

Culture And Behaviours

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Don't just sprint to the finish – take time to reflect fully on the work you've done

By Andrew Sharman

It's that time of year isn't it? Over the last few weeks you might have sat down with paper and pen, perhaps a glass of something seasonal in hand, and considered how you'd make 2016 a good year. Setting resolutions has become a time-honored tradition for many of us – eating better, going to the gym more, losing weight, and learning a language often feature in top tens around the world. But new research from Harvard University reveals that less than 10% of us

actually stick to our resolutions. And most of us don't even make it to the end of February!

So before you start planning your safety resolutions for 2016, let's consider how you can improve your chances of success.

Reflect

On the 24th December I was getting ready for the festive holidays: that last, mad rush to the finish line, trying to tick off as many items as I could from my to-do list. Now, following a bit of downtime, and a couple of weeks back into work, I realize that I have this 'sprint to the finish' not just in December, but almost every month. In a world that craves instant gratification do we really take enough time to reflect fully upon the work we've done? Those problems that seemed impossible but somehow worked out, the technical issues that seemed beyond our grasp... despite the challenges we somehow managed to succeed.

Scientists at the University of California found that the act of reflecting on what we've done deepens our learning, makes us more appreciative, and increases our positive bias. So look back before you look forward this year: What did last year teach you? What new skills did you develop? What business-lessons did you learn? In which areas do you want to focus more attention this year? And how can you build in some regular reflection time each month?

Recalibrate

Last year many organisations asked us to help improve their safety performance. Expectations were high and one particular manager stands out (though she's not unique): after listening intently to our proposal for safety culture assessment and the implementation of a behaviour-based safety program she nodded sagely and said: "It sounds perfect, but instead of 2 years, can you complete it 3 months? We need a difference much sooner."

In another global multinational I listened to a board presentation on safety. The H&S manager explained that the LTIR (Lost Time Injury Rate) was now 0.316 – a significant improvement for them. The Operations Vice President countered with: "Well, it's really not good enough, we're not really at zero yet". The safety manager offered that the rate was 30% better than industry average but the VP wouldn't budge.

The notion of 'doing more with less' is here to stay and there are no magic pills or silver bullets in safety – organisational change takes time and effort. A new year is the perfect time to recalibrate expectations. What do your stakeholders' expect this year? Does this match your view of reality? What do you need to do to ensure alignment?

Simplify

Our lives have become busier and busier: we work tirelessly to make things safer, but our 'to do lists' are longer than ever before! As we begin 2016, consider the [Pareto Principle](#) and work out where the biggest bang for your buck is. Each day I review my to-do list and choose the three things I believe will make the most difference. How will you simplify your list and focus on what's most important in the year ahead?

Create Safety

A new year provides a clean canvas on which we can design the future. Help people move from 'having to' to 'wanting to' do safety by starting with a mindset shift from the traditional attitude of 'preventing accidents' to a more forward-

facing one of 'creating safety' and get innovative with your resolutions.

Finally, Robert Cialdini, Professor of Psychology at Arizona State University reckons the act of simply setting goals for your resolutions significantly raises your chances of achieving them so grab your pen and get scribbling.



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*Andrew's best-selling book [From Accidents to Zero: A Practical Guide to Improving Your Workplace Safety Culture](#) is available to SHPonline readers with an **exclusive 50% discount** if ordered before 28 February. Use the code **SHP50** at www.fromaccidentstozero.com to order your copy now.*

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