

InThe Loop

Your magazine of personal finance

May - June | 2025

Your mid-year review in **3 simple steps**

How to create a stand-out internship program | Do you need an executive coach? | How motivating is your workspace? | Goal setting with the Golden AGE framework

Winning plays for your business

Success in business, much like in sports, often hinges on the ability to make calculated moves based on reliable statistics. As we approach mid-year, it's the perfect time to reevaluate your approach and create winning plays that will carry your business through the remainder of the year.

While day-to-day financial benchmarks will always matter, building a truly championship-caliber business requires looking beyond what's traditional; for example:

- Customer satisfaction rates
- Lifetime value of client relationships
- Human resource optimization
- Company culture indicators

By closely monitoring these — in addition to your “classic” financial metrics—you and your team can stay in peak performance mode, ready to tackle any challenge that comes your way.

Tracking stats isn't just about spreadsheets; it's about empowering your team with insights that drive smarter decisions. Whether it's revenue trends, customer engagement metrics, or operational benchmarks, the right data keeps your game plan on point and ensures every move is strategic and impactful.

With the power of comprehensive data and actionable strategies, you'll be set up to score big wins in any coming season. Remember that peak performance starts with clear goals, and we're here to help you set them.

Need guidance with your peak performance plan? Our team is ready to assist.

Your trusted advisors

Remember that peak performance starts with clear goals, and we're here to help you set them.

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How to conduct your mid-year review

The midpoint of the year is the perfect time to review your progress, adjust your strategies, and implement solutions for improvement.

Let's explore a three-step process to help you finish the year strong...

Step 1: Celebrate your wins

Begin by acknowledging what's gone well so far this year.

Note your:

- Revenue growth compared to the same period last year.
- New client acquisitions or improved customer retention rates.
- Successful product or service launches.
- Operational improvements that have increased efficiency.
- Team accomplishments and key milestones.

Take some time to analyze what factors contributed to these successes. With ongoing economic fluctuations and shifts in consumer behavior, understanding what works will help you maintain momentum.

Step 2: Analyze your challenges

Now for the more difficult part, examining areas where your business faced obstacles. Take a deep breath and get ready to assess any areas of struggle.

This critical assessment, although challenging, will tell you exactly where you need to improve:

- Identify underperforming products, services, or departments.
- Evaluate increasing costs and their impact on profitability.
- Assess customer feedback, including complaints or service issues.
- Review employee turnover or productivity concerns.





Consider gathering input from your team through brief surveys or one-on-one conversations. Their perspective can highlight operational issues you might not see and provide practical solutions for improvement.

Step 3: Refine your strategy and set actionable goals

With a clear understanding of both successes and challenges, you can now develop focused objectives for the remainder of the year:

- Revise financial projections based on first-half performance.
- Set specific, measurable targets for the next six months.
- Identify opportunities for growth or operational improvement.
- Allocate resources to high-priority initiatives.

Make your goals visible by creating a simple dashboard or checklist that you can review regularly. This visibility helps maintain focus and allows you to track progress consistently.

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Area	Current status	End-of-year goal	Action steps
Revenue	\$X	\$Y	1. Launch summer promotion 2. Increase customer follow-ups
Customer retention	X%	Y%	1. Implement feedback program 2. Create loyalty benefits
Operational efficiency	Current process	Improved process	1. Evaluate workflow bottlenecks 2. Research automation options

Maximize your mid-year momentum

The most successful business owners don't just complete this review, they use it as a springboard for action. Consider scheduling time with your accountant or business advisor to dive deeper into financial trends and opportunities. They can provide objective insights and help you develop strategies to overcome challenges.

