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Plan a Retirement Party Checklist

Follow this step-by-step guide for planning a memorable and fun retirement party. Before beginning anything, there is information you must know.

1) First thing to decide is if the retiree actually wants a retirement party.

Not everyone does. The retiree may prefer something else like being treated to lunch by close friends from work or no celebration at all. Ask. Find out what type of party would the retiree prefer?

Note: If it's a surprise party, you may already know the retiree's preferences based on personality. Also, you can ask a relative. You may want to get cooperation from relative(s) to help with arrangements.

2) How many people are coming to the retirement party?

This question decides if the party will be large or small. Are family members of the guests invited? Their children? If so, will arrangements like babysitting or entertainment for them be arranged?

3) Who is paying for the party?

Is it the employer or will a fee be collected from guests?

4) Formal or informal?

Usually a retiree with a high title has a more formal party.

With a general idea of who is coming and what your resources will be, you can now plan the party itself.

5) Party Theme

Will the party have a theme based on the retiree's hobby or interest? An example would be a baseball themed party. Location, invitation, decorations, entertainment and gift follow the theme.

6) Location

Some retirement party ideas for location are the office, restaurant, country club, dinner cruise, a home or backyard. If it's outside, don't forget to prepare for the possibility of bad weather. Use tents or an easy way to move the party indoors.

7) Food, Drinks, Snacks and Cake

Don't forget to consider special diets of the retiree and guests.

Decide the menu at a restaurant or hire a caterer for the office. Or you can have each guest bring a dish for a personal home-style touch if the retirement party is being held in an office or at a home.

8) Invitation

A flyer or notecard should have basic information about the retirement party.

The information should include: retiree's name; location of party with directions and parking information; date and time; fee; deadline to respond and pay the fee; contact name with phone number and/or location

The party invitation can be by mail, email, displayed or personally given to potential guests.

After the guests respond, you will have specific information about who is attending and the funds available. Now, you can decide how much money can be spent for things like decorations and a gift.

9) Entertainment

You can hire entertainment like musicians. Or create your own entertainment by having someone bring CDs and a player. Be imaginative.

For instance, you can create a short video about the retiree which can be shown during the party.

10) Party Decorations

Balloons, banners, party favors

11) Retirement Gift and Card

Have everyone sign the card in secret.

12) Miscellaneous

If it's an office party or held in a home, you will need to buy paper plates, napkins, etc.

13) Speeches

Ask before the day of the party if anyone (including the retiree) would like to make a speech.

14) Camera and/or Camcorder

Have plenty of batteries.

15) Before the Retirement Party

Be at the party location early to decorate, prepare food and ensure that everything is ready for the guests and retiree.

16) Retirement Party Begins

Have fun!