

Navigating Law Firm Receptions

Purpose: For firms, receptions provide the opportunity to showcase their offices, work, and attorneys to prospective candidates. For students, receptions provide the opportunity to meet attorneys, make positive connections, practice networking skills, learn about law firm work and partake in free and (typically good) food and drink.

RSVP: Respond to an invitation and stick to your response unless there is truly an emergency preventing you from attending, in which case reply again to express your regrets.

Attire: Most invitations will indicate appropriate attire for the event. If attire is not specified, feel free to ask when you RSVP. When in doubt, dress in [professional business attire](#).

Starting Conversations: Consider approaching an attorney standing alone and introducing yourself -- some people find this easier than joining a group already in conversation. Good initial icebreaker conversation topics include the weather, the good food at the event, sports, books, and travel. Icebreaker topics to avoid include religion and politics. Given that you are at a firm event, talking about the attorney's work makes sense. Remember, people love to talk about themselves! Being a good listener and expressing genuine interest in the conversation will go a long way.

Business Cards: If you speak with someone who you think you may wish to follow up with at a later time, feel free to ask them for a business card (or just remember their name and look them up on the firm's website when you get home).

Food & Drink: Feel free to take advantage of the free offerings, but do not overindulge. Try to eat foods that aren't too messy and will allow you a free hand to shake with other attendees. Stick to one alcoholic beverage.

Departing: It's probably best not to be the first or last to leave. Prior to departing, say thanks to a member of the firm's recruiting team or any representative of the firm for hosting the event and including you.

Follow Up: While not necessary, consider emailing one or more of the attorneys you met to thank them for the time they took to speak with you (if you recall a particular topic you discussed, you could reference that).