



Please welcome  
Annica Wainwright!

**#BeMoreEditorial**

*My tried and tested (😓)*

*process for fresh seasonal content*

# Who the Fork?

 [Annica Wainwright](#) and [Anna Kibbey](#)

We help food, drink and hospitality businesses like yours really **connect with customers** and take them on a deliberate journey from first-time buyers to return customers and eventually fans and ambassadors of your brand

From journos...

SquareMeal.co.uk  
THE UK'S LEADING RESTAURANT & BAR GUIDE

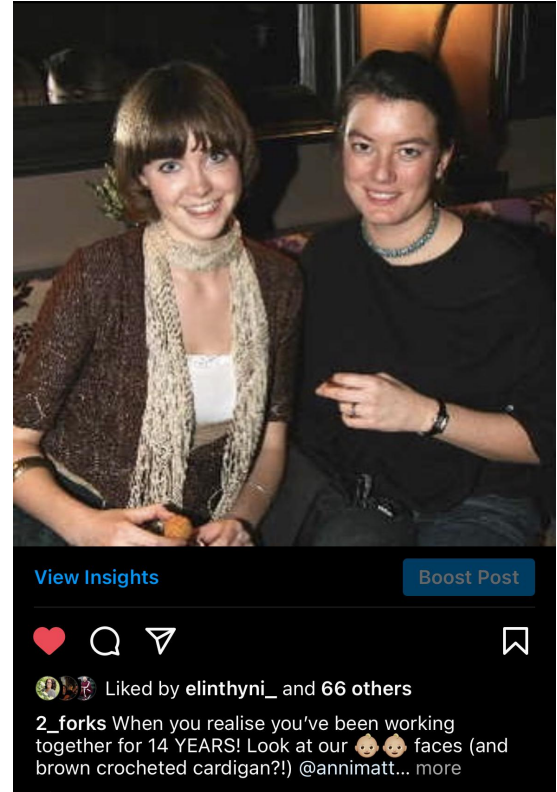
Men'sHealth restaurant  
MAGAZINE

The resident  
LUXURY INSPIRATION FOR DISCERNING LONDONERS

TimeOut  
London

London  
Evening  
Standard

FOOD  
and  
TRAVEL  
MAGAZINE



[2Forks.co.uk](https://2Forks.co.uk)

...to copywriters





# Today, I'm going to share...



Why I'm *quite possibly* the world's leading authority on hospitality Christmas content



My bullet-proof idea-generation process

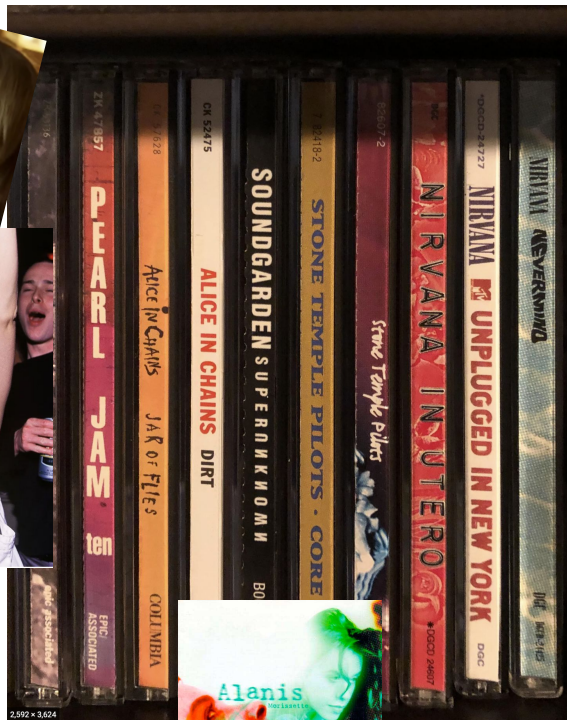


The prompts that will feed your seasonal content calendar FOREVER

**01**  
**\_\_\_\_\_**

**That bold claim +  
all I want for xmas**













And then this happened...





