

Getting In 2 HR - New Year resolutions for the business

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Hi

Happy New Year to you.

So how are the New Year's resolutions going? Still going to the gym three times a week, eating and drinking less, spending more time with the family? Every year we set ourselves New Year resolutions and are not always that good at keeping them.

Are you any better at setting and keeping them for your business? January is usually the time that business owners review the company's performance during the previous year and decide what they need to do for the coming year. If you have not set your business New Year resolutions yet, then here are some to get you thinking from an HR point of view.

Regards
Nicki

1. Grow the business this year by 20 %



Great idea but whilst you personally might be ready to take on that challenge, you need to ask the question as to whether your staff are. Have you talked to them about your plans? Do they have the right skills to take on the extra work or responsibilities? Do you

have the correct number of staff?

If the answer is no, then you need to set some realistic targets and plan how you are going to get to there. This needs to be carried out before you can think about successfully achieving that 20 % growth, otherwise you may end disappointing all of those new customers who will not get their orders in time.

A couple of thoughts to help you on your way:

- Decide which staff will need extra skills training or coaching and put plans in place to get these organised. Check out the In2HR training courses to give you a good start.
- Decide whether you will need to increase the overall headcount. If so, in which areas of the business will the expansion be felt most, how long will it take to get the new staff up to speed and build this timescale in to your plans
- Ensure that your plans for the business are mirrored in the targets you set for your team in their annual appraisals as you need staff to be helping you achieve the business growth targets.
- Decide what, if any, you are going to use as staff incentives to help the achievement of your business growth plans, examples of which could be an end of year bonus or contribution in to their pension scheme.

2. Employ the right people in my business

There are two parts to this objective; get the right staff in to the business in the first place and secondly, once you have them, keep them.

Looking at the first part, getting the right staff can be tricky these days and so you need to look closely at the way you recruit, and this does not just mean your interviewing style. Good recruitment practices start with knowing exactly what job the new recruit is going to do and then going out to find the right person to fit it. The more processes (e.g. interviews, tests, references) you can put in place to ensure there is a 'good match' the more likely it is your new recruit will turn out to be beneficial for the business.



For the second part you need to include all of the points in the next section but also a real factor in employee retention is the way you actually manage the poor performers. It is possible in most businesses to categorise staff into three distinct levels of performance - the high performers, the middle achievers, and the low performers. As a business, we are often challenged to help businesses ensure they keep their high performers, develop their middle achievers in to high performers and remove the poor performers. If the poor performers are not managed it has a negative impact on the rest of the team, especially the high performers, as they start to wonder why they should work so hard, when others are not.

Some actions you could take to improve the situation:

- List all of the staff in order of performance from top to bottom and then divide the list as follows - top 20% at the high performers, the next 70% are your middle achievers and bottom 10% are the low performers
- Concentrate your efforts to sorting out the low performers either by moving them

on to become a middle achiever, in to a different role to which they are more suited or manage them out of the business. If you decide to manage them out of the business do take HR advice about how to do this properly

3. Be a better / good employer



Following on from the above point, being a good employer helps protect the business and create an environment that people want to come to work in. Staff will be more inclined to stay with the business, putting to good use the skills and training you have invested in them. That way they will assist the business to continue its growth.

From an HR perspective, to achieve this:

- Ensure the business complies with its legal obligation in respect of issuing contracts of employment, checking for illegal immigrants, ensuring employees do not come to any harm by following good H & S practices, paying people on time, etc
- Show staff you are a fair employer by having a clear set of employment policies to ensure they are managed consistently with regards to disciplinary, absenteeism, time off, sickness, maternity, etc, and, of course, prevent any tribunal claims for unfair dismissal and discrimination
- Gain trust and respect from your staff by 'practising what you preach' and not expecting them to do things you would not do yourself.
- Talk to staff about the business and involve them in your plans for the future. See them as a source of useful information to help you solve business problems. Listen to their ideas.

4. Improve my work life balance

Finally, something we all strive to do but never actually get around to achieving. There is always that never ending 'to do' list. Well if you have thought about point 1 and planned how you are going to achieve it then this point requires similar stages. I am not saying it will be achieved during 2008 but you at least need a plan to know when it might be achieved.

First steps:-

- Have the right structures and resources in the business to allow you to be confident the work will be carried out when you are not there. This might be organising the sales team and promoting someone to be the sales manager to field calls you usually take. Someone who you might incentivise to get the best results from their team
- Seek professional advice when there is an issue to deal with so that you do not waste your time trying to deal with it, possibly unsuccessfully, and ensuring you get it right in the end.
- Trust other people in your management team to do a good job and delegate some of your work on to them. They may not do it quite right the first time or exactly as you would, but with a bit of coaching they will get there and you will free up some of your time to develop the business.
- Have a long term plan for you and the business and take small steps to achieve it

Happy planning!

I hope you have found this edition of **Getting In 2 HR** useful.

To show our commitment to helping you achieve your new HR targets (and to help me achieve mine!), this month we are offering a free place on one of our following 1 day courses, held at High Wycombe or London and designed to help you be a better manager:-

- Supervisor training
- Health & Safety (CIEH level 2)
- Assertiveness
- Time Management
- Introduction to project management

The place will be offered to the reader who uses the blue link below to forward this newsletter on to their SME contacts, with 20 or more employees, and who subsequently gets the highest number of these owners to subscribe to the newsletter. I will be assessing the winner, two days before the next newsletter which comes out in March

Disclaimer The information given in this newsletter is provided as a guide and overview only and not as specific legal facts. If you are unsure about any of the information provided you are advised to contact us directly.

Regards,

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