

# Inc. COLUMNIST

## 3 Powerful Ways to End 2014 on a High Note

Have no fear: you'll have a pleasant Thanksgiving dinner. You'll enjoy the holidays. You'll make your year-end goal. But you don't need to think about it all at once.



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IMAGE: Getty Images

Lately I've been noticing the tremendous churn happening within businesses today. New business models, big transformations, high expectations and turnover are all keeping businesspeople hopping. Keeping up with fast-paced change makes it hard to find or make time to reflect, and it's hard to get anything done. How do you find focus, and, more importantly, be able to maintain it, in an environment of constant change?

**Define your goal.** It sounds simple enough, but many entrepreneurs skip this step. Decide whether it's a big goal for the year of 2015, like doubling your revenue, or whether it's more

specific goal, like winning a proposal you're writing today. It may be a professional goal for a work project, or even a personal goal regarding the upcoming holidays. Defining your goal will help to clear the excess noise and make it go away. Take a brief statement of what your goal or vision is, then choose a set of 3-5 priorities that can get you there. This short list will become your area of focus.

**Clear space.** People feel scattered and have trouble focusing because there's a lot going on all at once. On top of ongoing changes that your business is undergoing naturally, those day-to-day interruptions just won't go away. Your phone and your computer are next to you, bidding for your attention, not to mention your clients, customers, coworkers, and family. Take control and make space. How much time do you need to finish a project? When can you make that time? What will that look like? How will you put that in the calendar? Asking yourself these questions allows you to clear out space to tackle your goal, and is crucial to clearing out the noise.

**Make your calendar a part of your daily plan.** In terms of maintaining your focus, you can gain traction by following those same two steps--defining your goal and clearing space--more consciously and in bigger ways, more and more often.

For example, consider the reality of a busy entrepreneur struggling to make it successfully through the end of the year. One such business owner I recently coached on this topic is a woman we'll call Kim. Kim's business has been thriving; she's listed in the Inc 500 and wants this year to be her best year yet. But Kim is also a woman who travels for work, has two small children and is hosting her family holiday reunion this year. Pile on top of that her commitment to make sure Santa Claus comes for her kids and to book a family getaway for New Years. You may be wondering, is it even possible to get all that done? It is, and if anyone can do it, it's Kim. But, in order to pull it off (and to also enjoy the ride--it is, after all, the holiday season), she will need to get focused. On a daily basis she will need to get out her calendar and organize tasks, not just at work, but for all the family events and the holiday chaos. She'll have to ask herself: Where does shopping and Thanksgiving dinner come in? When do I book the vacation? How will I be sure my business gets the big finish I have in mind? She will need to get those tasks out of her mind into her planner. That is, she will have to clearly define her goal and make space to focus on achieving what she wants to achieve, and leading the life she wants to live.

You can do the same. Have no fear: you'll have a pleasant Thanksgiving dinner. You'll enjoy the holidays. You'll make your year-end goal. But you don't need to think about it all at once.

Take a moment now to define your present goal. What's the goal you want to focus on right now? How can you clear space to devote your attention to that goal right now? Where else can you clear some space to work toward it and meet your goal? Repeat the questions at different times and for different goals, and you will find that scattered, unfocused feeling goes away. You'll be left feeling clear and confident about your ability to enjoy--and meet your goals--throughout the end of the year.

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