

THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

Resolutions, Part II

In my last article, I outlined my 10 new year's resolutions. Now that I have those carefully planned, I like to establish a set of short-, mid- and long-term goals. These may go hand in hand with my resolutions, or they become something that will indirectly help achieve an end result. Resolutions often fade, but goals can stand as mini-resolutions year-round.

SHORT-TERM GOALS

Short-term goals may include putting a fresh coat of paint in the bathroom at work, cleaning out a file cabinet or rearranging your store's floor plan. The point is to set a small task to be completed outside of your daily routine, so you feel the accomplishment immediately. (Do not delegate these goals.)

Developing your short-term goals will help break the cycle of procrastination and monotony. Don't enter these items in your iPhone, iPad or BlackBerry — it's too easy to silence the alarm when it goes off. Write the goals down in pen, so you have a daily list. Once you accomplish an item, check it off.

MID-TERM GOALS

Sometimes, my short-term goal directly influences my mid-term goal. Case in point: I started painting that bathroom in one of my stores and liked the look of it so much that I decided to paint the entire store. The problem was time and budget. I didn't have time to paint the entire store by myself in a few weeks or the budget to hire a crew. Besides, I like doing things myself.

So, it became my mid-term goal to paint the entire 6,500-square-foot store. I would have the store painted in six months by breaking it into sections. This way, it didn't look like a construction zone the whole time, and customers wouldn't have to see partially painted walls.

Unlike short-term goals, your mid-term goals have some flexibility. As other issues came up, I had to find time to paint here and there. The payoff? I learned that quality takes time and to be patient. Instead of taking six months to complete the job, it took me eight, but I finished it — and it looks pretty darn good.

LONG-TERM GOALS

My long-term goals change all the time, and yours probably do, too. Long-term goal-setting is what keeps many businesses going. You may decide that your goal for 2012 is to reach a certain number of students in your music lessons program, or you might want to increase your total guitar inventory over the course of the year. If you have to adjust your numbers a little, that's OK. The goal may change to reflect more realistic principles at play that you can't control, such as the economy.

My painting project started to look as if it would become a long-term goal, but I finished it and kept working on another long-term goal I'd started at the top of 2010 — overhauling our entire retail strategy from the ground up, which we did.

Sometimes, long-term goals aren't as defined as you think, and you realize that your short- and mid-term goals actually turn into something long-term. In 1992, I started my company out of the back of my car, and my long-term goal was to stay in business and make enough to get a storefront. That was 20 years ago. Now, my long-term goal is to write another article updating you on how my goals fared between 2012 and 2032. **MI**

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How to set and achieve your short-, mid- and long-term goals