

HR done differently

The manager's festive party survival guide.

Your go-to advice to avoid an uncomfortable chat with HR the morning after the Christmas party.

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Christmas brings a wonderfully festive – but undeniably risky season – for HR teams. Workplace celebrations have got form in turning good intentions into memorable stories, not all of which belong in Monday's inbox.

This guide preps managers to navigate the festivities with confidence, protect their teams, and enjoy the evening without creating accidental HR adventures, or becoming a cautionary tale themselves.



Do...

Remember you're still a manager.

No matter how late in the evening it gets, or how many renditions of *Wham!* you've settled in karaoke, you're with colleagues and your behaviour continually signals expectations.

Set the tone.

And preferably not a slurred one. Aim for confident, calm, and upbeat – festive spirit without drifting into tomorrow's HR folklore.

Mingle.

Use the opportunity to chat beyond your usual circle. A few friendly conversations may strengthen connections come Monday.

Do's and don'ts

Keep an eye out for your team.

Notice if someone seems unsteady on their feet or overwhelmed. A quiet check-in or a gentle nudge toward water could be required.

Balance the compliments.

But be authentic and warm. Keep it light and positive – you're going for celebratory without drifting into anything too personal here.

Lead the charge home.

When you leave, others feel permitted to do the same. You control the exit strategy, so stay just long enough to have a good time, but not so long you stop others from doing so.



Don't...

Use the party to deliver feedback.

A celebration isn't the moment for critiques. Save performance conversations for a calm, private setting – not in the middle of the festive playlist, shouting to be heard over Mariah Carey.

Approve promotions.

Career decisions need structure, not sparkly lighting. Promotions aren't earned through enthusiasm, late-night confidence, or inspired speeches about company values.

Overshare.

Keep personal stories light and limited. The party isn't the place for past relationship sagas, questionable tattoos, or former job disasters.

Do's and don'ts

Become the party problem.

Maintain perspective – even in high spirits. Tempted to mention your job title for authority? It's time to slow down.

Start or partake in rumours.

Avoid encouraging gossip. You'd be surprised how quickly anything whispered with “don't repeat this” alerts HR. Remember, HR hears everything.

Vanish without checking on your team.

Before you leave, make sure everyone is safe and accounted for. Abandonment at 1am isn't leadership – it's a safeguarding incident in the making.



Situations managers must avoid at all costs.

- Leading the conga line while yelling “follow me if you want a raise!”
- Trying to influence the DJ's playlist.
- Jumping into the dance circle unequipped and unprepared.
- Being the ringleader for *another* round of shots.



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Do's and don'ts

How to save someone from becoming a 'Monday morning legend'.

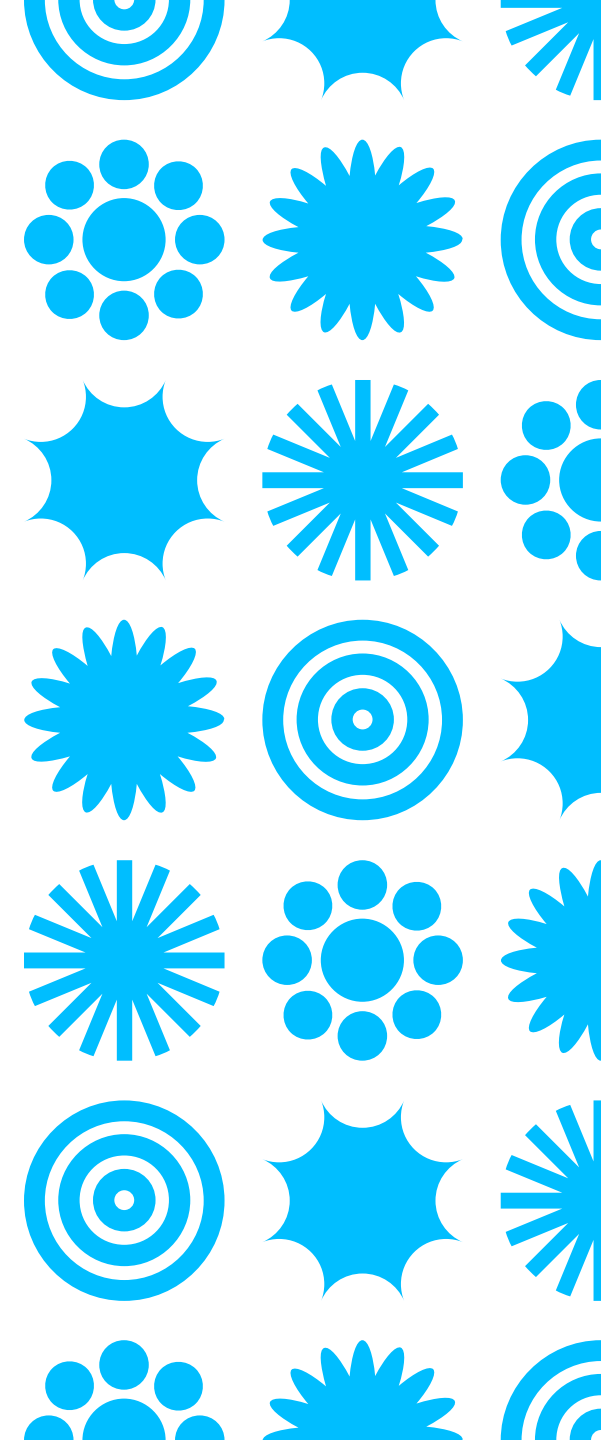
Mitigation strategies.



