

# 2017 HOLIDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE!

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## *Being A Good Host and A Good Guest*

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Last week we kicked off our 2017 Holiday Survival Guide talking about creating a positive image of yourself and your company by making sure you quickly RSVP to your host's holiday invitation. This week we provide additional tips on creating and maintaining that positive image by focusing on being a good host and a good guest.

Business holiday social events are times when, as part of the organization, you are expected to mix, mingle, and represent your company. To make the most of this opportunity, check your perspective. Don't view the event as a burden or obligation (even though it might feel like one!), but more as an opportunity to make new business relationships or strengthen existing ones. Use the holiday social setting to meet, greet, and be a good representative for yourself and your organization.

When it comes to holiday social events you may not be the actual event host but you can certainly step metaphorically into the role by emulating the qualities of a good host. The fundamentals of being a good host - welcoming your guests, helping them feel comfortable, and encouraging them to mingle - are all aspects of hosting that we as social event attendees can use to our advantage. Taking the initiative to introduce yourself to new people one-on-one or by approaching a group, if that makes you more comfortable, is one way to put this concept into practice. Stepping into the 'host mindset' is a successful tool I've used through the years to not only to try and help make others feel welcome - no matter who the host is - but also to help myself make the most of a networking opportunity.

Another way to make the most of a business holiday social event (or any social event!) is to set a goal for yourself to greet and get to know at least three people you've not met before (*hint – most employers consider such an effort to be a great accomplishment!*). If you get nervous in social settings sometimes taking on the role of host (even if it's only in your mind) often helps

give you that boost of confidence you need to take that first 'meet and greet' step. If you're still stuck, ask someone you know at the event to get you started on introductions and then take it from there!

### **Be a Good Guest – The One Drink Rule!**

When I think about being a good guest various principals of etiquette come to mind – being considerate first and foremost, in responding to the invitation, pocketing your cell phone, and not overstaying your welcome. But one of the most important considerations when it comes to business social events, especially during the stressful holiday season, is practicing moderation. Which leads us to the one drink rule!

Just because you are out of the office does not mean you have stopped being a representative of your organization. Your actions at any social event, including the traditional holiday celebration, impact not only your image, but the image of the company. Unfortunately, the effects of alcohol are insidious and they become apparent to others long before they become apparent to you.

Because we build business relationships with our words, actions, and appearance, the effect of alcohol – or even its perceived effect – could really cause you embarrassment and force you to apologize for or excuse your behavior. In business, you should NEVER find yourself in a position where you have to apologize for your actions. Indulging in more than one drink can really put you in that position. My suggestion is to avoid putting yourself in that situation in the first place by adhering to the One Drink Rule.

Now, ironically, there are two parts to the One Drink Rule:

**Part 1** – If you chose to drink this holiday event season (or at any business social event!), set a one drink limit on yourself BEFORE you start drinking.

**Part 2** – Always remember: You NEVER have to drink at a work/social event and you NEVER have to explain why you are abstaining.

Finding yourself in a position where, as a result of drinking too much, you must apologize for your previous night's actions will always reflect poorly on you and the company you represent – no matter how graciously your host excused the behavior. Unfortunately, not everyone makes it easy to adhere to a 'no drink' or 'one drink' rule. In fact, some people can be quite insistent that you drink with them or join them for "just one more round!" One of the ways to handle these potentially awkward social moments is to make a stop at the bar when you first arrive at the event and quietly order a sparkling water. Ask the bartender to put it in a cocktail glass with a lime, throw in a short straw, and no one will ever know the difference.

Sticking to a one-drink rule is a very personal decision that should be made with careful consideration and the weighing of the risks and benefits.

### **A Few Good Host, Good Guest Tips**

#### **Welcome people into your conversation.**

Holiday social events can be difficult for even the best social networker! Help solidify your reputation as someone who knows how to interact with people and build relationships by making an effort to welcome people into your conversation.

Make a good first impression by taking the time to meet people you don't know, and making the effort to include newcomers into your conversation. We all know how difficult it can be to approach a group of strangers so, be inclusive to the newcomer. This is where that 'host' mindset comes in handy. Get the new person up to speed on the group conversation and ask for their input which will quickly make them feel like part of the group.

### **Don't air the company dirty laundry.**

Airing the company's dirty laundry in a social setting hurts you and the company. Potential clients could decide not to work with you after hearing you talk about internal problems. And, instead of painting yourself in a positive light as a team player and confidante, it calls into question your loyalty and your ethics. Both situations could cost you and the company business because these actions tear down rather than build up your business relationships. And in business relationships are everything.

### **Let's talk about food!**

Most people like nothing better than to socialize over food and drink. The food and drinks provided at holiday celebrations (and most social functions) are there to make it easier for people to talk, mix and mingle. So with that in mind, be sure to keep your plate small – don't overload. Remember, typically, it's not the main reason you're there. Unless it's a sit-down event, don't treat the hor d'oeuvres or light bites as dinner. Worse yet, don't stuff your pockets or fill a plate to take home with you!

Follow these simple guidelines and you'll be well on your way to making a terrific impression at your next holiday event and building a reputation as someone who knows the value of social interaction and is an awesome representative of your organization.

Join us next week when we focus on engaging in small talk and socializing.

Have a unique perspective you'd like to share when it comes to surviving the corporate holiday party circuit? We'd love to hear it! Send us your tips for surviving and thriving the corporate holiday season to [Perspeticitive@saffirelegal.com](mailto:Perspeticitive@saffirelegal.com).