

Corporate Hospitality

Entertain, impress and influence your guests



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Introduction

Corporate hospitality, if used correctly, is one of the most successful ways of forming, developing and cementing business relationships. Unfortunately it is often the least planned, thought through and measured communication tool.

In this whitepaper we will look at why this is so and how to make your corporate hospitality budget really work.

Define corporate hospitality?

Hospitality can range from simple business lunches through to rounds of golf or invitations to sporting or cultural events. More elaborate entertainment could be at home or abroad focussed around business events such as exhibitions, forums or conferences.

Whether the activity is relatively simple or more complex the same basic principles should apply.

Nine Guiding Principles

Remember that your key contacts are invited to a host of events so can pick and choose the best. Their decision will be affected by a number of factors ranging from whether they are free on the date to whether the invitation actually appeals.

It is important to:

1. Think about what is appropriate for your guests.
2. Consider their company policies and any industry legislation.
3. Ensure health and safety, contingency plans and insurance are all covered.
4. Choose activities that strengthen and reflect your brand.
5. Make your invitations intriguing but clear and send them out well in advance.
6. Be creative with your hospitality.
7. Measure what works and what doesn't – don't keep making the same mistakes and ensure you build on your successes.
8. Be realistic with your budget and don't cut corners – it will show!
9. Don't settle for second or third best – if your first choice doesn't accept your invitation, or keeps sending their next in command, then there is something wrong with your offer.

Many of these principles are based on common sense and don't need further discussion but it is surprising how often they are ignored. The result is that hospitality is often planned late, resulting in inferior or very predictable entertainment. Invites go out late (which reflects badly on your company) and money is wasted on a poor turnout. Worse still a badly planned event can alienate your guests.

Differentiate your hospitality

So how do you ensure your events stand out and are the ones everyone wants to be invited to?

How do you get your target audience to attend?

The key is to make your hospitality special – something that stands out from the crowd. Guests need to feel honoured to be invited. They must feel it is an opportunity they cannot and should not pass up. Your invitation should be perceived as really valuable.

The best way to achieve this is through a bespoke event.

Bespoke versus packaged events

Rather than choosing standard hospitality packages look at producing a bespoke event. That way your clients will know they are getting something **different**, designed specifically with their tastes in mind and you won't be vying with your competitors for key clients.

Also, you won't be **competing on budget**. For example if your competitor chooses a more expensive and lavish package at a sporting event then your client will naturally choose to go with them and you'll be seen as the poor relation or disappointing second choice.

A bespoke event can also be used to **strengthen your brand values**. If for example your company positions itself as imaginative, progressive and innovative your corporate hospitality must reflect this. If you want your customers to feel valued and nurtured your event should do the same.

Consider your **target** audience carefully. It is difficult to find a package that appeals to everyone, particularly if partners are involved, so why try? With a bespoke event you can be bold, offer something new and exciting that your clients may not have tried before. Entice them with a unique destination and/or activity. Tailor the event.

A bespoke event offers much more **flexibility** in terms of dates and timing. You can avoid busy times, such as year ends or school holidays, and choose when suits you and your clients. You could also tie in the hospitality to an existing event such as an exhibition, company conference or company landmark.

Look at **adding value**. This could be in the form of offering an opportunity to try something or go somewhere your clients would not normally get the chance to do or go. Or you might want to incorporate a learning experience which will help them in their job and justify their attendance.

Summary

A bespoke event will involve more work than just booking a standard package. However, this will be time well invested if the event subsequently meets objectives and draws in your key clients. If you do not have the time, resources or capability inhouse then you should talk to a specialist agency such as Mirage.

Mirage has many years experience working on bespoke events in the UK and abroad and can show concrete success stories. Mirage would work with you to define objectives, discuss your target audience, offer creative ideas, work to a budget, produce the event and measure its success.

About Mirage

Mirage is a full-service live event management and production company.

We continue to delight clients, and exceed expectations, for the simple reason Mirage does not produce events to a formula. We tailor our creativity to meet your brief and create a memorable, vibrant event, which is professional without being predictable. We help define your objectives, refine your messages and then we inject fun, velocity and life into your content, ensuring your key messages are understood, reinforced and embraced.

Mirage has an impressive portfolio of blue-chip clients whose events range from product launches, conferences, roadshows, business forums, AGMs through to themed parties and fun days, award ceremonies, team-building and motivational activities. Our complete range of services includes venue selection, programme content, logistics, staging, print and electronic media, delegate management, guest speakers and celebrities, video conferencing, speaker support and AV.

To learn more about how your events could have greater impact, relevance and creativity call us on +44 (0) 1883 740400, email diane@mirageemail.com or visit our website at www.miragewebsite.com. For private parties visit: www.mirageparties.co.uk



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