

Taking Time Off Without Falling Off Your Clients' Radar

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You're listening to Business Badassery, the audio advice column for your online business. I'm Kirsty Fanton. And I'm Amy Posner. We're talking bite sized episodes that solve real world problems with a no holds barred tell it like it is kind of approach.

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Okay, the question we have this episode is this, how do you take a good chunk of time off your business without disappearing from your clients radar?

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me as somebody who was just out of a sabbatical, perhaps you'd like to kick us off?

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Yeah, it's interesting. Well, I'm thinking I'm looking at this. And I'm thinking, Okay, so you've, you've done that you actually have the, like, the full blown answer to this, not that I'm throwing it back in your lap yet. But

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it's funny, because, you know, I'm just in the first like, baby steps of doing that. And it's funny, because the agonizing about disappearing from the radar, it was big, like, you know, like, because especially, I think when you're a marketer, and you're so focused on consistency, and consistency over time. And that's, you know, sort of the, you know, the thing that I talk about all the time, and it's a thing that I believe it's like, well, have you just stopped and what happens, you know, you don't have any top of mind, for instance, anymore, for people. And you know, what I realized for me, I mean, and this will shift and change, of course, as time goes on, but it's like the agonizing was the problem not to disappearing, you know, and I think disappearing and being scared to actually, you

know, in some ways makes you more interesting. But it feels really risky. On the, on the front side of it. On the, you know, just started side of it. It's like, oh, well, yeah, first of all, you don't disappear. You just don't I mean, not if you've built anything at all. And second of all, yeah, I think it does. I think there's some advantage to it.

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But you know, what, I disappeared from client's radar when I switched markets. That's really interesting. I used to have such great lead flow as a copywriter. And when I switched my web content to be a coach or mentor, my lead flow just stopped. I mean, I disappeared from the radar, and I am like, I am like persona non grata. It's weird. It took me a while to realize that I had killed that and that maybe, you know, that wasn't the best thing, that best thing to do. But I think you can be very deliberate about not disappearing from the radar. And that's the lesson I learned from that. What's the you? Well, I'm very, obviously very happy to dive into talking about my experience of taking a big chunk of time off for Maternity leave. But can I ask you some questions before we move on? Because I feel like otherwise, I'm gonna forget the things I want to ask you.

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So first of all, I love that little last tidbit that you shared, but I always liked that might be a different episode, because that feels like changing that feels like a repercussion of shifting niches. And I think that's slightly different to what this person is talking about. Is that Is that right? Or am I just Oh, yeah.

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100%. I went, I went sideways there. Just yeah, that was a that was okay. It was me associate.

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Advising. But if you're listening, and you're like, Oh, I'd love to hear about that. Because I'm also thinking of redefining my niche, and let us know, because I would love to pick your brain on that experience to me, but it's actually also something I'm doing at the moment, too. So it could be a good episode. But I am really intrigued. And we'd love if you could talk more about two things you said. One was that you don't actually disappear. And I'm curious as to whether when you said that that was like a reputation and relationship type thing, or whether that was a more active thing, because you have set up, for example, some content to drip out while you're gone. So maybe you could talk to that a little bit. First, what did you mean by that?

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Well, you know, it's funny, because I actually both and what I did mean was a content plan. It's like if you're, and that's what I meant, when I said, if you're strategic about it, you don't you don't have to really disappear, you can you can plan and still be, you know, still be getting in front of people. So there's so there's the content plan. And then the other part of that is I think if you've if you've built a reputation in your space, and I guess I guess it depends on, you know, how much what you do

correlates with that, like, but for example, you know, are people doing business with you because of how you do business? And because of who you are, you know, that it's a statement. I mean, being able to like let your business take care of you doing business in a certain way. I think. I think there's something that's, there's a statement in that, and I think it's I think it's bold, and I think, especially, given how many people are dealing with stress and burnout, you know, it's a good example to set.

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Yes, I love that. Okay, cool. A good clarification to that you meant both that sort of relational side of things and also the fact that you have planned some content so that even though you're not actively creating that content in real time, there's still things coming from you to keep you front of mind for your clients. The other thing I wanted to ask you too, was that you mentioned that, you know, you're at now a weekend to your sabbatical. And you've already realized that the hardest thing was like making the decision and not sort of actually disappearing. So could you talk through that a little bit, too, because I wonder if that would be helpful for this person to sort of get some insight into what actually happens after you make the decision and how you found things perhaps easier, after you've decided and after you've started?

