



Work It, Mom! August 13, 2008



think the company picnic is just for fun?

Think again -- how you act could help or hinder your career

by Lisa Quast | 1463 views | 0 comments | ★★★★★ Rate this now!

Many people don't think twice about how they should act at company-sponsored events, such as a summer picnic. But according to a [Seattle Times article by Janet H. Cho](#), "Anything that starts with '[company](#)' first -- 'company picnic,' 'company barbecue,' 'company baseball game' -- means this is a business event" and workplace rules apply.

In the article, Cho provides advice for attending company-sponsored events. Not everyone may agree with the advice, but it's good to at least consider your strategy and behavior before attending events. Here's a summarized list of Dos and Don'ts from the article:

Don't:

- Let your guard down
- Drink too much
- Get sloppy in your conversations
- Get overly friendly or make inappropriate comments to co-workers
- Bring your dog (and only bring your children if it's requested or if your boss has kids; don't bring your spouse "if your spouse has no social graces")

Do:

- Attend the event. Management will see your attendance and may view the event as "team building"
- Dress to impress. This doesn't mean show up to a picnic wearing a suit, but it does mean look polished and "take your cues from your boss," not your co-workers
- Enjoy the event and come prepared. For example, if it's a sporting event, do some research on the sport, learn how the team is doing, and be able to briefly talk about the subject
- Bring enough food for people to share if it's a potluck

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Reading this article reminded me of an episode of the NBC sitcom *Seinfeld*, where Elaine Benes gets drunk at an office party and proceeds to dance horribly and embarrass herself in front of her boss and co-workers. How you act during company-sponsored events can definitely help or hinder your career. Bottom line: Treat all company-sponsored events as business events and act appropriately.

about the author

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