



## CONTACTS

**James K. Pedderson**, Director of Public Relations

Office: 312-422-5078

Mobile: 847-567-1463

[jamespedderson@challengergray.com](mailto:jamespedderson@challengergray.com)

**Colleen Madden**, Media Relations Manager

Office: 312-422-5074

[colleenmadden@challengergray.com](mailto:colleenmadden@challengergray.com)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### 2015 Challenger Holiday Party Outlook **80% OF COMPANIES PLANNING PARTIES**

**CHICAGO, December 15, 2015** – Company holiday parties still appear to be in vogue based on a new survey showing that 80 percent are planning to have one, but there is mounting evidence that more companies are moving away from the extravagant affairs that were common prior to the Great Recession.

In the survey released Monday by global outplacement consultancy Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc., just over 80 percent of companies are planning to have a holiday party. About 13 percent of respondents indicated that they are having their first holiday party after one or more years of not holding one.

“With the notable exception of the oil industry, where falling prices have caused many companies to make significant cutbacks, most industries are enjoying the fruits of a growing economy. Most employers want to celebrate and reward their employees for their contribution to continued success,” said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

The Challenger survey was conducted in November among a small sampling of approximately 75 human resources executives, representing a variety of industries across the country.

“It is difficult to say if the recent shooting in San Bernardino, which occurred during a workplace holiday party, will prompt companies to cancel or alter their party plans. We speculate that most employers will not let fear dictate the decision to move forward with parties. However, we do expect that event, at the very least, to prompt further discussion within the party-planning groups,” said Challenger.

In the Challenger survey, 19 percent of respondents said that their companies would not be having a party this year. Most of these indicated that they never host year-end parties. The percentage of companies not having parties is nearly double the approximately 10 percent of companies not having parties a year ago.

In a separate survey on holiday parties by the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), about 30 percent of respondents said their organizations would not be holding a party this year.

“Holiday parties may be falling out of favor. Some companies may have cut them during the recession and found that they weren’t really missed. Parties can be a morale booster, but they can also be a source of stress for many employees. And, they are most certainly, a potential source of workplace pitfalls, especially if alcohol is being served,” said Challenger.

More than half (54 percent) of the respondents to the Challenger survey said their holiday parties would include alcohol. That was about equal to the 59 percent who said the same in the SHRM survey.

“The dos and don’ts list, which is already pretty long when it comes to workplace functions, becomes even longer when alcohol is involved. Actions typically governed by common sense take on an entirely new level of potential risk, as the level of good judgement shrinks in direct inverse proportion to the number of drinks consumed,” warned Challenger.

Nearly one-in-three respondents (31 percent) said their party will be held on company premises. That is unchanged from a year ago.

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## 2015 HOLIDAY OFFICE PARTY SURVEY RESULTS

### 1. Will your company hold a holiday party this year?

Yes, we held holiday parties throughout the economic downturn.	69%
Yes, we are having a holiday party after one or more years of not holding one due to economic downturn.	13%
No, we never have holiday parties.	13%
Not this year.	6%

### 2. Is your company budgeting more or less for a holiday party this year?

(Percentages are among those having parties.)

<b>Budgeting Same</b>	<b>92%</b>
Budgeting More	0%
Budgeting Less	8%

### 3. If you are having a party, can you share some of the following information, checking all those that apply? (Multiple answers allowed)

Using caterer, event planner or other outside service	62%
Holding the party on company premises	31%
Serving alcohol	54%
Inviting employees only	46%
Inviting family/spouse/partner to attend	31%
Holding party in evening or on weekend	31%
Holding party during workday or near end of workday	54%

*Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.*

## **GUIDELINES FOR OFFICE HOLIDAY PARTYGOERS**

**Arrive early:** This might be your best opportunity to talk with senior executives while things are still relatively quiet.

**Work the room:** It is easy to simply socialize with the members of your department, with whom you work with day in and day out. However, you gain if you use this occasion to meet people in other departments. You never know who can help your career.

**Do not over indulge:** Free alcohol can quickly lead to excessive drinking. Stay in control. You do not want to do anything embarrassing to you or your employer. Even if your alcohol-induced actions do not get you fired, they could hurt your chances for advancement.

**Be friendly, but not too friendly:** The company party is not the place to try out your latest pick-up lines. The risk of such behavior being seen as sexual harassment is high.

**Avoid talking business:** This is not the time to approach your boss with a new business idea. Save that for Monday morning. Instead, find out about his or her interests outside of the office. Find a connection on a personal level. That connection will help you on Monday when you bring up the new idea and it could help when it comes time for salary reviews.

**Attend other companies' parties:** 54 percent of company parties are employees only. If a friend invites you to his or her company party, you should go. It is an opportunity to expand your professional network, which is critical in this era of downsizing and job switching.

*Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.*