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Yeah, well, I mean, I think if you do take time off, there's some impetus, right? There's, there's some kind of a reason. And I think before you do it, you're like balancing out like, the reason with what you're doing now. Right? Is it worth it? Should I do it? Will it give me what I want? Is it a good decision, I'll you know, all of those things. And it's hard when you you know, when you've built momentum, it's very hard to stop that and to want to deliberately stop that, especially when you've worked hard to create it. So I think, you know, for me, certainly, there was some, some angst about that and feeling like, yeah, you do you do fear being disconnected, that that presence is what keeps things going, when in fact, it's not really it's the quality and not the quantity, I think. And so what I discovered anyway, you know, having done it, is I needed it more than I thought I needed it. I needed it for different reasons that I needed it at the thought I needed it. And it's really interesting, because you know, as much as you can know that some open time will help you to think and be more creative. The fact that like that it happens so quickly. It's like, right, right, right, right. So there's that there's that realization.

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Oh, I love that idea. It's so true. Hey, because I feel like, like you say that fear is very real. But if you stop doing what you've always done, you know, to build Legion and to build a really good client base, all those good relationships, it can feel really daunting to test to test the theory of how things will go without that element. But it's so nice to hear that even a weekend from your experience, like the fear seems to far outweigh the reality of being in the space where you are disconnected from all those sorts of lead generation activities.

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Yeah. And it's interesting, because like, I mean, I'm actively doing things I have plans for, you know, when I come back and what I'm going to do, and I'm excited about that, and it feels good. And it feels

when I come back, and what I'm going to do, and I'm excited about that, and it feels good. And it feels like a real opportunity instead of feeling you know, the worried about the worried side. Now it's the reality side. So Oh, that's so often the case, which is like, you know, my dad used to say the really cliché thing that drove me crazy. And he would say, you know, if you can't do anything about it, why worry? If you can do something about it? Why worry? was true. It wasn't a worrier. You know, I am anyway, I digress.

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I love that. Oh, some data pay Doug was but that's amazing.

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So let's so let's flip this to you. Let's, you know, you took time off and I don't think disappeared from your clients radar and think fact I think you had people sort of knocking on your door for you know, knocking on the wind, when do you return door or even booking things? Is that true?

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Yes. So it's interesting to so I should preface this. So I for context, the time I took off was maternity leave. And I took off, I think it was eight months in the end. I'm pretty sure that's right. I don't know in months, so a significant amount of time. But I should also preface that by saying while so much of my business before Matt leave was about serving clients one to one and therefore, being on client's radar was very important to the success of my business. I had deliberately planned to shift my business models so that less of my income and less of my time was spent on those one to one projects. So it was a bit different, only in that I wasn't trying to find a way to keep front of mind for the same people I had previously been serving, if that makes sense. So just a slight nuance there. I just wanted to highlight just to give what I'm about to share some more context. Because I also think if my plan had been to come back from Matt, leave, and dive straight back into that one to one client work, I probably would have done some different things. And I think those things would have been things like for clients who, you know, had pretty regular launches in their calendars, I probably would have even booked in a few projects for my first few months back and I had the kind of relationship with my clients where I suspect that would have been a very enticing thing for a lot of those people. So I would have actually been able to firm up my calendar and my projects, I think in that way. But yeah, even without doing any of that and even being very clear that I had absolutely no idea if or when I would be taking your one to one client work again, I still actually got a like a really significant amount of inquiries. And that's also even though, on my website, I even had my services page redirected to a maternity leave page that basically said, Hey, I don't know. And I'm coming back to work. So if you want to work together, I'm sorry, but I believe in building a waitlist. So I was actively trying to turn people away just so I wouldn't have to field inquiries without anywhere to send them. But I still did get some quite a few. But when I did just recently, reopen my day rate service, I reached out to a handful of my favorite clients. And these are people who I had really safely handed over to other copywriters I knew and and most of those people had gone through brain camps, I felt very, very confident that those clients would be in really safe, professional hands while I was gone, a lot of them booked in those day rates without any hesitation. So I just want to sort of echo what you said AB in that, I think the fear of losing, like that momentum and losing that point of difference, the reason why clients would choose you over and above someone else who offers a similar service or a similar outcome, I think the fear is actually bigger than the reality because you know, in this time, so it would have

been, God, I'm trying to do the maths. So I had Ollie in May 2021. And I only emailed those clients about directs a couple of months ago, so would have been almost 18 months with no specific lead gen or keeping in touch or like teasing any sort of offers with those people. And they're still booked in. So I think that probably speaks to the relationship you have with the people you work with, and what you deliver, and how that is different. And better for that person. Obviously not better for everyone, you're not going to be everyone's best fit, but how it's different and better for that person than any other service provider that you know, is in the realm of possibilities. So I think if you are confident that you have those things, I think that is such a good indication that you can really safely take a big chunk of time off. And even though you may not be like waving in front of your ideal clients every other week with an email or whatever it might be. Trust that for at least some of those people, they will be ready and waiting whenever you are available again.

