



Avoiding a festive faux pas: dos and don'ts for navigating your work Christmas party

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The office Christmas party is a highly anticipated event on the corporate calendar, providing a chance for employees to relax, celebrate the year's achievements and bond with colleagues in a festive atmosphere.

However, it's essential to remember that, despite the celebratory context, it is still a work-related event. Maintaining professionalism and respecting boundaries is crucial to ensuring the party is enjoyable for everyone and free from regrettable incidents.

To help everyone navigate the festivities smoothly, we have put together a guide of "dos" and "don'ts" to share with employees in advance of any celebrations. These tips are designed to help employees make the most of the occasion while avoiding common pitfalls that can lead to awkward situations or even disciplinary actions.

Don't over-indulge in alcohol

It is important to remind employees that they are drinking with their colleagues so they should reduce the amount they would usually consume around their friends and family. Excessive drinking is the number one cause of office party "incidents" and consequent New Year HR meetings. Encourage employees to stick to their limit, drink slowly or alternate between alcohol and water.

Don't act in a way which you wouldn't act in the office

Employees should remember that it is an office Christmas party. Employees are advised to avoid making inappropriate jokes, comments or advances. Respecting personal boundaries is crucial to maintaining a comfortable and respectful environment for all. Encourage employees to steer clear of controversial or deeply personal topics such as politics, religion or finances unless employees are certain the other person is comfortable discussing them.

Don't drive home

Encourage employees to plan ahead. If they know they will be drinking, employees should arrange alternative transportation in advance. This could include booking a taxi, using a ride-sharing service or arranging a designated driver. If the party is being held at a venue with accommodation, employees should consider booking a room to stay overnight or making arrangements to stay overnight with a colleague or nearby friend. Planning ahead removes the temptation to drive and ensures employees have a safe way to get home. Remind them that driving under the influence not only puts their own life at risk but also endangers the lives of others on the road.

Do participate

Encourage employees to try to make an appearance at the party, even if it is just for an hour or two. Attending the Christmas party can be a great way to foster new relationships and strengthen existing ones. Engaging with colleagues in a social context can lead to deeper connections that benefit not just their personal rapport but also their professional relationships. Their presence shows that employees value the team and enjoy being part of the community. It's a small gesture that can go a long way in terms of team spirit and morale.

Do mingle

Advise employees to invite colleagues who are standing alone into their conversations. This helps create a welcoming atmosphere and ensures no one feels left out. When chatting with colleagues, employees should share interesting, lighthearted stories or experiences and keep the tone positive and professional. If employees are new starters, employees should make an effort to get involved. If employees are long-standing members of the team, employees should make a special effort to include newbies.

Do dress for the occasion

Ensure that the dress code is conveyed to employees in advance. For instance, if attending a cocktail event, employees should think smart-casual. On the other hand, a black-tie gala requires a more formal approach. For more casual settings like a pub or department lunch / dinner, employees should opt for neat yet relaxed clothing.

Do have fun!

This is a time to relax, celebrate the hard work that you put into the company throughout the year and share good times with your colleagues.

By sharing these guidelines with employees, employers can help ensure that the office Christmas party

is enjoyable, safe, and incident-free for everyone – with no HR meetings being scheduled for the New Year!

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