

FALL 2018

# amplify<sup>®</sup>

Promotional products. Remarkable results.

## Holiday parties evolve



Breaking down  
barriers to learning 17

A cheer for team unity 23

# Things change.

**Sometimes, the change is so subtle that it barely catches your attention. Then, as time passes, you can't help but see the differences.**



**Kevin,**  
with 4imprint  
27 years

## Different and related

Over the last few months, we've seen exactly that. In two seemingly unrelated studies (on [holiday parties](#) and [team-building](#)), we found interesting data that shed new light on the state of today's workplace.

## Workplace evolution

Our holiday survey showed that over the last three years, holiday parties are becoming more common, more casual, more likely to be held on-site, and increasingly likely to include coworkers instead of coworkers and family members.

Our team-building survey uncovers a similar evolution. Teams today are spending less time in off-site team-building sessions. Team-building today is focused on building skills like effective listening.

And, that's why it's hard not to see the connections between the two surveys. With communication among colleagues improving through training and technology,

the purpose behind the holiday party may be changing, too. What previously provided an opportunity to network and connect now provides the chance to relax, have fun and enjoy co-workers' company. It'll be interesting to watch and see the shape these soirees take in years to come.

## The more things change...

Even as team-building and holiday party preferences are shifting, organizations are increasingly using promotional products for both. Whether for party favors, decor or thank-you gifts at year-end or to build team unity year-round, promotional products remain a go-to. Perhaps that's because even in the face of change, the feel-good power these giveaways create remains the same.

Cheers to your workplace evolution!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Lyons-Tarr'.

Kevin Lyons-Tarr, CEO, 4imprint

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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amplify<sup>®</sup> offers an unmatched glimpse into real-life ways you can use promotional products to gain remarkable results.

## OVERHEARD

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Cozy apparel and branded outerwear

We'd love to hear your feedback! Please send questions, comments or concerns to [4ideas@4imprint.com](mailto:4ideas@4imprint.com).

## COVER STORY

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The evolution of business holiday parties



Our cover story reveals the results of a 4imprint survey that shows end-of-year celebrations are more casual and employees are receiving more holiday party gifts compared to three years ago.

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Lush with green

# Meet this month's featured contributors



**Suzanne Worwood**  
Senior VP Merchandising  
4imprint

Whether giving a gift at a holiday party, face to face or in the mail, Suzanne gives tips in the [Product Highlight](#) story on how to choose the perfect promotional item no matter how it will be delivered. Suzanne has been with 4imprint since 2000.



**Mark Wolzenburg**  
E-Learning and  
Curriculum Specialist  
4imprint

4imprint's e-learning and curriculum specialist, Mark Wolzenburg, shares insights in the [Lasting Impressions](#) story on unique ways training swag can be used to break down barriers to learning. Mark has been part of the 4imprint team since 2007.



**Cheryl Sina**  
*one by one*® Coordinator  
4imprint

For this issue, Cheryl shares a beautiful image of branded thank-you gifts the Mississippi Park Connection gave away at their "Cocktails for the Canopy" event. Cheryl has been with 4imprint 19 years and coordinates 4imprint's *one by one*® program.



**Erika Ferguson**  
Social Media Manager  
4imprint

Erika coordinates 4imprint's social media communities. She compiled content showcasing branded outerwear and promotional sweatshirts that earned people [#SwaggingRights](#) in the [Overheard](#) story. Erika has been with 4imprint 11 years.



**You!**

Customers shared images on social media of cozy apparel that will keep them warm in the months to come. Their [#SwaggingRights](#) shout-outs were [Overheard](#) and featured here in amplify.



# Keep warm with cozy apparel and branded outerwear that earned serious #SwaggingRights

4

**Emma**

All of our Peer Educators are really enjoying representing our organization around campus in our super soft sweaters!



f



**Karen Johnson Johnston**

#SwaggingRights Weymouth elder services, Choral members



4

**Lisa**

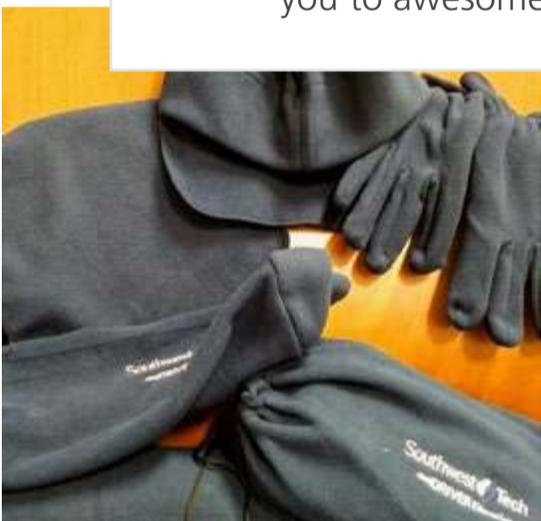
We have been working hard to motivate our employees so with the Windshirts that we had 4imprint send us we did just that. EVERYONE WANTS ONE! This has been a great addition to our program. We look forward to other motivational products from 4imprint! #SwaggingRights

Instagram icon



**annettebiggin**

#SwaggingRights Winter thank you to awesome instructors!



Instagram icon



**valleyhinursingandrehab**

Valley Hi Nursing and Rehab

We love our new Valley Hi Fleece Zipper Ups! Perfect to leave in the office year round for when we get chilly! #SwaggingRights #4imprint



Get more ideas for [branded outerwear](#) and [promotional sweatshirts](#) from these Pinterest boards!



# The evolution of business holiday parties

*By Joshua Grover-David Patterson*

Survey: Parties getting more casual, teams get more holiday party gifts





One day each December, employees at the Phoenix, Ariz.-based [Professional Health Care Network](#) take a few hours out of their workday to celebrate the holiday.

