

ACCELERATE

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OUR NEWSLETTER FOR GROWING BUSINESSES



Welcome back!

We know getting back into work mode after the holidays can be a challenge — swapping sunshine and relaxation for spreadsheets and schedules isn't always easy. But the new year is also a chance to refocus and lay the groundwork for a successful 2025.

To help you start the year off strong, this newsletter covers a checklist for financial success, the latest on cybersecurity, insights into the rise of eInvoicing, and how the falling OCR could impact your business.

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A new year is a fresh start — the perfect time to set aside an hour or two to give your business a quick 'audit'. A big-picture review to assess where your business stands and how to set it up for success in 2025.

This checklist will help you lay the foundation for a productive year ahead:



Refine your **PURPOSE**

Why does your business exist? If you're struggling to answer, it's time to revisit your *raison d'être* and long-term goals. A strong sense of purpose will motivate your team, deepen client connections, and guide financial decisions.

Pro tip: Before approving any expenses, ask: Does this drive us closer to our goals?



Look after your **PEOPLE**

Your team is your greatest asset: are the right people in the right roles? Are workloads manageable? Is there a way to further unlock your staff's potential?

Pro tip: Invest in tax-deductible training programmes that upskill your staff and strengthen your business.



Identify key **PERFORMANCE DRIVERS**

Pinpoint the areas that fuel your success — is it sales, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency? — and make sure your time and resources are centred around these priorities.

Pro tip: Review last year's financial reports to uncover what worked and what didn't.



MEASURE what matters

Tracking performance metrics consistently will help you meet your targets and stay on course. Use reliable tools that will help you capture key data and spot issues early.

Pro tip: Not sure where to start? Contact us to build a KPI framework tailored to your business.



PLAN for success

Define your top priorities for the year, break them into actionable steps, and map out clear deadlines to stay on track.

Pro tip: Any major expenses in the budget? Talk to us about cash flow forecasting.



Cybercriminals are upping their game, creating convincing scams that are harder than ever to detect. Small businesses, assumed to have limited resources and less robust security systems, are increasingly seen as an easy target. Let's prove the scammers wrong.

Stay informed

Knowledge is your first line of defence, so be aware of these emerging threats:

- **AI-driven scams:** Scammers use artificial intelligence to craft incredibly realistic phishing emails and fake websites.
- **Social engineering attacks:** Impersonation scams are on the rise, with attackers posing as banks, government agencies, or even suppliers.
- **Deepfake technology:** Fake audio and video messages mimicking trusted sources are becoming alarmingly hard to detect.



Train your staff

Teach your team about the latest scams and how to look out for red flags, such as pressure to act quickly. Train them to double-check email addresses and URLs before clicking on a link, and stress caution with unusual requests, no matter how authentic the source seems. Regular training and simulated phishing exercises help your team stay vigilant.

Protect your data *and* your reputation

To strengthen your cybersecurity, use basic but effective measures like two-factor authentication, keep software updated, and check out the [Business Online Security Series](#) from Own Your Online. This free resource offers practical advice to keep your business safe.

Embracing eInvoicing: a game changer for Kiwi businesses

If it ain't broke, don't fix it is a great motto for your trusty old lawn mower — but when it comes to invoicing, we prefer, *Out with the old and in with the new!*

eInvoicing is quickly becoming the standard in New Zealand, and it's easy to see why. By exchanging invoices directly between accounting systems, eInvoicing...

- **Streamlines payments** for improved cash flow.
- **Boosts accuracy** by eliminating data entry errors.
- **Saves time and money** by reducing admin tasks.
- **Enhances security** with invoices sent directly between trusted networks.

No delays. No manual entry. No admin headaches!



The Government is leading the way

The New Zealand government is stepping up its commitment to eInvoicing with new rules that will have a ripple effect across the business community.

- **1 January 2026:** government agencies processing over 2,000 domestic invoices annually must use eInvoicing and pay 95% of these invoices within five business days.
- **1 January 2025:** approximately 135 agencies must pay 90% of all domestic invoices — whether eInvoiced or not — within 10 business days.

Small Business and Manufacturing Minister Andrew Bayly explains: *'Given 97 per cent of all businesses in New Zealand are small businesses, it is crucial for our broader economic success that government agencies pay their invoices quickly.'*

Even if your current system isn't 'broken', it's time to make the change

An eInvoicing-capable system ensures seamless collaboration with government agencies, faster payments, and streamlined processes. For more information or advice, get in touch. We're here to help make the transition easy.

After a prolonged period of economic uncertainty and rising costs, the official cash rate (OCR) cuts in the second half of 2024 marked a turning point for New Zealand's business community. The reductions brought much-needed stability, allowing business owners to look ahead with cautious optimism.

But the big question remains: Will the OCR continue to fall, and what opportunities or challenges could this create for your business?

Mark your calendar

The first key OCR announcement of 2025 is on **19 February**.

Experts predict the OCR may fall further as the Reserve Bank works to stabilise the economy and stimulate growth. However, this depends on global inflation trends and economic conditions. Staying informed will help you make timely, strategic decisions.

Borrowing opportunities

The Reserve Bank's goal to return to a 'neutral' OCR of around 3% could bring mortgage rates down to 4.5%–5%, opening the door for significant savings on long-term investments.

Lower interest rates make borrowing more affordable, creating opportunities to:

- Refinance existing loans.
- Invest in equipment, property, or other assets to support growth.
- Fund expansion plans with less financial strain.

Shifts in consumer spending

The OCR cut is designed to stimulate economic activity, and while consumer habits don't change overnight, early signs suggest increased spending across many sectors. Demand for office and industrial spaces is also expected to rise as businesses expand operations.



Plan ahead

This shifting landscape creates opportunities but also requires adaptability. Key challenges in the months ahead might include rising competition for leasing, evolving customer preferences, and talent retention.

Let's talk about strategy

Need help navigating these changes? Contact us for advice tailored to your business.

TAX CALENDAR - FEBRUARY 2025

Date	Category	Description
5 February	PAYE	Large employers return for the second half of January. File employment information within two working days after payday.
20 February	PAYE	Small employers return for January and large employers return for the first half of February. File employment information within two working days after payday.
20 February	NRWT / Approved Issuer Levy	Payment and return due.
20 February	RWT	RWT return and payment due for deductions from dividends and deductions of \$500 or more from interest paid during January.
28 February	GST	Payment and return for January.

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