



## Holiday Parties A La Pandemic

employees pandemic

**Summary:** While holiday gatherings will likely need to be virtual, there are ways to make them more celebratory. We show you how.

Saturday Night Live aficionados may already know this, but the first season of SNL started in October 1975 with George Carlin as the host. Hard to believe SNL entertainment is still going strong 45Ys later!

As the world's seemingly longest year ever comes to a close, you may be thinking about some entertainment of your own for a company holiday party. Of course, the pandemic is re-shaping how people celebrate the holidays, including holiday office parties. Community financial institutions (CFIs) should not necessarily abandon holiday parties, but the approach will need to be shifted. While holiday gatherings will likely need to be virtual, there are ways to make them more celebratory than just another Zoom meeting. We have some ideas to help.

**Have a clear goal.** With most people suffering from Zoom fatigue these days, it is important to know what you are hoping to achieve from a holiday party before you begin planning. Do you want to connect and relax together or include some sort of teambuilding fun too? Knowing this will help set the stage.

**Be considerate about timing.** With many employees juggling work with the demands of at-home school children and/or spouses or roommates, holding holiday parties during work hours could be more popular and appreciated. Remote holiday parties held after hours may feel like another work obligation, while a party held during work hours is more of a treat. The one exception to this would be if a party involves the family members of your employees.

**Consider shared experiences.** Having to gather remotely doesn't mean that you can't get creative. One type of group event that has become quite popular since the pandemic is shared experiences, such as virtual wine tastings or cooking classes. Attendees are mailed supplies in advance and then walked through a tasting or a cooking class by a local or celebrity chef or a sommelier. Or you could just send everyone a gift basket full of a few gourmet snacks and a bottle of wine so that everyone can enjoy the same food and drink during your virtual party. Alternatively, you could send everyone the same supplies for some sort of craft that everyone can work on at the same time and then compare, such as a gingerbread house.

**Connect and engage.** Just like in-person parties, virtual gatherings need to be entertaining to hold people's interest. Whether you choose to hire an entertainer, such as a comedian or magician, or even decide to host a game that everyone can actively participate in, think of a way to connect and engage your employees. There are multiple options available these days, from [virtual escape rooms](#) where a guide oversees your group as you work to solve multiple clues and puzzles to group trivia games.

Company parties are still a great way to thank your employees for their hard work in 2020 and get into the holiday spirit. In order to continue the holiday party tradition this year, CFIs just need to be creative and think about the interests of your employees. Have fun on that virtual dance floor!

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