



Reflect, Review, Renew and Recommit – and Prepare for an Amazing 2017

2017

The sight of autumn leaves, a flood of Halloween costume ideas on your social media feeds, or the sudden appearance of Christmas trees in your local stores all tell the same tale. The end of 2016 is coming – and it'll be here sooner than you think.

Here's how to "jump start" 2017 to ensure your business is more focused, efficient and profitable! In this guide, you'll learn:

- How to ask the right questions about 2016's performance
- Ways to identify upcoming challenges and opportunities – and prepare for them
- How to use a workforce consultation to evaluate your team
- Tips for renewing enthusiasm and boosting engagement
- How to reevaluate – and recommit to – your strategic staffing plan
- Methods for "cleaning house" (physically and digitally) before the new year



Reflect on Your 2016 Performance

START BY ASKING:

- What were our major accomplishments this year?
- How well did those accomplishments move us toward or complete our goals?
- Which goals are left undone?
- Which accomplishments (if any) didn't move us toward a goal – and why did we do them anyway?

THEN:

Set goals by subcategory. Clients, finances, legal, marketing, operational, sales, talent: set goals in each of these seven areas to ensure your business is moving forward.

Talk to your clients or customers. What was their experience with you in 2016? Do they plan to stick with you in the new year?

Do the first half of a SWOT analysis. What Strengths and Weaknesses did 2016 reveal?

Review and Prepare for Upcoming Changes

2017 is likely to bring major changes, from opportunities to raise your rates and level of service to major overhauls in state and federal workplace regulations. Here's how to get ready.

START WITH AN INVENTORY:

- Which clients are likely to leave? Which clients do you wish you could "fire"?
- Which staff members deserve a promotion? Which aren't pulling their weight?
- In what direction is your business growing most strongly, and how will you find the people you need for those positions?
- What laws will take effect on January 1 that affect your business?





THEN:

- **Talk to your lawyer, accountant or other professionals as needed.** Staying compliant with the law means knowing what's changing and how it affects your business. Be ready!
- **Call your staffing partner.** Your staffing firm can help you create a strategic staffing plan, target promising candidates and be ready to hire the people you need when you need them.
- **Set SMART goals.** It's easier to hit a goal if that goal is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Based.
- **Finish your SWOT analysis.** What Opportunities and Threats are on the horizon? Set goals that will allow you to steer toward the former and away from the latter.



Reevaluate Your Workforce

Did you have the people you needed in 2016? Where will you get the ones you need in 2017? Here's how to work with your staffing partner to create a proactive workforce plan.

FIRST, KNOW WHAT YOU NEED:

- Who's currently on your team? What are their capabilities?
- What capabilities will your workforce need in order to meet the goals your business has set for 2017?
- How will the nature of your work change in the coming year? What internal and external factors will influence those changes?
- Where do you have too many people with a certain skill? Where do you have too few?





THEN, GET TO WORK:

- **Talk to your staffing partner.** Staffing firms specialize in helping companies create workforce plans that deliver results.
- **Identify opportunities for temporary or contract staff.** Special projects and seasonal overflow are both great places to bring in qualified contract workers who can handle the task without breaking your budget.
- **Consider a new employment brand message for the new year.** If your employment brand engagement is dropping off – or worse, if you have no employment brand at all – consider creating a fresh new campaign for 2017 in order to attract the talent you need.



Renew Your Enthusiasm (and Your Team's)

Celebrating your accomplishments may not be a "strategy," but it is essential to boosting engagement, reducing stress and helping your team feel as if it can buy into and be proud of your accomplishments in 2016.

ASK:

- What did we do this year that was worth being proud of?
- What was each team member's proudest accomplishment? What was the team's overall biggest accomplishment?
- Who deserves a "shout out" for exceptional work?

CELEBRATE!

Give personal, public thanks. Even if it's just a "thank you" in a meeting to an individual who went above and beyond, it's meaningful.

Make a list. Use this list during annual performance reviews to remember who pushed the envelope in the previous year.

Consider gifts. Even small gifts like the opportunity to hold a potluck, a gift card to a favorite store or flextime during the holidays go a long way toward boosting morale.



Recommit to Your Strategic Plan

No matter what your company's goals are, your plan can help you get there – if you're committed. Start by asking yourself and your team:

- What are our biggest goals for each month in 2017? Each quarter? The entire year?
- How does the team's everyday work get us closer to those goals?
- How will we know when we have reached those goals?
- How will we celebrate?

TO RECOMMIT:

Hold a strategic planning meeting with your entire team – even if you are a team of one.

Calendar your plans. Putting them in your calendar will make you more likely to remember them – and follow through.

Help team members align career goals with company goals. Prepare for each performance review so you can discuss each team member's career goals for the year, and help each team member reach those goals within the context of the company's overall goals.



Rely on Your “Winter Cleaning”

Wrapping up business in 2016 doesn't just mean taking stock; it also means making sure that records are labeled and business is handled so that 2016's business stays in 2016. For example:

- Which records need to be stored for the year, and how?
- What will your tax preparer need, and do you have it ready to go?
- Does anything need to be 'closed out' by the end of the year?

MAKE YOUR TO-DO LIST FOR END-OF-YEAR CLEANING:

Clear your email inbox. If you can take care of it, do it. If you can't, or you no longer need it, delete it. If you're going to need it as reference in 2017, move it to its own email folder.

Organize your electronic and paper folders. Create folders for each month of 2017, so you're not scrambling when next year rolls around.

Discard any files you no longer need to keep. Talk to your lawyer or accountant. Chuck anything you don't need to keep past a certain date.

Recite the Takeaways

To be prepared to make 2017 an outstanding year:

- Look back at your 2016 performance. Note the good, the bad, and everything in between.
- Prepare for 2017, based on your review of the previous year.
- Perform a workforce analysis with your recruiting partner so you have the talent you need.
- Create a strategic plan and prepare to stick to it.
- Get your files, calendar and other organizational tools in order.
- Celebrate your success!

