

Make or break time

Life will be much easier if you plan well before you go on holidays, writes **Daniel Hoy**

RETURNING to work after holidays can be tough. Dragging yourself out of bed, trudging to the train station or being stuck in traffic can be a nightmare.

You often spend that first day checking hundreds of emails and phone messages.

It's difficult enough without all the extra issues you face. That's why an effective holiday handover is important.

Victorian general manager of Sarina Russo Job Access, Lorraine Nesbitt, says an ineffective holiday handover can lead to deadlines being missed, customer needs being overlooked and work piling up.

"A smooth and systematic holiday handover ensures the job gets done," she says.

"The person taking the holiday can then return to work knowing they won't be stressed or overloaded on their first day back."

Careers expert Warren Frehse agrees that a good handover can make your life much easier.

"Because of leaner structures these days, you have to accept a certain amount of work will pile up. But those who put a recovery plan in place before they go are able to get back on top quickly after a holiday.

"A recovery plan will ensure that your duties are re-allocated, postponed or cancelled without any surprises.

"The last thing you want is an angry boss or the wrath of others who were unaware you were taking leave in the first place.

"The most important thing is that you actually do take leave. The most insecure ones try to work through, and their productivity, mood and energy eventually suffer."

Frehse and Nesbitt offer these tips for an effective holiday handover:

WRITE a step-by-step handover list outlining job duties, timelines, deadlines, resources, current actions and reporting responsibilities.

GIVE a copy to your replacement and your boss.

HAVE a face-to-face meeting with your replacement to explain protocols and duties.

EXPLAIN who's filling-in for you on your out-of-office email and phone messages.

IF YOUR replacement uses your workstation, don't leave personal items on your desk.

DON'T expect the job to be done exactly your way.

ON YOUR return, meet your replacement and boss to understand what has been done and what needs attention.

TELL staff in your area your leave dates.

ANTICIPATE any events coming up that can be dealt with now.

LET staff know where keys to cabinets are or common access passwords are kept.

ENSURE outstanding invoices are paid or redirected.

CANCEL your attendance at any events, seminars or meetings planned during your absence.



Exit plan: liase with your replacement. Picture: BEN SWINNERTON

When the holiday is over

STAY positive and take time to adjust back to work.

WRITE a list of what needs to be done and work through it.

DISENGAGE your email auto response message and recorded voicemail message.

PRIORITISE —don't react to all the demands.

GET an update from your boss.

SHOW the holiday snaps after your workmates know you considered their needs while you were away.