



# Team Building & Corporate Events

City, Suburbs & Across the Nation

## Top 10 Reasons to Have a Company Picnic

Look Inside for Ways  
to Maximize the Value  
of Your Multi-Day Meeting  
and more!

The idea to host a company picnic may be nothing new, but it remains one of the most popular corporate events for organizations that want to get employees and their families in one large, festive environment.

And it's no wonder. Where else can you entertain hundreds of people with food, drinks, games and general merriment – without expensive ticket prices?

To help you expedite the event planning process and get to the real fun, here are the top ten reasons why you should choose a company picnic this year:

- 1. Morale Booster** - There is no doubt that hosting company events is about showing appreciation for employees. That being said, it also gives employees an opportunity to strengthen relationships with co-workers, especially ones who they may not have met otherwise.
- 2. Space** - Planning an event for hundreds of people makes it difficult to find a large enough venue. But because picnics generally take place outdoors, you no longer have to contend with square footage limitations.
- 3. Food** - Let's face it – the food is the main course of any company picnic, and it is one of the most important components. Typically, these events serve up barbecue or summer fare, but the beauty is you can choose whatever you like. Even coleslaw tastes better at a picnic.
- 4. Entertainment for All Ages** - Everyone likes to be entertained at a company picnic. And not just having a clown at the event (although that is one possibility). Include fun, interactive sports games plus magicians, dunk tanks, bounce houses and more. A good outdoor event entertains all ages, from little tikes to seniors.
- 5. Convenience** - The nice perk about picnics is they generally operate in open house format. That means you don't have to worry about everyone getting there on time. For some of us, that is a good thing.
- 6. Easygoing** - Picnics are inherently casual, which puts a lot less stress on the event planner as well as all of the guests. It's a come as you are kind of day.
- 7. Location** - Unlike event planning for a conference or seminar that is out of state or across the country, the company picnic can be in a setting that is close to work. That means it is easier to check out locations before you make a decision. Plus, the less your guests have to commute, the more likely it is that they will show up.
- 8. Outdoors** - O.K. the outdoors part has come up already, but this point deserves its own place. After all, if you live and work in Chicago, then you know how exciting it is to be outside after a long, cold winter.
- 9. Kid-friendly** - We realize that not all employees have children, but for those who do, a company picnic is the perfect way to include family members. And it is easy to incorporate activities that children can enjoy.



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- 10. Stress-free** - If you are the event planner, then you may be wondering how this last one is possible. But when you plan your company picnics with Windy City Fieldhouse, its staff literally does everything for you – site selections, catering, serving, coordinating and setting up entertainment, transportation, and even entertaining the kids so adults can relax and mingle – yes, really!

Good luck planning your summer event. See inside for more summer planning ideas and other corporate event programs. ■

# Maximizing the Value of Your Multi-Day Meeting

Although it takes a lot of time, money, planning and energy to make them happen, multi-day meetings are capable of adding a lot of value to your company. Because so many resources are used to execute a multi-day meeting, it is important that the company get as much as possible out of it. Usually, there are specific agenda items - rolling out a new strategic plan, getting everyone on the same page, reviewing a new compensation plan, training on the latest technology or all of the above. While these agenda items are certainly the main focus, it is also a great opportunity to build relationships between the various regions or departments that will be attending, and ultimately create bonds that will allow them to work better together in the future. Let's walk through a few ideas to help foster the idea of building relationships and creating a multi-day meeting that maximizes the short and long term value for your company.



## Kicking off the Event – Team Building Program

When kicking off the multi-day meeting, you want to make sure to do it with energy. In addition, you want to get everyone's focus directed to the goals of the meeting as quickly as possible. Kicking off the day with a 1.5 to 2.5 hour team oriented event is a great way to accomplish this goal. You quickly get everyone's blood flowing, bring up the energy of the group and start to build relationships amongst attendees. You also more quickly separate the employees from that last client call or long day of travel that might distract them from the desired focus on the event. Another benefit of holding the kick-off event early in the meeting schedule is the ability to create teams to maximize the co-mingling of groups and get attendees out of their comfort zones. Organizers are able to mix teams from the East and West Coast offices, between sales and marketing or between whatever groups you strategically want to develop deeper relationships. With groups interacting across regions or business units over the next several days, these new relationships will introduce their existing contacts within the company to their new friends helping build and create even more relationships. In addition to enhancing relationships, the **kick-off team building event** is customized to match your goals for starting the event – increase teamwork and communication, enhance strategic planning, further define the key takeaways from the meeting or a combination of all these goals. The key is to do it early in the meeting schedule and make sure it has high energy and breaks down barriers amongst the various teams and departments attending.



