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Greetings!

Welcome to the December 2016 issue of The Bean Counters' Quarterly!

Farewell 2016...Welcome 2017!

It's always a bit of a jolt to find the New Year facing ahead in a couple of days. You know it's coming soon, but the reality of it seems almost sudden...each year. If you ask people how they feel about the end of year/new year, some will say good riddance to the outgoing year and any troubles it contained and/or some will have excitement and anticipation of the new year and everything it might hold in store. Whatever your feelings about the end/beginning of the year, please know everyone here wishes you the very best in 2017!

In this final edition of BCQ for 2016, you'll read about Derek's response to our Dialogue question...is he the Bah-Humbug type at the holidays?

Also in our About Us, you can read about how most of the team planned for the holidays and what is most meaningful to them during this time of year.

Want to know what trends or indicators are important in 2017? Check out the Maclean's article featuring the 75 charts you should be watching.

There's also an article about Resolutions or Goal setting for the new year, if you're trying to be more successful, more prosperous, healthier, or happier! See if something resonates with you. It's not easy to do and there isn't one answer for everyone. What works for you?

And then in the Reading section, we hope you enjoy 'reading' about how to make changes in the new year or anytime (that is if you want to make changes, and let's face it, most of us do at one time or another). Chip and Dan Heath write about the internal conflict we face when wanting to make changes and how to 'overcome' it.

On behalf of the team at Kirkham CA's, we wish you the most amazing year ahead. May 2017 bring peace, health, and prosperity to you!

Steve Kirkham

The Dialogue Department!

The idea is to open the lines of communication on a topic or question that may be light and breezy or deep and serious, in an otherwise busy and hurried world. We'll start on our end by telling you about our thoughts on a particular topic or question, and then we'll wait to hear back from you - just hit the link "Here's What I Have to Say" and send us a quick reply.

Here's our question/topic for this issue:

"Are you the Christmas is a magical time or Bah-Humbug type of person? Please describe why/how?"

Our reply for this quarter is from **DEREK STEVENS:**

"Getting into the Christmas spirit can often be difficult for me. I'm task oriented. With year-end deadlines approaching and people taking extended vacation during this time, it makes it even more difficult to get things done. Add to this the stress of going to the mall, battling the parking and to borrow a line from The Grinch, Oh, the Noise! Noise! Noise! But then I get that moment when my sprits start to lift. This year it was at the Salvation Army Christmas concert and I heard all those great Christmas carols and hymns that I enjoy. Other years it happens when I get a quiet evening with the snow starting to fall and the whole family gathers around the fire. It's a wonderful time to take a breath, think of your family and friends (old and new) and be grateful. That's when I remember; I like Christmas a lot."

Here's What I Have To Say - (send reply to) steve@kirkhamca.ca

75 Charts Every Canadian Should Watch in 2017

75 charts every Canadian should watch in 2017

Maclean's presents its third annual chartstravaganza to help make sense of the Canadian economy in the year ahead

Jason Kirby, December 12, 2016

For the third year in a row Maclean's asked economists, investors, analysts and financial commentators to submit what they think will be an important chart Canadians should watch in the year ahead-and they delivered, in spades. From the state of Canada's housing market and the energy sector to government finances and how Canada will fare under Donald Trump, these 75 charts, accompanied by explanations from each contributor, will help prepare Canadians for understanding the economy in the year ahead.

Click the link below to see ALL the charts. Enjoy!

[75 Charts Every Canadian Should Watch in 2017](#)

Spotlight On GOAL SETTING!

SPOTLIGHT ON GOAL SETTING!

New Year's Resolutions vs. New Year's Goals

"You cannot change your destination overnight, but you can change your direction overnight."

~ Jim Rohn

By F. John Reh

So what is it going to be this year? Same old resolutions to:

* Pay Off Debts * Save More Money

Or maybe some business-related resolutions for the new year:

* Increase Sales * Reduce Short-Term and Long-Term Debt

Well, they really aren't all that different, are they? We all vow each year to try harder to do the things we know we should do - get in better shape, physically, financially, emotionally.

