

# CAKE & WHISKEY



# WHO TO INVITE

**Businesswomen. Plain and simple.**

**Seasoned and newbie's, corporate and entrepreneurial, straight laced and off beat.**

The goal of CAKE&WHISKEY as a brand (gatherings, magazine and conferences) is to bring all women in business, at all stages of their journey, together to get inspired, learn from one another and pursue their career goals with support and encouragement.

When you make your guest list and start reaching out within your community, think big and think broad: At our first gathering, we had company executives, bank tellers, a yoga instructor, a radio producer, a young photographer, a veteran coffee house owner and the state tourism board director. All of these women came dressed differently; some rode in on bikes, while some pulled up in luxury SUVs. Some women had grandchildren, while others were still in college. It's exciting to pull this kind of group together, and CAKE&WHISKEY believes that it's necessary to pull this kind of group together.



# FREQUENCY & TIME

A typical CAKE&WHISKEY group meets quarterly throughout the year in **January, April, July and October**. You could certainly plan more frequent gatherings (monthly or bi-monthly), but we find that quarterly works best for the busy schedules of working women.



(For whatever reason, **Thursday's from 6:30-8** seems to work really well for most groups. But this again is completely up to you.)



CAKE&WHISKEY was initially born out of a desire to connect businesswomen in a non-networking-event environment. Typical networking events rely too heavily on...well networking: lots of business cards are passed, elevator pitches are given, suits are worn and smiles are pasted on. This is not what we are going for. CAKE&WHISKEY gatherings are indeed networking, but that is not the end goal.

The end goal is to create an environment where business women can connect, get to know each other, talk about both business and life outside of the office, and make genuine, heartfelt connections that will naturally lead to networking-- at the event and in the weeks and months following.

CAKE&WHISKEY is a fun name...so lets make these times together fun as well! Consider making a playlist of background music. We usually go with something low-key like Carla Bruni or Frank Sinatra. Depending on the location, you may not have much control over the music choices, of course.

# BUDGET



**K** eep the spending as minimal as possible. Otherwise, it becomes a burden for the hosts over time. For the initial **CAKE&WHISKEY** gathering, we spent around \$100. We purchased actual vintage cocktail glasses and mismatched dessert plates from a local antique mall. We purchased the whiskey and drink bar ingredients but had the cake donated by a

local woman-owned bakery. Now, each time we gather, we use the same glasses and plates and just add a few to the number for our growing group. Of course if you are hosting at a space that has these items, that works too. When we host at a local restaurant or bar, we do not pay for everyone's drinks and food. Each are on their own to pay their tab at the end of the night.

# FOOD & DRINK



No need to go all out with meal courses or heavy appetizers. Again, the atmosphere is fun and lighthearted and women really seem to gravitate to the idea of having a slice of cake and glass of whiskey after work together.

We would encourage you to find a local baker (a woman owned business, even better!) and forge a partnership with them to provide the cake for each gathering. They may offer to do this free of charge for marketing reasons or they provide a discount. Don't be afraid to ask. It's a win/win for everyone if they are able to get their bakery name and product in front of influential businesswomen.

Cake and whiskey,  
of course!

## As for the whiskey, you have a few options:

1. You could host the gathering at a swanky bar and have everyone purchase their own drink. We have done this with great success. We called the bar ahead of time, told them what we were doing and asked if they'd extend happy hour prices to our CAKE&WHISKEY gals. Bars are usually very accommodating of that request.
2. You can have distilleries or distributors who represent whiskey brands come to your event and offer bourbon/whiskey tastings. That may not be a viable option depending on your location--but check around. You may have a distillery willing to come to get their name and brand out to the women.
3. Purchase the whiskey yourself (more on the money aspect a little later). It really isn't too expensive to buy 1 or 2 bottles of whiskey and set up a whiskey bar of your own for the event. Ideally, women will not be arriving with the agenda to get sloshed, so having a full bar isn't necessary or recommended. We often provide a couple of whiskey drink recipes, the ingredients, and glasses and let the women have a ball creating their very own whiskey creation. We keep bottled water on hand and a non-alcoholic option like sparkling lemonade as well. Again, there is no need to provide a ton of alcohol. The event is called CAKE&WHISKEY not CAKE&WHISKEY&WINE&VODKA.





# LOCATION

As with most events, location is a big part of an event's success. We do not use the same location each time, but you certainly could, if you find a perfect space. For **CAKE&WHISKEY** gatherings, we put a lot of thought into choosing the space we meet up at. If you can roughly determine the number of attendees you'll be expecting, it obviously makes this process a lot easier. For a first **CAKE&WHISKEY** event in a new city, we try to choose an intimate setting. In fact, someplace like a woman owned boutique shop can work perfectly, especially for the first go around where the group number may be smaller in size. We have hosted at large showrooms, small shops, and trendy whiskey bars. It's just important that whatever direction you decide to go, your event location needs to hold your guests properly. Too large a facility will be off-putting to attendees and make the event feel under-attended. Too small a facility will be overwhelming to guests and make them feel constricted.

You also need to consider access and parking. Attendees need to be able to find your location quickly, without complicated directions and have easy, inexpensive parking. We have found that a central, downtown location works best for our gatherings.



The purpose of a CAKE&WHISKEY gathering is to connect. So leave plenty of time for that. The cake and whiskey definitely help give the event a sense of fun and playfulness too. We usually break the time up this way:

**6:30-6:45** | welcome women, sign in, chat

**6:45-7:00** | quick icebreaker (break up into groups of 5 or so if the gathering is large)

**7:00-7:30** | eat cake, drink whiskey, talk shop

**7:30-7:45** | “hot topic” discussion about business

**7:45-8:00** | final comments and wrap up mingling



# SCHEDULE



The purpose is to give just enough business substance but not to drag on and on with boring information, facts and figures. We keep the hot topic time to around 15 minutes. Just enough time to cover a topic like social media or business etiquette in a thoughtful yet lighthearted way.

# HOT TOPICS & IDEAS

# KEEP IN MIND



Everyone, and let me emphasize, **EVERYONE** should feel included. For many women, coming to a “networking” event takes a lot of courage, especially if she knows no one.

*Megan Smith*