

Holiday office party dos and don'ts



**RACHEL
WAGNER**

The holiday office party is an extension of your professional life. You are being observed by your supervisors and colleagues, as well as their spouses and guests — maybe even a few board members or clients.

It's a great opportunity to make a positive impression.

Here are 10 ways to help you put your best foot forward:

Do...

- **RSVP.** Those in charge of the party need an accurate head count to plan food, beverages and seating. The invitation will specify whether you may bring a guest or spouse. If so, include him or her in your RSVP.

- **Make an appearance.** Stay at least an hour; leaving sooner is impolite.

Stay longer if you can. Your appearance shows loyalty and appreciation to your company and support for your co-workers.

- **Dress appropriately.** Know what attire is appropriate — it's usually noted on the invitation — so you don't show up casually dressed while everyone else is in cocktail attire. If the office party is during the workday, choose something a little dressier but still conservative.

- **Mix and mingle.** Find and greet your host when you arrive. Socialize with those you know and those you don't know. It impresses the higher-ups when you can mingle with people outside your department or work group. Introduce your spouse or guest so he or she feels included. Look for an opportunity to speak briefly with the president or CEO.

- **Show courtesy at the buffet table.** If necessary, eat a little something before you go so you don't appear too hungry. Move away from the buffet table after serving yourself so you don't tie up traffic and aren't tempted to double dip. Use a clean plate if you go back for seconds.

- **Hold your food or beverage in your left hand.** This leaves your right hand free for a handshake that's not sticky or cold from your food or beverage.

- **Be thankful.** Before you leave, find the party host and others who helped in planning and express your appreciation. Even better, convey your enjoyment with a handwritten thank-you note to your host. You will stand out as a class act.

Don't...

- **Drink too much.** Limit alcoholic beverages to two drinks, then switch to something nonalcoholic.

- **Dispose of used plates and glasses on the buffet table.** Look for trays set up around the room for this purpose.

- **Talk shop.** A party is the perfect time to learn about your co-workers and their interests outside work. Keep the conversation light and positive. Sports, movies and holiday travel plans are great topics, plus they help spouses and guests feel included.

Rachel Wagner is a certified corporate etiquette consultant and owner of Tulsa-based Rachel Wagner Etiquette & Protocol. <

EDITORIAL

The 'power' of prayer

A news item crossed our desk recently that reminded us of the benefit the oil industry has provided our state and the dedication of our residents to the industry.

The basis of the story, as told by Mark Stansberry, International Energy Policy Conference founder and chairman, starts with Broken Arrow resident Nancy Huff meeting then-Secretary of State Colin Powell about a decade ago. In the meeting, Powell asked Huff if she would pray for Oklahoma to produce more oil because, he said, our country needs the oil in Oklahoma.

She took the request seriously, and upon returning to Oklahoma from Washington, D.C., became a volunteer for The Energy Advocates, wrote a mini book of prayers for the oil industry

and faithfully prayed with a group every Thursday night for Oklahoma, the U.S. and the industry.

Huff, who is director of Teach the Children International, a nonprofit that works with children in crises, was recognized as the 2011 Citizen Energy Advocate of the Year award winner at the 19th annual IEPC awards luncheon and round table Nov. 10 in Houston.

Hosted by The Energy Advocates, a Tulsa- and Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit public education organization, the IEPC attracts energy leaders from around the world every year to discuss the latest advancements, trends and public policies impacting the availability of energy resources in the U.S.

"Nancy's astounding level of dedication to supporting energy education in the U.S. is truly an inspiration," Stansberry said. "She has gone far above and beyond the call of duty to earn this recognition."

With the announcement that AMR Corp., parent company of American Airlines Inc. with some 7,000 employees in Tulsa alone, is seeking bankruptcy protection, it occurs to us that the aviation industry could stand some of the same kind of dedication.

Local leadership has been quick to call for the region to rally around a common goal of support to help make the company sound.

You can be sure some of that support is going to come in the form of prayers, too. <



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