

## Venue Selection Tips

KEEP THE FOLLOWING THINGS in mind while selecting a venue for your event:

### 1. TARGET AUDIENCE/GUEST SIZE

This means the number of people you are expecting to attend your event.

Make sure that your venue can easily accommodate your expected target audience. Your venue should not be too small or too large for your guests. If too small, then your guests will feel discomfort. If it is too large then you will unnecessarily end up paying more for the venue.

Get firm indications whether guests plan to attend your event by including R.S.V.P clearly printed on the invitation.

### 2. TARGET AUDIENCE STATUS

If your target audience is rich people then your venue must be a five star hotel or resort and all the services provided during the event must be of very high quality.

### 3. TARGET AUDIENCE CONVENIENCE

Select the venue according to target audience convenience. Your venue should not be very far from where the majority of your target audience lives. Your venue should have proper lighting and ventilation. It should not be in a noisy or polluted area. It should be absolutely neat and clean and free from any type of infestation.

### 4. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Keep climatic conditions in mind while selecting a venue. If you are going to organize an event during rainy season or during peak winter then selecting an open-aired venue is not a good idea. Always try to organize indoor events if possible as their production cost is less than that of outdoor events.

### 5. VENUE SERVICES

Before hiring a venue check out the number of services provided by the venue like:

#### **Parking & Transportation**

- Does the facility have adequate parking? If not, where is the nearest parking facility?
- Is there a charge to park? Will it be possible for participants to receive free or discounted parking?
- Does the parking facility appear to be safe, i.e. is it staffed; is it in an area where cars are likely to be vulnerable to trouble-makers?

#### **Security Arrangements**

- Security of guests, service providers and target audience is a very important issue which should never be neglected or compromised.
- Make sure that your venue has adequate fire extinguishers, fire alarms, emergency escape routes, a sprinkler system (a system consisting of overhead pipes designed to control or extinguish fires), security personnel, handicap ramps, security cameras, first aid kits and power backup (like generator, inverter, UPS).
- Your venue must have separate entrance and exit gates.

#### **Venue Staff**

- Your venue must have an adequate number of staff to serve your guests. Find out the ratio of servers to guests.
- The venue staff must be friendly, helpful and courteous. They should be decently dressed.
- Ask you venue manager whether or not the staff is able and willing to work overtime, if needed.

## Venue Selection Tips

### Restrictions

- Every venue has some unsaid restrictions like photography and videography restrictions, alcohol restrictions, music restrictions, dress code, decoration related restrictions (like you cannot install your own structure and lights for decoration or paste/paint anything on the venue's wall), advertising restrictions (like you cannot put a banner on the main gate of the venue) and other restrictions like outside caterer is not allowed or outside security service is not allowed etc.
- Find out all these restrictions before hiring a venue.

### Additional Services

Some venues provide additional services like catering, floral decoration, fireworks, audio-visual aids; staging, lighting, props, decor for event production; ticketing, reservation, transportation and sightseeing tours for the guests; DJs, anchors, performers etc. for event programs.

### Catering

- Does the venue provide catering?  
The venue should be able to provide you with a selection of sample menus to give you an idea of what they can provide, for what cost. Most venues have a range of menus to suit a variety of budgets and seating arrangements and will be able to give advice based on their experience.
- Can you use an outside caterer if you choose, and is there a fee associated with that?

### Lighting

- When the lights go down to darken the room, is your speaker going to disappear too? Will he/she be able to see his/her notes? If not, a lectern light will be needed. Is a speaker's podium available for use?
- Will the audience be able to see to take notes or refer to other literature?
- Where are the controls for the lights situated? Are they accessible to the planning team at all times?
- Will there be a technician available during the event to assist with these issues? What is the added cost for this technician?
- Are there adequate microphones available? What types are available and how many? Will there be an additional charge for any of the audio visual needs?
- Is there a screen for power point presentations in the event that it is needed? Is a laptop, projector and pointer provided or will you need to provide your own?
- If you are having a panel presentation, are tables (with linens) provided as part of the rental agreement?

