



## How to Plan Your Company's Summer Picnic in 10 Easy Steps

*compliments of Let's Gogh At*

The annual summer picnic or outing is a tradition for many companies and groups. It's the perfect opportunity to give employees or group members (and their families) a fun time out of the office to celebrate their hard work.

Below are 10 easy steps for planning a memorable summer event. We encourage you to get creative and have some fun.

### 1. Who to Invite?

This is the first step in your planning since this decision impacts so many of the other decisions. Choosing who to invite impacts many of your other decisions about the event. Will just employees be invited, spouses/partners or children/family. You'll want to get an estimated headcount in order to properly plan your picnic. Remember that 80% of people attend...on average.

*Questions to ask:*

- What is the budget for the event?
- Is a focus of the event to build camaraderie and goodwill amongst employees and/or employees and their families?
- Is the event focused on enhancing relationships amongst employees?
- Is the event strictly to reward employees?
- Is the priority on younger employees (generally without families) or those employees with families or both?
- If the priority is on both, how will the needs of the different groups be addressed?

## 2. Time for a Shindig

When picking a time for your shindig, consider your organization's typical work schedule, vacation schedules, and who's on the invite list. If inviting family members and/or children, late afternoon or evenings during the week, or on a weekend day may be the best option. If you're just inviting employees a weekday picnic may be a better option (plus, you may want to give your team the day off and have them enjoy a picnic instead). Saturdays at lunchtime and early-mid afternoon is typically the most popular day/time for family picnics. A recent trend towards evening picnics held from 5:00-9:00pm has proved popular with some of Let's Gogh Art's clients. Evening picnics are a good choice for many companies for a variety of reasons such as cooler weather, lower costs, larger range of available dates and more!

## 3. Find fun new locations

Change it up each year (or every couple years) and find fun new locations to host your outings. Depending on your budget and size of group, there's a whole host of interesting destinations, including local parks, amusement or water parks, dinner cruises, farms, country clubs, wineries, museums, outdoor festivals, or even the company premises can be a good, cost effective alternative. Check out a few of our favorite venues: [Kimball Farm, Westford, MA](#); [Nashoba Valley Ski Area/Tiki Hut, Littleton, MA](#); [Crane Estate, Steep Hill Beach, Ipswich, MA](#)

## 4. Plan activities that cater to your audience

Inflatables, [arts & crafts](#), pony rides, carnival games, games, sports, animal shows, [photo booths](#), paddle boats, and karaoke are just a few of many activities that you could offer. Whatever activities you choose, make sure they fit your audience and the ages in attendance. If you're planning a number of activities, it's a good idea to publish an agenda for all the attendees. Consider adding a charitable twist to your event this summer. We offer Paint beCAUSE canvas painting fundraising and stuff a bear activities in which children stuff a bear for themselves and for a homeless child, or a child in a hospital. We also have unique paint-n-press t-shirts which can include your company logo.



## **5. Event entertainers help engage**

Caricature artists, clowns, balloon artists, event artists, trapeze artists, gymnasts, stunt men, magicians, DJs, acrobats, [face painters](#), [temporary tattoo artists](#), jugglers, ventriloquists, comedians, fortune tellers, puppeteers, bands, soloists, dancers, and impersonators are all great event entertainment for any summer outing and really amp up the interactivity.

## **6. Everyone loves a raffle**

Do you know anyone that doesn't like a raffle. Add a bit of excitement by having your guests enter a drawing for some great prizes. It's a special way to give employee gifts without singling out people. In addition to gifts like bikes and iPads, give away gift cards, company gear, and even some paid days off!!

## **7. What's your theme?**

We love themes and think they're a great idea for company outings. If done well, they are a super fun twist on an otherwise ordinary event. Weave your theme into the food, activities, decorations and even communications about the event (invitations, reminders, posters). Themes could include a beach party, safari, wild-west, casino, circus, Olympics, luau, field day, etc.

## **8. Feed the hungry hoard**

What's a picnic without some yummy food? Summertime favorites such as corn on the cob, hot dogs and hamburger are usually sufficient. But if you want to really treat your group, go for steamed lobsters and clams. An ice cream Sundae bar is always a favorite as well as seasonal fruit. Consider trying new food this year, but don't forget the kid staples if they'll be at the picnic, like chicken nuggets and potato salad. Choosing a good caterer is important so start checking them out early in the process.

## **9. Consider including the classics**

Popcorn and cotton candy machines, ice cream and snow cone stands, or the annual company softball game, tug of war, the dunk tank, a dance contest or volleyball tourney. The classics and traditions of company picnics should be included. Make sure to include the traditions and classic elements of a company picnic that your guests love and that are unique to your company culture.

## 10. Pump up the volume on promoting the event

When you have all the details down pat, pump up the volume on promoting the event. You'll get everyone excited, and you'll also be building company loyalty. Your promotions about the picnic should include more than just a company-wide email or inclusion in a newsletter. Print up some personal invitations to each employee and their family. Considering coming up with a brand/logo for the event and display posters and communications around the company. Maybe you want to create a micro-website or intranet site.

Finally, the devil is in the details, so don't forget the logistics, including planning for rain. The company picnic is a special time to celebrate your organization and the people that make it function. It's a great time to get better connected within the team, get to know your employee's families, build rapport and relationships, teamwork and pride and loyalty in the organization.

We hope you have a great summer picnic 2015. Please keep Let's Gogh Art in mind for family and kid friendly arts & crafts including the ever popular activities like: sand painting, spin art, tie dye t-shirts, canvas painting, beading, face painting, glitter tattoos, balloon art and more. We've been hosting corporate and group events for over 10 years with thousands of people. Check out our website for more information. We "gogh" wherever you go! [www.letsgharteastma.com](http://www.letsgharteastma.com)

### Picnic Menu Ideas & FAQs

Answers Courtesy of Bonnie Matthew, Owner/President of [ERC's Preferred Partner Food for Thought](#)

**1. What are some popular choices this summer that companies seem to be ordering?**

Items that can be grilled on site, such as marinated chicken accompanied by some unusual side dishes such as a grilled sweet potato salad or a quinoa salad.

**2. What's good guidance on amount of food and beverage per person?**

If grilling and offering a choice of entrees, make sure to have at least 1 to 2 pieces per person (i.e. one piece of chicken and one hot dog). By offering beverages in dispensers you are sure to have a nice variety and plenty to go around. If it is hot you want to make sure your guests stay hydrated with plenty of cold water (try infusing it with basil and cucumber for something a bit different), iced tea or lemonade.

**3. Best advice you would give a corporate summer picnic planner?**

Make sure that you are setup to keep your cold food cold and your hot food hot on your buffet line. Depending on the size of your event the logistics can overwhelming consider having either a portion or the entire event catered so you can take care of the entertainment details. Give us a call we would love to be part of your corporate celebrations this year no matter how big or how small.