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# How to Make Bachelor and Bachelorette Parties Work for You

*These money-makers must be handled the right way, but can be a path to more business, since most singles end up married. . .*

*By John M. Greene, LCT contributing writer*

**E**xcessive alcohol consumption; testosterone, hormones and articles of clothing flying wildly around like the inside of a blender; pent-up inhibitions tossed out the window... and a moon roof that opens.

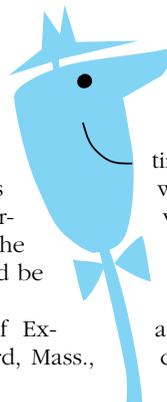
There you have it, a virtual perfect storm for something to go horribly wrong. On the other hand, what you also have is a great way to make money.

Bachelor and bachelorette parties are a thriving business, particularly as they fuel the wedding and night-on-the-town limousine companies that rely on

them for much of their revenues. But the question is: How do you bring in the business, and is it worth the headache?

There are ways of marketing to this sector of the business, with the most direct conduit being the bride herself. The key is to make sure the bridal party realizes you can fill ALL the transportation needs associated with the wedding, and that they should be handled by your company.

Eric Tonkonogy, owner of Exceptional Limousine in Milford, Mass.,



has perfected his own method. "I tell the brides that if they agree to hire our cars for the wedding and the bachelor and bachelorette parties, I'll toss in for free a one-way trip to the airport for the honeymoon. And 80% of the time, I get the business."

But as the old saying goes, sometimes you have to be careful what you wish for, or at least be prepared to deal with it.

### Men Behave Better?

Bachelor and bachelorette parties are a 180-turn from weddings and from corporate clients, as they involve a to-

# But for all its warts, the bachelor and bachelorette market can be a boom if you can latch on to it. And remember, many of the bachelorettes may have a wedding coming up someday, and you want to be the first card in their mental Rolodex when they start shopping for a limousine company for their big day — and the wild night out beforehand.

tally different chauffeur mindset and a vehicle capable of holding a good-sized crowd. Whereas in the past Escalade SUVs and Hummers were the vehicle du jour for these gatherings, now what we are seeing is an attempt to create a nightclub on wheels, with party limo buses that can hold 14-30 people and come complete with a bar, flashing lights, state-of-the-art sound system, 42-inch TV screens and DVD player. Some even come with a pole in the middle (use your imagination).

As different as the vehicles have to be, so too are the passengers in them, depending on whether you're transporting males or females. Bachelor parties, for the most part, don't seem as raucous. There's usually plenty of drinking but it's fairly uncommon for things to get out of hand — some chest-bumping and a little horseplay, maybe, but nothing off the charts. Men will usually target strip clubs as their destination (though our experience is it's No. 2 behind casinos), and at the very worst, what you'll find is 10 guys get off the bus at a strip club but 10 guys and two women somehow end up on the return trip. Then, it's up to the chauffeur to set the ground rules, which should be spelled out like it's Sesame Street — clear and simple to understand — before the wheels first start rolling. No. 1 rule: The number of people you pick up is the number of people you return with.

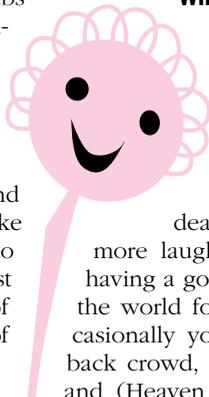
## No Vomit Comets

Another problem with the bachelor party is by the end of the night there is always one guy who has imbibed a wee too much, and has chosen to alternate between passing out and throwing up. I have found that a simple remedy, and one that avoids a massive cleanup, is

simply to cut a hole in a green garbage bag and drape it over his head. One last thing to remember about the guy who can't hold his liquor is that his friends will want to go somewhere else and when they get there, leave him in the car. You are a limo service not a babysitting service. You don't want that responsibility if something goes terribly wrong from a medical standpoint (Google "Jimi Hendrix"). They get out of the car; he gets out of the car, walking or otherwise. It's very simple.

And speaking of making extra stops after the predetermined destination has been reached, have your chauffeur find out if there is a credit card on file and get authorization from the card owner. If not, ask the guys to pony up cash out of their pockets. You will often find this is a deterrent to extending the night.

## When Mom and Auntie Leave



This brings us to the ladies. Put a dozen 21-24-year-old women in a party bus with alcohol and you have a whole new set of issues to deal with. More loud talking, more laughing — people definitely having a good time with not a care in the world for the next six hours. Occasionally you'll get a little more laid back crowd, especially if Aunt Harriett and (Heaven forbid), Mom tag along. But it's usually the case that the older women are there just for a dinner gathering, and once that obligation is behind everyone, and the mom and the aunt are dropped off somewhere, the ladies will then head out looking for dessert. That usually comes in the shape of a downtown nightclub or one of the "Men

in Motion" shows.

As wild and crazy as the ride to the destination can be, the ride home can take things to a whole new level. Totally alcohol-fueled, there can be a tendency to go a little overboard. I've seen shy young woman who would normally wear a turtle neck to a beach suddenly feel the urge to stick their upper body through a moon roof wearing little more than a smile. And whereas bachelorette parties tend to attract a lot of "girlfriends" bathed in sisterhood, you'd be surprised how alcohol can suddenly help conjure up a memory from a dozen years ago when one sister stole the other's boyfriend in the sixth grade. At the drop of a hat, a fun party can suddenly turn into a mixed martial arts match.

## Training for a Rolling Romper Room

But in the end, it's really all about training the people on the front line of this wild and crazy night-on-the-town stuff: Your chauffeurs. Don't think that the chauffeur who is great when a CEO and his staff crawl into the back seat will be just as adroit when 10 inebriated young women in your party bus start dancing and singing Lady Gaga songs at full volume, while twirling above their heads toys you'd never find at Toys R Us. It takes a certain mindset to work with a crowd like this, so make sure your chauffeur has the temperament needed. And also be more conscious of safety, such as making sure when you come to a stop that the occupants don't, literally, pile out into oncoming traffic. Your chauffeur should keep the doors locked until he gets out and safely opens them.

But for all its warts, the bachelor and bachelorette market can be a boom if you can latch on to it. And remember, many of the bachelorettes may have a wedding coming up someday, and you want to be the first card in their mental Rolodex when they start shopping for a limousine company for their big day — and the wild night out beforehand. **LCT**

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