

THE HISTORY OF NEW YEAR

January 1 became the beginning of the New Year in 46 B.C., when Julius Caesar developed a calendar that would more accurately reflect the seasons than previous calendars had.

The Romans named the first month of the year after Janus, the god of beginnings. He was always depicted with two faces, one on the front of his head and one on the back. At midnight on December 31, the Romans imagined Janus looking back at the old year and forward to the new.

In the Middle Ages, Christians changed New Year's Day to December 25, the birth of Jesus. Then they changed it to March 25 – the beginning of spring when new crops are planted. In the sixteenth century, Pope Gregory XIII revised the Julian calendar, and the celebration of the New Year was returned to January 1.

The Julian and Gregorian calendars are solar calendars. Some cultures have lunar calendars, however. A year in a lunar calendar is less than 365 days because the months are based on the phases of the moon.

The Chinese use a lunar calendar. Their new year begins at the time of the first full moon (over the Far East) after the sun enters Aquarius, usually sometime between January 19 and February 21.

The Bahai people (part of Iran) have their own calendar consisting of nineteen months of nineteen days plus a couple of extra days between the eighteenth and nineteenth months. They have however adopted the Iranian custom of beginning the New Year in the spring equinox.

The Muslims have their own calendar which is based on the cycles of the moon. For this reason the Islamic New Year moves eleven days backwards through the seasons each year. Muharram is the first month of the Muslim year and its first day is celebrated as New Year's Day.

GOOD LUCK RITUALS

Here's a look at some of the most interesting good luck rituals from around the world. They are believed to bring good fortune and prosperity in the coming year.

In **Bengal**, they celebrate New Year on the 13th or 14th of April. They use flour to paint patterns on the ground out the front of their houses, in the middle of the design they place an earthenware pot, decorated with a red and white swastika which is a religious symbol, and filled with holy water and vermilion.

In **Brazil**, the lentil is believed to signify wealth, so on the first day of the New Year they serve lentil soup or lentils and rice. In Brazil on New Year's Eve priestesses of

the local macumba voodoo cult dress in blue skirts and white blouses for a ceremony dedicated to the goddess of water, Yemanjá.

The **British** place their fortunes for the coming year in the hands of their first guest. They believe the first visitor of each year should be male and bearing gifts. Traditional gifts are coal for the fire, a loaf for the table and a drink for the master.

For the **Chinese** New Year, every front door is adorned with a fresh coat of red paint, red being a symbol of good luck and happiness. Although the whole family prepares a feast for the New Year, all knives are put away for 24 hours to keep anyone from cutting themselves, which is thought to cut the family's good luck for the next year.

In **Denmark**, it is a good sign to find your door heaped with a pile of broken dishes at New Years. Old dishes are saved year around to throw them at the homes where their friends live on New Years Eve. Many broken dishes were a symbol that you have many friends.

In **Hungary**, they burn effigies or a scapegoat known as "Jack Straw" which represented the evils and misfortunes of the past year to burn on New Year's Eve. Jack Straw is carried around the village before being burnt.

One **Japanese** tradition, kadomatsu, consists of a pine branch symbolizing longevity, a bamboo stalk symbolizing prosperity, and a plum blossom showing nobility.

In **Korea**, people place straw scoopers, rakes or sieves on their doors and walls to protect their families from evil spirit in the new year.

Norwegians make rice pudding at New Year's and hide one whole almond within. Guaranteed wealth goes to the person whose serving holds the lucky almond.

In **Spain**, when the clock strikes midnight, the Spanish eat 12 grapes, one with every toll, to bring good luck for the 12 months ahead.

The **Thai** New Year is celebrated from 13 to 15 April according the Gregorian calendar. People throw water over one another, under the guise of that it will bring good rains in the coming year and all the Buddha statues or images are washed. They visit the monastery to pray and offer gifts of rice, fruit, sweets and other foods for the monks.

In **Wales**, at the first toll of midnight, the back door is opened and then shut to release the old year and lock out all of its bad luck. Then at the twelfth stroke of the clock, the front door is opened and the New Year is welcomed with all of its luck.

TOP FIVE NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

New Year's is the only holiday that celebrates the passage of time. Perhaps that's why, as the final seconds of the year tick away, we become introspective. That introspection turns to thoughts of self-improvement and the annual ritual of making resolutions.

The Internet is full of lists and surveys about the most popular New Year resolutions. Following seem to be the most common amongst them:

1. Start exercising and dieting; lose weight; get fit; get in shape

Are you ever going to be fit again? The answer is unless you start making the right choices about your food and get into an exercise routine, you are never going to get fit, ever! It begins by opting for the stairs instead of the elevator, fruit in place of chocolate, and active rather than sedentary activities.

