Emergency Planning for Entrepreneurs
By Beth Schneider

Think back to when you were a kid. How many times did you quickly get in a single file line and calmly follow your teacher out the door during a fire drill? It got so routine, the drills just seemed silly, right? But think about, had the bell been an actual fire, you knew exactly what to do without thinking.

It is easy to pretend that nothing bad will ever happen. We would all like the think that emergencies, illness and accidents will only happen to someone else.
But what would happen to your business if you, someone you love or one of your team members were suddenly out of commission?

Would your clients go away? Your marketing efforts stop? Your cash flow wither up and die?

Now, I don't know about you, but when I'm sick, sad and stressed out, I don't tend to do my best thinking. The idea is to be prepared and ready BEFORE you need that emergency plan so that it just happens without thinking. Here's how to get started.

Figure out who would need to be contacted.
If you were suddenly out of commission, who would need to know? People like team members, clients, vendors, leads.

Have a communications plan. Determine who is your communication lead is. Maybe a VA, a manager, maybe even a friend or relative depending on the size of your business. But be sure to choose someone that won't be emotionally involved with your emergency. For instance, if you fell ill, your husband probably wouldn't be the best choice because he'd be off taking care of you.

For me, it my communication lead is my coordinator, Tasha. When ever any thing happens she is the first person I call. I call her and she does the rest.

Determine what you want your communication lead to do.
When you do make that emergency call, what do you want your communication lead to do? Reschedule clients? Ship product? Reschedule speaking engagements? Monitor email? Complete a project? Pay bills?

Here's how you determine what you need to do. Pretend that you have just won an all expense, first class, once in a lifetime trip. The only catch is you have to leave tomorrow and you can't take your lap top with you. Make a list of all the things that would need to happen immediately or be delegated so that you could get on that plane. Those are your emergency items.

Define how emergency items are handled.
Now that you know who will handle the items and what they are supposed to handle, you have to set up your lead to actually get to the information they need. Here's where your systems really come into play. Lets say, one of the items on your list is to reschedule appointments. How will your communication lead access your appointments? Are they on a calendar that only you have access to? How will they get the phone numbers of the people to call? For me, I use an online tool that syncs my calendar and contacts. Tasha just has to log in and she can see all my appointments, who they are with and she can access their phone number and email address. All without me lifting a finger. While I'm a big fan of

online tools, this particular item could be solved by simply by giving someone you trust a key to your office and a quick tour of your computer so they would know where to look for your calendar and contacts.

So now, go through your list of emergency items and figure out how the information will be accessed.

The idea is to simply know what to do should something happen, BEFORE it is an issue.

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Beth Schneider, Chief Infopreneur of Process Prodigy Inc., www.processprodigy.com is a highly sought after operations consultant who reveals the insider secrets billion-dollar corporations pay thousands of dollars for. Specializing in process creation, her tools and techniques have helped entrepreneurs increase productivity by as much as 600%, and revenues by as much as 250%. You will find her chapter "*Lions and Tigers and Process…Oh My"* in the book, "Inspiration to Realization". She has also published dozens of articles, which have been featured in publications such as the Orange County Register, the Personal Wealth Journal and at Entrepreneur.com. Visit http://www.processprodigy.com and sign up to receive her Ezine, "Your Tips" and for a F*R*E*E Report on how to Save Yourself Time Energy and Money. The Money is in the SYSTEM. Also, visit http://www.YourBusinessMachineBasics.com and http://www.MadeItToAMillion.com to see how you can work less and make more money.