

# Keeping Employee Morale Alive- Why Employee Events, Gifting and Perks are essential during uncertain economic times.

We hear it time and again, employees are the most important asset of a company. Then why in highly stressful and difficult times, do companies, owners and managers often neglect their staff?

We all have been witness to the dark cloud of insecurity, as it has cast a shadow over Canada and the rest of the world. In the past 6 months the cloud released its wrath and started to rain on the economy's parade. As a result, companies have pulled back budgets and tightened the reins. One of the first areas to feel the repercussions of uncertainty is employee perks, gifts and parties. In a recent Robert Half International study titled "30 Most Common Mistakes Managers make in an Uncertain Economy" the seventh most common mistake is "eliminating incentives". The study continues to say, cutting budgets should not mean cutting rewards. Low and no-cost incentives can make a significant positive impact.

A little extra goes a long way in boosting employee morale. It is important to show your staff that you appreciate and understand the challenges they face, both personally and professionally. Everyone is working "just as hard", with less resources, yet increased pressure, stress and uncertainty regarding job stability. As the economic landscape has become rockier, employers should make employee morale a priority in the face of uncertain times.

If companies eliminate special gifts, parties or perks that have been done annually (during the good times) they are potentially projecting a message that can be interpreted by employees to mean their efforts and hard work (during strained times) is not appreciated. Some organizational experts say that eliminating parties, events or gifting is demoralizing, dissatisfying and insulting to employees. By continuing to show gratitude to staff, they will be more affective, productive and loyal to the organization, rather than "just putting in time". Take the time to reward staff with small items of appreciation, share words of encouragement or celebrate small successes. You will be surprised at how affective it can be as a motivator.

Time Is Money has witness both ends of the spectrum. One large organization recently completely eliminated two annual gift programs, citing budget cutbacks. Another client asked Time Is Money to prepare their annual Valentines basket for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row. The management requested that costs be decreased and thus a small basket with themed items focusing on maintaining good health, was created. Along with the basket, management included a letter to encourage staff members that in periods of change and stress, good health is an important tool to alleviate both short term and long term affects of stress. The president of the local company commented that the next Monday, all of the staff was exceptionally happier. He feels this small gesture definitely made a difference to the staff morale.

Gifts and events do not have to break the bank. Creative and small gestures, which show employees that they are appreciated and their efforts are noticed, can be downsized, without complete elimination. Employees will understand going from a 5 star event to a cost conscious venue, or receiving something more frugal instead of a large gift; if the decision is explained to them.

Specific to Calgary, Stampede is just around the corner. There are numerous ideas that can be brought to life for reasonable pricing and that will still leave a memorable impression on your employees, customers or attendees. For one client Time Is Money created shoe shine kits wrapped in a bandana for Stampede. The cost? Less than \$10 per gift. Instead of providing a gift to everyone, why not have a unique centerpiece at each table or a set number of special gifts that can be "give-aways."

There are so many ideas for inexpensive gifts and events, that are unique and different, yet still portray thoughtfulness and class. To avoid being labeled frivolous; functionality and usefulness of a gift and a purpose to an event, should be expressed. Use a theme. Not every gift has to be "company logo'd", combine logo'd and regular items together.

A modest gift or party does not mean your company is in trouble. In fact, eliminating employee perks truly does send a red signal, which can further increase employee stress and uncertainty. In the end, creativity will be recognized and thoughtful statements will have lasting impressions.

Cynthia Pickering  
Founder  
Time Is Money Executive Concierge Inc.  
[Cynthia@timeismoney.ca](mailto:Cynthia@timeismoney.ca)  
403 612 2993

[www.timeismoney.ca](http://www.timeismoney.ca)  
From Glamour to Janitor- we do it ALL!

## About Gifting and Event Planning with Time Is Money Executive Concierge Inc.

For 4 years Time Is Money Executive Concierge Inc. (Time Is Money) has been known throughout Calgary, Western Canada and North America for their superior service, solutions, promptness, reliability and creativity.

Over the past 4 years, Time Is Money has launched a Gift Basket/Corporate Gifting Division, a Cleaning Division, a Wedding Planning Division, a Las Vegas VIP Division, a Travel Agency and most recently Senior Concierge Division.

Our gifting division is energized by thinking creatively and "outside the box". We can assemble distinctive and customized gift ideas, event themes or centre pieces, which make thoughtful statements. We are able to create baskets or packages for any price point and any event. From baby gifts, wedding gifts, birthday presents & housewarming presents to corporate rewards and thank-yous; we have ideas to match your needs and style.

Time Is Money attends Gift Shows around North America to ensure we are on the pulse of what is unique and original. We use these new ideas to create custom gift baskets, give away bags and center pieces at all price points. As a result, we are associated with numerous suppliers and artists that enhance our ability to offer distinctive ideas that make lasting impressions. We also have access to 100's of wholesale catalogues to obtain items at below retail costs. Our catalogues are in any theme, any event/season and for items from jewelry, purses, clothing, home decoration, kids toys and gifts, sculptures, glassware, Christmas decorations & so much more.

If the gift itself is useful and memorable, it can reinforce your company brand or characterize your personal consideration. Capitalize on special days; a birthday, welcome spring, a new house! We are not talking about spending a lot on these days. That small amount can say so much.

For Weddings; Why not give a 2-in-1 favor? A themed photo album with a picture of the happy couple is a great favor and thank-you card. Give a decoration that represents the wedding theme (tropical destination wedding) or the personalities of the new couple; your guests will think of you every year at Christmas!

For Car Dealerships; Go that extra mile and stand out among the regular and generic loyalty gifts. Have a gift basket (with themed items and vehicle branded items) on the front seat when a client picks up their new vehicle or even a small gesture after servicing.

For Real Estate Agents; Create "new home" gifts based on the personality of your clients; sport themed, young family, retired couple, golf enthusiasts, travel, etc. Remember special dates and send special gifts for special events; new parents, birthdays, retirement, welcome spring, summer fun, etc.

For Event Planners and Charity Events; combine a unique centre piece as a give away or for each table to have their own mini auction.

We have attached two files; one of current Stampede ideas and another of personal and corporate gift baskets we have created. If you would like more information about our company and the creative solutions we have created, visit <http://www.timeismoney.ca/gift-baskets-calgary.shtml>

Time Is Money possesses a passion for efficiency, organization, attention to detail and meticulous professionalism. We are successful only when we assist our clients to achieve success, satisfaction, productivity and sustainability in their work initiatives, personal life and corporate objectives.