## End of the First Day – Interactive Reception or Charitable Giving Event

After the first day is over, a big risk is having everyone end up back in their hotel rooms. One way to avoid this common meeting error is holding a **reception** to end the night. A reception alone is enjoyable, but you need to add just a little bit to it to entice people to attend and also add more value. A great option is to add some fun, non-team focused entertainment to the evening such as casino games, pool tables, foosball tables, Wii games on several large screens or even a green screen for some fun photos. The goal is to keep people together to continue building new relationships. It is also a great opportunity for people who met earlier in the day to spend more time together. Structured activities are not the best during this time because people might want to come and go as they wish. By adding some fun games and entertainment where people are able to simply walk up whenever they want, a fun and relaxing



atmosphere is created to continue growing team bonds. This point in the meeting is also a great time to setup an area at the event to add a **charitable giving component**. If desired, attendees have the option to spend some time together working on a charitable activity during the reception. Whether it is giving back to a local charity, school, food pantry or community group, adding a charitable activity to the reception builds a lasting sense of team unity.

## Second Day – Meeting Energizer or Game Show Competition

The second day is typically the core of the meeting. Often times, there is an agenda to follow so there isn't much time for anything else. Sitting through meetings all day can get hard; minds start to wonder, people get tired and stress levels increase. A great way to combat all of these negative effects is by doing a short event that takes place over lunch. **A trivia or game show competition** is easily facilitated during lunch right at the tables. By doing a quick energizer activity during lunch, you get the blood flowing again and also get them refocused. Best of all, you don't use up any of the agenda time for the day.



## A Little Something Extra – Scavenger Hunt or Amazing Race

One thing that is often brought up by clients that fly their employees in for a multi-day meeting is that their employees never get to see the sights of Chicago. Feedback from attendees often includes comments such as "We were in Chicago for 2 days and all I saw was the inside of the hotel". For many of the employees, this meeting could either be their first time to Chicago, or maybe their visits are always business oriented, never allowing them to see anything other than offices. If at all possible, a great option is to schedule a team event that not only gets them out and about, but also gives them a chance to see the great sights of Chicago. On the last day of meetings, all you need to do is set aside a small amount of time during the day or possibly as an evening event the night before. Your options include either a **2-hour activity** that takes them all over a specific area such as the Greater North Michigan Avenue area or, if you have a little more time, a **3-4 hour option** that allows them to travel all over the city to exciting locations like Wrigley Field, Chinatown and more. These events not only help foster relationships and strengthen team bonds, but they also allow attendees to see the sights of Chicago and not just the interior walls of the hotel ballroom or conference center. Employees truly appreciate and remember their experience in Chicago with more enthusiasm and gratitude.



## The Wrap-up

Planning a multi-day meeting has its own set of challenges for the organizer. Adding some of these high energy team orientated activities to reinforce the key meeting messages and also keep the energy high throughout the week, increases the participation and effectiveness of your meetings. The activities also help build lasting relationships and strengthen bonds amongst team members. In the end, it allows you the chance to maximize the short and long term value for the company while adding some fun and excitement to your meeting agenda.

For more information on maximizing the value for your next meeting, contact your sales representative today at 773.486.7403 or Request a Proposal. ■



## Should You Include Family at Company Events?

One of the more frequent questions asked to WCF planners is, "Should we include the family of our employees when planning a company event?" And it makes total sense; no one wants to be remembered for committing a major party faux pas.

To help you navigate the sea of invite indecencies, here are some suggestions on when to keep it employees-only and when to elect for a family-friendly event.

### When to Invite Family to the Party

#### • First Meeting

If you have never met the significant others and/or children of your co-workers, then extending an invite to them helps you better understand the people you work with through the eyes of their family. It strengthens relationships between employees by revealing the personal sides you don't always experience behind a computer.



#### • Employee Happiness

By including the family of your employees at a company event, you demonstrate to employees that this isn't just about business; it's about including the loved ones into the circle, too. This instills a sense of belonging and if increasing overall happiness among employees is one of your goals, this is one way to accomplish it.

