

# BANQUETS & MEETINGS SERVER

HANDBOOK





# Welcome!

Our Hotels have become a preferred venue for event planners around the world. That's because they know they can count on getting great food and great service every time.

As a Banquet or Meeting Server you're in a great position to reinforce that reputation.

If you follow the standards and procedures in this handbook, you'll be delivering the kind of service that defines our brand: service that's consistent, hassle-free, personalized and inspirational.



More set up info is provided in the “Banquets and Meetings Set Up” Handbook.



Set up and test all Furnishings, Equipment & Amenities 30 minutes before any event begins.

## BANQUETS & MEETINGS

### ROOM AND AMENITIES SET UP

- More comprehensive information about Set Up procedures is provided in the Job Mastery Library “Banquets and Meetings Set Up” Handbook. It’s important that you review it
- Banquets and Meetings involve a variety of configurations, each with its own specific set of requirements; these are covered in detail in the Set Up Handbook

### UNIVERSAL EVENT SET-UP REQUIREMENTS

- Fully set up and test all Furnishings, Equipment & Amenities 30 minutes before any event is scheduled to begin
- Check that accurate Direction Signs are prominently placed in advance of the event
- Have all refreshments prepared as ordered and ready 15 minutes before they are scheduled to be served

### TEA AND COFFEE STATION SET UP SEQUENCE

- Set out one station for every 75-100 guests
- Skirt and decorate all coffee break stations
- Place polished cups with hands pointing at 3 o’clock at the end of the table closest to the meeting room doors

- If saucers are used, place tea spoons under the cup handle facing 12 o'clock
- Prepare and set out beverages
  - » Fresh brewed caffeinated and decaf coffee
  - » Selection of high quality teas + hot water
- Set out condiments – ideally on a separate station or at the far end of the coffee station
  - » Cream/Milk
  - » Sweeteners
    - Sugar (white, in the raw, brown)
    - Spenda sugar substitute
    - Honey
  - » Lemon



Set out one coffee and tea station for every 75-100 guests.

## BREAKOUT AREAS

- A Breakout Area is any appropriate space in your hotel's meeting and banquet area where event participants can break from the main assembly into smaller groups
- Break out areas should be set up according to the event organizer's instructions – and are usually designed to accommodate different activities (such as team building, discussion groups, etc.)
- See the Banquet and Meeting Set Up Handbook for detailed instructions on setting up Breakout Areas



A Breakout Area is any appropriate space where smaller groups can gather away from the larger group.





For meetings, make sure pens, note pads and name cards are available in the Stand.



You are responsible for servicing the event. One example of servicing is to bring the client an extra flipchart if requested.

## OUR MEETINGS

### DEFINITION

- Our Meetings are branded events featuring 50 or fewer participants. They are a very important part of our event offerings

### SPECIAL ROOM REQUIREMENTS

- Make sure that these meeting branded items are always available in the Meetings Collateral Stand or Case:
  - » Pens
  - » Note Pads
  - » Name Cards

### SERVICING

- In general, you are responsible for servicing meetings during lunch and throughout the event
- Meetings tend to follow strict schedules, so you need to be prepared to service and refresh rooms whenever directed
- When servicing and replenishing a meeting
  - » Remove and replenish all dirty china and flatware
  - » Empty bins
  - » Remove any rubbish, food, etc., from the floor
  - » Ensure the room is secure before participants return
  - » Let your Supervisor know you have completed your service so they can check the room
  - » Make certain that fresh flipchart pads are provided when the one currently in use has fewer than 20 sheets remaining

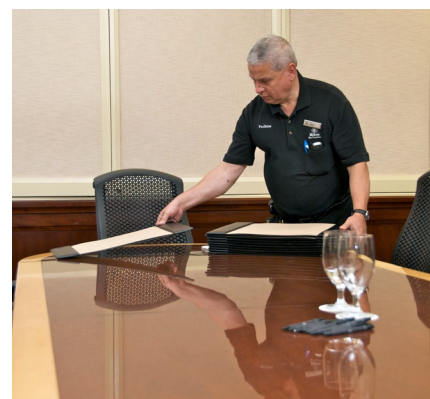
- During breaks
  - » Replenish water, glasses, mints and chocolates
  - » Straighten chairs
  - » Check linen and replace as needed
  - » Check lighting & temperature
  - » Apply appropriate amount of air freshener
  - » Inform Maintenance of any defects
- If you are required to service and refresh a room while the meeting is still in progress
  - » Check with your Supervisor to determine the exact level of service the client has requested
  - » Be as unobtrusive as possible – and keep noise to an absolute minimum

#### AFTER A HILTON MEETING HAS CONCLUDED

- After any event has ended, you will need to restore the room or rooms involved so that they are ready
  - » To be shown to prospective clients or
  - » To be prepared for the next event
- Review the section in the Meeting Set Up Handbook on Breaking Down the Room
- Left-behind items
  - » Ask your Supervisor how the client wants left-behind papers disposed of (shredded, recycled, or treated as trash)
  - » Return any other left-behind items to Lost & Found



During breaks, replenish water, glasses and mints / chocolates, and straighten chairs.