The early intervention strategy

If you see a team member approaching 'slightly too festive', step in with a friendly nudge:

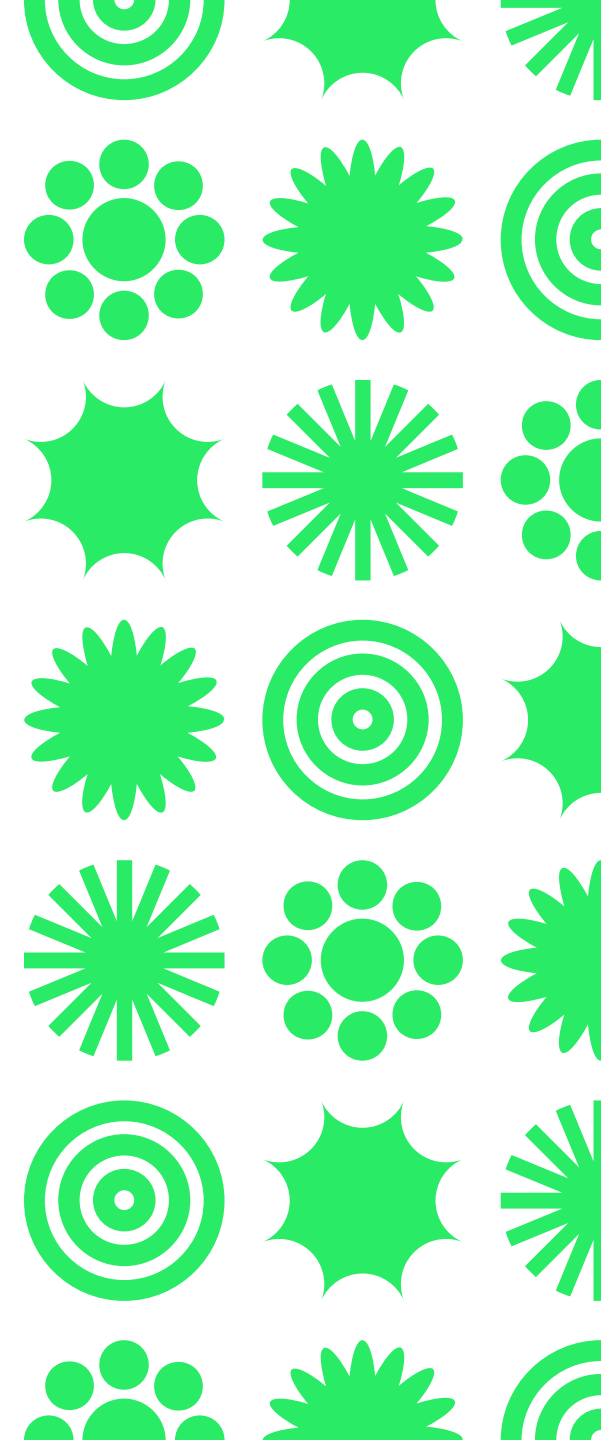
- "Let's take it steady."
- "Let's get some food."
- "Let's not challenge the MD to a push-up contest."
- "And, no, the CEO genuinely doesn't need that feedback right now."



