



Ladies, Get Out of Town (Gents Too)
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You have many resources for creating new business strategies. Attend a conference; read the newest 'must read' leadership, marketing or business development book. Conduct customer or employee surveys. Search the Internet to catch up with industry trends.

Having just returned from my annual 'Silent Business Retreat,' I can confirm that simply getting away for a few days is perhaps best, more insightful ways to gain new perspectives on your clients, customers, products, services and overall business.

In fact, one of the best business documents I've ever produced was eleven pages quietly written on the bow of a sailboat in the Caribbean long before others awakened.

Clients are surprised when I suggest that they get away from all distractions (frustrations, irritations, and blocks of creativity) for a few days to find the answers they're unknowingly craving.

Their initial response is: 1) it sounds amazing; however, impossible; or 2) sounds like a complete waste of time.

Then, the sometimes frightful, sometimes exhilarating, or sometimes fearful response as reality sets in: "What would I do with 48 hours alone by the ocean, river, lake, mountains? I don't have time enough for family, friends and work as is."

Without exception, I later learn from my clients who actually do get away, even for 24 hours, that it was one of the top ten things they've done for themselves and their business. Their family, friends, and health also benefit from their new relaxed, refreshed, and renewed state.

After letting go of the noise around you, things make more sense. You're not actually walking away from things, but toward things like answers, new insights, ideas and freedom to explore.

Here's your guide to a successful '**Silent Business Retreat**':

Plan ahead. One week or month prior to departing, write down the primary 1-5 issues or strategies you'd like to tackle on your time away. Let this simmer.

Prepare. You'll need a pad of paper, journals, multi-colored writing materials, possibly a computer if you pledge to yourself to use it only for this retreat. No Internet or Facebook searches. You can post the gorgeous photos of your surroundings after your return. Also bring food, beverages, snacks and why not toss in a bouquet of flowers.

Select a quiet destination. One where you'll not be disturbed. Las Vegas will not serve you. Have you noticed that your best ideas come in the shower? As water inspires relaxation and creativity, find a lake, river, or ocean.

Set boundaries. I know it's a challenge, but a necessary one to get full value of your time away. Let others know you'll not be available for a few days, including family. This is your silent, quiet, peaceful, intuitive, creative time.

Start immediately. Enjoy silence from the moment leave your home. No radio, music, audio books. Pure silence from the moment you leave to your return.

Arrive. When you arrive at your destination, take the first evening to unwind. Go for a walk, hike, enjoy a wonderful view and just breathe. Begin to quiet your monkey mind.

Retreat. The next morning and remainder of your time away is your creative time. Don't force it. After viewing the issues you want to tackle, select one. Start writing. Go for a walk, think about it, write some more. If your mind jumps to another issue, start a new page. Focus on only one at a time.

Yes, it's simple but not easy. This concept of silent retreat is so simple that most people overlook its value. And the scheduling and logistics are so 'not easy' that most don't give it another thought. Through this article, I hope to have taken some of the mystique out of it for you.

You're busy, you have deadlines and pressures. I get it. This is all the more reason to gift yourself with this special, productive time away.

Fall is a great time to take a few days off. I challenge you to 'get out of town', schedule something before the end of today. Then, let me know what you discovered.

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