

“Balancing Business Year End with the Holidays”



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As December approaches, we are busy with the year-end business activities of wrapping up projects and deliveries for customers, closing out the quarterly or annual financials, and preparing next year's fiscal budget. We are additionally challenged with balancing the flurry of holiday events and family activities - is there time to do it all without getting exhausted or sick?

This is the time to plan the month of December carefully, making sure that your priorities are accomplished, but not at the expense of your health and well-being. Here are some ways to support your physical and mental wellness so that you can maintain your work commitments *and* enjoy the upcoming holiday season:

- Map out the coming month and write down all that needs to get done. At first it will seem overwhelming, but with proper planning and strategies, you can do it. In both the personal and professional areas of your life, clarify your values, intentions, and highest priorities. Then identify activities that would absolutely have negative consequences if you did not do them. The rest can be subject to reconsideration.
- Eat light and healthy regular meals, and get extra sleep this month. Avoid indulging in too many treats that are so abundant at the office: overloading on fats, salts, and sugars will rob you of the healthy energy you need this time of year to maintain good health and resist colds, flu's and other "bugs" that are prevalent in the workplace.
- Negotiate with others for what can be handled differently. Consider delegating activities that you absolutely do not need to do yourself. Can your holiday party planning be outsourced to an events planning business or caterer? Can someone on your team create a preliminary budget that you can revise and finalize instead of you doing the whole thing? Can a temporary employee help to update your database for coming year?
- Excuse yourself from social events that will not be enjoyable for you to attend. This is the time to practice personal energy management and self-care. If going to an event will zap your energy instead of giving you energy, then graciously withdraw. Conversely, if taking a break from work to be with friends or colleagues will refresh you, then by all means do so. It will allow you to return to work with renewed focus and productivity.
- Give your employees a choice. Many love the annual company party, others would rather be spending that time with family or doing other activities. Instead of making those who do not attend feel like they are being unsociable or disloyal, offer to make a contribution to a local charity on their behalf for the value of what their attendance at the event would have cost the company. That way, people will feel that they were able to take care of themselves without sacrificing work relationships and the good will of the season.
- Think of time or energy-saving alternatives, even if it alters some of the ways you have traditionally done things. If you just can't get your holiday cards out on time, for instance, send New Year's cards instead. Consider other aspects of the holidays that you can adjust, adapt, simplify or eliminate all together.

(Adapted from the author's column, previously published in the Syracuse Newspapers)