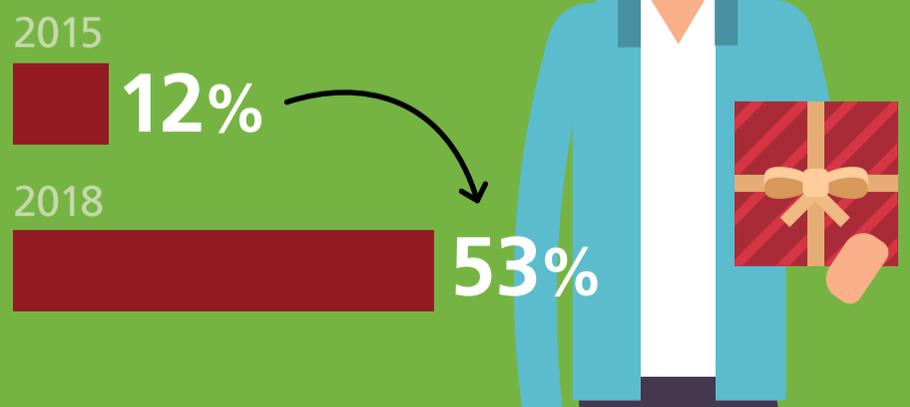
It's a fun, casual affair where employees are given a chance to unwind, enjoy each other's company and receive holiday party gifts.

"We sit in round tables with five to six people and we do an activity," said Billing Specialist Gladys Ramirez, describing the annual tradition. "Normally we build a ginger bread house and then the managers vote on it and the winners

receive a gift card. They give us thanks (for our hard work) and then we get food."

It turns out, Ramirez and her colleagues are in good company. According to a [4imprint survey](#) about business holiday parties, nearly 77 percent of respondents say their company will host a casual or business casual party in 2018, rather than a more formal affair. In fact, the percentage of large companies hosting a business-casual holiday event jumped 41 percent from 2015 to 2018.

The percentage of large companies hosting a business-casual holiday event jumped **41 percent!**





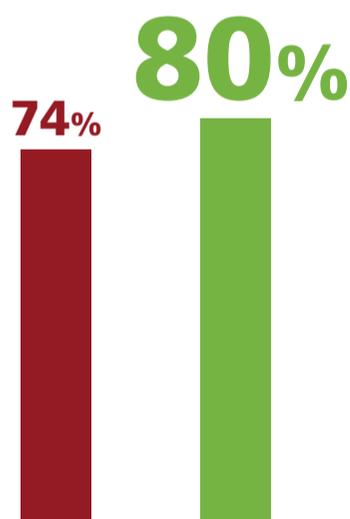
## More celebrations, less formality

According to the survey, more employees in 2018 will ring in the holidays with coworkers. But those parties are becoming less formal. In 2015, more than 38 percent of employee holiday parties featured either black tie or formal wear—a number that has dropped

significantly in 2018. The biggest shift in this area comes from large companies. In 2015, 12.5 percent of respondents from large companies were planning a black-tie event. This year, none of the respondents planned such a formal affair.

This shift might be related to party location. More than 37 percent of parties are now being held onsite—as opposed to 19 percent in 2015.

*More businesses are planning parties.*

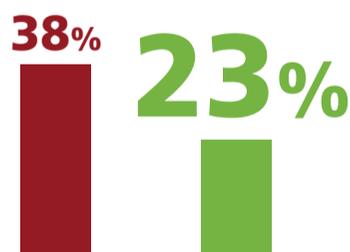


2015 2018



Businesses hosting a holiday party

*Parties are becoming less formal!*

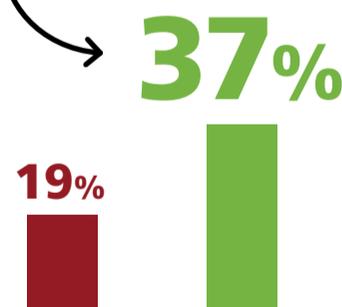


2015 2018



Black-tie or formalwear party

*Onsite parties are growing in popularity.*



2015 2018



Holiday party onsite

## Invitation lists get a trim

Business holiday party planners also are making another shift. This time, to the invitation list. Nearly 50 percent of holiday party invitations will go only to employees, up from 38 percent in 2015. Family gatherings are the least common type of party, with only 6 percent of parties including family members.

### Holiday invitation list



With an employee-only focus on holiday parties, some organizations like the nonprofit [MCAS Beaufort Military Spouses' Club](#) are also choosing to give back to the community.

“Every year around the holidays we host a senior citizen’s tea,” said Lauren Williams, president of the South Carolina-based organization. “It’s a completely free afternoon of entertainment, with lunch and tea at the officer’s club on base. Last year we had dancers, and a variety of local businesses donate things for the event every year.”

While all senior citizens who wish to attend are welcome, the majority of them are former military members, specifically Marines.



“A lot of them are coming from senior facilities in the area—and it’s their one night out for the year,” Williams said. “They come onto base and get dressed up.”

MCAS isn’t the only group at the base to donate their time, though. Some of the Marines also donate their Saturday to play a very special role. Each woman who attends is escorted by a Marine in uniform. “It just transforms their demeanor,” Williams said.

In addition to an afternoon out and donations from local businesses, MCAS also delighted partygoers with special holiday party giveaways. Each attendee received a logoed [ornament](#).



*Your employees will treasure these personalized ornaments for years!*

## Holiday party gifts a win for all

From décor to employee apparel to holiday party giveaways, promotional products also are becoming more popular at holiday gatherings, with nearly 55 percent of respondents including promotional products in their holiday celebrations.

