

SelfInformed

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**Taking Time
Off During
the Holidays**



Self-Employed Self-Care

Taking Time Off During the Holidays

As magical as the holiday season seems, for many entrepreneurs and small business owners, the end of the year can be full of stress. From dealing with a skeleton-crew staff, slowed communication, and stretched end-of-year budgets, it can be challenging to find time to enjoy the spirit of cheer that the holidays should bring. By navigating this busy and bustling season with self-care in mind, you will learn how to equip both your business and your own wellbeing for success.

Take Care of Business

The holiday-induced anxiety that many self-employed individuals experience is understandable. The fear arises that if you take any time off, clients and customers will take their business elsewhere. For businesses in the retail industry, or those whose products and services are geared towards the holiday season, it may not be as feasible to take a traditional Christmas vacation. This does not mean that these particular business owners are doomed to a vacation-less life. A better solution? Plan a break during the spring or summer to enjoy time relaxing with friends and family. Other business owners may not be impacted by holiday season demand, but may still be hesitant in deciding how and when to take time off. In any scenario, planning and preparation are key to navigating the holidays without jeopardizing your business's growth.

Systems, Secret Weapon of the Super Organized

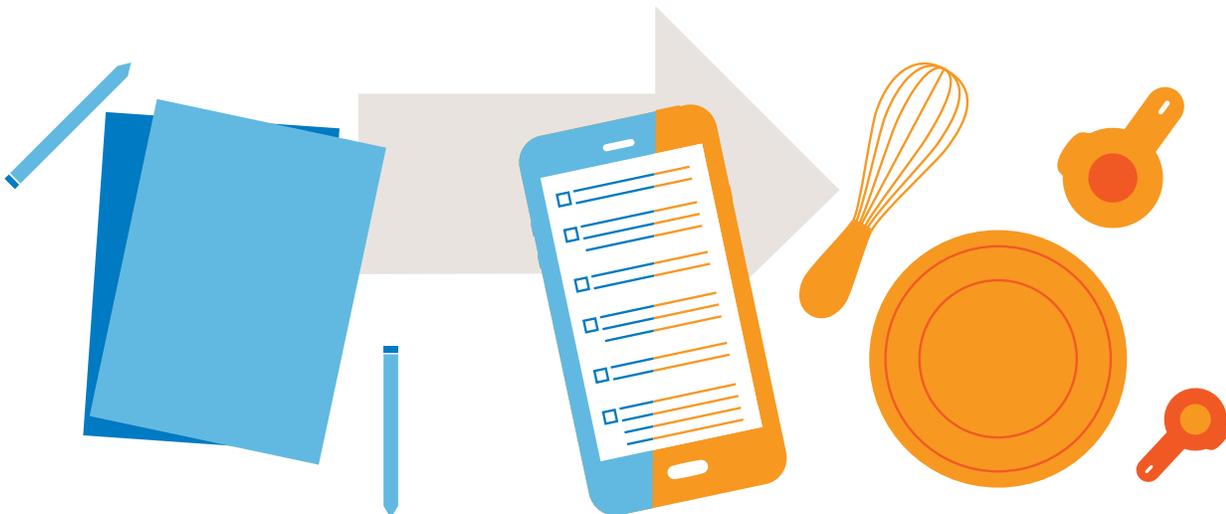
Business systems are tried and true processes that allow your business to function without your direct involvement. These should be documented clearly so that you, your staff, and any other stakeholders can reference them when needed. Systems can be especially valuable during holidays, when professional and personal schedules are at capacity. Not sure where to start? Try this — next time you complete a key task for your business, take notes about each step involved. After the task is complete, review your notes. Notice what worked well, and what could have been better. Could any steps have gone in a different order? Once you are satisfied with

Tip:

NASE Membership offers a wide variety of business tools to help craft your systems. Find out more [here](#).¹

the workflow, save it for future reference. Remember to follow it next time you complete the task!

Effective communication can mean the difference between a positive and negative experience between a company and its customers. As a small business owner, you have a greater opportunity to connect with your customers and allow them to see the human behind the service or product. Implement great communication strategies into your business systems — not just around the holidays, but all year round. This will build client confidence in your ability to meet their needs, no matter the season. Once you decide on what days you will take time away, alert your clients that you will be temporarily unavailable. Let them know when the office will reopen, when emails will receive a response, and when you will be available for calls or meetings. Include a reminder about upcoming holiday availability in your email signature, on your website, and in any other communication forums. Set automatic email replies and change your phone's voicemail to reflect your holiday availability. Advanced notice also goes a long way. If clients are aware that they have two weeks to connect with you before a break, it could become an effective sales strategy to wrap up end of year business.





