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## I Resolve...

By Eve Gumpel

[WomenEntrepreneur.com](http://WomenEntrepreneur.com)

Ah, New Year's resolutions. As December rolls into the New Year amid a surfeit of parties, holiday treats and expanding waistlines, we begin thinking of ways to improve both ourselves and our businesses in the coming year.

With that in mind, WomenEntrepreneur.com asked our columnists and bloggers to offer up their business resolutions for 2010. The responses were sometimes amusing, always thoughtful and--happily--cheerfully optimistic.

Here's what our experts have to say:

**Name:** Chia-Li Chien

**Column:** [Financial Independence](#)

**Business:** [Chien Associates](#)

Chien realized that some of her marketing efforts in 2009 were not particularly successful. So she recast her plans for 2010.

"Starting in 2010, I will only do very targeted, active marketing. The area of marketing I'm going to decrease is networking at two business associations. Instead, I will do more public speaking.

"I used to spend lots of money hosting a holiday appreciation dinner for my clients. That was so ineffective. In 2010, I will introduce a quarterly business retreat to show appreciation for my clients and to help them grow. My clients will invite their clients to attend this quarterly business retreat. The goal for my first meeting is 25 business owners. I expect this to grow to 100 business owners in the fourth quarter of 2010."

**Name:** Rosalind Resnick

**Column:** [Money Matters](#) Blog: [The Vest Pocket Consultant](#)

**Business:** [Axxess Business Consultants](#)

Resnick wants to keep better track of her valued customers. She resolves:

"To more accurately track and measure the lifetime value of my customers. Sometimes your best customers (that is, the ones who spend the most money and give you the fewest problems) are not the ones you think they are.

"Think about it. Everybody loves hooking that big fish, but big fish can take time to reel in--cold calling, meetings, presentations, the works. And once they bite, they often wriggle off the hook and swim away. A smaller fish might take the bait more readily and provide you and your company with fish fillet for many years to come.

"Translation: Fortune 500 customers aren't the only ones worth pursuing. Small-to-mid-size companies need your services, too."

**Name:** Lynn Parker

**Column:** [Branding for Real](#)

**Business:** [Parker LePla](#)

"My resolution is to listen more and listen better. As a consultant, people pay me to have opinions and ideas, which I am fast and ready with. But those opinions and ideas are always better when they are preceded by a deep understanding of the challenge, which requires listening, which I'm horrible at.

"My resolution for the New Year is to listen twice as much as I speak, to start by listening, and to learn to love listening. It's a big one for me, and it's going to be a hard one."

**Name:** Lisa Druxman  
**Column:** [Mom Entrepreneur](#)  
**Business:** [Stroller Strides](#)

"In 2009, our goal was just to hold tight based on the economy. In 2010, we are moving fast forward with some projects. We believe that timing is right for growth.

"We came up with a list of projects and spent time on each one breaking it down to the smallest detail. We had a team of people, so we could raise questions and think it through. Once we came up with all of the action steps, we charted it on the 2010 calendar so we have a plan of action, not just for the result but for each step to get to the result.

"Our resolution is to plan for success and to make sure that each project has the necessary budget, people and strategy behind it to become more than just an idea."

**Name:** Pattie Simone  
**Column:** [Inside Sales & Marketing](#)  
**Business:** [Write-Communications.com](#), [Marketing-Advantage.net](#), and [WomenCentric.net](#)

**"Get organized.** Make better use of technology to organize my life and my business. That means signing up with various open-source (free) applications to manage my social media interactions ([HootSuite](#), [Ping.fm](#)); organizing the seemingly endless jumble of passwords (I'm checking out [RomanLab](#) and [KeePass](#)); and using [Zoho](#) to the max for CRM, meetings, project and data management to keep track of a range of things, including new and current experts for WomenCentric and client projects for Write-Communications.com and Marketing-Advantage.net.

**"Book exciting speaking and TV gigs for myself and my WomenCentric experts.** I'll be [investing](#) time and money on direct-sales initiatives, taking paid online and cable TV ad campaigns, [blogging](#) and doing PPC campaigns.

**"Land my first book deal.** To accomplish this goal, I'm revamping my workday. I've dedicated daily "me" writing time and set a firm date in January for submitting my book proposal to various agents and publishers.

