

## Transcription - Going On Holidays

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today, we are going to discuss going on holidays when you're in a senior role and this is particularly important because Fulyana is going on holidays tomorrow and I have to convince her that she's in a senior role and I need to know what to do while she's away.

Well, actually, this is a bit different in the sense that we are talking about concentrating on how to manage yourself in that situation, while you are on holidays. It goes without saying, before you go on holidays, you do all the obvious things. You organize hand over to different people, delegations, anything that you can do before you go, which is the normal way of managing and leading a team.

This is what to do when you are not there. I think the most important thing is to start looking at your own behavior and disrupt your behaviour. So, when you're at work you have a routine, you get up in the morning, you do this, this, this. You could be on holidays at home, you could be on holidays away in country, out of country, with your family, on your own and whatever it is, the most important thing is that you disrupt your routine so you are not falling in the same trap. Wherever possible, avoid your mobile phone or use your mobile phone for purely holiday and family and friends reasons rather than work. It goes without saying again, that in a very senior role if there is a super emergency, then yes, they know a number to contact you but it has to be super emergency not because you felt it's important.

The other thing is, I often hear people saying, particularly when I'm doing mentoring or accountability partner, but I'll get my best ideas when I'm away and I like to jot them down then I'm not thinking about work, etc, etc. Well, that's fantastic. And if that's the case, and if you're really not trying to come up with ideas and you get out ideas, then the best thing is to do it the old-fashioned way, write notes. Take a notebook, write notes in and then you can reflect on those and flesh them out when you're back. I actually used it and it does work. The reason it is better is because you're not tempted by logging in, you're not tempted by going on the internet and following up your idea and seeing whether it's got legs or not. So in that sense, by writing it down you captured it, which is important, but you're parking it, so that you can think about it more, digested it, research it, etc, when you come back, so you continue to enjoy your holiday.

Some leaders particularly like to let people know "I'm here if you want, I heard that you did a good job" and they start just doing this cheering squad thing by saying "I would have done so and so and that went really well". I think that's kind of insulting in my book because even though you mean well, what you're really saying to your people is "see, I'm still connected and I still know what's happening". Not only that, it's about this culture you're trying to build work/life balance, people should be left to have a holiday. What you're saying is that when you go on holidays, I can manage without you, we'll manage but when I'm on holidays, you can't. You still need me to be the cheering squad or whatever message you're giving inadvertently. You're giving the wrong message.

It really undermines the hierarchy of the team that you've left behind. I think that there are few things that have to happen before you go on holidays. Firstly, you have to understand that you are going on holidays. You have to prepare your mind for the fact that you are going on holidays. And if you haven't been on holidays for a long time, if this is the first break that you've had in 2, 3, 5, 10 years, in some cases, we know people who do that, then you can't go for 2 weeks because you won't turn off in two weeks. So you really need to have, as Fulyana has said, about disrupting yourself, you really need to understand what that means for you and that you will be uncomfortable because this is not something that you have chosen to do before this time. So it might be that it's forced upon you, it might be that it is something that you feel now is the right time or that it's now or never, that you've really got to get your head around the fact that you are going to leave work behind for a period of time. I would suggest its three-week minimum if you haven't been doing it for a while because it's going to take you five days to recover. And when you know it's time to start thinking about going back to work, there's going to be three or four days where you're already focused on work and the holiday is over. So head space is very important for me before you go away and then when the day comes where you are away, it's switch off and it's not necessarily switch off your thinking but it's switch off your managing, take a step back, take a deep breath, look around you, actually be in the moment. We hear that phrase a lot and it's a bit trite sometimes but an example of that is this morning I was walking here from the train station and for those of you who don't know, we record in the State Library in the city of Sydney, and I come in by train from the country. I walk up through Hyde Park. It is a magnificent spring morning this morning. During this week, yesterday in fact, I had some quite distressing news about a friend of mine and I was reflecting on that as I walked through the park this morning. I came to cross the road of Macquarie Street, outside of the Mint and Hyde Park Barracks and there's a magnificent spring display of flowers there. I knew as I walked past, she would love this. I'm just going to take some photos of it and send them to her,

which I did as I walked along. I thought, I'm in the moment. I know I've got the things that I'm going to be doing today and I've got a whole range of things that are in my head that we are going to talk about today, but I took that time to step away from the pressures of the immediate issues that were at hand and thought about someone else. It's about being kind. It's about being mindful, it's about taking opportunities when they present themselves, whether it's in the workplace or whether it's for your own health and well-being.

