

work **at work**

End of financial year office party survival guide

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STORY BY

STAFF WRITERS
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If you start to slur, slow down or go home. (Or keep partying.) Source: News Limited

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|----------|----------|---------|----------|
| ASX 200 | at 19:45 | AUD/USD | at 19:45 |
| ▲ 5380.2 | | ▲ 73.47 | |
| +77.1 | | +0.09 | |

| CODE | NAME | PRICE | PERCENT |
|------|-------------------|-------|---------|
| SMX | SMS Management.. | 4.37 | 19.726% |
| OMH | OM Holdings Lim.. | 0.22 | -12.0% |

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IT'S the end of financial year, which for many companies means party time.

While it's important for businesses to recognise and reward staff, employers and employees are being warned to be careful of the pitfalls that can come when celebrations get out of hand.

Paul Findlay, managing director of white-collar training company **PD Training**, has compiled a 'survival guide' for bosses.

"As an employer you can choose to throw a high-risk party or a low-risk party," he said. "It depends on your assessment of your staff. Have I got a team full of partygoers or more mature professionals?"

Mr Findlay says the riskiest parties involve unlimited alcohol and fancy dress — a recipe for trouble, or fun, or both. The safest are alcohol free, such as a daytime BBQ.

While it might be tempting for employees to get trashed, he said it's important to read the tone of the organisation.

"The thing a lot of employees don't realise is that the most important conversations in your life happen when you're not in the room," he said.

"The people who decide whether you're getting a promotion are discussing it when you're not there. If you behave like a drunkard, your management will talk about it the next day.

"Be conscious that you are still at work and are being observed."

Here is PD Training's list of survival tips:

FOR EMPLOYERS

- The responsibility of the boss as host. Employers need to keep their staff safe — and then it's about the fun. Bosses set the tone of a party.
- Best type of EOFY party. EOFY parties are better than Christmas events because they're directly linked to results, effort and appreciation. The safest party is one without alcohol and late nights on the town. The best ones feature something surprising — consider a sumptuous silver service morning brunch with butlers!
- Tips to ensure no one plays up. It's a balancing act. Set the tone through a welcome speech and remind people to behave nicely. Try a morning event or an outdoors experience. And hire a photographer to commemorate the event (this may prevent nasty face book surprises). Bosses should ensure there are non-alcoholic beverages available.
- Handling a drunk or obnoxious employee. There's just one way — and that's the high way. Get them a taxi and pay for their ride home. Do it early.
- What should a boss do if staff want to kick on? It's a likely event so minimise the risk of it happening. Have a lunch or 'twilight' event and be clear about the finishing time. To deter it, cut off the tab and consider hosting a fresh breakfast at work the following morning and tell people in advance you expect them to attend.
- Dealing with the employee who misbehaves. Assess whether it's the type of behaviour you want reflecting your company culture. If another staff member complains or has been offended, act immediately. Don't just put it down to the party!
- Draw the line through bad behaviour. Breaking the law is breaking the law. If a person does so, or contravenes your business standards, it should be addressed decisively and appropriately just as you would address it if it happened during normal working hours.

FOR EMPLOYEES

- Read the tone set by your employer. Follow the cues of the most senior manager — it's best to follow the pace of the event, not set it.
- If you start to slur, slow down or go home. How much you drink depends on your ability to manage your alcohol. But if you start to come across 'drunk' (like putting your point across too strongly) you're embarrassing yourself. Being seen drunk (or on your way) undermines your 'leadership material' potential.
- If you're getting hassled by a colleague (or even a boss) get out or get a wingman. Arms around you? Inappropriate flattery? Not OK. Quickly remove yourself (take a bathroom break). If you're not ready to leave, make sure you stay in a group or get a wingman. If the hassling persists ask the offender to give you some space or 'stop'.
- When is it OK to kick on? Assess the tone of the party. Kicking on with peers is OK but if the rowdiness is escalating, best to go home.
- If your boss insists you kick on but you don't want to, don't. Make up an excuse: your partner, grandmother, pet — anyone — is expecting you home. Politely decline and depart quickly to avoid being hassled to stay.
- If you misbehave at a party, apologise quickly. Go to your manager and those you may have insulted, and say you're sorry. Be genuinely remorseful and demonstrate how it was 'out of character' (but you can only use this card once). Never replay the incident.

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