

Holiday Turkey



In 2009, the holiday turkey program was suspended due to difficult economic conditions.

This change is not a reflection on the hard work and commitment that our people dedicate to UPS each day, rather it was considered to be a prudent decision to help reduce related non-operating costs.

The UPS holiday turkey is a tradition dating back to the early days of the company. Before the holiday turkey, a gold piece, the legal tender of the time, was given to each employee as a symbol of the company's appreciation. The gift was not meant as a bonus for extra work during the holiday season, but rather as recognition for their hard work throughout the year.

As the company grew and the number of employees increased, turkeys replaced the gold pieces as the gift of choice during the 1920s. Originally, the turkeys were delivered to the homes of employees. Later, during the 1930s, the turkeys could be picked up at a butcher shop, either live or dressed. Employees could also have the birds delivered to them at work.

The turkeys were not distributed from 1937 through 1944 due to the effects of the Depression and the rationing of World War II. An article in The Big Idea stated, "The company regrets that because of the increased cost of business operations, heavier taxes, and the likelihood of less volume due to the business recession, it has become necessary to discontinue the practice of distributing Christmas turkeys." During this time, UPS Founder Jim Casey wrote a memo voicing his opinion on the matter: "The tradition of the turkey shows how close we are to our people. We want to show our gratitude in some way or another."

In December 1945, after World War II was over, the turkey tradition began once again at UPS with employees receiving a frozen turkey for the holidays. The process evolved to be more efficient and convenient, giving employees coupons in place of frozen turkeys.