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We all struggle with balancing our professional with our personal life. Some will say that there is no such thing. In Joe's blog this month, he mentions that the future is not about balance, but work-life integration. This could not be more true after wrapping up my daughter's wedding, and managing my work while on vacation. So this month, focus on what is most important to you, making the right choices to accomplish that, and staying connected to the 'why' of what you do every day.

Kristin

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ENTREPRENEUR TIPS FOR LEADING A BALANCED LIFE - by Joseph Sherren

Throughout our lives, we all struggle with balancing our professional with our personal life. Some will say that there is no such thing. However, I believe the future is not about balance, but work-life integration.

Today, more than ever, people are playing many different roles in their lives: workers, parents, spouses, friends, caregivers for elderly relatives, and volunteers in their communities. They must also make room in their lives for taking care of their own physical and mental well-being.

Indeed, with all that going on, it's tough. When people spend time in their business, they often feel guilty about not being with their family. Conversely, while with family, they feel guilty about not looking after the business.

Karen Murphy is no different, but may have the answer for you. She is building a prosperous business while at the same time raising two children with another on the way. Karen and the staff at [Moksha Yoga](#) address this issue by providing a place where people can achieve peace and strive to be their best self.

They enlighten others to the possibilities of living a holistic, balanced, healthy (both mentally and physically), and productive life. A "balanced life" consists of prioritizing what is most important to you, making the right choices to accomplish that, and staying

connected to the 'why' of what you do every day.

Karen, like many Island entrepreneurs, traveled and worked in various places and fields before realizing what she really wanted. She discovered her passion while working with PepsiCo in Calgary, Alberta. She was in sales, exceeding all her targets, and on her way to great success in the corporate world. During this time, she was introduced to Moksha Yoga. Originally drawn to the physical aspects and cardiovascular workout, she quickly realized it was more than a great way to stay in shape. She saw the benefits of mindful breathing, reduced stress, and an incredible blissful feeling post workout.

In fact, the experience was so great she wanted to share it with others. So, Karen went on to complete her Moksha Yoga training in Toronto, traveling to Costa Rica in 2010 for Moksha Level 2. Moksha means pure, and the great part of Moksha Yoga is that it is accessible to everyone, regardless of age or level of ability.

While in Calgary, she and fiancé, John Arch MacDougall, began to miss home and family and got the idea of bringing the Moksha concept to P.E.I. But, would people embrace it? Taking a big risk, she opened in a large salon near the Charlottetown harbor. She started with a team of two yoga instructors (including herself) and seven spa staff. They did not know what to expect, but for the first class at 6:00 a.m. on opening day – 17 people showed up. She now has 16 Yoga instructors, 23 spa staff, and the business continues to flourish.

Moksha Charlottetown is growing for many reasons: the products are all organic (free of chemicals), she hires top-quality people, provides on-going training and personal development, treats her workers like family, and ensures each customer has a positive experience. As part of the international organization, she provides a more affordable Karma option costing \$5. All of which gets donated and has raised over \$5 million for human rights and holistic health charities.

Even with all this, Karen maintains a balanced life. In fact, just setting up for this interview was challenging, as she did not want to take time away from her kids. She practices what she teaches.

My question for business owners:

Are you just in it for the money, or do you truly have a desire to help others and provide a healthy, balanced workplace for your staff?

BRAND ON OR BRAND OFF?

Have you ever had an amazing customer experience where everything smacks of the brand promise? At a restaurant, the maitre de, the server and the chef paid attention to every detail. During your hotel stay, the towels and the amenities were above the brand's standards. Sure you have! In [Janelle Barlow's book, Customer Branded Service](#), she calls this confluence of events as "brand on." The company and the employees are delivering at and above the brand's promise to the customer.

