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# trekking

**a newsletter on practical strategic thinking and action  
issue #68**

## **why i hate new year's resolutions**

It's December, which means we are fast approaching 2010 and with it, the annual ritual of New Year's resolutions. Personally speaking, I'm not a big fan of New Years resolutions. Don't get me wrong, the ideas and motivation behind these resolutions are good. No one ever makes a New Year's resolution to smoke more cigarettes, gain some weight or get more out of shape - so most resolutions then are to improve one's self. So, if the motivation behind them is good, why do they seem to go so wrong year after year?

Well, first off, most everyone chooses New Year's resolutions that significantly alter behavior that the person most likely has had for years, relying solely on their own willpower. Losing weight, quitting smoking, getting in shape or changing their saving habits - all pretty impressive, but very demanding challenges as resolutions go. Do I think people are then aiming too high? Maybe. But I think the real culprit is the fact that many people make New Year's resolutions without really thinking them through and putting a realistic plan in place to support the necessary behavior changes. In the end, resolutions are dropped, people fail and the entire idea of the New Year's resolution is disparaged. The concept of New Year's resolutions is good, but we are made to feel bad if we fall short of our goals.

Most years I don't make New Year's resolutions. There is one exception - three years ago, when I first joined the Winchester Highlanders running club. That year I made a resolution to run 75 mornings with the Highlanders (at 5:45 AM on weekday mornings to boot) and run a total of 750 miles that year. I fell short of my goals that year, probably aiming too high, but I increased my mileage significantly over the previous year. So it was a relative success.

No, I don't have extraordinary willpower that the rest of the world lacks. Instead, I sincerely wanted to do this, my plan fit into my schedule, and there were measurable benchmarks to track my success. I still run (if you saw last month's Trekking about my marathon you knew that) and finally exceeded the 750 miles this year. It's a goal I worked up to gradually.

So, as we look to our own or our clients' businesses, keep in mind that New Year's resolutions should be realistic and incorporated with a well thought-out plan of action in order to be successful.

## a different approach

Not sure exactly what New Year's resolution to pick for your business or a client's business? It certainly isn't as easy as doing a quick self-inventory and realizing that you are 20 pounds overweight -- self-improvement resolutions seem to be easier to spot. Here's a list of suggestions to consider. This list comes courtesy of Jan B. King, author of [Business Plans to Game Plans](#):

- Make sure you have a business plan.
- Resolve to continuously promote your business.
- Set up action plans for your employees.
- Survey everyone. (We love this idea and call it [Strategic Conversations](#))
- Make sure you are measuring the important things in your business.
- Review your business performance measures.
- Make a resolution to celebrate when you've accomplished a set goal. You and your team will take pride in achievement and can get started on the next target.

## reading list

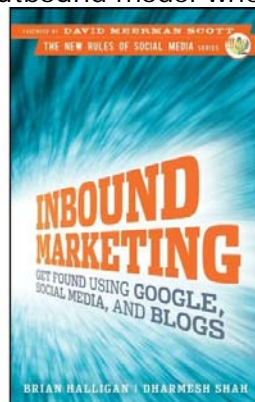
"Inbound Marketing: Get Found Using Google, Social Media and Blogs" by Brian Halligan and Dharmesh Shah

With all the talk about social media, the real news about the trend is often lost. The point is that the conversations you have on the internet are important to driving traffic to your firm's website. This book shows you how to use the web effectively to do just that. The authors are the founders of a company we like called Hubspot. In the book they explain very clearly how marketing is moving from:

An outbound model where you publish ads, call people and send out emails with the intention of selling something

to

An inbound model where you participate in, and contribute to, on-line conversations with the intention of informing and building relationships-- drawing people into your business and selling more effectively.



You don't believe it? Well, here at Trek we have recently closed on an engagement with a company that found us in just this way. It's happening, and we all need to start learning about it. [This book](#) is a very practical first step.

## announcements

### Exit Planning Exchange - Boston chapter

On Thursday morning, December 10 at Knight Hall at Babson College, Bryan Piskorowski, Managing Director, Wells Fargo Advisors will address the personal investing outlook for 2010. Ken Serwinski, CEO/Senior Managing Director of Prairie Capital Advisors will discuss the M & A outlook for 2010.

To register for this event, please visit the recently-updated [www.xpxboston.com](http://www.xpxboston.com)

Best wishes to all Trekking readers for a healthy and productive 2010!



Trek Consulting is proud to announce that our Trekking newsletter was named a 2008 Constant Contact All Star!

## about trek consulting

Trek works with owner-managed businesses to develop and execute action plans for growth. Trek also works with the owners to prepare for their successful exit by coordinating the resources necessary to increase and preserve the firm's value, creating the succession plan and assembling the right transaction team, financing and post-transaction plan.

Our clients report improved market focus, greater revenues, better margins and increased profits. To learn more about Trek Consulting and how we can help you improve your company's results, visit us on the web at [www.trekconsulting.com](http://www.trekconsulting.com) or call us at 781.729.1008.

