

Stop Blogging and Take a Break

Why taking the time to recharge can be a profitable business strategy

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I haven't posted a blog since the spring. I was focused on other activities this summer and decided I needed to take a hiatus (and the kind editors of the New York Enterprise Report kindly obliged). And, at the end of the summer (which is normally a busy time) I got "stranded" in Cancun for three days, thanks to Irene.

It wound up being an amazing three days. I worked during that time, but I was totally relaxed. I emerged after Labor Day with a flurry of new ideas, perspectives, and a fresh rush of energy. A friend of mine recently reassembled his drum kit after not having played for a couple of months. I had the pleasure of listening to him play and it was quite amazing. The hiatus gave him a new appreciation for his music.

The reality is that we business owners all need a break sometimes. The same way we remove the battery from a BlackBerry and allow it to recharge, we all need to power down on occasion to get that new energy surge that leads to innovation and a fresh passion for work.

Here are some easy ways to go missing and unplug from time to time:

- Schedule a mental health day for yourself once every six weeks, the same way you would plan a day of meetings. Block out the time and set up an out of office message for your emails. If you plan in advance, your clients, vendors, and staff will be better prepared. Offer your key team members an opportunity to do the same.
- If you really must work 24/7, then take your work someplace new and different—a park, a friend's office, or even a Starbucks or library. The beauty of technology is that our devices are portable. You can work in the cloud for a while.
- Hold meetings in a fun and different place. I recently held a team meeting with a retail furniture client on a sectional sofa in the store rather than the store lounge. The atmosphere was conducive to brainstorming and relaxation.
- Look at your to-do list and eliminate or postpone the least business-critical activity, replacing it with something that might lead to future growth.
- Attend an out-of-town conference and use your travel time (long train ride or flight) for future planning or simply meditating and ruminating.
- Skip out early with a creative and visionary buddy and spend some time brainstorming that next big project.
- Or, simply arrange a vacation when a hurricane is about to hit New York. (It worked for me!)

I hope that some of my readers actually missed me and will comment with their own clever suggestions for going missing and recharging their batteries. Whether you're a marketer, an accountant, or even a drummer, I'd love to hear from you! It's great to be back!

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