

Lazy summer days are time to recharge

By Cindy Krischer Goodman, Miami Herald

As the temperature rises and the day lengthens, summer slowdown creeps into almost every workplace. But this summer, a growing number of professionals are strategically using the downtime to rebalance.

Experts estimate that when vacation mindset seeps into offices during summer, productivity slips by as much as 20 percent. Rather than give in, some professionals are tackling to-do lists, researching new projects and brainstorming fresh ideas – activities that get ignored during busier times.

Duree Ross looks at the sluggish season as a time to rethink processes at work and home. After she sent her two children to sleep-away camp last week, she took a deep breath and began strategizing how she will break out time from her daily life – chauffeuring kids, spending time with her her husband – to build her Fort Lauderdale public relations/events firm.

“My husband and I are going to Colorado and we are going to spend time together like before we had kids. We haven’t had that in 11 years,” she said. When she returns, Ross will focus her attention on aspects of her business that usually get ignored during busier times, such as updating her bio and website, and retooling marketing materials. “This is an opportunity to refresh in all aspects of my life.”

Some professionals are using summer months to sharpen skills. Barrett Wolf, director of office leasing at Turnberry Associates in Aventura, has hired a business coach and enrolled in Florida International University’s Summer of Well-being course to work on his mental strength – activities he can’t fit in during the rest of the year. “Normally, I’m 24/7.

I'm using the slower months of summer to create a vision in my head for what I want for fall," he said.

A former professional tennis player, Wolf now leases office buildings, restaurant space and aviation hangars. He is meeting twice a week with his performance coach to mentally prepare for stressful situations ahead, such as bringing a complicated negotiation to a positive conclusion. "With my new skills, I will be able to attack every scenario head on."

Miami business coach Marlene Green says summer is for big-picture thinking about moving forward in your career and personal life. It's a natural fit, she finds. "The heat alone makes you slow down and take inventory."

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