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Taking a Vacation Can Increase Your Revenue

I recently returned from a 7-day vacation in Aruba that was absolutely magnificent. My days were spent lounging on the beach absorbing the warm, tropical climate, and in the evenings, I tasted the fine Caribbean cuisine and enjoyed the trade winds during my strolls. During the entire 7-day trip, I was fully immersed in my vacation and appreciated the time away from my business.

But I haven't always been able to take a "real" vacation. Part of the issue was that I was establishing my career and later building my business, and I simply didn't think I could take time away from my career to enjoy myself – even while on vacation.

In my corporate days my co-workers would say, "I haven't taken a vacation in five years." They took pride in being a martyr and wore this statement like a badge of courage.

And while in Aruba, I was reminded of how so many people haven't learned the importance of taking a "real" vacation. All up and down the beach, I saw people lugging their laptops and cell phones along with their sunscreen and beach towels. Sure, they were away from the office, but were they really on a vacation? No! All they'd accomplished was making their office mobile. They were still cranking out reports and proposals and checking their email the entire time. They may be in a luxurious location, but they certainly weren't on a vacation.

And I get it. You are an entrepreneur focused on growing your business, and for a variety of reasons, you believe that you can't remove yourself from your work – even on vacation – so as a "compromise" your office becomes mobile. You pack your laptop, make sure your cell phone service is available at your destination, take along a dozen or so project files, and you are ready to go, right? You think to yourself, "I simply cannot afford to take a week off. My business and clients need me." But you aren't helping anyone by doing this – including yourself.

Now I am not advocating that it is wrong to be engrossed in your business. In fact, I am the first to admit that I am totally absorbed in mine. However, taking a "real" vacation – meaning no cell phones, no project files, and no email – actually increases your business' financial health. Here's why.

When you take a vacation – a "real" vacation – you gain clarity and perspective about your business. This time away allows you to rejuvenate and refocus, and you come back from your vacation with a clear mind and rested. You have spent your vacation actually enjoying the fruits of your labor – not obsessing about your business. So when you return, you have a fresh outlook on your business, which often results in increased revenue.

Furthermore, if you have aspirations of selling your business someday, it is to your advantage to take a vacation. Those businesses where the owner can let go are much more attractive to potential buyers than those businesses where the owner is so deep into the business that making a smooth transition is nearly impossible. Vacationing may actually equate to sell-ability down the road – keep that in mind when you think you can't afford to take a “real” vacation.

So how do you make the short-term shift from engrossed business owner to vacationer?

The first element to making this transition is **giving yourself permission to take a vacation**. Remind yourself that you have worked hard and you deserve this break. You've earned this vacation. And it may also help to enlist the support of your spouse or travel companion to help remind you.

The second element is to **learn to delegate**. Delegating is a difficult thing to do, but it starts with setting the right expectations – for your clients, for your vendors and for your employees. A few weeks before you go away, let everyone know that you will not have access to email or phone messages during the time period of your vacation. If you don't have an assistant or someone you can rely on, consider hiring a virtual assistant or answering service for the week. This will give you peace of mind that your basic business needs are being handled. (Click here if you'd like to learn more delegation tips.).

The third element is to **plan appropriately for your vacation**. This is much more than simply what clothes you'll pack. This means developing a strategy for before, during and after your trip.

The strategy before your trip is the expectation element. This means possibly pushing back deadlines for clients or delegating to others so you can meet those deadlines.

During your vacation, your strategy is to truly enjoy your vacation. Reinforce that you've worked hard and you deserve to relax and enjoy this time away, and as a bonus, you'll be rejuvenated and reenergized with the momentum to move your business forward when you return.

After your vacation, your strategy should be to take care of your home first (unpacking your suitcases, retrieving the four-legged “kids” from the kennel, and getting your home tidy), and then the office. At the office, you should have a pre-determined plan for handling what you missed while you were away. Your plan should include a priority system for handling phone messages, emails and regular mail. It should also allow you the time needed to regroup and focus on what tasks need done – so it is probably not wise to schedule meetings for your first day back.

By taking these steps to take a “real” vacation, you will increase the clarity of your mind and have the energy to move your business to the next level.