Back with a bang! The return of the Christmas party – key considerations for employees

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After an enforced hiatus, the in-person office Christmas party is returning this year and, for many, not even Omicron will stand in the way. **BDBF Associate, Theo Nicou**, sets out his top tips to help employees make it a night to remember and not a night to forget.

Questionable behaviour at parties may not be new to employers, but they will certainly be out of practice after a long period of home-working and very few social events. It is not uncommon for misbehaviour at events to create an employee relations headache.

As an employee, it is important to remember that while Christmas parties are a social affair, they are still work events. Your conduct should reflect that. Your actions on the night can have lasting consequences.

Here are some top tips to make sure the night goes smoothly.

- Be mindful of your use of social media, including posting images of colleagues on public forums without their consent. What you may consider funny, others may consider embarrassing or offensive.
- When buying a "Secret Santa" gift for a colleague, think about how it might be received. It is best to avoid anything that could be considered offensive, especially if you don't know the recipient very well.
- Consider watching your alcohol intake as excessive drinking can lower your inhibitions. Your professional reputation is important. Remember that your actions have consequences and impact your fellow colleagues too.
- Report any inappropriate, unwanted behaviour. This includes behaviour that you are subjected to or that you

witness. You should review your employer's policy about the appropriate process to follow.

Christmas parties are the perfect opportunity to catch up with colleagues, and maybe even meet new ones in person. This year is especially important given how physically distant we have been in recent times. And hybrid working leads to less face-to-face time with colleagues, meaning it is all the more important to make the most of these festive events. So, be sure to eat, drink (in moderation) and be merry!

For guidance on steps employers may wish to take in light of the Omicron variant, please read our briefing here.

If you would like to discuss any points raised in this article please contact Theo Nicou (theonicou@bdbf.co.uk), Amanda Steadman (amandasteadman@bdbf.co.uk) or your usual BDBF contact.

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