

AdvanceMe's Small Business Tip: June 25, 2008

Take Time Away from Your Small Business

Maintaining a proper work-life balance can be challenging, especially for a small business owner. Unbelievable drive, dedicated focus and intense commitment are all hallmarks of the successful business owner. The other side of the coin is "burn-out," family stress, and lack of balance. Proper relaxation and some dedicated "me" time for the business owner can help sustain the energy needed for success. Here are some simple steps to help you achieve a better work-life balance:



Making Time for Your Personal Life

- **Schedule some recreation.** If you are having trouble justifying the time to take care of personal needs, schedule it as a regular part of your work-week. It's hard to argue with the day planner! Schedule time off once a week to enjoy some physical exercise, see a movie, or wander through a museum or gallery. Don't think of this as wasting time; view it as an investment in your most valuable business asset – you. Unplug and properly recharge your batteries and you will bring more energy to the business.
- **Leave the phone alone.** When you are scheduled for time off from work, take it. Don't check emails every ten minutes, and when possible, make a clean break from answering voicemail. Staying on top of things should not require 24 hour maintenance. If it does, you are probably ready to expand your staff and grow your business even further.
- **Sleep and eat properly.** Physical and mental fatigue can certainly be made worse by a poor diet and poor sleeping habits. In taking care of yourself and your small business, sometimes it pays to start with the basics. Make sure you are sleeping well, eating balanced meals and exercising regularly. Some simple attention to the basics your body needs can help you find better focus for your small business objectives.
- **Manage your time.** If it feels like you have no time left at the end of the week, you might want to examine how you are spending each day. Keep a log of all your hourly activity for two weeks. Identify places where you could increase productivity or share some of your workload. Discover things you ought to just plain stop doing. Find ways to delegate responsibility to key employees. By looking at your week hour-by-hour, you can often discover a better way to approach your overall efficiency.

There are some telltale indicators that you might need a better balance. Fatigue, boredom, and increasing restlessness may all be subtle signs that you should consider scheduling a little more time away from the business.

For most entrepreneurs, nothing is as rewarding as successfully running your own small business. However, it is important to realize that you probably started the business to improve your life, not replace it. If you take the time to properly maintain balance between your personal and professional aspirations, you will surely discover new ways to bring better results to both.

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