

SelfInformed

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

**Knikki
Hernandez**

**Turning The Tide
Tutoring LLC**



Mid-Year Review & Reset



Getting Your Business Back on Track

Every business owner starts out the new year with grand ideas. Whether your goals included rapid growth month over month, or just a more sustainable way of working that featured plenty of days off, you might not quite be experiencing the success you had envisioned.

But that's okay. There's always time to make adjustments and fine-tune your small business to inch closer to your objective. This post is going to break down how you can use a mid-year review and reset process to figure out what is working, what's not, and how to make more progress on the things that matter.

Start with an Objective Review

This is where it all begins. You can't know what changes are necessary without first knowing how you are doing. Most likely, you are on track to reach some of your yearly goals, while others aren't going so well. Now is the time to see things for what they are, rather than what you hoped they would become when the year started.

The review can start with basic business fundamentals like revenues and expenses. If you find that your revenues are down while expenses are up, things obviously haven't gone to plan. In addition to those core numbers, you can also think more generally about the direction of your operation. Here are a few questions to ask yourself during the review:

- Are you closer to the kind of business that you want to be running than you were at the start of the year?
- Has your workload increased without a corresponding increase in revenue?
- Do you feel like you are spending more time on activities that genuinely move the business forward?

The most important part of this review is being honest with yourself. It might be hard at times to confront things you don't like about how the year is going, but that honesty is what will set you up for big improvements over the next few months.

Take Time to Celebrate What Is Working

Don't fall into the trap of only focusing on the negative while reviewing the first half of your year. Sure, you might not be hitting on every one of your objectives, but it's likely that some progress has been made. Look at those wins and allow yourself to feel good about what you have accomplished.

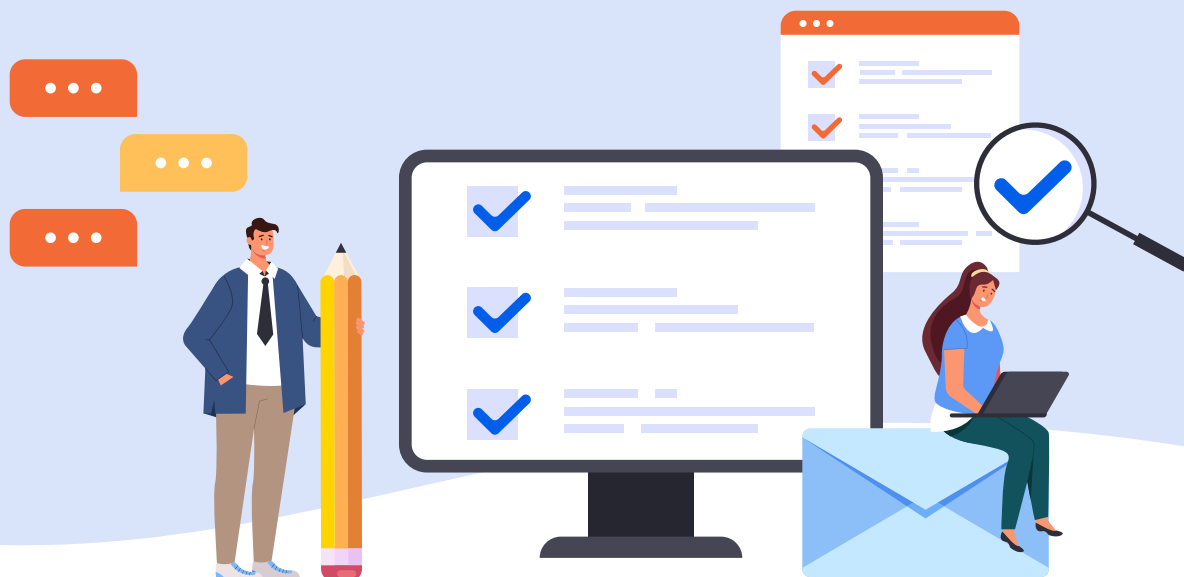
In addition to having a moment of pride, you can also learn lessons from your successes. Do you see any patterns in what is going right? Perhaps you've been doing well with a particular type of customer, or with a specific product or service. This progress can feel good and it can tell you what to lean into moving forward. After all, if something is working, the best possible thing you can do for your business is simply to do more of that thing.

