Three Keys to Making the Most of Paid Time Off

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Consider the following:

1. **Understand why employees don't take time off.**

   - Felt too overwhelmed by workplace demands to take their full time off.

   - Worry about work piling up while they're away.

   - Afraid they'll have trouble catching up when they return.

   - Felt they couldn't afford to travel or think it is too difficult to coordinate plans with others.

   - Worry that they'll be perceived as less dedicated if they take time off.

2. **Acknowledge when you send mixed messages about taking time off. Have you ever viewed "workaholics" as:**

   - More motivated,

   - More productive and/or

   - More promotable that those who do take time off?

3. **Take time off yourself (really unplug) and reinforce the value of PTO:**

   - Let direct reports know you will be unplugged and not checking email.

   - Assign a second in command with real authority.

   - Avoid sending emails or calling to check in while on vacation.

   - Check to make sure that employees are taking vacation time.

   - Take time in a staff meeting to express the importance of taking vacation time. Encourage others to tell stories about what they did on vacation.

   - Share articles about the value of taking time off.

   - Let employees know if there are times when vacations and/or PTO will create problems well in advance.

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