Managing Holiday Workloads

This playbook provides a sequence of steps to effectively manage workloads before, during, and after holidays or vacations, aiming to ensure that time off is truly restful and rejuvenating.

Step 1: **Planning Ahead**

At least two weeks before your vacation, start listing down all the tasks and projects that need attention while you are away. Prioritize them by importance and deadline.

Step 2: **Delegating Tasks**

Assign responsibilities for your critical tasks to capable colleagues. Provide them with the necessary instructions and resources to handle these tasks in your absence.

Step 3: **Setting Expectations**

Inform all relevant stakeholders (team members, management, clients) about your upcoming unavailability and who will be covering for you.

Step 4: **Automating Responses**

Set up an automated email response to notify senders of your absence and who to contact for immediate assistance.

Step 5: **Clearing Backlog**

In the week leading up to your vacation, focus on clearing your workload to minimize the number of outstanding tasks left for your return.

Step 6: **Final Check-in**

One or two days before your holiday, have a final meeting with your team or the colleagues covering for you to ensure everyone is prepared.

Step 7: **Disconnecting**

During your vacation, resist the urge to check in on work-related matters. Trust your colleagues and allow yourself to fully relax.

Step 8: **Gradual Return**

When returning to work, start by catching up on emails and communications. Prioritize your tasks and begin by tackling the most important ones.

Step 9: **Debriefing**

Meet with your team or the colleagues who covered for you to get updates and resolve any pending issues that have arisen during your absence.

Step 10: **Readjusting Priorities**

Reassess your task list and priorities based on the current status of projects and any new developments that occurred while you were away.

General Notes

Setting Boundaries

Communicate clearly the level of emergency that would warrant contacting you during your time off. This helps in ensuring that you are only disturbed if absolutely necessary.

Backup Plan

Have a backup colleague in case your primary substitute is unavailable to guarantee that your work is handled smoothly without any disruption.

Tech Preparation

Ensure your out-of-office automations, such as email auto-replies and voicemail messages, are functioning correctly before you leave.