

When is it Time to Host A Disaster Party®?

by
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I'll never forget my first Disaster Party®. It went **so** well. We had more disasters than we ever thought possible. No, I haven't lost my mind like a parent on day six of a rainy Spring Break, nor am I a total masochist.

I do believe in teaching those you work with you how to handle challenges, rough or dangerous situations, long before they ever arrive.

I learned the Disaster Party® Principle when I worked in the Health and Fitness industry. It was the best problem solving/ideas generation method I had ever seen put into practice.

All you need for your party is a table (preferably round) and 9-12 people from your staff or, invitations, a brown bag lunch, two flip charts with paper, larger colorful markers, some monopoly money and a few toys on the table.

Yes toys – like Mr. Bubble and some wonderful bubble blowing toys, maybe a Kush Ball, Silly Putty (now they have Glow in the Dark Silly Putty) some little Hot Wheels - if you're not sure what toys to get, rent someone's 4 year old and go to one of the local toy departments and let them run free! Welcome to **your** first Disaster Party®!!

It doesn't matter who you pick to Disaster with, but if you have a large staff, have a couple of different parties to include everyone. If you invite over 12 people it will turn out to be a circus rather than a Disaster Party®!

I know, you're thinking why would I ever want to hold a Disaster Party? I live this way every day!! I thought the exact same thing until I heard the results of one Disaster Party®.

It was in the Carolinas, mid-summer around 8.00pm at night. This elegant Tennis Resort was just finishing a dinner-dance for their members when the most horrific storm hit the area. With winds of over 100 mph and torrential rains they managed to get all the people, their children and the staff into the change rooms in the basement of the Club.

The storm lasted for over three hours and by the time they were brave enough to emerge, what they saw looked like a bomb had hit this gorgeous Resort. Huge trees downed, cars overturned, cars blown into the building, side walks torn up, power lines down and the gorgeous grounds devastated. They were glad to be alive and once everyone was taken home, the Manager of the Resort looked at his staff (now around 3 am in the morning) and said "Well we have one wedding here tomorrow for 200 people and two cocktail parties, let's get going!"

Impossible, is what most of you may be saying right now. And so did I. That was until I heard they not only pulled it all off without electricity or running water, but did it on time with rave reviews from the guests of all three functions.

HOW??? The Resort Manager had put into practice Disaster Parties® for quite some time and when they needed those skills the most, they were there.

When you host a Disaster Party® you need to explain to the group that you will start with one person around the table and then go clockwise for each next turn. Each person needs to think of a disaster for the organization, the event or something in the next year (whatever area you would like to focus upon). It's easiest to do the organization first, to give them bigger parameters.

Everyone needs to think of a disaster that could happen starting with minor little things and with each person the disasters grow in intensity. They must use the right side of their brains (that's why there's toys on the table – to help stimulate the right side) to be creative in thinking of disasters. Their whole brain is listening to what others are saying before they get a turn to speak and they will use their left side of their brain in part two of the DP (Disaster Party®).

Go around the table at least two times to give everyone two chances. No one can skip a turn. By the second time around people are usually laughing at the bizarre disasters that they are coming up with to out do everyone else. The disasters must not jump to extremes quickly, but work their way up a little at a time in becoming a slightly worse disaster than the previous.

Write each disaster down on the flip chart and number them 1 to whatever. Remember to never explain part one and part two together at the beginning or your partygoers will never share their extravagant disasters.

For **part two** let the partygoers know that they are now going to solve the disasters with the best possible solutions. Break the group into small groups of 3 people each and give each group an equal share of disasters to solve.

Explain they are to list at least 5 solutions per disaster and not to discuss the solutions just list them. There is a time limit of about 3-4 minutes per disaster - so if each group has approximately 10 disasters they will get 30 minutes. Check each group to keep them on focus as they write down their solutions.

Collect the sheets with the disasters and put them in numerical order. Then collect the solutions and put them in numerical order. Have everything typed up and hold a post Disaster Party® party to discuss viable solutions to the disasters identified.

They now have begun training their minds to be solution seeking rather problem processed. Do this once a quarter and your staff will begin to grow your organization with you. Useable ideas will flood in, and challenges that were once unbelievably time consuming will soon be a thing of the past.

Happy partying!

For more information on the train-the-trainer series How to Host a Great Disaster Party ® visit www.CompetitiveBalance.com.

KAZ is an international speaker, author, consultant and coach who focuses on working with people who want to **BE** more and organizations that want to **DO** more. For a free booklist , more articles or a copy of **KAZ's** speaking topics simply visit www.KAZproductions.com and let us know how we can help you.