

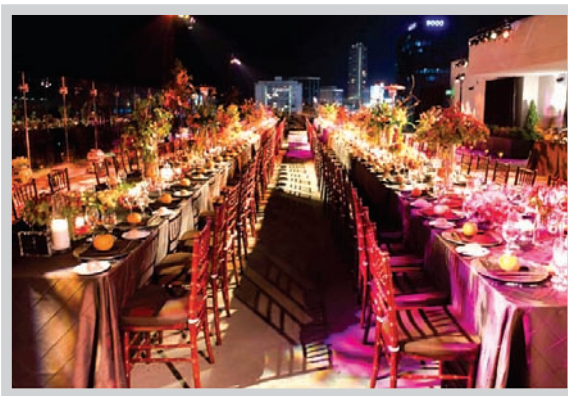
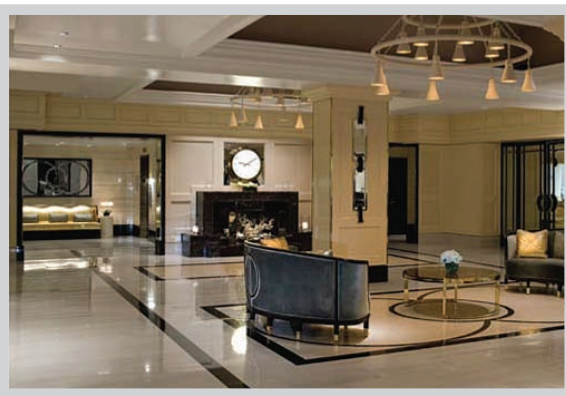


Holiday Venue Guide



THE LONDON WEST HOLLYWOOD

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Iconic Hollywood glamour mixes with modern sophistication and intuitive service at The London West Hollywood. Perched in the Hollywood Hills just steps from the legendary Sunset Strip and Beverly Hills, the hotel embodies the vision of a bold team of international tastemakers, presenting the perfect backdrop for impeccably staged events. Interiors designed by the renowned David Collins Studio and dining by heralded Chef Gordon Ramsay are all enhanced by service that is knowledgeable, friendly, and unobtrusive.

A fusion of both its namesake cities, The London West Hollywood emulates the best of cos-

mopolitan chic and California cool. Exchange vows against an unforgettable background of flowering gardens and breathtaking views. Dance the night away in an elegant ballroom or atop the hotel's signature rooftop terrace overlooking the Hollywood Hills. Toast with friends within a stylish private dining salon or spacious suite. Timeless style, award-winning food and drink, and exquisite event space awaits.

The hotel is known for outdoor event spaces with stunning views of the city skylines and Hollywood Hills. The Hampton Court, bordered by white roses and box hedges, looks out to downtown Los Angeles, while the rooftop terrace and pool deck offer

panoramic vistas and amazing sunset moments. All cuisine, from appetizers to desserts, is conceived and prepared by the Gordon Ramsay team under the direction of executive chef Anthony Keene, who creates menus infused with local artisan flavors and California's abundance of fresh produce and seafood. This level of innovative gourmet within a boutique Los Angeles hotel is wholly unique to The London West Hollywood. In addition, The London Breakfast Table—a buffet-style bounty of sweet and savory morning bites along with specialty coffees, is complimentary to all hotel guests.

Learn more at www.thelondonwesthollywood.com.

HOLIDAY VENUES

Business Gift Giving Guidelines for the Holiday Season

By 'MANNERSMITH'

Shhh, listen very carefully. I am going to share with you the secret to giving the perfect gift... Buy something the receiver would really like.

I know, I know. This is fairly obvious (and easy) advice. The tricky part is finding out what the receiver would really like. To do this, you must be a detective. Start to listen to the person. What subjects do they talk of often? What do they do when they are not working? Do they have any hobbies? Are they a fan of a particular sport? Do they have a favorite charity? If the person does not give you any clues about their interests, you must be an investigator. Start asking questions: "What did you do this weekend?" "Have you gone on vacation recently?" "What is your favorite restaurant?"

Giving Gifts to Clients

Not all clients are created equal. Following the old rule of thumb, 20% of your clients account for 80% of your revenues. For a business, it would be foolhardy, as well as costly, to treat all clients equally. You have three options:

- Send the same gift to all clients
- Send gifts reflective of the clients business (larger gift to larger clients)
- Send cards to all clients and gifts to VIP clients.