The gentle redirection method

Implemented when someone edges toward oversharing, venting, or revealing their life story:

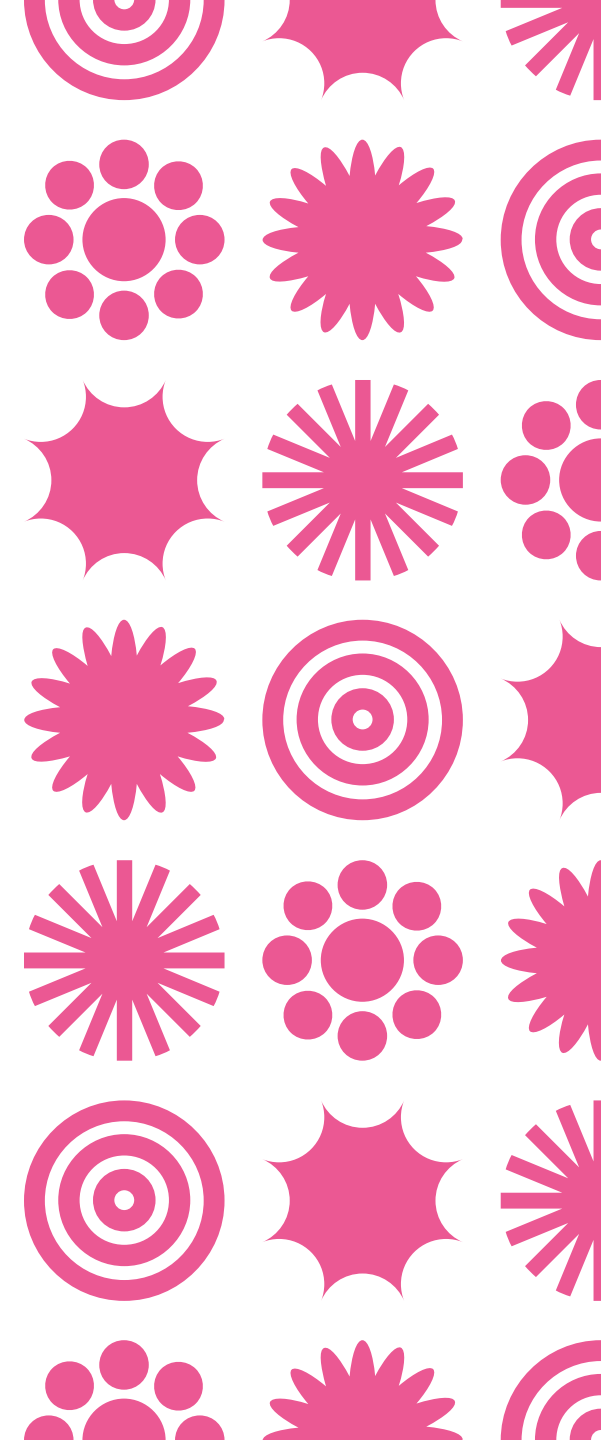
- Step in kindly but clearly.
- Shift the conversation.
- Deploy snacks as a diversion strategy.



The 'no, don't send that' policy

If you catch an employee composing a message, email, or social media post beginning with “TBH...” or “Here’s the real issue...”, it’s time to intervene, and quickly.

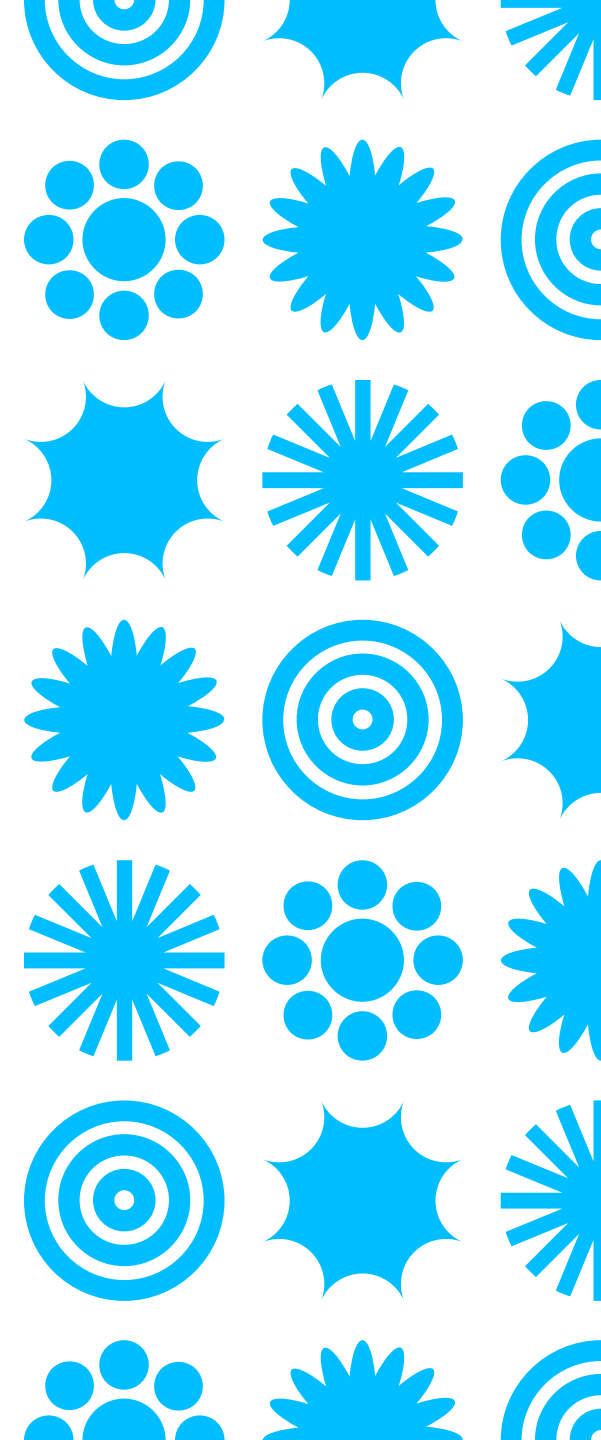
Your role for the next few minutes is to be the festive guardian angel of their digital footprint.



