



7

Mistakes people make when choosing a Caterer

When you are having an event catered, you want everything to be perfect. You'll want to impress your guests and ensure that they are well looked after.

The food, service, beverages and presentation are what your guests remember and can make or break your party. Your caterer has a very important role to play in the success of your event. It's important that you hire the right one to suit your needs.

Make sure you avoid these seven mistakes when looking for your next caterer →



1. Not asking friends or colleagues for a recommendation/referral

No amount of advertising can replace a good recommendation from somebody you know and trust. If a friend or colleague was raving about the food they had at their party, then this is the caterer you should talk to about your special event. Ask around and get recommendations. Someone you know would have enjoyed the catering at an event they attended and this is your best start.

2. Choosing by price – A lower quote normally means lower quality food or less experience

When it comes to food, price normally reflects quality. Lower prices typically mean lower quality food, inexperience or sub standard staff. Think carefully about the quality of the event you are looking to present and how you want your guests to feel. If your party is worth having catered, then its worth having it done right.

Some caterers cut costs by using frozen products. Ask your caterer about the freshness of their food and insist on only using a caterer that uses fresh food. Your being charged for it and fresh is always best.

Make sure that the business is reputable and they have a menu appropriate for your event.

3. Not hiring the right help – ie inexperienced staff

For the best result and to ensure that your guests get the attention they deserve, you will want to hire the right wait staff. Cutting corners here is a sure fire way to ruin your event. Professional wait staff are trained to work the floor and ensure that each and every guest is looked after. They will know exactly who the vegetarian is, where they are and if they have had enough to eat. They also add to the ambience. Hiring the right staff can ensure your guests safety as they practice the responsible service of alcohol.

Reconsider using friends or work colleagues to serve drinks or food. More often than not, they will be tempted to stop and have a chat to the other guests. Before they know it, 15 minutes has passed and the platter of hot food they were passing around has gone cold.

Consider the peace of mind you will have from knowing you have the right professionals helping you.

4. Comparing apples with oranges

When comparing catering companies you have to see beyond the menu in order to determine the value you are getting. Menu items and services may sound the same but the bottom line for your price may vary greatly. One caterer may serve a 180g portion of meat where another serves 220g portion.

No two caterers create the same dishes even if they sound the same. The amount, quality and preparation of the food can vary greatly. To understand why pricing differs you will need to understand how the food is prepared and what ingredients are used. The fresher and more exotic the ingredients, the more expensive the dish will be. Does the caterer actually create the food from scratch or purchase it frozen and just doctor it up at the last minute, by adding their own sauce? How big are the portions served? Are free range or organic meats used? How will it be presented at the event?

When comparing staff costs you will need to understand the level of service provided in order to make a fair comparison. The ratio of server to guest varies considerably depending on what style of food you choose (ie plated or buffet). A caterer whose standard ratio is 1 waiter per 10 guests will be providing a much higher level of service (and should be more expensive) compared to a ratio of 1 waiter to 25 guests.





5. Not having a budget in mind

It's best to avoid talking to any caterers or pondering menu possibilities until you've set your budget. Decide how much you are willing and able to spend before you start making phone calls. Determine approximately how many guests you'll invite and how much per head you can afford to spend. A professional caterer will offer suggestions within the established guidelines or let you know if they aren't the right caterer for you. Remember costs can escalate quickly when you let your vision of the perfect event dictate the food and beverage menus.

6. Not hiring a reputable caterer

Once you have a small list of caterers, have a look at their websites. A good caterer will have sample or full menus on their website to reflect the type of food they create. Many will have galleries to highlight the presentation of the food. If you feel that they could be a good fit contact them with a list of questions to make sure that they are reputable and are able to handle your requirements.

Ask that are an actual caterer and aren't just café or bakery. There is a lot more to catering than just the food, so you need to select a caterer who is familiar with all aspects of event catering. Ensure that the catering company you are considering has an actual premises and isn't just an online middleman. In the case of the latter, you may have problems with food quality, accountability or may find it difficult to contact the company if anything goes wrong.

If you haven't had a referral ask them for a reference from a client that has recently used them or check them out on social media.

7. Not asking the caterer if they have had experience in the style/size of party you are considering

You want a caterer with the right experience so you feel confident you are in good hands. It is paramount that they are capable of handling your event.

Ask your caterer if they have had experience in the style or size of event you are considering. Experienced caterers come with a wealth of knowledge and they may have ideas that you hadn't thought of to make your party even more memorable.

Overall you will want a caterer that understands your needs and is dedicated to making your party perfect. An enthusiastic caterer who is willing to go out of their way to ensure that things are planned and executed perfectly will make all the difference in you enjoying your own party.

To speak with one of our event specialists book in for a **FREE** 15 minute no-obligation party consult. Click on the link below to be directed to the calendar.

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Contact us to find out how we can help you design that perfect party.

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