The Truth Behind The Holiday Slowdown and How to Avoid It



Opinions expressed by *Entrepreneur* contributors are their own.

Were you like me when you started on your journey as an entrepreneur? You'd get to around mid-November and find yourself frustrated because all momentum seemed to grind to a halt. Your suppliers take longer to deliver. Your clients don't return your calls or emails for weeks, and there hangs in the air a feeling that nothing is going on (apart from present shopping, of course).

The Christmas season slowdown has begun!

This infuriated me as a young man trying to make his way into the business world. Why does everybody just down tools and

give up for the year?!

There's a general sense that December is a write-off as people slow down and look to the new year. But what is that about? Why do we have this collective agreement, and what can we do about it as frustrated "go-getters"?

The first thing to recognize is that this is a collective agreement – even Christmas is just that. We see it as the time of the year when we take a break during the cold. Ultimately though, the reason why we all engage in traditional behaviors around this time is purely that we've all agreed to.

Related: 6 Ways to Keep Employees Engaged During the Holiday Season

Collective agreements

Everything is really a collective agreement in our society. Most of us agree to:

- Work
- Pay our taxes
- The rule of law
- Abide by the results of elections (*mostly!*)
- Participate in traditions & the conventions of society

There are clear reasons why we do agree to these things. We understand, for example, that there will be consequences to breaking the law, but it's still just an agreement.

We are all free agents within our realm. If you want to get home, strip off and cover yourself in hot sauce…you can. I wouldn't advise it, but you can.

But in that (admittedly ridiculous) example, by not doing so, you're still abiding by the collective agreement that your family would probably deem you to be a danger to yourself and others and also that it would be physically unpleasant.

Our business practices are the same way. We generally agree that there are specific ways of conducting oneself when onboarding a new client, for example, or when conducting meetings. Contractual obligations are another very literal agreement that we enter into with an understanding of the consequences should either party not fulfill their obligations.

So why would the Christmas season slow down be any different?

It does seem like something people assume to be a naturally occurring phenomenon. Like rock formations or aurora borealis. “Well, we’re all getting into the Christmas slowdown at work now. It’s just what happens, isn’t it?”

But it’s not! It’s only a thing because we think it is.

The truth is that you don’t have to abide by it if you don’t want to. It’s a relatively harmless agreement, after all. Instead of being frustrated like I used to be, though, think of ways that you can mitigate the impact on your business by shifting how you operate.

Related: How to Create Trust and Keep Motivation High at Your Company

Use December to take care of all those tasks that get put off during the rest of the year. Work on your preparedness for the upcoming year by reaching out to clients and asking them for feedback, for example. Or you could make those updates to the website you’ve been grumbling about since 2020.

More than just housekeeping tasks, though, you could also use the time to work on yourself!

If you’re finding the stress of running a business is getting to you, now is the time to interrogate that and find out what

you can do about it. Start working mindfulness practices into your daily routine. Learn to listen to what your mind and body are telling you.

Read More: 5 Text Messaging Tips for Businesses to Succeed in 2023

If you're at that precarious stage of business ownership, where you're trying to focus on growth but also having to do the work, now is the time to sit down and determine how you will correct that. Get a roadmap together for next year that you can (and crucially: will) follow.

It's easy to see the Christmas holidays as a wind down to a final destination, but there is something on the other side! And it would be best if you prepared for it. Come out of the "new year's gate" swinging, and you'll steal a march on your competition. Moreover, your existing and prospective clients will see that energy and what a piece of it!

The ultimate truth about the Christmas season slowing down is that you don't have to participate. Others can sign up for that collective agreement if they want to, but you can use it to your advantage simply by reframing the situation.

Happy holidays everyone.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/441041