

# Food for Thought:

## Office Holiday Parties Shift Focus on Food & Drink in 2014

### Survey Reveals Enduring Importance of Holiday Parties Even Amidst Cost-Cutting Measures

Despite the mindful cost-cutting measures companies continue to take, holiday parties are still an important part of corporate culture, according to a recent survey of more than 1,100 administrative professionals conducted by Seamless Corporate Accounts. In its second year, the survey reveals that companies are paying attention to holiday party spending and shifting away from expensive sit-down meals, party venues and open bars. Instead, companies are opting for in-office parties and hosting more social events throughout the year.

### Employees Continue to Look Forward to Corporate Holiday Parties

While dancing, live entertainment and alcohol are the decline, employees still look forward to getting together with colleagues and enjoying some holiday cheer. Nearly a quarter (**24 percent**) of respondents report they would be very disappointed if their company's holiday festivities were cancelled, while over half (**51 percent**) would be disappointed to somewhat disappointed.

The survey finds that over-the-top corporate extravaganzas have been replaced by holiday parties that more than a third (**36 percent**) of employees deem as a 'casual event that people stop by at the end of the work day'. Only **26 percent** see the holiday office party as an 'opportunity to let loose, even for executives.'

Even without the excessive party perks, employees are still eager to attend their company's party. More than half of respondents (**56 percent**) report they arrive on time for their holiday party and a third (**33 percent**) indicated that a large crowd typically stays until the end.

### More Budget-Friendly Parties

When asked how much their company will spend on the holidays, compared to last year, half (**50 percent**) indicate their company will spend about the same, while **14 percent** will spend less than last year.

As a money saving option, more companies are hosting their parties at the office. **Thirty-seven percent** of employees report that their party is held at the office, up from **29 percent** in 2012. As for locations outside the office, restaurant and bar

### Holiday Parties



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### Holiday Entertainment

|            | 2014 | 2012 |
|------------|------|------|
| No Alcohol | 44%  | 21%  |
| No Dancing | 70%  | 37%  |

venues dropped from **39 percent** in 2012 to **32 percent** in 2014, while local event spaces remained the same at **25 percent**.

Offices in the largest cities across the U.S.—New York, Chicago and Los Angeles—still prefer restaurant/bar venues for their parties, but hosting in the office does not trail far behind.

| Answer Options                   | New York | Chicago | LA  |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------|-----|
| At the office                    | 35%      | 29%     | 32% |
| At a restaurant/bar              | 43%      | 33%     | 45% |
| At an event space                | 26%      | 31%     | 20% |
| At a boss's or colleague's house | 3%       | 6%      | 3%  |

### A Different Approach to Holiday Meals

With the rise of in-office parties, potlucks are gaining popularity. While the majority (**41 percent**) report having a full dinner (buffet or sit-down), that number is down from **49 percent** in 2012. Additionally, parties featuring finger foods fell from **40 percent** in 2012 to **31 percent** in 2014. Office potlucks, where employees bring dishes for sharing, more than doubled in popularity, with **22 percent** reporting it as the type of food served for their holiday party; up from **10 percent** in 2012.

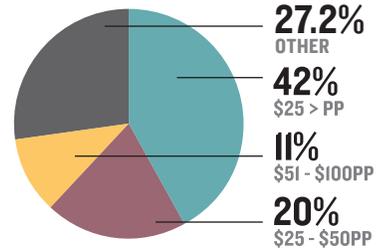
The shift in how food is served for corporate holiday parties is also being accompanied by a downward trend in how much is spent per person. More than a quarter (**26 percent**) of respondents, estimate \$11-\$25 is spent per person; relatively unchanged from **27 percent** in 2012. However, **15 percent** report less than \$10 per person being spent, up from **8 percent** in 2012, while spending \$51-\$100 per person declined from **21 percent** in 2012 to **11 percent** in 2014..

### Spending Less to do More

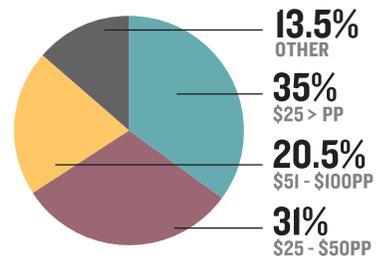
Many companies have scaled back their corporate holiday parties, but they continue to host additional events that celebrate milestones and foster comraderie at other times throughout the year. Nearly half (**41 percent**) of respondents indicate their organization has one to two events during the year, in addition to their holiday party, that are centered around corporate or cultural milestones. Additionally, close to a quarter (**23 percent**) indicate their company hosts frequent happy hours or social events throughout the year.

### Holiday Meal Cost

#### 2014



#### 2012



## The Bottom Line

Companies continue to keep a close eye on expenses, but understand the importance of the holiday party to employees—a tangible way to show appreciation for hard work and celebrate the season. The Seamless Corporate Accounts' survey confirms that despite cutbacks in sit-down meals, alcohol and entertainment, employees still look forward to their holiday parties—an indication of a party's significance as an employee perk and positive aspect of the corporate culture.

Companies are taking notice of this value and are hosting more events for their employees to socialize and enjoy throughout the year.

## Methodology

The nationwide survey polled 1,197 full-time professionals, of which **73 percent** are involved with planning their company's holiday activities. Respondents were equally distributed among small, medium and large companies and represented more than a dozen different industries.

## About Seamless

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Seamless Corporate Accounts, GrubHub Inc.'s leading online food-ordering and billing service for offices, simplifies the process of ordering and paying for food in the office. Used by thousands of corporate clients across the US and London, Seamless Corporate Accounts save companies time, money and hassle by consolidating all ordering into one online account and sending one invoice for all orders.