

# Three Entrepreneur Resolutions for 2009

Adapted from: [Scott Allen](#), About.com

You know how it goes... you make a big ambitious list of New Year's resolutions, and by the end of January, most of them are blown. So this year, I'm keeping my list to something more manageable and, hopefully, attainable. I think they're a pretty good start for most entrepreneurs' lists.

**1. Focus.** So about those lists... how big is your to-do list? If I'm not careful, I find that mine ends up well into the double-digits, and then continues to grow. Pretty soon it's a "big pile of undoableness". The human brain is only capable of dealing with so much at once. Items that are placed repeatedly in your field of attention continue to use up brain cycles even when you're not focused on them. They become "open loops" and a constant distraction. Of course you have to have plans that spell out all the steps for a particular project, but your active field of attention should really only include the single next most important thing to do on each project, and your immediate attention should be no more than three to five items.

Want to see a huge boost in productivity this year? Try this: every day, make a list of the three most important things for you to accomplish that day, not counting any scheduled meetings. No more. If you get through those three, you can add more, but I promise you -- if you get three significant tasks accomplished consistently every day, you'll quickly start to feel improved progress.

**2. Delegate.** Get help. No matter how small your business is, you can get affordable or even free help with it. Hire an intern. Put your teenage child to work for a few hours a week. Get a virtual assistant or other help through outsourcing marketplaces like [Guru](#)<sup>3</sup> or [Elance](#)<sup>4</sup>. Or maybe you're ready for part-time or full-time employees.

Think you can't afford it? Did you know that you can get virtual assistants overseas for as little as \$3 an hour? They may not be able to do everything that a \$30 per hour native speaker with experience as an executive assistant can, but that doesn't mean they can't be a useful addition to your business. Another way to delegate is by finding business partners. These can either be internal partners who complement your weaknesses with their strengths or external partners who bring expanded market reach or operational capacity.

Get creative. What daily, weekly or monthly tasks could be done by someone else at the same cost or less than you can do it yourself? Remember, you're talking about opportunity cost -- what can you do with that time? Or is there a way you can get someone doing something for you that's revenue producing? If they pay for themselves, it doesn't matter how much they cost.

**3. Be consistent.** This is admittedly a weak spot for me. I'm not much of a creature of habit. Entrepreneurial businesses tend to be a rollercoaster ride -- if you want consistency, get a job, right? At the same time, you need some degree of consistency. You want to find a way to produce consistent, predictable results in your daily task-oriented work, and the tips above will help with that. Another important area for consistency is in following up with clients and networking contacts. Use a contact management system to help ensure timely follow-ups with new people you meet and consistent, regular contact with the people already in your network.

So those are my three big business challenges for the coming year. That's manageable. That's something I can print out and put beside my computer or even set as a desktop background to help me maintain focus.