

THE BRANCH

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TREE LOGIC, INC.

What's your New Year's Resolution?

Della Coffelt

Every new year reminds me of the resolutions that I made last year. In reflection, I realized that not only did I not keep any of them, but I can't remember what they all were. If I know me, I'm sure the list was long, which of course is the problem. I'm one of those people that if given a list with too many things to do, my brain locks up and I can't get started. So, this year I'm making 3 resolutions. No, I'm not telling you because you'll ask me next year if I kept them. Nice try.

Let me turn the tables, what resolutions would you make? Not for you personally, but your business.

In the business world we are good at setting monetary goals and these are vital KPI's. But, what about those things that are much harder to measure?

For example, the # 2 resolution made (according MIOwatch) is to lose weight. If you look around at your company you may think you've already lost as much weight as you can. This past year has made sure that we cut and we cut deep. People are doing 2 and 3 jobs at once. The problem is, you really haven't cut the weight, you reduced the dollars. Basically, the jobs still need to be done and it is those jobs that is the weight.

I realize that you can't get rid of all of the work, but how much



To see the forest....

streamlining have you done? How much "fat" did you cut out of the job? By making sure that the process is as streamlined as possible, as automated as possible, you can take a lot of the weight out of the work.

Howard Coleman and his group are focused on Lean Distribution,

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Leadership in 2010

John Hayford, MBA

Tampa Tile

Some thoughts about 2010:

"It's finally here, the new year. I think that most of us were glad to see 2009 go. In fact I read that

some people were having "good riddance" parties. While we tend to look at the New Year as a fresh start, or a clean slate, what can we really expect from 2010? Will it be much different than 2009? This line of thinking got

me thinking about what your employees want from you as an owner, leader, manager, or supervisor. I'd like to share some key points.

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Special points of interest:

- Over 100 years experience
- Reasonable rates
- Fixed quotes
- Dedicated support person
- You own your modifications
- Onsite or remote consulting and training

What's your New Year's Resolution continued...

and it started me thinking about different ways my customers can become lean.

Inventory is always a concern and with the options provided in software you may be inclined to lean toward formulas such as EOQ. But customers that I've worked with recently found that Min/Max actually reduced their inventory levels. Other options such as limiting the weeks supply in a warehouse are all ways to make sure that your inventory is as lean as possible.

Workflow and processes add a lot of unnecessary weight and as we strive to become lean, you must consider why you are doing what you are doing. Don't get stuck in the "we've always done it this way" rut.

Communicating with customers and employees is an area that we are probably too lean in. When budgets get cut often times the marketing communication is immediately cut. Technology is available; free and easy to use. For example: instant messaging and social networking sites. And don't forget about online catalogs and ordering. We've found

a terrific partner and we can interface directly to SX.e without the high cost of API's.

We'd love a chance to help you lose weight and pump up those areas you've lost too much weight in.

Della Coffelt

Leadership in 2010 continued...

First off they want YOU. They want you engaged and active in your business. They want you to acknowledge their concerns and trepidations about the future of your business, and in turn, their future. You need to show concern about their needs and your company's needs. How do you do this? By being honest, by being visible, and by communicating. Your employees are watching you and your every move. What ever is not being communicated verbally from you, they'll try to guess the rest. When that happens, the rumor mill swings into full operation. Now is not the time to be in your office behind closed doors, but rather out in front, in full view. If things aren't going as well as you'd like for the company, say so, but also say what you expect from your employees to help combat the situation. We've done a few things at our company to help foster communication. We've setup regular department meetings. Each department head is expected to be at the meeting, our other location telephones in for a conference call. A meeting agenda is emailed prior to the meeting, approved by management, so everyone knows what will be discussed and the discussion does not deviate from the topics at hand. At the end of each meeting a "meeting leader" is selected for the next meeting. The meeting leader is responsible for gathering topics, and for keeping the meeting on track. All management is also present at the meeting. By having a meeting leader, the employees also have a stake in the conversation; it's not just something being handed down by top management. Sometimes the issues that are raised are issues that are not on the "radar" of another department, so we try to prevent repeat problems, and be a bit proactive.

Next, be visible, get out and talk to your employees, ask them questions. Ask them, "How could we do this better?", "Why have we always done it this way"? Now is a great time to challenge the status quo. If you don't like the current results you are getting, change the method. Be prepared to address employee suggestions. Some suggestions may or may not be practical given current conditions. We as a company had to examine some of our most basic premises, our company has been in business for over 55 years and we had to make sure that we weren't doing things for the sake of "that's how we've always done it". Some of our employees challenged our most basic policies such as pricing. Out of that conversation we've made a few changes. Feedback from our customers has been positive so far. We've also incorporated some "events" targeted to our customers. Our employees helped structure the program and I remember the first event we did. There was an air of excitement in our business that we hadn't seen in a long time. You know what? It felt good.

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Leadership in 2010 continued....

While there are no magic wands to wave (believe me, I would have used one a long time ago) to address our current economic situation, I think one of our biggest hurdles is past us. FEAR. Nobody really knew what was going to happen in 2009, just how bad or how deep the recession was going to go. Now I think we know, or at least we have a better idea. So take fear away as one

of your obstacles, ask yourself and your employees, "How we can we operate in these conditions"? "How can we service our customers and make a profit"?

Let the creative juices flow. You might be surprised with what your employees come up with, and you might even have some fun along the way. Remember fun? It's still out there.

But remember, it all starts with you. YOU are the leader, facilitator, counselor, etc. Nobody ever said being in a leadership position was going to be easy. In fact I just read recently that if you are out front, chances are you're going to have a few "arrows" in you. You can't please everyone, so don't try. The "arrows" come with the territory. But the good news is you don't have to go it alone,

and you shouldn't go it alone. Involve your management and your employees. Now is a great time to evaluate your company, processes, and policies. So to recap, be visible, stay involved, and communicate as much as possible. Now is a great time to make your company great."

John Hayford, MBA

Available Modifications

- GUI Rules Based Configurator (designed)
- GUI RF Receiving
- GUI Delivery Scheduler (designed)
- On-line ordering (without using costly API's ready 1st quarter)
- GUI Sales Manager Inquiry
- Hazmat
- TWL Order Interface
- Custom AR statement

If we do your mods, you own them. If we resell them, it is because you gave us permission, and you can recoup some of your costs.



To see the forest...

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Who is Tree Logic?

Tree Logic is made up of 19 individuals with various areas of specialty. We provide our customers with a single point of contact if they desire, or they can contact the individual based on specialty. Our main offices are in Colorado Springs, Chicago, and Lake City, Florida, with small satellites across the country.

While many of us came from NxTrend, we do have a number of associates that came from NxTrend customers.

Services provided include:

- Support
- Consulting
- Training
- EDI mapping

- Commerce Connect
- Modifications
- Business Consulting
- Technical Writing
- Audio/Visual
- Web-based catalog systems

We are also resellers of Pro Trac—a Progress package designed for distributors up to 50 us-

Rick Coffelt at 719-339-6423, or if you know of someone that is looking for a dependable system please let us know.