Easily Planning Company Parties

Looking for ideas to plan a great group or company party? A plan with a few guidelines will make your party planner days much easier.

A few times a year it helps morale and camaraderie to gather the workforce together and throw a company or department party. It is not always an easy task to plan a great group party, but once you do, everyone may begin to get behind it, so much so that great company parties could become a tradition. Everyone but your replacement will then be praising you.

It will become easier and easier with each party you plan. You might settle into a routine from year to year, but the goal really isn't to establish a working environment where the culture expects certain parties at certain times, so do everyone a favor and mix it up just a little. Here's how:

Birthday Parties

There are many ways to honor a person's birthday. Save the simple cards for the "Other Occasions" category described later. And don't bother creating a big to-do, either. Not everyone wants to celebrate their birthday at the office, especially if it involves cake at their cubicle and singing co-workers. Not to be a party pooper, but try to strike a compromise between too little and too much celebration. Everyone has a birthday, which could make for several parties. Instead, celebrate all the birthdays for a given time period at once—like quarterly (every three months). Do something that basically plans itself. For example, our company picks a place to go and eat lunch together, and then all who want to participate come on their own dollar. A simple e-mail can remind everyone that the celebration is to recognize all birthdays during said months.

Holiday Parties

Company Christmas Party

Most companies hold a Christmas party. Yours probably has some traditions that perpetuate those parties. The company Christmas party should big the biggest party. I have been to anything from spectacular events in grand hotels, with elaborate food, wonderful decorations, and various presents (representing various levels of employment) to straightforward recognitions of Christmas platters accompanied by the hand delivered thanks of a Christmas bonus or even just a certificate. If a companies management wants to put together a great party, then there are definitely elaborate ways to do so, that usually surround a nice company dinner, in a nice setting, with a host extending recognition by giving out rewards from a stage. You may even hire an MC and have some good music. Some companies may just set up a Christmas committee from its worker base. But then based on the support that all other employees are willing to give to the committee, you may determine how extensive a Christmas party you should have.

Company Halloween Party

For Halloween you could do a lot of fun things. Most people already have as many outside Halloween parties as they would like to support. But a fun option you could try on the office level is to hold an office trick or treat. Just have all who would like to participate bring some candy to set on their desk. Set a time to begin the trick or treating, but leave it open for everyone to go around and visit one another while they trick or treat throughout the day.

Other Company Parties

Chocolate Party

The Christmas break has worn off by February. People could use a little break from work to regroup and refresh. Make working life a little easier with a chocolate party. No, it does not have to be Valentine's themed, but chocolate is always a welcome diversion, and you know chocolate is on everyone's mind in February. Find someone with a chocolate fountain and/or a fondue pot that they can bring. Create a list of item suggestions for people to bring with several blank lines for people to participate in bringing delectable treats to dip in chocolate (strawberries, bananas, angel food/pound cake, graham/animal crackers, cinnamon bears, even potato chips)

Pie Day

Another option that you could hold in the first quarter of the year is Pie Day. On March 14th, representing the math equivalent of pie, 3.14, is National Pie Day. If this day falls on the weekend hold your party on the next closest business day and call it Almost Pie Day. Have everyone sign up to bring whatever pie they want to bring, but coordinate it a little so that everyone doesn't bring the same pies.

Other Events

Find other days and other reasons to throw into your mix of parties to rotate through. Don't get too carried away though. If you throw too many great parties in a year you will set a precedent for too many great parties in a year.

Food Bar Parties

If you wanted a party with a little more substance it still does not have to be a great hassle for anyone person. A party coordinator can plan parties where others can chip in just a little and come away with a better lunch than they could afford otherwise on their own. Hawaiian HayStacks, Taco salads, or potato bars are a good example of this. You may come up with some other good stackable foods.

Potlucks

The intent with a potluck is to hope you get lucky and whatever people bring is good food. You may think that your co-workers who expect parties will exceed your expectations in the support they give to those parties. But then you probably wouldn't be reading this article. All the previous suggestions only take a little more planning and you come off with a better result more often than not doing a food bar where everyone contributes a little to a coordinated meal over asking them to bring a meal. People don't want to spend a lot of time away from work preparing for work, especially in the microwave and fast food age.

Other Occasions

Weddings, Funerals, Births, and Surgeries

Companies need to be aware of important events outside of parties. Cards, gifts, or flowers are appropriate for immediate co-workers, but need to be done with great care for extended connections. When we have different persons in mind we realize that they each do things in different ways. A department assistant can't be expected to make an announcement about everything under the sun, especially if they aren't made aware of it to begin with. Sometime department assistants don't get wedding announcements and usually those who do get these announcements are the ones intended to know about the event. If you are told directly by parties involved directly then of course, you can expect that those people are hoping for some recognition of said event, unless they say otherwise. But there will be times when people directly involved will hope you will recognize something without them telling you to do so. You'll have to be pretty good with your personal skills and your detective work to keep on top of these things.

In short, with a good idea planned and some coordination you are set to have great parties without much headache.

One last tip: learn how to share google documents. Open a spreadsheet in google docs, name it (ie—Hawaiian Hay Stacks sign-up sheet), and then set it as a shared document where others do not need to sign in, in order to edit it. All will be able to access the document if you provide them a link to its place on the web, but it will be housed with your other documents in a gmail account. Multiple people can work on the shared document at the same time. As people click onto a new cell, their information from the previous cell automatically saves on the document for everyone to see. You can set the document back to where it cannot be edited by multiple users, if you so choose to preserve the information from being changed later on.