

Christmas Party Blues for Britain's Small Businesses



Released on: December 02, 2009, 12:39 pm

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Industry: [Human Resources](#)

It's been a tough year for Britain's small businesses, but even with the end in sight, hardworking business owners and staff are not in the mood to party. Almost half of SMEs (42%) are not going to have a Christmas party and 46% will not be paying any bonuses, according to new research from uSwitchforbusiness.com, the dedicated SME price comparison and switching service.

80% of SMEs have found 2009 to be a tough year. As the impact of the recession took its toll, 58% of business owners were forced to find ways to cut costs and only a third (33%) were able to leave staff perks unscathed. And it seems that 2009 is going to end on the same sombre note, with business owners keeping a tight lid on celebrations and bonuses so that they can continue to balance the books.

Staff may be disappointed, but in the longer term there should be much better news. 43% of small businesses can see some signs of economic recovery. As these green shoots strengthen jobs should become more secure, companies will be able to ease back on cost cutting and hopefully be in a position to start rewarding loyal workers again.

Jake Ridge, SME expert at uSwitchforBusiness.com, says: "2009 has been a difficult year for SMEs so it's not surprising that many feel forced to pull the plug on the traditional Christmas party and end of year bonuses. These are difficult decisions to make and could have an impact on staff morale and loyalty. For those employees hit by the

double whammy it's going to feel like a real damp squib of a Christmas.

"Things are looking up for next year though with 43% of companies saying they can see some signs of recovery. However, it's early days so it remains vitally important that they continue to keep a tight lid on essential running costs. One very easy step is to cut down on the amount they are spending on energy by making sure they are paying the lowest possible price and by cutting down on the amount they use. By getting independent information and support in switching to a cheaper supplier, SME owners could save up to 70% on their energy bills."

[See the full version of this press release.](#)

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