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## Tips for Surviving Office Holiday Parties: After Drunk and Stupid, Then What?

By [Robert McGarvey](#)

NEW YORK ([MainStreet](#)) — An employee threw a co-worker into a lagoon.

Another employee rode a Ferris wheel naked.

Yet another was caught going through co-workers' desks while the others were partying.

Call those scenes from office holiday parties gone desperately wrong. And you better believe those incidents actually occurred, according to research assembled by staffing agency The Creative Group.

Know this too: misbehavior at holiday parties destroys careers. Yes, 'tis the season, but that does not mean there will be forgiveness for drunk, stupid, crude behavior, because rule one of office parties is not to forget this is still a professional gathering.

Office holiday parties are, first and foremost, about work and business relationships. Said Angela Vitzthum, branch manager for The Creative Group in Chicago: "Employees forget that office parties are work functions, and bad behavior will come back to haunt you."

Vitzthum also offered a what not to do for the more sober among us: don't snap smartphone pix of drunk and stupid co-workers, post them to Facebook and expect a round of applause. Documenting the misbehaviors may be as unwanted as the misbehavior itself, suggested Vitzthum.

Career coach Steve Langerud offered two more crucial office party survival tips: limit yourself to one drink and leave early. The reason? Nobody has hard evidence, but best guesses are that the most flagrant party missteps are alcohol fueled (you would have to be drunk to go naked on the Ferris wheel, right?), and the sure way to dodge that disaster is limit intake and to curb temptation by ducking out early.

Like minded advice comes from Jacqueline Whitmore, founding director of the Protocol School of Palm Beach, who urged party goers to eat before arriving. Why, when there will be groaning boards of free grub? Easy: hunger leads to making bad decisions, eating the wrong foods and also getting tipsy fast when boozing on an empty stomach. Chow down on the way, and know you are fortifying yourself against the temptations ahead.

Stay long enough to be seen, to interact with those who matter - having a mental checklist of people you want to contact is smart - and when the boxes have been ticked, say goodnight and hit the road. That's key advice from multiple experts. Make the most of these events by having set goals beforehand.

What about if this advice is arriving too late? You already misbehaved - bigtime - and your question is how to repair the damage. April Masini, who blogs about relationships at AskApril, offers this advice: "Don't send a mass blast e-mail to your entire department asking for absolution from anyone you may have offended, but because you were so drunk, you can't remember. This isn't the Oscars, and you can't thank all the little people. Go in person to each individual and say you're sorry."

Focus - somewhere between your ears there are brain cells that recall the highlights, or lowlights. Then apologize individually and profusely to those you wronged and make a point to beg your bosses in particular for mercy.

Advised Whitmore: "Say, 'the alcohol went to my head. I'm so sorry.'" Be authentic and do the apology in a timely manner, said Whitmore; in the right combination, forgiveness may be yours.

Ours is an era of absolution, no matter how grave the sin, but you do need to grovel and to do it sincerely. Do that, and just about anything probably will be forgiven.

Except of course there is one remaining issue, because sex indeed is an issue at the office party. That is because, according to Harris Interactive research for Trojan, 42% of men and 27% of women, ages 18 to 34 have gotten it on at or following a holiday party.

Surprised? This coupling in fact cuts across age groups. The Trojan research said that 24% of all Americans - one in every four of us - hooked up with someone at or after an office party.

Now you know what else needs to be explained.

--Written by Robert McGarvey for MainStreet

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