

Banquets BEO in-depth notes



The intricacies of the day-to-day life of a catering professional are numerous. New challenges and opportunities arise each day, which allow those involved in catering to learn and grow. These learning opportunities abound in all disciplines of catering, both in facility and outside catering. Learning applies to all facets of the job, not just planning and selling. To varying degrees, all catering operations mandate a certain level of operational responsibility from each person. The term used broadly to describe the duties and responsibilities that catering staff can incur because of a function is operations. Catering operations is the set of functions/roles/duties a caterer may engage in before, during, and after a function. The daily responsibilities

of generating leads, managing the leads, and coordinating bookings are all operational. Communication, networking, and management are all crucial components of the caterer's operational skills.

Catering operations is a phrase that is also used to describe the inter-departmental relationships a caterer must build. A catering professional must be able to rely on other facility departments or on others outside



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the organization to deliver on the commitments made on everyone's behalf. These issues and responsibilities must be communicated. This type of communication is internal.

It outlines what a catering or convention service manager may engage in to secure a sale and bring a program to fruition, called operational tools and documents.

OPERATIONAL TOOLS AND DOCUMENTS

The operational responsibilities of a caterer do not end with the sale. Because during qualification booking most of an organization's function details were uncovered, the total facility impact of a catering salesperson can be extensive. A typical facility booking impacts many different departments.

What would happen if everything committed with a client (e.g., function space, dinner prices) stopped? What would happen if no one besides the salesperson knew about a booking? Clearly, there would be serious problems.

All catering professionals must use the systems at their facilities to communicate the goals and objectives of a client to the proper operational departments. Caterers must pay as much attention to this aspect of written communication as they do to their client letters.

Omitting operational details can seriously affect the outcome of any group function. There is no such thing as too much information when it comes to internal communication. The more people who know what is going on, the better.

Departments rely on the message from the catering office to understand their roles in the success of a function. The documents used to transmit this message fall under the heading of “internal catering communication.”

Except for meetings managers, who handle both the sales and catering aspects of small groups in hotels, catering salespeople usually create all the documents. Depending on the deployment scenario, facilities require salespeople to have different levels of responsibility in transmitting internal operations documents. It is important for all catering professionals, whether they create the documents or not, to be able to read and interpret these documents to ensure their messages are being properly transmitted.

BANQUET EVENT ORDERS

The banquet event order, sometimes called the BEO, banquet prospectus, or catering event sheet, is an important document in that it deals with all no sleeping room needs of an organization. It is a fundamental document that communicates to the internal departments of a facility the details of any function. Outside caterers use some form of a BEO to communicate their needs to the kitchen and setup personnel. Every aspect of a function, from the name of the group to its meal choices, times of the day and

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prices must be detailed to ensure that what the catering salesperson and the client have agreed upon is communicated.

The BEO format differs from operation to operation. The function can also differ. In most cases, the BEO serves as a contract, thereby becoming an internal and external form of communication. In these cases, the client's signature is required on the BEO as a confirmation of details. Other operations use separate catering contracts, or letters of intent, to confirm programs.

The BEO should be completed in ample time for internal departments to prepare. Departments must allow enough time for the kitchen to purchase all the food and pose any menu questions or suggestions. The banquet floor managers must schedule appropriate staff. Early BEO completion can help avoid double-booking of function rooms and even allow all the catering/convention service managers time to move rooms for efficiency. As a general rule, BEOs should be completed at least 3 weeks before the function.

When the BEO is completed, it is ready for distribution to the appropriate operational departments. These departments can include:

- * Kitchen/executive chef
- * Banquet manager/captains
- * A/V staff
- * Accounting/credit manager
- * Director of food and beverage/director of catering
- * Purchasing
- * Stewarding
- * Engineering

A master copy of the BEO should be distributed to a central file in the catering office that is broken down by day so that any interested party can get an “at a glance” view of upcoming functions.

Every operation that uses a BEO for internal communication uses some type of daily review meeting to discuss upcoming BEOs. Some combination of representatives from departments on the distribution list and the catering/convention service managers responsible for the upcoming BEOs meet to review the BEOs and address any possible challenges. These staff often review the BEOs for the following 2 days, with Fridays covering 3 days. This means that most BEOs are reviewed twice, allowing for scrutiny of all details.

Figure 8-2 shows a sample BEO and highlights the areas all catering personnel should know.

The sample BEO on the following pages shows a fictitious Valentine's Day dance. The layout and order of the topics may differ from catering operation to operation, but the same fundamental details will be included on all.

