

What Not to Do at Holiday Office Parties

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A recent Harris Interactive survey of office holiday party attendees found that:

- 49% saw flirtations with coworkers and supervisors.
- 47% heard a coworker using excessive profanity.
- 44% observed coworkers sharing inappropriate personal info about themselves or other colleagues.

Want to avoid being a punch line this holiday season? Don't make one too many visits to the punch bowl.

"Alcohol disables the editor between the brain and the mouth," says Janie Harden Fritz, associate professor of communication and rhetoric at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh. "You can end up saying and doing things you may regret."

Holidays are a time to relax and celebrate -- but when attending a work holiday party, remember that the key word is "work."

Blunders to Avoid

Here are some true work holiday party stories: reminders of what **not** to do at your next holiday shindig. (Names have been changed to protect the guilty and the innocent.)

* Jeannie's former colleague walked up to his least favorite manager at a holiday office party and planted a big wet kiss on his cheek. "I always wanted to smack you, but this'll have to do." The next day, the man was transferred. Jeannie never heard from him again.

* Marilyn got up at her table, where the office manager was sitting, and started making a holiday speech. "When I stood up, somehow a napkin fell onto the candle on the table and caught fire. I didn't notice it at all," she said. Several shocked colleagues and glasses of water later, the fire was out.

* An employee drove out of the parking lot at a holiday party and into the company president's parked car, reports a respondent in the above Harris survey.

* At a swanky holiday party, Tina's boss emerged from the rest room with her dress tucked into the back of her pantyhose waist. "I didn't know what to do. I was pretty new, so I didn't say anything. No one really liked her, so it was pretty hilarious," says Tina. It took at least 15 minutes before someone made her boss aware of her wardrobe malfunction.

* "The no-host bar loosened my tongue, and I told the big boss what sweet legs she had," says Brian. "Needless to say, we were a little uncomfortable in staff meetings for a while."

Risky Salary Talk

Keep your inappropriate comments to yourself. And whatever you do, don't let your hair down and start comparing [salaries](#) with your co-workers. If you're curious how much your colleagues earn -- and want to find out how much you should be making -- check out a [free salary calculator and report](#) instead.