“Unplug” — this term has become a popular buzzword among health and wellness coaches. And for good reason — the often irresistible obsession with checking every email, text, and notification can become very unhealthy, very quickly. For most business owners however, fully unplugging is just not feasible.

The explosive growth of technology has had its impact on business industries. We are now more connected than ever. The idea of “cold-turkey” unplugging from our work while on vacation often seems like the more stressful alternative.

It helps to come up with a game plan, and even a schedule, for how and when to check on your business. For example, you could decide to respond to or flag emails for only 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the evening. You could schedule social media posts in advance and delete all social media apps from your phone. Find the balance that works best for you and your business. Think of it as staying connected... but at a low-voltage setting.

Goal-Setting for Greatness

The holidays present an excellent opportunity to give your business goals a bit of TLC. The schedules of entrepreneurs and micro-business owners can quickly become inundated with marketing, sales, accounting, and other everyday operations. Consider taking a break during the holiday season to reflect on your business’s accomplishments from the

Tip:

Wish your clients a happy holiday season, and let them know you look forward to connecting with them soon!

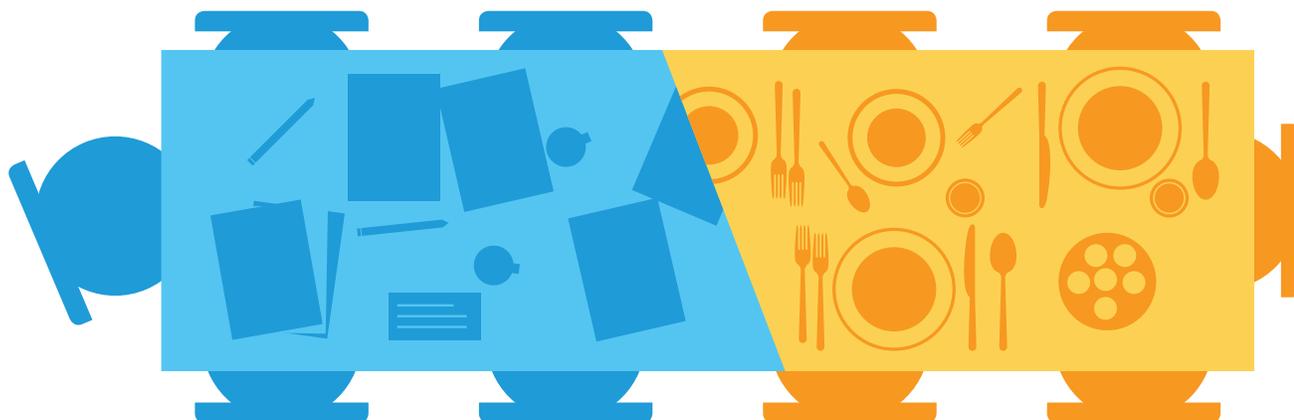
previous year, and set goals for the year to come. Look at your website from the perspective of a potential customer, outline sales goals, and map out new marketing strategies. See if you can think of creative ways to refresh your brand. Take notes and implement them into your business plan. A holiday break is the perfect time to renew your vision.

Helping Hands

One guaranteed way to ensure your business stays active during a break is to employ helping hands. Seasonal employees provide a great way to manage the hectic seasons your business tends to experience. If you choose to employ seasonal employees, provide them with the tools they need to be successful. Establish a clear holiday schedule so everyone understands the expectations. It is also helpful to provide a management guide that outlines the primary project objectives, top client concerns, and how to handle a few worst case scenarios. Just make sure to stay in compliance

