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 a very good idea, 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.

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!

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The Latest Event Planning Trends

The expectations of an event, meeting or conference, be it a holiday party or any work-related meeting, are ever evolving with technology and shifts in our culture. The newest trends are all aimed at the individual and not overtly showcasing the brand or company.

PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Whether your event is social or corporate, your guests expect to get something out of it. Not just the information or witnessing a ceremony but to learn something new, be changed or enlightened in some way. Content, speakers, entertainment, and a special class can all fulfill this requirement. How about a break out meeting where your team has the choice to make their own salsa or take a yoga class?

“EXPERIENCE” AREAS

For many, their lives are chronicled through social media posts. How will they remember themselves at your event and will they share it? Try creating a photo set, a fun recreational room, and/or wellness activity. Event venues are all working on ways to make a unique experience available from transforming a loading dock into an “Under the Sea” cave for break out sessions to having a chef host a 10 minute tutorial.

CUSTOMIZED PERSONALIZATION

This is a way to give your guests as little or as much control as you want with your event. It may be something as simple as allowing your staff to choose one of the meeting topics or break-out sessions. Utilize apps that allow your guests to request songs and other interactive experiences in real time. You can even create an AI personality like Siri to interact with your guests and become the star of your show.

GOING GREEN

Vegan, organic and “social responsibility” are all concepts that started as an elitist convenience and have now become mainstream expectations. Your menus need to have vegan options. The more socially responsible one can be at your event or meeting the better your organization will be valued. Showcase a puppy or two from the shelter the event raised money for. Use as many recycled products as possible. The list can go on and on.

LIVE STREAM IN

According to LiveStream.com, 67% of the people who watched a live streamed event, attended the following year. Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are great platforms to share your event with the world. You can choose to showcase the entire event or just a much anticipated moment. Online activities leave us with a longing for human interaction. Events and their planning are starting to play a greater role in our lives that is no longer frivolity but necessity. Events and conferences are more important than ever and that is a trend that is not going away.

Information for this article was provided by the Simi Valley Chamber Tourism Alliance. For more information, go to visitsimivalley.com
REIMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

Fresh off an $11 million renovation and surrounded by major Fortune 500 companies, the studios of Burbank and the corporations of Hollywood, the Warner Center Marriott Woodland Hills is in the hub for all business activity.

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Ventura County Coast: Inspiration Within Reach

From brainstorm spaces to breathtaking views, Ventura County Coast offers a most memorable meeting or holiday event location. Inspire your team by hosting an off-site meeting set in natural beauty and year-round pleasant weather. The region has 200,000 square feet of conference space and meeting rooms to choose from, and more than 5,000 guest rooms in 60 hotels and inns.

Ventura County Coast is a string of four communities located off Highway 101 between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. Along with the amenities it offers to businesses, Ventura County Coast contains 22 miles of beaches, historic downtowns, a range of outdoor activities, award-winning wineries and farm-to-table restaurants.

Here, business retreats are a unique combination of professional development and unforgettable team building. The meeting rooms accommodate groups from 10 to 1,000. Whether you’re looking for the salty breeze of a beachfront location or a full-service hotel conference center, you’ll find accommodations that match your team’s needs. Plus, lodging is affordable and welcoming to large groups.

To keep inspiration sustained, Ventura County Coast has a culinary experience all its own, created from an abundance of fresh and local ingredients. The region’s artisan chefs, locally grown produce, fresh seafood and rich farming heritage make the Ventura County Coast dining scene uniquely delicious. Be sure to try a local craft brew at the end of a hard day’s work.

In your team’s down time, complete the experience with leisure activities from the four unique but complementary cities that make up Ventura County Coast.

CAMARILLO
In Camarillo, you’ll find the latest fashions at one of the nation’s best Premium Outlets, with brands like Banana Republic, Coach, Michael Kors, Polo Ralph Lauren, Tony Burch, Tommy Hilfiger and much more. Minutes down the road, visitors can savor the sights and smells of a delicious agricultural tradition and rediscover how sweet and inspiring fresh-picked fruits can taste.

For golf enthusiasts, Camarillo is a dream destination with incredible year-round weather and two pristine public golf courses. Those who simply want to relax and rejuvenate can enjoy indulgent spas, captivating art galleries and an enchanting old-town brimming with history.

VENTURA
Ventura synthesizes surf culture, historic buildings and a bustling downtown scene in a way that makes visitors feel at home and on an adventure at the same time. Visitors to Ventura enjoy outdoor adventures, a lively arts scene and an oceanside proximity that makes it a chef’s paradise.

Get the whole team together for beach activities in the style of a true Californian getaway. Surfers, kiteboarders and water enthusiasts will enjoy winter swells and summer whitecaps at Ventura’s beaches. And for those who prefer to enjoy the surf culture from a distance, the oceanfront Ventura Promenade is a festive place to watch the action, take a stroll or ride bikes.

OXNARD
In the casual seaside city of Oxnard, you’ll find an active boating harbor, the nation’s largest kosher winery, the world-class Mullin Automotive Museum and a historic downtown bursting with multicultural flavors and architectural treasures.

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authentic Mexican cuisine and new eateries are putting Oxnard on the culinary map. Also in downtown Oxnard, Heritage Square is an amazing collection of magnificently restored homes and lushly landscaped gardens.

Oxnard’s serene harbor provides access to Channel Islands National Park. The natural and cultural resources of its five different islands have been steadfastly preserved here. This national park is known as “America’s Galapagos,” and is just a short boat trip away for a one-of-a-kind team-building excursion.

**PORT HUENEUME**

Stroll wide sandy beaches alongside a history-rich Naval Construction Battalion Center in Port Hueneme, a seaside community located between Oxnard and Ventura. Its original Chumash Indian name, Wenemu, means “resting place.” And it doesn’t take much time at the fifty-acre Hueneme Beach Park to discover that this city is a place for refreshing the mind and soul.

Port Hueneme Beach Park’s expansive sandy beaches, south-facing surfing waves, volleyball courts, and walkable beachside promenade promise satisfaction for every kind of beachgoer – sunbathers and surfers alike.

BRING YOUR TEAM TO A PLACE OF INSPIRATION

Whatever your needs are, Ventura County Coast is big enough to meet them and it’s closer than you think. Invite inspiration into your workplace, and plan your most memorable meeting at venturacountycoast.com.