Don’t Forget Office Gifts for the Holiday Season

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Don’t forget office gifts for the holiday season

If you are a manager or boss who has direct supervision over employees in your firm, you are entering that period of the year — the holiday season — when gifts, bonuses and holiday parties provide opportunities for you to recognize and reward your folks.

Or not.

You can always opt to be Ebenezer Scrooge and refuse to sponsor or endorse end-of-year festivities on the grounds of cost (no need to spend more money), fairness (don’t want to single anyone out in particular for fear of hurting someone else’s feelings) or religious beliefs.

Bah, humbug to you.

If the Ghost of Christmas Past (officially convinces you to shed your scrupulous ways, consider your options for employee recognition.

Business this year may not have fulfilled expectations, which suggests that bonuses may not be the best way to say “thank you” to your employees. Conversely, if you can afford it, bonuses are always welcomed. However, if your business is not the non-alcoholic ones — are excellent events that do not cost too much, yet engage most everyone. While fun and often therapeutic, such parties are not the forum for you to say “thank you” in a meaningful way to your direct reports.

Instead, you may wish to consider giving a gift to those who are directly responsible to you for executing the firm’s mission.

Let’s start with what not to give. In general, items of a personal nature are off-limits. This includes clothing, jewelry, perfume/cologne or gifts that appear to have intimate connotations.

There are some obvious exceptions. If you have purchased shirts, scarves or jackets with the company logo, these are acceptable. Watches, for example, with a company logo are also okay.

A good litmus test to determine the appropriateness of the gift is the “fair use” test. If the “fair use” of the gift would make the spouse or parents of the employee uncomfortable, then it is probably not an appropriate gift.

What is acceptable? Probably the safest gift to give is food.

A myriad of companies locally specialize in creating beautiful gift sets of all sizes and prices involving food. Cheeses, jams, meat, cakes, crackers and nuts and many other foodstuffs are available and represent a nice, tasteful way to say “thank you.”

While alcohol is a bit more risky but may work in certain situations. Clearly, you need to know how your employees would react to such a gift.

Useful office items, again perhaps with the company logo, are universally well-received. Clocks, business card holders, paperweights, and nameplates are examples of refined gifts for professionals.

Many local companies operate in this sector and offer a wide range of interesting office gifts ranging from basic to decorative.

Finally, a gift card to a local store is also appreciated. This is an especially good idea given the current economic conditions. Supporting local businesses is a win-win outcome.

Your employees will appreciate (almost) anything you give, as long as you say “Thank You!”