After a meeting has concluded, you are responsible for breaking down the room.

## IMPACT YOUR PERFORMANCE SCORES

By following the procedures shown here you'll positively impact these

#### Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

- Ambience of the meeting room
- Food & Beverage presentation/layout
- Helpfulness of the catering/banquet staff



For Banquets, make sure linens are clean and pressed with no rips, fading or burns.



Ensure that the Banquet doors can be opened before the event starts.

## BANQUETS

- These guidelines incorporate the key points included in the Banquet Service Standards Manual
- Ask your Supervisor to show you the full Standards Manual and familiarize yourself with the many important details it provides

## PRE-EVENT GUIDELINES

- Make sure that linens are clean and pressed – no rips, fading or burns
- Confirm with your Captain exactly what place-settings are required for each event
- Fold napkins neatly according to the design selected by the event representative
- Confirm that all utensils needed for each course are included at each place setting
- Inspect all dishes and glassware for spots or blemishes
- Make sure all wicker baskets are free of fraying and crumbs
- Be at your post, in uniform and ready to work at least 15 minutes before any event is scheduled to begin
- Complete all service setup and ensure the doors can be opened before the event starts



## TRAY HANDLING GUIDELINES

Trays require special care to avoid accidents. Follow these guidelines.

### LOADING TRAYS

- » Never load more than you can carry – 2 trips are better than 1 accident
- » Before loading, check that the tray is clean and dry
- » Place heavier items at center of the tray or on the side closest to your body
- » Lay tall glassware down and away from the edge of the tray
- » Lay condiment bottles flat on the tray
- » Fit plate covers properly before carefully stacking on the tray

### CARRYING TRAYS

- OVAL
  - » Carry over your left shoulder
  - » 1 hand under the heaviest part
  - » Fingers pointed to the back of the tray
  - » Do not carry in front, at waist level
  - » Keep your other hand free to balance the tray, open doors, carry the tray stand, etc
- 16" ROUND
  - » Use as directed for mixed drinks, individual beverage orders, etc.
  - » Carry on the left for ease, in front of your body

### SERVING FROM TRAYS

- » Always use a tray stand with oval trays
- » Open stand, bend at the knees, gently slide the tray onto center of the stand
- » Never place trays on chairs



Never overload trays. Stack heavier items at the center of the tray.



Carry oval trays over your left shoulder, with one hand under the heaviest part.

## IMPACT YOUR PERFORMANCE SCORES

By following the procedures shown here you'll positively impact these **Key Performance Indicators (KPI)**

- Speed of service
- Ambience of the meeting room
- Overall experience



Tray jacks should only be placed around the perimeter of the room.



Serve all beverages on a round cocktail tray.



Before leaving the room, offer coffee replenishments to guests.

## GENERAL BANQUET SERVICE GUIDELINES

- Tray jacks should only be placed around the perimeter of the room
- Remove all trays from the room before the meal begins; do not return them until clearing is required or meal service has ended
- Remain on the floor while guests are eating
- Only leave the floor to remove dirty items or pick up food & beverage items
- When in the room, keep quietly focused on diners – do not huddle or chat with fellow Servers
- Constantly monitor the carpet for items that need pickup and removal
- Serve all beverages on a cocktail tray
- Accompany all reception cocktails with a napkin
- Carry no more than 3 entrees at a time from the service stand to the table
- Make sure that you are serving hot items hot and cold items cold
- If sauces or gravies are served, offer them to each guest, identify them by name, and explain what they accompany
- Warn guests when serving hot plates, beverages, etc.
- Handle all items as quietly as possible around guests (and try to keep noise to a minimum in areas adjacent to the dining room)
- Before leaving the room, offer coffee replenishment to guests – or leave a pot behind if instructed
- If any spills occur that soil a guest's clothing or property, immediately take action
  - » Offer a neutral-colored napkin or cloth for initial clean-up
  - » Notify the Banquet Captain who will take subsequent action

## TABLE & GUEST SERVICE SEQUENCE

- Serve & clear the Head Table first
- At mixed tables, take orders from and serve ladies first, in counter-clockwise direction
- Otherwise serve counter-clockwise, beginning with the Host
- Serve food from the left, beverages from the right

## TABLE REPLENISHMENT GUIDELINES

- Keep ashtrays clean
- Refill water glasses
- Offer coffee & tea refills; always use a napkin splash-guard when pouring hot coffee or other beverages
- Offer to refill all beverages when half-empty
- Clear used wine glasses before pouring new wine
- Keep cups and glasses on the table when refilling
- Replenish bread, butter, dressings, etc., as needed during the appetizer and entrée courses
- Place additional silverware as needed during meal to right or left of similar items already on table
- Promptly replace any dropped item so the guest sees that the replacement comes from clean stock



Always serve food from the left of the guest.



Always serve drinks from the right of the guest.



Keep cups and glasses on the table when refilling them.



Hold all stemware or silverware by the stem.



Hold all dishes by the rim of the plate. Keep your fingers away from the food.



Wine glasses, cups & saucers, teapots and cold beverages go to the right of the plate.

