Goal Setting in 2017

As we enter the New Year, many of us are setting new goals and resolutions. To achieve these goals, you need a solid strategy and a practical plan of action. **Here are 5 steps to set up a good strategic plan:**

1. Translate your vision into measurable and achievable long & short term goals.

2. Break your goals down into achievable objectives to help concentrate on what's important.

3. Set up specific ways that you will go about achieving your objectives.

4. Choose tasks that you must complete each day and integrate them into your daily schedule.

5. Build in simple monitoring mechanisms to keep track of your progress.

Monitor your progress regularly and remember – it doesn't matter how much you're doing; what matters is how successful you are in achieving your objectives.

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Simon Tutt, President & CEO of DP Solutions.

"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"

Your #1 MUST-DO Resolution For 2017

With every New Year comes the chance to reset priorities. Unfortunately, when the topic of implementing a data recovery plan comes up, the comment we most often hear is "I know I should, but I haven't gotten around to it yet…"

So…what if the pilot on the next flight you're on announces right after takeoff, "I know we should have run through our pre-flight checklist, but we haven't gotten around to it yet…"???

Without a solid backup and recovery plan in place, just one mission-critical file that gets lost or stolen could put your company in a world of serious hurt. When you compare the high cost of replacement, repair and recovery to the relatively trivial price of keeping good backups, the choice is an absolute no-brainer.

Why disaster recovery planning matters more than you think

Let's face it, data is the nucleus of your business. That means that a single ransomware attack could wipe you out in a matter of minutes. Today's cybercriminals are raking in literally billions of dollars (yes, billions) preying on the unwary, the poorly protected and those who "haven't gotten around to it yet."

Let's consider the facts…

Ninety-seven percent of IT services providers surveyed by Datto, a data protection company, report that ransomware attacks on small businesses are becoming more frequent, and they expect that trend to continue. These attacks are taking place *despite* anti-virus and anti-malware measures in effect at the time of the attack.

Windows operating systems are most often infected, followed by OS X. Cloud-based applications, particularly Dropbox, Office 365 and Google Apps, are also being targeted.

Ransom demands typically run between $500 and $2,000. About 10%, however, exceed $5,000. And even at that, paying a ransom demand is no guarantee that encrypted files will be released.

For a typical SMB, downtime from ransomware can cost around $8,500 per hour, and will take an average of 18.5 hours of the company's time. That's a hit to your bottom line somewhere in the neighborhood of $157,250. Yet in many cases the ultimate cost has reached into multiple hundreds of thousands.

In a recent survey of 6,000 IT professionals by the Ponemon Institute, 86% of companies had one or more incidents causing downtime in the past 12 months. Typical downtime was 2.2 days, with an average cost of $366,363. And that's just the *average*. **Could your company survive that kind of hit?**

"Ransomware attacks are on the rise, since they can be triggered by just one employee…"

It's no wonder that 81% of smaller businesses suffering such an attack close their doors within three years.

It's tragic. And yet the solution is so simple…

The #1 antidote for a data disaster
What's behind these costly incidents? Here's the breakdown of contributing factors:

- Human error: 60%
- Unexpected updates and patches: 56%
- Server room environment issues: 44%
- Power outages: 29%
- Fire or explosion: 26%
- Natural disasters: 10%

Note that human error accounts for 60% of the breaches. It's no wonder then that ransomware attacks are on the rise, since they can be triggered by just one employee inadvertently clicking a bad link in an e-mail or social media site. Human behavior is hard to control. However, *the #1 antidote for a ransomware attack is*

having a secure backup ready and waiting to replace encrypted files. And when you scan through the rest of the list above, it becomes clear that, while you need to implement a comprehensive set of data security measures, having a solid and reliable data recovery plan in place and ready to go the moment disaster strikes is still your best defense.

Protect Your Company From A Knockout Blow In 2017
Cyberthreats are proliferating and are expected to grow throughout 2017 and beyond. Will this be the year you finally get your data backup and recovery plan DONE?

The choice is yours—exposure to a devastating loss…or rock-solid security. Let us help. Visit www.dpsolutions.com/backup-audit to schedule a thorough Backup and Recovery Plan Audit for your company, absolutely FREE. Do NOT wait until disaster strikes. Let's make 2017 the year you finally get this DONE. Contact us TODAY so we can keep *your* company's story from becoming yet another unfortunate statistic.

Client Spotlight: Beacon Services, LLC

First licensed as a collection agency in 1994, the primary objective of Beacon Services is to improve the cash flow of its clients.

With a staff of experienced personnel supported by cutting edge technology infrastructure and solid financial resources, Beacon Services has the ability to effectively accomplish this objective in a wide range of environments. At each stage of the recovery process, Beacon's clients receive highly sophisticated collection support. Beacon emphases maximum recovery efficiency after normal recovery efforts have been exhausted.

A successful collection process depends in large measure on effective data management. Thus, it is mission-critical that Beacon Services collection associates be supported by a sophisticated technology infrastructure.

By taking advantage of DP Solutions' Managed IT Services, they receive comprehensive 24x7 technology support, IT monitoring and proactive updates to ensure the technology keeps up with the business needs.

Additionally, as a DP Solutions Cloud Hosted client, Beacon Services' associates enjoy reliable remote access allowing them to perform their duties effectively and efficiently even when they are not in the office.

To learn more about Beacon Services, visit www.beacon-services.com.

3 Ways Smart People Blow The Close

The weirdest thing happens when it's time to close a deal.

Smart people turn to mush! I've seen it a hundred times. Many of my teammates have PhDs and MBAs from the toughest universities in the world. They've performed at the top of their peer groups at places like McKinsey, Bain, the White House, GE, Marine Force Recon and Goldman Sachs.

