



ENOUGH with the EXCUSES!

It's a New Year and time for you to start getting honest with yourself.

Did you set any New Year Resolutions in 2004? If you have been following these articles I hope the answer to that question is a resounding, "NO, I set 'Smarter' Goals!"

Laura Ashley-Timms, the Licensing Industry's very own Coach, has teamed up with Total Licensing to challenge you to improve yourself and your business. So read on... and then send in your questions to be answered in our regular 'Coaching Corner' feature.

Whatever you did last year, now is the time for the truth. There is no point starting 2005 living under the assumption that merely setting New Year Resolutions or even goals, however they are defined, is enough. I want you to take the time this year to evaluate your performance and decide what changes you need to make and what actions you need to take, in order for 2005 to really count, for both yourself and your business.

So what worked?

Which of your goals did you achieve last year? If you didn't have any formal goals then take the time now to list out your greatest achievements over the last 12 months. Were there any particular strategies you implemented to ensure you achieved these goals? If so note them too as they will come in useful for this year.

Which Goals didn't you achieve?

Unless you are a truly incredible person (or set yourself very low targets) there are also likely to be goals that you did not achieve or even possible start! Consider these goals for a minute and assess what the core reasons were why you didn't achieve them. Were they no longer relevant to you or your business? Or were they just too much effort? Be honest.

Get tough with yourself

It's 2005, half a decade has already passed since Y2K – how much have you and your business really progressed during this time. Are you where you thought you would be? Are you where you want to be? If not get tough with yourself and ask yourself what is holding you back? Skill gaps? Laziness? Lack of support? Lack of Motivation? Lack of knowledge? Having identified these things decide what you are going to do about them.

Don't live life by default. Don't hide, don't lie and don't make excuses. I am not interested in them and neither is anyone else. This is the year you can choose to make a difference and get on with being a success (on your terms) by choosing to define what you want and by taking constant ACTION to achieve it.

The power of baby steps

We have covered action planning and breaking down goals into smaller steps in the past. Just think of it this way – if you broke a goal down into 100 baby steps and did just 1% a day (or 1 step) towards achieving that goal – you would achieve your goal in 100 days. Something to start talking to your sales force about!

Are you prepared this year to start doing what you really want to be doing and stop hiding behind all the reasons why it doesn't happen? You don't have to live your life by gritting your teeth and settling for "your lot". You can choose to live your life this way – but let's be clear – that is your choice. Or you can choose to make this year count!

Ask yourself questions like:

- "What do I want to have achieved by the end of this year?"
- "What am I prepared to change about my actions in order to achieve this?"

- “What can I do today to take my first step towards this goal?”
- “Who will I need help or support from? When am I going to ask them for it?”
- “Am I prepared to stop listing all the reasons why I can’t do it and accept these are just excuses and are holding me back?”

Structure your answers into ‘Smarter’ Goals and then break these down into action plans. If you need help with any of this then pick up the phone and call me – remember the 30-minute free consultation – you have nothing to lose by using it!

Take one day at a time

Mark Foster in his book “Get everything done and still have time to play” sets out right at the beginning a core skill, that if we develop, will make the world of difference to our life. Like anything else, skills need to be practised if we want to develop them – just ask any great sportsman how many hours a week they have to practise in order to become great.

The skill identified by Mark is the ability to decide the one thing that we are going to achieve today, however small and make sure we do it.

If you don’t achieve it then it is too hard (however ridiculous that may sound) so set a simpler task for the following day. Keep repeating this exercise until you achieve it. When you regularly achieve the one task that you set yourself each day then you can slowly make the task harder and in time add another task and another one.

What is important here is the daily routine of committing to do one thing every day and doing it.

That is how you make progress. For example my task today went something like this:

‘Today I am going to write an article for Total Licensing and if I do nothing else I will achieve that today.’

This may sound like a fair task, however a week ago I was happy setting a much simpler task like ‘I will tell my

Don’t forget that for readers of Total Licensing Laura is offering a completely FREE no obligation 30 minute coaching consultation.

So go on and pick up the phone, what have you got to lose? Your only risk is spending half an hour talking about yourself...

Contact Laura Ashley-Timms at Notion Limited.
Tel (UK) 0845 4568217 (Int) +44 (0) 1926 840078
Mobile +44 (0) 7968 164083
laura@notionltd.com. www.notionltd.com

new born baby that he is a good baby (not the devil) and I am a relaxed mum!’

Next steps – taking Action

Think hard about where you really want to be by the end of this year. If you look back at the end of 2005 and ask yourself the same questions I asked you at the beginning of this article, namely: Which of your goals did you achieve last year? Were there any particular strategies you implemented to ensure you achieved these goals?

What answer would you now give?

- What are you going to do differently this year to ensure you are more fulfilled and thereby more successful?
- What is the baby step you have set for tomorrow? And the day after?
- How are you planning on maintaining the momentum?
- Are you committed to stop making excuses?

Choose 2005 to be the year you really make a difference, to yourself, your business and to your loved ones – or you can always blame someone else for your life – It is after all your choice!

Coaching Corner

Q: It’s all very well setting challenging goals, but I find it very hard to stay positive – the cynic in me takes over and I revert to type? Any advice on how I can change this pattern?

Marketing Manager

A: There are various techniques you can develop to stay positive and motivated including state management and push/pull factors that I have touched on before. However it is always valuable to develop a range of tools to allow you to change negative patterns of behaviour and I am going to share with you one of my very favourite tools – a visit to my favourite factory – the smile factory.

Wherever in the world you visit a factory they always bring with them new ideas, be they inspirational management techniques, great team working, better efficiencies of stock control, superb and motivated individuals – what is particularly special about the smile factory is that you can visit it whenever the will takes you and it can have an immediate effect on changing your negative pattern of behaviour into a positive one.

Just follow this simple exercise.

Stop what you are doing and take two minutes to visit the smile factory. Close your eyes and focus on your stomach and notice the tiny little smile bubbles that are starting to form in your smile factory. Suddenly one of the smile bubbles escapes your stomach and travels up through your ribs and into your throat. It tickles you on the way up and gives you that tingling feeling that all those cartoon and Fimbling type characters are always going on about! Suddenly it pops into your mouth and before you can swallow it the smile is on your lips and has escaped.

Just as this happens another smile bubble escapes from the factory in your stomach and follows the same journey, tickling you on the way up and escaping onto your lips. They just keep coming and the endless smile factory keeps producing those rouge smiles that just won’t leave you alone!

So every time you start feeling cynical or you lose that positive energy just pay a quick visit to your smile factory. It is impossible to feel negative when you are smiling and with your endless smiles your positive energy will reappear.