

## A PUBLIC INCENTIVE TO STICK TO ONE'S GOALS

 WORK & LIFESTYLE

The first few days and weeks of any new year are notorious for testing—and too often defeating—the resolve of resolution-makers around the world. Similar to [Pfizer's recent Times Square effort](#) aimed at those trying to quit smoking, a new site out of Estonia uses financial incentives and a social approach to help make consumers' resolutions stick. Tallinn-based [Pledgehammer](#) gives people a way to make their resolutions public, whether it's stopping smoking, losing 20 lbs. or—to take an example from the more than 100 on the site—taking better care of one's tractor. When they make their pledge, users are asked to choose a deadline—say, by a year from today—as well as some amount of money to give to charity should they fail to keep their promise. Members of the site can create profiles and then post updates of their progress toward their goal over time, as well as cheering other people's efforts. They can also edit or delete their vow if they get cold feet. Otherwise, when their deadline arrives, Pledgehammer sends users an e-mail asking if they kept to their vow. If they admit that they didn't, it directs them to the websites of its charity partners, where they can make their donation—a small part of which gets paid back to Pledgehammer, the site says. Participating charities currently include ChildLine, PDSA and the World Land Trust. The site explains: "This way your unsuccessful pledge may help to save the rainforest or support families in third world countries, making it not all that unsuccessful after all." Similar in some ways also to [WeightNags](#), which we covered last year, Pledgehammer promises to transform consumers' persistent challenges into a win-win-win that benefits those in need as well. Were the site broken down by resolution type—a section for those who want to quit smoking, say, and another for those aiming to exercise or lose weight—it seems to us the community and advertising possibilities would multiply. One to emulate in the niche of your choice....? Spotted by: Judy McRae  
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Email: [info@pledgehammer.com](mailto:info@pledgehammer.com)

Website: [www.pledgehammer.com](http://www.pledgehammer.com)