Those of us who also are responsible for business units make similar promises to ourselves to do what we already know has to be done to improve the business. I

will leave the personal improvement resolutions to you to handle, but I want to give you some ideas on how to make this year's new year's resolutions for your business come true.

First, the easy part - Decide what you want to achieve; what you want to make happen; what most needs to be done. Then, the hard part - Set your GOALS.

Set Specific Goals

Setting goals is important. That is how you convert good but ephemeral ideas (cut expenses, increase sales) into specific, measurable targets (reduce expenses by 5% before the stockholder meeting in May; increase sales of the retail brands by at least \$60,000 per quarter).

This is not the time to worry about whether or not you can reach these goals. You will have plenty of time for that later. This is the time to "draw the line in the sand" and publicly announce "this is what we are going to do, and this is when we will do it."

If you set easy goals - keep expenses at this year's levels; increase sales of our flagship product by 2% this year - you will fail.

Oh, you won't fail to meet those goals, but you will fail to satisfy yourself. And you will fail to keep the business alive because your competitors will set (and reach) more aggressive goals.

If you set difficult, yet reasonable, goals it won't really matter if you reach them. The effort to reach them will force you to push yourself.

It will make you use the resources you have to the best of your ability. It will teach you what you really can do when you focus on specific goals.

However, I suspect you will get pretty close to those goals. Who knows? You may even reach and surpass them. And your reward for doing that? Self-satisfaction in knowing that you really are 'the best' and the privilege of competing again next year in the cutthroat world of business.

Set Measurable Goals

In setting your goals, it is important to be as specific as you can. Nobody knows your business like you do. Nobody knows what your people are capable of as well as you do. And only you know what is really important to you. So you have to be the one to set the goals and communicate them to everyone else.

The more specific and more measurable your goals, the easier it will be to tell when you reach them.

For instance, if you set a goal to increase sales how do you know if you have succeeded? If your month on month sales figures for January exceed last year's January sales figures have you met your goal?

What about the fact that you have four more stores this January than last January? Were sales really hot last January, because of that freak storm? If you've met your goal by the end of January, what will you use to test yourself for the rest of the year?

If, on the other hand, your goal is "to increase net sales for each region by at least 5% per quarter and 7% by year end", you have something you can measure, track progress against, and use to push yourself to new successes.

If you decide to reduce turnover of full-time staff to under two percent for the entire year and cut the dropout rate of help-desk staff by half, you are better off than simply deciding to increase employee morale.

Rewards

Don't wait for this time next year to sit back and look at this list and see how you did. Post your goals where you, and everyone else, can see them. Measure how you are doing against your goals and adjust as necessary. Do this at all the measurement points you built into the plan (monthly, quarterly, whatever intervals you selected).

That way, when this time next year does get here you can sit back and reflect again. Rejoice in your successes. Learn from your misses. And then set tougher goals for the following year.

[New Year's Resolutions vs. New Year's Goals](#)

Recommended Reading:

Switch: How To Change Things When Change Is Hard

By Chip Heath, Dan Heath

Why is it so hard to make lasting changes in our companies, in our communities, and in our own lives?

The primary obstacle is a conflict that's built into our brains, say Chip and Dan Heath, authors of the critically acclaimed bestseller *Made to Stick*. Psychologists have discovered that our minds are ruled by two different systems - the rational mind and the emotional mind - that compete for control. The rational mind wants a great beach body; the emotional mind wants that Oreo cookie. The rational mind wants to change something at work; the emotional mind loves the comfort of the existing routine. This tension can doom a change effort - but if it is overcome, change can come quickly.

In *Switch*, the Heaths show how everyday people - employees and managers, parents and nurses - have united both minds and, as a result, achieved dramatic results:

- The lowly medical interns who managed to defeat an entrenched, decades-old medical practice that was endangering patients (see page 242)
- The home-organizing guru who developed a simple technique for overcoming the dread of housekeeping (see page 130)
- The manager who transformed a lackadaisical customer-support team into service zealots by removing a standard tool of customer service (see page 199)

In a compelling, story-driven narrative, the Heaths bring together decades of counterintuitive research in psychology, sociology, and other fields to shed new light on how we can effect transformative change. *Switch* shows that successful changes follow a pattern, a pattern you can use to make the changes that matter to you, whether your interest is in changing the world or changing your waistline.