## GUIDELINES FOR HANDING SERVICE PIECES

- CUPS – by their handle
- STEMWARE – by the stem
- DISHES – by the rim
- Always keep fingers away from food-contact surfaces
- Use a clean, dry napkin when handling hot items in front of guests

## GUIDELINES FOR PLACING ITEMS ON THE TABLE

- These guidelines are designed so all items are easy for guests to reach
- MIXED DRINKS (during meal service) – to the top right of the place setting – no napkin needed
- BREAD – center of the table where room allows
- SALAD – directly in front of the guest (move to the left of the forks if it is not eaten when the entrée arrives)
- SOUP – directly in front of the guest
- CONDIMENTS (ketchup, mustard, etc) – in front of the guest who asked for them
- ENTRÉE – directly in front of the guest with entrée at the bottom, garnish and vegetables at the top
- BEVERAGES – to the right
  - » WINE GLASSES - to the right of the water glass at 45° angle down
  - » CUPS & SAUCERS – right of the spoon, 2”/5Cm from the table edge, handle @ 4 o’clock
  - » TEAPOTS – on the under-liner above and slightly to the right of the cup
  - » COLD BEVERAGES (iced tea, milk, etc.) to the right of & below the water glass
- DESSERTS – in front of guests; see New Banquet Service Standards or ask your Supervisor for additional details about how to position different dessert items relative to diners



## TABLE-TO-TRAY CLEARING GUIDELINES

- Clear items onto an oval tray or trays
- Stand behind guests when stacking items on trays
- Clear each course before serving the next
- Clear food & beverages from the right
- Before serving entrées, clear previous items and base plates together
- After the main course, before serving dessert, clear items in this sequence
  - » Plates
  - » Bread & Butter plates
  - » Bread trays
  - » Butter dishes
  - » Salt & pepper
  - » Wine glasses (if empty)
  - » Condiments
- After dessert, on your Captain's instructions, clear everything except
  - » Water goblet
  - » Wine glasses (if not empty)
  - » Coffee cup & saucer
  - » Teaspoon
  - » Cream & Sugar
  - » Napkin
- When removing plates with silverware on or near them, place utensils on the center of the plate while clearing
- Place silver & china on the tray separately, with heavier items in the center
- Stack dishes of the same size together on the tray
- Do NOT stack plates on top of cups or glasses
- When clearing soiled plates, silently scrape food items onto plate at the center of the tray as needed to ensure even stacking
- NEVER scrape food items, ashes, etc. directly onto the tray
- Remove any empty sugar packets, etc.
- If you find chipped or broken items, show them to the Captain or Banquet Manager



Always clear items onto an oval tray. Clear food and beverages from the guest's right.



After dinner, clear everything except water, wine, coffee, cream & sugar, dessert fork & teaspoon, & napkin.



Stack dishes of the same size together on an oval tray when clearing.





Always wear a clean and crisply pressed uniform.



Smile when you are around guests, and acknowledge guests through brief eye contact, when appropriate.

## KEEPING THE "SERVICE" IN YOUR BANQUET SERVICE

- It's very important to know how to perform every task involved in banquet service. It's also important to do so in ways that make guests feel welcomed and cared-for

### PREPARING TO SERVE

- Always wear a clean and crisply pressed uniform
- Make sure to attend the pre-meal (function) meeting to receive information about the event you'll be serving

### MAKING A POSITIVE IMPRESSION

- Remember that guests can see you whenever you are in the room – so always be courteous, efficient, and quiet
- Maintain good posture – and never slouch, lean, or slump
- While in the room, smile and, when appropriate, acknowledge guests through brief eye contact
- Welcome guests at your table, introduce yourself and your partner, and be prepared to tell them about the menu – including any food and beverage choices
- For example, say "Good evening (morning/afternoon). Welcome to the **our Hotel**. This is Debbie and I am Stephanie. We will be your servers this (morning/afternoon/evening). Today's entrée is a filet of beef with herbs. If there is anything we may do to make your meal more enjoyable, please don't hesitate to ask."

- Always remember any special dining requests (such as vegetarian entrees) at your table(s)
- Engage in brief and purposeful conversations with guests only to keep them informed and well-served
- Do not pay attention to guest remarks or stories unless they are directed at you
- Each time you visit a table, check for guest satisfaction and fill any needs

## GRACEFULLY RESPONDING TO SITUATIONS

- Avoid physical contact with a guest unless it's requested (for example, if assistance in getting up is requested)
- Be mindful of your fellow servers; if one of them looks as though they are unsure of themselves or needs help, make sure that you or someone supports them while keeping the situation from being apparent to guests
- If guests have a complaint, do not disagree or argue with them; instead show quiet concern for their need, move away from the table, and consult your Captain and follow their instructions



Each time you visit a table, check for guest satisfaction and fill any needs.

## IMPACT YOUR PERFORMANCE SCORES

By following the procedures shown here you'll positively impact these

### Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

- Quality of food & beverage with the meeting/banquet
- Helpfulness of the catering/banquet staff
- Overall service
- Return to THIS hotel
- Loyalty

