



Unused PTO? Big Mistake!

Call it what you will...paid time off (PTO), leave, vacation. The terminology is secondary to the intent.

Most employers offer their staff time off from work.

Whether that statement prompted a huge cheer from you or a guttural groan, as we enter the back half of the year, let me share five reasons why taking that time matters.

Recoup -- Did you know that, on average, U.S. workers use only about half of the vacation time offered to them each year? Yes, more than a third of us leave *at least* 50% of our days on the table annually. (And, I won't even touch the roughly 9% who take no time at all.) According to 2019 data from Glassdoor, the U.S. Travel Association, and Priceline, that's exactly where we find ourselves -- and that was even before fully entering into COVID-world. Put this into economic perspective. It means that every year workers say "no, thank you" to the equivalent of about \$65.5 million. (Let that soak in for a minute.) That's a lot of money we're forfeiting. So, taking time off is one way to recoup a budgeted employment benefit.

Recharge -- Unlike the Energizer Bunny, none of us is able to keep going and going. No, we're human! And, we need an occasional break...to rest and recharge. PTO offers just that (that is, when you're not calling or emailing or texting the office at every available moment, despite being away). It's time to get refreshed for what lies ahead.

Reconnect -- Because of COVID, many of us have been at home with others far more than in the

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Quotes

"As you grow older, you learn a few things. One of them is to actually take the time you've allotted for vacation."

~John Battelle

"If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second."

~Edward Bellamy

"I took some time out for life."

~James L. Brooks

"At the end of your life, you will never regret not having passed one more test, not winning one more verdict or not closing one more deal. You will regret time not spent with a husband, a friend, a child, or a parent."

~Barbara Bush

"We need time to defuse, to contemplate. Just as

past. Yet, in juggling home-based or hybrid work, school, church, and countless other activities, that time together still often has been harried. Time off, however, provides an opportunity for slowing down and for reconnecting with loved ones and friends (especially now that there's some loosening of COVID restrictions). It gives us a chance to get to know one another, to enjoy one another, and to build into one another in meaningful ways that often are unavailable when functioning according to our typical schedules.

Recreate -- When's the last time you had some fun, pursued your favorite hobby, or got some exercise...without watching the clock? Time off provides those opportunities. It allows for leisurely recreation activities to fill in gap areas that may be ignored, or given short shrift, in the normal hustle and bustle of life.

Refocus -- While it should not be a principal purpose of your pause, PTO also may offer a chance to gain fresh perspective. It can provide just enough separation from the daily grind to aid in refocusing and in lending clearer thinking about tough workplace challenges and even potential opportunities. It's often a good time to regroup and set direction without the usual workday pressures. (And, if you could benefit from some refocusing support, don't hesitate to [contact us](#), at **Executive Advantage**. We're available to help you assess, reframe, and strategize about next steps so that you can return to work with a new, and targeted, perspective.)

So, no matter your reasoning, here's hoping you'll commit to adding some lovely purple-shaded days to your Outlook calendar really soon...because it really is time that you block time for YOU!

All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
Executive Advantage, LLC

*in sleep our brains
relax and give us
dreams, so...we need
to disconnect,
reconnect, and look
around us."*

~Laurie Colwin

*"The ant is knowing
and wise, but he
doesn't know enough
to take a vacation."*

~Clarence Day

*"The purpose of a
vacation is to have the
time to rest."*

~Thich Nhat Hanh

*"Rest when you're
weary. Refresh and
renew yourself, your
body, your mind, your
spirit. Then get back
to work."*

~Ralph Marston

*"I go to the ocean to
calm down, to
reconnect with the
Creator, to just be
happy."*

~Nnedi Okorafor

*"Take rest; a field that
has rested gives a
beautiful crop."*

~Ovid

*"People who cannot
find time for recreation
are obliged sooner or
later to find time for
illness."*

~John Wanamaker

About Executive Advantage

At **Executive Advantage**, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

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