



Dear Chief

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COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: I’m the owner and manager of a mid-size company and each year I throw a Christmas party for my employees and their spouses or significant others. This year I’m getting push-back on it because of tensions between people of different religions. I’m thinking of canceling it but don’t like the idea of not having some type of informal party or gathering before year’s end. Should I press on regardless of some people’s feelings or should I just cancel the party and be done with it?

CHRISTMAS PARTY GRINCH



DEAR CHRISTMAS PARTY GRINCH: Throw a Christmas party? Heck yes! When properly planned and executed, a Christmas party can be great for morale. If you have people sensitive about calling it a Christmas party then call it a holiday party instead.

I learned a valuable lesson once when some of my employees, who were not Christian, gave me an earful on a Monday morning after an organizational holiday party displayed a nativity scene on the lawn by the front door entrance. I never realized that a baby Jesus in a manger could cause such an uproar, but in today’s world, religious overtones

Call it a holiday party and press on

sometimes seem to offend at least one or more people.

Additionally, I would not recommend making attendance at the holiday party mandatory and definitely do not give the perception that you will “notice” who’s there and who’s not. You don’t want people attending for the sole purpose of avoiding possible retribution. Rather, you want them to look forward to it--that your party will be a fun event (even if you have to hire someone to make it so).

If displaying a slide-show, be sure the humorous portions don’t offend anyone. Not everyone has the same sense of humor as you or those organizing the party. And be sure to keep all entertaining activities dignified.

When placing someone in charge of planning and executing your holiday party don’t make your expectations so daunting that it causes a great deal of stress for them or that it severely interferes with their work. And get your holiday committee together as early as September to give optimal time for the generation of ideas and the coordination of efforts.

Next year, I recommend you hold your holiday party in early December if possible (or in January as some companies do now). This reduces the chance of interfering with or disrupting people’s hectic schedules during the

holiday season. Book your location in early fall or summer to give your organization a better chance of having the party at a place of their choosing. Consider the length of drive when selecting a location so logistics don’t become complicated. And don’t make a potential late-night drive longer than it needs to be.

If you’re not funding the party with organizational money, I recommend conducting fund-raisers to raise money to cover costs associated with the party so people don’t have to donate their own money or buy tickets. Activities like car washes, bake sales, or auctions are simple and easy to organize.

Lastly, always ensure you have a reliable designated driver program in place for those who may need it.

So press on with having your holiday party, make it fun, and be safe. I’d also like to wish all of my readers and their families a happy and safe holiday season. Joy and peace to all!



For an opportunity to have your question, issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to www.DearChiefAdvice.com and submit your comments or email them to Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com.