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Balance Your Holidays & Business

By Rudolf Freidlander

When you've been working long and hard at your home business for a while, you might feel like you've earned yourself a little break. There are home business owners out there who haven't taken a real holiday since they started their business — including some who started their business as long as five years ago!

After all, how can you ever just desert your business and your customers and go bronze yourself on the beach? How can you avoid being on call 24/7 throughout your holiday? Well, everyone deserves some time to themselves at least once a year, if they want to keep being productive and avoid stress. Here's what to do.

Tell People When You're Going Away.

You can't just disappear when you're running a home business — you need to let people know long in advance that you're not going to be available, and make sure that they have everything they need to manage without you while you're away. It's best to schedule your holiday not to interfere too much with the business.

However much you might want to have your holiday in the summer, it's important to remember that every business has its quiet months, and you should schedule your holiday in the period where they seem to be.

Change Your Answerphone Message.

A quick and simple way to let people know that you've gone away is to change your answerphone message. This allows you to still hear what people have to say when you get back, and stops them from wondering why you never seem to answer your phone.

A good format for the message is as follows: 'Hi, this is [your name] at [company name]. I'm sorry I'm not in the office right now, but I will be back on [give a date]. If you leave a message, I will be sure to get back to you'.

Set Up an Email Autoresponder.

Similar to an answerphone message, but less commonly used, is the email autoresponder. Again, you don't want people to wonder why their emails are going unanswered, so your best bet is to set up your email program to automatically reply to any email you get with a message saying that you've gone away.

Example: 'Hello, and thank you for your email. This is an autoresponder, as I'm away on holiday until [date]. I have received your email, however, and will respond to it upon my return. I apologise for any inconvenience to you, and I am willing to make an offer of 10% off your next order to make it up to you.' The special offer for people who get the autoresponder is a nice touch — it makes them feel lucky that they emailed you while you were away, instead of frustrated.

Don't Stay Away Too Long.

Of course, when you go on holiday, you're relying on people being willing to wait for you. That means you can't really take the kids to Disneyworld for two weeks, or spend a month staying with a friend abroad — it's just too long to be away from your business for.

You should regard a weekend away as ideal (it avoids the whole problem for the most part), and a week as the maximum you can allow yourself. Don't let people make you feel bad about only taking one-week holidays: after all, you could always have more than one each year.

Alternatively: Get Someone to Look After the Business.

If you really want to get away for longer, or it's essential that your customers don't have any break in service, then you could consider getting someone to look after your business. This could be an existing member of staff that you make your 'deputy', to be in charge while you're away, or it could be someone who's related to you and has some experience running a business. You could even hand the business over to a competitor that you're friendly with and share the profits with them, if you think they're trustworthy and they could handle it.

Enjoy your holiday!

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What Balance Looks Like For You

By Angie Dixon

Balance Your Holidays Business

Recently, in an online group, we talked about "balance" and an article one member had read decrying the demise of balance altogether. We all had different ideas about what balance is and how to reach it, and I realized, after a number of posts, that we were all right.

I believe it is possible to "achieve balance in our lives." What I don't believe is that the way you create balance is going to match the way I create balance. I don't believe that dividing my time 50/50 or 25/25/25/25 is right for me, though it may be for you.

How do YOU create balance? Easy. Find times when you feel like things are going exactly as they should, that everything in your life is perfectly in alignment, and that you're doing what you need to do, when you need to do it. That's balance. Then "creating" balance becomes RE-creating it. Once you know what to do, you can do it again. And again.

When you're struggling to find what's next out of the middle of a dozen or more things, when everyone feels downhearted and discouraged because they're not getting enough of your time even though you're running between chores and family as fast as you can, you're not in balance.

Imagine your life as a series of circles, arranged around an inner circle. The inner circle is you. If you're just running the bases and touching each circle with your toe as you go by, you're not in balance. But if all those circles are close in to your inner circle, touching or overlapping not only you but each other, chances are you're in balance.

Balance comes when you're doing what you want to be doing, when it needs to be done. It's not about fifty percent of your time being home and fifty percent being work, or any other formula. It's about doing what is important at the time.

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

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