**"Make more money.** My new 'income boosting blueprint' includes streamlining my service offerings, concentrating on the areas I enjoy most--which are better profit centers--and creating new revenue streams with a core group of self-help e-products.

**"Have fun.** My fun resolution is hugely important. In addition to enjoyable work-related tasks, I'm branching out by allocating more free time to recharge my batteries by playing. (I'm thinking of joining an American Revolution re-enactors dance troupe, and taking yoga and a painting class.) I want to read more, share and mingle (and connect with new groups of like-minded people in the process) via [Ning](#), a personalized social networking space where I can sound off on mixed topics besides new media and marketing, including fab new coffees and chocolates, parenting tips, recipes, travel and restaurant picks, etc."

**Name:** Bonnie Price  
**Column:** [After 55 Blog](#); [After 55](#)  
**Business:** [SilverVixens](#)

"Call me a troglydye, but I am going to learn Facebook. I'm kicking and screaming, but I am going to do it. I understand that it isn't complicated and I'm pretty tech savvy, but I am going to learn how to use it effectively. I will also up my effectiveness on LinkedIn.

"I'm also going to learn to speak Hebrew, so when I go to visit my grandkids I don't need them to translate for me."

**Name:** Nina Kaufman  
**Column:** [Business Law Advisor Blog](#); [Making It Legal](#)  
**Business:** [Ask the Business Lawyer](#)

"Spend less time working and make more money doing it. The plan: greater automation and delegation so that I can enjoy more meditation and recreation.

"In 2009, I've had to face the fact that my running-on-empty way of driving myself--which has been my hallmark for many years--is not conducive to my health. Sounds painfully obvious, but I have avoided facing it until now. For other reasons, I'm also better poised in my business now to reshape it strategically so that it can operate without so much of my active involvement. Getting a working system in place (or at least in progress) is my main 2010 goal.

"Set up better e-mail filters to weed out non-urgent/recurring items (newsletters, goofy stuff from friends, blog alerts), as well as better parameters around when I check e-mail (e.g., three times a day, not constantly).

"Repurpose more of my content by hiring freelancers to rewrite my articles and post them to article submission services.

"Hand off some of the social media development to my virtual assistant (e.g., maintaining my various profiles, screening Twitter followers, and researching top bloggers and tweeters in particular subject areas).

"Create a series of webinars on small-business legal issues that I will charge for and record (to later sell as a product).

"Roll out an affiliate program so I can benefit from other people's traffic.

"More virtual (telephone) coffee dates and fewer in-person coffee meetings.

"I'm also treating myself to a retreat in January: reduced hours for the first half of the month; away at a fabulous spa for the second half."

**Name:** Terry Neese

**Column:** [Women's World](#)

**Business:** [Terry Neese Personnel Services](#). Neese also founded [Women Impacting Public Policy](#) and the [Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women](#).

"Take good care of *me*. If I don't have my health, my business isn't healthy. I plan a body massage every two weeks, healthy cooking classes, a day of shopping for *me* once a month, and I will *continue* to work with my personal trainer."

**Name:** Melissa Thoma

**Column:** [The Business of Marriage](#)

**Business:** [Thoma Thoma](#)

"This year at Thoma Thoma we are resolving to win the majority of our business without competitive pitching that involves speculative strategy or creative work. Here's why:

"Our entire business model focuses on a process for developing brand leadership that requires deep inquiry into our client's business strategy, plus internal and external [market research](#), and competitive research.

"When we are asked in a competitive situation to bring a completely speculative campaign, we cringe. No matter how creative, smart and effective our work, we know that--lacking the appropriate undergirding research--it may register a memorable message, 'make the phone ring' and win awards, but in the long run won't build a brand.

"When we agree to this speculative pitching process, we are in fact selling our own methodology short. It is not in the long-term interest for clients to choose their marketing or branding partners based on a short-term creative approach. It makes us very uncomfortable to be put in this position as a branding firm.

"And put in it we are, almost every time we respond to a competitive RFP. This year we tried something that could be construed as gutsy . . . or naive. We came to the finals of a major competitive pitch without spec creative. We presented our approach and let that speak for itself. This was an account that truly needed a well-built, research-informed brand position. We didn't win the account. The tabulation shows that our decision not to present creative was a deciding factor in our scores. Deep sigh.