Please remember that a promotional item (i.e. something with your company's name on it) is not so much a gift as part of a marketing plan.

Giving Gifts in the Office

Most offices have guidelines on gift giving. If you are not familiar with these guidelines, now is the time to investigate. The first place to check is the employee handbook. If there is nothing listed, ask a fellow employee what happened last year. Here are some of the typical rules:

Employees can see gifts to a boss as a requirement. Employers should make it clear well before December that supervisors and superiors are not allowed to accept gifts. (The only exception to this rule is between a boss and their executive secretary. These are two individuals who have a special relationship as well as a symbiotic career path.)

Small token of esteem from bosses to employees are always welcome. But employees tend to prefer bonuses and additional time off to a trinket.

Gift swaps can be entertaining. However, when poorly executed can leave bad feelings behind. Gift swaps often go bad when

not everyone brings in a gift or when some gifts are tasteless and/or thoughtless. Plus, gift giving among employees can be taxing for employees and their pocketbooks.

I recommend that for an office in the spirit of holiday giving, to donate to a charity. Employers can fund the contribution and allow the employees to decide where the fund will be donated. Often-times, employees prefer this charity fund to another little knick-knack from the company.



My favorite business appropriate gifts:

- Writing paper (such as Crane's)
- Beautiful pen (such as Cross or Mont Blanc)
- Fruit baskets (such as Harry & David)
- Business card cases – monogrammed is nice
- Business portfolios - leather
- Calendars/planners/PDA
- Watch/clock/timepiece
- Crystal paperweight
- Silver picture frame
- Tickets to an event (not for December)

Gift Giving Guidelines:

- Know the person's preferences and try to match the gift.
- Be aware of cultural, religious or interna-

tional taboos. Also be aware that some companies restrict their employees from accepting a gift over a certain amount.

- Use your common sense, no matter what the salesperson or website says is appropriate.
- Save the gag gifts for purely social occasions, and even then, proceed with caution.
- Save items with your company name on them for marketing campaigns.
- For business select a gift that reflects your business and your image.
- A gift for the client's office can bring greater good will especially if the staff participates in projects for your business.
- Wrap the gift. Half of the thought is the presentation.
- If you need some gift hints for a client, speak to his/her assistant.
- Start planning in advance. For extra help, contact a professional gift manager.

Some Holiday Q&A's

Q: I am the owner of a very small business and do not have a budget for sending my clients presents during the holiday season. What can I do?

A: A little trick for small business is to only send out cards during the holidays. Save the gift giving for another time during the year. This way you can spread out the cost of the gifts by sending a few

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Marketing Executives Give Creative – If Not Always Tasteful – Holiday Gifts

Nearly eight of 10 (79%) marketing and advertising executives say some form of holiday gift giving occurs among workers in their offices, but gifts can range from thoughtful and appropriate to bizarre and humorous, according to a survey from The Creative Group.

The most common forms of gift giving are from managers to staff (51%) and among co-workers (51%). Gifts are least often given to managers from employees (39%), the study found.

"Given the current economy, office gift giving may be toned down this year, but there still will be those who want to spread holiday cheer by giving colleagues tokens of appreciation," said Megan Slabinski, executive director of The Creative Group. "Although presents don't have to be expensive, they do need to be thoughtful and appropriate to the work environment. A gift that works in one setting may not be well received in another."

Some gifts given in the office aren't always appreciated or understood, The Creative Group said. Among the most questionable gifts cited by respondents in an open-ended question:

- A voodoo doll of the boss, given to a co-worker.
- A wrapped six-pack of beer.
- Portraits of an employee, given to other employees.
- A case of tuna.
- Orange hair extensions.
- A fully-stocked 125-pound aquarium.
- A plastic pizza with a face on it.

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per month. Plus, a gift that is received all by itself in March is much more memorable and has a bigger impact on the client than one that is found among all the others in December.

Q: One of my co-workers and I are very friendly. We enjoy working together and we get together often out of the office. Everyone in the office knows how close we are, but last year we got the cold shoulder when we exchanged gifts. Do I have to buy everyone in the office a gift?

A: No, you do not need to buy everyone in the office a gift. But if you are friendly enough with this co-worker to exchange gifts, you should be friendly enough to plan a get together outside of the office to do so.

Q: Should I be sending thank you notes for all the "give-aways" I receive in the office this time of year?

