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PRESS RELEASE**UK-Wide Christmas Office Party Survey Reveals Stingy IT and Legal Companies, a Very Charitable Charity Sector and a Riotous Media Sector.**

London, Oct 27 2004: Results from an online survey announced today reveal the truth behind office Christmas parties in the UK; from the most miserly employers, to the most outrageously behaved employees. In an effort to find out which regions and which industries have the most fun at their office Christmas parties, Sigmer Technologies used its online questionnaire tool, Boomerang, to survey 16,067 people all over the UK, from all industry sectors.

People were questioned about their annual office Christmas party on areas of expenditure, venue, and what they actually got up to on the night! The online survey asked 11 questions in total, with single, multiple, and text option answers. The survey had an average response time of about 3 hours.

Regionally, London companies generally gave the most expensive bashes with 73% of people saying that over £200 per head was spent on their Christmas parties, and only those working in the South East actually had £200 or more spent on them. It seems that the rest of the UK bore the brunt of cheap-skate employers, with 40% of the South East, 50% of the Midlands, 75% in the South West and a distraught 100% of Wales having less than £30 per head spent on their office Christmas Party. Yet, despite the overall statistic that London was more generous, 87% of people working in IT who went to parties with £30 or less spent per person were from London and the South East.

There were, as you might expect, also discrepancies between the industry sectors, with some spending more on their employees than others. Unsurprisingly the Media, Finance, and IT sectors had the largest percentage spend per head compared with other industries such as the Public Sector. However industries one might expect to have a lavish office party often had the least spent on them, with a surprising 100% of people working in the Legal sector having less than £90 spent on them per head. The clear leader of employer generosity was within the Charity sector – with a startling 100% of this sector paying over £60 per head on their Christmas parties and 50% spending over £120 on each employee. The Public Sector fared the worst, with a disappointing 60% spending less than £30 per person at their office Christmas parties.

But often quality and not quantity is the measure of a good time. Regardless of the Christmas budget, often where the money is spent can dictate just how much fun an office party can be. In Britain the phrase 'free booze' will almost certainly light up any employee's eye and ensure that they'll get at least some enjoyment out of what can be an annual bore. Unfortunately for the Public Sector, none of the people questioned were given even this small gesture of Christmas cheer, with an astonishing 100% saying that no free booze was available at their Christmas party. Media stayed true to its reputation with 87.5% saying they received free booze at their Christmas party. Legal companies proved particularly stingy for such a well-paid profession, with only 50% of the survey participants enjoying a free booze bar.

Whether or not the level of free booze has an effect on the enjoyment of parties cannot always be certain, but the people working in the Charity sector certainly saw more action than most, being the only sector with employees who were arrested during their office Christmas party - perhaps all that expenditure brought out the demon in them.

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Media employees were the most vocal and visual, with a satisfactory 31.3% insulting their boss and 12.5% indulging in a bit of festive flashing. These same Media workers proved equally romantic with 37.5% snogging a boss/colleague. Those working in IT gave Media a run for their (employer's) money with 42% being sick and an unsettling 36.8% also snogging a boss/colleague.

Aside from romantic liaisons and being sick, many people still managed to get up to something else embarrassing at their office Christmas party and, despite having no free booze at their Christmas party, 50% of those from Public Sector still had embarrassing moments to remember the next day. Those questioned from the Finance industry managed to talk business at a social event, with a boring 16.6% being promoted at their office Christmas party, but presumably after that deal was sealed they then dashed off to become part of the 50% who participated in a little 'embarrassing behaviour'. Employees from the Charity sector continued their exuberant activities, with 50% being involved in embarrassing behaviour, alongside a surprise contender, the Business sector, also with 50%.

Despite, or perhaps because of their various 'activities', 26.5% of people in IT said that their office Christmas party was 'So poor, they wished they'd stayed at home', and 25% of the Public Sector agreed with them, perhaps the lack of free booze made an impression after all! Overall, 50% of Media employees said that their Christmas party 'rocked', as did 35.7% of those working in Business and 33.3% in Finance. 5% of IT professionals felt that their office Christmas party could be improved by a change of location to an ice-rink, and 8.3% of people questioned from the Finance industry felt that a football ground would be good venue.

Boomerang is an online questionnaire management tool developed by Sigmer Technologies, which allows users to quickly and easily create real time questionnaires, utilising a variety of question/answer formats. Questionnaires can be created to have multiple choice answer formats, including yes/no answer options; single answer options; and/or a multiple answer option with free text answer format (for example, see Question 7). The survey can be compiled and sent out to an email list within the hour. Boomerang automatically collates the responses and develops them into statistical information. These statistics can be exported to other programs, including Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint, for further analysis. The automatic analysis of real-time data and immediate response capacity enables users to view live feedback. Boomerang also allows companies to brand the questionnaires with their own imported logo. Boomerang utilises email format, making answering much easier for the respondents, eliminating the need to download further information. This promotes a fast response rate, giving valuable feedback for the user, often within hours.

About Sigmer Technologies

Sigmer Technologies was founded in 1999 and is based at the Sussex Innovation Centre. The company's carefully balanced team of specialist programmers, designers and consultants has attracted a number of high profile clients, including: British Sky Broadcasting; The International Save the Children Alliance; Memorex; Apex Car Rental; and History.uk.com. By combining traditional computer technology with advanced cutting edge innovation, Sigmer provides a full range of programming, web design and Internet and IT based services individually tailored to meet clients' needs. More information about the company can be found at www.sigmer.com.

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