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I love that. And I'm wondering, would you suggest them? Because this person says you know, don't you know, like the the concern is disappearing from their radar. Now, we don't know if they're planning to do something different. You were. So would you recommend if they're going to come back and do the same work that they like it's depending on their circumstances, but that they do book work out? Or likes have totally? Yes, yeah.

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Yeah, that's it. That's what I would have done had I wanted to go back straight into one to one client work, I absolutely would have had a chat if with a handful of clients, maybe three and try and booked in some projects for my return date. So I think the things you need to be sure of there are one year return your return date. And again, I wasn't sure about with Matt leave, because I want to give myself the space to come back when it felt like the right time. And also that you do want to come back to the same work you've been doing. If you have those two things in place. I think of course, it makes sense to try and get some projects in the books. Because I think what that does is it just means you have something to come back to. It's a bit of security, I guess. And it's also a way to feel like you don't really leave the game, I guess if it's like okay, cool. Well, in three months, and I'm going to be doing one of these projects with this wonderful client again, it sort of means that that moment and can keep going or you can hit the ground running as soon as you come back from that, that time off. Does that make sense?

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Yeah, it makes perfect sense. And what I find myself wondering, though, is that unique to the launch space? And I don't think that it is, I mean, because that's not the space I worked in, and I had ongoing clients, I think it would have just happened. Launch seems like a much more regular kind of thing where they would know what they were doing. And when you might be included in that where I feel like in other spaces, maybe that's not so regular, but I could be wrong thoughts.

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So I think definitely there is something about the launch space, in that if people you know, have launches that they do every year around the same time that does give some sort of clarity into when

incidences that they do every year around the same time that does give some sort of clarity into when they might require your services. But I should also say like some of my coaching clients also rebook straightaway, as soon as I opened up slots again, and I suspect that some of those I could have even if I had wanted to, sort of booked them in for when I was going to get a return. So I think yes, there are definitely some things about launch projects that might lend themselves more to having set dates where a client knows they need support, but it doesn't exclude those other services. to where the support you offer is still valuable. And you know, all those sorts of things, even though the dates may be more flexible in terms of when they might need that help.

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Yeah. And I think it's actually can be really good to go to someone and be able to say, Hey, listen, I'm you know, this is what we're doing now, this is what I see that perhaps needs doing. Here's how I see envision I can do it, even though I am going to be taking, you know, this chunk, like you've considered them, and you've, you've built them into your, you've built them into your schedule, and then it's theirs to say, you know, yeah, let's let's look bad, or, you know, or see you later.

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Totally. And also think of like other even incentives that you could offer a client, like, if you know that you're going to be off for three or six months, but you are offering them a project, as soon as you come back, you know, could you offer them even like a monthly payment plan? Would that be enticing for the right person? Because that could perhaps be a good reason for them to say yes, and it could also help you fund your time off. So you know, thinking creatively about the levers you have to play with, and how you can make that booking really easy. Yes, I guess for the people that you do want to have in your calendar for when you return.

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I love that. You're so smart. It's such a such you're so smart. I think you are you're welcome.

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I feel the same about you are pinheads are full of knowledge. Mainly yours?

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No, I don't think so. Yeah, so I think I think we've we've covered that. I mean, I think I think the bottom line we're saying, you know, build a really good reputation. And then don't worry, do what you need to do. T LDL into long didn't listen, as opposed to.

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Yep. Exactly. To LDL. I love it. But yeah, I think that that is the key takeaway. And of course, I know that that could be very annoying. It's often this person who was like, Well, how the hell do I do that?

So of course, we are happy to talk about that. If you know, that's something that you would like to hear more about. Let us know head on over to [business badass.co/podcast](https://businessbadass.co/podcast) And just put a question in there or be like, Hey, Amy, hey, Kirsty like answered this part of the question. But yeah, I think that is the look of the short of it.

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Right, less less we have you seen his Cavalier? On that note, we shall leave you for this week. Thank you so much for listening. Catch you next time.