Be Intentional About Problem Solving

By this point, you should have a pretty clear picture of what has transpired over the first six months of the year. You've identified some things that are going well, and you have been honest with yourself about what isn't working just yet. Of course, if you keep doing the same things, you can expect the same results. So, now is the time to intentionally make changes to address the areas that are coming up short.



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At this point, you have two basic options to solve the problems you are facing. One option is to abandon certain goals you set at the start of the year. The other is to change your approach to how you pursue those goals. In most cases, it's a combination of these two that will prove most effective in the end.

Pick out one or two goals you set at the start of the year that are far off from where you thought they would be. Do you still think these are attainable, or is it time to toss them out entirely?

Don't view throwing out a given goal as a "failure". Business owners set goals all the time and not all of them are going to work out. You are better off moving to a new goal than continuing to chase something that simply isn't going to happen. With unreachable goals or objectives thrown out, you can now focus on changing your approach to the remaining targets that you still feel are within reach.

Perform a Hard Reset on Expectations

You don't have to view what remains of the year as a desperate rush to cram in everything that you didn't accomplish in the first half. In fact, that mindset is only going to lead to frustration and burnout. Now is the time to reset your expectations, reframe what success is going to look like, and then build a plan to make it happen.

As mentioned above, this will probably mean tossing out some of the things you had hoped to accomplish initially. And that's a good thing. You might feel like a weight has been lifted when you throw out those earlier goals and free up time (and mental energy) to zoom in on the things you are confident will push you forward.

Refine Your Systems to Support a Fresh Perspective

It's all well and good to give yourself some new targets for the rest of the year, but without systems, those goals are unlikely to be realized. If you started the new year by developing some daily systems that would support the progress you are trying to make, you'll need to revisit those systems to make sure they are aligned with your new vision for the future.

- **Track your time for one week.** This is a powerful exercise while you are in the middle of a reset. Make a log of how you are spending your time and what goals that time is serving. You might find that your patterns have drifted from what you planned at the start of the year, and you can use this point to make adjustments to your daily activities.
- **Explore new technologies.** It's possible that you could tap into new tech options at this time to optimize your systems. Does it feel like you are spending time on tasks that could be at least partially automated to save you time and effort? There are countless possibilities in just about every area of business, so look into relevant tools that might be able to cut down on your time obligations for a modest investment.
- **Protect your focused time.** This is one of those things that most people need to reinforce constantly to make happen. If you have time set aside on your calendar each day to focus on a specific task that is important to your business, make sure you have the time necessary for that work completely blocked off. That means you aren't checking messages or being interrupted by calls. Find a way to protect this time above all else and you might be surprised by what is possible.

Recommit and Move Forward

For as important as it is to go through a mid-year refresh and take a look at what needs to be improved in your business, you don't want to get stuck in this retrospective mode for long. Be intentional about doing the work of reviewing your habits and seeing how they relate to your goals, but then move on and get back to work.

You aren't going to be able to erase the last six months, and you don't have to. Surely, some good things were accomplished in your business, along with some likely disappointments. The next step is to recommit to improving your operation by learning from your mistakes, building on your wins, and continuing to work hard day after day. With a renewed focus and reason for optimism, you can dive back in and take time to reset again once the next new year arrives.



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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Knikki Hernandez

NASE member Knikki Hernandez is the founder of Turning The Tide Tutoring LLC in Ruckersville, Virginia, where she helps students become confident, independent writers by teaching them to turn their ideas into clear, effective writing.

With more than a decade of experience as a high school teacher, Knikki has worked with students of all skill levels and recognized that many understand concepts better than they can express them. Her

structured, step-by-step approach helps students build confidence, strengthen organization, and develop critical thinking alongside their writing skills.