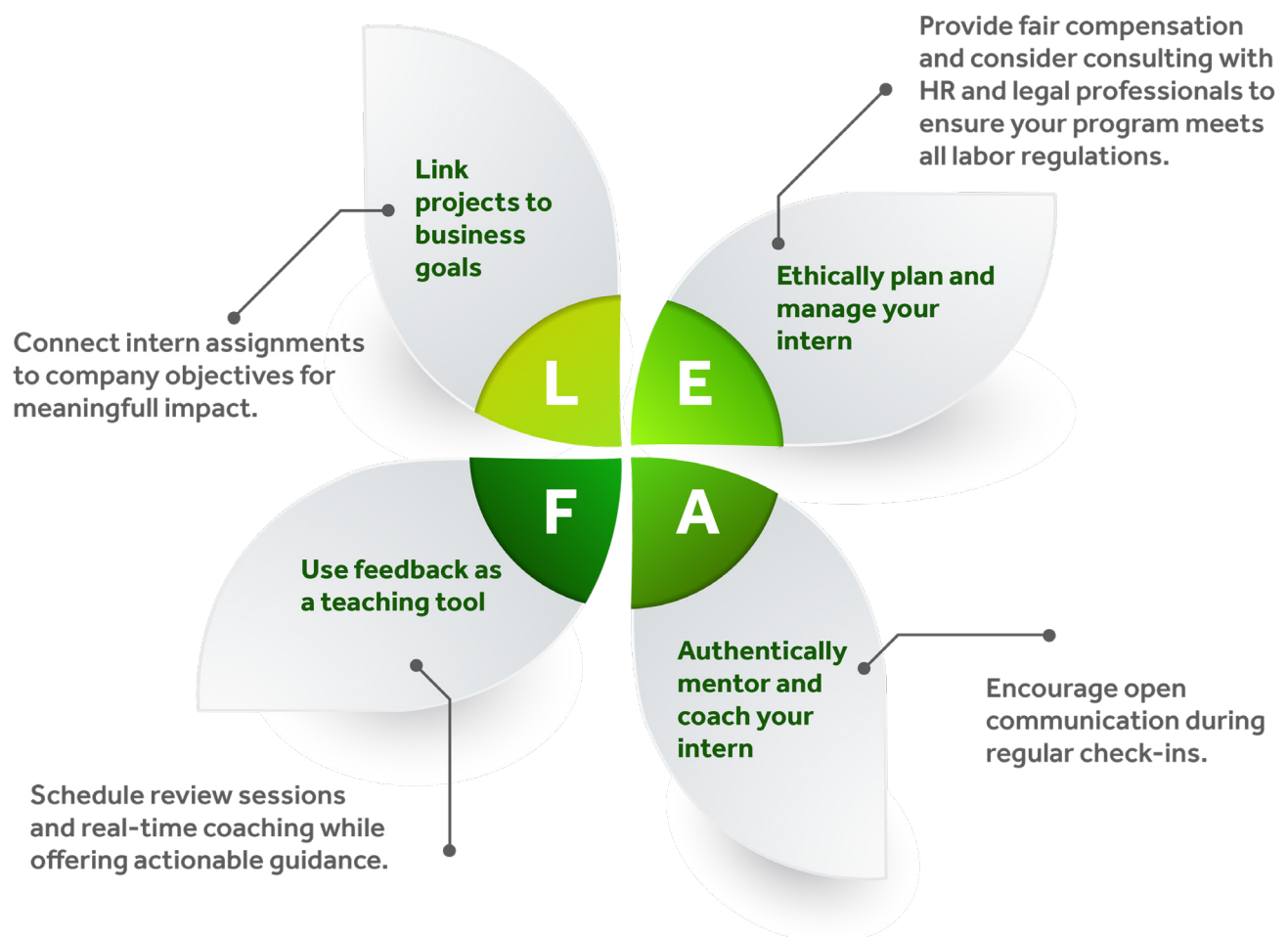
By following this structured approach to your mid-year review, you'll gain clarity about your business's current position and create a roadmap for achieving your year-end goals. The time invested now will pay dividends through increased focus, better decision-making, and stronger results as you move toward a successful conclusion to the year.

How to create a stand-out internship program

Internships have evolved beyond coffee runs and filing paperwork.

Modern interns seek meaningful experiences that offer real impact and professional growth, while businesses need programs that deliver genuine value. The **LEAF** approach provides a framework to create internship programs that benefit both parties.

The LEAF approach to internships



L – Link projects to business goals

Interns want meaningful work, not just tasks to fill time. To keep them engaged and ensure your business benefits, too, align their projects with company objectives.

What do today's interns want?

- Projects that match their skills and interests.
- Challenging assignments that build transferable skills.
- Clear expectations and structured programs.
- Exposure to leadership and multiple departments.
- Professional coaching and career guidance.

