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Outrageous expense submissions cited by CFOs:

THE AUDACIOUS

- Trip to Italy
- Bear rug
- Pogo stick
- Taxes
- Moving a horse trailer
- Jet ski rental
- A home
- Traffic tickets
- Hot air balloon ride
- Gambling



CRITTERS & KIDS

- Pet sitting
- Daycare
- Kids' clothing
- Crib
- Toys
- Animal rental
- Museum admissions
- Crayons
- Cow
- Video games

Finance departments continually develop rigorous expense reporting guidelines, but that hasn't stemmed the flow of eyebrow-raising requests by some employees, new research suggests. In a new survey, 56% of CFOs cited an increase in the number of inappropriate reimbursement submissions over the last three years. Some of the more egregious infractions included a cow, Super Bowl tickets and invoices for another company.

CFOs were asked, **"Have you seen inappropriate expense report requests increase or decrease in the past three years?"** Their responses:

- Significantly increase: 27%
- Somewhat increase: 29%
- No change: 29%

- Somewhat decrease: 11%

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- Taxes
- Moving a horse trailer

Expenditures for children and pets, like the following, were commonly flagged:

- Daycare
- Pet sitting
- Kids' clothing
- Cat litter
- Toys

Household items and expenses were also popular reimbursement submissions:

- Chandeliers
- Tractor
- Tree
- Plunger
- Bed bug removal

There were even a few requests that verged on the incredulous:

- Chicken statue with a top hat
- Yacht
- Pearls
- Motorcycle
- Lamborghini

“Some of the more absurd expense report submissions may seem laughable, but they can be an expensive problem for businesses,” said Tim Hird, an executive vice president with Robert Half, which conducted the survey. “Companies must have

effective review systems, policies and processes in place, or they risk losses in profits

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make sure there is no ambiguity among employees about what constitutes a valid business expense. Regularly share your policies and include examples of past tricky situations to clarify gray areas.”

Robert Half Management Resources offers managers three ways to address and reduce inappropriate expense report submissions:

1. **Overcommunicate guidelines.** Make company policy easily accessible and provide regular reminders through the employee newsletter, company intranet or staff email.
2. **Discuss expense report issues with employees.** Improper submissions may be the result of staff members' lapse in judgment or attempt to push boundaries. Whatever the reason, follow up with employees so that mistakes can be avoided in the future.
3. **Review new requests carefully.** Keep an eye on future submissions when a significant problem has occurred. If you spot a red flag, address it immediately and reinforce company policies.

Accounting • Technology

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