

GEARING UP FOR 2005 A GLANCE BACK TO SPRING FORWARD

Thanksgiving has come and gone, and the annual holiday marathon has begun. Shopping for gifts, making appearances at company holiday parties, attending neighborhood celebrations, and getting the house ship-shape for guests and relatives, all while trying to get 4th quarter sales in, boggles any free space you have left in your brain, and fills up your otherwise casual schedule. However, it's important to be aware of the New Year nipping at our heels.

This month's e-consult introduces the first of a three part series we call GEARING UP FOR 2005. The collection of articles focuses on the past, present, and future (hopefully with less pain than Ebenezer Scrooge). Planet Management Consulting believes in the importance of having a cohesive and objective approach when it comes time to make decisions that affect a company's success. Doing so requires the practice of three key components:

- **Part I:** A Glance Back to Spring Forward
- **Part II:** Setting Goals for the New Year
- **Part III:** Executing Your Plan

In this three part series, our quest is to give you some guidelines to help you transition into a new and successful 2005.

Sometimes in order to move forward, we must first take a look at where we've been. With the New Year rising quickly on the horizon, it's time to reflect, evaluate, and move forward with vigor and grace into a triumphant 2005. We must not dwell in the past, but take the time recognize our losses, and celebrate our wins. In doing so, we learn what works and how to improve for the future.

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Those who do not learn from history
are condemned to repeat it.
George Santayana
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Recently, Planet Management Consulting took some time to reflect on the past year with client Cori Whitacre, Training Manager for EB Games. EB Games is an interactive computer game company. Whitacre's priorities for 2004 included a whole gambit of training initiatives, as well as presenting top notch Vendor Show training that addressed major training initiatives for the company including Loss Prevention, Recruiting and Hiring, Customer Experience, and Merchandising. The EB Games Vendor Show is a unique experience of training, interaction with peers and various key support vendors. Its purpose was to prepare employees for the holidays and gain insight from the leadership of one of the most exciting, fastest growing retailers in the world.

This year's Vendor Show was a tremendous success. The many hours of proactive planning the training department dedicated to the event was a catalyst in creating a seamless flow in the overall presentation of the show. The entire company saw the important role the Training Department plays, and that its function is not only viable, but also necessary. Whitacre believes the practice of reflection is "a process of continuous improvement." It is important to identify where it went good, where it went bad, and what you need to do next time for improvement.

In reflecting on the past year's training initiatives, Whitacre realized the importance of internally promoting an initiative. The training department was good at getting things done, and they had the right tools in place to achieve their goals. However, they didn't do enough to create excitement for the training - especially with managers. More buy-in and excitement would have been created if the managers were given a better understanding of the program from the start.

The EB Games Training Department needed to establish more credibility for their initiatives. However, the programs they implemented were so successful they gained credibility for future projects.

THE PRACTICE OF REFLECTION

President of JWC Group, Jennifer White (2000) explains, "When you don't take the time to reflect on where you've been, you never learn the lessons you need to learn."

<www.nashville.bizjournals.com/nashville/stories/2000/12/25/smallb3.html>

So, how do you practice reflection? Do you sit and stare at a wall and just think about the past year? Whitacre instilled the practice of reflection in her team after the Vendor Show through a variety of different best practice scenarios including:

- Surveys to attendees in remote locations
- A re-cap meeting with all involved from upper level management to behind-the scenes employees
- One-on-one meetings with supervisors

The practice of reflection should not instigate tunnel vision only looking back at the past. Instead, it should encourage a 360 degree scope through which we can look at the past, but also towards the future.

Whitacre's team was successful in reaching their training initiative goals for the year 2004. They will carry that success with them as they continue to strengthen EB Games by implementing the 2005 training initiatives they have planned (some of which would not have been discovered without the practice of reflection).

Planet Management Consulting encourages you to reflect on your wins and losses of the past year - individually and collectively with your team. We have created a form for you to utilize as a guide in your reflection exercise.

>> [Click here to download the form from PMC's website.](#)

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For more information on EB Games, visit their website at <http://www.ebgames.com/>.

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