Different Types of Events

- Whether you’re just starting out in your profession or a seasoned executive, you will participate in the cocktail party circuit. Knowing how to manage these events with style, grace, and ease should be your goal and will lead to a positive impression.
- Be aware of the differences between cocktails, cocktail party, cocktail buffet and a cocktail reception.

Cocktails and Cocktail Party

- Most of the time guests are standing, and the attire can range from business to casual.

Cocktail Buffet

- After guests fill up their plates at the buffet stations, there are usually small tables and chairs set around the room for the guests. Attire is business or formal. This type of event could last 2-3 hours.

Cocktail Reception

- This event is the most formal and could be held for a distinguished guest of honor or an event such as an opening of a new performing arts center. Attire is very dressy for women and usually black tie for men. Champagne is always served.

How to Navigate the Event

- Research and learn something about the guests attending the cocktail party. “Small talk” will be much easier.
- Decide whether your goals are social or business networking.
- Do extend your hand and introduce yourself to unfamiliar guests. Maintain eye contact during introductions and conversations.
- Only have your drink or food in your hand, never both. Always hold your drink in your left hand so your right hand is dry, clean and available to shake hands. If eating hold your plate on your right hand and take the food with the left. If someone approaches you switch the plate to your left hand and your right will be clean to extend.
- Circulate, walk around the room before you head to the bar or buffet table. Food and drink should not be your main goal.
- Connect with as many people as possible.
- Never interrupt people when they are speaking. Wait until they include you or there is a break in the conversation.
- To start a conversation, ask the person something about themselves or their jobs. People enjoy talking about themselves.
- Do not be looking around the room when you are speaking with someone. Maintain eye contact!
- Be mindful of others’ space– do not stand too close. Never back someone against the wall.
- Do not be a clock watcher, always looking at your watch. The person you are speaking with will get the impression you are in a hurry and not really interested in what they are saying.
- Never drink too much.
- Don’t spend time looking at your cell phone.
- Remember to follow-up with everyone you connect with at each event.