



ONTARIO TECH

BULLETIN FOR GIFT EXCHANGE

Gift-giving at a workplace can be a great way to show appreciation and build relationships, but it can also be tricky if not handled with care. This bulletin can help keep things stress-free and positive for everyone to keep in mind.

General Information

Aim for Inclusion

- Ensure that everyone who wants to participate has the opportunity.
- Be thoughtful about choosing gifts that won't make anyone feel excluded or uncomfortable.
- Allow participants to disclose any **personal restrictions** (such as allergies or dietary preferences) to avoid unintentionally offending or inconveniencing anyone.
- **Avoid** giving gifts to only a select group of co-workers, as this can create feelings of exclusion
 - This should be done privately and outside the office setting.

Respect Boundaries

- **Don't** pressure employees to participate; gift exchanges should be voluntary not mandatory.
- Make sure everyone feels comfortable opting out.
- Stick to any established spending limits for gifts.

Power Dynamics

- Be mindful of potential power dynamics.
 - Ensure the exchange doesn't create feelings of pressure or discomfort.
 - Employees should not typically give gifts to their managers to prevent any appearance of favoritism or undue influence.
- **Avoid** giving gifts around review periods.
 - Presenting a gift to your manager right before a performance review might be perceived as an attempt to influence their evaluation.
- **Instead:** consider a gift to the whole team for special occasions.

Professionalism and Appropriateness

Keep it Professional

- Ensure your gifts are appropriate for the workplace.
- **Avoid the following types of gifts:**
 - Personal items, such as perfume, clothing, or jewelry.
 - Humorous or controversial gifts, including political, religious, or overly personal items.
 - Alcohol or any consumables that may not be suitable for all employees.
 - Adult-themed gifts that may cause discomfort or be considered inappropriate.
 - **Instead:** opt for neutral, thoughtful gifts like books, gift cards, etc. to keep things professional and respectful.
 - Offer alternatives to traditional gifts, such as handmade items.

If you have any inquiries regarding this document, please contact the Office of Risk Management at orm@ontariotechu.ca.