### Sound

- Will you need microphones in the room?
- Is there a sound system already in place?
- Will you need mics for the speakers on stage?
- Will you have standing or hand-held mics for the Q&A portion of the sessions?
- Is there an extra charge for this or is it included in the cost?

## Venue Selection Tips

### Hotel Accommodations

If you are using a hotel facility or any other facility where accommodation is offered and the participants will be staying overnight, be sure that you also get to view a selection of bedrooms. Consider the following:

- If in a busy city center are the windows double-glazed?
- Are there facilities on site, or nearby, where attendees will be able to get food? Will committing to a room block (a set number of rooms you commit to fill during a certain amount of time) provide for a discounted rate on sleeping rooms and meeting rooms?

### 6. VENUE FEES

Ask the following questions of the venue manager before hiring a venue:

- What is the venue fee?  
Does it include all other taxes? (Negotiate rental fee to ensure the best deal.)
- What is included in the venue fee?  
Are tables, chairs and linens included in the venue fee? Is security and liability coverage included in the venue fee?
- What is not included in the venue fee?
- Is there any cost for parking?  
Generally parking space is provided free of cost by the venue, but some venues may charge separately for a parking facility.

- What is the price range for a seated/buffet lunch and dinner?
- What are the corkage fees?  
(fees to server liquor) Make sure that the venue has a license to serve alcohol. Check the license for an expiration date.
- What is the cost of sleeping rooms?
- What is your cost per person and per food item?
- What are your bartending and bar set up fees?
- What are your fees and how do you charge for providing additional services?  
Such as floral decoration, fireworks, audio-visual aids; staging, lighting, props, decor for event production etc.
- What modes of payments are available?
- What are your payment, refund and cancellation policies?

### 7. VENUE INSPECTION

- Make sure air conditioners, fans, water taps work properly, elevators are operational. There is adequate lighting and ventilation.
- Check for sanitation and infestation.
- Find out how helpful, courteous and professional is the venue staff.
- Check out whether or not security is provided in the parking lot and how safe the area is where the venue is located.
- Make sure that the venue suits the event theme.



## Venue Selection Tips

### Suitability of Space

- Where would the registration area be located? If the area is not clearly visible to attendees entering the venue, make a note of the fact that adequate signs will be required to point them in the right direction.
- In the registration area, will there be enough room for conference materials and staff working registration?
- Will there be adequate space in the meeting rooms to accommodate the seating plan you intend to use?
- Are there enough meeting rooms to accommodate your needs for the forum? This will depend on your program for the forum. You may require just one room set in theatre style, or you may be planning to have the participants split up into smaller groups for workshops or breakout sessions. If that is the case you will need to have rooms available which are adequate in size, location and content.
- Where will breakout rooms be located?
- In an ideal world the breakout rooms would be located on the same floor and as close as possible to the main conference room. However, this is often not the case and participants may have to walk or go to other floors within the building. If so, make sure there are adequate stairs and/or elevators to be able to accommodate the number of people you are expecting. Also make sure there is there disability/wheelchair access.
- Will additional signage be required to ensure participants don't get lost en route to breakout rooms? You can also post staff at key locations to guide participants to where they need to go.

### Set Up & Seating Arrangements

- Will the rooms accommodate speakers being seated on a stage?
- For large sessions you will probably want the speakers seated on a stage so they are easily visible. In smaller rooms, speakers can be seated at a table at floor level.
- What type of seating plan will the meeting rooms accommodate?
- How many people can the available rooms hold?
- Some of the most common seating plans are: Theater, Classroom, Table Rounds, U-Shaped

### Accessibility for Disabled Participants

- If the conference rooms are not on the ground floor, is there a suitable sized elevator to take anyone using a wheelchair to the appropriate floor?
- Are there disability accessible bathrooms within a reasonable distance?
- Do you need to consider hearing disabled or those with language barriers?