

Making a fresh start for your small business in 2016

 By [Daryl Blundell](#)

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The start of a new year is always a great time to re-evaluate your business plans and operations, and ask yourself if there's anything you could do better.

Here are a few ideas for getting a good start to 2016:

1. Set your goals for the year ahead

During the first few days of the new year, take a bit of time to think about your goals for the calendar year ahead. Focus especially on the aspects of your business that you neglect in the busyness of day-to-day survival.

- Do you want to target new customer segments?
- Fix up your ageing IT set-up?
- Hire new staff members?
- Write down each goal, along with a deadline and a metric for success.

2. Get in touch with your customers

The first week or so of a new year is an ideal time to get in touch with people and set up meetings. Send a New Year's greeting to people who have opted in to receive your emails or text messages and give your especially important contacts a quick phone call to catch up. This will help put you on the radar for your key clients right from the start of the year.



Image via [123RF](#)

3. Get ready for the financial year-end

The tax year-end looms on 28 February, so avoid the rush and start preparing now. Start chasing down debtors with longstanding invoices, evaluate your inventory, and consider what your tax bill will look like. Perhaps you could benefit from using extra cash to invest in new computers or delivery vehicles? Or maybe you'd like to put some goods you have in stock on sale so you can move them before the new tax year? Think about how you can optimise your profitability before the last day of February.

4. Freshen up your marketing

A new year is as good a time as any to give your business a fresh coat of marketing paint. Why not audit your website, brochures, business cards and other marketing materials to ensure that they're up-to-date and that the content is professionally presented. If you run social media or a blog account, you could jot down some ideas for content and share during the course of the year.

5. Think about training for yourself and your staff

In a business world that moves as fast as ours, it's important to stay up to date with the latest trends. Think about the gaps in your and your team's skills and knowledge and book some courses and seminars. Some ideas might be an e-marketing course to get up to speed with the latest trends in digital marketing, seminars about the latest developments in tax regulation and labour law, or general financial management and leadership courses to sharpen your business acumen.

ABOUT DARYL BLUNDELL

As MD for Sage SSB (start-up and small business) Accounting South & Southern Africa, Daryl Blundell oversees the growth of the business and the development of solutions that help SMEs to grow and succeed. The Sage solutions under his watch are Sage One Accounting and Sage Pastel Accounting. Blundell brings 20 years experience in a range of sales, business development and management positions with organisations such as Ariel Technologies, Sun Microsystems, Systems fusion, Burlington Air Express, and Xerox.

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