

Questions to Ask Venues

Questions

- Do you have my date available? If not do you have any alternate dates available that could work for me?
- How many rooms do you have available? What are their capacities? (If you already know what you want, ask for it – e.g. “I will need one large room that seats 200 banquet style for the keynote, and four breakout rooms that seat a minimum of 40 classroom or theater style”)
- Do the rooms have any restrictions on setup, A/V, etc.? (e.g. long and narrow room so only classroom style works, lots of windows so projector may be difficult to see, etc.)
- Where are the locations for power access (especially if you’re setting up a fair with exhibitors who will need power)?
- Do you have a lobby space that can be used for check-in/registration?
- Do you have a room off the lobby that can be used for staging and stashing personal belongings? (not always possible but SO USEFUL when it is)
- Do you have a floor plan or site map we can use in the event program?
- Do you have parking available for attendees? Will it accommodate the size of my group? Is it free or will they have to pay for it? Is there a space for buses to drop off students and park?
- Am I able to come stage and partially set up the day/night before? (doing this makes the morning of the event run much smoother!)
- Can I come a month or two prior to the event to walk through the space?
- Here is the timeline I’m hoping for, will this work? (Remember to include set-up and breakdown timing, when you want meals served, when you will have registration open, etc.)
- What is provided for A/V equipment, and what are the costs?
 - ▶ Is there an A/V contact separate from my primary venue contact that I should work with on this?
 - ▶ Projectors?
 - ▶ Screens?
 - ▶ A/V Cart?
 - ▶ Computers? If so, is there a password?
 - ▶ Connector cables for computers (including macs, tablets, etc.)?
 - ▶ Speakers?
 - ▶ Microphones?
 - ▶ Remote clickers?
 - ▶ Wi-fi available? What is the network/password?
 - ▶ Onsite printing facilities for last minute presenter needs? Or recommended option nearby?
- What else is provided for set-up, and what are the costs?
 - ▶ Tables?
 - ▶ Table clothes?
 - ▶ Chairs?
 - ▶ Podiums/lecterns?

- ▶ Stage? (Usually just for keynote)
- ▶ Flip charts?
- ▶ White board?
- ▶ Markers?
- ▶ Pens?
- ▶ Notebooks?
- ▶ If attendance is higher or lower than expected can the room be reconfigured to accommodate?
- What are my catering options?
 - ▶ Is there a catering contact separate from my primary venue contact that I should work with on this?
 - ▶ Coffee/tea service? (Remember to ask for it to be left out/refreshed throughout the day rather than cleared immediately after registration)
 - ▶ Water? (Not always automatically provided, make sure to ask)
 - ▶ Breakfast, Lunch, Mid-Morning Snacks, Afternoon Snacks (Up to you what you want to provide, ask your venue for options and pricing)
 - ▶ Where will food be served?
 - ▶ Is pricing inclusive of service and tax? Are there any added fees for servers and set-up?
 - ▶ Can I bring in outside food/snacks or do I have to use your preferred caterer?
 - ▶ A few tips on catering:
 - Consider a la carte options as meal packages are often more expensive
 - Buffets are typically more affordable and offer more options than plated service
 - Consider dietary restrictions (vegetarian/vegan, lactose intolerant, gluten free, nut allergies, etc.)
 - Make sure to give plenty of time for meals – it can take a while for people to make it through a buffet line
 - Make sure food is setup in a space with plenty of room for attendees to form a long line
 - Consider having coffee and snacks placed in a lobby area where people can grab them and socialize in between sessions
 - If allowed, consider bringing in outside snacks – you can buy granola bars and apples for much cheaper than you’ll get them through a caterer
- What kind of day of event support do you provide?
 - ▶ Will my primary venue contact be onsite day of event? If not, who will be my primary contact if problems arise, and how do I get in touch with them?
 - ▶ Will I have A/V support day of event? Who will be my contact for this and how do I get in touch?
 - ▶ Do I have a separate catering contact? How do I get in touch with them day of event?
- What are your deadlines for the following:
 - ▶ Signed contract?
 - ▶ Certificate of insurance?