Read

Discover the [7-step formula for goal setting](#).²



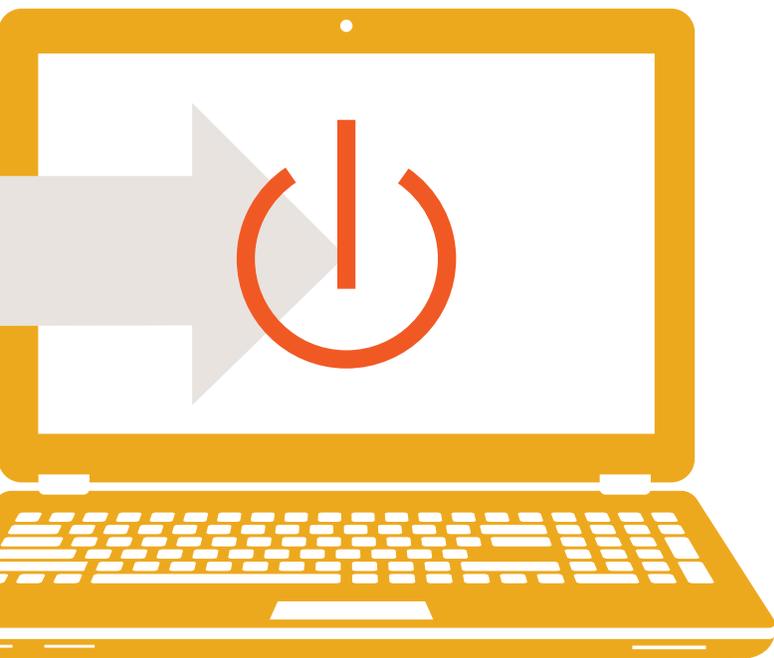
Read

Learn more about automation and other [key technology trends to watch for in 2018](#).⁴

with [labor laws and regulations](#).³ For those with a family business, the involved family members can coordinate with each other to ensure that someone always has an eye on operations, and that someone is always available to take any important calls.

Web-based “helping hands” are also widely available, and social media automation is definitely one of the most powerful of these tools. Programs like Hootsuite, HubSpot, and others allow you to create scheduled posts across major social media platforms, and on multiple accounts. Some programs even offer a daily roundup email to report post engagement trends.

As a small business owner, creativity and organization are critical skills for making things happen. The entrepreneurial endeavor certainly requires you to work “hard”...but when you need time away to decompress and regroup, try to think of ways to work “smart” instead.



Take Care of You

A business will thrive when its leader is at their best. Taking the time to revel in the good cheer of the holiday season doesn't have to be viewed as slack time. Considering the proven benefit of reduced stress to a person's overall wellbeing, it's actually quite a productive use of time.

Although it may be challenging for ambitious business-minded individuals to admit, we all need a break from time to time. If you provide consistent high-quality service, chances are your clients and customers will agree that a break is well-deserved. The beauty of owning your own business is that you aren't required to operate like a faceless large corporation. Embrace the opportunities to reveal the human face behind the business. Whether you are starting or building your business, growth is important — but it should not outweigh your reasons for going into business in the first place. Always remember your “why”.

Read

Find out how to [practice self-care](#) as a business owner.⁵

You want to grow your business and your bottom line. We want to help you. Visit www.nase.org for more information and resources about self-employment success.

References

- 1 National Association for the Self-Employed (2018), Member Benefits. Retrieved from <http://www.nase.org/become-a-member/member-benefits>.
- 2 Tracy, Brian (August 23, 2017). The 7-Step Formula for Goal Setting. Retrieved from <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/297205>.
- 3 Beasley, Caron (September 6, 2012). 5 Things to Know Now about Hiring Temporary or Seasonal Workers. Retrieved from <https://www.sba.gov/blogs/5-things-know-now-about-hiring-temporary-or-seasonal-workers>.
- 4 Borth, Kelly (January 29, 2018). Key technology trends to watch for in 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.sbnonline.com/article/key-technology-trends-watch-2018/>.
- 5 Forman, Tami (December 13, 2017). Self-Care Is Not An Indulgence. It's A Discipline. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tamiforman/2017/12/13/self-care-is-not-an-indulgence-its-a-discipline/#5eeacb3fee0c>.

Self-Employed and the Holidays

Being Self-Employed in the holidays can be very hard if you don't have a plan. Don't let Christmas be an expense you didn't prepare for. Create a budget that includes the holidays as a line item. A lot of times we have a budget for Monthly expenses and when an unforeseen cost comes we are not prepared and it can become devastating. Here some tips to help you prepare:

Take A Look At What You Spent on Christmas Last Year

Start by plugging in your normal monthly expenses like gas, utilities, insurance etc. Then, enter your more flexible spending budget groups, like business dinners, advertising and charitable donations. What's left? Will that be enough for Christmas? If not, you may have to adjust some of that flexible spending to make it work.

If you typically spend \$500 on business dinners in a month, why not make it a business breakfast or lunch and stash an extra \$300 toward Christmas savings? Or if your flexible money is on the higher side, why not reduce it in the fall or hold off (temporarily) and put the extra money into your Christmas fund? Smart budgeting now can free up more money for what you want later!

