



Three Things Attorneys Must Do in Order to Take Enjoyable and Rejuvenating Vacations

Make no mistake, vacations are an essential antidote for the stress and demands of the legal profession. But for many solos and small law firm attorneys, vacations are a mixed bag.

Sure, vacations are wonderful in their own right and can help overworked attorneys get some rest and relaxation. But many attorneys are too busy to take a vacation—or so they think. Or, they're concerned that they'll come home with so much work waiting for them that any benefits they received from their vacation will vanish the second they walk back into the office.

Here are three things you can do to put yourself in position to take restorative, enjoyable vacations.

1. REALIZE VACATIONS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

According to a survey by the [American Psychological Association](#), the majority of working adults surveyed stated that when they take time off, they are able to relax (80 percent) and they sleep well (73 percent). By now, we all know [how important sleep is to our health and well-being](#). Plus, vacations allow us to be more productive when we return home because in order to recharge our brains, [we've got to unplug them from our normal daily grinds](#) and give them a chance to relax.

Attorneys who enjoy their vacations understand that skipping essential relaxation time is tantamount to avoiding the gym or eating too much junk food. They know that when they do any of these things, they are engaging in conduct that doesn't help them and, in fact, may actually hurt them.

These attorneys have fully embraced vacation as a “good for your health” endeavor. Because of that, they make an effort to protect their vacation time—just like they go to great lengths to attend yoga classes or avoid unhealthy foods.

2. COMMIT TO BUILDING A LAW FIRM THAT OPERATES IN YOUR ABSENCE

A funny thing happens to attorneys who believe that they're the only ones capable of completing certain tasks at their firms: they end up being the only ones who work on those tasks.

This refusal to delegate or to build systems to empower their colleagues to take on certain tasks is what causes many attorneys to feel like they are underwater at the office—and forces them to work instead of enjoying a vacation.

The solo and small firm attorneys who savor their vacations have invested time and effort in becoming delegators and optimizing functions at their law firms. They have worked hard to ensure that they need not have their hands in every aspect of their firms because their colleagues have everything under control.

With teams and processes in place to handle the everyday operations of a law practice, solo and small firm attorneys are able to spend time out of the office without fear that there will be unresolved issues and crushing deadlines awaiting their return. Vacations aside, they also tend to operate more successful firms.

3. WHEN YOU BEGIN PLANNING YOUR VACATION, BEGIN PLANNING FOR YOUR VACATION

For some attorneys, notably true solos, building a law firm that operates without them may not be feasible. But that doesn't mean true solos (and any other attorneys, frankly) can't plan ahead for their vacations.

The solo and small firm attorneys who enjoy their vacations have planned for them well ahead of time—practically from the day they decided to go on a vacation.

They've alerted their colleagues well in advance and have discussed those colleagues' expected tasks and roles during the time they will be away. They've alerted clients about their vacations. They've advised opposing counsel about their vacations. Beyond that, they've built goodwill with opposing counsel that they can draw upon to avoid a briefing schedule that ends, or a deposition that falls, on a day when they will be on vacation or within a few days after they return to the office.

They also know that if they have clients and/or manage their law firms, legitimate emergencies happen and that they may need to be reachable in case an emergency occurs while they are gone. As a result, they may carve out time(s) each day to check their email or voicemail that will not conflict with the activities they have planned with their travel companions. That way, they balance their need to stay mildly abreast of what's happening back home with the need to unplug and enjoy themselves on vacation.



THIS SUMMER, DON'T BE A STATISTIC!

According to the [U.S. Travel Association](#), at the end of 2017, 52 percent of Americans had unused vacation days, which amounted to 705 million unused days. We don't know what percentage of these people were attorneys but we're willing to bet they made up a significant percentage.

Don't be yet another attorney who fails to reap the benefits of a vacation. Follow the practices of solo and small law firm attorneys who take enjoyable and restorative vacations. If you do, you may finally realize what you've been missing out on all these years.

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