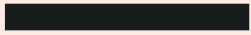
100+ pages of xmas party content 🎄  
 Every. Single. Year. 🎁🎁



\*We thought 42 was bad

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**02**



**#BeMoreEditorial**

# Three things not to do alone

- Apply sunscreen to the middle of your back
- Play badminton
- Publish 100+ pages of Christmas content

# Find a Robin to help you...

- Brainstorm
- Research
- Edit



... and have more fun creating better content

# Start with an editorial meeting

- “Christmas in July” means your one needs to happen no later than June
- There’s no better time than the year before 💪 work up 2023 while you’re at it!
- Debrief + edit in January

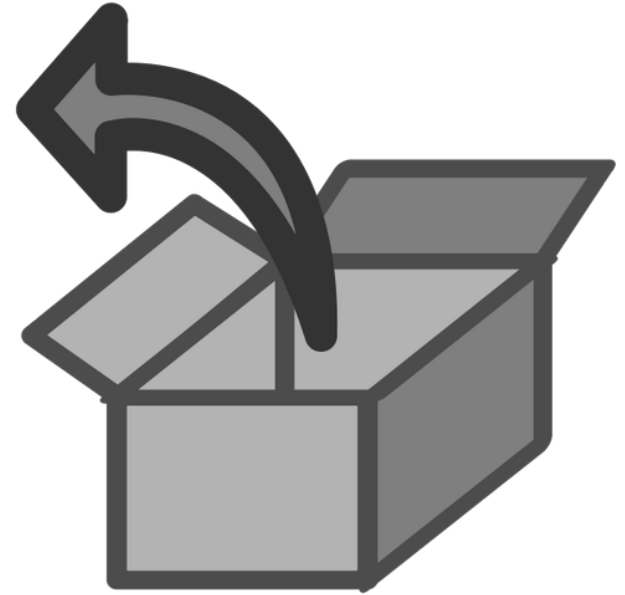
First on the agenda: ideas\*



\* More on that process later

# Next: pictures

You might have to  
think outside the box



Christmas  
Parties



## Festive Forecast

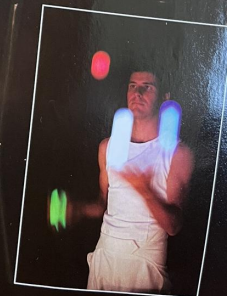
Wondering what some of this year's top Christmas themes will actually look like on the night? These exclusive pictures will give you a sneak preview. Four top organisers took on our challenge of creating a themed table setting for a photo shoot – one of them even gave us two! – and the results were pretty spectacular. From magical blue to boudoir-inspired chic, via glamorous old-school Hollywood and a circus extravaganza, here's the proof that there's much more to dressing tables than laying out plates and cutlery

[www.squarmeal.co.uk](http://www.squarmeal.co.uk)

Exclusive Preview

### EVENTWISE

*Cirque de Noël at Lindley Hall  
Drawing inspiration from the height of the season,  
this contemporary circus theme features a variety of  
big top entertainment, from jugglers and acrobats to  
contortionists. Table settings are kept simple, but the  
fabulous lighting adds plenty of wow factor.  
Find out more at [squarmeal.co.uk/ew-xmas](http://squarmeal.co.uk/ew-xmas)*



[www.squarmeal.co.uk](http://www.squarmeal.co.uk)

[2Forks.co.uk](http://2Forks.co.uk)

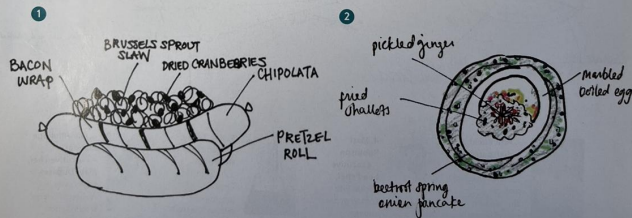




# Sketchpad specials

Turns out kitchens are full of budding artists. We asked a roll call of top chefs to design the perfect Christmas canapé. These are the drawings they sent us

WORDS ANNICA WAINWRIGHT



**1. Sandia Chang** – co-founder, Bubbledogs  
*Chipolata dog*  
A take on that old festive favourite, pigs in blankets. Served in a salty-sweet pretzel roll, the chipolata is wrapped in bacon and topped with dried cranberries and a crunchy brussels sprout slaw.