"So this year, we will resolve to live our brand even more fully by further differentiating our unique expertise in brand development, as well as our special practice areas: business-to-business, technology, real estate development and marketing to women, attracting business in one-to-one situations rather than traditional speculative shootouts. Perhaps as branding is better understood as a holistic and leadership discipline--not just a creative exercise--we will compete without giving away our intellectual property."

**Name:** Aliza Sherman

**Column:** [Women at Work](#) Blog: [Woman at Work](#)

**Business:** [Coversify](#)

"Pursue my writing, podcasting and other creative endeavors more, acknowledging that I'm part careerwoman/part wife/part mother--and that it is a delicate juggle every day."

**Name:** Azita Arvani

**Column:** [All Things Tech](#)

**Business:** [Arvani Group](#)

"I want to ensure that my business values are reflected in my business strategy and goals, and clearly communicated with customers, employees, supplier and partners.

"Also, I will set up systems for as many aspects of my business as possible. Well thought-through systems for every work process in the company, especially the routine ones, create a solid foundation for the business. Systems help reduce the entrepreneur's workload and maximize the company's throughput. Systems are the only way entrepreneurs can effectively scale up the business. I'm not just thinking about conventional systems, such as accounting, financial, sales and marketing systems, but also systems for increasing knowledge, staying on top of the industry and giving back to community."

**Name:** K.B. Keilbach

**Column:** [The Triple Bottom Line](#)

**Business:** [K.B. Keilbach](#)

"One of my resolutions for this year is to get as close to [zero waste](#) as possible, both in my office and at home. The goal is to streamline processes and reduce costs, in addition to benefiting the environment.

"I've already begun saving documents to disk rather than printing them out, and I use both sides of the paper whenever I can. However, I'm confident that I can reduce my paper and toner use even more by not keeping the paper tray full. That way, I can't automatically hit 'print'; I'll have to stop and consider whether I need a hard copy. Of course, I will also continue to recycle paper and either reuse or recycle my toner cartridges.

"Switching to electronic billing as well as online banking and record keeping can help reduce paper waste and save time. And this Christmas I started shredding my junk mail and reusing it as packaging material for items that I ship (via reused Amazon boxes). I also make sure that I turn off my computer at night to save money and electricity--approximately \$95 per computer in annual cost savings.

"Finally, since traveling up to the Bay Area last spring, I've become intrigued by the idea of reducing trash by composting food wastes for use as fertilizer. I am currently re-examining my purchasing behaviors, bringing my own shopping bag and refusing to buy items that are individually packaged in plastic wrap or clamshells unless I absolutely have no alternative. I'm also re-evaluating my family's waste-disposal system."

**Name:** Kim Lysik Di Santi

**Column:** [The Mother Lode](#)

**Business:** [Total Strategy](#)

"For some, the economic downturn means less business or fewer options. For me, it means less to distract me from reaching my goals and living my values. It's easier to focus on what is important to me and what is insignificant when there is less activity overall.

"Because I'm an older first-time mom with a nearly 5-year-old son and a 10-year-old business, I need to reassess continually. So I continue to tweak the balance between the board position that I hold with our Greater DC Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners, my clients and business opportunities. For example, my son will start kindergarten in the fall of 2010. I have reduced his day care and reconfigured my work week so I can have more time with him before he goes to school.

"Given that, my resolutions, goals, priorities are as follows:

"Maintain my current schedule with work and my son's care until he starts kindergarten in the fall of 2102, then reassess.

"Maintain my position on the NAWBO board for one additional year.

"Continue on the self-care path to reduce stress in my life and build my physical strength and the energy I need for my active life.

"Continue with the two places that I network regularly.

"Continue to look for ways to deliver added value to my current clients.

"Increase my business in the government contracting sector."

**Name:** Roni Deutch

**Column:** [The Tax Lady](#)

**Business:** [Roni Lynn Deutch, A Professional Tax Corporation](#) and [Roni Deutch Tax Center](#)

"I have three distinct businesses open and operating in 2010, with unique goals for each one."

