



LOUISIANA TECHNOLOGY PARK®

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Tech Park News

December 2008

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Tech Park U Business Plan Winner Named

Ultix Technologies received \$2,000 award



Baton Rouge-based start-up [Ultix Technologies, Inc.](#), was selected as the winner of the 2008 Tech Park U class business plan competition. Business plans were evaluated by a panel of judges (Andres Calderon, [Antares Technology Solutions](#); Bill Brown, [SCORE](#); Elizabeth Querbes, [Morgan Stanley](#)) based on criteria ranging from potential for growth, the business model and the merits of the proposed marketing strategy.



Ultix Technologies developed the Ultix Core Integration Engine. Built on the Microsoft .Net platform, it resembles other popular Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platforms and can be customized for any business or industry. However, Ultix is unique in that it can be easily extended across all standard business functions (i.e. supply chain management, human resources, accounting), but also non-traditional, company-specific ones. Through the Ultix platform, a company avoids writing a stand-alone system to address non-traditional functions--a redundant solution which defeats the purpose of company-wide integration.

Says Ultix Technologies CEO Don Flores, "Tech Park U came along at the perfect time for us. We'd just completed 2 ½ years of product development, but we had no idea how to bring our product to market, or market it thereafter; our backgrounds are in technology, not marketing. After going through Tech Park U and the Kauffman Foundation's FastTrac program, we're more confident about handling the future growth of our company."

[Tech Park U](#) is a program created by the Louisiana Technology Park in association with the [Baton Rouge Business Report](#). Starting its third successful year, Tech Park U is a nine-month "boot camp" designed for entrepreneurs looking to take their idea or emerging business to the next level of implementation. For more information, please visit www.techparku.com.

LTP's Tools for Entrepreneurs: Helping to Make Running Your Tech Business a Walk in the

'Park'--Holiday Edition!

Holidays at the Office: Win them over!

By Nicole David, Founder, ProjectOfficeParty.com

Businesses are in a budget battle this holiday season. How can they show appreciation for employees while working to cut expenses? In the red corner are employee raises, weighing in at barely a cost of living increase. In the green corner are the lavish holiday parties of the past, weighing in at a major blow to the bottom line. In this fight for the right to party, big celebrations are down for the count!



Before you decide that spreading some holiday cheer will break the bank consider these ideas that deliver a one-two punch by boosting morale and helping you be a good steward of your organization's resources.

Dinner is the new Lunch

If you normally host an elegant evening event during the holidays, try having a luncheon instead. Here's why:

Dinner is expensive for YOU and YOUR EMPLOYEES

YOU - Dinner is an involved affair. There are the pre/during/after-dinner cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and higher priced meals. Because it is an evening event, you may feel obligated to allow employees to invite a spouse or guest. Now, multiply your fancy schmancy dinner by 2 and it's easy to see how costs can get out of control fast.

YOUR EMPLOYEES have to find/buy something to wear, hire a babysitter, and take a night out of their already hectic holiday schedule.

Lunch is less

Close your office at noon. Reserve a private room/area at a favorite local restaurant. Treat your employees to a fun, casual lunch, and then give them the rest of the day off to shop, trim the tree, or just relax. Their guests will probably be at work, so you won't need to worry about any "plus ones" and the kids are at school, so they won't need to find a babysitter.



It's in the cards

Personalizing gift cards is a thoughtful approach to this generic gift. If possible, match the card to the person's interests. Consider a gift card from an online music store for the music lover, a book store gift card for the bookworm, or home improvement store gift card for the Bob Vila in your group. When in doubt, stick with bank card gift cards that can be used for almost anything.



Thanks giving

Take the time to prepare handwritten cards for your employees. Express what their dedication to your organization means to you and how much you enjoy having them as part of your team. Be specific and sincere. Giving a complement, giving encouragement, and giving thanks all qualify as gifts, and are among the most cherished you can offer to anyone.

