

# enterprising solutions

WITH ROBERT GROSSMAN

## New Year Offers New Opportunities

Last year the January “Enterprising Solutions” featured a look into the crystal ball — or in my case, the Magic 8 Ball — with predictions for technologies and trends for the coming year. We jumped the gun a little early and talked about that last month, but since January is the month for predictions I thought we’d try a different kind of crystal ball this issue.

If your business is anything like mine, there are a lot of loose ends this time of year. You’ve recovered from a busy year — aren’t they all — and the holidays, your crazy relatives, and all that commotion. As this issue reaches you, you’re getting ready to really begin 2007. How’s my prediction so far?

But wait! There’s some housekeeping that should always be done this time of year. It represents an opportunity to make a fresh start, and this may be the only breather you get. Be-

fore you return to “business as usual,” consider taking some steps that may help you later on in the year, regardless of which end of the spectrum you’re on.

### Starting Fresh in the Office

Sometimes a new beginning can be symbolic, as well as practical. Many people take this opportunity to do the housekeeping they’ve been putting off all year — cleaning their desk and going through the piles of documents we inevitably accumulate.

If you keep your work in binders or files, start fresh ones. If you didn’t get a new date book as a holiday present, treat yourself. Regardless of how organized you are, we all need a housecleaning now and then. My prediction here is that if you don’t get to it by the end of the month you may not get to it at all.



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This is a great time to tie up loose ends as well. Many of us spend the year putting out fires or attending to the “squeaky wheels” first. An unfortunate side effect is that there are lots of minor projects and issues that get pushed aside. We all have a stack of these things, and the New Year is a great opportunity to revisit them.

These often include punch lists with minor items that need to be cleared up, paperwork that was never completed and other internal issues. It also includes some missed opportunities — maybe there were sales leads you never had the time to follow up on, or only left a halfhearted voice mail message. Go through these things, do your best to resolve them during this brief lull and get them off your desk!

### Thank Your Clients and Vendors

The words “Happy New Year” are such a great conversation opener that I wish I could use them all year long. Realistically, you’ve got about a month for that as well. If you didn’t get a chance to get holiday cards out, or even if you did but missed some folks, take the time to wish everyone well. Use the phone if you can, E-mail if you can’t, but thank everyone for their business or their help. If there are people that didn’t bring you any business or provide any help, consider calling them as well. Maybe in the spirit of the season you’ll shake something loose.

This works for vendors as well as clients. Face it, there are two ways to



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**Seize the New Year as a fresh start to do all the housekeeping you've been putting off — clean off your desk and go through the piles of documents that inevitably accumulate. If you keep your work in binders or files, start fresh ones. If you didn't get a new date book as a holiday present, treat yourself.**

make your business or department more profitable — more money coming in or less expenses going out. Throughout the next year your vendors are going to be called on to help you with the second of these, and they'll be much more helpful if properly motivated.

## Plan Your Upcoming Year

While you've no doubt given plenty of thought to budgets, expenses and costs for the coming year, that's only a partial picture of the things you'll be doing in 2007. Consider setting an internal plan with very different goals:

If you're an end user, plan the projects you'll be pursuing. While the larger jobs have a way of driving your calendar, there are usually smaller projects that need you in the driver's seat. Rather than waiting for a crisis or other event to spur you into action, think of the things you'd like to upgrade, repair, expand or replace, and put them on your calendar.

If you're a dealer or integrator, this is a good time to give thought to vertical markets. The numbers are in for the previous year, and you should

have a good idea of where you made your money. Some organizations use this information to select areas where they'd like to focus in the New Year; if you see government work trending upward, for example, you may want to dedicate more resources to that arena. It's also a good time to get out of markets that you're not equipped to serve well (and profitably).

There are also technologies you'd like to be watching in the coming year. While IP video gets all the press, there are plenty of other areas that you hear of occasionally and might want to track more closely. Wireless signal transmission, ultra high-resolution cameras, biometric readers, integration — if there are technologies you believe will help you grow in the coming year, make a list and dig into any information that comes along in that area.

As a side note to that, magazines such as this one are very responsive to your needs in these areas. If there's an application, technology or market you'd like to be chasing, don't be shy about it. A quick E-mail to *Security*

*Sales & Integration* Editor-in-Chief Scott Goldfine (scott.goldfine@securitysales.com) will ensure the topic is considered, and enough feedback virtually guarantees a spot on the *SSI* Editorial Calendar.

Trade shows are also an important part of the learning experience, offering both formal education (and certification) as well as an opportunity to see products firsthand. If there are events that you're interested in attending, don't wait until the last minute. For those in corporate roles it's often far easier to present justification and get permission as far in advance as possible rather than waiting until the event is upon you. ISC West isn't that far away, and other trade shows are on the horizon as well.

If you're in a supervisory role, this is also a good time to take an objective look at the folks working for you. The dynamics of running a department or business often cause shifts in responsibilities throughout the year. As a result, many find that their people aren't always in the right places, and productivity and job satisfaction can suffer as a result. If you've moved people around to accommodate changes, consider whether those moves should be reversed, made permanent, or if other moves should be made to fill in the cracks.

While I'm a believer that you should never wait to get rid of people who don't belong, many put off this unpleasant task. If your team will be better off without certain individuals, consider making that part of your fresh start as well.

One of my favorite quotes comes from renowned Roman philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (often known simply as Seneca, or Seneca the Younger) (ca. 4 BC-AD 65): "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." If you believe in that, as I do, and take the time to prepare, you are sure to have luck in the New Year. If not, another quote attributed to Mr. Murphy is sure to come to mind. ■