

AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR, WITH TENSIONS RUNNING HIGH AND STRESS LEVELS AT THEIR PEAK, OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTIES HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO GO HORRIBLY WRONG. NIKKI HEALD SHOWS YOU HOW TO PREVENT BECOMING A CHRISTMAS PARTY CASUALTY.

Not everyone looks forward to the office Christmas party! Combine frazzled nerves with personality clashes and then add a dash (or two) of alcohol and you may well have the recipe for disaster. Whilst it is the time for employees to let down their hair, all too often people let loose at work functions and fail to recognize that such behaviour can be detrimental to their career. Even though the event is surrounded in social occasion, it is definitely not a social event. Of course, you can still have fun although there are some factors to consider beforehand.

From a management perspective, employees are professionally still on display and superiors are observing the way staff conduct themselves. For those seeking career progression, work functions are strictly business and are not the time to gain reputation as the office stripper or party animal. By no means is it the time to tell your boss what you really think, air grievances or grope that attractive co-worker. We've all experienced the person who shouts when they think they are whispering or the one who conveys their eternal love.

On the flip side, it's not all bad. The good news is that the office Christmas party or any work function can also be the time for you to impress clients and colleagues with impeccable professional and social courtesies. Use it as an opportunity to shine and demonstrate your credibility in a networking environment. It's also a great way to develop internal and external relationships which are the foundation to success. In today's competitive climate, there is an expectation that employees are able to facilitate introductions, generate conversation, mingle, behave appropriately and put others at ease.

So, whilst the festive bash can be a potential minefield it really doesn't have to be the silly season. Remember, you have the power to control your personal brand so consider the perception you would like associated with it. By implementing the following protocols you will be sure to keep your business reputation intact and, who knows, you might just get that promotion!

1. Limit the eggnog - doesn't mean it's a free-for-all because the company is paying.
2. Don't speak with your mouth full - even though there are lots of delicious canapés.

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Written by Nikki Heald

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3. Avoid skimpy or revealing clothing - retain the mystery by dressing suitably and professionally.
4. Use appropriate eye contact - flirtatious and intimate glances can lead to trouble.
5. Avoid the urge to snog your boss or colleagues - a professional handshake goes a long way.
6. Don't monopolise the conversation - no-one likes bragging, correcting, whining, or ridiculing.
7. Stay away from the photocopier - resist the urge (or dare) to copy body parts.
8. Finally, remember your manners, have fun and enjoy the festivities.

So, whilst the festive bash can be a potential minefield it really doesn't have to be the silly season. Remember, you have the power to control your personal brand so consider the perception you would like associated with it. By implementing correct protocols you will be sure to keep your business reputation intact and who knows, you might just get that promotion after all?

**Nikki Heald** is a corporate trainer, author, presenter and businesswoman and the Managing Director of Corptraining, established to provide dynamic and modern training solutions appropriate to the business needs of today. Her programs focus on maximising professional and personal visibility through consistency in presentation, protocol and communication techniques. For more information visit [www.corptraining.com.au](http://www.corptraining.com.au) .