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## How to Dress for Your Office Party

BY [Brian O'Connell](#) | 12/11/13 - 07:30 AM EST



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NEW YORK ([TheStreet](#)) -- No one wants to be the employee who gets drunk and falls down the stairs at the holiday party, but experts say that watching what you wear is just as important as watching what you drink. While it's important to have fun and enjoy a relaxed evening with co-workers, it's essential to keep your career in mind and "dress for success" during your corporate celebration.

If you're unsure what to wear, check out our list of expert tips before you raise a glass with your boss this year.

**How professional or festive should I be?**

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This really depends on when and where the party is, says Jill Swanson, image coach and author of *Out the Door in 15 Minutes*. If it's a daytime party, opt for an outfit that's a "step up" from what you'd ordinarily wear to the office. For an evening affair at a nice restaurant, a "little black dress" or suit are in order.

To know how to dress, you have to pay attention to the date, venue and wording of the invitation when you get it, says Rachel Weingarten, brand strategist and author of *Career and Corporate Cool*.

"If it's an official invite in the mail, you know that things are going to be more proper," Weingarten says. "If it was a friendly email invitation for drinks, you can be more laid back. Bear in mind though, that this isn't a gathering of friends -- it's your co-workers."

Some employees may feel that a weekend holiday party is more casual than one that occurs on a weeknight, but that's simply not true, says Lauren Rothman, founder of **Styleauteur** and author of *Style Bible: What to Wear to Work*.

"Keep in mind that the holiday party is still a work event. Keep dressing for the job you want and not just the one you have," Rothman says. "Always be appropriate. Your style reflects who you are and who you want to be -- it matters."

If you're still unsure of exactly how to dress, Swanson says it's OK to ask your colleagues what they're planning to wear -- but be careful who you ask. It's probably only a good idea to inquire if you admire their dressing style, she says. Also, it's not a good idea to ask your HR department for advice unless you're a new employee.

"Only ask your HR department for advice if you've worked there for less than a year. Any longer than that, and it might appear you aren't really plugged into the business family," she says.

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