While they're doing the work, they're confident, caring, even daring. But when it comes to selling the work, many of them struggle, before they overcome the three simple closing errors I'll describe for you here.

1. Hit mute.
Recently I was with a colleague in the boardroom of a billionaire CEO of the #1 company in his industry. Getting this client to sign on the dotted line was a layup. After the CEO talked for the better part of an hour about the ways he wanted our help, he asked a question to wrap up the conversation. Rather than bring it to a close, my colleague's mind hit "mute." Silence. Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock… The clocks on the wall (showing local times in NY, London, Mumbai, Shanghai…) were ticking so loudly they sounded like the drumbeats you hear before a public hanging. I heard 20 drumbeats—20 seconds of silence while the client was expecting us to wrap up the conversation and close this deal! Finally my colleague recovered, and we ended up with a happy outcome. But the 20 seconds of mute didn't help. Clients want help wrapping up a conversation and turning it into an action plan. Don't just sit there—close!

2. Dazzle with complexity.
Another teammate and I were sitting with a private equity investor who wanted our help. My colleague talked at 90 mph, offering complex, nuanced analyses, interspersed with questions that had multiple parts, lots of commas; and even a semicolon here and there, just like in this sentence. Her intent was to show how smart she was. And this was supposed to dazzle the client into hiring us? The actual effect was the client felt he couldn't get a word in edgewise. This is a common pitfall for smart people coming out of consulting backgrounds— the urge to overwhelm the client prospect with data, analysis and complicated questions that are designed to show how smart you are.

3. Win the argument (lose the deal).
My eyes went big and I felt hot flashes creep up my neck when I witnessed a cardinal sin. One of my colleagues put his hand up in a "stop" gesture. In the face of our client. The consultant said, "Let me stop you there. I think your logic doesn't hold. The data tells a different story. Here's why…" The client was not impressed. Folks, serving clients isn't about winning arguments. It's about understanding the client and figuring out how to get them what they want. You are on the same team. If you forget this, you may win the argument, but lose the deal.

Geoff Smart is Chairman & Founder of ghSMART. Geoff is co-author, with his colleague Randy Street, of the *New York Times* bestselling book *Who: The A Method for Hiring* and the author of the #1 *Wall Street Journal* bestseller *Leadocracy: Hiring More Great Leaders (Like You) into Government*. Geoff co-created the Topgrading brand of talent management. Geoff is the Founder of two 501c3 not-for-profit organizations. SMARTKids Leadership Program™ provides 10 years of leadership tutoring and The Leaders Initiative™ seeks to deploy society's greatest leaders into government. Geoff earned a B.A. in Economics with Honors from North-western University, an M.A., and a Ph.D. in Psychology from Claremont Graduate University.

Beat the odds and be a small business "survivor."

You've heard the scary stat: 70% of all small businesses fail within the first five years. And let's face it, it all boils down to how you manage your cash flow. So what can you do to be one of the 30% that beat the odds? 1) Hold off on spending, even when you can afford it. First, become known as really good at what you do. 2) Notice the small things. The difference between $198 and $198.37 matters—a lot. Plug the leaks and take every cent seriously. 3) Avoid bank loans for now. Options like peer-to-peer lending, crowdfunding and invoice factoring can help you grow without piling on debt.

-*HuffingtonPost.com*

Do you have the right CRM system for your company?

Job #1 for any business is to anticipate and meet customer demand. Yet today's tsunami of customer data makes it hard for sales, marketing and service reps to keep track of it all. A good CRM system helps your team collect, sort and make informed decisions on critical data. To ensure having the right system from among the dozens of great choices out there, use one that 1) integrates with your e-mail marketing tool, 2) lets you track if and when a sent e-mail has been opened and 3) comes with iOS and Android mobile apps—you don't want your team to have to wait till they get back to the office to input data.

-*PCmag.com*

Get your desk in order with these three handy gadgets.

Got piles of books and magazines stacking up that you haven't read yet? Clear the clutter with the IRIScan Book Executive. About the size of an ordinary pen, it scans all that reading material into digital files you can take with you to catch up on while waiting in line at Starbucks. Or in flight on your next business trip. If you need a clock on your desk but find it distracting, try the Click Cube Clock. With its attractive, minimalist design, it shows the time only when you tap it or snap your fingers. Then top off these gadgets with the Happylight

Energy Lamp for a bright outlook on the New Year!

-*Inc.com*

"Mousejacking": Need you be concerned?

Researchers at security firm Bastille report that with a simple $10 antenna and a few lines of code, hackers could take over your wireless mouse and keyboard. "Air-gapped" computers – that is, computers physically separated from the Internet – are particularly at risk. Fortunately, hackers' options are limited: they would have to be within a few hundred yards of their target, and likely would need to see its screen to unlock access. However, once inside, it might take only a few moments to inject a piece of malware. It's unlikely that anyone at your company will attract such a highly targeted attack. Yet it pays to not underestimate the vulnerability of even the most mundane of devices.

-*Popular Mechanics*

This may be the #1 way to cut your customer acquisition costs by 86% or more.

Did you know that, on average, acquiring a new customer costs seven times more than keeping one you've already got? Not only that, an existing customer is 14 times more likely to buy from you than a non-customer. And one of the best ways to keep the customers you've got is to use a mobile customer-retention app. In a study of 621 people by mobile app builder Apptentive, 66% of businesses that saw a decrease in customer loyalty over the past year did not have a mobile app. The right app keeps customers happy and coming back for more—and sharing the experience with their friends across social media.

-*SmallBizTrends.com*

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"Just once I wish someone had a bone to pick with me."

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