



Five tips for planning the perfect year-end party

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It's the end of the year and it is certain that between your ALA chapter, office and yourself, you will be hosting some kind of celebration. Planning the event can be a lot of work though. To help, here are five key considerations to help you create an inclusive event that everyone on your guest list can appreciate.

Choose a date.

When choosing a date, consider all holidays or important dates to all religions so that you can avoid a conflict. In order to create an inclusive holiday party, you'll have to come to understand the beliefs of everyone in the office so that you can plan accordingly. Then, grab a calendar and choose a date that works for everyone.

Select the perfect venue.

The perfect setting is about more than just linens, lighting and location. When selecting a venue, be sure to ask yourself whether the venue is accessible to guests with mobility issues, such as wheelchair users. Skipping this step means making your guests go out on a limb to ask if the facility is accessible, at the risk of being perceived as the reason why the event was moved if the venue is not accessible. If a venue is not accessible, don't choose it.

Food and Drink.

Having a mix of healthy and hearty food is a sure way to please guests of all backgrounds. When setting your menu, be considerate of those who may be vegetarian or have other dietary needs or restrictions such as food allergies.

One in five adult hosts will serve alcohol at a holiday function this year. If you plan to be one of them, try not to make drinking the center of the function so that those who do not drink for personal or religious reasons will not be made to feel uncomfortable.

Decorations.

Decorations are essential in creating a fun and inviting atmosphere for your guests. Fall or winter colors are usually a popular choice. It is best to avoid choosing decorations that have specific religious or cultural contexts. However, if you find that your guest audience is interested in having decorations that depict certain holiday scenes or idols, be sure to cover all of the holidays that everyone in the office celebrates.

Speaking of guests.

If it's within your event budget, allowing participants to bring a guest can make your event feel extra special. When asking for a plus one on your invitation, be cautious not to use words like "spouse" that would exclude individuals whose guest of choice may not be included in that category. Your guests may wish to bring a date from a committed relationship that is not defined by marriage, such as a long-term boyfriend/girlfriend or domestic partner

Additional Resources:

ALA Podcasts: Religion at Work— a three part series produced in partnership with the Tanenbaum Center on Interreligious Understanding. Includes "better practices" for holiday gatherings and other areas of office policy.

Legal Management Resource Center (LMRC) Articles about Holiday Parties