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Taking Stock

BUSINESS INSIGHTS

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We have come to the end of yet another year. If you are like me, you are taking stock of the past 12 months and working to determine your new year's resolution(s) for 2023.

Again, like me, you may also be having trouble remembering the resolution(s) you made for this past year (or even if there were any). In my case, I believe I set a goal to lose weight. Did I hit that goal? Absolutely not... I also seem to recall setting the goal to embarrass my wife and kids less often, but again, complete failure.

Reviewing our results can be disappointing when we have failed to accomplish the goals we set out to. It is, however, these reviews that help us learn and create better plans moving forward.

For me, I use three practices to reduce the fear of reviews and make them more effective.

1. **Make them routine.** In my army days, we executed what is called an After-Action Review (AAR) after everything we did. Whether we had just completed a complex military operation, or rifle qualification range, we reviewed what had happened and how we could improve. By completing these AAR's consistently, they became less frightening, more focused, and increasingly valuable.
2. **Define success.** Without a clear definition of success, it can be difficult to determine what we should focus on. In my examples from above, my weight-loss goal is a simple one, lose 30 pounds (no need to share where I'm starting from...). As for not embarrassing my wife and kids, success is a bit harder to define (and perhaps impossible). Having a clear understanding of success is critical.
3. **Prioritize actions.** Following a detailed review, it is not uncommon to identify 15-20 things that could be

improved on. While the identification of these is good, a list that long can be overwhelming and unrealistic to act upon. Based on your definition of success, prioritize those 15-20 things to identify the top 3 (at the most). This gives you a clear set of activities to maximize positive impact.

In closing, I wish you the best of luck with your personal and organizational goals for 2023. Make the most of the new year and have a positive impact on those around you who are looking to do the same!

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