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Nov. 21, 2016



To gift or not to gift at work? That is the question many employees ask during the holiday season. In a recent survey from staffing firm Accountemps, the majority of human resources (HR) managers said it is acceptable for employees and managers to exchange presents in the office.

Sixty-three percent of respondents noted it's appropriate for supervisors to give their staff a holiday gift, and 58 percent said it's appropriate for workers to give their boss a gift.

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- "An employee gave a re-gifted gift that the manager had given the year before"
- "A big order of frozen pork"
- "A lavish gift. Something that was very valuable because of favoritism"
- "A mug with a satirical phrase on it, used to make fun of someone"
- "A wig"
- "A \$700 gift card"
- "Liquor"
- "A dozen roses"
- "Cash was given discriminately in different amounts to different employees"

"As much as people enjoy giving presents, this can be a sensitive issue in the workplace and becomes a personal decision based on individual relationships," said Bill Driscoll, district president for Accountemps. "More important than the dollar amount, the focus should be on giving something meaningful to the recipient. The best gifts are thoughtful and demonstrate care for others."

HR managers were asked, "**How appropriate is it for managers to give their employees a holiday gift?**" Their responses:

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|---|------------|
| Very appropriate – it's a must | 17% |
| Somewhat appropriate – it depends on the work relationship | 46% |
| Somewhat inappropriate – it can seem like you are playing favorites unless all employees get a gift | 21% |
| Very inappropriate – it shouldn't be done | <u>16%</u> |
| | 100% |

HR managers were also asked, “How appropriate is it for employees to give their

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| | |
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| | 100% |
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Accountemps offers five rules for exchanging holiday gifts in the office:

1. **Give unconditionally.** Don't gift out of obligation or because there's an expectation of something in return. Similarly, managers should make sure employees know trading presents, even if there is a group exchange, is optional and not a requirement.
2. **Make it personal.** Show you are thinking of the recipient by finding something he or she will specifically enjoy, such as a gift card to their favorite coffee shop or a book related to a hobby they pursue.
3. **Don't be overly extravagant – or a Scrooge.** Spending too much can make the receiver uncomfortable, while spending too little can make the gift seem like an afterthought.
4. **Present it nicely.** No matter the present, cheerful packaging shows thoughtfulness. Include a personalized holiday card with it.
5. **Be thankful.** Always express your appreciation. Go the extra step and send a handwritten thank-you note that expresses your appreciation for their help throughout the year.

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