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A Strategic View on New Year's Resolutions

New Year's Eve is just around the corner, and so the time for New Year's resolutions has come. Starting on January 1st many of us will certainly lose weight, stop smoking forever, always have a tidy house or change other important things in their lives.

By February frustration might come up because the resolutions have not turned into actions. We can tell by looking around when we are at our fitness center. In January it is sometimes much too crowded, but in February it is not that crowded anymore.

There are plenty of psychological theories why this is so. You will find a lot of books about this topic, too. Looking at this phenomenon from the strategic point of view you will find some ideas to make it better next year.

A good strategy always starts with a vision. This is what we definitely have on New Year's Eve. We see us in a shop buying clothes in size S or even XS. We imagine travelling – payed by the money we used to spend on cigarettes. We can imagine how great our life will be when we are slimmer, more active or turn into a non-smoker. Even our family physician will be happy. In short: There is a vision. Fortunately, it is much easier to create a vision for our private life than to create one for a company.



But suddenly some stones appear on the way. If we talked about an enterprise, we would call it "Strategic Challenges". In companies we deal with topics like digitalization or climate change. Our own New Year's resolutions are threatened by "the birthday party of our auntie (who serves the most delicious cake)", the "wedding of our best friends and all the food that is served", "long workdays that kill our motivation for some sports in the evening" or "the movie night with friends, being the only ex-smoker".

Whether talking business or about our private lives – we cannot influence challenges that come from outside. But we can find a strategic way to cope with them. Once considered carefully they do not happen unexpectedly, and we can deal with it. This is similar to a corporate strategy:

- Think about the coming months and what kind of challenges they will bring. Will your vision

be at risk?

- Prioritize these challenges. Some of them can be dealt with easily, some might be „big chunks“.
- For the “big chunks”, you can decide in advance how to cope with them. You can, for example, find a type of sport that fits into your daily life. You can decide on a way to deal with dinner invitations or how to spend time with smokers.
- You can decide if you want to be strict or allow yourself some small “sins” you can compensate easily.

In short: You will be well prepared. And this is what it’s all about – whether you work on a business strategy or on your very personal New Year’s resolutions.

I wish you a good start into the year to come. May all your visions for 2018 come true.

Editorial Notes

About the Author

Wiebke Brüssel is a graduate in business administration and managing partner of Strategiebüro (The Strategy Office) in Germany.

We moderate planning processes - including preparation and documentation. From a single question to strategic corporate planning. Our clients are companies and organizations in the private, social, and public sectors, companies at the beginning of their development, and founders.

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