

5 ideas for workplace holiday celebrations during COVID-19



Workplace holiday celebrations undoubtedly will look quite different this year at most companies. Many organizations are still operating remotely and safety concerns remaining top of mind. Gathering everyone together for a potluck buffet and a white elephant gift exchange might not be in the cards this year. However, employers still can (and should) find ways to mark this special time of year.

“The past year has taken a toll on all aspects of our lives,” says Scot Chrisman, founder and CEO of [NWT3K](#). “Everything from the pandemic to politics has elevated our stress and lowered our finances, making holiday celebrations seem bleak. As a business owner, it is crucial to overcome the miasma and welcome the coming year with an infusion of positivity.”

With a few creative ideas, you can still strengthen team bonds, thank people for their hard work, and infuse some much-needed fun into the work environment.

Enjoy virtual holiday parties

Use Zoom for more than just the Monday morning staff meeting. For example, host a workplace holiday celebration with food delivered to guests from local restaurants. (Your business helps them stay open.) Consider asking participants to dress up to provide a change of pace from dreary sweatpants. Festivities for this holiday celebration might include:

- Charades, Pictionary, bingo, multi-player video games.
- Karaoke.
- A virtual escape room.
- A seasonal craft (you send the supplies ahead of time).
- A holiday movie watch (perhaps through a streaming service to which you give a subscription).

Socialize on Slack (or other chat programs)

You don't need to have a formal workplace holiday celebration to instill some holiday cheer. Instant messaging platforms have been your team's watercooler substitute for months, so create some channels dedicated to holiday chatter.

- Host an ugly sweater contest.
- Create a recipe swap area.
- Post the best holiday deals.
- Share pictures of home offices decorated for the holidays and award participation prizes.

Send cheer

Rejoice, Secret Santa enthusiasts. The tradition can stay alive. As Janet Patterson, vice president of marketing communications for [Highway Title Loans](#), explains regarding her company, "Just like each year, employees will get one another gifts this year too. However, the only difference is that they'll mail them this time. On the day before Christmas Holidays, we'll have a Zoom meeting link sent out for each department individually and have the event. Everyone will unwrap their gifts one by one, just like each year. We think this is a very wholesome way to keep the holiday spirit alive and celebrate the happy moments together, as one big team."

For managers looking to brighten days, send staff members a surprise. From a festive poinsettia (not pet-friendly!) to a fruit basket and everything in between, almost anything can be delivered.

"We're going to send everyone a quarantine care package," says Jake Hill, CEO of [DebtHammer](#). "This will include a bag of high-quality coffee beans, noise-canceling headphones, a nice blanket for the cooler weather, and a few other odds and ends. All packaged carefully after being sanitized."

Give monetary gifts

The pandemic has taken a financial toll on many employers and employees. Raises and traditional year-end bonuses likely will be in short supply, but doing what you can to give workers something "extra" around the holidays is bound to draw appreciation. Write a check. Send a gift card—everyone can find something they like or need at Amazon, the grocery store, or a major retailer.

"We are planning to use funds saved on office rent and other expenses and roll it into our corporate gifting budget to provide cash bonuses to staff. We believe that the additional cash will be especially welcomed this year due to the unusual circumstances that we all find ourselves in," says Steve West, founder of [Entrepreneur Nut](#).

Looking for other ways to finance a holiday gift? Check the company's social budget, which likely hasn't been tapped as much this year.

"We're sending everyone some money to buy themselves and their families something nice since we won't be spending it on lavish parties this year," says Dmytro Okunyev, founder of [Chanty](#). "Our only request is for our employees to send us a few pics of themselves with their families. We'll then put these together in a collage, which we'll create and share after New Year's."

Get personal

Whatever you decide to give or however you choose to celebrate, include heartfelt thanks. A handwritten note expressing appreciation for going above and beyond during this unprecedented year or a sincere virtual toast focused on staff accomplishments in the face of adversity will boost spirits at a time when your team needs it most.

Additional Resource: Keep employee morale up by [instilling some fun](#) in the office - even remotely.