

# Healthy Individuals Equals Successful Businesses



## Human Resource Update

*Finding the balance between work and family begins with three Rs: recognize, reflect, and respond. To move toward a balance, you must:*

- recognize *the need to establish a healthy balance between work and family*
- reflect *and plan to create alternatives for making it happen*
- respond *and act to make it a reality.*

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**H**ave you come to the end of a long day and still felt guilty about not working harder and longer? Have you felt guilty about not spending more time with your family and friends but still kept working? Have you worked long hours but wondered whether you were making any progress?

If any or all of these are common in your life, ask yourself if you feel that your life is in balance. Many managers working with turf – golf course superintendent, sod producer, landscaper — believe their work is a seven-day-a-week job. The health of the turf is critical to business productivity, but so is your health and that of your family. Research shows that those of us whose lives are in balance are healthier, and healthy individuals are more productive in their businesses. Time for regeneration (refueling your energy level) is important to your health. Vacations are a vital way to refuel, reduce stress, and energize family unity.

Maybe you've heard a story like this: "My dad always bragged that he didn't take a day off in 50 years. But after Mom died, he regretted that they never took that trip she dreamed of. He told me to be sure to get away with my family. I took his advice-and I'm glad I did."

### The Three Rs

Finding the balance between work and family begins with three Rs: recognize, reflect, and respond. To move toward a balance, you must:

- **recognize** the need to establish a healthy balance between work and family
- **reflect** and plan to create alternatives for making it happen
- **respond** and act to make it a reality.

### Recognize the Need

Different individuals find balance in different ways. What one does to regenerate energy levels and reduce work stress differs for each person. It may mean developing a hobby, getting more exercise, involving yourself in school activities of your children, finding time alone as a couple, socializing with family or friends, or taking a vacation.

In times of rapid change, as managers are currently experiencing, an unconscious voice often kicks in to say that there just isn't time for these activities. There is an unstated belief that if only one works harder, then problems will go away and things will get better.

But it doesn't work that way. Not only do the problems not get better, the stress resulting from the long hours and unsolved problems starts to

pile up. That pileup often comes not just from the business but from the family as well, because there is little to no time remaining for the family.

In order to focus, this article will concentrate on the need for vacations. You probably can think of a hundred reasons why you shouldn't take a vacation. Here are some reasons you should:

- to rediscover your spouse and children
- to gain a clearer perspective on the business
- to create memories with your family that last a lifetime
- to catch up on lost sleep
- to develop confidence that this can be done again
- to reduce stress by focusing your energies on something else
- to discover how other people live

Reducing the stress of everyday business life can reduce the potential for accidents, improve communication with family members and employees, increase creative problem solving, and can improve your long-term health.

### Reflect and Plan

Where should you go on vacation? When should you go? Who should go? Just as a business plan is needed to make your business a success, vacations will only become reality if concrete planning goes into it. Scientists have found that there are big differences between the genders and the generations with regard to time away from the business, so communication ahead of time is crucial.

Think ahead about what might need to happen to manage the turf work differently.

- Will you need to hire someone? If so, do a trial run ahead of time so you can train, observe, and supervise. We often expect those we hire to meet our standards without giving them proper explanations and directions about what and how we want things done.
- Is it possible with advanced communication and concrete planning to trade with neighboring families or with other members of the business?
- Vacations are sometimes a tool to give greater responsibilities to employees who have earned additional responsibility on a short-term basis.
- Consult with others in the industry about different ways to manage the business workload to create time for a vacation.

### Respond and Act

Often part of the stress release of vacations is in the excitement and process of planning what to do. Remember, vacations don't always have to cost lots, particularly if planning goes into it or they are for a shorter amount of time.

Plan for contingencies if something goes wrong while you are gone. But, remember that no matter how much you plan, something unforeseen may occur. When you return, assess with the team you left behind what other problem-solving alternatives might be used next time you are gone.

A change in behavior doesn't occur without first being open to the possibility, talking about it, and then believing it will happen. There is a correlation between healthy individuals and successful businesses. Research indicates that individuals who take time away from work are better family members and better business people.

A 50-year-old golf course superintendent's wife talked about how she viewed the barriers to taking a vacation this way:

"Every time we've taken a vacation, my husband feels better physically and mentally when we return. He's rested, and upbeat. What

stops him from planning vacations isn't money or people to fill in-because he has those, at least for the moment. It's this notion that he is indispensable, and no one else can do things quite as well when he's gone. Once we get beyond that, it's no problem!"

Information and communication along with problem solving through shared decision making (among business members, with employees, and with suppliers' personnel) are critical factors for viable turf operations today. To do this well you need energy-physical, mental, and emotional). Taking vacations creates a larger pool of energy from which to build a successful business or manage a successful golf course.

Recognize that vacations are important for maintaining your overall health and to the successful operation of your business. Reflect and plan now to create alternatives that allow that to happen. But, most of all, respond and act to make it become a reality in the near future.

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### Don't Forget the Mini-Breaks!

*Vacations are important* for maintaining balance between work and other activities. Also important is developing habits that relieve the stress of work and create quality time away from work and with your family and friends. Research shows that *how* you spend time with your family is at least as important as *how much* time you spend. Try some of the following:

- Schedule time during the day when all family members are together. Talk about the day. Ask each person to share one or two positives from their day-a new friend, an accomplishment, something learned, an exciting experience with an old friend.
- Go for a walk. Don't look for weeds in the turf or problems with the fairways. Listen to a bird sing, watch a butterfly flit by, marvel at a beautiful flower or the quiet of the countryside.
- Read something you enjoy. You need not spend a long time. A chapter or a few pages a day really adds up. A short period of reading or reflection is very important to many very successful people.