**2. Jeremy Pang** – executive chef, Cha Chaan Teng  
*Christmas morning breakfast canapé*  
One for an early morning (or late-night) event, this boeuf and spring onion-flecked pancake is topped with star anise, cinnamon and jammie tea-infused egg, crispy kale, deep-fried shallops and pickled ginger.

## Party like a... ROCK STAR

Okay, not exactly like a rock star. We're not advocating the use of narcotics, the destruction of televisions or the consumption of bats and other bite-size mammals. We just want you to channel the sense of abandon that makes a rock-star party the ultimate celebration.

No self-respecting rock god would be seen without his

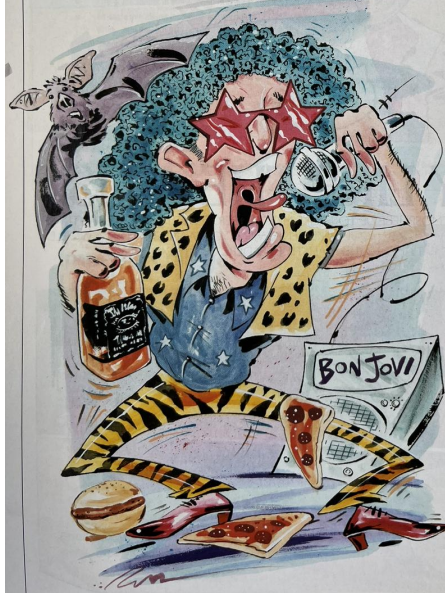
trusty hip flask and, of course, alcohol – Jack and Coke, whiskey cocktails and Champagne (preferably from the bottle) – should flow. But encouraging your guests to lose their inhibitions is not about plying them with enough alcohol to drown a donkey. It's about immersing them in the party atmosphere and inspiring them to get involved.

Firily, guests should feel at ease in the venue – this isn't a black-tie ball, so choose

somewhere they might go on a night out. Go as grungy as you dare. You're aiming for the clandestine feel of a smoky dive bar but a casual bar or private room will do (you can add atmosphere with smoke machines, low lighting and band posters on the walls). If you're trying to raise the roof, you don't want a three-course meal to send energy levels crashing through the floor. At the NME awards earlier this year, a line-up of grab-it-and-

growl Domino's pizza made sure that guests were left to concentrate on the main event: the music. Follow suit.

**Moves like Jagger**  
The stage should be the heart of any serious party. With a cheap venue and no-nonsense catering, you'll have budget to throw at a crowd-pleasing main act to get the room jumping. A great covers band will be able to roar through all the classics, from Mr Brightside to Paradise City, while a playlist of 80s soft rock will appeal to young (in an ironic way) and less young (in a



*At the NME awards earlier this year, a line-up of grab-it-and-growl Domino's pizza made sure guests were left to concentrate on the music*

nostalgic way). Even better, lay on rockaoke, karaoke with a pro backing band.

There's no point in cranking it up to 11 on the dancefloor if the rest of the venue has all the buzz of a vicar's tea party. A 'glam metal' dress code (including staff), a tour-bus photo booth, 'tattoo' station and heavy metal hair-stylist are all ways to set the tone throughout. Just remember: whatever happens on tour, stays on tour.

