

GrowthForce CEO year-end checklist.

Its time to evaluate 2009 actual results, complete your last minute year-end tax planning steps and finish the first stab at a 2010 budget.

No matter what you do, pick something to work on now so you can check them off your new years resolution list. Otherwise, it'll be March before you know it...

1. **Tax Planning:** The growing deficit likely means higher taxes in 2010. When tax rates are expected to rise, tax planning may be the exact opposite of a normal year-end plan. That makes its more important than ever to meet with your CPA to execute a year-end tax plan because once the calendar turns to January 1st it is too late for anyone to help lower taxes. If you need a proactive CPA to help you grow your business or bookkeeping help to get accurate November financial results [click here](#). (contact@gf) Either way, meet with a CPA to make a year-end tax plan.
2. **Evaluate 2009 Results:** What did your business accomplish in 2009? Did you start the year with written goals? Get them out and see if you met them. You likely achieved more than you imagined. Share successes with the whole company. Write down what you have attained and share them with your staff before you break for the holidays. Take the time to celebrate those accomplishments. Share the disappointments with your management team and focus on the lessons to be learned. How does the experience of last year impact your 2010 planning?
3. **Set 2010 Goals:** It's the beginning of a new decade. . Hopefully the next will be better than the last. Now is the time to set goals and objectives, even if just for for the 1st Quarter of 2010. An [Administaff](#) training course taught us its as easy as completing this sentence:
 - I will "action word" "key result" "measure" by "deadline".
 - For example: I will increase sales to major prospects by 15% next quarter. Mary will create a new welcome process that can be incorporated into our portal and get 90% of the information needed by March 31.

Make sure the goals are SMART – that is they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, with the needed Resources and a Timeline.

4. **Create Incentives:** Once the goals are set. How do the quarterly goals translate into incentive compensation? How will employees benefit if they meet or beat the goals? It's important for a business to align its compensation so that every employee acts like an owner of the business. The percentages depend on the level in the organization. Senior managers should be incented by company wide results, junior staff by individual performance.
5. **Define Personal Development Plans:** Because labor costs are typically the biggest expense of any business, each employee needs a Personal Development Plan. Investing in people skills gives a high return on your investment? Training often gives a ten time ROI. Now's the time to figure out what new skills your staff need to learn so you can increase productivity for 2010.

Set a 2010 Budget: Once the strategic company goals have been defined, you need to create a budget. Visit http://growthforce.com/enews/whitepapers/Five_Steps_to_Your_First_Budget.pdf to follow our five and a half steps to setting up a budget for your business.