#### • Picnics and Parties

Summertime company picnics and holiday parties are two of the best opportunities for inviting family into the fold. Not only does it capitalize on the season (think warm summer days and festive winter nights); it can also making your corporate events more interesting.

### When NOT to Invite Family to the Party

#### • Work Talk

If your event is focused on recapping sales figures or talking about the next marketing campaign, then inviting the family is not a good idea. It can deter your employees from their most productive contributions, and it is just plain boring for non-employees. Unless you have activities for family members to engage in during work-related portions, keep the invite list to employees only.



#### • Team Focused Event

When the purpose of your corporate event is primarily focused on very specific team building goals between co-workers such as building camaraderie, improving creative thinking or enhancing group problem solving, then having family present will generally be counterproductive to your event goals. Save the family invite for the summer picnic or holiday event.

#### • Cost

If including the loved ones of your employees is cost-prohibitive, then the best choice is to invite just the employees. You can always plan ahead for a family-friendly event next year.

Of course, all of these are only suggestions. Every business' situation is unique, so when planning an event remember to consider the focus of the event, employee engagement, time of year, budget, and overall feelings on family. ■

## Event Spotlight: "Cake Boss" Meets Team Building!

### Increase Morale and Improve Creativity with "Let's Cut the Cake" Challenge.

The beginning of the year always brings a heightened sense of awareness on team goals and the ongoing challenge for HR managers to improve team morale.

**"Let's Cut the Cake" Team Challenge - focusing on communication, creativity and thinking outside the box** - is the perfect event to kick off the New Year.



Combining the flare and excitement of the show "Cake Boss" with WCF's award-winning Team Challenge, **"Let's Cut the Cake" Challenge** is designed to re-energize your team and get them focused on 2016 goals while increasing morale and improving teamwork. Teams work together to design a cake while completing challenges and trivia to acquire additional supplies needed to enhance their cake masterpiece. Designs are judged not only on appearance but their ability to convey the corporate message communicated to the teams at the beginning of the challenge. **Successful teamwork, creativity and time management tend to bring home the winning designs!** Once all the designs are complete, each team makes a presentation to prove why their masterpiece takes the cake!

To learn more about how you can help get your team focused and energized to meet its new goals for 2016 with WCF's **"Let's Cut the Cake" Challenge** or to request a proposal, visit [WindyCityFieldhouse.com/challenge#cake](http://WindyCityFieldhouse.com/challenge#cake) or contact your sales representative at 773.486.7403. ■

## Book Your Summer Picnic Now and Save!

There are many questions to ask as you begin to plan for your company's next summer picnic!

- How soon should I start planning?
- What is the budget for the event and how can I maximize the return on our investment?
- How do I find the perfect venue and get permits?
- What types of activities should we offer?



**But there is only one answer...**

**Let WCF help you select the best event to match your unique goals and objectives!**

**Taking advantage of WCF's experience gained from executing over 2,000 picnics and outings is priceless. Don't settle for anything less!**

**ACT NOW and SAVE!** Book a Summer Picnic by March 31st and receive discounted pricing\* along with access to WCF's team of expert summer outing planners. Contact your sales representative today at 773.486.7403 or [VisitWindyCityFieldhouse.com/picnics](http://VisitWindyCityFieldhouse.com/picnics). ■

\*New Proposals only. Must mention this newsletter and book event by March 31, 2016 to receive discounted pricing.



## TEAM BUILDING & CORPORATE EVENTS

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**CALL FOR YOUR FREE CUSTOMIZED  
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## Windy City Fieldhouse Referral Program

**Happy Clients are the Best Advertisement!**

Therefore, we want to reward clients who refer business to Windy City Fieldhouse. For every business associate you refer who books a WCF event, **you receive a \$100 AMEX gift card.\***

Thanks for your continued support.  
We look forward to working with you again soon.

Just a few of our happy clients:



\*Some restrictions apply. External referrals only. Ask a sales rep for details.

## 1st Quarter Event Ideas

- Team Challenge
- Mousetrap Race Car Challenge
- "Mission Impossible" Scavenger Hunts
- Great "Amazing Race" Chicago
- Taste of Windy City Scavenger Hunt
- Events for a Cause – Bike Building, Casino Nights, Charity Scavenger Hunts and more
- Meeting Energizer Program
- And More!

**VOTED CHICAGO'S  
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