



[www.mln.org.uk](http://www.mln.org.uk)

[www.dcpnr.co.uk](http://www.dcpnr.co.uk)



## Out of Office

The media call it 'the silly season' and others somewhat euphemistically call it the 'summer season' but, whatever you call it, the month of July can often be a time when business comes to a grinding halt.

Many companies will find that work drops off at this time of the year as customers and suppliers take extended breaks. While the days of complete closure for four weeks have largely passed, it is undeniable that in Northern Ireland things still slow down greatly at this time of year.

If you are in the enviable position of dealing with customers from elsewhere in the UK and Europe, it is important to ensure that the lines of communication are kept open throughout the summer period. Gone are the days when it is acceptable to hang a 'gone fishing' notice on the door (or even pop your 'out of office' notice on your email) and expect that to suffice. While everyone deserves a holiday, if you are planning to close, it is wise to forewarn your customers.

Communication is key, especially in an age when we are used to being able to contact others at any time via email or mobile phones. Tell your customers in advance that you will be away, provide emergency contact details and give them a definite date for your return. Ideally go one step further and contact them when you get home to let them know that you are open for business again.

Clients from outside Northern Ireland tend not to slow down for the summer, at least until the end of July when schools in England and Wales close, so it is important to remember this when planning work for clients whose expectations need to be met. Customers will not thank you for promising to deliver then being incommunicado when they are trying to reach you, so don't make promises you can't keep. It is always better to over-deliver than to over-promise so if you know you will struggle to meet deadlines, be honest.

For some of us, of course, July is a very busy month and a holiday is the furthest thing from our minds. Dealing with increased demands on your time whilst often being faced with a reduced workforce can prove frustrating and put a strain on resources. If you know that suppliers and other business associates will be un-contactable for a period of time, plan ahead to make sure that their closure does not have a knock-on effect on your business.

In short, whatever your plans for the summer, keep the lines of communication open, even if your business is closed.

You can contact a member of the dcp strategic communication team by any of the following methods;

T - 02890 402296

W - [www.dcpnr.co.uk](http://www.dcpnr.co.uk)

E – [info@dcpnr.co.uk](mailto:info@dcpnr.co.uk)

Twitter – dcpnr

Facebook - DCP Public Relations & Public Affairs

Linked In – Gwynneth Cockcroft

Content of this article is provided for information purposes only and does not constitute professional or other advice.