

# The Case for VACATIONS

HERE'S HOW TO  
MAKE THEM HAPPEN.

WRITTEN BY RUBY L. POWERS

**AS A SOLO PRACTITIONER OR MANAGING ATTORNEY**, you might find it more of a hassle to go on vacation than not to actually take it. With the calendar filled with consultations, hearings, client preps, media inquiries, marketing content creation, and meetings, it can seem never-ending. When we really need a vacation the most, the clarity to plan and cut through the anxiety of leaving your responsibilities at the office is at its lowest.

Vacations are necessary for our health and happiness and to continue to zealously and competently represent our clients in the long run. Vacations are the pause button you didn't realize how much you needed. In fact, a vacation helps you work more efficiently when you return, fights burnout, and helps your team grow while you are out, among so many other reasons.<sup>1</sup>

It may seem unnecessary to have a how-to on taking a vacation, but being a mom of two under 12, a business owner for over 13 years, and an author, professor, and someone who wears a lot of hats, I have found this formula to help guide me for optimal impact on my time away from the office.<sup>2</sup> In the past couple of months, I attended a four-day work conference in New York City, went on a weeklong anniversary trip to the Bahamas, took a two-week RV road trip to four national parks, and explored the coast in California.

Fear not—with the right team, mentality, tools, and proper planning, you can take and enjoy a much needed vacation. *Let's focus on how to make it happen.*

**Step 1: Make goals for the vacation.** The point of knowing if you are successful in your pursuit of vacation is the question, “What was your original

goal?” Was it to relax, spend quality time, read, think and plan, make new memories, seek new adventures, visit friends and family, or some combination? Be clear on your intentions and this will help you plan.

**Step 2: Plan a vacation in advance.** This helps on so many levels including planning when there are fewer conflicts with your work calendar. I usually like to travel when my business is slow and I have coverage with other staff. Spring break, summer, and Thanksgiving break seem to work well.

**Step 3: Put a plan in place to be out of the office.** Once dates are set, inform your team and provide a plan. Have your duties and functions listed and assigned—which ones will be covered by someone else and which ones will wait until you return.<sup>3</sup>

**Step 4: Go over the calendar.** When it gets closer to your vacation, move any meetings and appointments or reassign ownership. For the time you'll be away from the office, if possible, have a backup trustworthy attorney who can help fill in if absolutely needed. Or if you have other associates, have them prepared to take on more duties when you are out.

**Step 5: Update your email and voicemail with an automatic vacation responder before you leave.** Train your team on the messaging and tell them who will be your replacement. Ideally, a trained assistant can monitor your email while you are away so you are not the bottleneck for case movement and your inbox will not be trouble when you return.

**Step 6: Attempt to avoid social media and news (and internet access).** What we don't realize is with constant connectivity, we are constantly able to access our work duties or stress triggers like depressing news or even social media posts. Set boundaries for yourself, especially on checking email. Cruise ships or national parks are good places with little to no internet if you need extra help disconnecting (speaking from experience).

**Step 7: Have fun and unplug.** Take the time to do fun activities on

your trip—do things you actually enjoy. Rediscover joy. Recharge, let go, and do something different. Don't feel guilty for being away.

**Step 8: Repeat.** Plan your next vacation while you are on vacation, if even just the approximate dates and location to get you started. Journal what could have made your vacation better so you can improve for the next time. Repeat these steps over again when you take your next vacation.

**Step 9: Reentry into the office.** Be kind to yourself. Keep your first day or two light. Have time to schedule check-ins with key staff and block off work time to respond to email. Manage expectations of your staff and clients on your availability when you return.

Remember, not only should you value your time away but also encourage your staff to take their vacations too. Use your newfound clarity to build the life you don't have to escape from. Now, go forth and vacation! **TBJ**

## NOTES

1. *5 Reasons Why Vacations are a Must for Lawyers*, NW Sidebar, (Oct. 29, 2018) <https://nwsidebar.wsba.org/2018/10/29/12605/>.
2. Ruby L. Powers. *Build and Manage Your Successful Immigration Law Practice (Without Losing Your Mind)* (2019), <https://tinyurl.com/rsstvk3>.
3. *Going on Vacation? Here's How to Prepare Your Team in Advance*, Forbes, (Sept. 2, 2022) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/09/02/going-on-vacation-heres-how-to-prepare-your-team-in-advance/?sh=61c7ae504c32>.



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