When you're away, I think one thing we forget is not worrying, but thinking about who we are going with whether it's family, friends, etc, and making sure everything is going to be all right at work. We forget to be children sometimes, we forget to say, hey, I'm going on holidays and no routine, no rules, you know, in that sense and what I'm going to do, when we eat when we get up, when we go for a swim, when we go for a walk or whatever we do, we're going to have fun and I think that is so important to remember that. It's your job to make sure you personally are going to have fun.

There's another thing that many of us struggle with and it's about how can you be happy? And only you can make you happy. So you choose to be happy on your holidays. Happy to be away from work for a period of time, happy to know that you're going back to work after the holidays are over. The other thing that I would caution you about is living on Facebook while you're on holidays because you think that that's your connection or you unconsciously see that that is your connection to the workplace or your work colleagues or the others that you're not seeing on a regular basis. Then when you have put your images up of where you are, or what you're doing, all of the comments the individual people are saying is that they've been there, or they've done that, or they went there and they did that and then not acknowledging what you're doing. They're talking about about themselves and you think why aren't they appreciating what I'm doing? It's not about you. Facebook is about whoever is writing about what they're doing at the time and the interaction is not about making you feel better. It's not about acknowledging that you're on holidays and it's not about how important you are or how much they're missing you if they don't comment, if they don't like what you doing. It doesn't matter. So, don't rely on Facebook for feedback while you're on holidays.

While we're on the Facebook thing, I'll share this with you. One of the people I'm working with, did everything right, used Facebook because that was his, you know, holiday thing, nothing to do with work, but he did put a comment that said, this is so wonderful, I'm having such a good time and I really haven't thought about work and I don't even feel like coming back. It was his intention was to say

disconnecting is good, I recommended it, I encourage it, but I don't think it might have been received by all that way. So, again, leave Facebook for the family, I think, and friends and keep work out of it.

Well we have cautioned you about that before, because the other issue is, that perhaps in this period of time, it's the time for you to reflect on work and what you're doing and you might decide that it's time for a change, time for a bit of a mix-up of what you're doing. It might open up to you other opportunities for lifestyle that you hadn't considered or didn't think you were ready for. So advertising that, for want of a better word, on Facebook opens up the opportunity for not just your colleagues but potential employers, or others, to see what you're thinking and how you're reacting and what you're saying and it is increasingly a way for organizations to filter who they talk to and what they talk to them about. So as always, we would remind you to remember that your personal profile and your digital profile are important and you need to be vigilant about looking after them.

The other area that we could probably talk about on this topic, is about coming back to work after you've had the break. So you come back or you come back from a holiday and you've had such a wonderful time, you've really done all of the right things and you've switched off, you've recharged, re-energized, rejuvenated, you get back to work and the first day that you're back at work they just dump the files on your desk and say well it's good to have you back, get all this sorted out for us because we couldn't do it without you. Now you're thrown back into often the position, headwise, that you were in before you went on holidays or even further back than that. Our natural reaction predominantly is to feel like we haven't had a holiday at all. How many of you have heard someone say that or you've said it yourself? My mother used to always say as soon as you get back from your holiday, you plan the next one because it gives you a target.

We've talked about targets through all of our podcasts. They don't have to just be in the workplace, they can be in your life as well and they should be in your life as well. So my recommendation is that when you come back from holidays, you plan the next one, whether you plan what you're doing or where you're going, but you plan the time. You at least start to say, this is when I will have my next break and you start to create a different pattern for you and for your life, and for your wellbeing and that's going to come across in everything that you do.

Even if it feels flattering when they dump all these things on you, initially you might feel like see they couldn't deal with that, they need me as the leader or whatever it is. Don't, because at the end of the day, as a good leader it's your job to make

them become the future leaders. So, in that sense don't do it, just say, all right you want to bounce something off me, keep them the owner of that task, the job, that strategy, whatever it is, make sure they continue to own it and don't take it off them, but be there as a sounding board and a guidance. In that way, you'll be able to gauge where they're at in your absence, you will be able to build on all their strength and help them grow where they need to grow.

I think we've probably covered going on holidays. I hope you to hear that you have all had a holiday after you listen to this podcast and we do wish Fulyana well (with grated teeth) on her latest adventure overseas but she'll be back to talk to us as will I, so for now, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.