Here I sit with my laptop, trying to figure out what should make my New Year’s Resolution list for 2003. I have a lot of ideas to choose from, but I limit my list to five things. That way, I have a better chance of success. Here goes.

I will not allow myself or my staff to be used as an estimating service. I know that this is kind of a pie-in-the-sky goal, but this was my number-one resolution last year and I was able to significantly reduce the number of times we were used. Last year, in order to accomplish this goal, we focused on our clients; we wanted to get to know them better, do more with them on a personal basis and find out more about them as individuals. We focused on this because we felt the biggest reason we get used was that our relationships were just not as good as they needed to be. It worked. This year is more of the same. Bottom line is that I plan to play more golf with my clients, and this justifies my efforts.

I resolve to make the field staff more responsible for their handling of jobs. Over the past year, I have been told that we would have been more profitable if I had provided them with more specific information that would have allowed them to plan and monitor the construction process and the budget. This will not happen again this year, no more excuses. I am going to begin with a two-day office meeting between Christmas and New Year’s Day. At that meeting, we will go over production rates, we will define a “proper” job setup. I am going to let them tell me what they want, and my staff and I will give it to them. Then I am going to play more golf.

I will learn more about my competition. One of the results of concentrating on our sales over the past few years is that I haven’t kept up on our competition. I know that several competitors have changed their leadership and/or the direction that their company is heading. There are also several new estimators in the area who are having an impact, and I don’t know much about them. During the next year, I will choose one company each month and will outline everyone in their corporation, what their function is, who they are, where they cam from, what their skills are, and who they know and work with. I am sure there will be other items I will learn too, but this is a quick starter list. By choosing one company each month, it should not be too difficult or time-consuming a task.

I will improve my overall health. After all, what can be more important to the company than keeping me healthy and more productive? During the next 12 months, I will lose weight (I won’t tell you how much), I will work out at one of the local fitness centers at least three times a week; I will improve my diet by eating regularly and by adhering to the recommended diet, and I will exercise more for fun. Once again, I will play more golf.

There you have it. Those are my resolutions for 2003. There are many other things that did not make the list that I could have chosen from, things like being more involved in AWCI, being more active in one or more of the local associations; increasing family time; improving my time management, negotiation and computer skills, becoming involved in one of the local political action committees; spending less time with accountants and attorneys; improving my golf skills, etc. For me personally, it is important for me that I improve each year. I have found from experience that the best way to accomplish that is to keep your list small and focused and to include golf.

Happy New Year to you all, and here’s hoping that we have a good enough economy for us all to prosper.

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