

Negotiating with Restaurants

A tip sheet to help you make the most of your venue.

Choosing Your Restaurant

When choosing your restaurant, there's a few very important considerations to keep in mind. First, be sure to compare a few different restaurants in your zip code to find exactly what you're looking for. While searching, you can use price discrepancies to your advantage. Second, keep in mind that some restaurants have guest minimums or fixed charges; it's important to always ask these types of questions before booking. Last, ask about food substitutions before making your final decision, for example, prime rib is less expensive than filet mignon.

When Negotiating

It is always best for you to hold your ground and understand that you do have a voice in this situation. Your priority should be that you are able to give them the final headcount on the day of the seminar. This will prevent you from overpaying in the case that people who have RSVPd do not show up. Realistically, most restaurants would prefer a smaller number showing up over having to add seats just before the seminar.

Here's a few helpful tips:

1. Ask for a "bulk discount" because of how many meals you are buying at once.
2. Ask if the restaurant can serve lunch portions rather than dinner portions.
3. When creating your menu, select a set option for beef, chicken/pork, seafood, and vegetarian.
4. Do not forget to make sure your food menu fits your state's gift/rebating limit.

During the negotiation process, it will be helpful to mention that this is a form of free advertising for their restaurant. Explain that their restaurant logo will be on the front of your invitation that will be received by X amount of people. This will get people talking about their restaurant and positive reviews if everything goes well. Also, discuss with the restaurant the potential of regularly booking seminars with them.

Above all, remember to stay confident and hold your ground.