*“The gifts with the company logo are normally a big hit because we personalize it a bit,” Ramirez said.*

“We add name tags, and one year they bought tree ornaments and attached (the name tags),”



Fruitilicious Infusion Tumbler

*Healthy holiday gifts last throughout the year!*



Ramirez said. “Another year, they bought Santa-pants baskets and put a tumbler and candy in them. That is actually how we find our seats, based on where our names are.”

Survey results revealed that companies throwing a holiday party frequently give holiday party gifts, with almost 60 percent offering non-monetary gifts, roughly 39 percent giving monetary gifts, and almost 27 percent giving performance bonuses.

### Holiday party gift types



**60%** Non-monetary gifts



**39%** Monetary gifts



**27%** Performance bonuses

Even among companies not throwing a holiday party, half will offer monetary or non-monetary gifts to their employees.



## Goodwill that lasts throughout the year

While the holiday gathering and holiday party gift-giving happens between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day almost 90 percent of the time, the good will lasts all year long. "As early as August, I get phone calls asking when next year's party is," Williams added. [4](#)

### Ideas for branded holiday party gifts that are sure to please!

Roll-Up Blanket –  
Black/Red Plaid with Red Flap



*They'll have warm thoughts every time they use this cozy blanket.*

*Give your team the power to make it through the day.*

Energize Portable Power Bank Charging Kit



*They'll appreciate your taste in holiday party gifts!*



Slate Cheese Board Set



PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

# Message delivered

*By Suzanne Worwood*

Holiday gifts that shine at parties, make you look good face-to-face, and stand out in the mail.



Ah, the power of a simple thank you. For employees, gratitude is a powerful motivator. For customers, it's a way to show you care about your relationship, not just the work.

Grab your holiday gift list and check some boxes with these year-end powerhouses.

## Take-home gifts for an office party

Call it the tale of two parties: One idea, two ways.

If your office party is a daytime on-site event, the [Viking Lowball Vacuum Tumbler](#) adds a festive touch. Displaying them near the coat check allows for employees to easily take one on their way out at the end of the evening.



Viking Lowball Vacuum Tumbler



Corzo Vacuum Insulated Wine Cup

If your event is an evening dinner affair, place the [Corzo Vacuum Wine Insulated Wine Cup](#) at each place for a branded, yet elegant look.

*Your guests can enjoy a drink at any moment with these promotional drink tumblers!*



## Giving a gift in-person

Giving a gift in-person adds a truly personal touch to your gratitude. It gives you the face-to-face opportunity to thank your customers for their business over the last year. And it lets them know you're looking forward to working with them in the year to come.

## When you want to thank an individual in-person

If you're offering an in-person thank you to a business associate, consider offering them year-end gifts that will help them enjoy their holiday playlist and favorite podcasts.

The **Jupiter Bluetooth® Speaker** easily connects to a smartphone or other device via Bluetooth, offering 2.5 hours of music-listening time with every charge.



Jupiter Bluetooth® Speaker

*Give thanks in-person with a gift that can be used throughout the year!*



Block True Wireless Ear Buds with Charging Case

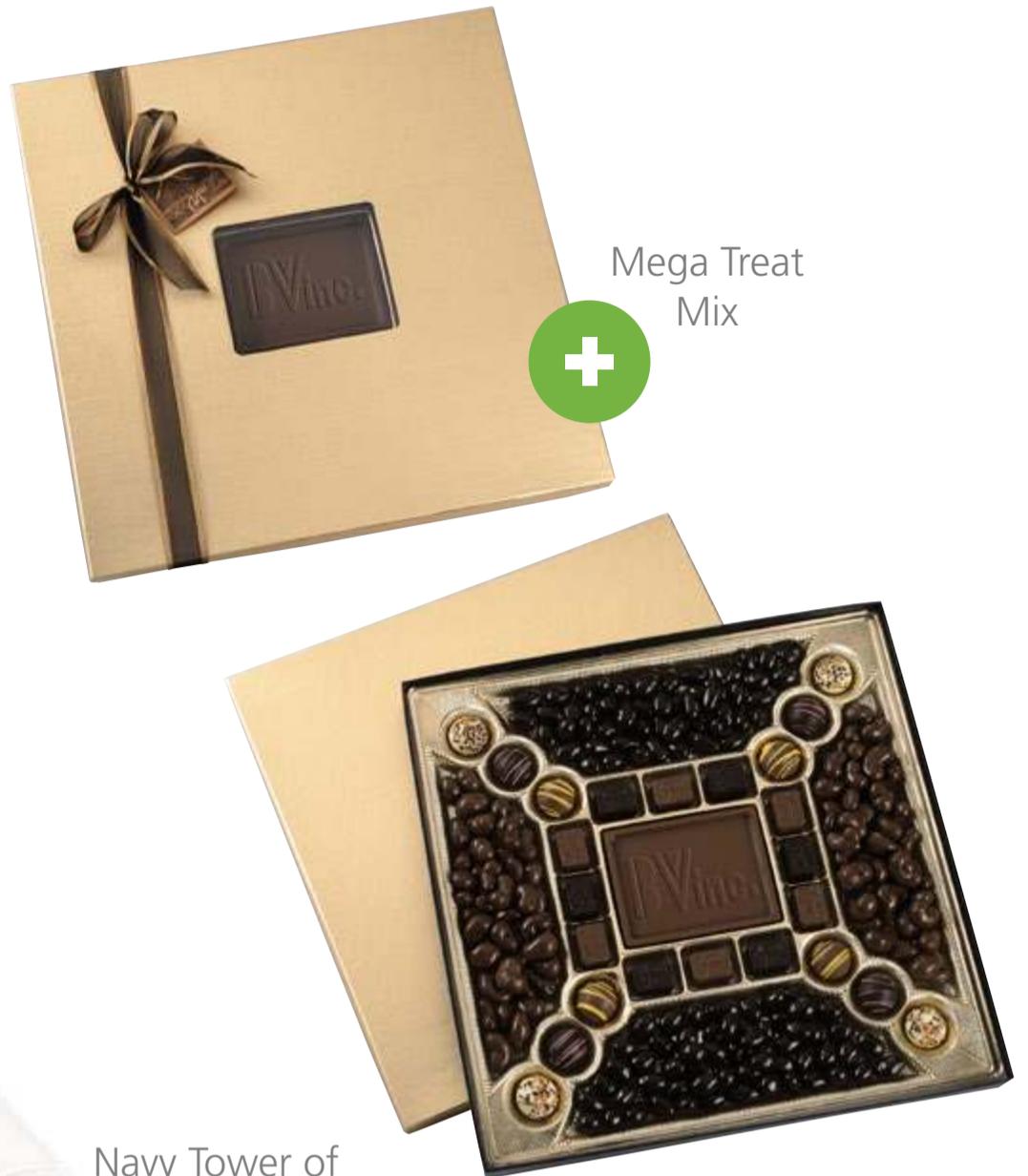
Or give your recipient the option to take their tunes with them wherever they go—and even recharge their ear buds twice with the included charging case—with the **Block True Wireless Ear Buds with Charging Case**.

