



BUSINESS PLANNING DURING SUMMER VACATION SEASON

“There is virtue in work and there is virtue in rest. Use both and overlook neither.” — Alan Cohen

For many, the rush to make summer plans starts much earlier than this time in the season, but July and August are usually the months when those plans take place and when short-staff may rear its ugly head. However, even though coordinating summer vacations is no walk in the park, employers still need to encourage workers to take their leave and unplug from work. It’s an essential step in supporting employee’s work/life balance while maintaining high workplace morale. Rest assured that with some preparation and policies in place, you can ensure summer vacations don’t negatively impact your business, especially if summer is a high season in your niche. Here are a few tips for this month’s InfoPays:

1. Have a clear vacation policy.

Let your team know when they can take vacation as well as set up a fair system for booking off holidays. This way, there are clear expectations, and you can focus on making the summer season a success.

2. Create a shared vacation calendar.

A public calendar where employees can see each other’s absences helps ensure that they can step up during times others are out, and vice-versa. This culture of trust and ability to depend on others is a sign of a healthy work environment. Not to mention, it makes your job as a manager much more relaxed when employees cover for each other.

3. Train employees on various tasks.

It is fundamental that your workers are trained to cover for others. This way if a key person leaves for their vacation, you will not be left stranded. A workforce with versatile skills also guarantees your business continuity and mitigates any adverse risk to your operations.

4. Implement a checklist of pending tasks before someone leaves for vacation.

Anticipating issues before they happen and making a list of things to be on the lookout for before the employee leaves for their vacation ensures that you can allow them to unplug. Unless an emergency happens, having a checklist in place can ensure that business is taken care of while your employee enjoys their well-earned break.

5. Set up a process to brief employees upon their return.

Getting back to work after summer vacations is not always easy. Business is a living, breathing thing, and employees need to be informed of all the changes that happened in their absence. Have a process, however small, to guide returnees and help them get integrated back into the flow of things.



CORPORATE GIVING

"The highest use of capital is not to make more money but to make money to do more for the betterment of life" -- Henry Ford

The trend of corporate giving in Canada has been on the rise in recent decades, specifically as it relates to large-scale corporations. According to Imagine Canada's 2011 research findings, 97 percent of large companies donate to charities, but that percentage drops to 76 percent when businesses of all size are considered. Moreover, you don't have to be a large corporation with millions to give. You can be a small mom and pop or mid-size operator who may donate any form or resource as it doesn't always have to be cash donations.

Here are some ideas for corporate giving beyond cash donations:

1. Donate products and services
2. Purchase goods and services from charities
3. Organize employee volunteering
4. Set up team fund-raising

Why give back? The reasons for giving back are vast, but we will name the top 4 in our view:

1. Build respect and good reputation.

Giving back to the community shows that you care. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it is also the smart thing to do because it can give you free exposure and potentially generate publicity for your organization.

2. Support the community by making it a better

place to live.

Giving back has to do with both business-related and altruistic grounds. Large corporations most often dedicate funds to charitable giving to contribute to a community. The idea is that healthy and active communities are good for business, so corporate giving creates win-win scenarios from which everyone involved stands to benefit.

3. Develop connections and engage in networking.

When you connect with others in helping a cause, you might discover a few introductions that can lead you to new clients. Networking is everything in business, and this is no different when it comes to organizational charitable giving.

4. Inspire your employees to get into the spirit of giving.

Employees who work for organizations that care can be also motivated to do good. Not to mention the fact that it makes people feel inspired and proud that they are part of such a socially aware company.

Many businesses give back because it fits their business philosophy and tradition. According to Imagine Canada, 48% of all companies donate with those reasons, and 45% gave because it is a good thing to do, irrespective of the financial returns for the company.

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