

When jury duty is a trial

NOTICE OF MANDATORY jury duty can make small-business owners break out in a cold sweat. Service is usually for a minimum of 10 working days. The time out can be devastating for sole traders, proprietors of small firms, consultants and freelancers, when they do not have others to fulfil their work obligations in their absence.

Thankfully, official guidance from Her Majesty's Courts Service recognises this, and summoning officers are required to consider every case "carefully, sympathetically and with regard to the individual circumstances of the applicant."

These officers must be "both fair to the individual and consistent with the needs of the court." The watchword is discretion.

Officers are told deferral should always be considered in the first instance if there is good reason why a date is not suitable. This merely delays jury service to another day within the next year.

Excusal is possible only in cases where officers are satisfied it would be unreasonable to require the person to serve at any time within the following year. This might be because of a lack of understanding of English or a disability, for example.

However, the guidance is clear: Excusal is an



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For more information, go to www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk, and click "Jury Service" in the Quick Links section of the site on the bottom right, then click "Deferrals and excusals."

option for "valid business reasons" but will be granted only if there would be unusual hardship, such as in the case of a small business.

But note well—employers cannot make applications on behalf of staff. Where care responsibilities are cited, deferral should be considered in the first instance.

Officers are required to consider deferral for teachers who cannot attend during term time, especially during exam periods in the first instance. The same

guidance applies to those who have important public duties to perform.

Thinking things through

Before you seek jury service deferral or excusal, be sure to see to the following points:

- ❑ Clearly state your reasons for wanting deferral or excusal on your reply to the jury summons form.
- ❑ Have evidence ready to verify your claim in case you are asked for it.
- ❑ If you are seeking deferral rather than excusal, provide any other dates when you cannot attend within the next 12 months so a new date can be arranged.
- ❑ You have the right to appeal if you are refused excusal or deferral.—*Andrew Don*

accompanies nuclear power.

Deal, whose reputation as a salesman is stellar, offers the following tips on connecting with potential customers.

● "Most sales guys like to put off getting into price. But people are very sensitive to value, so I get pricing right out there up front."

● "Sooner or later the customer will figure out what your weak point is. ... I'm not going to wait for him to ask. I bring it up pre-emptively and get it out of the way."

● "Never worry about how you're doing in a meeting. Focus on the other guy. Otherwise, it's like watching your feet while you're running. And be emotionally prepared to be slaughtered—it makes you bulletproof." [E]

To read the entire article, which follows Deal through a series of meetings in several places, including London, visit www.inc.com, then type in "John Deal" into the search tool. Select "On the Road With a Supersalesman" from the resulting list.

