

5 very stupid things Gavin did at this year's office party.

Meet Gavin

He's 31, kind of short, rides a scooter and wears a biker's helmet that says "Bad Ass Mother Funker" on the back. Gavin is an idiot. But we can learn a lot from Gavin. Here's how Gavin managed to completely destroy his career, his respect, a woman's faith, the brand new Cannon laser colour printer – and his supervisor's nose!



Despite spending a whopping \$29.95 on a new shirt for the party, Gavin still managed to resemble a barrel-chested bear with a new-born-baby head. There was an inaudible, yet unmistakable, groan as he entered the room. But he was feeling good and ready to let loose. Already he was moments away from his first very stupid thing.

1. Spiking the punch!

It was all so simple. Hide 250ml bottle in sleeve of smashing new shirt. Pretend to fiddle with watch while actually unscrewing lid. Pour. Walk to bin and discard bottle. Watch the fun begin.

What Gavin didn't know – but wishes he had

The punch he poured the vodka into was quite clearly labeled "non-alcoholic" punch. There were three people in the office who didn't drink alcohol, including Dala, a practicing Muslim woman who had never had a drop in her life. In police interviews the following day, she estimated she had a total of five glasses of punch!

2. Showing his belly-button ring to Paul, Pete and Akrash

He really didn't know them that well, but he figured it was a good conversation starter and, who knew, maybe one of them had a belly-button ring too! They didn't. But they were more than happy to have a look – and could they take a photo? The conversation ended with Akrash convincing Gavin to do a belly-dance while he videoed him with his iPhone.

What Gavin didn't know – but wishes he had

Akrash's YouTube postings had a dedicated and growing following!

3. Assuming Amanda fancied him

Let me begin by telling you a bit about Amanda. Amanda is 5 feet, 11 inches tall. She is a true blond with the kind of looks that cause talent scouts to approach her on the street. She has a Master's degree in International Marketing and has risen to 2IC of Marketing in just 12 months. She is not interested in Gavin.

What Gavin didn't know – but wishes he had

That just because Amanda said hello to him when she passed his desk on the way to the loo each day and admitted that she too once owned a scooter, did not mean that she wanted to sleep with him. In fact, Gavin was so convinced that she did want to, that after three beers and a mug of non-alcoholic punch, he made his move. This consisted of him sneaking up behind her and shouting "Boo!" at the top of his lungs in order to be heard over the music. Unfortunately, for both of them, the music stopped at just the right moment to cause Gavin's shout to reverberate like a five-year-old-girl's scream throughout room. While this didn't faze Gavin, it scared the stuffing out of Amanda and caused her to spill white wine down the front of her light, white cotton blouse, effectively ending her evening.

4. Impersonating the CEO

It's true that after a few drinks most people will graciously accept a bit of public humiliation – and to Gavin's credit, he is a good impersonator. The point of concern here is who he chose to impersonate and what. Grabbing the mike, Gavin took over the PA system with a high-pitched primal cry of, "Aaaaare yooouuu ready for THIIIISSSS!" We weren't. "I'd like you to meet Mr. Andrew Eckhart," he began. Andrew Eckhart is the company's Managing Director, thankfully not present. While admired by his employees, it was well rumored that Andrew was a swinger. It was this particular topic that Gavin chose to lampoon. With his head cocked to one side, his left hand deep inside his pocket and his eyes blinking just a little too often, Gavin managed a believable, if somewhat shorter, rendition of the revered leader. He even managed to elicit a rather comforting ripple of laughter. Then with his voice appropriately deepened, he stepped boldly and blindly into very dangerous territory. "Gavin, my boy! Good work on the McKinley pitch. They tell me you went in with your bat swinging. And on the topic of swinging..." The black hole of uneasy silence that followed was mercifully broken by a quick-thinking DJ who switched off the mike and turned the volume up for Nut Bush City Limits. Tina Turner had never sounded so good!

What Gavin didn't know – but wishes he had

Melissa Eckhart, Andrew's wife, had that very day both filed for divorce and

pressed charges against Andrew for having an affair with Leola Wallace, a rising star in the finance department (present at the party!) Apparently, while comfortable with swinging, Melissa was a stickler for the rules, which she considered her husband to have broken. Leola was more than happy to relay Gavin's entire repertoire to her boss and, as correctly assumed by Mrs Eckhart, her lover.

5. Inventing the Snake Dance

One of the gifts that Gavin delusionally misconceived himself as possessing was the gift of improvisational dance. With 6 drinks now under his straining red vinyl belt, Gavin felt the impulse to use the DJ's boringly predictable choice of One Night in Bangkok as an opportunity to demonstrate this gift. Gavin began his dance with what he was certain represented a cobra slithering through the streets of an 'oriental city'. Upon spying a ladder and deciding it would be a great performance prop, Gavin stepped onto the first rung. Bringing his Snake Dance to its unexpected end.

What Gavin didn't know – but wishes he had

The ladder, which had lost the rubber pad under one of the legs, was resting on a cable that was powering the temporary disco-ball and the strobe lights. The simple act of placing his pudgy weight upon the ladder caused it to slice through the cord, sending high-level volts through his left arm that was grabbing the ladder for balance. The resulting shock, while unfairly not killing Gavin, sent him flying backwards with such force that his collision with Emma Taylor, Managing Director of Global Sales and Gavin's direct supervisor, not only broke his fall, it broke her nose. Her concussion was immediate and complete. The ladder, meanwhile, was thrown sideways and downwards, the top rung catching the cable dangling from the strobe light on its way down. The combined momentum and force was just enough to pull the strobe and its steel-framed stand into the brand-new (bought – not leased) Canon colour laser printer.

With the lighting system gone, the head of Global Sales out cold, the printer sparking dramatically, Dala throwing up in the bathroom, Amanda considering a career change, Leola already on the phone with Andrew Eckhart and Akrash's latest YouTube video quickly spreading throughout the sub-continent – the party was, in every way, finished. Even Gavin was aware that things had appeared to slow down just a tad.

Here's the scary thing!

Gavin, in all his guises and pseudonyms – because haven't we all worked with Gavin? – is still out there, bringing terror to our professional social lives. Perhaps you're guilty of having been a little Gavin-esque yourself! (I haven't.)

But he can be stopped – or at least tempered. If you happen to have hired Gavin, in any one of his myriad disguises, you simply need to put him, along with all your other employees just for good measure, through a brief but targeted Office Party Induction Training Course. We now use an online software called Rapid Induct (www.rapidinduct.com.au) Because it's online, Gavin can take the course from the comfort of his horrid little "Bachelor's Pad". It will also test Gavin's knowledge as he takes the course, printing out a certificate only when he manages the appropriate pass mark. Without the certificate – he can't get into the party. If only we'd known!

All names, apart from Gavin's, have been changed to protect the humiliated.