



The end of year is fast approaching, but it is not too late to tick off some of the jobs that you set out to accomplish to improve and enhance your business at the start of this year.

At Account(able) we have a to do list of projects planned for each quarter and monitor these each month. We also ran an incentive for staff where they needed to tick off 13 out of 16 jobs, once achieved the reward was to have the Monday before Melbourne Cup day off. The staff worked hard and completed the 13 jobs and all enjoyed the long weekend.

Just some of the projects we completed and how we have achieved them are:

ONLINE JOB MANAGER SYSTEM:

We implemented a new job manager system in XERO where we schedule in all of our jobs for the year ahead and track our Work in Progress. This has enabled us to be more efficient and track how long we spend on each job and how the budget is tracking. We can also monitor the status of each job from: Work In, In Progress, On Hold/Client Queries through to Completion.

All Accounting staff receive a "Work In Progress" report each week which has been updated and meet every Tuesday morning to discuss any issues they have with any of their jobs and how to overcome them.

MONTHLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF:

Staff had to write their own monthly PD plan for the year and come up with ways to stay relevant and ahead in their field. This may involve training

sessions, webinars or professional development days, which are important to ensure they are competent in their professions, and enhance the knowledge and skills to deliver the service to our clients. .

DEBTOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

An important component in managing cashflow is debtor management. We are no different so we worked at streamlining and automating some of the manual tasks associated with debtor management. We now have automated reminders at set intervals and provide clients with additional payment options.

MENU OF SERVICES:

We wanted to create a menu of services for our clients. Clients come to us for various reasons and may not be aware we can provide another service that they need. For example a client may get their annual tax & compliance work done and may not realise we can also provide all of their lending requirements from Mortgages, Vehicle & Equipment Finance. Plus Risk and Life Insurance, Financial Planning, SMSF's and more. We can tailor packages and prices to suit their needs.

NEW SOFTWARE SYSTEM FOR ASIC COMPLIANCE WORK:

We are always looking to improve our software used and have changed our ASIC Compliance software for all of our ASIC requirements. It has reduced our administration time therefore we are able to pass this onto our clients and reduce the cost of our annual compliance work from \$330.00 to \$220.00 per year. Some of the great features are automatic email follow ups and text messaging.



TIPS FOR AVOIDING A CHRISTMAS SPENDING HANGOVER..

It's that time of the year again. Time to empty the wallet and max out the credit cards. Or is it? The truth is Christmas doesn't have to be a time to break the bank. You don't even have to become a scrooge to save some money. The key is having a well laid plan so that you can enjoy the holiday season and keep some money in your wallet.

SET A BUDGET

Seriously look at your finances. What can you afford to spend this year and still pay your bills, have money for savings/retirement, and money set aside for the unexpected? Also be sure to look at what you're spending and see what you can do without this month so that you have more money. If you find that your budget is small don't turn to credit cards. There are a number of quick and easy ways to make money around the holiday season to boost your spending budget. A bit of hard work or selling stuff you no longer use can mean zero credit card bills after Christmas. A great tip when making your budget is to break down your expenses as much as possible. For example, instead of just setting a budget for gifts, go one step further and set a budget for each person on your list.

MAKE A LIST AND CHECK IT TWICE

Another big mistake people make is to go shopping without an idea in mind. Sure you may see a lot of gifts that the people you're shopping for would love but spending money willy nilly can end up costing you big time. Sit down and really think about what each person enjoys doing and match it to your budget. For example, your mother may love to be pampered. With this in mind you can look at your budget and determine what gift would allow her to feel pampered but also meet your budget. Doing this for each person not only ensures that you stick to your budget, but you'll find that you put a lot more thought into buying gifts and people will notice your efforts.

COMPARISON SHOP

Once you have a list of ideas in mind, go online and start shopping for the best prices. You'd be amazed at how much a price can vary from store to store. If you do choose to shop in stores, be sure to download apps that will allow you to scan a barcode and see which store in your area (or online) has the best price. A bit of research can save you a lot of money this Christmas.

You don't have to end up in the poor house this Christmas. A bit of time, work, and research can allow you to make everyone's holiday special without making your wallet miserable.



