

Getting Started: A Tutorial Guide

While it may feel odd, hard, or implausible to suddenly start getting outside, and start applying BusinessOutside principles, there are few easy tips and practices to get started. BusinessOutside is more than being outside in the great outdoors – although that’s a vital part. It’s also getting outside outdated corporate norms, outside inauthentic lives, and embracing a genuine, intentional, and healthy lifestyle.

Below are six tips to get started today with BusinessOutside, as well as a personal story from Bart and a key takeaway for leaders.

SIX TIPS TO GET STARTED



1. Book The Outdoors

Just like booking a room, make it possible to book the outdoor space – whether that’s at the office or your remote office/home. Setup shop on your home patio, grab a picnic table, or bring a folding chair to a park.



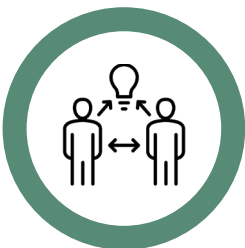
2. Walkie-Talkies

These are one-on-one walking meetings outside. Ideally in-person. But if that’s not possible, ditch the video call and tell your team to take their phones and start a walking meeting. Not only does it provide a built-in way to de-stress, but walking together creates a common bond, generates creativity and clarity, and is better for your physical and mental health than sitting behind your desk.



3. Weekly Check-Out

Check-ins are typically a time for managers and employees to touch base. A check-out is an invitation to be outside. It can create an opportunity to be more open and authentic. I find that being outside is more efficient and creates richer conversations. Research shows that 87 percent of people enjoy the outdoors and nearly 86 percent would like to spend more time outdoors during the workday. So, schedule a check-out; either with teammates or by yourself.



4. BusinessOutside Brainstorm

We generate better and more ideas outside. In a groundbreaking study, Stanford University researchers measured the effects of walking on problem solving and idea generation. Of all the variables tested, 81 percent of participants experienced enhanced creative thinking from walking outdoors. Try brainstorming outdoors and watch the creativity explode.



5. Fresh-Air Fridays

Take a page from outdoor retailer L.L. Bean, whose company does Fresh Air Fridays. Statistics show that 77 percent of people regularly eat lunch at their desk. Taking perks like catered lunches into the fresh air and having regularly scheduled picnics will break the routine and make lunch breaks even more healthy and fulfilling. Whether at the office or remote, take a Fresh-Air Friday.



6. Power Presentations

Often, people sit inside a conference room when doing a dry run through slides and talking points. Did you know we remember more when we rehearse outside? Next time you find yourself preparing for an important presentation, rehearse it outside and make the most of the extra memory boost that nature and movement offers.



BART'S STORY

Shortly after I moved to Boulder, I was asked to serve as president of a yoga, fitness, and wellness company. As exercise is important to me, and so is living the company's values, I decided I would prioritize taking a yoga class at least three times a week. I was so surprised to find only three people in my first class. As president, when people saw I was attending yoga classes, it gave them permission to do the same. In the next class, ten employees attended. Then twenty people. One day, when I was walking down the hall with my yoga mat, the CEO made a comment as we passed. "Oh, it must be nice." I was startled by the comment. The subtext, of course, was that it must be nice to have so much free time that you can take a yoga class during the day.

I was trying to lead by example, but instead the CEO made it seem that I must be shirking my responsibilities or not working hard. Even though the company said they had a culture of health and wellness, the reason there were no people in those early classes was because everyone knew the actual corporate culture rewarded more hours behind the desk, and yoga should happen on their own time.

Let's change this outdated, toxic mindset. Let's do BusinessOutside.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

If companies were made aware of the ways that working outside can bolster productivity and promote happiness, more workers would feel empowered to get outside – outside in the great outdoors, and outside outdated corporate norms. But the culture must change first, and that starts with leadership. As a leader, you have a chance to lead by example. Two million years of evolution can't be wrong. Humans thrive outside.