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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2018 Holiday Party Survey Report

ONE YEAR AFTER THE START OF #METOO, FEWEST COMPANIES CELEBRATING SINCE RECESSION RECOVERY

CHICAGO, November 6, 2018 – This year, 65 percent of companies plan to hold a holiday party, the lowest number since 2009, when 62 percent of companies held holiday festivities, according to survey results released Tuesday by global outplacement consultancy Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

According to the annual survey on holiday party plans, conducted in October among 150 human resources representatives across the country, nearly 27 percent of companies reported they never hold company parties, the highest since Challenger began the survey in 2004. Nearly 8 percent reported they are not holding a party this year for various reasons.

This is the highest number of companies reporting they will not have a party since 2009, when 38 percent reported they would not hold year-end celebrations. In that year, 15 percent of companies said they never have holiday parties, and 23 percent reported they were not having one that year.

“The low number of corporate celebrations does not appear to be due to economic reasons. Companies are sitting on tax savings and generally report a thriving economy,” said Andrew Challenger, Vice President of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

In the survey, companies reported higher confidence in the economy than last year. Sixty-two percent of companies said the economy has improved over last year. That’s compared to 48 percent who reported improvement in 2017. Nearly 29 percent reported the economy is on par with last year.

“We have never seen so many companies report that they never have holiday parties. The number could be due to several factors, including potential liability following the #MeToo movement,” he added.

In fact, of those companies that are having a party this year, nearly 58 percent reported they have addressed the #MeToo movement with their staff this year, 33 percent of which have addressed or will address this issue prior to the party.

Does your company have concerns about inappropriate celebrating following #MeToo?

Yes, we have addressed this issue with our staff over the last year and are taking precautions to ensure everyone is mindful of avoiding impropriety at the party.	27.27%
Yes, we have not addressed this issue over the last year, but will do so prior to the party.	6.06%
No, we are not taking any precautions for the holiday party, but have addressed the issue at work this past year.	24.24%
No, we have not addressed this issue and have no plans to do so prior to the party.	39.39%
Other (please specify).	3.04%

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. ©

“Other reasons for fewer holiday parties could include that a company’s workforce is primarily remote and it’s too difficult to gather for a holiday party, or perhaps companies are having parties at other times of the year. However, the fact that nearly 60 percent of companies that are having parties have real concerns about inappropriate behavior shows that HR departments nationwide are responding to this particular issue,” said Challenger.

“In some cases, that response may mean eliminating the holiday party,” he added.

Despite the low number of company parties, those that are holding holiday festivities plan to spend more. Nearly a quarter of companies plan to increase the budget for the party, the highest since 2007, when 38 percent planned to budget more than the previous year. No companies planned to budget less than the previous year, the lowest number since 2012.

“The cost savings associated with corporate tax cuts may be used toward the party budget this year,” said Challenger.

More companies plan to hold the party on company premises, with 39 percent this year versus 34 percent last year. About the same number of companies plan to serve alcohol as last year, 48.5 percent. This is slightly below the average of 51 percent of companies that serve alcohol since Challenger began asking the question in 2005.

“The impact of #MeToo has been overwhelmingly positive, and it’s clear the movement is spurring companies to enact important policies to protect workers – a huge boon to the business community,” said Challenger.

“The holiday party should be a time to celebrate the accomplishments of your workers as well as unite and gather as a team. Hopefully, for companies that are not having holiday get-togethers this year, they have other ways to recognize their people, so crucial to building morale and a positive culture,” he added.

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2018 HOLIDAY SURVEY RESULTS

Will your company hold a holiday party this year?

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Yes, we always hold holiday parties.	65.4%	72.7%	76.0%	69.0%	77.8%
Yes, we are having a holiday party after one or more years of not holding one due to economic downturn.	0.0%	4.6%	4.0%	13.0%	11.2%
No, we never have holiday parties.	26.9%	11.4%	16.0%	13.0%	6.5%
Not this year.	7.7%	11.3%	4.0%	6.0%	4.5%

If you are having a party, is the company budgeting more or less this year?

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Budgeting Same	75.4%	65.7%	68.4%	92.0%	76.0%
Budgeting More	24.6%	18.7%	21.1%	0.0%	18.0%
Budgeting Less	0.0%	15.6%	10.5%	8.0%	6.0%

If you are having a party, will you be (check all that apply):

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Using a caterer, event planner, or other outside service	51.5%	59.5%	66.7%	62.0%	58.8%
Holding the party on company premises	39.4%	32.4%	28.6%	31.0%	29.4%
Serving alcohol	48.5%	48.7%	61.9%	54.0%	41.2%
Inviting employees only	54.6%	59.5%	52.4%	46.0%	52.9%
Inviting family/spouse/partner to attend	30.3%	37.8%	42.9%	31.0%	29.4%
Holding party in evening or on weekend	45.5%	48.7%	38.1%	31.0%	35.3%
Holding party during workday or near end of workday	51.5%	51.4%	47.6%	54.0%	64.7%

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. ©