

Hey Bosses: Productivity Hurt By College Basketball Tourney? "Don't Be Mad-It's March!"

Applebee's® Invites Basketball Fans to Enjoy New Appetizers and Free WiFi

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KANSAS CITY, Mo., March 17, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- It's college basketball tournament time, and U.S. companies stand to lose an estimated \$1.9 billion for every hour workers spend researching and picking pools, checking scores and watching the games.¹ An estimated 60 million Americans will participate in college basketball tournament pools.

But despite the potential losses, employers' efforts to clamp down could damage employee morale, loyalty and engagement, according to human resources consultant Challenger, Gray and Christmas, Inc.

"Why fight it?," said Applebee's Senior Vice President of Culinary and Marketing Darin Dugan. "Embrace the madness at Applebee's – our new appetizers and sampler platters are perfect for work groups to share while enjoying the games together."

But watching the games doesn't have to be a total loss: Applebee's is supporting the work effort by providing free Internet access in most of our restaurants, so your team can have fun and stay productive.

Be the point man and take a time out to enjoy the team building as your squad shares Applebee's new lineup of craveable Bar Snacks, Shareables and Pub Plates, available in sizes fit for snacking, sharing as appetizers or as individual entrees. With new appetizers and free WiFi watching the games at Applebee's is a win-win, slam-dunk situation.

What could be better for employee morale, loyalty and engagement than sharing Applebee's new Salsa Verde Brisket Nachos, Sriracha Shrimp or Kobe-Style Meatballs while enjoying the excitement of college basketball? Those are just a few of the bar-and-grill classics Applebee's has taken to a new level with premium ingredients and unique and innovative builds that underscore flavor and craveability.

With Applebee's new Bar Snacks, Shareables and Pub Plates, your teammates can customize their own plates and platters by mixing and matching any combination of items to fit the table's desire for a variety of flavors and portion sizes.

New **Salsa Verde Brisket Nachos** features tender, slow-roasted brisket, shredded and tossed with salsa verde and served with white queso cheese sauce on the bottom and shredded cheddar on the top. Fresh jalapenos, lettuce and pico de gallo add texture and contrast, and in-house, hand-cut tortilla chips complete the dish.

New **Kobe-Style Meatballs** uses top-of-the-line premium ground beef for a juicier, more flavorful meatball that is slow-cooked in Pomodoro sauce and served with a French-style baguette.

New **Sriracha Shrimp** are fried with Applebee's special coating, which provides a light, flaky crunch. Then they're tossed in a Sriracha Chile Lime sauce and served on a nest of wonton noodles.

New **Double-Crunch Bone-In Wings** are larger, meatier wings, flash-fried twice for extra crunch, then tossed with a choice of six sauces: Honey BBQ, Spicy Sweet, Asian Chile, Classic Buffalo, Hot Buffalo and Thai Peanut.

Available in a variety of sizes and sampler platters, these new appetizers are great for team building while watching the games. This season win some goodwill by letting your team relax enjoy the games and Applebee's new appetizers while getting some work done via the free WiFi available in most Applebee's restaurants.

About Applebee's

Applebee's is the world's largest casual dining chain, with more than 2,000 locations in 49 states, 16 countries and one U.S. territory. Based in Kansas City, Missouri, Applebee's offers a lively bar & grill experience with an array of flavorful, hand-crafted drinks, appetizers and entrees that constantly evolve. Applebee's Grill & Bar[®] restaurants are franchised or operated by DineEquity, Inc.'s (NYSE: DIN) wholly-owned subsidiary, Applebee's International, Inc. and its affiliates.

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¹ "Employers Brace for Productivity Decline, But Small Price to Pay for Higher Morale," Challenger Gray & Christmas, Inc., March 11, 2004

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