

New Year, New Commitments - Helpful Tips for Attaining 2007 Financial Goals

by Bend Weekly News Sources

The New Year marks the beginning of new goals, opportunities and exciting adventures. For some, it is a time of reflection on past experiences, accomplishments and failures. For most, the New Year is a time to determine and undertake new improvements and to set new financial goals. Setting financial resolutions and keeping them are two different issues. It's easy to know what you want and to get excited about your New Year's aspirations. The hard part is staying focused enough to accomplish the goals you have set for yourself. In fact, research shows that 37 percent of consumers don't keep the resolutions they initially set. With this in mind, plan carefully, stay focused, and make this New Year's commitments stick by taking a little advice from the experts at Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Oregon, a division of Money Management International (MMI):

Be specific. Wanting to save more is great, but if you end up saving merely a third of what you initially intended, you really did not accomplish your goal. Focus on practical goals with measurable results. Clearly stating your goals and how you intend to achieve them will keep your resolutions realistic. Have a strategy. Financial goals can be overwhelming. It is important to break the big goals down. If your target is to save \$2,500 for the year, plan to put away \$50 a week. This will help you create a realistic budget that you can stick to and help you feel less discouraged; you will actually see yourself making progress toward your goal. Stay committed. Remind yourself of your goals on a regular basis. At the very least, you should write them down and post them where they can be seen everyday. If one of your goals is to buy a new car, or do some home improvements, it may not be a bad idea to surround yourself with photographs of what you are striving for. Budget, budget, budget. You cannot talk about financial goals without talking about the importance of budgeting. The first step in creating a budget is determining what will work for you. Being realistic about expenses and your spending is key. Consider tracking your expenses for two weeks so you can identify areas where you can cut back. "Expect a challenge when trying to achieve new goals, but don't give up," said Cate Williams, vice president of financial literacy for MMI. "The opportunity to create new resolutions only comes around once a year. Once you have decided what you want to accomplish, be confident. Remember, a little discipline can help you enjoy a happy and prosperous New Year."

About Consumer Credit Counseling Services
Consumer Credit Counseling Services (CCCS) is a non-profit, full-service credit-counseling agency, providing confidential financial guidance, counseling and debt management assistance to consumers since 1958. CCCS helps consumers trim their expenses, develop a spending plan and repay debts. Counseling is available by appointment in branch offices and 24/7 by telephone and Internet. Services are available in English or Spanish. To learn more, call 800-762-2271 or visit their Web site at www.moneymanagement.org.

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