

Holiday? What Holiday?



By David Boyce, CEO
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With the traditional summer holiday season fast approaching many people will be making plans for an extended holiday break with family and friends.

In the transport industry it always amazes me the number of people that never take time off for a holiday. It's not that they haven't earned a break, but for many they are just too scared to take time away from their business. They are scared that their business will fail if they are not there all the time.

The reality is that they have just failed to plan ahead.

In an industry where working long hours is the norm rather than the exception, it is important for you and your business that you take time out to have a break and recharge your batteries, if you don't you may well burn yourself out, which could spell disaster for your business.

Having run my own transport business for many years I understand the situation many of you find yourself in, it can be hard to get away from your business. Taking a holiday doesn't necessarily mean you have to fly to the other side of the world. A holiday might be something as simple as finding time to go for a bike ride or a walk. The main point is you need to find time to physically get away from your business, to put some balance in your life.

Going on holiday is good for your soul, and is a good way to wind down. There are a number of reasons your business needs you to take a holiday break:

You need time to look at the big picture. When you are flat out working in your business, you don't get time to step back and look at the big picture and plan for the long term health of your business. Getting away from work on holiday can give you the time to reflect on what is really important for your business. Turn off the cellphone and computer, otherwise you will never relax. A lot of businesses suffer from the old 80/20 rule, which is that 20 percent of their customers provide 80 percent of their income. So taking time out will give you time to think about how you can focus on the 20 percent and work on getting rid of the 80 percent to free up some of your time, so that you can get more time for yourself.

There aren't 25 hours in a day. How many hours do you work in a week? Like many in the industry, probably miles too many. The reality is there is only so much you can do in a day. Just focus on the important stuff and forget about the rest. If your time is worth \$500 an hour to your business, then don't waste it doing the \$15 an hour tasks, pay someone else to do these and focus on the \$500 an hour tasks. Try delegating to your employees, the sky won't fall in, most employees will rise to the challenge and the faith you have put in them.

Practice taking a break. If you don't you may find yourself forced to one day through accident, illness or one of life's unplanned events. This can make life really hard if you are not prepared for the unexpected events that life can throw at you. Review your insurances, do you have cover for income protection, medical, key personnel etc? I can speak from experience, in my early business days I used to race motorcycles, the inevitable happened and I had an accident that put me off work for 12 months. This caused me some grief at the

time, but it taught me a valuable lesson in how to plan ahead for the unexpected. I also learnt that life goes on without you, which helps put things in perspective.

Focus on your business systems. All businesses need effective systems and processes for handling day to day business, including customer service, deliveries, scheduling, accounts, cashflow management, legal compliance and staff management. Your employees should be trained to run your systems effectively, and clearly understand your expectations. It is good practice to communicate your holiday intentions in advance with key customers and suppliers, this helps to minimise business disruption. Having effective business systems in place will enable the business to run successfully while you are away on holiday.

Make your life easier. When you return from your well-earned holiday, you will be refreshed, re-focused, and full of energy and will have a new perspective on what is really important. You will be ready to better cope with the fast paced and challenging industry that we work in. Your employees will be feeling better as you will be able to fully appreciate how they have stepped up to the challenges that you have set them. Business owners who have learnt to take a holiday are more likely to have a successful business.

NZ Trucking Association is here to help your business be a successful business. We would be pleased to hear from you and can be contacted on 0800 338 338 or info@nztruckingassn.co.nz



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