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**Paul McDonald** • Jul. 17, 2018



Love going on vacation but worried about taking time off? You're not alone. The majority of workers in a [recent Accountemps survey](#) said they typically check in with the office at least once or twice a week during their vacation.

Many public accountants find it difficult to completely disconnect. No doubt, it has something to do with managing inboxes, keeping clients happy and making sure projects are on track. But with modern professionals' ties to technology, especially in firms with a high-pressure [corporate culture](#), it's more important than ever to give overloaded brains a break. Here's why this should matter to you if you're a manager:

- **Productivity:** Stressed-out workers find it hard to focus. Setting the regular routine

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the bigger picture. When employees take a vacation, they have the opportunity to reflect on their career paths and even perhaps crystallize ideas about professional goals.

### Putting it into practice

While the advantages of time off are clear, making vacations a reality can be a whole different ball game. As a manager, you have a part to play in the well-being of your team. And you need to get away, too.

If your firm's leaders seldom take a long vacation, what sort of message does that send to staff? Employees may get the feeling that management frowns on getting away and those who do will be relegated to the slow track. Be a role model when it comes to using vacation days, and urge your staff to use their paid time off rather than saving it for the future.

Here are additional tips both you and your team can benefit from:

1. **Plan ahead.** With a bit of preparation, taking a break needn't result in work piling up while you're away. Tell staff and clients your out-of-office dates, and let them know who to contact in your absence. Make a list of the tasks that need to be handled and issues that might arise. Delegate responsibilities to your team, and make sure everyone has the resources and permissions they need. When you have backups and contingencies in place, you'll be able to more fully unplug and relax.
2. **Set boundaries. Some people feel uncomfortable never checking in with the office during their time off. If you're one of those, it's OK. But be sure to put boundaries in place.** Designate specific times when you'll be working, and avoid making calls or checking email outside those hours. Define what you consider to be emergencies, and encourage your staff to contact you only for those few situations. Everything else can wait until your return.

**An additional thought:** Interruptions when you take calls during your time off

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## Rethinking vacations

It can be difficult to go from full-time work to full-time relaxation. That's why many accounting professionals insist on checking in with the office even when they're off the clock. Your employees need to find the balance that's right for them, and so do you. But whatever you do, use those hard-earned vacation days and unplug as much as possible — and encourage your staff to follow your example.

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*Paul McDonald is senior executive director at [Robert Half](#), the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm. He writes and speaks frequently on hiring, workplace and career-management topics. Over the course of more than 30 years in the recruiting field, McDonald has advised thousands of company leaders and job seekers on how to hire and get hired.*

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