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## Stop Making Resolutions and Start Making Plans

Imagine yourself on New Year's Eve 2008, yes 2008. I want you to think about what an ideal 2007 would look like. I want you to imagine being truly content in your life and all its aspects - business, finance, health, relationships, whatever it is that will make you truly content. Take at least thirty minutes, and create a vision that is real for you. See it and feel it? Write it down, capture those thoughts and make them tangible by writing them out.

Now, let's make it happen.

Planning is really a three step program that you apply to each aspect of your life and business.

1. Understand your current position regardless of how good or bad it is,
2. Know what you want to achieve, you did that in the exercise above
3. What to change, do more of, or less of to get you moving toward your goal. Start by evaluating the activities that got you to where you are. Also, consider outside factors that might have a positive or negative influence on your business.

For example you see your business finishing 2007 with orders of \$250,000, up from \$100,000 last year. Ideally you have sales records from last year and can come up with the following data:

- How many new clients did you identify last year, lets say 1,000.
- Of those new clients you identified, how many did you really contact? Maybe you had so much work "walk in" that you did not really focus on creating new clients and only contacted 500 of the 1,000 you identified.
- For those you contacted how many did you turn into clients? Of the 500 contacted you actually created 10 new clients. A 2% conversion rate.
- What percentage of sales came from your existing customers and can you expect that same amount of business this coming year. We will assume 75% of your business is from repeat customers and an average order is \$10,000.

To reach the \$250,000 mark we need to make \$150,000 in new sales plus the \$25,000 we have to replace each year; for a total goal of \$175,000. Therefore, you need 18 new customers this year to make your goal. Your current system produces 10 new clients each year so you only need to figure out how to create 8 more clients or more orders from existing clients.

Now that you know what has to be done you can start to use this information to develop specific tactics. To do this go back a couple of columns and read the article on PRIME leverage and go through the exercises outlined there to develop specific tactics to achieve your goal. For example you could:

- Contact an additional 400 prospects, very weak leverage.
- Improve your conversion rate from 2% to 4%, great use of leverage.
- Explore other marketing systems; check out the *Web Wise* column by Lori Gama for internet marketing ideas, perhaps the best use of leverage.

Having systems in place to track your business allows you to easily monitor the health of your business and plan for growth. If your business is lacking these systems, even if you are a one person operation then you are hindering your growth and most importantly your success.

Your next assignment is to plan how to handle the increased order volume and be prepared for it and, as it builds, be strategic.

John S. Benjamin, Business Coach and Strategic Business Owner of The Growth Coach located in Greeley. John's passion is to provide affordable coaching to Front Range Business owners, helping them to have more successful and balanced lives. For more information, questions or comments go to [www.FrontRangeCoaching.com](http://www.FrontRangeCoaching.com), e-mail [j.benjamin@TheGrowthCoach.com](mailto:j.benjamin@TheGrowthCoach.com) or call (970) 346-0101

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