



Holiday Season: Reducing Employee Stress

By Kelly Spors

The holiday season is supposed to be a time of comfort and joy. Yet, for many people, it can also be a time of great stress. Employees have to juggle their professional duties with personal demands, such as shopping for gifts, hosting and attending holiday parties, cleaning, and cooking.

Moreover, some workers may feel financially or emotionally drained this time of year. "The holidays can be a hectic time for many, and a lack of money, a lack of time, and the hype and commercialism of the season causes increased stress" for many Americans, according to a 2006 study by the American Psychological Association.

Business owners and managers can take steps to relieve their employees' stress levels around the holiday season and make their lives a little merrier.

Be flexible about scheduling

Offering flexible scheduling or extra personal time in the days leading up to Thanksgiving or Christmas may be the best gift you can give your

employees. This will allow them extra time to run errands, shop, spend time with family or simply unwind during the hectic holiday season.

Hire temporary staff, if you need extra help

Hiring a few extra workers can relieve your full-time staff and prevent them from needing to work overtime around the holidays.

Don't overdo employee holiday events

Even though it's a festive time of year, office holiday parties and other employee events around the holiday season only place an extra burden on your staff. Consider keeping work-related events to a minimum around the holidays, if possible. Perhaps host just one party or employee event over the holiday season.

Praise your staff

Your employees may need some extra encouragement and compliments around the holidays. Tell employees directly that they're doing good work or give them cards with messages that show gratitude. Whatever you do, avoid making



the holidays extra stressful by complaining too much or pressuring your employees.

Be sensitive to cultural or religious differences
Remember that not everyone celebrates

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Interested firms please contact John Papagiannakis at Skanska Koch Inc., john.papagiannakis@skanska.com

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