

Holiday Office Party, Fun Or Obligation?

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Office Party is kind of an oxymoron. I mean really, who equates anything to do with the office or their job with a "party?"

We should begin by defining the word "party." Parties usually start with invitations being sent by someone who wants to gather people they care about to celebrate something. The person receiving the invitation then can choose whether to accept or decline the invitation.



This time of year, many invitations are sent out for a different kind of party, the **Office Holiday Party**. Unlike other party invitations, many times, this invitation is not really an invitation but an order and attendance is mandatory! For some reason attendance at the Corporate Holiday Party has become part of one's job description.

There are many reasons businesses have holiday parties:

Some want to show employees how well the business is doing by splurging on open bars and fancy food.

Some want to make up for the fact that they pay their employees so little that for one night a year they treat them to food, drink and atmosphere the employees can never afford to enjoy on their own time with people they ACTUALLY care about.

Some call it "*employee bonding*." Getting employees who would never normally hang out together in one place to boost moral and teamwork for the office.

Some also wants to see who gets drunk, who over eats and basically watch to see who are the ass kissers and who just showed up for the free shit.

Some want to simply know that they not only control their employees from 8AM to 5Pm Monday through Friday, but also can control their off the clock hours by forcing them to come to a party the employee have no interest in just to praise the boss for his/her generosity for providing such a nice "*party*."

Whatever the reasons, many of these parties are MANDATORY and employees are instructed to attend or "*else*." Meaning there could be repercussions to anyone who does not agree to spend an evening with the boss and their workmates at a venue of the bosses choosing for the "**Holiday Party**."

Let's look at some Corporate parties and see if what many readers have told me is true. Holiday parties actually cost employees more money than the free booze and food

provided by the boss at the party.

First of course is babysitting. Many employees, who already pay extraordinary percentage of their salary for daycare have to now pay a babysitter to go to the Corporate Holiday Party.

Since many Corporate parties are held in fancy places, the lower wage employees may have to buy fancy clothes for both the employee and their spouse so they will look like they belong for one night in the boss's world.

Sometimes the venue chosen by the boss is also over an hour or more away from the employees home so many are forced to get hotel rooms since drinking is part of almost all Corporate parties. Add that to an overnight babysitter, the party soon is no longer a Holiday gift from the boss, but instead a stressful, expensive night the employee never wanted or needed.

Most employees, in fact would rather the thousands or in some cases, tens of thousands of dollars spent on the Corporate Holiday Party be spent instead to give THEM a Holiday bonus or an increase in their hourly wages. Most would rather spend their free time, especially during the holidays, with family than with the Boss and work mates when they are not on the clock.

On a personal note, I started working for a company when I was 20 and I worked with 3 other girls under a female boss. One day she said I was invited to her house for dinner as we all were and I said "no thank you." I did not want to go spend my evening with the people I spend 8 hours with and I wanted to go home make dinner and watch my recorded soaps and do my counted cross stitch.

Imagine my shock when my workmates told me I was not allowed to say no. That she had this dinner every year and we all needed to attend. My first question was, will I get overtime pay for this? Seriously, all I signed on to when I accepted the job was working 8-5. I never signed on to being forced to have dinner with my boss and my workmates but apparently it was part of the job.

So I drove 25 minutes to the boss house and had dinner because it was intimated that if I did not go, I would have problems at work. My work day that day was technically 15 hours but I only got paid for 8 hours. The dinner at the bosses that I did not want to attend was considered my "free time" even though I certainly was not free during the time I spent there.

The bottom line is that Americans spend more time at work than with their families in their own homes or on vacation when compared with our European counterparts. Many children come home each day to empty homes with no parents and many children don't even have regular meals with their working parents.

Many employees no longer have Thanksgiving Day off with their families and only get one day for Christmas and New years.

Employers today are trying to stop female employees from having birth control paid for by company insurance and force employees to live by the boss's religious beliefs.

Employers control most of Americans daily lives and I think it is wrong for them to

control any time employees are not on the clock. Forcing them to attend parties with people they can barely stand spending eight hours a day with when they are being paid for it; let alone being forced to spend a Saturday night partying with them at the bosses orders!

Refusing to realize that this time of year, employees would rather be doing what THEY CHOOSE with whom THEY CHOOSE when not on the job, continues to show the fact that many employers believe they can control every minute of every hour of an employees life. Even how they spend a Saturday evening in December.

Make no mistake, when attending an office party, you are on the job and your behavior is being evaluated just as if you were at your desk and on the boss's time because the party IS the boss's time and money!

I have heard from people who attend Holiday Office Parties who say that by attending they get "points" with the boss and may get promoted faster. WHY?

No "party" should ever be mandatory! An employee should be evaluated on the clock during working business hours. Not by what one's spouse wears or how one comports themselves off hours at a company party where drinking too much is encouraged and making a fool out of one's self usually happens.

Note: *Happy to report my husband is an independent contractor meaning the only Christmas Party we are going to this year is the one we hold in our own home for two people who have nothing to prove to the boss(my husband) and DO LOVE EACH OTHER*

Happy Holidays Everyone!