

Top 10 Office Party Don'ts

Attending an office party? Don't check your professional reputation along with your coat. An office party gives you the opportunity to celebrate the holidays or other occasion with your co-workers. You should have fun, but be careful about having too good a time. Follow these tips and you'll be able to return to the office with your head held high.

1) Don't Drink Too Much

Alcohol lowers your inhibitions and alters your judgement. It can make you do things you may regret. Even if you think you can handle your alcohol quite well, one mixed drink or a glass of wine at the office party should be your limit. Remember, perception is everything. You don't want to look like you're drinking too much, even if alcohol has little effect on you.

2) Don't Treat the Office Party Like a Singles Bar

An office party gives you a chance to see another side of your co-workers. However, you shouldn't try to get to know any of them *too well*. Jim (or Jane) from accounting may suddenly look a lot more appealing under bar lights than cubicle lights. Ignore your animal instincts. Workplace romances — or worse, one night stands — can be disastrous.

3) Don't Flirt or Act in a Sexually Provactive Manner

Your flirting may be entirely innocent (if it's not please see #2), but the message it sends to your colleagues isn't innocent. If you want to be respected on a professional level, save this side of yourself for parties with friends.

4) Don't Wear Suggestive Clothing

If you wouldn't wear it to the office, you shouldn't wear it to the office party. Of course, your clothes can be more festive than those you wear to work (think sequins, color, and sparkles), but they shouldn't be revealing.

5) Don't Let Your Guard Down

People tend to relax at office parties. When relaxed, we let our guards down and reveal things about ourselves we don't want our co-workers to know. Alcohol may contribute to this too, so be sure to pay careful attention to item #1.

6) Don't Tell Dirty or Off-Color Jokes

This rule holds true in or out of the office. Dirty or off-color jokes may be offensive to others so avoid telling them.

7) Don't Use Foul Language

You may feel so comfortable at the office party that you forget you're really at work. Keep bad language in check as it could make you look unprofessional.

8) Don't Talk About People Behind Their Backs

Just because someone is absent from the office party it doesn't give you reason to talk about him behind his back. In addition to the fact that it's just not nice, this person's friends may be present and word could get back to him.

9) Don't Bring Uninvited Guests

Often office parties are for employees only. Don't assume it's okay to bring your significant other or someone else without asking first.

10) Don't Underestimate the Importance of Your Guest's Behavior

If it's okay to bring a guest, choose wisely. Invite someone who will behave appropriately. That means he or she will have to follow the same rules you are expected to follow.

From Dawn Rosenberg McKay, Your Guide to Career Planning