

# What to do about the “P” word



## Introduction

It was exactly a year ago that we were only just getting used to the “R” word as we headed into the December festive season. At the time many organisations were debating whether a Christmas party would be appropriate or not. Well, little has changed and the debate will still be had as to what would be appropriate, despite apparent “green shoots” with some measured optimism thrown in.

## To Party or not to Party...?

Surveys show that 1 in 5 organisations are likely to abandon their annual party this year. Whatever your plans are, consider a **sensitive** and **sensible** response, particularly if redundancies or major changes are still fresh in people’s minds. There is a growing chorus from employers and employees alike, voicing their views that “less is more” as the economic reality reigns in some of the past excesses around this time of the year. If you are to do anything, consider some of the following:

- A party is a formal company event and the normal rules of work must apply. This includes ensuring employees are not subject to bullying, harassment, abuse or any other detrimental treatment
- Supply a sensible amount of alcohol to guard against inappropriate behaviour that may potentially end up becoming a grievance or disciplinary issue the next day
- Be safe – consider supplying transport home or have details of local taxi firms to hand
- Communicate arrangements well ahead of time and set out the guidelines for behaviour, especially if you have had issues in the past
- Where appropriate, cater for those who do not drink or eat meat and provide them with alternatives.

If you do not intend to have a party then it may be a good idea to look at other ways of showing appreciation for effort and contribution, following what may have been a very difficult year. The value of personal, positive and formal feedback to employees, which recognises their contribution is often underestimated and does not cost a penny except for sometimes, a positive word.

## Christmas Greetings

This last year has been a busy one for HR Insight as we have guided and supported many of our clients through some very challenging times. Despite these challenges, we have enjoyed working with you all and want to thank you for your continued support. We extend our best wishes for the festive season and here’s hoping 2010 is good to all of us.

**Can We Help?** We will only be closed on the morning of Christmas Eve and on the Bank Holidays. If we can help in any way over the Christmas and New Year period, please do call us on 01708 758958 or visit us on [www.hrinsight.co.uk](http://www.hrinsight.co.uk).

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