

# Halloween At Your Office

*By John Reh*

For most people, Halloween centers around their children and the annual trick-or-treat festivities. However, Halloween is also celebrated at the office by a growing number of companies. That's a good thing for the business as well as the employees. Here is a plan that you can start today that will let you and your employees reap the benefits of Halloween at the Office.

## **Why Should I Bother**

You can use Halloween at the Office to build morale and teamwork. At the same time it can help you spot creative and participative talents among your employees. Your people have a little fun in the office, which builds morale. Groups of employees work together on fun projects, which helps build teamwork. Employees from different departments share a common activity, which improves communication and inter-departmental cooperation.

You get to identify the people in your organization with hidden talents, skills like creativity, team leadership, and cooperation, in a non-hierarchical setting.

## **Start Today**

Even if you haven't yet started, it's not too late. Find, or appoint, a volunteer to coordinate the activities. Human Resources and Communications are good places to find this type of individual, but it can be anyone.

Decide what the event will include, when and where it will take place, and set a budget for the event. Then get the word out.

Use whatever employee communications methods you have to announce the Halloween at the Office event. Post it on the bulletin boards and the company intranet. Send out a blast email. Use the communication tools you have so people will have enough time to get their part ready.

## **What to Do?**

Below are a few options that may work for your company. Be aware of the company culture, its industry, and its location.

### **1) Halloween Party**

Usually this works best at lunch time. Set it up in the company cafeteria or lunch room if you have one. Get facilities to put up decorations, which you can purchase. Make sure everything is fireproof. The party can be as simple or as extensive as time and your budget allow, from a buffet lunch to punch and cookies. Having a party increases the time that employees from different departments will interact and provides a venue for judging a costume contest if you have one. It also gives employees who cannot, or choose not to, participate in the costume contest an opportunity to interact with those employees who do.

### **2) Costume Contest**

Set up and publish the contest rules, including categories. You may want to have separate contests for teams and for individuals. Award prizes for best, most original, scariest, lamest, etc. You can even give a prize to the individual who's costume most resembles a corporate executive or best exemplifies the company spirit.

### **3) Area Decorating**

Starting the morning of the event, allow employees to decorate their group areas in a manner reflective of Halloween. They may want to create a haunted house or a graveyard. What they come up with tells you something about the people in the group. How well they do it says a lot about their team spirit. Keep an eye out for the informal leaders who emerge during the process who you might be able to develop further.

### **4) Other Games and Contests**

If it's appropriate for your company, consider apple bobbing or pumpkin carving or anything else your event leader comes up with.

Events like Halloween at the Office can be great ways to promote employee morale, teamwork, and inter-departmental cooperation. They can also help you identify creativity, innovation and leadership talents among your employees that you can develop for business purposes. Besides being good for business, it can be fun. Give it a try.

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