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What can you learn from Gert?

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Resolutions, Shmezolutions

Personal New Year's resolutions can help you work out more or get organized. But we'd like to take a second to instead recommend a few business goals and ideas to help you kick off the New Year on the right note. Okay, call them business resolutions, if you must.

1. Learn from others that have been there: Sure, lots of people know about Columbia Sportswear, and the commercials that made its former president, the uber-gruff Gert Boyle (in her TV spots, anyway) famous. But few know about her or Columbia's remarkable small-business-to-giant-killer story, or that her favorite saying is, "early to bed, early to rise, work like hell and advertise." Oh yeah, and did you know that Columbia received an [SBA-backed loan](#) in 1970? Learn more about Gert [in this short video](#), just one part of BusinessUSA's [extensive library](#) of online videos and instructional tools.

2. Get some new equipment: Did you know that the General Services Administration (GSA) [auctions off surplus government property](#), from office furniture to automobiles

and industrial machinery? They even auction off real estate. It's ideal for small businesses to get started, or for larger businesses to expand – at far less cost.

3. Make more friends and get out more: He probably wasn't talking about business when Mister Rogers extolled the virtues of the neighborhood, but he might as well have. [Local business networking events and other programs](#) are not only great ways to learn about starting or growing a business, but they're good places to meet similar colleagues facing similar business challenges with whom you can share ideas, whether you're a [potential exporter in Auburn, Washington](#) or [interested in joining a trade mission to Central America](#). And who knows, you might even make a friend or two.

4. Win that bid: Did you know that the US government contracts out millions in goods and services every year? Learn more about the ins and outs of how it all works with this course on [Government Contracting 101](#). For those ready to poke around at what kind of opportunities are out there, here's our [government contracting tool](#) for helping you do just that.

5. Shore up your financing: Being cash-starved is no way to head into 2015. Check out the range of government funding grants available to businesses, all the way down to one loan for small agriculture businesses that [helps promote the development of biofuels](#). Learn more about the range of [funding options on BusinessUSA](#). After all, if Gert can do it, so can you.

What do most want to accomplish this year? Tweet using the hashtag #2015bizgoals. We'll be watching – and we'll share the best in future newsletters.

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