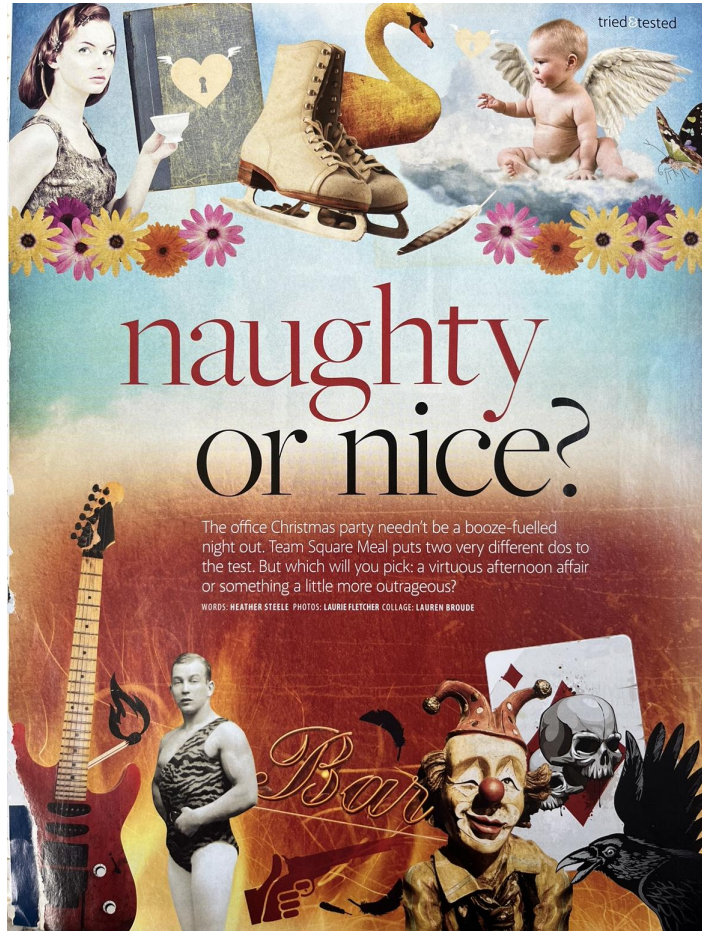
SquaresMeal Christmas

# Go do some things



[2Forks.co.uk](https://2Forks.co.uk)





# naughty or nice?

The office Christmas party needn't be a booze-fuelled night out. Team Square Meal puts two very different dos to the test. But which will you pick: a virtuous afternoon affair or something a little more outrageous?

WORDS: HEATHER STEELE PHOTOS: LAURIE FLETCHER COLLAGE: LAUREN BROUDE



## PLAYING NICE

Exchange the A&E night club for a skating session and a meal of deliciousness. The plan is simple: Not only do you get to blow hours out of the office, there's also the opportunity to get to know your colleagues in a different way.

**14.00** Alexandra Palace, you can't lose the venue. You also get the sight of half the team scabbling around on the ice while the other dance across it efficiently. Our take is former Christmas caroling partners and friends – even for those who can't stay upright – as

## ANGELIC OPTIONS

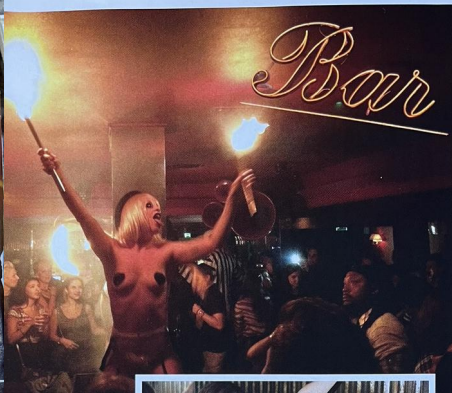
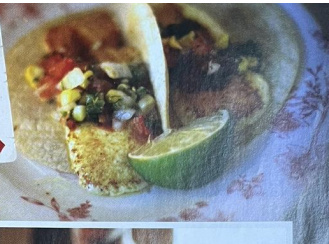
- Consider a private view of one of the world's greatest. We suggest the recently opened *The Hours* from Courtauld Gallery, and don't forget to visit the *Christmas* exhibition.
- Indulge in George & Julia's Cornish, featuring the art nouveau option for afternoon tea and the gift of a hot chocolate.
- Instead, you can have a night of the party in a game room to go down well. Alternatively, consider another option such as the all-day breakfast from the *Hotel* at the Royal London, Champagne at the *Hotel*.

• A reading class is an alternative way of using the evening light for some books. The *Bookroom* has a variety of classes, available on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings.

## THE VERDICT

- Light on your feet
- ★★★★★
- Ingredients substituted
- ★★★★★
- Calories consumed
- ★★★★★
- From food to drink
- ★★★★★
- Something different?
- ★★★★★
- Hangover from hell?
- ★★★★★





## BREAKING BAD

Tequila, burlesque, circus-themed freak shows and facepaint: it's all in a night's work for the Square Meal team.

**19.30** The entrance may not be decorated like a sex shop but, like its Soho counterpart, Casa Negra in Shoreditch is just as bad ass. Besides a platter of flavoured margaritas, we also sample a whole bottle of the good stuff, neat. The food is varied and hot: our favourites include a spicy fried chicken dish and a plate of melt-in-your-mouth beef. We leave well fed and very well watered.

