

5 Tips to Prepare Your Small Business for Summer

7 min read



Key Takeaways

- Get Vacation Requests In Now: Early notification will give you much needed time to create a plan of action and keep your business operating smoothly
- Review Your Cash Flow Forecast: 41% of businesses noted that seasonable swings make it more challenging to stay on top of cash flow throughout the year. [2]
- Declutter your workplace: It's always a good practice to tidy up all aspects of your business so you can focus on the more important tasks like growth and profitability. Use this checklist...

Summer is here- which means sunshine, the smell of freshly mowed grass, and some much-needed downtime is right around the corner. But as a business owner, it's much more than that. For some, the approaching summer translates to a slow and lean period. For others, business is booming.

Whichever category your small or medium-sized business falls into, **the summer months offer some unique opportunities, as well as challenges, that all businesses need to prepare for** ahead of time.

Here are **five tips** to ensure that your business stays ahead of the curve, no matter what the summer months throw at you...

1. Get Vacation Requests In ASAP

This is the time of year that everyone is looking to take some time off. Some of your employees have already made (or are in the process of making) vacation plans that include a week or more of Paid Time Off (PTO).

Request your employees to submit their time-off forms now to **help you plan ahead** for when your staff members will be out of the office. Getting vacation requests ahead of time allows you to see the members of your team that will be out and also when they will be taking the time off. Since some vacation dates are sure to overlap, early notification will give you much-needed time to **create a plan of action and keep your business operating smoothly** while your employees enjoy their much-deserved time off.

Advance notice also provides your payroll department with the time they need to accommodate the accounts to have money for paid-time-off. As you are well aware, these seemingly small disruptions to your workflow can have an unwanted big impact on your Cash Flow.

Having prior knowledge of your team's availability allows you to shift work, move deadlines, communicate commitments to your clients as well as oversee processes to keep your business running as usual, even if you don't have a full staff.

That being said, encourage your employees to take time off. The inability to disconnect has skyrocketed in 2021, largely due to the pandemic. **In fact, American workers in total left behind 768 million days of unused PTO- more than 27% of their earned PTO.** ^[1]

The effects are disheartening- on your employee's well-being and your bottom line.

Employees across America have been putting off taking PTO during the pandemic. The statistics on mental health effects are jarring: 75% of workers report they are experiencing burnout, and the risk for depression has risen 102% for workers of all ages and 305% for workers aged 20–39. ^[1]

It doesn't just stop there- this trickles down to affect your business as a whole. Annual global productivity losses of \$1 trillion are attributed to the increased prevalence of negative mental health outcomes. ^[1]

2. Evaluate Your Staffing Needs

In addition to asking for time-off requests, use this time to see if you need to adjust your company's staffing for the summer. Some businesses may have to increase their staff for the summer to meet customer demand.

These types of businesses may include:

- Home and Garden Stores
- Restaurants
- Lawn Care Services
- Air Conditioning Service Providers
- Pool Supply and Cleaning Services

Whether you're tied to the demands of the season, providing lawn care and A/C repair services, or if you're tied to seasonal travel trends, such as hotels and restaurants, businesses that cater to summertime may want to consider increasing seasonal staff now to accommodate the approaching summer spike in business.

Getting a head start on vacation scheduling and seasonal hiring plans now will help you keep cool and calm in the summer.

3. Review Your Cash Flow Forecast

Conquering your cash flow as a business owner can be a challenge- especially when you are a seasonal business.

A Wells Fargo/Gallup survey found that nearly half of small business owners reported having predictable times of the year that are drastically busier or slower than others. More importantly- 41% noted that these seasonable swings make it more challenging to stay on top of cash flow throughout the year. ^[2]

If the summer season affects your business's demand, having a cash flow forecast is vital to staying afloat. We recommend preparing a 13-week forecast to stay on top of inflows and outflows of payments. This additional analysis into your financial systems gives you the insight you need to properly prepare for times of drought, and times of excess.

Cash flow forecasting will help make sure potential issues are flagged far enough in advance to fix them without a fire drill. By anticipating cash flow gaps, you can ensure your business has a backup plan (such as overdraft protection, a padded savings account, or a line of credit) or you will be able to avoid the gap altogether by [improving your cash flow strategy](#).

4. Declutter Your Workspace

We've discussed four great [spring cleaning tips](#) to help you declutter your workspace, as well as your small business processes.

This is something all businesses should consider, implement and follow through on a regular basis, especially in the summer.

Here's a quick recap:

1. Go Paperless: Automate, automate, and automate. Start with invoices, collections, and billings. Some of the big benefits you'll notice right away are reductions in expenses, improved efficiency, and added security.

2. Ensure Data Integrity: Have your Bookkeeper does a thorough review of your accounting and make sure they are backed up completely and regularly. This will save you headaches in the long run.

3. Review Outstanding Invoices: Now's a good time to do a “deep clean” of your accounts receivable. Have your bookkeeper or accountant use your accounting system to run reports and pull every unpaid invoice for the year-to-date.

4. Review Service Agreements: If you do not stay informed on the fine print associated with these agreements you may encounter unpleasant surprises down the road.

5. Invest In Maintenance Now While You Can. Take inventory now to see if anything is in need of a tune-up, an upgrade, or a replacement. If you schedule your maintenance or replacement now, you may even be able to set up a payment plan with the service company to spread your costs out over a few months.

It's always a good practice to tidy up all aspects of your business so you can focus on the more important tasks like growth and [profitability](#).

5. Review Your Business Continuity Plans

Along with fun in the sun, summer also has a darker side with a reputation for severe weather events.

Hurricane season is already upon us, and companies along the Atlantic Coast and the Gulf of Mexico need to be prepared. Companies located in the middle of the country are at higher risk for tornadoes. And, as we've seen more frequently in the past few years, even a bad thunderstorm or flash flood can knock out power, sometimes for more than just a few hours.

It's important to have a contingency plan in place for when nature strikes to keep your business running smoothly with as few disruptions as possible. **A handy checklist to ask yourself:**

- Do you have a generator in place, in case the company loses power?
- Is your information securely backed up?

- If necessary, are your employees prepared to work remotely?
- Do you have a cloud-based financial system that can keep your business running if you don't have power and/or access to your office?

These are all important items to consider and plan for ahead of time.

It's important your employees know your plan of action if something should happen to your office, or should they have difficulty getting to work. Luckily, technological advances have made working remotely a seamless transition. If you have the ability to allow staff to work remotely, make sure you and your employees test it out so that if they are not able to get to work – they can log on remotely.

Peace Of Mind With An Expert, Remote Team

These are just a few ideas for your business to ensure that the summer ahead is more enjoyable instead of it taking up all of your time and resources. Plan ahead now, so you can spend some time enjoying the warm season with some rest and relaxation

Worry less this summer. Consider the benefits of having a fully functional back office and access to highly experienced accounting professionals. Partnering with a team of accounting professionals enables businesses to leverage a powerful back office. These U.S based, out-of-house experts, are able to optimize your accounting system with the best tools and technology available for your industry, show you how to use it, and help you interpret your business's financial reports. So you can focus on what matters- running your business without your hands in the back office.

[1]

<https://www2.deloitte.com/xe/en/insights/topics/talent/culture-vacation-policy-trends-employee-burnout.html>

[2] <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/303368>