Before bringing interns on board, clearly define what your business needs. Establishing expectations upfront ensures a productive experience for everyone involved.

E – Ethically plan and manage your intern

Beyond legal compliance, ethical considerations are essential for creating valuable internship programs:

- **Fair compensation matters.** Unpaid internships are increasingly rare, as proper payment attracts better talent and improves engagement.
- **Provide structured guidance.** Assign mentors, schedule regular check-ins, and create thorough onboarding processes.
- **Don't use interns as cheap labor.** If your team lacks the time or resources to properly mentor an intern, reconsider your program.

Consider consulting with HR professionals to ensure your program meets all labor regulations.

Create a win-win experience

By adopting the LEAF approach—providing meaningful feedback—your business can create internship experiences that benefit everyone involved. As workforce dynamics continue to evolve, companies that prioritize these elements will attract top talent while building their reputation as employers of choice.

A – Authentically mentor and coach your intern

Today's interns are looking for more than just a job—they want meaningful mentorship that helps them navigate their career paths. Strong mentoring relationships enhance both the intern's experience and your company's reputation.

To build effective mentoring:

- Define clear program structure, including timelines, goals, and expectations.
- Schedule regular check-ins to provide support and guidance.
- Foster open communication where questions are welcomed.
- Offer real-world career advice about industry trends and skills development.

Remember that mentorship works both ways. Be open to learning from your interns' fresh perspectives and ideas.

F – Use feedback as a teaching tool

Interns expect clear, constructive and frequent feedback to understand their performance and areas for improvement.

Feedback best practices:

- Schedule structured feedback sessions throughout the internship.
- Provide real-time feedback for both accomplishments and areas needing adjustment.
- Make feedback actionable with specific guidance.
- Encourage self-reflection to foster growth and accountability.

A culture of continuous feedback ensures interns develop valuable skills while forming positive impressions of your company.



Tools for tracking your (and your business's) progress

The right tracking tools can be the difference between just setting goals and actually achieving them. For small business owners, selecting the right applications to monitor both personal and business progress is essential for productivity, organization and growth. Here are the most effective tools to help you stay on track.



Personal tracking tools

Managing personal growth alongside your business is key to maintaining work-life balance and overall success.

These tools provide structure and insights to help you improve all aspects of your life from daily step count to unloading the dishwasher.



Health and wellness

MyFitnessPal: Track your nutrition and fitness goals.

Fitbit: Physical activity, sleep, and wellness monitor.



Habit building

Habitica: Gamified habit-building app.

Streaks: Simple habit and routine tracker.



Goal management

GoalsOnTrack: SMART goal tracker.

Strides: Milestone progress tracker.



Personal finance

Mint: Automated budgeting system.

YNAB (You Need A Budget): Zero-based budgeting system.



Business tools

Monitoring key metrics is crucial for small business owners to make informed decisions and drive sustainable growth.

These tools help you measure what matters—from task deadlines to web traffic.

✓ Project management

Trello: Visual task organization.

Asana: Task and deadline tracker.

Monday.com: Customizable workflow platform.

✓ Time and productivity

Toggl: Billable hours tracker.

Clockify: Team productivity monitor.

✓ Financial tracking

QuickBooks: Income, expense, and cash flow tracking.

Navan: Expense management system.

✓ KPI and analytics

Databox: Real-time KPI and analytics.

Klipfolio: Customizable data reporting.

Google Analytics: Website and marketing performance tracker.

✓ Team management

BambooHR: Employee onboarding, payroll, and performance tracking.

15Five: Performance review and feedback platform.

✓ Customer feedback

SurveyMonkey: Customer feedback collection tool.

Typeform: Interactive survey creator.

By leveraging the right tracking tools, you'll gain clarity on what's working and then grow both personally and professionally.

Whichever tools you choose, consistency is key.

Start small by selecting one or two applications that address your most pressing needs. Integrate them into your daily routines before adding more to your toolkit.

Remember that tracking is only valuable when the data collected drives action. Schedule regular reviews of the information you're gathering to identify patterns, celebrate progress, and adjust your approach when necessary.

Do you need an executive coach?



As a business owner, deciding whether to hire an executive coach is a significant investment that can transform your leadership capabilities, but it's not right for everyone. Use this practical guide to determine if coaching aligns with your current needs and circumstances.

