

Anchor your Vision with Small Wins

As the new year approaches, you may be struggling on what and how to plan and prepare your business, organization, or workload for 2021 – especially after a year of curveballs, including the COVID pandemic, racial tension, elections, and general shift into how you live and work. If this is you, I invite you to look over my 2-part blog series on ways to plan and prepare. You may have also noticed how your daily routine or work ethic has morphed this year, and perhaps it makes sense to look at ways to feel anchored when the ground below is unsettled.

Prepare for Distractions

Celebrate Small Wins

Strive for Balance

Prepare for Distractions

As they say, the one constant thing in life is change. Regardless of your planning efforts, expect things to continue to shift as you look into 2021 and beyond. Prepare for those shifts and expect the unexpected. Let's say you have a business goal next year to launch a new service in Q2 2021. Prepare for things to slip and map out what would happen if the launch happens in Q3 or Q4 of 2021. Maybe one of the objectives is to announce the launch at an industry event scheduled for Q2. Prepare an alternate plan containing various modifications of the pre-scheduled announcement to capture the essence of your new service regardless of how far ahead or behind you are on your timeline.

Let's zero in on a personal angle. Perhaps you're a person driven to get things done as you juggle many demands such as care for your family, deliver on work commitments, run errands, arrange family logistics across schedules and make time to complete a personal certification by Summer 2021. Although your survival tendency may be to move swiftly and efficiently to get things done and move on to the next task – prepare for the distractions that may side-line your efforts. Prepare for the entire 2020-2021 school year to be through virtual learning. How does this adjust your plans? If your scheduled alone-time to study for your certification is absorbed by work, plan pivotal ways to allocate other time to review.

Celebrate Small Wins

When you acknowledge small successes, it helps maintain motivation as you work towards your goal. These small steppingstones provide you the footing to pause a moment and look around. Notice what you've accomplished and how far you've come – even if it's completing the first, hardest step. Then look ahead to keep your 'eye on the prize' before noticing the next steps forward. As insignificant as this may seem, this celebratory pause allows for a sigh of relief and a short break needed as you continue to work. And when the next milestone feels far, consider celebrating on Friday the efforts made throughout the week towards the goal. It can also be a nice transition from work to rest over the weekend.

Remember to keep celebrations in proportion to the work accomplished and the work remaining ahead. Inflated celebrations can deflate you and the team's momentum. Keep the big celebrations for finales and covet the small wins to keep your candle lit to complete the work and reach the destination and end-goal.

Strive for Balance

While many strive for balance in their lives – especially when life is full, I invite you to strive for harmony. Rarely are things truly balanced at any point in time, yet over time – there's harmony and an integrated flow of energy in our lives. When you feel over-stretched or over-committed, you're triggered to delegate, delay, or delete tasks to allow for more space. Then after a few weeks, you may find yourself more in harmony with life's demands and your personal needs.

More practically, there are endless mindsets to go about your work. Find the one that rings true for you and let it ride. Know and embrace your natural tendencies of work so that they work for you. If you're a morning person, stack the cards in your favor and secure those morning hours to complete 1-2 high-priority and high-value items. Leverage the time you're most productive to do the essential work – personally or professionally. Then you have the momentum to address whatever else is scheduled or comes up unexpectedly that day.

Life is dull when it's all work and no play. Find time to play. Find time to be by yourself and with yourself. Allow time to re-connect with those you care for and love. And most importantly, remember to B-R-E-A-T-H-E and ground yourself as you plan and prepare to step into 2021.



A passionate organizer of people and initiatives, Erica Smigielski brings over twenty years of experience in project leadership to financial software and SaaS companies who want to launch their next big idea. She leads large-scale, complex projects like product launches and company mergers and acquisitions as well as focused efforts to bring structure and process to fast-track businesses. Erica holds certifications as a Stanford Advanced Project Manager as well as a Certified Group Facilitator, making her a master orchestrator of strategic planning, as well as a skillful communicator who can expertly navigate complex group dynamics.