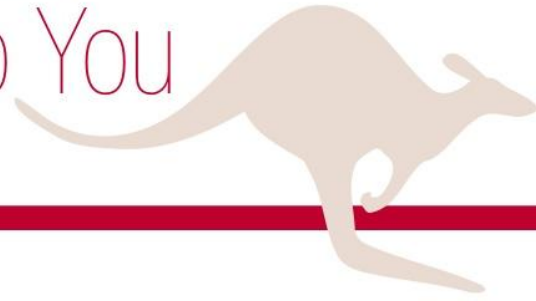


# From ROO to You



January 1, 2011

## Resolutions or Simply Resolute?

Lose 10 pounds. Spend more time the family. Grow the business.

Ah yes, it must be New Year's Day. I will see fresh faces at the gym, successfully manage a few Saturday Board Game Days with the family, and hopefully help my colleagues and clients in new and meaningful ways. How many of our resolutions are still top of mind and moving forward in April?

My friend Riley sent a great note to his friends and clients describing the goals he has set during each of the past three years and how he has done accomplishing each of them. This was not simply a laundry list of accomplishments, but the sharing of his goals, the story behind them, the challenges he faced and what he has learned. Equally important, he shared his 2011 goals and asked for support.

I do not typically make New Year's Resolutions so I thought it was high time to explore how people best make the leap from setting resolutions to actually accomplishing them.

Merriam-Webster's defines resolution as:

the act or process of [resolving](#): as

- a : the act of analyzing a complex notion into simpler ones
- b : the act of answering
- c : the act of determining

**This sounds good, but nowhere does the definition address actually accomplishing anything!**

Many people create resolutions or set goals and most organizations "decide" a lot of things. They hold three-day retreats to refine strategy and identify key initiatives; sometimes we even manage to communicate them at a high level to the workforce. But how well do we translate resolutions and intent, to actual accomplishment?

We hope this New Year's edition helps you to be resolute in accomplishing your professional and personal goals in 2011.

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## For You: Simply Resolute

If you establish a New Year's Resolution, or any other project plan or goal, be resolute. A few suggestions to help you establish goals you can achieve and celebrate:

- Decide. Deciding to accomplish something is half the battle. The other half requires commitment, persistence and resiliency. There will likely be setbacks or frustrations. Expect them, accept them and move on.
- Share. Your odds of success increase exponentially simply by telling someone about your goal. Whether stating your goal aloud makes it "real", or it is simple peer pressure, telling someone about your goal will keep you accountable. This person can also provide support and encouragement to you along the journey.
- Focus on the critical few. Most of us create a list of all the things we want to accomplish this week/month/year. Figure out what will make the biggest difference for you personally or professionally in 2011, and focus on 2 or 3 goals at most.
- Stretch, with realism. Winning the Nobel Prize is probably not a realistic goal for me. American Idol is definitely out. However, I can work toward a more realistic goal of offering bimonthly seminars for clients in 2011, and learning from others at least twice per month. How will you stretch this year?
- Be SMART. Set SMART goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based.
- Take baby steps. Losing 20 pounds is a BHAG (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal). It is also overwhelming. Break your goal down into a few milestones or "baby steps". If your goal is to lose 20 pounds, steps toward that goal could be to:
  - Find a workout partner by January 31
  - Work out 2 times per week, with at least one group class
  - Lose one pound every two weeks (remember, muscle weighs more than fat!)



# From Roo to You



## For Your Organization: Focus, guide, and get out of the way

While suggestions for individuals apply equally well to groups, organizations have additional obligations. As leaders, we are beholden to our shareholders, our workforce and increasingly, our community. Different groups of stakeholders may have different priorities. At best, these competing demands are a distraction. At worst, they derail the organization and little gets accomplished. This creates additional strain on an already lean workforce and on you as a leader. A few suggestions that will increase your success in 2011:

- Set clear direction. As leaders our role is to set direction, and at a high level, plot the course for the business. Our role is not to dictate every detail, process and activity, but to establish overarching goals, objectives and outcomes. If you cannot describe what “success” looks like, you have more work to do before sharing this goal with the organization.
- Tell a story. Increasing revenue by 15% is an easy goal to understand, but it isn’t particularly motivating for most employees. With your leadership team, take the time to really explore the “why” behind goals. While a burning platform can be effective (we need to defend our market share or jobs may be lost), an aspirational goal (including why it enhances the company, the workforce and the individual’s reputation, stability and opportunity) will usually be more effective in engaging people. The leadership team, and functional leaders, should take the time to share how an individual department or group has (or will) impact this goal. Sharing stories can be especially powerful when you can share how a person or group who doesn’t directly touch the customer or product can impact success.
- Focus. It is challenging, if not impossible, to be more successful managing 10 priorities compared to three. Focusing on increasing sales when operations is unable to support existing production levels will only lead to frustration, finger-pointing and a lot of overtime. Figure out the critical few, and the sequencing of those priorities. Too many priorities results in too many “shiny objects” that distract and confuse the organization with constantly changing messages. Stick to established priorities, barring a major business change.
- Guide. As leaders we often think we have to be the people to not only establish scope, but to identify every milestone, run every meeting and make every decision. Let your “next level” of managers help define milestones and success measures. They are closer to specific aspects of the business in many respects and will offer new insights and suggestions. The role of leader is to guide these individuals or teams as they move forward with projects. Coach, ask questions, and be available to support the team.
- Get out of the way. Letting go is difficult. You probably know three ways to get to the outcome you desire and probably have a strong preference for a particular course of action. Remember that

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your way is not the only way. We each suffer from some degree of myopia based on our experience, bias and opinions. Help your staff find their way, get out of their way and let them deliver.

**\*\* A caveat: “Getting out of the way” is not the same thing as abdicating responsibility.** Leaders should remain abreast of project progress, be available to answer questions and clarify, help to remove obstacles, and if necessary, provide course correction.

- Spotlight. Create opportunities for project leaders and project teams to shine. Ask a project team to provide an update at a company luncheon. Share the accomplishments of the group at your leadership meetings. Invite a project lead or team member to conduct a Q&A with the leadership team or subject matter experts about the project. Most importantly, do not ignore them. They are doing important work, face uncertainty, and need your active support.

For additional strategies and/or support setting yourself or your organization up for success, contact Roo Solutions.