

## **New Year's Resolution: Relax**

As the New Year rolls in, I will provide my own New Year's resolution to all small business owners: relax. The fact of the matter is that although owning your own business may provide more money, flexibility, and a sense of accomplishment; many times it comes with additional headaches and responsibilities.

Unfortunately, unlike traditional eight to five jobs, small business owners do not always leave their problems at the office but carry them into the home. This causes anxiety and could result in a stressful home environment.

This 2007 take it upon yourself to consciously unwind. Whether you relax by spending more time with your family or taking up a hobby, it doesn't matter as long as you do it. It will help you reenergize your mind and body, and in the long run make you much more productive. Additionally, encouraging employees to engage in similar activities will result in increased morale and team building.

In fact, during my time at adidas (yes it's actually spelled with a lower case "a"), we were constantly reminded of the benefits of enjoying our time away from work. Employees were not only encouraged but also expected to take an hour for lunch and an hour for sport. Interns would organize weekend excursions along biking trails or foreign cities. These activities became even more important during vital events such as the World Cup or other major negotiations.

You may argue that adidas encouraged sports because of the nature of their business, but I've been able to experience this same concept at other companies such as Texas Motor Speedways, where employees are allowed to use the club gym during the work day. Even the industrial plastics company in Mexico where I worked hosted weekend soccer games to increase morale.

You do not need to play sports to unwind. All you need is a small hobby such as fishing, playing an instrument, puzzles, or reading. Anything will do as long as it gives you a moment to cleanse your mind of the rigors of running your own business.

This New Year work hard but remember you need to enjoy your life as well. Happy New Year's from all of us at the Small Business Development Center. Cheers! Prost! Salud!

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