

LTP'S TOOLS FOR ENTREPRENEURS: HELPING TO MAKE RUNNING YOUR TECH BUSINESS A WALK IN THE 'PARK'--HOLIDAY EDITION!

Holidays at the Office: Win them over!

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Businesses are in a budget battle this holiday season. How can they show appreciation for employees while working to cut expenses? In the red corner are employee raises, weighing in at barely a cost of living increase. In the green corner are the lavish holiday parties of the past, weighing in at a major blow to the bottom line. In this fight for the right to party, big celebrations are down for the count! Before you decide that spreading some holiday cheer will break the bank consider these ideas that deliver a one-two punch by boosting morale and helping you be a good steward of your organization's resources.

Dinner is the new Lunch

If you normally host an elegant evening event during the holidays, try having a luncheon instead. Here's why:

Dinner is expensive for YOU and YOUR EMPLOYEES YOU - Dinner is an involved affair. There are the pre/during/after-dinner cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and higher priced meals. Because it is an evening event, you may feel obligated to allow employees to invite a spouse or guest. Now, multiply your fancy schmancy dinner by 2 and it's easy to see how costs can get out of control fast.

YOUR EMPLOYEES have to find/buy something to wear, hire a babysitter, and take a night out of their already hectic holiday schedule.

Lunch is less Close your office at noon. Reserve a private room/area at a favorite local restaurant. Treat your employees to a fun, casual lunch, and then give them the rest of the day off to shop, trim the tree, or just relax. Their guests will probably be at work, so you won't need to worry about any "plus ones" and the kids are at school, so they won't need to find a babysitter.

It's in the cards

Personalizing gift cards is a thoughtful approach to this generic gift. If possible, match the card to the person's interests. Consider a gift card from an online music store for the music lover, a book store gift card for the bookworm, or home improvement store gift card for the Bob Vila in your group. When in doubt, stick with bank card gift cards that can be used for almost anything.

Thanks giving

Take the time to prepare handwritten cards for your employees. Express what their dedication to your organization means to you and how much you enjoy having them as part of your team. Be specific and sincere. Giving a complement, giving encouragement, and giving thanks all qualify as gifts, and are among the most cherished you can offer to anyone.

Don't drop the ball

Once the Times Square ball has dropped signifying the start of a new year, don't drop the ball on showing your employees they are appreciated. Visit ProjectOfficeParty.com for ideas and easy step-by-step instructions for hosting unique and inexpensive events throughout 2009.