**21.30** Next stop, The Hippodrome in Leicester Square. We're not actually here to visit the casino, but rather to watch its burlesque show. We're surprised at how fast-paced and funny it is. Our favourite is Kitty Bang Bang, who performs a strip-tease to Alice Cooper's *Pison*. We also end up having time for a quick flutter on the way out after all. No winners, alas.

**23.00** We stop off at Danish steak house MASH for a quick bourbon cocktail (see recipe, right) and a Five Dollar Shake. We're big *Pulp Fiction* fans.



**00.00** Our final destination: Cirque le Soir. As we descend the stairs we enter a world of debauchery and decadence. It doesn't take long to settle in as we've served a magnum of vodka and a flaming bottle of fizz at a private table. Although there's plenty of weird and wonderful action to see (a life-size model of the Elephant Man leaning over the toilets, for example) the real fun begins at 1am, when a troupe of macabre-looking, scantily clad performers flood the club and mingle with guests. We leave at 4.30am: Hello, hangover. ●



## AMERICAN PSYCHO

By Ondrej Pospichal, head bartender at MASH

25ml Buffalo Trace bourbon  
20ml Georgia Moon corn whisky  
15ml Benedictine  
15ml homemade falerium  
20ml lemon juice

Roll the cocktail from one metal shaker filled with ice together, a couple of times. Pour the cocktail into a martini glass, and garnish with a plastic axe, as well as some edible 'blood' dripped on the inside of the glass.

## THE VERDICT

Laugh-o-meter

★★★★★

Injuries sustained

★★★★☆

Calories consumed

★★★★★

Team bonding

★★★★☆

Something different?

★★★★☆

Hangover from hell?

★★★★★

## If you don't have time: do some interviews

- Hospitality businesses are full of passionate people who love to share
- Tap into the knowledge of your teams

# You know more than you think

ORGANISER'S HANDBOOK

## What to do when

*It's October and you haven't started organising your Christmas party. Don't worry, it's not too late. Follow our checklist and go from zero to party-planning hero in two months*



**Two months to go**

- Find out numbers and budget
- Choose type of party (see flow chart)
- Pick a date
- Shop around for venue/package options
- Make a shortlist and visit possible venues
- Book the venue
- Sign the contract with your venue
- Is there a full catering package at your venue? If not, book catering
- Make a guest list
- Book event insurance
- Pick your entertainment and DJ/band

**One month to go**

- Decide on your theme
- Organise hire of props, furniture and flowers
- Ask your venue for a list of preferred staffing suppliers, including security
- Do a menu and wine tasting
- Decide on your menu and drinks
- Organise buy-backs on your alcohol
- Invitations (don't forget details of dress code and dining)
- Ask guests to notify you of any dietary requirements
- Book a photographer
- Organise AV provision for the speeches
- Consider the contents of your goodie bags
- Design table decorations, place cards and menus
- Appoint your departmental party reps

**Two weeks to go**

- Chase all unanswered invitations
- Make transport arrangements to and from the venue
- Make a seating plan
- Send out driving instructions to guests
- Decide who is speaking and make sure they're briefed
- Compile a timing plan for the event and share it with suppliers

**One week to go**

- Reconfirm numbers
- Confirm special meals (for those with dietary requirements) with your caterer
- Reconfirm all your suppliers
- Compile a shot list for your photographer

**A day to go**

- Fill the goodie bags
- Visit the venue for a catch-up and run-through with your suppliers
- Send out a final reminder email to guests
- Reconfirm transport and book necessary taxis
- Check the weather forecast and make provisions if necessary

**On the day**

- Arrive at least two hours before your guests
- Identify the key members of staff
- Check the AV
- Run through the timing plan with key staff
- Ready cloakroom/welcome drinks 15 minutes before arrivals
- Check how much alcohol is left at the end of the night

**After the event**

- Get feedback from your team of reps for each department
- Thank and send feedback to your suppliers
- Share the (selected) photos internally
- Arrange buy-back of alcohol
- Book well ahead for next year

