



Paulyne Hyman, who heads Baltimore's Global Messenger Corp., says take advantage of a holiday slowdown.

NICHOLAS GRIMER | STAFF

## Have a holly, jolly office

*Follow these tips on avoiding holiday stress*

EMILY MULLIN | STAFF

The holiday season tends to be either the busiest or the slowest time for businesses — sometimes both as many companies struggle to keep running as usual amidst holidays parties, a bare bones staff and unpredictable winter weather. What is supposed to be a care-free, joyful season could end up being the most hectic for companies and their employees.

But local business owners have some ideas for fellow employers and employees on managing time and stress while at the same time staying jolly — and keeping clients happy — this December. Here's the holiday checklist:

### Customer cheer

Ron Attman, vice president of Acme Paper in Savage, said customers always come first — even when dreams of sugarpilms may be dancing in employees' heads. For Acme, Christmas and New Year's is an "extra busy" time of the year because the company's clients include caterers and restaurants that order plenty of paper. Attman said he has to adjust his delivery schedule to accommodate a

higher demand around the holidays and make sure his business is adequately staffed so he can meet his clients' needs. Ken Walz, co-founder of Popper and

Co., said his workload around the holidays depends on the needs of his patients. "If we have a client that needs something, it doesn't really matter whether it's Christmas or not," Walz said of his life sciences consulting firm in Baltimore. A few years ago, Walz said he helped a business through a transaction during Christmas.

### Jingle and mingle

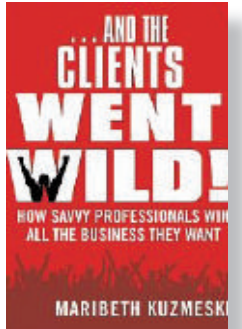
Stop putting off that lunch or coffee meeting you've been meaning to have with a co-worker or client. Take a leisurely lunch break or hit up a coffee shop and show a customer, business partner or cubicle-mate your appreciation for him or her. For Barb Clapp, president and founder of a Baltimore marketing and advertising firm, the holiday season is a time to loosen up. Clapp said she likes to host networking events, parties and luncheons to ring in the new year. "Having a little change in the business climate relieves stress," she said.



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### BOOKSHELF

"...And the Clients Went Wild! How Savvy Professionals Win All the Business They Want," by Maribeth Kuzmeski is a timely look at how your fans — i.e. loyal customers — can be your best marketing tool. She offers a new twist on why the customer is always right in today's world.



### TOOLBOX

The Maryland General Assembly session promises to be a busy one. With the election a distant memory, expect lots of controversy as the state tries to right itself in the down economy. Get a first peek at the session's goings-on at the 2011 Annapolis Summit. Marc Steiner will host this joint BBJ/WEAA event. For information, call (410) 454-0500.



### CAREER COACH

**Question:** I am close to retirement and am thinking about my second career. What should I be doing to prepare for this transition?

**Answer:** Take an inventory of your current range of professional skills and experiences. If you plan on staying within your current industry, networking can help you secure your next move. If there is another industry that interests you, then you need to gather the appropriate experiences that create your industry "eligibility". Perhaps these industries already utilize your experiences in many ways, but you will need to make the case that your skills are transferable and create value in a new field or for a new company.



ART TAGUDING

ART TAGUDING, executive director of career services for Stevenson University, can be reached at ataguding@stevenson.edu.



### BACK TO WORK BLOG

Keep up to date on the latest news about Greater Baltimore employment. [www.baltimorebusinessjournal.com](http://www.baltimorebusinessjournal.com)

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# Holidays: Yoga, cleaning the desk can help relieve the usual stressors

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## Chimney cleaning

You've got a whole week between Christmas and New Year's while some of your co-workers and clients are out for vacation. For Popper and Co., 'tis the season for house-keeping. Walz said the week between Christmas and New Year's is the perfect time to reflect on business in the past year and do some long-term planning.

Paulyne Hyman, president of Baltimore's Global Messenger Corp., said it's a good idea to clean out your desk, update your phone and e-mail databases and get in touch with clients you've done business with to get a fresh start for the new year. Hyman said she's usually busy around the holidays because her business provides same-day delivery services for Marylanders sending envelopes, packages and anything in-between.

But sometimes



business can wind down after Christmas. "If we're slow it's a good idea to bring people in the office in to review their job descriptions because jobs can change from time to time," Hyman said. She'll also provide extra employee training around the holidays, especially for newer workers.

## Winter workout

Clapp also recommends keeping up with your exercise regimen — not only because it will help burn those extra calories from Christmas cookies, but it will also keep you relaxed during the holiday heyday. To keep everyone in the holiday spirit, Clapp does something unique in

the workplace — she brings in a yoga instructor to the office on a regular basis. She said the whole office takes a break from the daily grind to do a bit of yoga and "we go back to work and we're just very energized." She said the yoga classes are especially useful to manage holiday stress.

# Beware of the Internet's 'tattoo'

Everything you say can and "might" be used against you in a court of law or public opinion. Take this to heart. This is a real mantra on the Internet.



SOCIAL STRATEGIES

PATTI NEUMANN

Think of what you choose post on the Internet, on any site be it a Facebook personal update or a Twitter feed or a useful tip on Foursquare or a video loaded on YouTube as a tattoo. Tattoo, yes a tattoo, a permanent branded seal. What you post on the Internet is as difficult to

ever erase as a tattoo embedded onto your skin. Take the opinion that your words might never, ever be erased and can possibly harm your career, just like one's skin will never be the same once a tattoo gun takes to the fresh skin.

Talking amongst friends at the gym or co-workers around the water cooler is one thing. There is some level of privacy. But if you think you are using Facebook posts and Twitter updates (600 million people do) as a secretive way of posting opinions of your boss or plans to go out with a married co-worker or say hurtful statements and misrepresenting your company on company time, there is no privacy and actually no rights protecting your behavior.

Yes, you can choose to use the chat feature — this is similar to the AOL Instant Message feature — that is private. But what if someone copied and pasted this and posted it? They're not private thoughts anymore.

Here are some rules of Facebook and Twitter to live by:

- If you are representing a business, how you act online can and very well

might be used against you in a court of law or in the closed door of the boss.

- Do not post anything — videos, photos, opinions — you would not want your worst enemy to see, because, I assure you, they can see it if they so desire.

- Don't waste precious real estate and others' time. We don't care if you can't sleep at 3 a.m. or just ran into your "ex" at the Starbucks. You have to earn your friends and fans. They can "unlike" you as easily as they "liked" you.

- Do create and link from your website social media profiles on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter that include your company's name. Those social network websites rank well in Google, so when someone searches for your company, they see content that you have written and that you control.

But you must be active on these channels and check in at least once daily, two to three times is suggested. These are real online communities. Followers expect that you care enough about your customers to engage with them directly.

- Do engage with bloggers who blog about your business. Commenting on their blog posts, thanking them, answering questions they pose, suggesting products can also create content that will show up when people are searching for your company. Just recently I commented on a CNN reporter and they quoted me on air.

- Do create a company manual of proper social networking conduct. As I have said, we are in new, uncharted territory.

The Internet is here to stay. We must regroup and rethink our marketing strategies to use these wonderful tools to our best interests.

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*I just wanted to let you know I thought the Edge event yesterday was fantastic. I am thrilled we chose to sponsor the event; it was time well-spent. There were moments we had people lined up at our table to talk, many of whom had never heard of the Alliance. From a networking perspective there were a lot of NEW faces, many from the Annapolis area, which was a great way for us to continue expanding our network.*

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