

Developing People
Creating a
Competitive Advantage

Precautions Avoid Holiday Party Headaches

Businesses planning holiday parties can avoid potential harassment charges and litigation by taking a few simple precautions. The office holiday party can be a breeding ground for sexual harassment and misconduct. A relaxed friendly environment mixed with alcohol can lead to unwanted flirtation and sexual advances.

In the United States, Christmas business parties remain a staple, at least according to the findings from the Society for Human Resource Management's (SHRM) 2005 benefits survey. Among 364 human resource professionals responding, 81 percent said their organization have holiday parties. Social gatherings are a way for employees to get to know each other out of work. There is no reason to cancel the party to reduce the risk. A few simple precautions

can lower your businesses chances of liability. It is the employers responsibility to create an environment free of harassment and respectful to everyone.

- Alert supervisors before the party and remind them of their fiduciary responsibilities.
- Remind management that it is their responsibility to stop and prevent harassment.
- Remind them that their personal behavior is a model for others.
- Restrict access to free drinks, provide drink tickets allowing one or two free drinks each.
- Do not hang mistletoe!
- Hire someone to serve the alcohol rather than self-serve.
- Encourage spouses and significant others to come. This may reduce flirtation.

- Avoid sexually-related joke gifts.
- Reduce physical contact, for example avoid slow dancing music and party games such as "Twister" or "Truth or Dare".

These simple steps may reduce the possibility of incidents resulting in harassment claims, allowing everyone to enjoy a happy holiday. If harassment does occur follow your employer's published policies and procedures for reporting and resolving a harassment concern.

If an organization has history of these types of problems it may be necessary to redistribute anti-harassment policies.

Inquiries about harassment prevention at holiday parties, or in general workplace settings, contact Treasure Associates; specializing in training on all harassment matters as well as management training.

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Giving Memorable Business Gifts

You give business gifts for specific business reasons: to thank a customer for their past business; to cement the relationship; and to encourage their continued business. You want to select and deliver gifts that leave your clients delighted.

To give gifts that are well received and memorable, and avoid giving gifts that offend, here is what you need to know.

1. **Know your company:** What are the policies? Do the gifts go on to your budget? What is the budget?
2. **Know your peers:** Is anyone else in your company sending gifts? Consider combining budgets.
3. **Know your client's company:** Does the recipient set limits on the number of gifts to be received? Some specify money amount and others prohibit gifts altogether. Know the policy and abide by it.
4. **Know your client:** This is most important. Which holiday does he/she celebrate, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa? Does he prefer to have gifts delivered to the home or office.
5. **Know your suppliers:** Who are the best suppliers for different types of products? Where can you get top quality items of different types from one source? Who has the best prices; the shortest turn-around; the fastest delivery?

Holiday Gift Idea: RoadMate

For those who do site inspections and sales calls, finding your way can be a hassle. Magellan's RoadMate 700 GPS Vehicle Navigation System, from the creators of Hertz NeverLost, is portable; you can take it from your car onto the plane and then install it in a rental car. The color LCD screen shows maps and your movements with street-by-street detail. When you input an address, RoadMate gives text directions or turn-by-turn voice prompts, letting your eyes stay on the road.
www.magellangps.com



Six Steps Needed to Management

If you are feeling a little frustrated with the way you have been managing your time you're not alone. Time management is an important and popular subject especially as we start a new year.

Our lives are so busy that we're often looking for some new idea, some new system to help us. Since time is constant, we manage ourselves in relationship to it. Time is a resource to be used, but unlike other resources it can not be saved or stored, ready to use another day. By managing ourselves better, we use time more effectively.

Adopting the time management habit involves two primary ele-

ments: systematic time planning and positive action against time wasters. Systematic time management can be broken down into six steps:

1. **Analyze your use of time.** Keep a time log periodically to determine your real use of time. Don't rely on your memory, it can deceive you.
2. **Clarify your objectives.** Clarifying your goals and objectives provides the basis for determining the best use of your time.
3. **Set Priorities.** Set priorities based upon your objectives and activities that lead to the attainment of your objectives.

Setting your priorities focuses your energy on the most valuable activities.

4. **Plan your time.** When you plan your time make prioritized "to do lists"
5. **Schedule your time,** much like you do appointments with other people. This determines when you will do activities that lead to your objectives.
6. **Evaluate your progress,** modify your use of time based on evaluation. This allows you to determine if you are achieving your objectives.

By incorporating these steps into your daily routine, you will become an effective manager of time.

Linda Treasure, President of Treasure Associates

Drowning in a Sea of Paper Work

Almost anyone in business can grasp the allure of paring down paperwork. Many firms are buried in documents, with bulging files packed into cabinets that clutter up the office.

You can cut down on the clutter and confusion by making some key decisions. First, you'll need to decide which documents you can discard. Next, you'll need a strategy for storing the remaining records. You'll want to make sure that your strategy makes the most of existing technology, including low-cost scanners and easy to use document management software that can make your task much

easier.

Documents that will be kept should be stored in a computer file. Scanners are best to place paperwork into computer. Choose scanners that come with a document management software, such as ScanSoft's PaperPort Deluxe 10. Also, after storing paperwork in the computer, copy these files onto CD's for additional safe keeping. Make sure to clearly label all digital records.

Shredders are useful for all junk paper, documents containing valuable information such as social security numbers or medical his-

stories. Once you've decided what to get rid of, the proper shredder is needed. Here's what to consider:

- **Throat Size** (opening that accepts paper)
- **Capacity**
- **Speed**
- **Size and Shape** of shredded pieces

Keep tabs on employees entering new data, make sure they understand it is the long-term health of the company at stake.

The Rules on Records

There is no consensus of how long to keep certain types of paperwork. There are some rules of thumb-described below—but check with an accountant and attorney to ensure compliance with state and local laws. Whatever you decide, write down timeframes for retaining various types of documents and make sure the appropriate employees know your policy.

One Year: duplicate deposit slips, job advertisements, employment applications, and purchase orders.

Three Years: cash and credit receipts, employee attendance records, expired insurance policies

Seven Years: accounts payable and receivable records, bank statements, cancelled checks, cash books, expired contracts/leases, terminated employee records, expense records,

payroll and employment taxes, inventory records, invoices to customers.

Permanently: accountant audit reports, annual financial statements, cancelled checks for large important purchases such as house; deeds, bonds and stocks.

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