A: No, gifts and promotional items (calendars, mouse pads, pen or other items with another company's name on it) are two distinctly different categories. As always, a thank you note should acknowledge all gifts. For promotional items, you can thank the person who sent it the next time you see them or speak with them on the phone.

This information was provided by and is copyright of Mannersmith.com, the online etiquette consultants. Interested parties can subscribe to Mannersmith's monthly newsletter via the subscription form on mannersmith.com.

In contrast, respondents said other presents showed considerable thought:

- A membership to a local art gallery.
- A ride on a parade float with Santa Claus.
- Ohio State football helmets given to Ohio State football fans.
- Custom-made bobble-head dolls that were replicas of employees.
- A photo collage of someone's children.
- A customized Disney toy.

Among the most humorous gifts:

- The Clapper device for turning on and off lights and electronic devices.

- A punching bag that emits curses when hit.
- A radar detector for an employee who received numerous speeding tickets.

Some respondents say those in their workplaces often opt for charity-based gifts around the holidays in order to give back to their communities. Such gifts included a certificate to a charity in an employees' name and an office-wide effort to collect and distribute gifts to needy families.

"This year, especially, many nonprofits could use the help, whether it's a gift in an individual's name to a cause he or she

believes in, or a group outing to provide assistance to those in need," Slabinski said.

The national survey was developed by The Creative Group and conducted by an independent research firm. It is based on 250 telephone interviews - 125 with advertising executives randomly selected from the US's 2,000 largest advertising agencies and 125 with senior marketing executives randomly selected from the nation's 2,000 largest companies.

Information provided by the Creative Group.

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HOLIDAY VENUES

Planning for that Big Holiday Office Party

By SYDNEY CHAFEE

If you have decided to have a holiday office party this year, you have to do some planning. And depending on the size of your business, you may have to start planning well in advance.

You can make your holiday office party one to remember – provided you know what is involved in planning the perfect office party.

Here are some tips for your holiday party planning:

Get Everyone Involved

Discuss the party with your employees and colleagues. Solicit company holiday party ideas from everyone who is interested. This helps in forging a sense of unity and avoiding resentment.

Then, consider forming a committee to organize the party. If your business is smaller, then everyone should be involved.

Holiday Party Themes

Decide on a theme for your holiday party. Having a holiday party theme helps in organizing a more entertaining party.

Try to think a bit differently; go for something new and exciting. Consider taking the company to play a round of golf, visit historical places, or taking a dinner cruise or going to a fine dining restaurant.

The idea here is to opt for a holiday party theme that takes you away from the mundane office environment.

Pick a Suitable Date

Decide on a date that is good for everyone. Christmas Eve usually isn't very good, as most people want to take off early to be with their families.

Make sure you inform everybody well in advance, and that your holiday office party date does not clash with a holiday or fall on the date of an important company event.

Ask your employees if they think it should be held on a weekday or the weekend. This will ensure that everyone will be able to participate.

Choose the Right Location

The idea behind a holiday office party is for everyone to unwind and enjoy themselves.

Choose a location that is festive, comfortable and beautiful. When you choose the location, make sure that it is in a location that is convenient for everyone.

Food and Beverage Considerations

Naturally, the people in your office have different dietary requirements. Some may be vegetarian while others may be on a diabetic diet.

Having a menu that caters to everyone is a good idea. It is always better to serve non-alcoholic drinks so that things don't get out of hand. You can ask your employees about their dietary restrictions and preferences.



Make sure that you arrange to have the right amount of food and drinks available.

Decorations to Create That Party Feeling

While doing your holiday party planning, pay special attention to the decorations. They should match the season and the holiday.

Games and Activities to Enjoy

Be sure to plan games and activities that help break the ice.

For example, you can organize games and have singing competitions. You can have prizes for the best-dressed person. Play lively music in the background. Try to hire a DJ if your budget permits.

Remember, this is your opportunity to show your employees your appreciation.

Cool Gifts and Prizes

At the party, give gifts and prizes that are cool, fun and useful. They can be the latest electronic gadgets, party favors or gift certificates.

Ask all your employees to pitch in when it comes to gift ideas – that way, everyone will feel that they have an opportunity to contribute.

Organizing a great holiday office party can be fun for everyone. Follow the tips above and make your party one to remember!

Sydney Chafee is a freelance writer.



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