**When you want to show the team your gratitude**

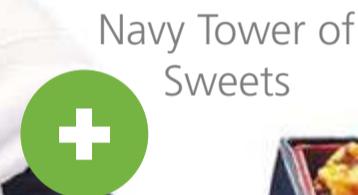
If you're looking to thank a customer team, food is always going to fit the bill. The **Mega Treat Mix** box allows you to select an assortment of chocolate and nuts sure to be appreciated by anyone looking for a sweet or savory snack.

And the **Navy Tower of Sweets** offers three tiers of treats—from chocolate to truffles to sea-salt caramel corn

*Personalized treats can thank an entire team!*



Mega Treat Mix



Navy Tower of Sweets



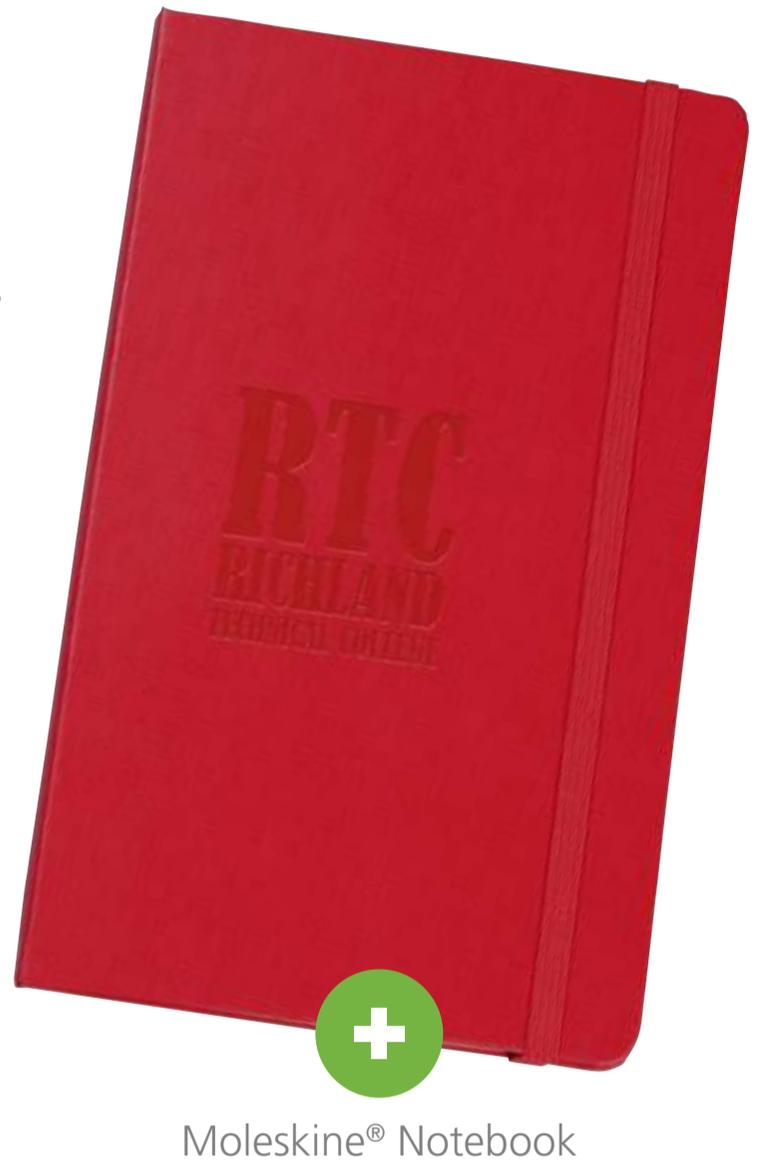


## Mailable thank-you gifts

When you don't have the ability to thank your customers in-person, personal notes and appreciation giveaways sent through the mail can help show them you care. The classic **Moleskine® Notebook** comes in a variety of colors, imprints and paper types that can help show off your brand and your gratitude.



If you're looking for a budget-conscious way to show appreciation, **PopSockets® Phone Stands** slide easily into a card you can put in the mail. And they're available in a variety of styles that allow you to "pop" up on your customer's radar right as they're planning for a new year of business.