**Roni Deutch A Professional Tax Corporation.** "My goal is to receive between 150,000 and 200,000 lead inquiries.

"We are launching a new, bilingual national advertising campaign, utilizing media in ways we never have before. We are releasing new commercials in both English and Spanish. We will be utilizing our go-to national TV and radio partners, and expanding those relationships. We will continue our online advertising methods and build on our experience with digital media. We will run new print campaigns and launch our first direct-mail efforts. Additionally, I will appear on significant national TV and radio shows to promote my law firm."

**Roni Deutch Tax Center.** "My goal is to sell 300 new territories and grow from 60 open locations in 25 states to 200 open locations in 40 states.

"The plan for achieving these goals is twofold. First, we will establish and nurture relationships with national franchise brokers.

"Second, we will leverage our high level of brand-name recognition to create national alliances with Fortune 500 companies. By aligning with large companies, we can provide onsite and over-the-phone tax preparation to each company's employees. Our franchisees increase their customer base, and the client companies provide a valuable service to their employees."

**Books and Products Division.** "This year, I am releasing two new tax books, a Roni Deutch personal financial kit and a Roni Deutch tax preparation kit. My goal is to sell 25,000 to 50,000 units all together.

"First, I will utilize national television venues to sell products directly to consumers. Second, I will promote my books and products through national radio, television and print interviews. Finally, I will use my heavily trafficked website to promote and sell the books and products."

**Name:** Cynthia McKay

**Column:** [Building a Million-Dollar Business](#)

**Business:** McKay Group LLC

"My resolution is about new ideas. Of all the crazy ideas I've had in my life, I only implemented two and, fortunately, both were a great success. Overall, I want to live a bit more dangerously by acting on those ideas and maybe jumping out of a plane to conquer my fear of heights."

**Name:** Hilary Kaye

**Column:** [PR Like a Pro](#)

**Business:** [HKA Inc.](#)

"First, I resolve to get my business running so smoothly that I can take three-day weekends as often as I want/need them, without guilt (and later, without regret).

"Second, I resolve to look at each client, and each prospect, with new eyes, meaning that I won't take anything for granted--even things that have worked perfectly in the past. Instead, I will carefully and strategically uncover the best way to get them where they need to be in 2010. The PR/media world we work in is fluid; I resolve to go with the flow--and stay out of my comfort zone.

"Third, I resolve to keep up the yoga classes I just began in December--I have a feeling that if I do this regularly, resolutions No. 1 and No. 2 may come true."

**Name:** Lena West

**Column:** [Seriously Social](#) Blog: [Seriously Social](#)

**Business:** [xynoMedia](#)

"Resolutions don't work for me. I make evolutions. So this year, I will be evolving everything. I will be focusing on playing a bigger game and up-leveling everything from my mind-set to my business. I'm normally a big thinker, but it's time to be an exponential thinker.

"I'll have support from my coaches, my PowerPartner 'T' and a host of other people who are wildly committed to my success. I'll probably also attend a few workshops and hire a few specialists to get right to the crux of a few stubborn challenges so I can blast right through them. My annual theme is: I'm gonna win in 2010! (Yes, I realize it's corny, but it works for me.)"

**Name:** Julie Moline

**Column:** [Biz Travel](#)

**Business:** [Avenue Three Creative Group](#)

**"Stay on top of paperwork.** I usually start off strong, entering expenses into a spreadsheet and filing receipts neatly in January. By March, the receipts are usually stuffed into a "to be filed" file. By November, I'm ready to scream, because the receipt pile files have reproduced and are stuffed into two drawers in a file cabinet. I know I should hire a bookkeeper, but I'm also trying to keep my overhead as lean as possible, which is a nicer way of saying that I'm too cheap.

**"Be more disciplined about working regular hours.** I'm a procrastinator, which usually means I end up working on weekends to finish up things that should have been completed during the week. I should stick to working only on weekdays, even if it means working longer days . . . I do need to recharge more than I've been doing.

**"Quit procrasticleaning.** That's Laurie Perry's hilarious expression for using housecleaning as an excuse to avoid doing work-work. Don't get me wrong--I hate housecleaning. But I hate transcribing tapes and working on receipts (see above) even more. (Perry is the author of a memoir called [Drunk, Divorced and Covered in Cat Hair](#).)

**"I'm going to try to be better at staying in touch with clients, colleagues and potential clients.** I'm considering starting a blog--and if I do, I will have to commit to posting at least once a week. If I commit to once a week, I'll probably end up managing at least twice as much."