- ▶ Event schedule and timing?
- ▶ Meal guarantees (the final headcount for catering)?
- ▶ Payment?

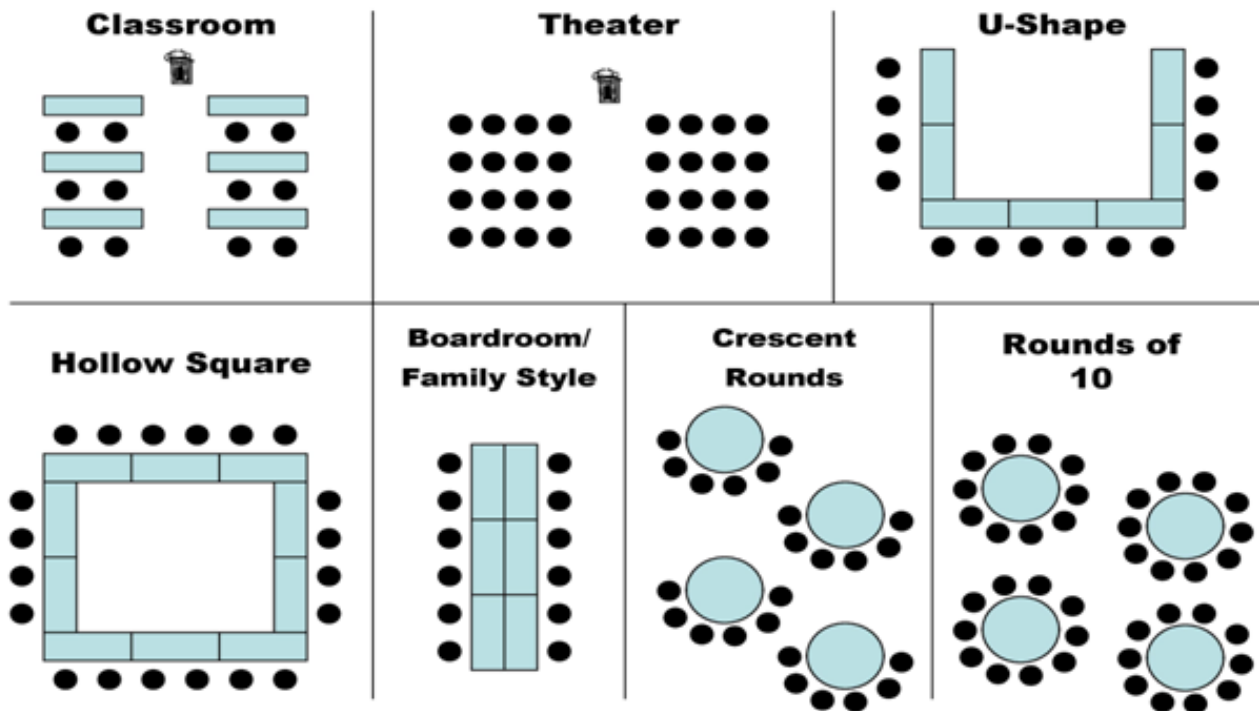
Terminology:



- ▶ Wireless microphone
 - most common, can be stationed on a podium but allows for movement and audience questions
- ▶ Podium microphone
 - less flexible than a wireless microphone set up on a podium
- ▶ Lavalier/ Lapel microphone
 - good for speakers who want to move a lot during their presentation



Various Meeting Set Ups



Sample venue outreach email:

My name is [your name], I'm with [your org]. We're in the middle of planning [your event name and date] and wanted to see if you had any meeting space availability on those dates. We would be looking for one large room that could accommodate up to 200 banquet style, and two smaller break-out rooms that could accommodate around 50 people theater style. If you think you might have space available for these dates, please let me know and I can get you additional information on our event. Thanks!