**Notes**

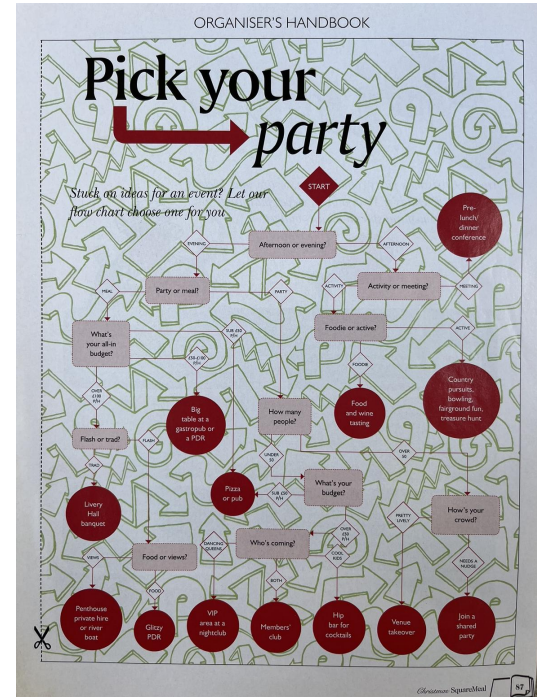
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SquireMeal Christmas





# Make something out of nothing

tried & tested

## cheap thrills

*You don't need to fly Rihanna in or spend thousands on fireworks. These little items cost next to nothing, but they can provide priceless entertainment*

WORDS: Jemima Johnson-Gilbert    PHOTOGRAPH: Sam Walton

**LOO PAPER**  
Each team chooses one person to be a mummy. They have two minutes to wrap their mummy as neatly as they can, then the mummies have to race without ripping the paper.

**A COIN**  
Teams sit facing each other with a selection of drinks at their feet. Flick the coin into each other's drinks - players drink whatever the penny lands in.

**AN ORANGE**  
Two teams race to pass an orange from one end of the table to the other, sliding the fruit under their chairs and without anyone using their hands.

**RIZLA**  
Everyone writes the name of someone famous on a cigarette paper and sticks it to their neighbour's forehead, then players ask 'yes or no' questions to work out who they are.

**STRAW & MALTESERS**  
Race to fit 10 Maltesers from one bowl to another by sucking through a straw. And a tea-breaker, if necessary, see how many Maltesers you can fit in your mouth at once.

**CEREAL BOX**  
Each player picks up a cereal box from the floor using just their mouth. After each round, cut two inches from the top of the box. A game not to be played if you've had more than two glasses of wine.

**PLATYSTICKS**  
Can you balance a spoon and fork on a glass, without either touching the glass? Thread a spoon and fork together so they make an arch. Put a matchstick between the fork's prongs and rest the other end on the edge of the glass. Cue collective amazement.

**AFTER EIGHTS**  
Balance a chocolate on your forehead and try to get it into your mouth using only facial movements. First to eat the chocolate wins. Can be played in pairs or as teams.

**CORKS**  
You'll see a few discarded corks in the run-up to Christmas, so fill your pockets and reuse them as name-card holders. Slice a notch into two corks and slot the card in. Name each table after a wine to contribute the theme.

tried & tested

## top hats

**SWAP YOUR PAPER CROWNS FOR SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE OUTFIT THIS PARTY SEASON! HERE'S OUR PICK OF THE 2012 AUTUMN/WINTER COLLECTIONS, MODELLED BY TEAM V&E**

**ANGRY BIRD** It's already taken the gaming world by storm and now you can turn it into a party game. [Escopio, 020 7652 7294, escopio.co.uk](#)

**SPAMCAN** Win friends and influence people in this one-size-fits-all trend-mal spectacle. [Angie, 0295 224 8224, kerrygates.com](#)

**RAINBOW HAT** Sound to brighten the gloved winter day - just make it your own! [Team V&E, 020 7652 7294](#)

**FRUIT & FEATHERS** Call Channel the festive spirit of Mardi Gras with Carmen Miranda's signature fruit hat. [Escopio, 020 7652 7294](#)

**PINK FEATHER HEADRESS** The traditional bachelorette gets a glamorous makeover. [Fun Party Direct, 02000 070000, funparty.com](#)

**FLAPPING** Pump the turkey with the fines - and pretest - of the big game. [Team V&E, 020 7652 7294, teamvande.co.uk](#)

**DANCING TEACUP** Watch fellow guests flex from the office party's most luscious creation. Then put your hat on. [Party Direct, 02000 070000, partydirect.com](#)

