

# **Taking a Sabbatical:** *How to Reboot Your Court Reporting Agency ... and Your Life*

# Taking a Sabbatical:

## *How To Reboot Your Court Reporting Agency and Your Life*



### **A CRC National Whitepaper**

Court reporting has extremely high standards of performance and is demanding mentally as well as physically. According to the [Princeton Review](#), 25-percent of those who leave the profession during their first two years cite stress as the major factor in their decision. Court reporters work hard and need to take time off, but sometimes they just don't know how to go about managing it.

Whether you own an agency, a small firm, or work as an independent contractor, taking time off to accomplish personal or professional goals may seem counterintuitive. To counter what many professionals describe as a “cycle of burnout,” many professionals and business owners are taking sabbaticals and enjoying the benefits.

In an interview, [sabbatical coach Clive Prout](#), identifies inertia and fear as the two biggest reasons people find it difficult to plan a sabbatical and then actually take one. Inertia, Prout says, is habit. It's hard to change the things we're used to doing every day; we have a tendency to just keep going. Prout finds people are afraid because they think their time and money will be wasted, or that their business will suffer.



## The Benefits of a Sabbatical for a Business Owner

Sabbaticals, once reserved for academia, are now considered an important part of the benefits package for about a quarter of the 2012 [Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For](#). Many companies are realizing the benefits of time off --either for personal or professional development-- far outweigh the risks and are finding that people return with a fresh outlook and a boost in productivity.

Most people start their own businesses because of the freedom they anticipate will result - the freedom to determine when they work and when they take time off. Once their businesses becomes successful, many feel it can't survive without them. A Staples poll found it was difficult for 37% of business owners to remember when they last had a vacation. American Express recently surveyed business owners and found that half of them worried they'd lose a major client if they took a vacation.

It's no surprise that thinking about a sabbatical seems even less doable to a business owner than a vacation. However, time away allows a clarity to return that reignites the passion they once had for their business. When they return they are more apt to apply new ideas and are ready for new opportunities. Many find they can do a lot more for their business when they're not "in" their business and that delegating responsibilities becomes far easier once they spend time away. A study from [TSNE and CompassPoint](#) found that a sabbatical that's well planned has significant positive effects on an organization as a second tier of leadership assumes more responsibility. Linda Manassee Buell, owner of coaching firm Simplify Life, encourages clients to take time away and suggests small business owners who feel their business can't survive without them need to ask

themselves two questions. First, what is it that they control that they can't let go of and second, whether they've created a culture within their business in which everything must either get channeled through them or originate from them. The process of letting go is healthy; it benefits both the business and the business owner.

## The Process for Taking a Sabbatical

A sabbatical has a purpose, and once you prepare yourself for a sabbatical, you can then prepare your business. Prepare yourself by identifying a clear goal for your sabbatical. It may be to study, spend time with family, do some volunteer work, explore career options, or just to travel. Whatever the goal of your sabbatical is, be honest about it and share it with your clients, employees, family, and friends. Rely on people that are supportive of your endeavor and don't worry too much about those that aren't. Using the word "sabbatical" reinforces a mindset with your employees (and within yourself) that you have a clear purpose for taking time off.

In *Escape 101: Sabbaticals Made Simple*, writer Dan Clements suggests three steps: Choose your departure date, the time you'll be away, and schedule it on all your calendars. Then, share your plan with other people. They can help you with planning and provide you support to follow through with your plans. Then, start an automatic savings plan.

## Financial Planning for a Sabbatical

Money is the first big hurdle for most people, but the cost of taking a really great sabbatical can be far less than regular life because people tend to go places where the cost of living is lower, according to Clements. He also suggests giving access to bank accounts to a trusted friend, getting rid of all unnecessary bills, setting up automatic bill pay for the rest, using Skype or a prepaid calling card to stay in touch, and investing in travel health insurance with World Nomads or Medex. You can also rent out or sublet your residence. "Learn to trust that things will work out. They almost always do, and there's no return on thinking otherwise." says Clements.

If you plan to work in another country, Congress recognized the value of leaving the country for at least a year and made provisions in the US Tax Code to help you do it. Most foreign income can be excluded from your federal income tax if you're away longer than 330 days, over 12 consecutive months.

## How CRC National Can Help

Once you've prepared yourself for your sabbatical, it's time to prepare your business. At CRC National, we'll help you take a sabbatical without putting your business at risk. We understand your concerns and will work with you before you leave, so you'll be confident your clients will be taken care of. We'll make sure your business continues to run effectively, so you can successfully reach your personal or professional goals. We're here to help and have the professionals to take care of your business while you're away.

## Resources

[Career Break Secrets Real Stories](#)

[\*The Benefits of Taking a Sabbatical\*](#) by Jackie Sloane

[\*Going on Sabbatical: More than a Mental Health Break\*](#) by Thursday Bram

[\*Sabbatical Allies and the Herd Mentality\*](#) by Dan Clements

[\*Burned Out? Take a Creative Sabbatical\*](#) by Gina Trapani

[\*Escape 101: The Four Secrets to Taking a Sabbatical or Career Break Without Losing Your Money or Your Mind\*](#) by Dan Clements and Tara Gignac

