

New Year's Career Resolutions You Can Keep



It's that time of the year again. You've thought about everything that's transpired and started to come up with a list of things you're going to do better or differently next year. Yes, we're talking about New Year's Resolutions. They're always well-intended. However, the reality is that most of them are forgotten by the end of January. Whether you just don't have time, or lose motivation, the truth remains, New Year's Resolutions are tough to keep.

When it comes to your career, you have goals you want to reach. Maybe it's becoming a Team Lead or a Chief Engineer. In order to reach those goals, you need to have specific steps that are going to get you there. What better time than the start of the New Year to set about making those smaller steps a priority? Here are a list of New Year's Career Resolutions that you can keep:

Brush Up Your Resume

Even if you don't have plans to look for a new job right now, you never know when an opportunity might present itself. This simple exercise keeps you from losing information you might need in the event that you decide to look for something new. The process can be reflective as well. When you look back at your past jobs and accomplishments, you can be proud of how far you've come. Conversely, maybe there's a hole in your resume that needs filling and now's the perfect time to get to work.

Update Your LinkedIn Profile

When was the last time you looked at your LinkedIn profile? A lot has changed since the days when people threw up a professional picture, their schooling and titles for jobs they've held. Now, more than ever, your LinkedIn profile is part of your professional brand. The information, style and layout should be up to date. How's that professional summary coming along?

If you need some inspiration, check out the profiles of some of your connections. Chances are you'll learn a thing or two.

Subscribe to a Blog

We're all guilty of wasting time during the day. Whether it's scrolling through Instagram or checking fantasy football scores, the time can add up. The truth is though, we all need a mental break at some point. Why not put that time to good use and subscribe to a blog you find interesting? It doesn't even have to be related to your industry. There are literally hundreds of thousands of talented writers out there sharing their perspective and information for free. If you're not sure what kind of blog you might be interested in, ask around. Your friends and colleagues will have plenty of ideas.

Send One Thank You Note Per Week

Even though most of our communication takes place electronically, there's still no substitute for an old-fashioned hand-written thank you note. Whether it's to a person from another department that helped you out on a project or even just a friend, personal thank you notes are memorable. They don't take long to write and are a great way to practice gratitude - something we could all use more of.

Add a New Skill

The ways in which we work are constantly changing. As a result, your skills need to be current. Set aside some time each week to learn a new skill. It doesn't matter if it's learning a second language, new computer program or becoming a better public speaker. The point is that you're bettering yourself and enjoying the

process.

Take Care of Your Health

We all know about those New Year's Resolutions focused on weight loss. "This year I'm joining a gym." "Starting in January, I'm going to do yoga three days a week." Just like most New Year's Resolutions, it's only a small percentage that are actually seen through.

The good news is you can take some smaller steps to improve your health and well-being. Buy a stand-up desk for your office. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Bring your own lunch instead of eating from the cafeteria. Replace that comfy computer chair with a Swiss ball. There are all sorts of easy ways to be healthier at work. The key is to find one or two that work for you and, stick to them.

Find a Mentor

Even if you're the company President, there are still people in your organization you can learn from. Find someone with some skills that you particularly admire. Approach that person and ask them if they'd be willing to mentor you in a specific area of your job. Together, you can set goals and have some fun along the way.

Become a Mentor

Maybe there's someone on your team who seems to go above and beyond. You can tell this person is passionate about what they do and is driven to meet their goals. You can't be everything to everybody but, if you make an effort to take an exceptional employee under your wing, they'll be more than thankful. Giving back makes you feel good. Better yet, chances are you'll learn something too.

Get a New Professional Photo

You like the picture on your business card. Unfortunately, it's 15 years old. Yes, you have a little more gray hair now but, that baggy suit hasn't been fashionable since Y2K. As trivial as it might seem, people are going to judge you by your

professional picture. Whether it's in an email signature, on your LinkedIn profile or on your business card, your professional picture is often the first chance someone has to put a face with your name. Why wouldn't you want to look good?

