

## Ask the Expert: What Does a Catering Manager Do?

by Ryan Conner | May 20, 2015



Thanks to Lisa Dalton from the Hilton Anatole for answering this week's reader question:

*What can I expect from my catering manager? Are they same as a wedding planner?*

While some hotels/venues have a "wedding specialist," not all do, so it is really important that you have a high level of comfort with the catering manager from your first visit to the facility. This is especially important if you are doing all of your planning without the assistance of a wedding planner. Unfortunately, just loving the venue isn't enough. The catering manager needs to have a clear understanding of the bride's vision for her special day. Without that symbiotic connection it can leave a bride disappointed with the outcome. Also, you should get a clear picture of what their level of involvement is on your day of your wedding as some venues will have a different person that books your wedding than the person that services it. You want to be sure you're comfortable with the person calling the shots on your big day!

So now you've got the right venue and a connection to the catering manager, what should you expect that he/she will provide for you?

At the most basic level, they should provide you with the layout of the wedding day set up, outline the timeline for your festivities (i.e. cocktail hour, cake cutting times, first dances, etc.), a tasting of your chosen menu selections, and coordination of your guest rooms. What you should not expect is for them to run your reception as though they were your wedding planner. Their primary role is to communicate your vision, timeline, menus, etc to the staff so that the event flows per your expectations. If you do find that they are willing to go over and above by assisting with other items (vendors, timeline preparation, etc), you've really found yourself a keeper! The best way you can show your appreciation is to make sure you refer any friends or family to that super star catering manager. Nothing shows your appreciation like referral business.