

8 FACTS

What you should know before you hire your Caterer ...

1. **Fresh doesn't always mean fresh.** Your meal should be prepared from scratch by chefs just for your event. Your hors d'oeuvres should be made by hand not machine. Your cedar planked salmon filets should never have been frozen and should arrive in your caterer's kitchen the day before your event. Your pastry chef should be following recipes not ordering from a price list.

2. **Served fresh means cooked on site, not cooked elsewhere and carried in hotboxes.** With very few exceptions, nothing should be sent to your event already cooked. All the cooking should be done at your event site. Vegetables sautéed, seafood grilled, sauces finished. If you want the food served fresh this is how it has to be done.

3. **Service is a matter of math – the ratio of staff to guests is critical.** Nothing is more frustrating than having to hunt for hors d'oeuvres, wait in line for a drink, or sit at your table wondering where your dinner is. Lack of adequate staff is very obvious to the guests and can undo all your careful planning. Your staff should be service oriented, pleasant and attentive because your guests should never feel as if their needs are an imposition. In every thank you letter we receive from our clients, our staff is repeatedly complimented for their wonderful attitudes as well as their good service.

4. **Style is significant.** Your food whether plated, buffet or served cocktail style should have eye appeal. Striking garnishes, unusual serving pieces, foods that add colour and zing to a plate, plates that aren't round – these are just a few elements of style that a caterer can bring to your menu.

5. **Menu design does not involve picking your food from columns.** Your caterer's event planners should be well versed in menu and event design. What kind of a crowd is it? Are they younger and more receptive to many cuisines? Is there a vegetarian contingent? What time of year is your party? What personal touches can be added to ensure guests know it was your party and not just a party?

6. **Customer service counts.** How long did you wait for your information after you made your initial phone call? Was it the information you asked for? Are your calls and emails answered in a timely manner? Do you feel important? If you have definite ideas they should tailor the information to suit you.

7. **Your caterer should be a know it all.** When it comes to the venues, the menus and all the other details your caterer should be an expert. We are familiar with several venues across the city and you will work with a coordinator who is thoroughly familiar with your selected venue.

8. **Word of mouth is the best advertising.** What is your caterer's reputation? Look at the list of caterers for the facilities you are considering. Vendors also have a good sense of who's who and who's doing what in the catering world. Speak with the florists, musicians, and photographers you are considering. They are at events from start to finish. They see the service, eat the food, interact with the staff and won't hesitate to share their thoughts. Ask to speak to past clients, nobody forgets the performance of their caterer.

