
Ph: 61 3 9699 7771