

Holiday Party Planning Tips

1. **Book Now, Don't Wait!**

I know it's hard to think about the holidays in July or August but it's critical to book your ideal venue EARLY. There are only so many options for your perfect holiday party that are the right size, in the right location and offer the right vibe for your group. When determining your date, consider also the best day of the week for your party. Mondays are more low key, but can offer greater venue options. Thursday's are more festive but can lead to more Friday "sick days" and Fridays allow your attendees to really let their hair down. Or, consider holding your holiday party in January to avoid the holiday party rush for your attendees and allow for more options with venues.

2. **Consider the "Plus 1" Option**

Consider the pros and cons of allowing your attendees to bring a spouse, partner or guest. Allowing the "Plus 1" option will double your total attendee count and your budget. It also may leave some "uncoupled" attendees feeling awkward. However, allowing attendees to bring a guest can also lead to a deeper connection with your organization. It also creates the opportunity for better bonding at the event where attendees can get beyond workday banter and engage in different ways with each other.

3. **Find a Balance**

You want to offer some entertainment and activities to make the evening and the conversation flow, but you don't want to dominate the evening either. Striking a balance with all your event elements is very important. If you have a limited budget, focus on one or two elements that can make a big impact, and time it out so that those elements make the biggest impression at the right point in the night. Find entertainment or activities that encourage interaction among attendees and maybe even something with a charitable purpose. If executives or board members give speeches, keep them brief – it's supposed to be a party after all.

4. **Select a Venue with Perks to Allow for Budget Spend on the Fun Stuff**

Select a venue with built-in lighting and AV that is part of the rental package rather than having to hire expensive equipment and laborers. Select a venue that's close to the office with ample free parking so that attendees can get there easily and without paying. Select a venue with rental equipment (tables, chairs, china) included. Carefully selecting a venue with perks built in allows you to spend your budget money on fun elements like food, entertainment and décor so it can really feel festive.

5. **Décor with a Purpose**

Get creative with your décor and ensure it serves double duty. Colorful, branded or festive décor pieces can serve as a visual display during the event but can also be your gift attendees at the end of the evening. Florals, branded merchandise and games can check multiple needs off your list and be a win-win for your budget.

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Missy Johnson, CMP – Principal/Meetings Consultant
MJMeetings, LLC – www.mjmeetings.com
913.645.6649 | missy@mjmeetings.com

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