Be the buffer

Be alert at all times, and position yourself between your team and:

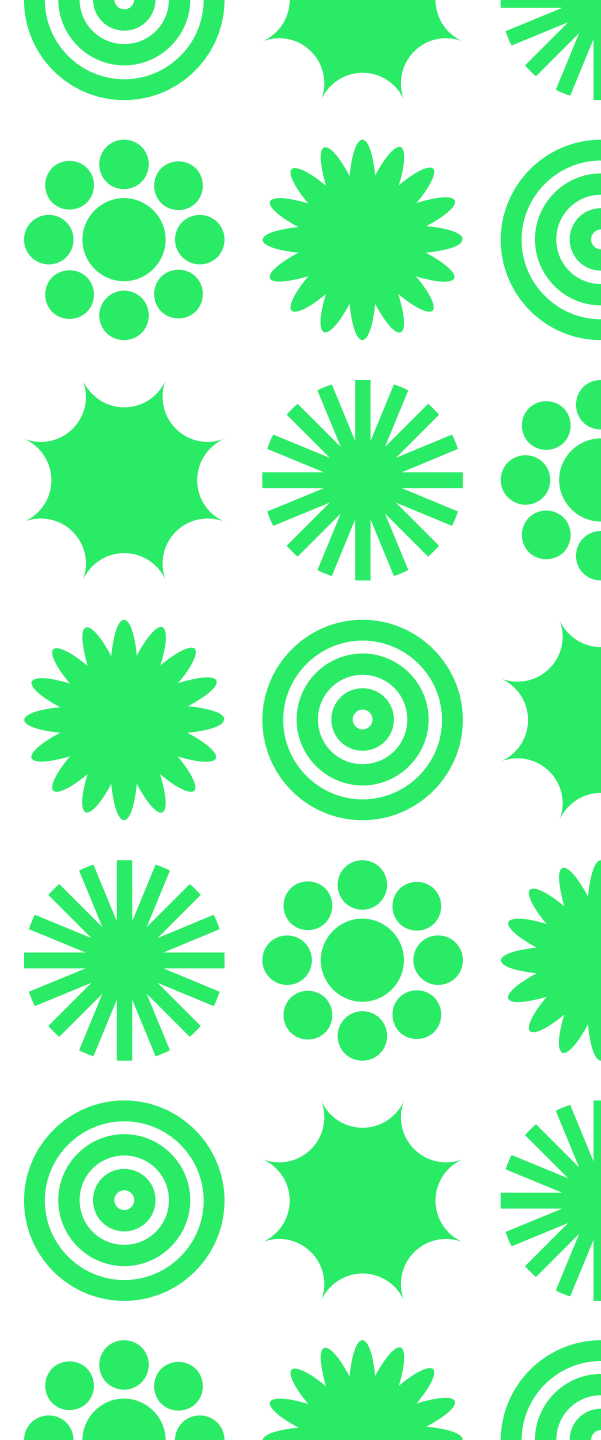
- Senior leaders during emotional moments.
- Karaoke opportunities.
- Any colleague they're quietly irritated by.
- The bar when they exclaim, "Just one more!"



Exit strategy coaching

It is inevitable, but when someone reaches peak festivity, guide them out with dignity in tact:

- “Shall we call a taxi?”
- “Time to go, before we start making memories HR has to file.”
- “The dance floor will still be here next year.”



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Some final HR wisdom for managers

Your role at the Christmas party is straightforward but important:

- Help people enjoy themselves in a way that reflects well on the team.
- Help colleagues feel appreciated and included in the celebration.
- Help everyone get home safely – without the need for any emergency calendar invites with HR.

Ultimately, your presence shapes the atmosphere more than you may realise. By staying grounded and quietly in control, you set the tone for everyone else to relax without crossing lines they'll later regret.

Be festive, supportive, and guide your team through the evening in a way that keeps them confident and respected – and still entirely promotable.

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