

More Than Just a Company Picnic – Why Out Of Office Really Matters



Think twice before you cut that company gathering. Invest in smiles, and you'll reap the rewards. | Image via [Elena Cid](#)

It's summertime. Days are longer, temperatures are rising, and in offices around the country, productivity is dropping. You, and your staff, are getting restless. And for good reason. All



work and no play is *not* an effective way for a company to operate. In order to keep the work place thriving, everyone needs a breath of fresh air every now and then.

No. We're not talking about vacation. We're talking about company retreats, out-of-office staff adventures and playfully-crafted team building. In some circles, it may seem counter intuitive to spend money in such a manner, but at ECHOtape, we believe that a company that plays together, stays together. I mean, we work hard all year long and it's only natural that silos build up between departments. But when the manager of a different department is tee-ing off or in the batter's box, you can't help but root for him or her. Not only does being away from the office re-energize the team, it fosters new bonds between departments, builds morale and simply lets us reward the remarkable work from our remarkable employees.

Just like [last summer](#), we will be hosting an annual golf event. It's a tradition our team loves, even if they don't love golf, but we started to wonder... what do other companies do? How do small businesses, like ours, create an affordable event that is fun and rewarding at the same time? This is what we found:

According to [usnews.com](#), every other Friday at 3 p.m., employees at Alaska Pacific University set aside their work and leave the office to participate in group activities including yoga, cross-country skiing, and volleyball. The myWebRoom team regularly takes breaks for fun activities like

crafting, movie nights, picnics in the park and sailing excursions around San Francisco. Vermont-based Green Mountain Coffee Roasters takes this concept to the extreme by sending employees on trips to gain first-hand knowledge in coffee-growing countries like Costa Rica and Guatemala, where they get to see the entire coffee-growing process for themselves.

In another article by [Mashable](#), Levatas, a next-generation ad consultancy firm, hosts an end-of-summer beach BBQ, where everyone can enjoy the sunshine and unwind with friends and loved ones. And the Cashmere Agency hosts an annual cook-off that requires it's diverse range of employees to cook their best ethnic dishes.

And then there's international application developers, [Weavora](#), a team who likes to inject adrenaline into their outings. [Rifle shooting](#) or [paintball](#), anyone?

Speaking from experience, no matter what kind of event you host, there's a personal kind of satisfaction you get from seeing people enjoy something you poured your heart into. Our golf event is one of only a couple of times each year that I can look around and see tons of smiling faces all at the same time. My advice? Think twice before you cut the company picnic, or events like it. Invest in smiles (and lots of sunscreen), and you'll get the financial and emotional reward.

How often does your company, your top team, get away from the office for a corporate retreat? A different environment, with no interruptions.