And yet, many times, we experience something is a tad bit "off-brand." It's inconsistent with the brand promise. Smacks you as a bit weird. The restaurant is known for elegance, but the wine glass has fingerprints (or even lipstick!) on it. The posh hotel that doesn't have a bathrobe in the room. You know what I mean. You had a certain expectation for that establishment, and they didn't deliver. Something was a little off-kilter. That's "off-brand." I love this nickname because it allows the team to point out the incident rather than pointing the finger at a person.

In my experience, those things that are "off-brand" are typically symptoms of a process that is not working...not a case of people not wanting to do what's best for the customers.

So take inventory of your workplace: What's "on-brand" and consistent with your

organization's mission, purpose, values, and brand promise? And what smells just slightly "off-brand?"

CONNECT CONFERENCE TAKEAWAYS FROM A SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER - by Shannon Gagnon

After a few years of taking the steering wheel to manage Kristin Arnold's social media and online reputation, it's time to introduce myself and to write a bit on the blog. What a better time than after the [CONNECT Marketplace](#) conference where I saw Kristin Arnold in action. My name is Shannon Gagnon, I reside in New Orleans, Louisiana, but manage social media for clients all over the country. Today I'd like to debrief from Kristin's conference session, make a few observations about panel discussions, and slightly brag on my client, all from the perspective of a social media manager.

So what is CONNECT Marketplace? It's a conference where meeting planners, suppliers, and experts come together to present their ideas and network with one another. This is where I had the privilege to hear Kristin speak about reinventing the panel discussion. Let me just tell you, she put years of what she blogs on, writes on, and studies, into a well-rounded session.

So what would I have to learn that's NEW in this session after years of proofreading, listening to, and promoting all of Kristin's content online?

I learned that everything she preaches as a professional panel moderator and high-stakes meeting facilitator, she put into practice herself, such as re-organizing the room to customize it for your session, mingling with the audience before the presentation to hear their needs, engaging the audience, and managing the clock. I learned that her content on taking panel discussions from Boring to Bravo can be applied to so many types of presentations, and that meeting and event planners, moderators and facilitators can change the reputation that panel discussions have.

So what is the social media angle on this conference, Kristin's presentation, and on panel discussions?

My takeaway was that many speakers, panelists, moderators, event planners, and facilitators need to know how to effectively reach their audience before and after the event through social media. Meeting planners and speakers need to work together to promote their session, which Kristin explains here. However, don't just do the work beforehand, set yourself up for leads and connections afterward. Instead of doing a shameless plug and rushing through a slide saying "Connect with me on LinkedIn," tell your audience something along the lines of,

If you liked what you heard today and could benefit from more content in bite-sized bits, you should connect with me on social media, because that's where I'm sharing more information like this each day!

And then, of course, make sure you are providing value to your followers, not just fluff in your posts. With that being said, make sure to make "virtual" friends with me, [connect](#), say hi, or [stop by soon](#).

[Shannon Gagnon](#) helps business professionals and brands (like Kristin) by managing their online presence. She publishes consistent and compelling content on social media on her client's behalf in order to improve their brand authenticity and credibility.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF: VICTORY! APPLYING THE PROVEN PRINCIPLES OF MILITARY STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE GREATER SUCCESS IN YOUR BUSINESS AND PERSONAL LIFE

- Brian Tracy

As a military academy graduate and small business owner, I appreciate the art of war applied to the business world. Brian Tracy has conquered this genre with a compact book featuring twelve successful military strategies along with the application of those strategies to the business world AND your personal life.

Tracy has written a bazillion books, and I found that the best of his best is crystalized in this [300 page book](#) tied to fascinating military histories. Want to know more about strategic planning? Read this book. Productivity? Read this book. Motivating your team? Read this book. Streamline and simplify your life? Read this book. Be more financially secure? Read this book. Make better decisions? Read this book. Accelerate your success? Read this book. Provide exceptional customer service? Read this book. Okay, so if you want to be more successful, not only read this book, but APPLY the concepts and you will be successful!

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