



# Make 2011 Your Best Year Yet!

## How to Make 2011 Your Best Year Yet! Part I

Happy New Year! Let's talk about making your 2011 great! To get started, I've got five important questions for you.

These questions are for you to ask yourself. So you can take a good look at what happened in 2010. And use your answers to do better this year. You will look back on your previous successes... and disappointments.

The very best way to make 2011 the best it can be is to leverage your past experience.

In other words, you simply must take a long, hard look at what happened in 2010.

I figured out years ago that doing an honest analysis of my previous mistakes and accomplishments is the best way to continually improve my company and my own performance.

Let's all face a cold, hard fact of life: no matter how good or bad your results, you can always do better. Yet the single biggest key to improving both performance and results is ignored by almost everybody. If you want to be at the top of your game, you absolutely must learn from what has already happened. Unfortunately, most people either can't or don't want to use their missteps and achievements as learning experiences. And they end up becoming stagnant... or repeating the same mistakes over and over again.

I am going to share with you how I leverage all my experiences into greater levels of success. Follow my lead, and you can make 2011 your very best year (so far).

All you need to do is answer five questions. If you're serious about your success, you should do this today! Ready, set, go...

### **Question 1: What were your greatest accomplishments in 2010?**

Even if 2010 was the worst year of your life, odds are, if you look hard enough, there's something somewhere to be proud of. If 2010 was a great year for you, that makes answering this question even easier.

After you've listed all your accomplishments, go back to them. This time through, identify several takeaways for each one - what you learned from or were reminded of by it.

### **Question 2: What were your biggest disappointments in 2010?**

Practically every company and individual resists analyzing their mistakes. That's a shame, because this is where the best learning comes from.

No matter how well everything is going, we all make mistakes. The trick here is to examine what preceded them, what you could have done differently, and how you can prevent making the same mistakes in the future. Even though 2010 was the best year of my life (so far), I still had my share of disappointments, both personally and professionally. (Don't worry, I won't bore you with the details!)

As you did with your accomplishments in 2010, list your biggest disappointments - and then identify several takeaways for each one.

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### **Question 3: How did you limit yourself last year, and how can you remove those limits in 2011?**

Were there certain actions you took or didn't take that came back to haunt you? You need to bring these self-defeating actions to the surface, shine light on them, and, most important, determine what you must do differently to make sure you don't limit yourself the same way all over again. Here are just a few of mine...

- Not reviewing my goals daily
- Not sticking to a daily sleep schedule
- Hoping things would work out well in situations where my gut told me not to

Once again, make a list and identify the takeaways. For example, one of the self-defeating actions on my list was not reviewing my goals on a daily basis (even though I know better). When I don't review my goals daily, I get sucked into what's currently happening and distracted from what's most important. That caused me to miss the mark on a few goals I had set for myself in 2010. The takeaway: I'm determined not to make the same mistake in 2011.

### **Question 4: What did you learn from your answers to the first three questions?**

This is where it gets interesting. Remember, the purpose of this exercise is not simply to know yourself and your business better... but actually to use what you learn to make certain that 2011 trumps 2010.

What are your main takeaways from the first three questions? What do you now know about yourself or your business that you didn't realize or weren't thinking about before? Here is just one that I have put together for my own business:

Creating products, programs, and materials to help entrepreneurs and other businesses grow consistently gives me my greatest feeling of accomplishment. Therefore, I need to spend time daily on creating these materials and not let the fast growth of our business pull me too far away from what I do best. This also means putting on more educational seminars in 2011, and collaborating with other experts that can offer additional insights into business and marketing. (This is actually already in the works, to start up in February.)

You should shoot for as many takeaways as possible, because it's here that the rubber meets the road. It's these takeaways that'll practically guarantee that 2011 will be the best year of your life.

Of course, it's not enough to just make your list (although that, by itself, will get you part way there). You still need to take this information and USE IT!

And that's where our final question comes in...

### **Question 5: How can you use this information to make 2011 your best year yet?**

The idea is to take everything that surfaced in your answer to Question 4 and build it in to your schedule, your interactions, your management style, and so on. For example, I've already scheduled on my calendar two hours a day of content creation and 10 minutes every morning to review my goals. Plus, I've slotted a weekly 20-minute appointment with myself to surface and then analyze whatever concerns I have.

There are lots more on my list - but you get the point. And besides, what's important here is not what I am going to do to make 2011 great for me... it's what YOU are going to do to make 2011 great for YOU.

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Many thanks, as always to my many marketing mentors, in this case Rich Schefren, who had shared many of his ideas with me.

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**In our Next Issue (March-April), I will help you take this a step further with a 4-Part Strategy for a Productivity Plan for 2011. Watch for it!**