

New Year, New Review

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How many times does the new year start at work, and it's all about checking boxes on a list of things to do? Budget approvals, staffing needs, and company policies-oh my! What if instead of looking at these tasks as necessary individual hurdles to get over, we see them as interconnected steps to reach the summit of next Fourteener.

I admit I'm a list junkie so I'm guilty of running laps. For 2019, I almost found myself in that same vicious quarter mile circle once again-making it around the track but never actually getting anywhere except where I started when the next January rolls around. The prioritized task was simple: bring proposed cost savings to the table. Initially, my mentality was just one more thing to add to the list until I realized I could actually knock out multiple items at once by noticeably changing my view-a 14,000-foot view if you will.

Foremost, programs had to be reviewed with the mindset of streamlining the process. How many procedures are redundant or unnecessary? Is there anywhere information is being collected, but nothing actionable is being done or ever will be done with this data? What about tasks that are held over because that's how it's always been done? I'm sure none of us have ever heard or even used the last one.

Once the processes themselves are assessed, you can more effectively utilize the staff you already have and truly evaluate the needs of a department. Aside from effectively making yourself more efficient, your department or company can be as well. Team members may have more job satisfaction as they see their work having more value, that in turn could reduce turnover, which of course saves money as well.

The numbers people are probably thinking, "That's great, but I can't chart, graph, or measure theoretical concepts." This is for you. In review of one program a certain task was done multiple times per day. Excluding labor, materials and process cost were \$14.50 each time. The data collected was never utilized, and it took time away from other responsibilities that team member had. Yet it continued because it was the status quo. Over 7000 times just in 2018. That's more than \$100,000 that might as well have just been shredded. This led to finding another unnecessary task costing \$104 performed more than 2500 times equaling more than a quarter of million dollars in savings.

There's no denying that it's a much broader view at a 14,000-foot summit versus standing on a track. When I saw it as a hurdle, I thought maybe I could find \$10,000 here or \$20,000 there and that item was off my list so I could make it to my next task. It wouldn't have been anything substantial and the team members in the department probably never would have known it even happened. However, by climbing my way to the summit, it was an easily found \$350,000 that will have a noticeable and positive impact on the department as a whole. So, with the new

year many of us make personal resolutions, but how many of us make professional resolutions?
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