With every year of your life, you have more to gain from being healthy and fit as your age-related risks of chronic disease increase. Regular exercise and healthy diet generally slows or reverses that trend.

2. Stick to a budget; reduce debt; start saving

One of the first things you have to do before any debt can be eliminated is to stop using charge accounts. If you continue to use the accounts, you will only make the problem worse. If you can't pay cash for it, you don't need it. Make it just that simple and you will find yourself out of debt soon.

Keep a diary of all money spent. Once you know where your money is going, only then you can prepare a budget that you can stick to and start saving.

3. Spend more quality time with family and friends

Almost everyone puts family as one of the most important things in life along with good health, wealth and success in a career. But few are happy with the amount of time they spend with their family.

Starting right now, you can make choices and take day-to-day actions that can make a significant difference. Start with small commitments like getting back from work in time to enjoy dinner with the family; reading to kids, or just communicating with them; taking a walk with your spouse; connecting with friends and family abroad.

And here are a couple of resolutions that we hear from salespeople and managers every year:

1. Get more sales; make more money

Almost everyone decides to achieve their dreams in the New Year through more sales and more money. Few actually do it. First step is to convert your dream into a goal by

being very specific about what you want to achieve and by when. If it's a car, what make and model? Brand-new or used? On cash or installments? And by when? Next is putting together a plan. How much you need to save every month? How much you need to earn? How many unit, orders, and presentations will you need? What daily routine would you need to put in place to achieve the number of presentations – including the time for prospecting, calls and travel? Once the goal and plan is clear, it's up to your level of commitment and desire (how badly you want it) that will determine your daily action towards the goal.

The other side of the coin is the quality of your work. Small improvements in the conversion of calls to appointments, appointments to presentations (fewer cancellations), and presentations to orders can make a huge difference in the overall results. These improvements require putting in the time to develop your skills and product knowledge.

2. Start building a team; become a successful manager

It is possible to remain a salesperson and continue to earn a high income consistently month after month. But it does get difficult to maintain a high level of energy and enthusiasm for the same job year after year. You've made a "career" in sales only when you are earning consistently high income without any personal sales. That means all, or most of, your income comes from your team. Resolve to take some simple steps towards building a career this year:

- a. Familiarize yourself with the company's career plan – how you can become a manager, what are the expectations and what's the additional income.
- b. Learn the recruitment methods that are tested and proven in your company – whether it's customer recruiting, invitations to seminar or through advertising.
- c. Follow the method with persistence. You don't make a sale on every presentation; every recruit you get is not going to become an active and successful salesperson.
- d. Learn the basics of managing a team and apply it – training, managing, motivating and being a role model are the essentials of being a successful manager.

It's a slow process but a very rewarding one. As a salesperson, you make a difference in the lives of your customers and their children. As a manager, you make a difference in the lives of your salespeople too!

SUCCESS TIPS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND MEDICAL CENTER

Two psychiatrists from the UMMC, Jill RachBeisel, MD (Director of Community Psychiatry) and Hinda Dubin, MD (Professor of Psychiatry) offer time-tested tips to help you succeed with your New Year resolutions:

Bad habits that keep you from optimal health such as overeating don't have to follow you into the New Year. You must prepare yourself psychologically, however, if you

don't want them hanging around for another 12 months. The trick is to keep everything in perspective.

"Focus on realistic goals with measurable results. You need to break things down into small steps that you can manage." Said Jill RachBeisel. E.g. instead of trying to lose 50 pounds, focus on losing five pounds at a time. And instead of trying to lose five pounds a week, focus on losing a pound a week. Create bite-sized jobs for yourself that you'll be able to accomplish. If your goal is too big, you'll feel defeated before you even get started.

When deciding on your New Year's resolutions, you often believe you'll be able to tackle your goals effortlessly. But soon the reality sets in and your ambitions once again seem insurmountable. According to Hinda Dubin, the key to achieving your goals is to get started immediately.

"Action precedes motivation, not the other way around," said Dubin. "People often think that they should wait until they are motivated to start doing something good for themselves. They'll say, 'I'll start that diet or fitness program when I'm really well rested and have a lot of energy'. But it doesn't work that way."

Instead of waiting for inspiration, you need to take action first and inspiration will follow. Your initial action doesn't have to be anything big. Just by putting on your sneakers and hopping on the treadmill for 10 minutes, you will make that energy you are "waiting" for materialize.

Once you initiate even a small action, you pick up momentum and you'll realize 'hey, this isn't so bad' and it will be a lot easier to keep moving forward, and to stay motivated.

Wishing you a happy New Year!