Most New Year's resolutions fail for one of two reasons. First, they're too big to tackle. Second, they aren't specific. The good news is it isn't that hard to make some small improvements to keep you on the track to success. Create some daily habits that don't take a ton of time but are fun and rewarding. You just might surprise yourself with the difference you see.

Planning the Perfect Holiday Party



Your team has worked hard all year to achieve the results you expect. They've come in early, stayed late, and performed duties far beyond those listed in their job description. You've set the bar high. Everyone knows what's expected and they respect you as a leader. You've remained highly professional throughout the whole year.

Now that Thanksgiving has come to pass, you find yourself feeling a little sentimental about the holidays. Sure, there's still plenty of work to be done. But, you've taken a step back to really appreciate the effort everyone's put forth for the past 11 months. To show them your appreciation, it's time to plan a company holiday party. You don't want to do the typical catered appetizers and cheap wine. You really want to show everyone a good time. Planning a party that everyone's sure to enjoy isn't easy. If you're not sure where to start, check out our list of best tips below.

Budget

As you start planning your holiday party, all sorts of ideas are going to run through your head. Maybe it would be cool to have a DJ. Perhaps it's a fancy offsite venue with room for all trappings imaginable. While all these ideas sound like a blast, you have to keep your budget in mind. Yes, you want to throw a party that everyone will remember. However, the last thing you want to do is spend a chunk of quarterly profits on one night of fun.

Before you start putting down deposits and ordering the finest sushi in town, do some research and make sure you stay within your budget.

Decide on a Theme

Themes are fun. That's the bottom line. And the best part? Your options are limitless. A good place to start is taking a poll. Come up with a few ideas and circulate them through your organization. Maybe it's a casino night. What about a masquerade party? Who doesn't love a luau when it's frigid outside? Whatever theme you choose, make sure it's fun and won't raise any red flags with HR.

Book a Venue

Your employees spend the majority of their waking hours at the office. That's the last place they want to cut loose and have a little fun. If it's in your budget, book an offsite venue. Maybe it's the county fairgrounds. What about a bowling alley or roller rink? Whatever you choose, make sure it's a place people can get to that's within your budget.

Icebreakers

Your employees love the fact that you're throwing a holiday party. They get to bring their significant others and have a night of fun. That doesn't mean that they're going to be super comfortable mingling with everyone in the group. Chances are, Greg from the engineering team isn't going out of his way to say hello to Sam from accounts payable.

Holiday parties are a great time to foster cross-departmental integration. This is

easy when you set up activities that encourage bonding. Set up teams for charades. What about trivia? Again, you can get as creative as you want. Just make sure they're fun and allow people to let their guard down.

White Elephant Gift Exchange

Who doesn't love an old-fashioned gift exchange? Well before your party commences, communicate that everyone should bring a gift for a white elephant gift exchange. It's a good idea to set a limit on how much money people should spend on their gift so it doesn't become a financial burden in any way. Usually \$10 or \$20 is affordable for everyone.

Entertainment

Entertainers are a hit at every party. Whether it's a hypnotist, magician or Santa, entertainment adds a fun dynamic to any party. Whatever entertainment you decide on, make sure to reserve it well in advance. The holiday season is where entertainers make their money and they book up quickly.

Transportation

The idea of having a holiday party is for everyone to have a good time. As they should. It's inevitable that some folks are going to have a little too much to drink. You shouldn't, but some people will. It's important that they get home safely. Spend the extra money to have transportation arranged for people that shouldn't drive. Hire a local cab company. Post an ad on Craigslist for Uber and Lyft drivers letting them know that there will be plenty of fares once the festivities end. The last thing you want is someone making the wrong decision and having to deal with the consequences.

Holiday parties are meant to be fun. They're a chance for everyone to come together, bond and share in some holiday cheer. Throwing a party that's memorable goes a long way in not only showing your appreciation for your employees but, boosting morale and carrying momentum through the end of the year. As long as you follow some of the advice above, stay within budget and make sure everyone is safe, your holiday shindig is sure to be a success.