



A Stress-Free Summer Vacation

As business owners, we often stress when we plan a week-long vacation or business trip, knowing that we will have to keep the business going in our absence. Here are some ways you can stress less and help your business run smoothly while you're gone:

- 1. Schedule your trip during down time:** If possible, schedule your trip during a time when customers or vendors may not need you. Many business owners schedule vacations around a national holiday such as July 4th because they know that customers often take vacation days on the few days before and after a holiday. If your business is cyclical and your busy period ends at a certain time of year (for example, April 16 for tax professionals), schedule your vacation at the end of your peak season for the least impact on your business.
- 2. Look ahead one month:** Be sure to glance at the upcoming events on your calendar to see if there is anything you can do to complete those tasks before your vacation. This will prevent you from missing any deadlines and will ensure that you don't have surprises upon your return. For example, if you have a recurring advertisement running in your local paper, have the ad created and sent to the publisher prior to the deadline. Re-schedule any appointments that conflict with your vacation time, and remember to give yourself time to catch up on work upon your return.
- 3. Automate or delegate whenever possible:** Just as you might have a neighbor get your newspaper or mail while you're gone, you can delegate certain tasks that require daily attention. Assign a team member or outsourced person to handle any follow-ups or business-related items in your absence, and leave customers with this person's contact information should they have further needs. Set your marketing on auto-pilot by pre-scheduling blog and social media posts and email campaigns to publish during the week you're on vacation. Customers may never realize you are gone. This will keep your business visible and you won't lose valuable marketing opportunities while you're on vacation.
- 4. Enjoy your vacation:** There's nothing worse than a vacation or trip where you cannot enjoy your time off, because you feel like your head is still focused on work-related issues. Or when you take a vacation and have to bring work along with you because there is no one else to do the job. If you spend some time preparing in advance, thinking about how the business can run without you, and automating your processes, you'll find yourself more relaxed and ready to take over the business upon your return.

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