



# HOW TO MAKE 2019 A GAME CHANGER

MAPPING OUT THE NEXT 12 MONTHS FOR YOUR BUSINESS IS AS EASY AS ONE, TWO, THREE. FOLLOW **FIONA CLARK**'S THREE-STEP APPROACH TO BUSINESS PLANNING. AND THE TIME TO DO IT IS NOW.

**I**t's the beginning of the year and some business owners have returned from their holidays, have spent time with family and friends, are refreshed and ready for the year ahead.

But for others, they may have worked right through the Christmas period and it may have been their busiest time of year.

We're all at different stages – some businesses are young, in their first few years of trading, and others are mature successful companies with strong market share. Either way, we all have the same opportunity to map out the next 12 months and make the year ahead a 'Game Changer' for 2019.

This is where it gets exciting – this is literally the time to wipe the slate clean and start again each year.

A lot would have happened in your business over the past 12 months, some that adds value and dollars to your bottom line and other factors that could have cost you time and money. If things are working, that's great, keep doing it. But where are the gaps?

And if you have a stable, consistent client base, minimal complaints, and predictable turnover – then it's time to future proof the company. Why? Because technology is changing, business is changing, customers' expectations are higher, access to information and products from all around the world

has never been easier, and if we want to keep growing each year, we need to keep up!

So when you are working through business and strategy planning for the year, I would encourage you to add a different perspective – a new view – when mapping out the year ahead.

Here are some things to think about:

## 1. CHANGE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

This is the time to step back from the business and see the company with fresh eyes. It's not always easy to do this when you're caught up in the day-to-day running of the business. In order to think creatively and differently, it's a good idea to get away from the business when you have time and space to think clearly and objectively. So don't try to 'plan business at your business' – when the phone is ringing and the office is busy. Try changing your environment, and block out time so you can relax and focus on what you'd do differently this year. Some of my clients go to the beach with notebook and pen. Others might sit on the deck at home with a coffee and quiet time, or you could even use a bach or holiday home for a couple of days to get that separation and space.

## 2. THINK DIFFERENTLY

It's valuable to take the emotion out of things and see the business from the outside with a detached perspective. One thing to avoid is to look at last year's plan, add ten percent to your target, tweak it a bit, and then consider it done. And if you feel not a lot will change for you in the next 12 months, then it's time to think differently. Because if we don't think differently, sometimes a new business will emerge as a 'disrupter' in the market, with new products or offerings for customers, and quickly gain market share from established companies. So use the opportunity to look at your products and services, and find ways to do it better. It would be valuable to monitor emerging trends overseas, competitor activity you need to be aware of, and to stay engaged with your customers – asking them how you can serve them better. While we want to know what customers want, we also need to think differently with a new perspective too. According to the

late Steve Jobs, "People don't know what they want until you show it to them." This is how innovative and dynamic companies are standing out in crowded markets or carving out their own niche.

## 3. SET YOURSELF GOALS

You may set business goals, but do you set yourself personal and professional goals every year? What are you doing to continually expand your own learning to stay relevant? In order to grow our own businesses we need to be the best version of ourselves and keep up with changing markets.

So let me ask you a question: what training have you done in the past 90 days? What courses, seminars, workshops have you been on? What webinars have you watched? What podcasts have you listened to? What customers have you chatted to, and what staff have you sat down with to see how things could be done better?

We create KPIs for staff to achieve each year, so what can you do as a business owner or manager to grow yourself?

We know change is constant, and businesses need to stay relevant and current. What this looks like will be different for each company – and we don't want change for the sake of it, but to be driven by 'what is best for the business'.

This is why it's important to invest time in Business and Strategy Planning at the beginning of the year, and find creative new opportunities to grow your business.

Remember to involve your team in the process, as they are often close to the customer and can contribute vital information and insights.

There is something exciting about having a clean slate, mapping out your path for the next 12 months, and deciding the future of your business. Will 2019 be a 'Game Changer' for you? **NZB**



**FIONA CLARK** IS A DIRECTOR AND BUSINESS GROWTH SPECIALIST AT BREAKTHROUGH BUSINESS SOLUTIONS. VISIT [WWW.BBSOLUTIONS.CO.NZ](http://WWW.BBSOLUTIONS.CO.NZ)

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