

Is Your Business Beach-Ready? Seven tips for ensuring your business stays on track during the holidays

Submitted by: Flourish PR

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With school holidays underway and employees looking forward to a well-deserved break, businesses are faced with the challenge of negotiating their team's summer breaks with the minimum amount of disruption.

Claire Ward, HR expert and founder of HR subscription service for SMEs – www.thehrhub.co.uk – gives the following advice to business owners on managing the summer months successfully.

1. Work out what your business needs

“Start by working out what your business needs over the summer. How will you ensure that the phones are answered, that queries are dealt with in a timely manner and that customers or clients are dealt with by an appropriate person? How many team members need to be present at any given time? Do you have any special events or sales periods that need extra support?”

2. Get all the information

“Map your business plans against your team's annual leave calendar. That doesn't just mean holidays, but also one-off leave requests for e.g. children's sports days, family celebrations or summer events such as festivals. Then you can work out where the gaps and pressure points are.”

3. Think creatively about resourcing

“The summer can be a useful period for introducing new learning and development opportunities. Ask your staff whether they might consider stepping into a different role or learning a different skill for a short period. Managed properly, it can do wonders for their motivation and confidence.”

4. Consider using contract staff or sub-contractors

“Sub-contractors or contract staff can bring excellent benefits to a business in terms of a fresh outlook, different experiences and new ways of solving problems. Depending upon the complexity of the role, you may need to invest in extra induction time to get them up to speed. Remember to plan ahead - the right people may not always be available at short notice.”

5. Keep spirits as high as the temperature

“The summer can be a bit of an unsettling time for employees with team members taking time off, sports and other events. To combat low spirits, organise an outdoor picnic during the lunch hour, treat your staff to strawberries and cream, or organise to have the biggest sporting events streamed into the

workplace. Small gestures can often go a long way.”

6. Be a ‘good sport’

“Avoid any HR own-goals by highlighting important sporting dates to employees early and manage their expectations by explaining how holiday requests are dealt with. Consider flexible working options, such as compressed hours, weeks when crucial events or matches are on. Watch out for those who might pull a sickie by making sure your managers are clued in to when key games are on so they keep a watchful eye on any likely wanderers...”

7. Finally...don’t underestimate the importance of holidays for you and your staff.

“45 million working days were lost due to stress, anxiety and depression over the last three years¹. While long working hours and low pay are also to blame, taking proper breaks is essential to the well-being and success of your employees. Actively encourage your staff to take a holiday, if they haven’t already done so.”

For more HR information and advice, visit www.thehrhub.co.uk

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1 Labour Force Survey Figures, April 2016.