## Gratitude makes the world (and your business) a better place.

It will always be appreciated, no matter what day it is on the calendar. But taking a special moment at the end of the year to offer a sincere thanks and some appreciation giveaways can help your customers and employees think warmly of your business as a new year begins. 4



LASTING IMPRESSIONS

# Learning blocks

*By Joshua Grover-David Patterson*

How to use training swag to  
break down barriers to learning





**B**arb Flowers had a problem. The office manager/resource coordinator at Community Family Partnership of Network180 in Grand Rapids, Mich., wanted to encourage more parents to attend training events for a program that works with children living with behavioral and mental health issues.

She found a solution in two small but effective pieces of training swag—a punch card and a [Hanes® Tagless® T-Shirt](#).

*Custom tees make effective giveaways!*



“We do parent training once per month,” Flowers said. “We also run classes where we bring in a speaker for six to eight sessions so that parents can learn about a topic like keeping safe on social media or parenting children with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). We also do a big family dinner once a month, with different themes and activities.”

Flowers used the Engaged, Equipped and Involved Connect Card as an incentive for parents. With every event they attended, parents earned a punch. When they reached six punches, they were awarded the T-shirt.

“We wanted to use (the shirt) first because we wanted the people who use our programming to get the sense of belonging to something,” she said.

Thanks to the punch card, T-shirt and other training giveaways, event attendance has improved.

*“People always say, ‘Been there, done that, got the T-shirt,’ and here, we really mean it!” Flowers said.*



## Making the most of educational opportunities

Companies clearly understand the importance of fresh education and training, with one study showing that corporations around the world spent **\$70.6 billion on training in a single year**.

But getting people to take advantage of educational opportunities—and getting the most out of them—can be a struggle. With the help of these tips and some training swag, you can break down some of the most common barriers to learning.

Corporations around the world spent  
**\$70.6 billion**  
on training in a single year.



### **BARRIER #1:** Attracting attendees

The first challenge is letting people know training is available. To start the conversation, 4imprint trainers turn to promotional products.

“Once a year, 4imprint has a benefits fair for employees. The training department is always there, along with a schedule that lets people know what sort of training options are going to be available over the next few months,” said Mark Wolzenburg, e-learning and curriculum specialist at 4imprint.

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*“We’ll usually offer employees who come to the table to talk about educational opportunities a pen, sticker or magnet,” Wolzenburg added.*

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In addition to offering training giveaways, try [these tips](#):

### Link attendance to your goals



Helping people understand the value of your training will go a long way toward raising interest.

“The best way to get people to attend classes is to make certain they’re relevant and interesting,” Wolzenburg said.

### Offer something tangible



Course attendees may feel like they put in a lot of effort with nothing visible to show for it.

Offer recognition for continuing education, like a note in their personnel file or a certificate in a [holder](#).



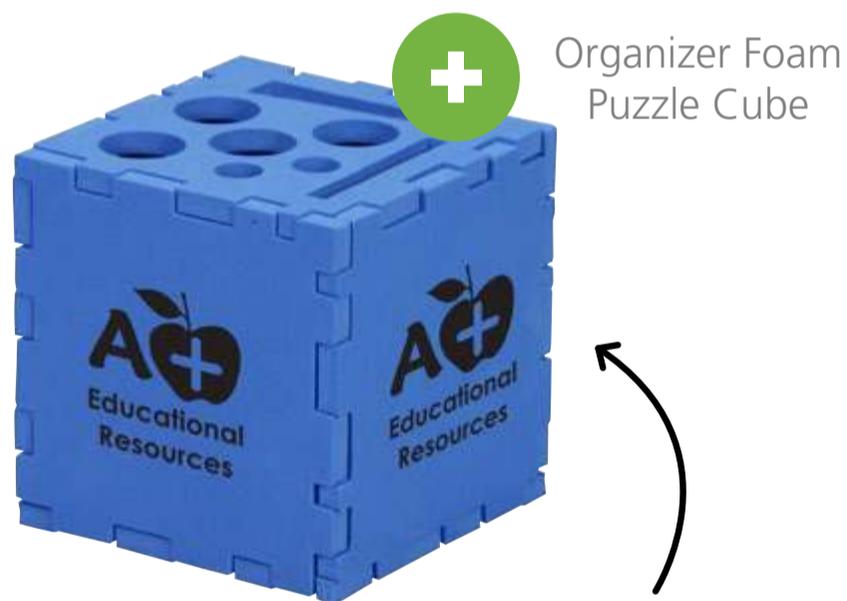
Paper Certificate Holder - Grandee

### BARRIER #2:

#### Getting them in the door

Even if people sign up for training they may not show up, sometimes for the most human of reasons: They simply forget!

Send reminders. [Email is the easiest and least expensive way to communicate with training registrants](#). But to stay top of mind, mail training giveaways, like a [foam puzzle](#) with the training date printed on the side.



Organizer Foam Puzzle Cube

*Remind registrants about your training with this fun cube!*



**Email is the easiest and least expensive way to communicate with training registrants.**

## BARRIER #3:

### Keeping them engaged

Learning improves when attendees are engaged. How do you keep their focus?

Eventbrite offers some tips:

#### Turn statistics into stories



A study by the [London School of Business](#) found that people only recall 5 to 10 percent of the statistics they hear. But by telling the same information as a story, retention skyrockets up to 70 percent.



#### Keep it short

Training sessions should last no more than two hours. If you're offering daylong training, take several breaks to get people moving and rest their minds.

*Surprise trainees with prizes that showcase your organization!*

#### Reward Participation



Participants will be more likely to pay attention and answer questions if they get something in return. Try a piece of training swag. Financial analysis software company Visible Equity used the [Nike® Workout Plus Duffel](#) as a prize during their software training sessions.

