



## Career and Productivity Benefits

*“Making yourself available 24/7 does not create peak performance; recreating the boundaries that technology has eroded does.”*

*--Edward Hallowell, MD. Harvard Medical School*

Spending time away from the office – especially traveling – also provides numerous benefits for workers and their employers.

- Three out of four executives believe that vacations are necessary for them to prevent burnout (78%) or that vacations improve their personal job performance (75%). Nearly as many – two out of three – believe that vacations improve their creativity (68%).<sup>20</sup>
  - Indeed, an inability to take a break can lead to stress, burnout, and a greater likelihood of feeling betrayed and angry when things do not go well at work. Anxiety of top executives often translates into low morale and slumping productivity throughout the ranks.<sup>24</sup>
- Burnout decreases significantly during two-week vacations, according to researchers at Tel Aviv University.<sup>3</sup>
- Travelers experience a 25% increase in performance on vigilance tests after returning from vacation – travelers 45 or older show a 50% increase in performance.<sup>26</sup>
- There is also a positive relationship between vacations and intellectual functioning among women from 65 to 92 years old, according to a study by the South Coast Institute for Applied Gerontology.<sup>3</sup>
- Overwork costs employers about \$150 billion a year in stress-related absences.<sup>25</sup>
  - And the loss doesn't stop there: workers get no more done when they work 50-hour work weeks than when they work 40-hour work weeks.<sup>25</sup>
  - In fact, Europe, which ensures that workers get ample vacation time, had higher productivity growth than the United States in most years between 1981 and 2000.<sup>25</sup>

- There's a good chance the benefits of vacation will go straight to the bottom line. According to a study by American Express, more than a third of small-business owners say their best ideas – the ones that lead to business growth – come not at work but during their downtime.<sup>12</sup>
- Rather than detracting from work, vacationing and a having fulfilling life outside of work enhance business accomplishments, and several organizations – both within and outside the travel community – are taking note:<sup>12</sup>
  - PricewaterhouseCoopers tracks employees who have not taken enough vacation, sending reminders to them and their supervisors that they should do so.<sup>21</sup>
  - The Sheraton Hotel in Chicago is offering a “BlackBerry Check-In Program,” which allows guests to lock up their PDAs with the belief that doing so allows travelers to better focus on their business partners or families while they're traveling. Guests who lock away their PDA for 48 hours can receive a complimentary stay, room upgrades, dinner at the hotel's restaurant, and a map to encourage them to see and enjoy Chicago with their friends and families – rather than read emails on their devices.<sup>21</sup>
  - A Cincinnati-based maintenance-services firm found that after a liberal vacation policy went into effect, employee turnover dropped and employee morale and productivity rose.<sup>25</sup>
  - During an extended vacation, steel workers reported more interactions and activities with their spouses and children. And one out of four of these workers felt that their work efficiency increased and that their jobs were more interesting after a vacation.<sup>3</sup>