

Conference Catering

Keeping an eye on your budget and leaving your guests with a good taste in their mouths can seem like a juggling act. Getting it right is down to strong communication!

Prepare a strong brief to give to the caterers – the good ones will listen, ask questions and give you a proposal that reflects the things that are most important to you. Run through the points below – it might seem like a lot of information but we guarantee you that it will pay dividends. We do our very best work when we really understand a brief and our clients excitement about what they're doing.

Caterers should want to know:

- The Conference name
- The purpose and/or mission statement for the conference
- The look and feel of the conference – is it content heavy, serious, are there activities etc
- The type of delegates (male/female, age group, industry, likes/dislikes, local or overseas)
- What is important to you with catering? i.e. Fresh and bright, lots of hot options, all vegetarian, lots of choice, budget, that delegates are energised, that there is plenty, that there are healthy and indulgent options, that food sourced is local, sustainable, free-farmed carbon footprint, etc....
- What are your must-haves and nice-to-haves?
- Will all food be consumed on site or would you like takeaway options?
- Is there a conference website or app?
- Number of delegates
- The venue or proposed venues
- The event date
- Timings and duration of arrival tea & coffee, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea
- Budget

If you've chosen a caterer it's invaluable to visit venues with them as they will be able to explain the service styles achievable within the space and alert you to any additional costs that may be needed. If you haven't chosen a caterer please give us a call as we may be able to help over the phone.

Questions to ask your caterers:

1. Have you worked out of "ABC" Venue before?
2. Is there anything I need to consider with this venue for the style of conference I'm interested in?
3. What styles of food can you provide?
4. Can you create a menu? Is there an extra cost for this?
5. How will you layout and service the catering area/s? (What about creating interactive food stations rather than just having the food on trestle tables?).
6. How will food be labelled?
7. Can we have a menu tasting prior to the conference?
8. What is included in your quote/package?

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9. How do you provide beverages? What about decaf coffee, hot chocolate, herbal teas etc?
 10. What services will you provide on the day of the conference? (Refreshing rooms etc).
 11. When do I need to have final numbers to you?
 12. How do you handle dietary requirements from my guests?

Healthy Conferences

Keeping delegates eyes open after lunch is made simple with a good caterer. Managing sugar levels will go a long way in keeping everyone awake, focused and remembering a great conference experience.

Caterers should be able to provide advice on what, how much, and often to eat and drink, to keep eyes wide open.

At a minimum they should be able to provide healthy options/menus such as:

- Wholefood only
- Low fat
- High fibre
- Reduced or no salt
- Reduced or no sugar
- Vegetarian, Vegan, Paleo, Gluten Free options
- Nutritionist approved balanced menus

And to encourage delegates to get physical - how about:

- “Quick walk” maps (10 or 15min) for lunch and “Scenic Route” maps (30-40 min) that take in some Auckland sights and encourage guests to get exercising. Walking maps could include the kilojoules burned. Give a prize for the most kilojoules burned or kilometres walked.
- Walk maps from the the conference centre to the main hotels where guests might stay – also reduces carbon footprint of the conference.
- Cycle for your juice – cycles that power juicers – fun and healthy.

We’re here to help – please get in touch if you’d like to run anything past us.