Through her four-stage program, students progress from learning the basics of clear expression to becoming independent thinkers who can communicate with confidence in school, college, and beyond.

When and why did you join NASE?

I joined NASE several months ago because I heard about your scholarship opportunities for small and independent businesses.

What inspired you to enter the field you are in?

I've known since I was a child that I was born to be an educator. Additionally, the amazing professors and teachers that I had in my K-12 education and at the university level solidified my decision to enter the field and inspired me to continue my mission to help students with academia, entrepreneurship, and life.

Additionally, as a student, I know the power of having an educator who cares about you personally. When students feel safe, supported, and stimulated, they become inspired to discover themselves and their own purpose in life. Each day is a wonderful challenge that brings new opportunities to help them grow, learn, and follow their dreams.

“ I know the power of having an educator who cares about you personally. ”



When and why did you start your business?

I started my business in January of 2025. The reason I created Turning The Tide Tutoring is because I imagine a world where people of any age can access empowering knowledge from real-world experts and teachers who can help them achieve their personal and professional goals.

In traditional education, students receive very little one-on-one attention throughout the school day, which enhances a conformity model turning them into adults who are often so busy that they don't take time to empower themselves. My focus, however, is to pair students with educators in one-on-one and small group settings to receive a personalized and tailored education that helps them reach their goals. I also realized that if I wanted to scale this concept, I would need help from other passionate educators and subject-matter experts to provide assistance in areas that are not my specialty. This helps me to connect with motivated learners anywhere around the world for any subject.

How do you market your business?

Currently, I market my business via [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#). We utilize organic social media outreach to provide thought-provoking and helpful educational content for parents and students.

What challenges have you faced in your business? How have you overcome them?

The main challenge that I have experienced is that my organic reach feels limited on social media. In order to expand my reach, I have to pay for paid ads on a teacher's salary that is already stretched thin.

Do you have any employees?

I do not have any employees. I have independent contractors that make their own schedules. When the business scales, I will definitely be in search for people who can help me on a full-time basis.

What's your schedule like, what's a typical day for you?

A typical day for me involves working as a full-time teacher and then coming home to tutor students who need assistance with their academics. On my off days, I spend time writing educational blogs and building programs for students. I'm currently collaborating with an actress on providing improvisation and acting classes for children ages



8-18 that's available at <https://actingwithpippi.com>. We've also created an amazing pickleball program for people of any age that helps them build their skill and knowledge of the game in the Charlottesville area. This can be found at <https://aydonpb.com>. Turning The Tide Tutoring is also in the initial stages of building a cybersecurity program as well as offering voice lessons for singers as well as traditional academic support for students taking traditional classes.

What's the best thing about being self-employed?

The best thing about being a teacher-preneuer is having a creative outlet that allows me to explore what I am truly capable of as an educator.

What's the best compliment you've ever received from a client?

This is one of my favorite reviews from a client: Ms. Nikki Hernandez has been an incredible guiding light for me since the start of high school. Her dedication, attention to detail, and deep knowledge have helped me navigate the complex world of internship applications. Thanks to her support, I was accepted into several programs that have opened doors to top internships, serving as crucial stepping stones in my journey.

What truly sets her apart is that she's not just a tutor; she has become a mentor and a source of constant encouragement. Her belief in my potential motivates me every day, and knowing I have someone like her in my life makes a huge difference. Thank you, Ms. Hernandez!

What's the most important piece of advice you would give to someone starting their own business?

Join a network of driven, ambitious, and like-minded people who dream big and associate with them often. This is the antidote to the modern day pandemic of mediocrity.

Which NASE member benefit is most important to you?

Right now, it's the grant opportunities. As a self-funded business owner, I'm always looking for chances to expand my educational programs and reach more people.

Any other information you would like to share?

I realize that during these uncertain economic times parents need as much support and flexibility as possible. At Turning The Tide Tutoring, we are committed to providing the highest quality educational support for families across the economic spectrum.



Congress is Set for August Recess; What Remains?

