



Learn from Last Year's Mistakes as You Move Forward in 2016

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Most people learn more from their mistakes than they do from their successes. Sure, success is great, and nobody goes into a new venture with the goal of failure. But with the right mindset, we can learn valuable lessons from our failures and mistakes that we can put to use in future ventures.

Given this, what did you try and fail at in 2015 that you can learn from as you move forward to grow your business in 2016? Maybe it was a business expansion plan, either geographic or product related, that didn't pan out. Or perhaps you rolled the dice on a new employee you weren't quite sure about and had to let him go. Or maybe you took your company in a new strategic direction that didn't work out like you'd hoped.

Start With Careful Analysis

The first thing to do as you attempt to turn last year's mistakes into this year's successes is carefully analyze the mistakes and failures to determine why things didn't turn out like you planned. Ask such questions as:

- How does the outcome compare to what you thought was going to happen?
- Was the failure due mainly to factors outside of your control or to things that were within your control?
- Were the factors driving success (or the lack thereof) mainly internal or external?
- Did you make certain assumptions that turned out to be inaccurate?
- What were these assumptions and why were they wrong?
- Can you make adjustments to your incorrect assumptions in order to hopefully change the outcomes in the future?
- What did the mistakes or failures cost your business, in terms of both financial and human resources?

The next thing to do is determine that you will not let the failures or mistakes of last year follow you into the new year and beyond. In other words, don't be "gun shy" as you move forward in managing and growing your business. This would only compound your prior mistakes and inhibit the future growth and success of your business. Or, to use another cliché, you need to "get back up on that horse."

Often, the hardest part about moving forward after failures and mistakes is getting past the psychological barriers that they can create. Even the most successful business owners and entrepreneurs can have their confidence shaken after making mistakes and experiencing failure. But you need to realize that failure and mistakes go hand in hand with owning and managing a business. If you're not making any mistakes, you're probably playing it too safe and need to take a few more risks and chances.

Benefits of Turning Mistakes Around

Facing your mistakes and failures head-on by acknowledging them, analyzing them and determining how you won't make them again can result in many benefits for your company, such as:

1. **Continued growth and development.** One of the best ways to grow your company is to learn from your mistakes and not make them again.
2. **New opportunities for everyone.** When your company grows, this creates new opportunities for your employees to stretch themselves with more responsibility and learn new skill sets.
3. **New ways of thinking and problem-solving.** As you go through the exercise of analyzing past mistakes and failures, you will discover new ways of looking at situations and problems that can lead to new insights.
4. **Alternative ideas, actions and strategies you might not have thought of before.** These, in turn, can lead to new opportunities and direction for the company.
5. **Added confidence among you and your executive team in your leadership abilities.** There's no better way for you and your executives to regain confidence in your ability to lead the company and make wise decisions than to turn a former mistake or failure into a success.

If you need assistance in analyzing past mistakes and failures in order to turn them into future success stories, an outsourced CFO services provider can help. An outsourced CFO can help you prepare an analysis of what went wrong and why in order to devise a plan for how you can move forward and not make the same mistakes again. In addition, the outsourced CFO can help you identify new opportunities that may still exist while developing alternative strategies and reviewing them with you to determine which ones make the most sense.

Concluding Thoughts

Most people learn more from their mistakes than they do from their successes. With the right mindset, you can learn valuable lessons from your failures that you can put to use in future ventures. First, ask a series of questions to analyze the mistakes and determine why things didn't turn out like you planned. Then determine that you will not let the failures of last year follow you into the new year and beyond. An outsourced CFO services provider can help you analyze past mistakes and failures in order to turn them into future success stories for your business.

About CFO Edge

CFO Edge, LLC delivers enterprise-class financial and operational performance solutions to executives throughout Southern California. Based in Los Angeles, our formerly-seated chief financial officers engage on demand as part-time CFOs, single-project CFOs, and interim CFOs to help business leaders successfully resolve pressing challenges and realize their financial and operational goals. At CFO Edge, we are passionate about helping our clients create, grow and sustain value. For more information, visit www.cfoedge.com or call 800.276.1750 Ext 101.

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