

Office Party Etiquette

Office parties are actually business functions and should be treated as such.

The holiday office party is actually a command performance. Be sure to RSVP in a timely manner and to show up, even if you are shy and not a social butterfly. Often office parties are where company executives size you up to see how you deal with people.

Office parties are also intended to build goodwill among co-workers. Your absence may not be held against you, but it can affect how others feel about you.

However, don't get noticed for the wrong reasons.

Office Party Guidelines

1. Dress appropriately. Holiday gatherings can mean anything from cocktail, black tie optional, casual, or smart casual. The office party isn't the place to look sexy. Don't wear a lot of jewelry or a low-cut dress.
2. If a spouse or guest attends a company party with you, help him/her feel comfortable and have fun by making introductions to your co-workers, boss, and other guests. ("Bill, I would like to introduce Julie, our marketing manager.")
3. Focus on remembering people's names.
4. Don't panic if you forget someone's name. Laugh and say, "Oops, I'm so sorry, I'm having a senior moment and can't even remember my own name." At this point, the person will usually remind you of his/her name.
5. Start conversations yourself to break the ice for others.
6. Expand your interoffice network. Don't stay too long with the same people.
7. To end a conversation, try saying, "It's been fun talking to you, but I don't want to monopolize your time."
8. If liquor is served, be cautious about how much you drink. It would be better to stick with bottled water than to risk getting tipsy.
9. Make a point of saying good-bye and thank you to your supervisor before leaving.
10. If the party took place at your supervisor's home, you might want to bring a bottle of wine, flowers, or candy to show your appreciation.
11. Send a note of thanks afterward.