

# All Work And No Play – No Hols For Business Owners

**New research from Direct Line has revealed that almost one in five small business owners and sole traders will take no annual leave at all this year.**

On average small business owners and sole traders take just 13 days holiday a year, far less than the 28 days of annual leave a year to which most employees are entitled.

Over a quarter (26 per cent) of small business owners and sole traders admit they often feel guilty taking time off.

When small business owners and sole traders do take holiday, almost a third of the respondents (30 per cent) confess that they find it hard to switch off from work. This could be down to half (50 per cent) of these individuals taking work calls or responding to work messages while on holiday. On average they spend three quarters of an hour (44



minutes) every day of their vacation taking calls and checking work emails/messages.

It is important to take regular breaks throughout the year, as research shows it helps reduce stress, improve the mood within the workplace, boosts health, reduces absenteeism, improves productivity and offers a creativity boost.

Over a third (35 per cent) of small business owners and sole traders acknowledge the importance of taking time away from work, however, over a third of respondents (39 per cent) admit to finding it hard to take holidays due to the loss of income when

not working, while a third (34 per cent) said that they find it hard to turn down work due to fear that customers may go elsewhere.

Worryingly it's not just annual leave small business owners and sole traders are missing out on due to a desire to take time off. A third (33 per cent) also admit they have missed an important friend or family occasion due to work commitments.

When asked about the benefits being a sole trader or small business owner, nearly three quarters of respondents explained being their own boss (75 per cent) and being able to make their own decisions (74 per cent), were the greatest pluses. They also enjoy having flexibility in their day-to-day hours. [f](#)

*Picture with thanks to Saga Travel.*

## Three Ways To Tackle Slow Sales

**Cornwall Group chair Mark Mitchell (pictured) argues that poor consumer confidence shouldn't result in poor business activity. He writes:**

Analysts believe the government's pessimistic view of the nation's finances in the lead up to the Budget in October has dissuaded homeowners from making big purchases. However, I believe you shouldn't be a slave to poor consumer confidence and here's what I think you can do to overcome it.

**Communication:** Maintaining an open dialogue with suppliers and customers is vital. It is surprising how many businesses batten down the hatches and

only look inwards when times are difficult. openness fosters trust and as we saw in the months following Covid, trust and partnerships can help you overcome many obstacles. **Quality:** Part of your trust-building exercise is to ensure that your products are always up to scratch, which you can't guarantee if you spot buy – so deal with regular suppliers at agreed prices and with quality and lead-times guaranteed.

**Stability:** In recent years, we have seen how damaging an unstable supply chain can be. Make sure your suppliers are stable and in business for the long haul. Avoid companies that sell



too cheaply – they are likely to go bust and re-emerge as a 'phoenix' which doesn't do anybody any good. [f](#)

# Grenfell – Scrutiny & Testing Now A Must



**A letter from the British Fenestration Rating Council, penned by MD Richard Sellman (pictured), has been received. It reads:**

The publication of the Grenfell Tower Report 2024 & 2017 are having far-reaching effects on the construction industry and reshaping building compliance.

Significant failings have been exposed, not only with product compliance but also in the actual installed performance of materials compared to their design specification.

As a result, the fenestration sector, now more than ever, will come under increasing scrutiny to show that not only do products meet the required standards as designed but also that the installed products also attain those standards.

The level of performance claimed by manufacturers must be demonstrable, not only at the initial type test stage but on everyday production. Subtle differences in specification can make huge differences in performance values and whether those differences are being implemented for cost or process savings, they need to be investigated and tested to ensure that the performance level is not diminished below that which is the minimum acceptable.

The 'new look' BFRC was launched back in April. Since that time, it has been working hard to develop and strengthen its offering to ensure it continues to be the most trusted and widely recognised Testing and Product Certification organisation for the performance of glazing, win-

dows and doors.

The findings of the Grenfell report serve as a poignant and sobering reminder to all of us, that the impact of decisions we take, and our everyday actions can truly result in the difference between life or death. Grenfell is a heartbreaking reminder of the vital necessity of strict safety regulations, enforcement and oversight in construction. Failures in government regulation, poor supplier practices and a lack of accountability, all contributed to this disaster. I believe we're at a pivotal point. Greater focus will now be brought to bear on compliance, to ensure product performance as installed meets all of the claimed levels. I really hope our industry is ready to embrace the increased scrutiny under which it will be placed. [f](#)

## Façade, Design and Engineering Awards

**Reynaers Aluminium UK has been confirmed as the headline sponsor for the Façade Design and Engineering Awards for the third year in a row.**

Following directly after the Zak World of Facades London conference, which will host up to 1,000 façade specialists from across the world, the Façade, Design and Engineering Awards will take place on 6 November 2024 at Old Billingsgate, London.

These awards, organised by the Society of Façade Engineering (SFE) and the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineering (CIBSE), recognise excellence in façade engineering.

Reynaers plays a significant

role in this industry sector as a leading global manufacturer and supplier of aluminium façade systems. The company's portfolio includes structural glazed facades, unitised systems and advanced façade solutions designed for high performance and sustainability-led projects.

John McComb (pictured), the technical director at Reynaers Aluminium UK, says: "As a company that strives to support architects and construction professionals in achieving the most innovative and sustainable designs, we are happy to once again take on the role of headline sponsor for such an important awards initiative in the sector.

"As well as design excellence, this year's awards will again



reward sustainability in façade, engineering, which Reynaers continues to work hard to support through constantly enhancing the capabilities of its curtain walling system and by seeking lower carbon aluminium solutions." [f](#)