**Top tips for Business Owners on surviving the summer holidays – 100%!**

Dealing with the impacts of the 8 weeks of school holidays can often leave business owners with a sense of dread for many reasons. Team members will often want their long holidays, others need to cover for holidaying staff and many of our clients also go on holiday which can cause chaos if the diaries clash! On top of all that we often like to have a holiday ourselves! Here are a few ideas from our Managing Director, Jayne Bratton:

1. **Plan yours and your team’s summer holidays early in the year**

This can minimise the impact and also helps staff to book up their time away. I always schedule all my years holidays in at the start of the year so that everyone knows where we are when. Currently we have bookings 6 months ahead which I couldn’t do if I didn’t know when we are on holiday! If you aren’t sure of your own holidays then just book out a few spare options as you can release the time back to your diary later!

1. **Consider having a company shut down**

I know this won’t work for all companies, but this may be worth thinking about. All of our team have young children and so we typically allow the team to take all school holidays off, with the exception of the main summer holiday when we ask them to work half-time. This allows us to know early on when the team will be in, they appreciate the flexibility and our clients are comfortable as they know the team don’t work in the holidays. The exception to this is the directors and we tend to work for at least half of the time in all holidays which for us gives us time to catch up with our internal work and also to deliver to our regular monthly clients. When we do book up to be away, we do try to make sure that at least one of our senior team members is ‘around’ if needed.

1. **Plan your workload**

All businesses which have been trading for a few years will have some idea of when their peak times are which allows for staff planning. Some businesses are extremely busy over the summer and it can even be their peak trading time. One business we support finds that the August bank holiday weekend is their top annual workload pressure point and they have successfully implemented a policy of no staff holidays that weekend – retail have been doing this for years with most retailers not allowing holidays for the whole of December and so the concept is successfully proven.

1. **Budget for the impact on turnover**

Some businesses thrive in the holidays and others see a big dip. Very small businesses are often directly dependent on the business-owners to deliver to clients and when they are away there is no income coming in. However, remember that everyone deserves a break away from work and so simply make sure you plan your cashflow accordingly. Some people take the same money from their business every month and others put some away for holidays each month. Just make sure you know the impact to your business and plan how to balance the income.

1. **Plan your regular appointments**

We typically book our regular clients up a month ahead; however, for the summer holidays period we book at least 2 months ahead. This allows us to plan around clashes of holidays etc. A simple solution we use is to include one session at the start of a month and one at the end alternatively we double-up the length of appointments.

1. **Manage your clients’ expectations**

I email all our clients a good week before we are due to go away to let them know we are going to be away and inform them of the dates. I include in that email that if they have anything they would like me to do to please let me know and I will make sure it is done before I go away. Interestingly, in 6 years of doing this no-one has asked me to deliver anything extra which isn’t already planned for me to do whereas I expected it would lead to a flood of last-minute requests. In addition, I can’t ever remember getting a phonecall from an active client when we are on holiday.

1. **Being on top of tasks before you go on holiday**

I always leave the last day before my holiday completely free. I am really strict on not over-booking this day as it is the only way I have found to make sure I have sent out all the last-minute things for clients and I leave knowing I am on top of all my work for clients.

1. **Leave your phone at home – yeah right!**

I have not ever found a business-owner who really does leave their business phone at home for a holiday though I would always suggest it is the best option.

However, we feel we have a compromise as we have a ‘bat phone’. This is a pay-as-you-go phone which our immediate family and a couple of our team members have the number for in case there is a really big issue. We haven’t ever been called on it but it allows us to relax. We typically connect to our emails every few days, normally when our children are chilling out, and this allows us to keep on top of things, give answers to quick queries and manage expectations if enquiries are more in-depth.

1. **Come home to a clean house/offices and tidy gardens**

A real treat we schedule for ourselves is that while we are away we book a cleaner to do an in-depth clean of our house and offices – including hoovering under furniture, washing out the fridges etc. We book a gardener to come to cut the grass and weed in the week before we are due back. It is really great to come home refreshed and our premises are all refreshed too!

1. **And relax**

I try to do everything to 100% which includes being on holiday. I fully commit to my family and I switch off – otherwise I feel I am being unfair to them. If I am with my children and thinking about work I am not really with my children and I feel they deserve my attention, in the same way I wouldn’t take another client call when delivering a coaching session… People are often surprised that I am able to do this, but it is only something I have been able to do for the last few years. So please be 100% on holiday.

**In summary,** don’t try to beat the impact of the holiday season but just plan for it and then go with the flow. Remember that you deserve to be on holiday too – and your family deserve you to be with them 100%. If you have any other good summer holiday survival tips for business owners please let me know!

For support in planning you’re your workloads and learning how to get your business ready for you to go away and relax, please feel free to contact Jayne directly at:

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