Understanding your challenges

Before considering an executive coach, identify which specific areas you need help with:

Strategic planning

- Creating a compelling long-term vision
- Making high-stakes decisions with confidence
- Aligning daily operations with business goals

People management

- Motivating your team effectively
- Resolving persistent conflicts
- Enhancing overall team performance

Personal growth

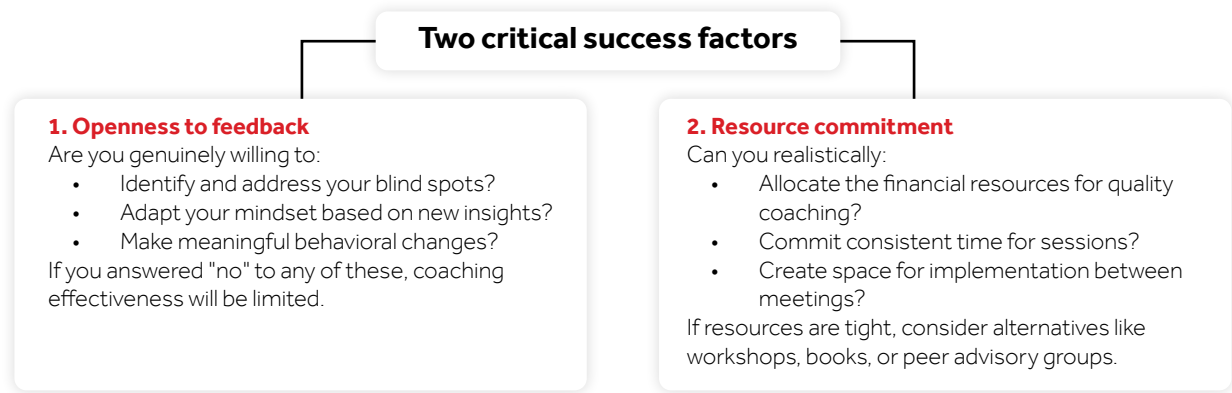
- Feeling stagnant in your leadership role
- Experiencing burnout or decreased motivation
- Lacking confidence in key leadership moments

Executive coaching works best when addressing specific challenges rather than general dissatisfaction. The more clearly you can identify your needs, the more effective coaching will be.

Your executive coach decision tree



Reality check: Even if the path leads to "you need coaching," two more factors determine success.




Coaching alternatives

If executive coaching isn't the right fit, consider these growth options:

Alternative	Best for	Typical investment
Peer advisory groups	Networking and shared experiences	Moderate to high
Leadership workshops	Specific skill development	Low to moderate
Industry mentorship	Career guidance and perspective	Low
Self-guided learning	Flexible, self-paced development	Minimal

Final thoughts...

The right development path aligns with your needs and your readiness. Whether you choose executive coaching or an alternative approach, your commitment to growth is what ultimately drives success.



How motivating is your workspace?

Your home office should energize you and enhance productivity—not drain your motivation. If you're feeling uninspired when you sit down at your desk, it might be time for a workspace refresh.

Declutter and get organized

A tidy workspace fosters a clear mind and helps maintain focus. It's also essential you see what you already have before adding to a cluttered office space—so before purchasing any of your dream office supplies, do this:

1. Start by removing unnecessary items (stray coffee cups, children's toys, unrelated paperwork).
2. Organize frequently used supplies—pens, sticky notes, paper clips—and keep them within reach.
3. Store less-used items on shelves or in labeled bins to maintain a clean and functional area.
4. Use a wall-based planning calendar or whiteboard for tracking deadlines and staying organized.

Reevaluate your space

Once you've cleared the clutter, take a moment to assess what isn't working in your current layout. **Is your desk too small for your needs? Does your chair cause discomfort after an hour?** Identify the problem areas and make a list of what you truly need—whether it's new furniture, better equipment or improved lighting—to create a workspace that supports your goals.

Pro tip:
Transfer note-taking to an app to reduce the paper on your desk.

