

PUBLICATION

2016 Christmas Party Post Mortem

December 15, 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS IS SATIRE

MEMORANDUM

To: Management Team
From: Legal Department
Date: December 15, 2016
Re: Company Holiday Event Post-Mortem

Three years ago, the Company Christmas Party resulted in various criminal charges, allegations of sexual harassment, compensation of the entire Accounting Department for an all-night game of Truth-Or-Dare, a workers compensation claim for dance fighting, and the consummation of a little boy named Wendell, Jr. The Legal Department took inventory of these events in a [memorandum](#) that provided advice for future parties.

For the past two years, that advice has generally been followed. Both "Non-Specific, Non-Denominational, Non-Mandatory Holiday Events," as management's emails referred to them, were joyless and claim free. The lawyers were pleased.

Last night's event was not in keeping with the previous two years. Peg, the CEO's assistant, has reported that the new Executive Vice President of Marketing, Todd Packer, was tasked with planning the event because the Office Administrator and the CEO are on a continuing education trip to Cancun, Mexico. (A separate memo will address this trip.) Todd was apparently unaware of the policies in place concerning the Holiday Event, and the following issues have been reported to the Legal Department:

- First, Todd Packer sent several emails to staff members promoting the event that contained statements such as "all the cool kids are coming" and "if you're not there, you don't care – about tradition or morale or the U.S. of A." He also told several managers to make sure their employees show up. So far, two team leaders have reported that Todd said "I'm sure guys who don't have their all of their people at the party will be considered for bonuses – just not in my organization." Not surprisingly, the event was well attended. Todd's tactics likely changed the voluntary nature of the event to mandatory, and we should compensate the employees who attended to avoid potential wage claims.
- Second, Rhiannon from Graphic Design used the event to promote marijuana use, which was recently legalized locally for recreational use and medicinal purposes. She set up what she described as a traditional Tibetan tent and invited anyone interested in broadening their horizons to leave their shoes and prejudices at the door, step into the tent, and greet each other with a soft "Namaste." Rhiannon has convinced Human Resources that she should be allowed to smoke marijuana at

periodic intervals during the day as a reasonable accommodation for an anxiety condition (which may be legitimate and legal), but she cannot share it. Because Company policies applied at this gathering just as they do during a normal workday, any employees who self-medicated with Rhiannon will be terminated because marijuana is, after all, still illegal under Federal law. We will also have a counseling session with Rhiannon about the limitations of her accommodation and update our policies to ensure they comply with the new laws.

- Third, Wendell, the current manager of the mail room, brought his wife, Peggy, who formerly worked for the Company in Human Resources. Lonnie from IT also brought a date, Lurline, who turned out to be Wendell's high school girlfriend. After quickly discovering that Lonnie is not much of a conversationalist, Lurline begin downing Boiler Makers. Just as she was finishing her fourth, she spotted Peggy standing next to Wendell, the man she still considers the love of her life. Lurline, a champion wrestler in high school, took a running start and launched her surprisingly agile 5' 3" 245 lb. frame over the punch table and into Peggy as the unsuspecting human resources professional popped another Swedish meatball into her mouth. Chaos ensued. Mr. Packer began taking bets, and significant property damage occurred before the women could be separated.
- Finally, and thankfully, three Eastside police officers arrived. Unfortunately, they began arresting everyone because of the violence, gambling, and heavy smell of marijuana. We were saved, however, when Jose from Ethics caught the attention of the lead officer. He was sitting next to Maria from Compliance. Don Key from Labor and Tre Kamel from Shipping stood on each side of the pair. A light fixture broken during Lurline's leap at Peggy emitted a star-like glow. And situated between Jose and Maria in a punchbowl full of potato sticks sat an unopened Hatchimal—the hard-to-find star of this year's Christmas shopping season. Sensing exactly what was at stake, Jose agreed to give the officer the Hatchimal if no one was arrested. The party disbanded and everyone somehow made it home safely.
- We recommend that the Company take the following steps next year to avoid these and other issues: (1) The party must be voluntary, and if we ask any non-exempt employees to perform services during it, they must be compensated for it; (2) The party should be planned by a committee that includes at least one high-level Human Resources employee; (3) No alcohol should be served, particularly Lurline's favorite whiskey, and if it is, a car service (and security guard) should be provided; (4) We should consider restricting the event to employees only or holding it during work hours so guests are not invited; (5) We must send consistent communications before the party stating that all company policies must be followed at the event; (6) Jose must be counseled that Company employees, particularly those in the Ethics Department, cannot engage in unethical conduct such as bribing police officers, even at the Holiday Event and even if it benefits the Company; and finally (7) We must, *today*, fire Todd Packer.

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