

# 4 Practical New Years Resolutions for Your Small Business



It's hard to start thinking about the New Year when we're stuck in the middle of the hectic holidays. But with January 1 right around the corner, now is the perfect time to reflect on how to improve your business.

## 1. Resolve to put your data to work.

Every business has almost unlimited data available about customers, employees and business operations. But are you taking advantage of all that information, or just letting it pile up? While the sheer amount of data available today can seem overwhelming, analytics tools can help you drill down to key information. Look for products that enable you to create custom dashboards, graphs, tables and visualizations. That way, you can see and share complex data in whatever format makes it easiest for you and your team to understand.

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## 2. Resolve to streamline your systems.

Based on what your analytics uncover about your employees, your customers and business processes, you can streamline your business to focus on what matters most. For example, if you identify a bottleneck that's slowing down customer service response times, you can come up with ways to eliminate it. Is a particular sales or marketing tactic getting great results? Then do more of that. The right analytics tools can even help you automate workflows to save time and boost efficiency. Be sure to ask your employees, especially those on the front lines, for suggestions when it comes to simplifying processes and systems. They'll often have great ideas about improving the processes they engage with every day.

**Learn about LEAN, QRM and other time & money-saving strategies from your Blackhawk Business Banker.**

## 3. Resolve to focus on employees.

Low unemployment is rapidly creating a job seeker's market. With competition for qualified employees getting fiercer by the day, keeping employees satisfied and engaged should be a key area of focus for every business. Of course, you also want to continuously improve your team's performance. You can use strategies such as gamification to promote friendly competition among teams or individuals to help accomplish both goals at once. It'll boost employee engagement, while also motivating your workers to improve their performance — and have lots of fun.

**To learn more about gamification, click here.**

## 4. Resolve to communicate better.

Understanding how you communicate and the communication styles of those around you is a game changer. Communication is so much more than the words we speak. It includes our body language, non-verbal cues and the behavior that follows our words. To effectively connect with those around you, it's helpful to understand different communication styles. While no one style is inherently better than the other, picking the *right* style for the *right* audience is imperative.

**The four main styles of communicating are: Analytical, Intuitive, Functional and Personal; to learn more about them, click here.**

**By putting these 4 resolutions into practice, you can definitely improve your business in the upcoming year!**

*Source: smallbiztrends.com and blackhawkbank.com*