



Business - Satisfying Your Personal and Professional Needs - Travel For Business and Pleasure

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Many professionals enjoy travel but feel that they cannot take a holiday because there is no one to take care of business while they are away. This is a dangerous fallacy that can rob you of your health and well-being.

You are not invincible! You need to look after yourself! Being away from the office is something that is done by most healthy individuals. Everyone deserves time off.

You will need to do some planning in order to serve your needs and the needs of your clients:

1. **Schedule time off well in advance and mark the days on your calendar** - You schedule time with your clients and you need to schedule time for your own needs. These days are sacred and should NOT be changed. It is easier to avoid temptation to cancel time off if you have tickets or plans to be out of town.
2. **Inform your clients of their options while you are away** - Most people will not be in crisis or need to access other services while you are gone. They respect the fact that you will not be there and, in fact, are used to booking appointments with professionals based on what is available for them.
3. **Limit your time away** - I tend to book time off in seven day (or less) increments. Also, I often go away in the middle of a week and return in the middle of the next week. That way it doesn't seem to be so long for clients as it is just two or three days out of two weeks.
4. **Ensure that your clients have appointments booked before you leave** - They will feel more content, knowing that they have a time set up and reduce your voice mail messages.
5. **Change your voice mail message and/or check it each day that you are away** - If you return calls during your time off, many people will not even know you are away. This will help you to triage for crisis and deal with only the things that really require your time. Also, your workload will be reduced for the day you return to the office.
6. **Combine business and pleasure** - Add a couple of days to a workshop or convention so that you can enjoy the city where this is being held. Search for opportunities to meet individuals or visit organizations that have inspired you or might have lessons for you to learn. When you combine business and pleasure, you can also take advantage of tax deductions for the business activities.
7. **Bring back items or stories that will enhance your practice** - Many of trips have provided wonderful experiences which I have been able to use to help clients. My book, for example is about ten lessons that I learned in ten different cities. If you travel with a mindset that is open to new ideas, you will be rewarded!

You can "get away from it all" but it will require planning so that your needs and the needs of your clients can be met while you are away. Begin now. Take out your calendar and plan an adventure! You'll be glad you did.