



Four Critical Items You Must Know *Before* Booking Your Event Facility

By Darlene Lyons

Booking the perfect location for your event is determined by many factors. Your past event's content, past attendance and past marketing will all affect your results. If you have found a great location, stick with it! If you haven't, you may want to consider the following items. You'll find them critical to your success.

1. Location, Location, Location!

If your event is local, be sure it is easily accessible from all thoroughfares and freeways. I share with you from my past experience that booking an event that is difficult to get to in prime time traffic is a serious and painful mistake. Drive it yourself in prime traffic times *at least twice* to be sure your attendees can arrive on time. You may need to adjust your start and end times to maximize your attendance. In the northeast, for example, we usually start our meetings at 9:30 to alleviate early morning road rage from our attendees.

If your attendees are flying in from around the country, you'll want to be sure that there is adequate and affordable transportation to and from the event. Many years ago, my team was shocked learn that Orlando was one of the most expensive cities in the country to try and reach your hotel. Cab fares can run \$120.00 or more, round trip, *just to get to and from your hotel.*

2. Important Audio/Visual Capabilities

Trust me on this one...you need to run through your entire program to be sure you can rent the equipment you'll need the facility. If not, you'll need to rent it from an outside vendor without a hassle.

Most importantly, be sure the facility can support your internet needs, your microphone needs, your screen sizes, ceiling height requirements and sound needs.

From experience, I can tell you that checking the sound system may seem simple. But imagine your shock when you find out that the room you have booked the president of your company or association to speak in has no sound system! I urge you to put it on your facility checklist!

3. Parking

If you are holding a local event this is a *huge* issue. You need at least a 60% ratio of attendees to parking spaces.

*Example: If you expect 500 attendees, the facility you book must have at least 300 parking spaces **in addition to** the spaces they need for their employees and other events happening simultaneously to yours.*

Parking fees are also an issue. Be sure to negotiate free or reduce rate parking as part of your contract. There are very few things worse than angry attendees who drove over an hour in heavy traffic and pouring rain to attend your event only to find they have to park three blocks away *and* pay \$10.00 per hour!

4. Meal Functions and Facilities

This is very important if your event is longer than a half day and you're expecting high attendance numbers. Releasing 500 people for an hour lunch break with only 1 restaurant available that seats only 150 at a time is a recipe for *sure* disaster.

Some options if you are not providing lunch and your time is limited:

- Have the restaurant serve only a buffet to expedite service
- Have a cash bar with pre-made sandwiches and whole fruits in addition to the restaurant
- Give them a longer lunch break
- Provide transportation to another meal option
- Choose another facility!

Considering these four simple options can truly "make or break" your event. Before you sign the agreement with the event facility, it is *imperative* that you have researched all of these variables. If you have, you're destined for a superb event!

~Written by Darlene Lyons. © 2004

Darlene is President of Broker Agent Speakers Bureau (BASB), the nation's leading real estate speakers' bureau. For more helpful information, visit www.BrokerAgentSpeakers.com. Darlene also owns and operates EzEvents, the #1 real estate event management company in the country. Visit www.EzEvents.net.