CHRISTMAS FBT LIABILITY? HO HO NO

Apart from giving businesses a chance to thank their employees for a job well done over a difficult year, end of year Christmas celebrations are also of course a chance to get everyone together for some fun and socialising. But while you should feel free to pop a champagne cork or three for employees, make sure that you don't get the tax hangover.

As with any benefit that a business provides to staff that is outside the safe definition of "salary", the question of whether it is a fringe benefit (and therefore taxable) or not (therefore not taxable) will need to be addressed.

But don't think for a minute that the ATO doesn't know how to have fun. While the ATO may be prudent, it can still provide some wriggle room for businesses to let their hair down. Christmas time entertainment up to the value of \$300 for each employee is generally exempt from FBT. So throwing a party where the cost per head is less than \$300 generally dodges any FBT liability. This should also be the case where an employee's spouse attends the function.

But as the ATO has stated before, there are no different FBT rules that specifically apply to Christmas entertainment, and the rules as they stand are part of the general FBT regime. Under the "minor benefits" umbrella is the allowance for the \$300 limit mentioned above for "incidental" benefits (that are not provided regularly) to be FBT free. Happily however there seems to be a Kris Kringle inspired tweak to how the rule is applied – the

minor benefits threshold of \$300 applies to each benefit provided, not to a total value of "associated benefits" (which used to be the case). So if, as a generous employer, you also give a gift to staff, the party and the gift are considered separately for FBT. If each is less than \$300, they are both generally FBT free. But remember that if a benefit is exempt from FBT, the business cannot claim it as an income tax deduction, nor can it claim any GST credits arising from these "supplies".

DEDUCTIBILITY OF THE ACTUAL PARTY

The cost of providing a Christmas party is income tax deductible only to the extent that it is subject to FBT. Therefore, as mentioned above, any costs that are exempt from FBT (for example, those minor benefits) can't be claimed as an income tax deduction. Also the costs of entertaining clients are not subject to FBT and are not income tax deductible.

Christmas party held on the business premises

A Christmas party provided to current employees on your business premises or worksite on a working day may be an exempt benefit. The cost of associates attending the Christmas party is not exempt.

Christmas party held off the business premises

The costs associated with Christmas parties held off your business premises (for example, a restaurant) will give rise to a taxable fringe benefit for employees and their associates unless the benefits are exempt minor benefits.

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EAT, DRINK, BUT BE WARY

Most Australians can relate to increasing the link on their belt buckle when the New Year rolls around. On average Australians gain 0.8-1.5kg over the Christmas period. One to two kilograms might not sound like much but researchers have identified that weight gained over the holiday period is rarely lost.

Tips to avoid weight gain over the holiday season

- Avoid going hungry to parties. Eat something light before the party to reduce your chances of snacking on high calorie party food.
- Don't try to lose weight over the Christmas season. Instead, aim to maintain your current weight.
- Watch your portion sizes. If your will power is weak and you know you will want to finish everything in front of you, use an entrée plate instead of a dinner plate. That way you are sure to eat less.
- Fill up with foods from the foundation layers of the healthy eating pyramid. These foods include vegetables, legumes, fruit and grains foods.

Exercise

Try some of the following ideas to help you stay fit over the holidays:



- Ask for a gym membership as a Christmas present. That way you can stay fit all year round.
- Set yourself an exercise challenge for the New Year. Fun runs are great events to get involved in.
- Play with your children. They enjoy when you watch their games, but they LOVE when you play with them. Try outdoor cricket, throwing a Frisbee, bike riding or swimming.
- If you're on a holiday, walking is the best way to become familiar with your holiday location. It's amazing what you can discover when you are on foot.
- Use the facilities at camping grounds, motels or resorts. For example, hiring a tennis court is an inexpensive way to stay entertained for hours.

Merry Christmas

As 2017 draws to an end we would like to wish all our valued clients a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year. It has been a pleasure working with you throughout the year, and we would like to express our sincere appreciation for your confidence and loyalty in us and look forward to working with you again in 2018.

We hope you manage to take a break over the festive season and enjoy this time with your family. Embrace the New Year ahead with a fresh and positive outlook.

**Our office will be closed from
12.00pm Friday the 22nd December
and reopen on the 8th January 2018**

