

MDS Alert

Goals: Resolve To Make This Your Best Year

With a little attention and focus, you can make your resolutions last all year long.

Fight it as hard as you like, every New Year's Day brings a bevy of promises about how to live a better, healthier, and more organized life.

Consider this: The average New Year's resolution is left in the dust before the calendar hits February. But that doesn't mean you can't set attainable goals that will both improve your professional life and still motivate you in December, says **Greg Helmstetter**, CEO of goal-setting site www.MyGoals.com.

Secret: "The trick to making resolutions work is to follow the same steps required to make any goal work," Helmstetter explains. He offers these basic tips for making resolutions that stick:

Set attainable, serious goals. Sure, you may want to be more organized or attend more training, but habitually disorganized people won't be able to simply "get organized" overnight and extremely busy people can't just "find time" because it's a new year.

Better: Be specific about what you'll do to accomplish what you want. For instance, if you want to be more organized, you could resolve to make and follow a to-do list everyday or write all appointments down on a calendar that you'll follow. These smaller goals are more attainable—and more likely to be something you can stick to for the long term.

Write down your plan. Now that you've resolved to make a change, you must clarify how and when you'll judge your success.

Try this: Write down:

- a. what your goal is,
- b. how you'll accomplish it, and
- c. when it should be your habit.

This way, you can give yourself a few weeks to make progress and will be less likely to throw your hands up in failure if you haven't accomplished 100 percent of your goal by the second week.

Monitor your progress. You will need some checks and balances to turn your goal into a habit.

Do this: Build monitoring into your plan so that you can evaluate and reward your progress. Celebrate your mini-goals and pat yourself on the back when you've stuck to the goal for at least a month—you are well on your way to success.