

Managing Holiday Time Off

Around this time each year, your company's calendar fills up with everyone's rush to cash in the rest of their time off. You're stressing out. You were already stressed of course, because it's the fourth quarter crunch time for your business. There's also the holidays. And football. Ugh.

You may not be able to avoid your family or fourth quarter business rushes, but you can mitigate the effects of having a ton of work to do but nobody to do it with these few simple tricks.

1. **Normalize time off**

Employees need regular time off. It improves their productivity and it builds redundancy in a company's ranks. Getting folks to commit to regular time off should be a quarterly responsibility of both employees and managers. Some employees purposely stockpile time off to take a longer trips, which is great. Most don't though, which means smaller, incremental breaks from work should be worked into the calendar to avoid inadvertent end-of-year dumping. For example, think about getting someone with a larger balance of hours to take every other Friday off during the summer months.

2. **Holidays aren't for everyone**

Some people actually prefer to work during the end-of-year holidays. If you've normalized time off per the suggestions above, you should have some willing team members there to hold the fort down. Get an email out to the company, find out who those folks are, and start putting your roster together.

3. **Create rotating time off blocks**

Instead of having employees schedule time off piecemeal, create rotating blocks of calendar time during the holiday period, say mid-December through mid-January, which people can opt into.

Ensure each block accounts for the critical functions you need to run the business, and keep in mind that, generally, businesses are closed during Christmas and New Years so everyone will likely get that decompression time anyhow.

4. **A deadline for time off scheduling**

Along the lines of #1 above, set a deadline for booking extended time off during the tightest periods of the holidays. Communicate it early to ensure you're giving enough lead time for folks to book their travel, vacations, family time, etc. This helps you set expectations with your clients earlier so they can plan accordingly as well - that means fewer panic calls on Christmas Eve.

5. **Roll it over**

It takes some administrative work, but consider rolling time-off over into the new year. You can put a cap on it (such as ten days max) as well as an expiration date (use it or lose it by February 1st) but it helps extend that end of year time-off cash in a bit, especially for folks who want to take a vacation after a hard year's work but don't celebrate Christmas.

6. Use a tracking system

Whatever you do, make sure you track it. The worst thing to do is put all of these processes into place, but let them fall through the cracks. [With tools like Kin](#), you can not only track paid time off, but also allow new employees to complete their onboarding paperwork and end-of-year employee reviews all in one system.

By Craig Bryant, CEO, [Kin](#)