Separate Your Christmas Budget Into Categories

Don't just budget for gifts to your clients, family or friends. Remember you need to budget for all things Christmas: decorations, wrapping paper, travel, festive meals, charitable donations, and anything else you're planning to do over the holidays for your family or business.



Once you've figured out how much you can spend on Christmas, do some simple math. Take your number and think over your seasonal expenses. Make a goal amount and stick to it! You'll be amazed at how quickly you can pile up a stash of cash when you just make a point to save.

Now that you have your Christmas budget all set, you know how much you'll need to add to your Christmas fund. As long as you plan where your money will go before you spend it, there's no right or wrong way to split up your Christmas budget.

Next Year Plan Ahead With a Christmas Fund

Once you've determined the total you want to spend on Christmas, determine when you want to start saving and divide it by the number of weeks left until Christmas.

2018 Annual Meeting

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we would like to invite you to the 2018 Annual Meeting of the National Association for the Self-Employed. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 5, 2018, at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill hotel located at 400 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington D.C. at 5 PM.

No registration is required, NASE members are encouraged to attend and meet with the NASE staff and Board of Directors.

Wednesday, December 5, 2018 | 5:00 PM

Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill
400 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington D.C.

New!



Member Benefits

Visit NASE.org to learn more about the following benefits!



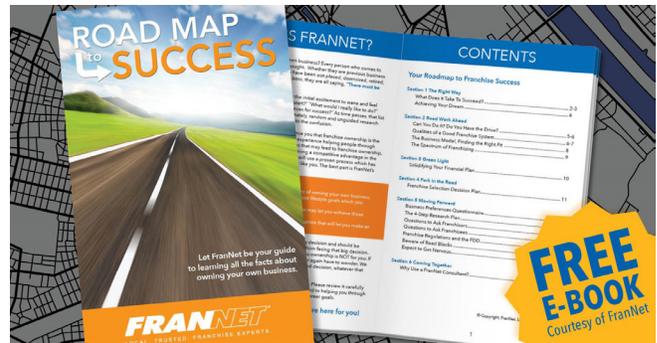
LOCAL. TRUSTED. FRANCHISE EXPERTS.

As a recognized leader in franchise consulting, FranNet has partnered with the National Association for the Self-Employed to provide education and training. FranNet has led the industry by developing a **Client Bill of Rights** that documents the standards we set for our clients.

Our **Broker Disclosure Document** makes our working relationship transparent.

So, you'll know what to expect from the very beginning. And since our services are free to you, you can be assured that we'll only introduce you to the franchisors that make the most sense for you. We do most of the work so you don't have to.

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REQUEST A HEALTH INSURANCE QUOTE

The 2019 Open Enrollment Period runs from **November 1, 2018**, to **December 15, 2018**. Plans sold during Open Enrollment start January 1, 2019.

Request a Health Insurance Quote Today!

The ACA penalty for being uninsured still applies in 2018. There won't be a penalty for people who are uninsured in 2019 and beyond, but penalties for people who are uninsured in 2018 will be assessed on tax returns filed in 2019.

Source: <https://www.healthinsurance.org/obamacare/obamacare-penalty-calculator/>

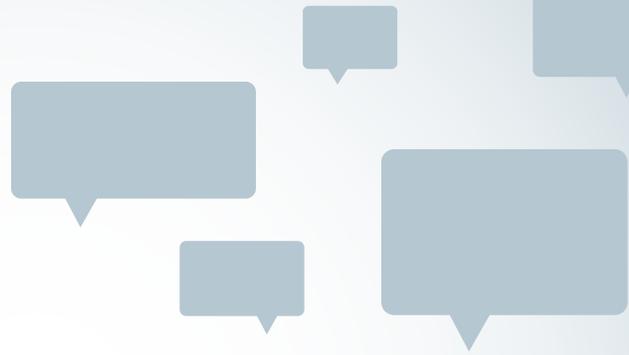
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Let's Get Social!



