

Alvin Caballero, CPA

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The Main Street Accountant

...For all your main stream needs

HAPPY NEW YEAR

We're already halfway into the first month of the new decade, and if you haven't already taken the time to reflect on those things, in your business and personal life, that may not have worked so well in the previous years, NOW is the perfect time to do so.

For many small businesses, this is the slower time of year, making it the opportune time to make small improvements and set new goals that will put you on (and keep you on) the path to success.

In this issue of **The Main Street Accountant**, you'll discover various ways to revamp your business and personal life for the new year including improvements to your financial decisions, mindset and organizational skills, changes to your business culture, and much more.

After reading this issue, you'll be motivated and ready to keep the positive momentum going for 2020 and beyond!

Until next month...

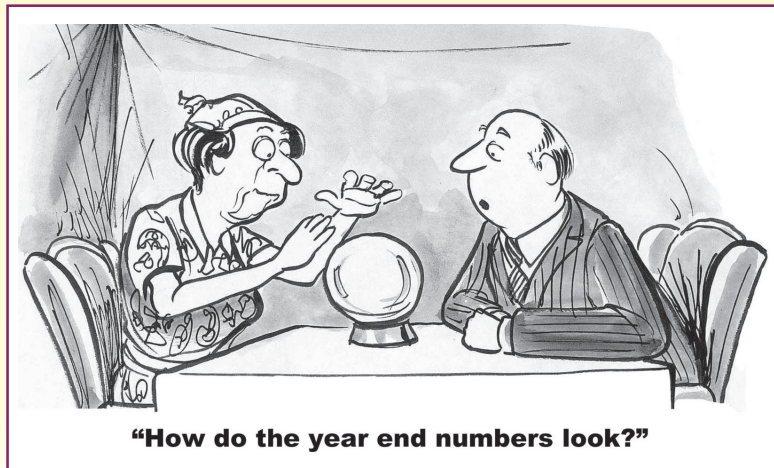
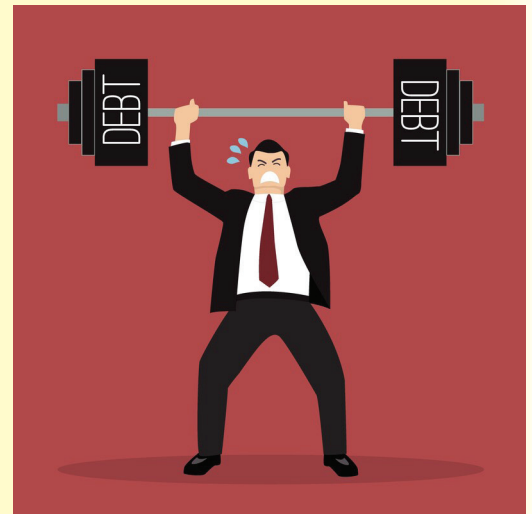
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A Resolution For Fiscal Fitness In 2020

Most New Year's resolutions revolve around getting fit. Although that frequently means losing weight, one area you want to fatten up is your money supply. Here are some simple resolutions for adding some healthy heft to your overall financial profile:

- **Pay down your mortgage.** You can save more than \$63,000 on a 30-year, \$200,000 mortgage by paying just \$100 more a month.
- **Save 10 percent.** Put aside 10 percent of your income for long-term investments and retirement savings before paying any bills.
- **Track your expenses.** Record every dollar you spend, for at least one week. You'll get a clearer idea of where the money goes and what you can cut back on.
- **Energize your house.** Look for ways to make your house more energy



efficient. You'll save on heating and cooling costs and also help the environment.

- **Stay home.** Resist the temptation to eat out. Cook more meals at home. Instead of going to the movies, rent a video, read a book, or play a game with your whole family.
- **Don't rely on credit cards.** Credit card debt can eat up your savings and your future. Start reducing your debt, and don't buy anything on credit if you don't have the money to pay the bill off promptly.

Setting up an IRA for your retirement can be a good investment, but it's

Follow These Rules For Your

IRA

not a simple process. Watch out for these common mistakes from the start:

- **Not getting professional advice.** Don't try to do it on your own. Accountants, financial planners, and lawyers have studied the complex financial and legal rules for retirement vehicles.
- **Naming the wrong beneficiaries, or not naming any at all.** Making your minor child a beneficiary will require a court appointed guardian to manage the money until the child turns 18. If you fail to name a beneficiary, it is likely the IRA will become payable to your estate upon your death. This unnecessarily subjects the IRA to estate taxes.
- **Confining yourself to the form.** Most account agreements allow little space in which to name more than one beneficiary. Attach a sheet of paper with the information of all beneficiaries and exactly how you want the account to be distributed.
- **Thinking your financial institution keeps records of everything.** In this age of mergers and acquisitions, who knows where your records could be? Keep copies of your account agreement and beneficiary designations and let your family know how to find them.

Creative Thoughts Start In Bed

Creativity is a vital skill that can enhance your success. You can't always summon it out of the blue, so this advice from the Study Finds website should help:



A survey of 2,000 British residents commissioned by Microsoft Surface found many people's best ideas tend to occur as they're dozing off or when they first wake up in the morning, and sometimes in the middle of the night.

Pay attention to your thoughts in bed, write them down when ideas and solutions come to you, and keep rolling through problems before and after you sleep.

You might discover some surprising answers.



KEEP YOUR EMPLOYEES SAFE



Employers are responsible for the health and safety of their workforce. *The Augusta Free Press* website shares these important guidelines for keeping your employees free of injuries, whatever industry you work in:

- **Train and retrain your employees.** Make sure everyone is deeply familiar with the safety requirements of your organization. Don't go over the rules once and then forget about them. Hold refresher courses and fire or emergency drills at least once a year so employees remember how to respond to safety issues.
- **Inspect your workplace regularly.** Don't take your working environment for granted. Walk around frequently, keeping your eyes open for any potential hazards. Bring in experts to audit your premises so you can remove dangers before they cause accidents.
- **Train workers in first aid.** You have a first aid kit (don't you?), but do employees know how to use it? Offer complimentary training to employees so more than one or two people know how to quickly respond to and treat an injury.



Quotes:

"The beginning is always today." — *Mary Shelley*

"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." — *Benjamin Franklin*

"A wise person should have money in their head, but not in their heart." — *Jonathan Swift*

"The hardest person you will ever have to lead is yourself." — *Bill George*

"If you don't take risks, you'll have a wasted soul." — *Drew Barrymore*