[SWITCH: How To Change Things When Change Is Hard](#)

Stuff To Know About Our Team

-Sherry says it's been a busy Christmas season but she managed to get her "To Do" list all done. She sent packages to family out west, decorated the tree and created a nice centerpiece for her dining table and an arrangement at the front door. It all came together quite smoothly this year. Her in-laws prepared the feast and she supplied the appetizers on Christmas Day. Sherry looks forward to this gathering every year. They always have a ton of fun. She hopes everyone out there finds a piece of joy and happiness during this time.

-Linda says it's pretty busy during the holiday time and celebrated with family.

-Ana says she was quite bushed in December from a lot of shoveling, as her husband was down with injuries! It was a big job to get all the Christmas shopping done, but she still had a couple of weeks before the big day and only stockings to finish. She also managed a carefully managed schedule to nail down family get togethers for Christmas. It gets harder every year now that the kids (nephews & nieces) are all married with kids of their own. She was looking forward to their big family dinner (the noise, the eating and the joking around), and this year with her brother-in-law & sister-in-law up from the US and her great niece walking and talking (which is a new experience for all of them), a great holiday time! And next year they will have another new addition.

Ana is very much looking forward to the coming year and all that it holds and wishes everyone a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

-Andre says he has been busy with the CPA courses in the last two months, until Christmas. There were big assignments for his CPA online course to completed by the holidays. For the kids, their curling season started in October and they went back to the curling club. He's so glad that Martina joining the school's orchestra with new teammates in the new school. They gave a great show for the audiences in her high school before the holidays. His wife is also working hard in the lawyer office as the real estate market is still hot in Toronto. There doesn't seem to be a break in the market even in the winter season.

Andre wants his family and others to have a comfortable rest and enjoy family time over the holidays!

-Derek says Phew! Another 3 months have passed! The presentation he gave on internal controls at the non-profit housing conference went well. It was standing room only in the room that held about 80 people. Imagine if the topic were actually exciting (haha). After the presentation he had a line of people that wanted to talk with him which made him feel good. The warm Fall allowed Laura to keep busy showing vacation properties into December. She's also been taking more and more courses to build her knowledge base. Paige loves loves loves Christmas. She's has been so excited every morning leading up to Christmas to find her shelf elf, Sparkle. Oh, to be a kid again.

-Steve says he's not sure where this cold came from, as it was just about 4 weeks ago we were basking in the dog days of summer? Being spoiled last winter, Steve feels as though he has already done more shoveling this year than last! Part of the shock to the system may be a result of a getaway to Costa Rica in November. Steve, Sherry and Gavin took off for a week and enjoyed some real heat while getting in some zip-lining, ATV riding, and a trip to Nicaragua to look over the edge of an active volcano. It was a great trip, too short of course, but relaxing by the pool was much needed. The other two family members were "stuck" at school. They were finishing up exams before the break and came home for the holidays. Justin seems to be adapting well to university life, continuing his busy social calendar and hopefully squeezing in time for class. Outside classes, Erin is nurturing quite the plant collection in her room, and has taken to rock climbing for exercise. She has got Steve and Gavin interested as well, and they have taken out a trial membership for a month, trying to go 2-3 times a week (Gav is a bit better than Dad, but don't tell him that). Sherry is managing to keep quite busy as "part-time" coach with the swim club, but it does take up one or two weekends a month with meets, etc along with weekday practices. All happy for the holiday season to get back together, wind down, and of course get lots of presents! Steve wishes all the best to everyone over the holidays and into the New Year.

Quick Links...

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- [More About Steve Kirkham C.A. and Our Team](#)
- [View previous issues of our Bean Counters' Quarterly](#)

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