

8 WAYS TO AVOID BURNOUT IN YOUR SMALL BUSINESS

Most small business owners think of their businesses as their babies, especially when they love what they do. That's why it can be so challenging to get away from work, even for a little while. As hard as it is though we all need to walk away sometimes in order to stay at the top of our game.

1. STOP AND GET ORGANISED

If you don't have control of the day-to-day business administration activities, your files, and other data, it can be a major source of stress. When you're working hard and focused on your work, disorganisation is nothing more than a distraction. Taking time to get your files, computer, desk, and processes organised can save you from stress-induced burnout.

2. PRIORITISE FIRST

We all have a million things we need to get done and it can be easy to get fixated on the number of things that need to get done and become overwhelmed. The good news is that you don't need to do everything at the same time. Take your list (or whatever you use to keep track of your tasks), and break it up into more manageable segments, based on priority. Then focus on just the top 1-3 priorities at a time.

3. SCHEDULE DOWN TIME

If you have a packed schedule, there's no chance you will be able to take a break or do anything non-work related without shuffling your time and causing more stress. One way to ensure you take time out is by scheduling in the time as if it were another meeting (30 minutes a day is a great start) and make it a for a specific activity, like a walk. In time, this will become second nature to you and will be one of the most valuable slots of time during your day. And don't forget to schedule a vacation while you're at it!

4. KNOW YOUR STRESSORS

There are probably certain things that you don't love about your job, so you probably procrastinate and put them off as long as you can. Then when you finally tackle them, they take longer and are much more painful than they need to be. Be able to identify what these stressors are, so you can create a plan for getting them done and off your list as quickly as possible.

5. DELEGATE

You know the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child?" The same could be said about a successful business. Acknowledge your weaknesses, line up support in those areas, and learn how to delegate effectively so you can maximise the use of your time and the impact of your skills.

6. JUST SAY NO

It's always tough to turn down work, but there may not be a quicker way to burn out than taking on work you really don't want to do. Create an ideal client and an ideal project and measure all incoming work against that list before taking it on.

7. SET WORK HOURS

Some of us work better when we have a set schedule. If this is the case for you, try creating specific work hours. It can be 9.00 - 5.00, 5.00 - 9.00, or whatever works for you, but once you set standard hours, stick to them. And that means when the day is done, you are done...e-mail included!

8. PEEK AT YOUR SUCCESSES

From time-to-time, it's a good idea to revisit where you were before getting started on your own. What were your first small business goals? What kept you going? Then celebrate your accomplishments and acknowledge how far you have come.

Avoiding burnout is really about protecting your time, focusing on your priorities and taking breaks so you can come back refreshed. It takes a conscious effort, but once you get the hang of it you will reduce stress and reach a whole new level of productivity.