

Business Holiday Party Etiquette: How to Avoid Disaster!

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Tips on How to Enjoy the Party - and Even Make it Work For YOU!



Thanksgiving has come and gone, now you're probably looking at the calendar and thinking about a big business holiday party coming up. While this type of affair is fun, it can also be a minefield for professionals to navigate.

Don't let your behavior - or other people - ruin the party! Enjoy and even make it work for you by following these holiday party etiquette tips.

1. Make a point to be attend - even if you'd rather not, or have other plans.

Make an appearance at an important business holiday party. You are not obligated to stay all evening, but your absence will be noticed.

2. It's a business function, so act accordingly.

Yes, it is an opportunity to socialize with colleagues in a casual setting, but be careful to be friendly but not too familiar with those at the party, especially superiors, and always to act with courtesy and respect.

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3. Know the guest policy.

Don't assume that it's okay to bring a spouse or date. Often these parties are for employees only, so be sure to check ahead of time.

4. Dress appropriately.

A business holiday party is not the place to show off your newest club outfit. Opt for a more dignified, low-key look so that you will be remembered for your good taste not your revealing attire. When in doubt, ask someone whose judgment you trust what is appropriate dress - or, check with your host.

5. Be a gracious guest.

Be sure to greet and thank your host or the individual responsible for planning the party. Chat briefly (you can't go wrong with a compliment about some aspect of the party, such as the food, the band, or the décor) and then move on.

6. Don't over-indulge!

Enjoy the food and drink, but don't over do it. Limit your intake of alcohol and don't pile your plate with excess amounts of the most expensive items on the buffet - other guests will notice and not in a positive way.

Also, have a back-up plan in case, despite your best efforts, you find that you have had too much to drink. Arrange for a designated driver, call a cab or reserve a room at a nearby hotel.

7. Mingle and network.

Take the opportunity to chat with as many of your colleagues as you can and introduce yourself to some coworkers that you don't know well. An office holiday party can be a good opportunity to strengthen existing business relationships or to initiate new ones by means of networking.

8. Limit business talk.

When you are socializing with business colleagues it can be difficult not to talk shop, but try to keep business talk to a minimum. Instead, look at the office holiday party as an opportunity to get to know your coworkers on a personal level. Keep the conversation upbeat and stick with safe topics like travel, kids, local sports, and movies.

9. Don't gossip.

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Some of your colleagues may enjoy gossiping about coworkers, especially as the evening wears on and a little too much alcohol loosens tongues. Don't join in. You'll regret it in the morning. The same goes for griping about your job or bragging about your business triumphs.

10. Have fun!

An office business party is meant to be fun, so relax and enjoy yourself.

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