

# Banquet event orders — creating the pieces to the puzzle

By DANA LYNN BERNSTEIN

The meeting planning puzzle has a million pieces — each brings a different nuance and enhancement to the entire meeting picture. For a successful meeting the specifications for all of these pieces must be conveyed to the hotel clearly. The more comprehensive the planner's specifications, presumably, the less hassle there will be on site.



Bernstein

The meeting planner should start a staging guide (the basis for the hotel banquet event order — BEO) with all the specifications and requirements for each room. The guide should have one function per page and be in chronological order so there is no confusion as to what is being outlined. If the event is a multi-day program, the daily specifications should be repeated, as the hotel staff will throw the page away at the end of the day. Each page should include:

- Name of the function;
- Name of the function room;
- Time that the room is blocked;
- Program start time;
- Reader-board posting;
- Number of people in attendance;
- Room set up;
- Menu selections;
- Time the audiovisual equipment and food should be completely set up;
- Time food should be cleared and/or refreshed; and
- Special requirements.

The banquet event order — BEO — is the blueprint for the meeting. As an addition to the original hotel contract, it also has

to be signed and list the details of the room set up, menus, prices, special requests and services, and other items that need to be relayed to the hotel staff. The cooking, moving meeting-room tables or placing final touches are the sole function of those who carry out the BEO.


I prefer to "map out" the meeting specifications in the staging guide form (minus the menus) and send them to the hotel before conducting a site inspection (make sure your hotel contact is aware that the document is preliminary and may change after the site inspection).


The hotel staff should be aware of the group's needs up front so as to identify any concerns before the hotel contracts are signed. This will then provide you with the opportunity to look at other meeting space in the hotel during your site inspection if the original room that is blocked for the group is insufficient.

After the site inspection, add your menu selections and other items specific to the hotel to the original staging guide. Remember, the hotel BEOs can be changed closer to the meeting date if necessary. The planner's responsibility is to make sure all of the information originally provided is listed in the hotel BEO.

The hotel will request the planner's specifications (staging guide) one month before the meeting and will create the BEO, which will include menu prices. The planner should request the date when the BEO will be returned for approval. Once you approve and sign the hotel BEOs, request that they counter sign and return the pages so you are sure they understand your changes, additions or deletions. This process should be completed a week before the meeting. Don't fret; for those last minute changes the hotel is usually flexible enough to work with the planner to make a

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**Crabtree's Rattle House**  
*Restaurant and Inn*

The Fine Art of Progressive Cuisine and Outstanding Wine

it has brought a number of jazz and performers to free lawn concerts at Ryer's Rye Brook offices. At one such 1996, the Westchester Philharmonic

wide has been drastically cut, the National Endowment for the Arts, for example, is expected to disburse \$99.5 million in federal money next year, down from the high of \$170

## request event order —

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meeting. planners, you may request that the BEO you a blank version of its BEO so they capture all your information the requests are clear, but I have a hotel to do this. I found that an "action required" preferable to sending separate memos hotel department. This list will be separated into items pertinent to and ones pertinent to the group which is sent to each department a

few days before the meeting date. The action-required list comprises "instructions" to the individual departments (front desk, audiovisual, etc.) as well as notes for each food function (i.e., low-fat and regular milk should be labeled and set out with all coffee functions; music should be piped into all of the food function rooms). This list becomes more of an asset when multiple functions are occurring within the one meeting (the specifications will need to be conveyed once).

The action-required pages and the staging guide should be tailored to the group's

needs in Westchester. The philharmonic sales it has caused to celebrate this year; its pre-season subscription sales were up 18 percent.

Philip Morris, with international food and

Pea Operating Companies, Nantux, Inc., Miller Brewing Co., Philip Morris USA, Philip Morris International Inc. and Philip Morris Capital Corp.

needs (i.e., if the group is meeting to discuss obesity issues, ask that the food be cooked low fat; if the group will not take notes, you need not request large pads). The action-required list should be separated into the main departments that affect the meeting.

In addition to having a final BEO, request the hotel send a group resumé to you before the pre-conference meeting.

This is a hotel internal document that summarizes the group's needs. It should also list requests outlined in your action-required pages.

The clearer you can communicate your

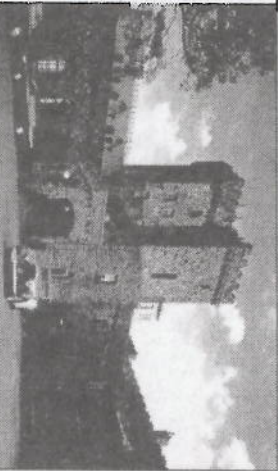
meeting needs to the hotel in writing and the more complete the staging guide is, the more smoothly the meeting will run once you are on site. As stated, the BEO is what the entire hotel staff follows. If it is missing an item or specification, even though it may have been communicated, the missing item may not be provided without a second request.

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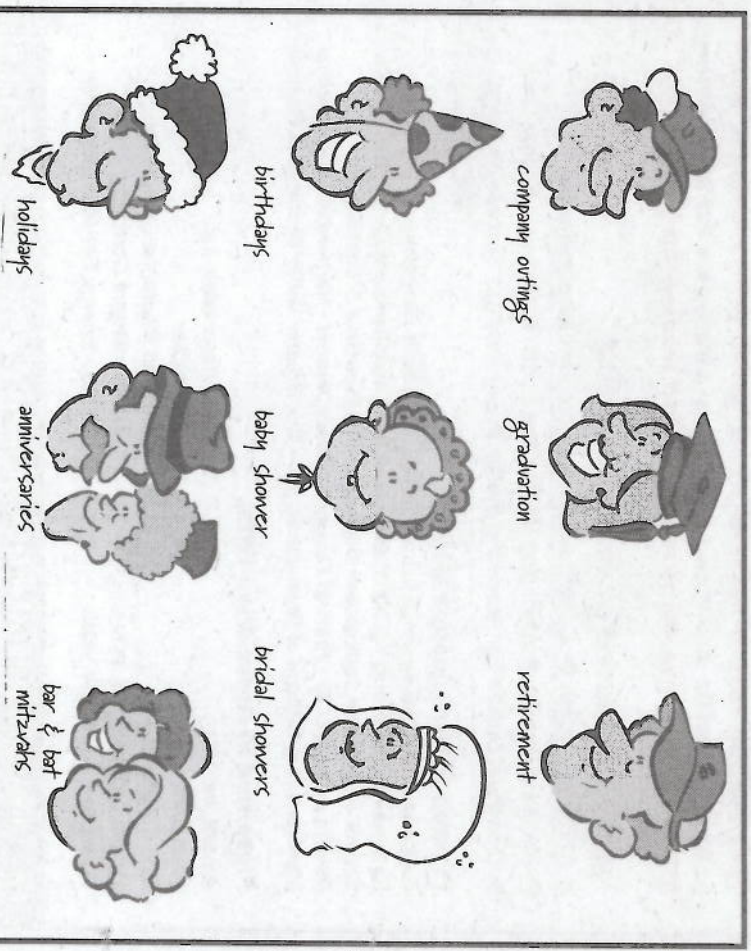
*Be aware*

*The Castle...*

*meet here, and you may want to conquer the world*



Assemble for your next meeting in splendid isolation, in one of the inspiring meeting rooms of The Castle at Tarrytown. You shall encounter the highest standards of European-style service, combined with superb facilities and magnificent surroundings. But beware of your feelings - the world's a huge place to conquer.



company outings

birthdays

holidays

graduation

baby shower

anniversaries

retirement

bridal showers

bar & boat parties