

# Planning the Perfect Holiday Party



Your team has worked hard all year to achieve the results you expect. They've come in early, stayed late, and performed duties far beyond those listed in their job description. You've set the bar high. Everyone knows what's expected and they respect you as a leader. You've remained highly professional throughout the whole year.

Now that Thanksgiving has come to pass, you find yourself feeling a little sentimental about the holidays. Sure, there's still plenty of work to be done. But, you've taken a step back to really appreciate the effort everyone's put forth for the past 11 months. To show them your appreciation, it's time to plan a company holiday party. You don't want to do the typical catered appetizers and cheap wine. You really want to show everyone a good time. Planning a party that everyone's sure to enjoy isn't easy. If you're not sure where to start, check out our list of best tips below.

## Budget

As you start planning your holiday party, all sorts of ideas are going to run through your head. Maybe it would be cool to have a DJ. Perhaps it's a fancy offsite venue with room for all trappings imaginable. While all these ideas sound like a blast, you have to keep your budget in mind. Yes, you want to throw a party that everyone will remember. However, the last thing you want to do is spend a chunk of quarterly profits on one night of fun.

Before you start putting down deposits and ordering the finest sushi in town, do some research and make sure you stay within your budget.

## **Decide on a Theme**

Themes are fun. That's the bottom line. And the best part? Your options are limitless. A good place to start is taking a poll. Come up with a few ideas and circulate them through your organization. Maybe it's a casino night. What about a masquerade party? Who doesn't love a luau when it's frigid outside? Whatever theme you choose, make sure it's fun and won't raise any red flags with HR.

## **Book a Venue**

Your employees spend the majority of their waking hours at the office. That's the last place they want to cut loose and have a little fun. If it's in your budget, book an offsite venue. Maybe it's the county fairgrounds. What about a bowling alley or roller rink? Whatever you choose, make sure it's a place people can get to that's within your budget.

## **Icebreakers**

Your employees love the fact that you're throwing a holiday party. They get to bring their significant others and have a night of fun. That doesn't mean that they're going to be super comfortable mingling with everyone in the group. Chances are, Greg from the engineering team isn't going out of his way to say hello to Sam from accounts payable.

Holiday parties are a great time to foster cross-departmental integration. This is easy when you set up activities that encourage bonding. Set up teams for charades. What about trivia? Again, you can get as creative as you want. Just make sure they're fun and allow people to let their guard down.

## **White Elephant Gift Exchange**

Who doesn't love an old-fashioned gift exchange? Well before your party commences, communicate that everyone should bring a gift for a white elephant gift exchange. It's a good idea to set a limit on how much money people should spend on their gift so it doesn't become a financial burden in any way. Usually \$10 or \$20 is affordable for everyone.

# Entertainment

Entertainers are a hit at every party. Whether it's a hypnotist, magician or Santa, entertainment adds a fun dynamic to any party. Whatever entertainment you decide on, make sure to reserve it well in advance. The holiday season is where entertainers make their money and they book up quickly.

# Transportation

The idea of having a holiday party is for everyone to have a good time. As they should. It's inevitable that some folks are going to have a little too much to drink. You shouldn't, but some people will. It's important that they get home safely. Spend the extra money to have transportation arranged for people that shouldn't drive. Hire a local cab company. Post an ad on Craigslist for Uber and Lyft drivers letting them know that there will be plenty of fares once the festivities end. The last thing you want is someone making the wrong decision and having to deal with the consequences.

Holiday parties are meant to be fun. They're a chance for everyone to come together, bond and share in some holiday cheer. Throwing a party that's memorable goes a long way in not only showing your appreciation for your employees but, boosting morale and carrying momentum through the end of the year. As long as you follow some of the advice above, stay within budget and make sure everyone is safe, your holiday shindig is sure to be a success.