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Company Christmas party or holiday event planning made easy - Useful Tips

By Boris Cherniak

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Cherniak

"Holiday entertainment planning is a serious business - a lot happens behind the scenes, long before the CEO says thanks for a job well-done", says Incredible BORIS (Boris Cherniak).

Around this time of the year, human resources managers and company CEOs are asking the age-old question – How do we make our holiday event an affair to remember? After all, we are simply trying to thank the employees, suppliers and their families for a job well done throughout the year. We also want this event to motivate the group to be happy and productive in the future. This is a more difficult task that may appear from outside.

"The people planning functions have an enormous task of fitting into the ever-shrinking budgets while keeping party-goers satisfied," says Boris Cherniak, corporate event planning professional, comedy hypnotist entertainer and motivational speaker.

Here is a helpful checklist of planning an affair for the holidays (as provided by Boris Cherniak):

1. Budget. Break down all the amounts allocated to each task then you can have a clear view of how much room you have to play. Spend it wisely and know what your limitations are. The old rule of thumb is you get what you pay for. If it appears too inexpensive, it may be the inexperience or you will not be getting what you expected. Get the best value possible with the resources you have available. It is easy to spend ANY budget. You may have to make a few sacrifices. What gets eliminated first and what should be kept at any cost? Always keep in mind of what the overall impression by the attendees will be. Leave a lasting impression.
2. Number of people in attendance - estimate the number of people expected at the party. Keep in mind that a small percentage may not attend due to lack of babysitters, illness or vacation.
3. Book banquet hall facilities, venue location. Pick a location that is convenient for your group with amenities like transportation, parking, etc.
4. Food and catering - dinner / lunch, drinks or buffet - most halls will offer you different choices of meal options, hors d'oeuvres, desserts and per person amounts. Make sure there are enough choices for all tastes.

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5. Schedule and timing. It is easy to under-estimate the amount of time a function will take due to many unforeseen circumstances. Factors such as how long the speeches will take, time to bring out the food or attendees arriving late due to a freak snowstorm or traffic. This can change the dynamic of your event – plan accordingly and have a contingency plan.

6. Entertainment - comedian, hypnotist, juggler, psychic, magician, DJ and dancing, party games. Entertainment is a wonderful way to make your event memorable. Entertainment comes in many budgets and styles. Pick a solution that will not only make the company and event planner look good, but will leave a lasting impression on the attendees. Explore different options best suited to your group. Local or national performers can be considered. Many are available on the web and could be your first place of inquiry. Many agencies have a roster of people they can suggest. Never forget to look within your company for entertainment suggestions and talent (in every company there is a band or a disk jockey that would be more than happy to accommodate your budget and show off their talents). Keep in mind that entertainers are extremely busy during the holiday season - leaving booking your

entertainment until the last minute is not a good idea as your date may no longer be available.

7. Sound, lighting, projection equipment and audio visual materials - Have a run-through and make sure everything is in place before your audience arrives so that you don't have to deal with "technical difficulties".

8. Accommodations for any out of town guests and transportation to and from the airport.

9. Taxi cabs for anyone that over-indulges in the open bar concept and to avoid liability.

10. Registration - name cards for your guests, open seating or pre-arranged seating plan.

11. Awards, door prizes and giveaways. Many of these can be donated by your suppliers or provided to you at their cost for your holiday event. It shows good faith, and don't be surprised if the suppliers return the favor.

12. Party theme and décor - color scheme, chair covers, centerpieces, flowers, ice sculptures. One of the more unique ideas I saw recently was a sports theme, where instead of elegant centerpieces, sports memorabilia was placed in the center of the tables, which was available for the guests to take home - these included running shoes and football helmets.

13. Dress and attire. Let the attendees know what to expect to wear - formal, casual or business attire. We all heard a story of a prank where a person is invited to a pajama party when it's a formal affair.

14. Invitations or a simple announcement in the company newsletter and bulletin board.

15. Contracts. Commit to the people you will be doing business with, since it usually is done on a first come basis. Halls, performers and caterers have limited availability. Be decisive and direct. Most people will give you a price range that would depend on your choice of options. Many event suppliers will require deposits to commit.

16. Presentations - keep the speeches brief and to the point. Number of speakers should be kept down to a minimum. After all, people are there to be social and not to be lectured.

17. Everyone wants to have a party on a Saturday. You may find that having an alternate day of the week may greatly reduce your expenses and make it easier to hire entertainment and book your venue. Also, consider having your function early afternoon. A lunch is less expensive than a seven-course dinner.

18. Include a table for the crew, entertainment and other behind-the-scenes people. They, at times forget to eat to make sure your event runs smoothly. Show them the spirit of the holiday season and include them in your celebrations.

19. If your business is busy during the holiday season, consider having your event earlier or later. It

should not make a difference if your function is held in November or January instead of December. 20. Have a cell phone handy for any last-minute emergencies the day of your event. If a cell phone is not an option (no signal or simply unavailable), make sure your suppliers have the venue address and phone number. Your function will be attended by people from many walks of life and backgrounds – politically correct term is Holiday Party. Make it chic, memorable and fun. Have people walk away saying – I had a great time, that was incredible."

He is a wordsmith comedian, observer and commentator on society quirks, obsessions and stereotypes. Incredible Boris is not just a stage name, but also a way to describe a positive attitude and a constant state of mind.

The Incredible Boris is an expert in psychology, hypnosis, body language, power of suggestion and human behavior. He authors a popular ezine "power words and phrases" through his web sites www.comedywood.com or www.IncredibleBORIS.com or www.HypnotistShow.com

Boris has been featured on numerous television programs, including Montel, Howie Mandel Show and the prestigious Just for Laughs Comedy Festival in Montreal.

Boris' self-hypnosis Relaxation and Motivation CD is available through his web site or as a giveaway to complement his performance at your company's function during this holiday season.

Happy Holidays.

The Incredible Boris is a comedy stage hypnotist that appears in almost 300 live performances yearly at functions for most fortune 500 companies and their competitors. He is a frequent talk show guest and delivers a comical point of view to an otherwise serious subject of human behavior and expression.

Selecting A Party Theme

By George Meszaros

Coming up with a theme is the easiest way to create an atmosphere for your party. Selecting your party theme should be one of the first steps in your planning process. A theme doesn't eliminate spontaneity from your event it makes it more complete. Before you create your party theme think about how some themed parties made you feel in the past. Was it the Hawaiian party theme, or the 60s flower child theme, or Mardi gras party theme was the most precious experience? Your theme could be a single theme or variations on other themes.

Whatever your party theme may be make sure you incorporate it in as many aspects of your party as you can. For example, if you go with a Christmas party theme make sure everything speaks "Christmas." You should ask your guests to come dressed in Christmas theme close. Make sure you prepare foods normally served around Christmas time, and serve it in Christmas theme plates. The possibilities for decorating your house for a Christmas theme are endless. Even the colors you use should reflect your theme.

If you are having a party for your child, get her involved. Your child will have a lot of fun just choosing the party theme.

Because most holidays reoccur every year, you have plenty of time for planning and preparing. You can stock up on supplies long before your event. If you have a Christmas party every year, you may be able to save a lot of money buying decoration items after the holiday season. By planning ahead you are not only better prepared but you can also save a lot of money. Gift and party stores are full of great deals to be had after the holidays. It gives you an opportunity to pick up holiday themes plates, napkins, tablecloths, cups, and many more items you may need for your party.

The fundamental difference between theme parties and parties that feature themes is the amount of planning involved. With some thought, a lot of creativity, and careful planning you can create a great theme party everyone will love.

Author: George Meszaros with



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