While attendees didn't know at first they could win participation prizes, the promo item got them talking.

“We give out the Nike bags to those who answer questions correctly during the training, or who do something to win them,” said Director of Marketing Valerie Jackson. “We have funny competitions, and the winner will receive the bag. It's more of a prize giveaway—they don't expect it but love it.”

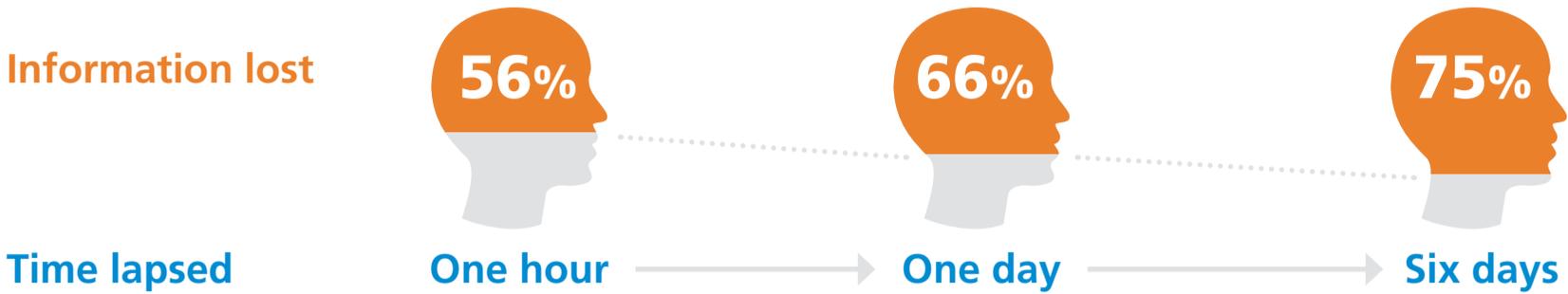


Nike® Workout Plus Duffel

## BARRIER #4:

### Helping them retain what they learned

Learners lose 56 percent of information after one hour, 66 percent after a day, and 75 percent after six days.



There are ways to slow this process:

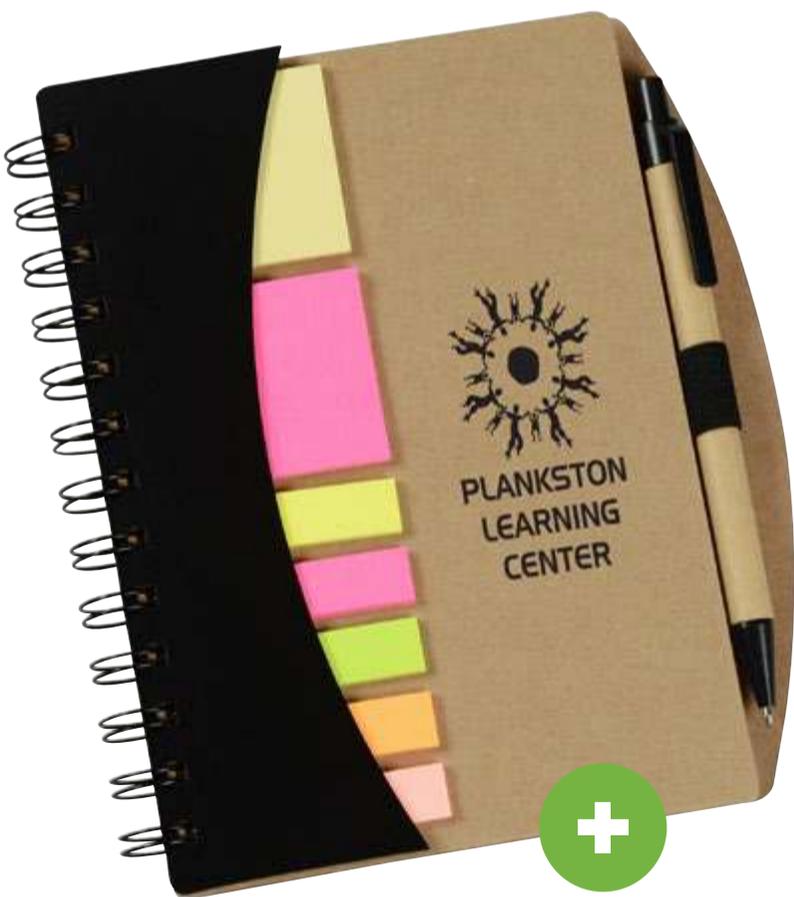
- ✓ Have trainees explain the information to one another
- ✓ Review important information at regular intervals
- ✓ Quiz attendees on key points

### Break down barriers for learning success

By toppling the barriers that prevent people from learning and retaining information, you'll help them become better employees.

Use training swag for an A+ presentation. [4](#)

Keep your learners engaged with these promotional giveaways.