The House is adjourned for the August recess, the Senate is likely to recess the first week in August, what awaits when they return for the very short period post August and the midterm elections. Here is what is on deck:

FY27 Appropriations: Stalled, CR Increasingly Likely

The House has made real progress; the Senate has not. House bills appropriate over \$1.856 trillion in base discretionary budget authority for FY2027, about \$217 billion (13%) above the FY2026 enacted level, and the central question is no longer whether appropriations legislation will move, but how Congress will reconcile competing spending priorities within a compressed calendar. On the Senate side, the Senate has not made comparable progress, and appropriations are unlikely to be

enacted by the October 1 start of the fiscal year. Senate appropriators postponed FY2027 markups again due to the continued absence of Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Mitch McConnell, and a series of setbacks also derailed House floor consideration of both the Energy and Water and the National Security/State bills.

The practical result: absent accelerated negotiations, a continuing resolution to keep the government funded at current levels is the likely path forward, and a CR text is already circulating — H.R. 9770 would fund the government through December 4, 2026. The House has also offered a stop-gap plan to keep the government funded past the September 30 deadline into December, with OMB separately requesting specific funding "anomalies" (exceptions to flat CR funding) for select defense programs.



Emergency Supplemental: \$87–88B Request, Contested

OMB Director Russell Vought sent a formal request to Speaker Johnson on June 24 for \$86.1 billion in supplemental FY2026 appropriations, including \$67.1 billion for DOD military and intelligence activities. Reporting on the same request puts the total slightly higher — \$87.6 billion, covering the conflict with Iran, farmer aid, and the Ebola response in Central Africa — with \$17.3 billion for operational costs and \$21 billion to replenish munitions used in the Iran conflict, plus \$5.1 billion for cybersecurity, \$2 billion for the Coast Guard, and \$12.1 billion for classified programs, and \$11.1 billion for farmers, including \$10 billion in temporary crop assistance and \$1.1 billion for Florida storm losses. As of early July, House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee members were still pressing the administration for more detail, and CRFB has flagged the package for review, cautioning that a supplemental of this size should be carefully reviewed and fully offset.

Reconciliation 3.0: Moving in the House, Stalling in the Senate

The House Budget Committee advanced a \$95 billion package known as "Reconciliation 3.0" on July 17, using the special budget process for a third time to bypass the Senate filibuster, passing committee by a vote of 20–14. The resolution instructs four committees: House Administration (\$10B, for SAVE America Act election-integrity provisions), House Armed Services (\$60B for defense/Iran-related spending), House Intelligence (\$13B), and House Agriculture (\$12B for farm aid) — though a more recent version reflects \$73 billion for defense and intelligence, \$12 billion for farm assistance, and

\$10 billion for voter-ID grant programs, and the resolution as currently written does not direct any committee to identify offsets or pay-fors. The full House passed the budget resolution on July 22, without a single Democratic vote, with the package headed toward reconciliation legislation on defense, election-security, and agriculture priorities.

The Senate is a different story. Majority Leader John Thune has said the Senate won't immediately take up the framework, viewing it as "Plan B" — a backup to keep in reserve in case appropriations negotiations break down before the September 30 deadline — while House Republicans are urging the Senate to move aggressively, given this is likely the party's last chance to advance these priorities before Congress is consumed by the funding fight and the midterms. Notably, Speaker Johnson has signaled some conservative priorities left out of this package would be pushed to a fourth reconciliation bill after the November midterms.

How Will This End?

They're now effectively one negotiation. Thune's team is pursuing a two-track strategy — keep appropriations moving while holding reconciliation in reserve — meaning reconciliation 3.0's fate depends heavily on whether the regular FY27 appropriations process or the supplemental can get unstuck first. For your dinner audience, the throughline worth flagging is straightforward: **a CR into December is the most probable near-term outcome**, which means Q1 FY27 contract awards and new-start programs are likely to slip, and any procurement planning tied to a "clean" October 1 start should build in that delay as the base case rather than the exception.

Katie Vlietstra is NASE's Vice President for Government Relations and Public Affairs; You can contact her at kvlietstra@nase.org.