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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Holiday Cheer in the Workplace is Waning, Study Says

Interest in giving gifts at work and amount workers are willing to spend decrease in 2015

ATLANTA – Dec. 2, 2015 — Despite a predicted uptick in consumer spending during the months of November and December, according to the National Retail Federation (NRF), more American workers are likely to leave their office colleagues off their shopping lists this holiday season. According to the “WorkSphere” survey from national staffing company Spherion and conducted online in November 2015 by Harris Poll among over 1000 adults employed full or part time, employees plan to give less and spend less on workplace gifts this year.

Fewer workers this year than last plan to give gifts to nearly everyone in their workplace, with only 31 percent planning to give gifts to their co-workers at their level (down from 38 percent in 2014), 28 percent planning to give gifts to their boss (down from 34 percent in 2014), and 19 percent planning to give gifts to other colleagues (down from 24 percent in 2014). The number of workers planning to give gifts to their direct reports remained steady at 17 percent, down only slightly from 18 percent last year.

Further, those who do still plan to give gifts in the workplace will likely spend less in 2015 than they did in 2014. American workers anticipate spending an average of \$17 less on gifts for their immediate colleagues this year than last. Direct reports, bosses and other office mates also should expect to receive less, with the amount workers plan to spend on these groups decreasing by an average of \$10-\$14 this season.

“While many offices and their workers want to acknowledge the holiday season within the workplace, many are struggling to find the right balance in making sure all employees feel comfortable and can enjoy celebrating,” said Sandy Mazur, Division President, Spherion. “As the holiday season draws closer, it’s important for companies and their workers to be transparent and set ground rules for gift giving, décor and events that match their office culture, while also promoting the fun and camaraderie that this time of year is all about.”

Overall, about half of companies are planning to celebrate the holiday season as an office (51 percent), with 58 percent of workers noting their company typically acknowledges specific holidays during the period between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day. However, this practice seems to go against the opinions of a significant number of American workers. Forty-four percent think their company should host a general end-of-year celebration, not specific to religious or cultural beliefs, while 19 percent of companies already have plans to host a non-denominational “holiday party” this year.

The survey found several other interesting trends surrounding how companies and their employees are planning to approach the holiday season:

The Office as a Home for the Holidays?

- Companies who host a seasonal celebration are almost as likely to bill it as a “Christmas” party (22 percent) as they are a “holiday” party (19 percent, respectively). Similarly, an even number of companies display holiday-specific decorations for different holidays (16 percent) as they do for just one specific holiday (15 percent). One-in-five also do not typically acknowledge specific holidays at all during the holiday season.

'Tis the Season of Appreciation

- 55 percent of workers think the reason their company is planning to celebrate the upcoming holiday season is to thank employees and show appreciation for their work throughout the year.
- More than half (53 percent) of workers would give their company a grade of “B” or higher for their success in making all employees feel included and appreciated during the holiday season.
- Among those who plan to buy gifts for people at work, 44 percent would give gifts anyway to people who do not celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa to make them feel included.

Unwrapping Workplace Gift-Giving Challenges

- The pressure of having to buy something for everyone is a detractor again this year for those who do not plan to buy gifts, with 41 percent of workers saying it’s just too much. Nearly one in five workers who won’t buy gifts are concerned with perceptions of trying to gain favoritism.
- As the structure of the traditional workplace shifts, 18 percent of workers say one reason their company isn’t planning to celebrate the upcoming holiday season is because employees are too spread out and there is no central location for everyone to celebrate.

Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of Spherion from November 17-19, 2015 among 2,104 adults ages 18 and older, 1,034 of which are employed full or part time. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. Data for the 2014 survey was collected online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of Spherion from November 19-21, 2014 among 2,013 adults ages 18 and older, among which 873 were employed full or part time. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Jamie Cwalinski at 404-877-5534 or jamie.cwalinski@mslggroup.com.

About Spherion

Spherion Staffing Services is a leading recruiting and staffing provider that specializes in placing administrative, clerical, customer service and light industrial candidates into temporary and full-time opportunities. As an industry pioneer for more than 68 years, Spherion has sourced, screened and placed millions of individuals in virtually every industry through a network of offices across the U.S. To help clients meet their workforce goals, Spherion offers companies a unique combination of personalized customer service and in-depth knowledge and expertise of the communities where Spherion offices are located. Each local office is individually owned and operated by a team of staffing specialists who are well-known and acquainted with the community and supported by a strong network of talent. To learn more, visit www.spherion.com. Also, as part of one of the fastest-growing industries, Spherion is actively expanding into new territories, with more than 75 franchise markets available. To inquire, visit www.spherion.com/franchise.

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