



Top 5 Things You Should Do To Have the Break You Need and Deserve

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I lived in denial about taking time off when I owned my franchise. I wanted to believe that I could take breaks like 'normal' people do.

Americans enjoy little precious time off when compared to other countries as it is. As an owner for 15 years, my challenge was to figure out how to get the most out of the time I managed to get away.

The denial part came about the first time I was totally out of pocket, and something urgent happened. Urgent as in *it turned into a lawsuit urgent*. I was on a horse in Idaho getting my Cowgirl on with my son when it happened.

At the time, I was glad I didn't know until I got home. Later, I thought I could have possibly prevented the lawsuit had I been in communication with my Director and the client. I'll never know.

Five years later, I attempted again, only this time I instructed my General Manager, Kathy, to hunt me down *only if there was a fire or blood*; a lot of blood, to be more specific. She called. There was a fire. It was a bathroom-fan-electrical-short kind of fire. But still, it was a fire.

Not much I could do from Paris. I was celebrating my 50th with my son and my GM handled the crisis so well that I was able to enjoy the remainder of the trip. I was glad I knew, and Kathy was relieved to tell me in real time instead of having to wait until my return.

Those two incidents had five years and a whole lot of lessons learned between them. All business owners need downtime and franchisees are no exception. The key is making sure you have all of your bases covered before you leave.

If you follow my lead below, you'll come back feeling more energized and enthusiastic about your business because you know you won't be receiving any 'surprises' when you walk in the door.

Here's what I learned if you really want to disconnect:

1. If you leave the country or go rafting in the Grand Canyon, **notify your Franchisor Quality Assurance representative. He or she is your Best Franchisor Friend (BFF)** if you are willing to give them your trust. Your Manager should have his or her cell number in their contacts. They are your first line of defense and can play offense when needed.
2. **Be specific about what you want to know in your absence.** General categories: Complaints, Injuries (Work Comp and/ or Client), Terminations/Resignations, New Hires, Notable Mail (certified, urgent) and Money Matters.
3. **Be specific about how you want to be notified:** Text, email, voicemail or other.
4. **Be specific about what and how much information you want to know.** I recommend an outline with who, what, when, how and why to start with.
5. **Create a notebook for your Managers** to use in your absence. Include Workman's Compensation Reporting Instructions, Client Injury instructions, your emergency contact information and other important contacts they may need including franchisor, attorney, and liability insurance carrier information.

In my video : Christy Wilson Delk - Being Prepared for the Worst I talk about the importance of having a plan for Acts of God and the importance of retaining a Crisis Management PR firm if your franchisor does not have one on retainer for franchisees. This holds true regardless of your whereabouts.

One last thing. I'd vote for the candidate who declares a platform for declaring more national holidays. That's something I think we could all agree on.

Christy Wilson Delk will be speaking on "Top 5 Strategies of a Successful Franchisee" at the IFA Expo in New York on June 16th. Additional useful articles, videos, and speaking topics can be found on her website www.ChristyWilsonDelk.com

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