

## Holiday Party Etiquette: Forget the Mistletoe!

By Martha Newman, J.D., PCC, TopLawyerCoach, LLC • November 22, 2011

### *Manners Matter at Holiday Gatherings*



You probably have a lot of parties to attend during the next few weeks.

You want to be the life of the party and really let your hair down.

#### **But wait - stop right there!**

Throw your visions of spiked egg nog and dancing on tables out the window.

Office holiday parties can tarnish your brand if you let the liquor flow too freely or forget that professionalism never stops mattering.

#### **Have fun, but please don't end up wearing the lampshade!**

Miss Manners herself, **Emily Post**, offers this etiquette advice for all holiday party goers.

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## 1. Limit drinking.

Sure, it's okay to have a glass of wine - but don't have 5 or 6.

People who drink too much at office parties take the risk of seriously harming their professional careers. Stay in control and limit your drinking.

## 2. Be prepared for small talk.

If the thought of party small talk makes you sweat, don't panic.

Simply think before you speak. Have a list of potential **talking points** in mind that will help you get a conversation going. Try to avoid yes or no questions.

"What are your plans for the holidays?" will generate a more detailed response than "Are you traveling for the holidays?"

And remember, the wallflower near the buffet is probably looking for a conversation just as much as you are.

## 3. Don't forget about your spouse.

Often, spouses and significant others are invited to holiday parties, too. Give them a heads up on bosses and colleagues who are likely to be there.

At the party, don't ditch them. Make them feel included and comfortable.

Also, make sure you introduce them to your important workplace family.

## 4. Thank your host.

Always be a gracious guest by thanking the host of the party, as well as any of the people who worked to plan the event.

A verbal thank you is sufficient, so is an email. A hand-written note, however, will make you stand out and it will convey a deeper level of warmth and sincerity.

So go ahead, relax a bit this holiday season.

But be sure to do it with your best foot forward and **ALWAYS keep manners in mind.**

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