Don't drop the ball

Once the Times Square ball has dropped signifying the start of a new year, don't drop the ball on showing your employees they are appreciated. Visit ProjectOfficeParty.com for ideas and easy step-by-step instructions for hosting unique and inexpensive events throughout 2009.

How to Give Gifts Fairly and Ethically at the Office this Holiday Season

Trying to cut down on spending this holiday season? It may be best not to worry about expensive gifts for the co-workers and the boss. A batch of homemade treats or a handmade craft is not only less expensive, but it also may raise fewer ethical dilemmas, said Kansas State University business ethics expert Diane Swanson.



"Especially in an economic downturn, a personal touch might be better anyway," said Swanson, professor of management and von Waaden business administration professor at K-State. "If the gift is food, it might smack less of bribery than something like a gold paperweight."

Swanson is the author or co-author of several books on business ethics, including "Toward Integrative Corporate Citizenship," co-authored with Marc Orlitzky and published this fall.

Exchanging gifts in the business environment is a way of gluing the social bonds among colleagues and clients, Swanson said. But it's important to keep in mind that gifts by their very nature imply that they need to be reciprocated. That's why Swanson said she would like to see businesses have a written policy on gift-giving. She said that professional organizations could help businesses determine industry standards.

Having a policy that addresses gift-giving might let cash-strapped workers feel more comfortable going cheap or not exchanging gifts at all, Swanson said. Ideally, the policies would include a spending cap, she said.

"A lot of people do not have the same amount of discretionary income this year," Swanson said. "A policy can take people off the hook and not feel expected to spend discretionary money at a time when there are bread-and-butter needs to attend to."

Swanson said she thinks it would be best if managers would reward employees not with gifts but rather with financial bonuses that are fair and equal. She wouldn't want to see a cap put on these bonuses, especially given the whopping bonuses and "golden parachute" severance pay that people at the top get.

"Those of us who study executive compensation are hard-pressed to find the correlation between executive performance and that exorbitant kind of pay," Swanson said. "Employees may feel appreciated when they get a bonus, and when it's applied equally across the board, it won't seem like management is singling people out based on favoritism."

When organizations and their clients exchange gifts, Swanson said it may raise legal questions, and laws may vary from place to place. When businesses want to thank clients with a gift, she said it would be helpful to have professional organizations weigh in on industry standards in terms of price and other considerations.

Given the economic climate, Swanson said that a donation to a food bank or other charity stretched thin by economic woes might be more appropriate and meaningful than a gift that will just sit on a desk or hang on the wall. She said this is especially true if the charity relates to the client's type of business, such as giving to a breast cancer charity in the name of a client whose customer base is women. It's called "cause branding."

"It's a sophisticated touch, and it says we're all in this together," Swanson said. "Legal issues aside, I still think that some policy based on industry norms should prevail in this area, too, as huge gifts might still raise conflicts of interest and expectations of reciprocity in purchases. But unless the vendor advertises the gift or uses it in a public relations campaign, the effects are less direct, perhaps, as the main beneficiary is the public."

<http://www.k-state.edu/media/mediaguide/bios/swansonbio.html>

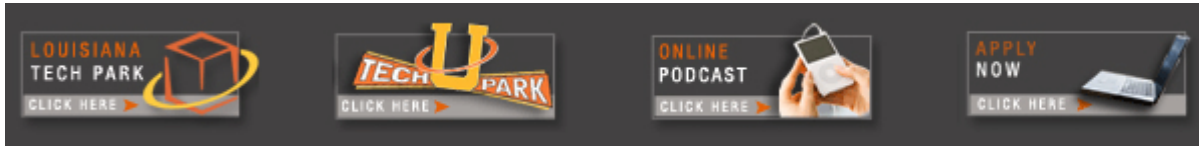
SOURCE [Kansas State University](#)

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level in a supportive environment designed for success. Visit www.latechpark.com or contact [Jesse Hoggard](#) for information on applying to the incubator.

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