If someone has sent you this: they're planning to be away from the business, and they'd like to agree with you what needs to be in place first. Tick what you've done, and talk about the rest.

Two weeks away: what has to be in place

Tick it on your own, or each of you separately and then compare.

Before the time away

- [ ] **You've listed what usually waits for the person who's going away.**
  From the last time they were away, or from the last two weeks if they haven't been.
- [ ] **Each item has one named person to cover it.**
  With the information and access they'll need.
- [ ] **Key customers know who to contact.**
  Customers who expect one person will otherwise wait, or phone them.
- [ ] **You've agreed which decisions can be made while they're gone.**
  Including amounts, so nothing gets saved up for their return.

During the time away

- [ ] **You've agreed what counts as urgent enough to get in touch.**
  A short, specific list, so everything else is handled or waits.
- [ ] **You've agreed how they'd be reached, and that otherwise nobody expects a reply.**
  Checking in "just in case" tells people the arrangement isn't real.
- [ ] **Their email and phone say who to contact instead.**
  So messages don't sit unanswered.

Afterwards

- [ ] **You've noted what waited for their return.**
  Each item is something to hand over before next time.
- [ ] **The people who covered have said what was hard.**
  They'll know where the gaps are better than anyone.
- [ ] **There's a date for the next time away.**
  A few days first makes two weeks easier.

Why these points are important

A business that can't manage two weeks without the person who runs it can't manage an unplanned absence either, and that's the version nobody plans for.

What usually turns out to depend on one person

- Passwords and access to accounts.
- Approving payments.
- A supplier or customer who only calls one number.
- Quotes and pricing.
- Contact with the bank and the accountant.

Most of these take minutes to hand over once someone has noticed them.

Why the first time away is the hardest

The first time away shows what has been relying on one person without anyone saying so. In my experience it's rarely the work people expect. It's a supplier who only calls one number, a password one person knows, a customer who only trusts one name.

What I'd do first

I'd take three days, a month ahead, write down everything that needed me, and hand each item over before taking a week.

Agree what's urgent

Most contact during time away is about things that could have waited. A short list of what counts as urgent, agreed beforehand, protects the time away and the people covering.

If you're the one covering

It helps to ask for the list of what usually waits, and to agree in advance what you'd decide alone. Writing down what was hard while it's still fresh makes the next time away easier for everyone.



WHERE COACHING FITS

People at this point often use coaching to look at what keeps them reachable, and to plan the handover before they go. I won't tell you how long to be away. I'll ask the questions that show what your being away would really test.

What to look for in any coach
simonbowen.com/guides/choosing-a-coach

A free first conversation
simonbowen.com/enquire/?moment=scaling