

Vacations Of A Lifetime

Good News: Science Proves The Value Of Vacation

(NAPSA)—The results of a groundbreaking physiological and psychological study of travelers will be good news to anyone who has ever felt guilty about taking vacations. Applying a method previously used only to analyze astronauts and pilots, the study, which was conducted by former NASA scientists and Air New Zealand, examined what is now termed the “Vacation Gap.”

The results of the Vacation Gap study were compiled as part of a two-phase project. Phase one was an in-depth national online survey that measured consumer perceptions of the vacation process, and the second phase consisted of an intricate in-flight study of travelers using scientific equipment to measure heart rate, brain activity and mood.

The Effect Of Vacation On Performance

Among the study’s findings is a dramatic 82 percent spike in performance for the vacationers, showcasing the highest increase ever documented through objective testing. Even more relevant to corporate America is that the subjects continued to operate at an increased performance of nearly 25 percent even after returning to work following their New Zealand vacation.

Here are some more details of the study:

- The subjects were wired to a



Vacations Under A Microscope—
An extensive study of travelers proves the value of vacation by looking at what happens to vacationers before, during and after their vacation.

monitor prior to takeoff, which tracked brain, eye and muscle activity as well as heart rate throughout the flight. The monitor was removed during the vacation and reattached to the subjects for the return flight.

- Throughout the flight, both outbound and inbound, as well as at regular intervals before, during and after their New Zealand vacation, the subjects were asked to perform tests that measured alertness and reaction times. Ultimately, these simple tests dictated performance levels at various points throughout the vacation.

- In addition, the subjects used a personal digital assistant to col-

lect electronic diary information to provide daily reports on activities, mood stress and relaxation.

The Effect Of Vacation On Health

The Vacation Gap study also demonstrated that the physiological benefits of a vacation extend well beyond passengers’ arrival back home. With sleep deprivation a constant battle for overworked Americans, the Air New Zealand study showed that subjects continued to get an average of 20 minutes more sleep each night following their vacation.

In addition, the data collected demonstrates that going on vacation actually lowers travelers’ heart rates by more than 4 percent, proving the positive physiological effects of vacationing. Simply put, travelers return from vacations feeling better and working better, and now scientists have the numbers to prove it.

The Paradox: Americans Don’t Use Their Vacation Days

The survey also shined a light on America’s dark vacation secret—people don’t use their vacation days. This coming year, more than 43 percent of Americans have no plans to take a vacation, despite the fact that all evidence proves Americans need vacations now more than ever.

To learn more about the Vacation Gap study and survey, visit www.vacationgap.com.