

59% of UK workplaces downscaling Christmas celebrations – as overwhelmed professionals feel ‘too much’ pressure to socialise

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33% of UK workplaces are planning smaller celebrations this year. Whilst a quarter (26%) say they aren't holding any festive celebrations at all.

New research from [Robert Walters](#) shows that the Christmas party as we know it is changing, as are professionals' attitudes to festive celebrations in the workplace.

Lucy Bisset, Director at Robert Walters UK comments: "In the face of tighter expenses, many employers are dialling back their festive celebrations. However, there is also mounting pressure coming from professionals who increasingly feel that their company's Christmas budgets could be spent more wisely than in the traditional office Christmas 'knees-up'."

Turnout taking a hit

According to the 1,700 professionals polled by Robert Walters, almost half (47%) plan on giving their work Christmas party a miss this year.

Over three-quarters (78%) of professionals now think that attendance at their work Christmas party has become less important since the pandemic.

Lucy adds: "The post-pandemic workplace has gone through numerous changes – from most professionals

working in at least a partially-hybrid capacity, a greater proportion of younger professionals embracing alcohol-free socialising and more focus being placed on work-life balance.

“The thought of setting aside an entire evening during the already busy run-up to Christmas can feel like a logistical nightmare for many.”

Festive burnout

When quizzed about the Christmas party deterrents, just over two-fifths (42%) of UK professionals stated that it creates too much pressure to socialise with colleagues.

A quarter feel like their Christmas parties are not inclusive – with alcohol-fueled faux pas highlighting or even creating cracks in company culture.

Meanwhile, a further fifth (22%) state that there are just too many personal costs associated with attendance – including forking out for office secret Santa presents, finding a suitable outfit, and footing the bill of taxis to and from the event itself.

Lucy notes: “In a period, infamous for draining both workers’ pockets and social batteries, it can feel as though work Christmas parties are yet another costly duty professionals must fulfill before the year is up.

“However – done right, they serve as an opportunity to celebrate the efforts of workforce throughout the year. Accessible and inclusive parties can provide a great way of ensuring all staff feel valued.”

Alternative celebrations

37% of professionals stated they’d prefer a more casual office Christmas party – one that either took place in the day so they could clock off earlier (54%) or gave them a specific activity or game to take part in (31%).

According to findings from [Robert Walters Benefits reporting](#) – the majority (79%) of professionals don’t class ‘employer-organised team building/socialising opportunities’ as an important workplace perk.

In fact, over half (52%) of professionals would select a gift or small bonus over organised celebrations.

Lucy concludes: “Christmas parties are a staple in almost every workplace’s diary – though they need a revamp. Large-scale office events may place too much pressure on professionals to turn up at the end of the year.

“Instead, simpler approaches like immediate team lunches, games, small gifts or perhaps a re-allocation of festive budgets into professionals’ pay packets as a small December bonus may be the best way for employers to show their staff some holiday spirit.”