

## Member's Quarterly

Fall 2016 Edition

### Perspective

# Vacation Days: Protect Your Health

*Time off requires proper planning*

**D**o you find the phone calls or emails from your senior executive or managers about your unused vacation days truly annoying? How are you supposed to respond when you are up to your eyeballs in work and the load keeps increasing? Are you prepared to drop everything you're working on and spend time deciding when to take weeks off when you can't leave for two hours without a backlog of things to do and people to see? Don't wait until you're told to "use them or lose them" to discover that you're in dire need of time to regroup. There's nothing worse than being given a deadline of two to three months in your busiest season to take the time off to really make you dislike planning vacation days.

We all realize the importance of work-life balance. This means daily, not just seasonally or annually. We're now told that if we don't take the time off, this has negative impacts on both physical and mental health. Our bodies and minds absolutely need time for a break to rest and refresh. We need to bid a temporary farewell to our workload, our colleagues and our communication devices to focus on ourselves. The growing popularity of staycations proves that we don't need to travel to far places and spend thousands of dollars for a much needed break.

If your workload is such that you can't really afford to take one or two weeks off together, break it up. There are many who take 3-day weekends throughout summer and fall and claim the benefits are equal to if not better than taking an entire week or two together. These shorter work weeks are not as bad as you would think. You schedule your time appropriately and then you don't have as much fallout to deal with when you get back. The secret to success is to schedule your work properly and allow a bit of time for "the unexpected" last minute problems that tend to arise.

How you spend your much deserved time off is essential to maximizing the benefits. Let's say that you've already done the "family vacation", taken your kids shopping and prepped for school, spent time with friends and family members who can't allocate the extra days to spend with you and finished your list of things to do around the house. Your "chore list" is done. What do you do next?

Take the time and clearly plan your days, even if this means doing nothing but enjoying the outdoors and a good book. Play tourist in your own city, check out museum exhibits, fairs and festivals. Get a guest pass at a new gym or yoga studio and try some new classes. Book a session with a trainer to revamp your regular workout. Check out craft stores and studios in search of a new potential hobby that you can do year-round. Pamper yourself, but whatever you do, don't check your emails every few hours or call your colleagues to see how things are going. You won't go broke taking in some of the attractions and you get to exercise both your mind and your body in a different way than you usually do.

Teleworkers should really leave their home-offices to avoid the urge or demand to answer phones, texts, emails and doorbells particularly during business hours. Fear not — whatever problems arise while you are away will certainly be there when you return. Believe it or not, when you do return to work after a vacation break, you will be more energetic, focused, productive and better able to handle the issues that come up in your daily business lives.

Taking time off should not cause you grief. It will in fact make you more productive and a healthier and happier person!

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