FIGURE 8-
2 Sample
banquet
event
order

XYZ Hotel and Towers

Banquet Event Order

BEO 1234 SALES FILE NA555

DATE SUBMITTED: 12/5/98 CONV. SERV. FILE 1232

CATERING FILE 0001

PAGE 1 of 2

FUNCTION DAY/DATE: Sunday, February 14, 1999

ORGANIZATION: Gotham City Valentine Couples Group

POST AS: Valentine's Day Dance

BILLING ADDRESS: 123 Lovers Lane, Gotham City, NY 01234

BOOKING CONTACT: Ms. Jane Doe

ON-SITE CONTACT(S): Mr. John Q. Public

PHONE: (202) 555-1521

FAX: (202) 555-1522

SALES MANAGER: Mike Smith CONVENTION SERVICE

MANAGER: Andrew Jones CATERING MANAGER: Janet Hill

ATTENDEES EXPECTED: 275 GUARANTEED: 290 SET NUMBER 305

FUNCTION TIMEFUNCTION ROOM

3:00 P.M.-6:00 P.M. Room Setup Ballroom 6:30 P.M.-7:30

P.M. Reception Ballroom Foyer 7:30 P.M.-12 midnight Dance
Ballroom

3:00 P.M. Room Setup Ballroom

No Food or Beverage Needed

6:30 P.M. 3 Host Bars *Ballroom Foyer

House Brand Liquor @ \$3.00 ++ per serving Premium Brand

Liquor @ \$4.00 ++ per serving Top-Shelf Liquor @ \$5.00 ++

per serving House White/Red Wine @ \$2.50 ++ per serving

Premium and Imported Beer @ \$4.50 ++ per bottle Assorted

Soft Drinks @ \$2.00 ++ per serving

* Bartender fee of \$35.00 + assessed per bar, should sales
not exceed \$300.00

International and Domestic Cheese Display

Garnished with Fresh Fruit and Served with Assorted

Crackers @ \$4.50 ++ per person

“Sweetheart” Dessert Station to Include:

Mini Raspberry Cheesecake, Chocolate-Dipped Strawberries

Assorted Valentine Candies

Heart-Shaped Cookies with Red, White, and Pink Icing

Freshly Brewed Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee, and Tea

Service @ \$10.00 ++ per person

7:30 P.M. Valentine Dance Ballroom

No Food or
Beverage Needed



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Note to Banquet Please note the theme for this evening is Captain: Valentine's Day. All appropriate decorations should include red and white colors.

Note to Banquet Please ensure food items are replenished Kitchen: continually.

Reception Setup: Cocktail

Lounge-Style Seating Skirted

Buffet Tables

3 Banquet Bars with Bar

Backs Valentine-Themed

Decorations and Props

Dance Setup: Skirted Disc Jockey

Table in Center/Front of Room Dance Floor

Decorations/ Additional Decorations

Supplied by Client Special

Arrangements: Disc Jockey Provided

by Client

AV Requirements: Please supply power cords and outlets for disc jockey. Please adjust ballroom lighting.

Room Rental: Waived

Billing Arrangements: Advance Deposit Received
Incidental Payments at Conclusion of Function

++ Indicates 20% Service Charge and 10%

Sales Tax Will Be Added + Indicates 10% Sales
Tax Will Be Added

Approval Signature: –

If the Above Meets with Your Approval, Please
Sign One Copy and Return.

XYZ Hotel and Towers

Banquet Event Order

BEO 1234SALES FILE NA555

DATE SUBMITTED: 12/5/98 CONVENTION SERVICE FILE 1232

CATERING FILE 0001

BEO Number. This number should serve as an internal control number for all BEOs. Each BEO should have a unique number. It is useful for tracking purposes.

Date Submitted. The date the BEO was created and distributed should be marked so that all the appropriate internal departments know it was submitted in a timely manner.

“File” Number. Group file numbers serve a few purposes. First, at a glance anyone can know if a BEO applied to local catering or a sleeping-room-related group. In our example, we can see that this function was group catering, because all three of the file numbers were listed. This hotel uses three-tiered deployment: sales, catering, and convention service representatives were listed. The other purpose for listing the file numbers is to give the manager in charge a little backup. If the manager were not available for some reason, another manager could pick up the file and find what he or she needed to know about the group.

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POST AS: Valentine's Day Dance

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BOOKING CONTACT: Ms. Jane Doe

ON-SITE CONTACT(S): Mr. John Q. Public

PHONE: (202) 555-1521

FAX: (202) 555-1522

Function Day/Date. Day of the function.

Organization. Name of the organization booking the function.

Post As. Often (as was the case in this example), the group that booked the function wants to post the name of its function differently. Posting a function is simply naming the group throughout the hotel. The reader boards in any facility list the daily events as their sponsoring groups want them. Attendees often look for the posted name on reader boards.

Billing Address: Address of where the final bill is to go. It is listed here so that the banquet captain who prepares the bill at the conclusion of the function can include the appropriate information.

Booking Contact/On-Site Contact: Here the internal departments are informed about the person in charge of the event. Many times, the person who booked the function is not the same as the one who is on site during the function. The facility staff looks much more efficient if they all know for whom to ask.

SALES MANAGER: Mike Smith

CONVENTION SERVICE MANAGER: Andrew Jones

CATERING MANAGER: Janet Hill

ATTENDEES EXPECTED: 275

GUARANTEED: 290

SET NUMBER 305

Manager's Names. Like the section listing the file numbers, this section of the BEO has a dual purpose.

First, it lists the manager(s) who booked the group. The facility can tell if the BEO applies to local or group catering functions by which type of sales people are listed. In some cases, the salespeople who created the

BEOs (catering or convention service managers) will initial their names to approve the BEOs and authorize them for distribution.

Attendees Expected: Initial number of people for which the function was booked.

Guaranteed: The “guarantee” for a function is very important in the catering industry. Full-service caterers require some type of notice from groups as to how many people they guarantee will attend. This guarantee is reinforced by the fact that most caterers bill clients for this number of attendees as minimums. Most require guaranteed numbers of attendees from clients 48 to 72 working hours before the function. This is vital for food purchasing and staff. If a group arrived with significantly more attendees than expected, the guarantee gives the caterer some time to accommodate the change.

Set Number serves a contingency purpose. Because there are many intangibles affecting function turnout, most caterers set functions for 5 percent over guaranteed numbers to accommodate any unexpected, last-minute attendees. Typically, a room is set for, and the kitchen prepares for, this extra 5 percent. The banquet captain in charge of the function does a head count once everyone is seated so as to

inform the kitchen if that extra 5 percent or more of food is needed. Hotels should never bill for this oversight, as it is sometimes called, unless the numbers of attendees dictate.