Pick the perfect desk

Your desk is the cornerstone of your workspace. It should comfortably fit your computer and essentials while providing enough surface area for your work style. Consider these options:

Standing desks



For improved posture and energy

L-shaped desks



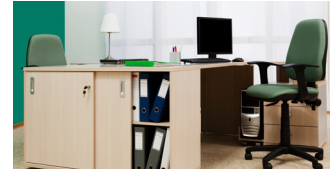
For maximizing corner spaces

Compact writing desks



For minimal needs

Multi-functional desks



For maximizing storage space

Think about placement too—position your desk away from distracting, high-traffic areas.

Upgrade your chair

Your chair is essential to your physical comfort and long-term health. Choose one that supports your back and promotes proper posture. If you're embracing a more active workday, consider adjustable sit-stand chairs or options with built-in movement features to reduce sedentary fatigue.

Ergonomic chair



Support your back and maintain proper posture

Sit/stand chair



Adjust your chair to fit your movements

Exercise chair



Get some light exercise in while you work

Active sitting chair



Promote regular movement

Optimize lighting for energy and focus

Lighting can make or break your mood. Natural light has even been known to make focusing easier and improve your overall mental well-being. Take advantage of natural light by positioning your desk near a window. And if natural light is scarce in your office space, invest in daylight-mimicking bulbs to create a bright and energizing environment.

Personalize your space

A workspace that reflects your personality can enhance creativity and make your day more enjoyable. Consider adding:



Small plants for a touch of nature and improved air quality



Inspirational artwork or quotes



Photos of loved ones or memorable experiences



Bookshelves that double as stylish storage and inspiration sources

Transform your office, transform your workday

Your home office should inspire you. Start with these small changes, make the space your own, and watch how your newly energized workspace transforms not just your productivity—but your entire outlook on work.



Go from average to excellent with the **Golden AGE** framework

Did you know that excellence isn't an accident? It's the result of a deliberate journey that Terrell Turner, CPA, has mapped out in his Golden AGE framework. This powerful approach has helped countless professionals transform their performance across various business domains.

"AGE" — standing for Average, Good, and Excellent — represents the three stages of mastery in any skill or business function:

Average: Your starting point or baseline performance

Good: Demonstrating consistent improvement beyond the basics

Excellent: Achieving mastery and exceptional results

1

SELF-ASSESSMENT IS YOUR STARTING LINE

Before beginning your excellence journey, honest self-evaluation is essential. Where do you currently stand in your target area? According to Turner, many professionals overestimate their starting position, making improvement more challenging.

2

MEASURABLE MILESTONES MATTER

The Golden AGE framework emphasizes creating clear benchmarks for each level of performance. Define what each level looks like for your specific goal:

- Average sales performance: Meeting basic quotas
- Good sales performance: Exceeding targets by 15%
- Excellent sales performance: Consistently in the top 10% with strong customer retention

3

SMALL STEPS CREATE BIG CHANGES

Breaking down the journey from average to excellent into smaller steps makes progress sustainable.

If you consider your team communication "average," prioritize moving to "good" before tackling "excellent":

Good: Schedule regular check-ins.
Excellent: Run a team-building workshop.

4

CONSISTENCY CREATES EXCELLENCE

Excellence requires regular practice, not occasional effort. Schedule time each week to work on your chosen area, whether it's reviewing financial statements or practicing presentation skills.

5

FEEDBACK FUELS GROWTH

External perspectives reveal blind spots. Ask mentors or colleagues to evaluate your progress as you move through AGE.

6

THE PATH IS PERSONAL

Unlike rigid performance systems, the Golden AGE framework is fully customizable. Your definition of "excellent" financial management may differ from another business owner's, making the approach relevant for businesses of all sizes and types.

How to apply the Golden AGE framework to life and work

The Golden AGE framework can be applied to various aspects of life and work. Here are a few examples:

Career development



Average: Average performance reviews
Good: Exceed expectations
Excellent: Take on a special project

Health and wellness



Average: Occasional exercise
Good: Maintain a regular workout routine
Excellent: Optimize your nutrition and fitness plan

Personal growth



Average: Some self-awareness
Good: Practicing mindfulness or journaling
Excellent: Attend a personal development workshop



Your success is our success

When it comes to your financial strategies and well-being, you can count on us to help your business reach new heights. From your monthly financial management to your tax strategies and planning, we have the knowledge and commitment to keep you growing safe and sound.

***Thank you for making us
your trusted advisor***