Mini Journal with Pen, Flags & Sticky Notes



Wave Monitor & Keyboard Cleaner

*Digital note takers will appreciate keeping laptops tidy.*



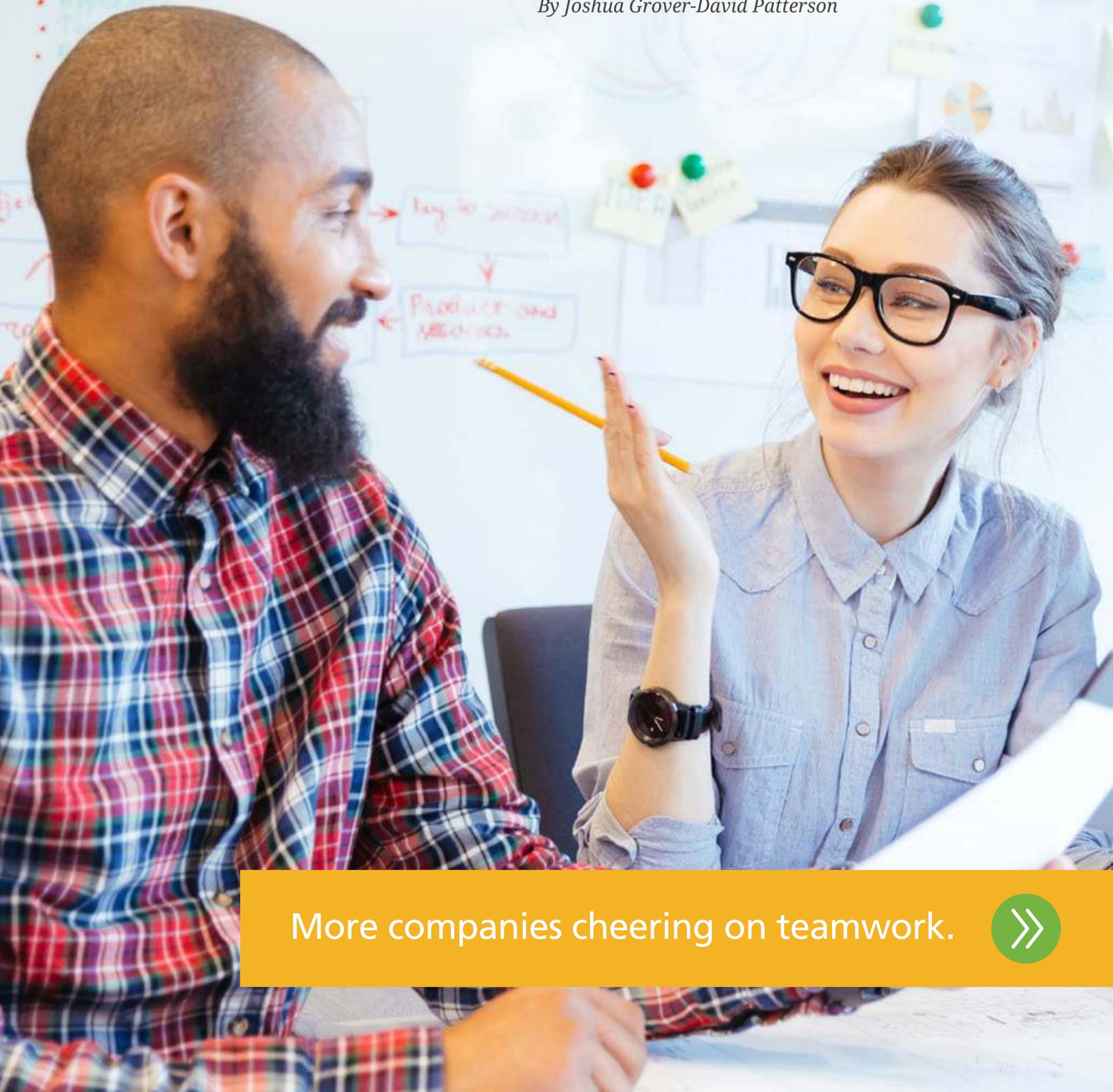
Pic N' Mint

*Share a refreshing treat to keep them motivated.*

TREND

# A cheer for team unity

*By Joshua Grover-David Patterson*



More companies cheering on teamwork.





Sometimes a simple piece of clothing can be the finishing touch that unites your team.

Such is the case at the Los Alamos County (N.M.) Police Department. There, the [Stain Release Performance Polo](#) for women helped office personnel represent themselves as members of two teams at the same time.

“We wanted to wear something that made us look professional but that didn’t make us look like police officers,” said Office Manager Teresina Berg. “My department is all women, and we wanted something a little more comfortable and a little more feminine than the standard uniform. By getting us similar shirts to wear on Fridays, we were both building a distinctive appearance for our in-office team, and building cohesiveness between us and the rest of the police department.”



Stain Release Performance Polo

Of course, team-building giveaways are just one method to encourage teamwork and unity in the workplace—an essential practice in every industry. **Teamwork improves** workplace efficiency and improves relationships among colleagues. Knowing that, it's no wonder that 92 percent of respondents to a recent 4imprint survey said they sometimes or always worked in teams.

The survey shows that regardless of their size or industry, companies are using training, communication tools and team-building gifts to help their teams improve communication and conflict resolution.

## Teamwork is for everyone

One of the more interesting details the 4imprint study revealed was that the larger the company, the more common it was to ALWAYS work in teams. According to the results of the study, companies with 1000+ employees were most likely to say they always work in teams.

