

Santa's Dilemma?

December 2010



Introduction

At this time of year Christmas food, parties and gifts are at the top of everyone's agenda. However in a few short months, parties and gifts will be on everyone's minds again but perhaps with slightly less cheer as April 2011 sees the implementation of the Bribery Act.

Should we rein Santa in?

The Bribery Act will cover the day-to-day practices of UK businesses and will impact on the practice of corporate hospitality, including the gifts 'Santa' chooses to give clients and suppliers!

In line with the tradition of the Christmas season, many organisations send and receive gifts from clients and customers and may invite clients to a variety of Christmas events.

However from next April, such activities could well fall within the offences described in the Bribery Act. We are all awaiting final guidance on the Act which we are hoping will provide clear clarity, with boundaries and parameters.

In the documentation produced so far, there is no defence for "reasonable" hospitality so the offering of what is perceived to be "lavish" may well trigger the application of the Act if it is intended to induce improper conduct. Those organisations may well attract the attention of the Crown Prosecution Service and Serious Fraud Office; bodies that will police the Act.

You are urged to review the Guidance which will be published in the New Year if clients' gifts, events and corporate entertainment form part of your sales, marketing or account management strategies.

Contact us

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Offices in Romford, London (City & West End), St Albans, Hayes and Redhill.



And talking of parties...?

With seasonal celebrations fast approaching, the usual pitfall of hosting these events for employees, once again, raises its head.

A friendly written reminder of the fact that you want everyone to enjoy themselves, combined with details of all the arrangements, is probably one of the best ways to encourage good behaviour.

There is also the question of alcohol consumption and unacceptable behaviour. Whilst not wanting to put a dampener on the festivities, there are steps that you must take to ensure health and safety is not compromised.

You may have rules stating that employees should not consume alcohol on company premises or present themselves for work whilst under the influence of alcohol. By considering what would be acceptable prior to being asked, you can positively communicate the arrangements and reiterate what is and isn't acceptable.

Avoiding party pitfalls

For parties on Company premises:

- Choose your timings carefully to minimise disruption to the business
- Select a designated area, ensuring valuable or dangerous equipment is locked away.
- Don't be over-generous when providing alcohol. Buy a sensible amount based on the number of people that are attending
- If providing food, make sure that the hygiene requirements are observed
- Avoid the inclusion of spirits or the stronger beer/wines in your bar selection.

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For parties at external venues:

- Set an agreed limit for the bar and stick to it
- Liaise with the venue's management regarding the standards of behaviour that are expected and advise all your employees of these
- Consider transport arrangements home and pre-arrange these if at all possible.

A big THANK YOU to you

On this last fact sheet of the year, we would also like to take this opportunity to warmly thank you for your support of us here at HR Insight and for taking the time to read our monthly thoughts.

For over a decade, this monthly sheet has communicated a huge array of changes in employment legislation, as well as providing simple insights into some of the latest HR views.

Factsheet webinars...

We are now inviting you to join our follow up webinar where the Factsheet subject matter for the month will be discussed.

Please email Joanna Cowie at jcowie@hrinsight.co.uk to obtain the login details. There is no fee for this event which will be held on Monday 6 December at 2.30pm.

Can We Help?

If you have any questions about the content of this Fact Sheet or any specific concerns about individual employees, please do contact us on 01708 758958 or visit us at www.hrinsight.co.uk

Fact Sheet webinar

We are running a Webinar at 2.30 pm this Friday, 6 December on Christmas Parties. To register or have your questions answered, email Joanna at: jcowie@hrinsight.co.uk