Connect with NASE on our social platforms

As an NASE member, you are the driving force for what we do. Promoting self-employment and providing as many self-employed people as possible with our wide variety of benefits is something we do every day. But is it something you do? A great way for you to show your support for the NASE is to Like, Join and Follow us on our social media channels to help spread awareness. If you haven't taken the time already, we invite you to do so now with the links to our social media below:



Facebook



Twitter



NASE Minute



LinkedIn



Instagram



Pinterest



Google Plus



NASE Blog

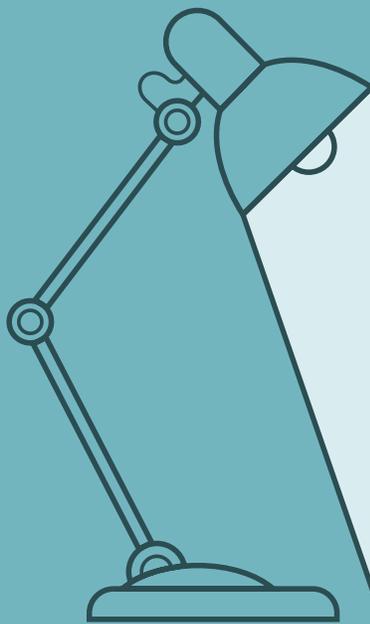


HuffPost



YouTube

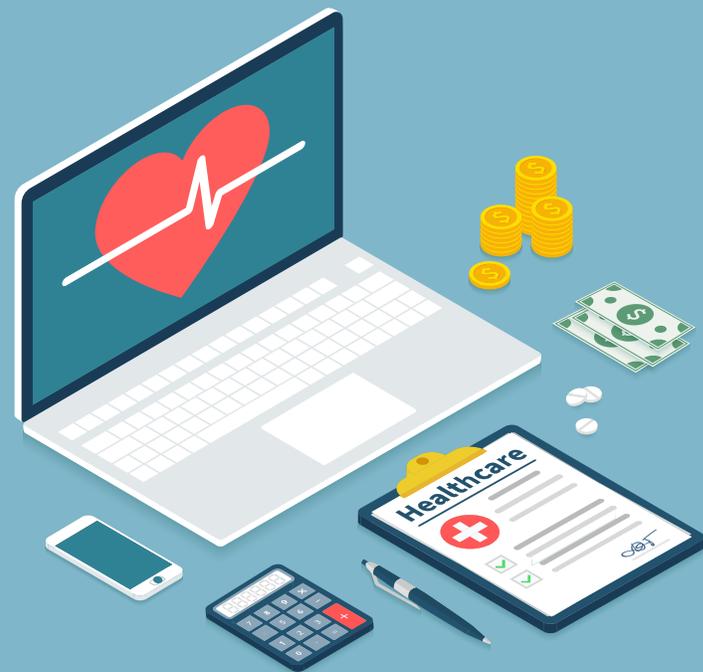
WANT TO BE FEATURED?



We are always looking for NASE Members to feature in our monthly spotlights. If you want free publicity for your business and you are an NASE Member, we can help you promote your business! Simply fill out our "Get Publicity!" form here, and you and your business could be featured in an NASE publication, like our monthly member e-newsletter, SelfInformed.

Fill out the information in our Publicity form so an NASE representative can reach out to discuss featuring you and your business next!

[Get Publicity](#)



Administration Acts on Health Reimbursement Arrangements

On October 12, 2017, President Trump issued Executive order 13813, *"Promoting Healthcare Choice and Competition Across the United States,"* to direct the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Treasury to develop rules to expand association health plans (AHPs), short-term limited duration insurance, and health reimbursement arrangements (HRAs). This proposed rule pertains to HRAs only.

Achieving a significant legislative goal of the National Association for the Self-Employed.

The proposed rule sets parameters for employers to offer employees: 1) an HRA for the purchase of individual health coverage in lieu of a traditional group plan; and separately, 2) an HRA for excepted benefits coverage.

Under the proposed rule, an employer is permitted to offer a class of employees an HRA for the purchase of individual health coverage. However, the employer is not permitted to offer both the option of a traditional group health plan or an HRA for the purchase of individual health coverage to the same class of employees.

The proposed rule defines these eight classes of employees that employer can offer an HRA for the purchase of individual health coverage:

1. Full-time employees
2. Part-time employees
3. Seasonal employees
4. Collective bargaining agreement unit
5. Employees currently in a waiting period
6. Employees under age 25
7. Non-resident aliens with no U.S.-based income (foreign employees who work abroad)
8. Employees whose primary site of employment is in the same rating area

The proposed rule permits an employer to offer employees an HRA for excepted benefits. However, the proposed rule does not enable an employer to offer employees both an HRA for purchase of individual health coverage and an HRA for excepted benefits.

The NASE will submit comments on the Administration's proposal in support of the ability of our members to offer HRAs. ■

Thank you to Horizon Government Affairs for providing resource materials