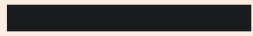
**POCKY TURTLES** There's no better time to accompany with a turkey leg than at Christmas. Just watch out for night-time booty. [Mogwoki, 0845 100 0818, jake.co.uk](#)

**STUPID TURKS** Eat, drink. This turkey barbecue is only for the boys like you. [Smily's, 0800 592 399, smilys.com](#)

With thanks to Sky Photofix for letting us pose in their photobooth. 020 7602 6292, skyphotofix.co.uk/skyfx

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**03**



**Channel Homer**





- **THE MARKETPLACE**  
customers / players
- **THE THING**  
truths, feels
- **YOUR USP<sub>s</sub>**  
products / team  
/ relationships



# Bucket 1: your playing field

- What's true about your customers at this occasion / time of year?  
Any particular wants, needs, fears, frustrations?  
👉 Check reviews & FAQs, talk to events, reservations and site teams
- What else is going on? Who / what else is fighting for their attention?

# Bucket 2: the name of the game

No, not the ABBA song, the **\*thing\*** and what it means to people

👉 Look for **universal truths** (like a kick-ass comedian)

What's their opposites?



# Bucket 3: your strongest players

Set your xmas offer to one side for now and dig a bit deeper into what people ❤️ about:

- Your product
- Your people
- Your place in the world

What's the 'benefit of the benefit'?



# Easy as 1, 2, 3...actually, just 2

- Fill your buckets
- Filter with prompts

Yes, I've got prompts for YOU. After today, you will never have to pull your hair out over Christmas - or any other seasonal event - ever again. Promise. 💪

# No pressure!

“Discover our festive packages from £55pp including a drink reception, 3-course dinner, wine, festive decorations and a DJ”



*Christmas 2012 at the Strand Palace Hotel*

Quite literally dominating the Strand and a perfect backdrop to Covent Garden, the Strand Palace Hotel offers stylish Club and Executive bedrooms and provides an excellent service with four restaurants and bars. Designed with the client in mind, our Strand Meetings and Events department can accommodate up to 250 guests with flexibility and comfort. Whether you are looking for interview rooms, training suites, a large conference space or private dining, you need look no further.

Discover our festive packages from £55.00 per person including a drink reception, three course dinner, wine, festive decorations and a DJ.

- 11 flexible private dining function suites
- Joiner and private party events welcome
- 2 restaurants with unique Christmas menus
- 2 amazing bars just waiting for your Christmas drink receptions

With Charing Cross, Covent Garden and Waterloo stations close by, we are the perfect base to enjoy Christmas in the capital!

Please call our Christmas Coordinator on 020 7379 4737 or email us at [christmas@strandpalacehotel.co.uk](mailto:christmas@strandpalacehotel.co.uk)



**Strand**  
meetings & events  
372 Strand, London WC2R 0JJ  
[www.strandpalacehotel.co.uk](http://www.strandpalacehotel.co.uk)

# There's a reason why we're here



👉 Most people would only give us this bit



One more thing before we  
get to the prompts...



- What can we reuse / recycle?
- What feedback have we got? (reviews, press, past guests - praise / complaints)?
- What are the FAQs (FOH/reservations)
- Any special bar/kitchen requests at this particular time of year?
- What does the customer REALLY want at this time of year? What's most important?
- How do we make their life easier?
- What could we do with selling more of?
- Which details would they remember?
- How can we bring all the senses in?
- Can we make this interactive?
- What would they share on Instagram / tell their friends about?
- What can I be really specific about - even if that means doing some research?
- What's in the news?
- What are we seeing everywhere all of a sudden? Anything we want to jump on? Anything we want to do OPPOSITE of?
- What would make this unmistakably ours?
- What personal stories (from the founder / business / a supplier / team member / customer) could we tell around this thing?
- How can we be less like everyone else?
- How do we add a smile?
- Any obvious cultural references (think: when was my customer 25)?
- What's the emotion we're going for?
- How can we 'Netflix' this? How will the episodes build?
- How can different channels contribute?
- How will we present it all?
- How will we sell it to the press?
- How do we make it live beyond the day of?
- What's the call-back?
- Any bolt-on sales?

**Thank-you**