

Holiday Parties - Outclass the Competition

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The Refined School of Protocol and Etiquette®



The holiday season will soon be upon us. You know what that means, office parties and entertaining clients. Now is not the time to let loose. Take these opportunities to advance yourself in the eyes of your client and your firm. The following tips can help you on your way and keep you out of trouble.

Don't drink too much. Although you may feel more relaxed after a few cocktails, don't forget that alcohol lowers your inhibitions. You want to maintain your good judgment. One or two cocktails are plenty at a work function.

Don't eat too much. You should not spend the entire party at the buffet or eating appetizers. Eat a little something prior to the party so that you can spend time with clients, colleagues and management. Don't miss an opportunity to converse with senior management because you were too busy eating.

Dress appropriately. This is work, so you want to maintain the professional reputation you have taken so long to build. Anything too flashy, tight or revealing is inappropriate. Remember ladies - more skin equals less power.

Do not bring uninvited guests. Not all companies allow guests at office holiday parties. Find out from those in charge before you invite a friend. If you are attending a customer reception, call the person in charge prior to bringing any additional clients.

Maintain office etiquette. Do not tell offensive jokes or use foul language at an office gathering. You may think that no one can hear you but then again maybe they can. Remember not to discuss business or client situations if you are at a party that includes customers.

Make proper introductions. Make sure you introduce customers to your colleagues and senior management. Shake hands, make eye contact and say a little something about each person you are introducing. In business introductions the name of the person with the most seniority is spoken first. The only exception to this rule is when you introduce your customer. Their name is said before anyone else at the company.

Mingle. The office party may be your only opportunity to interact with your managing partner or CEO. Take advantage of this situation. Do not spend the whole evening chatting with one small group of friends.

Thank the organizers. Don't leave without thanking the planning committee or the President of your company for a lovely evening. This is another good way to stand apart.

Think of the office party as an opportunity to outclass the competition – literally.