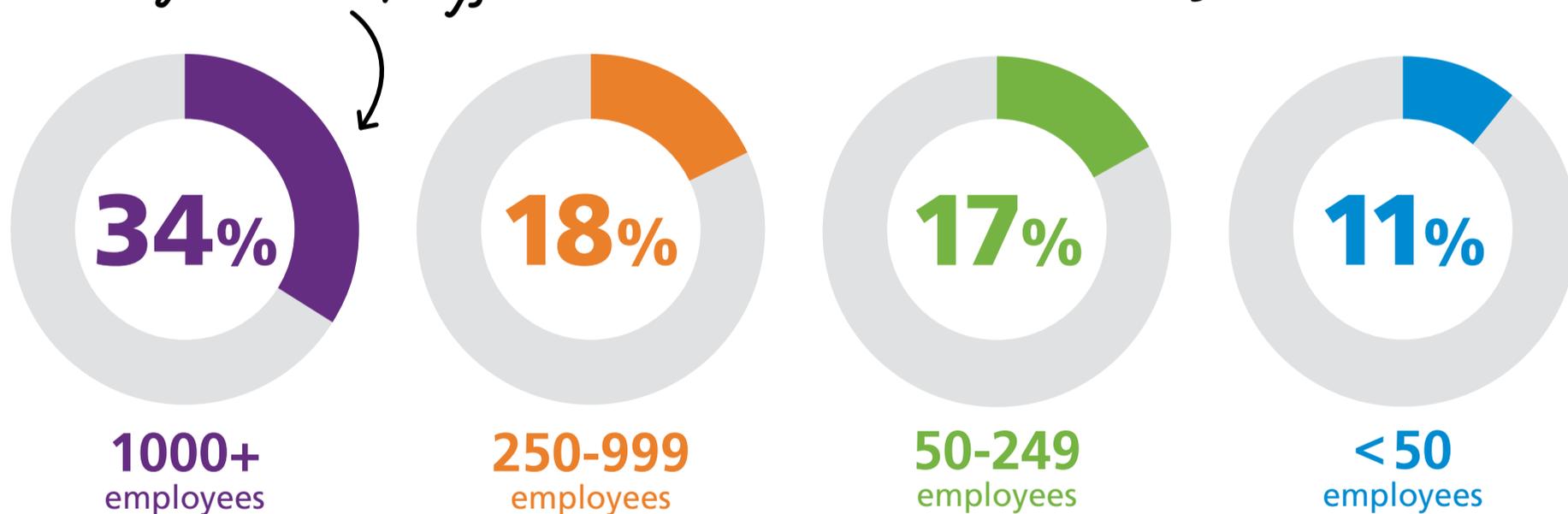
**92%**  
of respondents said they sometimes or always  
**worked in teams.**

As company size drops, so does the frequency of employees stating they work in teams.

## More training at every level

In a similar study done in 2017, 43 percent of respondents said that all employees received team-building training—a number that has jumped to 51 percent in 2018. In organizations where teamwork training is limited to executives and managers, training is also on the rise. Twenty-two percent of managers and nine percent of executives received teamwork training this year, up from 18 percent and eight percent, respectively, in 2017.

*The larger the company, the more common it was to ALWAYS work in teams!*



**51%** of respondents said ALL employees received  
**team-building training**

## Encouraging teams to flourish

The survey showed that team building is most frequently encouraged via on-site exercises—48 percent of respondents hold on-site team-building activities. Nearly as many organizations—45 percent—provide technology/tools to help teams work together. Researchers expect that number to rise as millennials make up more of the workforce. Studies show that 49 percent of millennials [support the use of social tools](#) for workplace collaboration.

And while technology tools were common across company sizes, organizations with 500-999 employees use them the most.

## Promotional products build teams

When it comes to promotional products and team unity, logoed apparel is by far the most popular team-building giveaway. The study showed that almost 50 percent of businesses chose logoed apparel to encourage team unity, with logoed pens and drinkware being the second and third most popular gifts, respectively. Two important exceptions: In government, logoed notebooks/journals proved to be most popular, but in education, logoed pens were the promotional product of choice.

**Not only do a majority of businesses give away apparel, 44 percent say logoed apparel is also the most effective team-building gift.**

“My team really liked the option of wearing bright colors, instead of just khaki and dark colors,” Los Alamos County (N.M.) Police Department Office Manager Teresina Berg said. “And it really helped to show how we were both part of the police department and our own separate unit. We’re not officers, but we can help you find your accident report!”

**48%**  
of respondents  
**hold on-site  
team-building  
activities.**

Almost  
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of businesses chose  
**logoed  
apparel to  
encourage  
team unity.**

**49%**  
of millennials  
support the use of  
**social tools  
for workplace  
collaboration.**



## Communication is critical

Communication skills are far and away the most popular kind of training companies provide, at 54 percent. That's followed by conflict resolution at 41 percent and effective listening at 39 percent, indicating that helping employees gain understanding before reacting is a high priority among businesses.

Communication among team members **improves efficiency and reduces mistakes.** It also heightens understanding and trust among team members.

Logoed apparel helped improve communication for the Telecare Mason County Mobile Outreach (MOT) and Intensive Case Management (ICM) Teams in Shelton, Wash. The organization's mission is to serve and care for people living with serious mental illness. While Telecare provides a variety of mental health services, teams are most visible assisting people in the community during a crisis. The group started wearing the **Conquest Jacket with Mesh Lining** in the field to improve team unity, communication and visibility.

*“The jackets we ordered were to promote team unity and give our team a sense of pride,” said Lee Wilson, now an office coordinator at the Telecare Corporation.*

# 54%

of respondents said

**communication skills**  
are the most popular kind of training.



Wilson's team uses the jackets to help keep track of each other when assisting with a crisis. “Purple was a great color,” said Wilson. “One person can be speaking to someone in crisis while another is speaking with neighbors or a family member and it makes it easy to spot the person we're coordinating with—which helps with communication.” Being able to check in on each other at a distance helps to make certain every interaction goes as smoothly as possible.



Conquest Jacket with Mesh Lining

The jackets also made it much easier to approach people in crisis. “People will come up to us because they know the jackets—it's been really great in the community,” Wilson said. “People who see us know we're there to help.”

That's a win for their team and the community. [4](#)



# Lush with green

Donors get plant giveaways in exchange for helping new trees grow

By Cheryl Sina

The seeds in *plant giveaways* to *Mississippi Park Connection* donors may not grow as big and strong as trees, but they served as a fitting thank-you gift for those who attended a “Cocktails for the Canopy” event. It’s a fundraiser to pay for trees to be planted along the mighty river in the Twin Cities.



Mississippi Park Connection was a 4imprint *one by one*® promotional products grant recipient.

