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5 Ways to Attain Your New Year's Career Resolutions

Rachel Zupek, CareerBuilder.com writer



If I had to guess, I would bet that at least once in years past, come Jan. 1, you've resolved to lose weight, be more organized, spend less and save more, find a better job, or simply be a better person.

Yes, people love to make New Year's resolutions. Perhaps more than that, people love to break them.

"People often give up on their resolutions after the first setback. They get frustrated that they messed up," says Karyn Beach, success coach and founder of www.losetheexcuses.com. "What most people don't realize is that messing up is part of the process. Things happen. The key is to stop beating yourself up about it and get back on track as soon as possible."

Libbe HaLevy, a [business coach](#), says she advises workers *not* to make New Year's resolutions because "resolution" makes it sound like the issue is quickly taken care of. As a result, people get excited to make a change without understanding how long it will take to truly institute. When results don't come quickly, people get discouraged and give up before the end of January, she says. Instead, HaLevy prefers to have people make goals they wish to achieve by the end of the year and strategize the steps they'll need to take in order to get there.

"Instead of squeezing the self to 'resolve' things quickly, they spread out the commitments and proceed at a manageable pace, with benchmarks to understand and celebrate their progress," HaLevy says. "Steady progress is made and the stated goal has an excellent chance to be achieved."

Ultimately, everyone wants to achieve their aspirations in the New Year and make a positive change in some aspect of their lives. With the current dismal state of our economy, perhaps one of the most important areas people should look to make a change this New Year is professionally.

"Resolutions don't have to always be personal. In fact, having resolutions that pertain to your career is a great idea," Beach says. "The kinds of things you want for yourself at home -- be more organized, use time more effectively, eat healthier -- will work equally well in the workplace."

What are your career resolutions?

Our readers weighed in with some of their career goals for the New Year:

- "Sell 150,000 copies of my next book; talk to over 100,000 people; donate \$50,000 to charity and be able to afford to dump undesirable clients." - **Dave "The Chef" Sheffield, author and speaker**
- "One big work resolution I have for the upcoming year is to remain as focused as possible. Ideas are wonderful and we have tons of them. Unless we remain focused on a handful of critical projects, which may not necessarily be lots of 'fun,' we will never get the opportunity to accomplish our much larger objective of becoming the brand that young adults look to for the training and development of their essential soft skills." - **Eric Barron, president of Eric Barron Live**
- "My New Year's resolution is to shut my phone off at night so I don't check my e-mail every time I hear a beep! I currently have four jobs and have an e-mail address for all of them. Alerts, newsletters, questions -- everything gets forwarded to my phone. It's recently come to my attention that I'm waking up my roommates with constant ringtones and blips." - **Jenn de la Vega, chef/publicist at Mushpot Records**
- "My New Year's resolution is to launch my Web site to support women who have left an abusive relationship. [I] have been working on it for the past year -- next year is the time!" - **Cynthia Colby, editor**

Five tips for resolution success

Beach offers the following tips that career resolutionists can use to stay on track in the New Year:

1. Eat the frog: "Mark Twain said if you eat a frog first thing in the morning that will probably be the worst thing you do all day. So, start your day by tackling an important task, especially if it is a task you aren't crazy about."
2. Concrastinate: "If procrastinating means putting things off, procrastinate should be doing things immediately. Work in 15 minute increments. If there is a task you don't like, set a timer and do it for 15 minutes. At the end of 15 minutes, you will be amazed at how much you've accomplished. At that point, either stop or if you have built up some momentum, keep going."
3. Nix the multitasking: "We pride ourselves on being able to do two, three or four things at once, and that is fine if the activities are fairly simple, like stuffing envelopes while on a conference call or eating lunch while reading e-mail. But if at least one of the tasks is more complicated, like putting together a PowerPoint or writing a report, then it deserves your full attention. Set aside a period of time that you can devote to that one task. You will make fewer mistakes and get more done in less time."
4. Buddy up: "If your resolution is to do something simple like eat lunch away from your desk or go for a walk on your break time or keep your desk clean, make a pact with a co-worker who has a similar goal. Support each other in keeping your resolutions."
5. Plan it: "A few minutes of planning can save you hours of time. Either first thing in the morning or at the end of the day, take a few minutes to plan. It doesn't have to be a long formal process, just jot down the things you want to do that day (or the next if you do this at the end of the day)."

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