

Catering: Off-Premises Service

Unit: Preparing Foods

Problem Area: Food Preparation

Lesson: Catering: Off-Premises Service

- **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

- 1 Summarize off-premises catering.
- 2 Review equipment and packaging for off-premises catering.
- 3 Explain service options for off-premises catering.

- **Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

E-unit(s) corresponding to this lesson plan. CAERT, Inc. <http://www.mycart.com>.

Brewer, Elizabeth. *Off-Premise Catering: How to Plan and Execute Large-Scale Catered Events*. Wiley, 2015.

"How to Start a Catering Business," *NFIB*. Accessed July 15, 2016. <http://www.nfib.com/article/how-to-start-a-catering-business-59046/>.

"Introduction to Off-Premise Catering Management," Wiley. Accessed July 15, 2016. <http://catalogimages.wiley.com/images/db/pdf/0471464244.excerpt.pdf>.

Mattel, Bruce, and the Culinary Institute of America (CIA). *Catering: A Guide to Managing a Successful Business Operation*, 2nd ed. Wiley, 2015.

Thomas, Chris. *Off-Premise Catering Management*, 3rd ed. Wiley, 2013.



■ **Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying master(s)
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication
- ✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
- ✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
- ✓ Classroom resource and reference materials

■ **Key Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- Alto-Shaam®
- ancillary
- buffet service
- Cambro®
- carryout
- cater
- caterer
- catering
- cater-waiter
- chafing set-up
- disposable
- event
- holding cabinet
- liability
- menu
- off-premises
- on-premises
- premises
- Sterno
- sub-contractors

■ **Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

To introduce what is required to provide food and service outside of a restaurant or banquet facility, consider having an open brainstorming session with students with a given scenario.

For example, propose that they plan an end-of-the-year class party at a local park. They are to plan a full meal menu. Ask students to “throw out” menu ideas as you list them on the board. (NOTE: To expedite this activity, choose the menu

yourself from the listed options, and identify them for the class. Be sure to pick some hot and cold items.) Next, ask the students how the food would arrive/be delivered to the park. Remind them that hot foods must stay hot and cold foods must stay cold and must remain at a safe temperature once delivered.

Allow students time to digest this information and to respond. Then record their responses on the board. Next, ask what else might be needed to facilitate a meal in the park. Who would provide those “other” items? How would the meal be served? What equipment, tools, and expertise are needed for the selected service? What would this event cost? Who is doing the set-up, the service, and the clean up?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Summarize off-premises catering.

Anticipated Problem: How do off-premises differ from on-premises catering?

I. Off-premises event catering

- A. To **cater** is to provide food and beverage for an event or a banquet. **Catering** is providing prepared food and beverage, and sometimes service, for a specific group and/or for an event. Most catered events are planned social or business occasions: meeting, birthday party, wedding, banquet, graduation, family reunion, family game night, etc. To clarify, catering does not refer to picking up food “to go” from a drive-through restaurant. There may or may not be a large group involved, but catering always involves an **event** (an activity of importance that occurs once or occurs on a limited basis) for which food and service are desired.
1. A **caterer** is an independent vendor or a department within a facility (e.g., hotel, resort, or restaurant) that provides food, beverage, and sometimes service for an event. A catering manager or event manager organizes and staffs an event with servers (front of the house), chefs (back of the house), valet service, bar service, etc.
 2. Catered foods may be simple or elegant. They may be served on-premises, off-premises, or picked up by the ordering client as “takeout.” **Premises** are the location where food is prepared. **Carryout** (sometimes referred to as takeout or to go) is food prepared in a kitchen and consumed in another place.
 - a. **On-premises** are in-house; attached to the event venue. Advantages of on-premises catering are the ability of the caterer to make last-minute food or order changes due to residency in the venue (event location); proximity to the kitchen; and access to a supply of linens (napery), stemware,

dishes, flatware, and décor. A disadvantage is that it may be more expensive than off-premises catering by the same caterer and/or from another catering source.

- b. **Off-premises** are not at the site; removed from the venue. Advantages may include full wait staff service, venue set-up, venue clean up, and a better price than on-premises catering. Disadvantages may include fewer options to adjust or change food, linen, table arrangement, stemware, etc.
3. Catered foods may be designed to be served (by a server) or may be designed for buffet service. **Buffet service** is food and beverage service in which guests serve themselves from a hot and/or cold food table set up. Picked up catered foods are served by the ordering client or provided as buffet service at a location of choice.

B. Ancillary goods and services

1. While catering refers to food and beverage preparation, and sometimes service, some catering businesses offer ancillary goods and services to accompany the order. **Ancillary** is supporting elements that go with the food. The ancillary items may include **disposable** (single use) plates, flatware, napkins, serving pieces, and chafing set-ups for buffets. A **chafing set-up** is a metal frame that holds pans of food, often with disposable Sterno cans underneath. **Sterno** is “canned heat”; usually an alcohol-based jelly-like fuel packaged in a small can. Sterno is manually lit and provides a heat source for a given number of hours when placed under a hotel pan. Ancillary items are sold for an additional fee or are included in the price of the carryout order if stated that way on the menu.
2. Off-premises catering may be delivered with basic ancillary items (e.g., disposable napkins, plates, cutlery, and spices). Items depend upon the food and the event. For example, pizza may be delivered with no ancillary items. In contrast, a fried chicken dinner delivery may include side dishes, napkins, and plastic flatware. Off-premise catered meals for higher-end events (e.g., weddings and anniversaries) may have ancillary items available for purchase or rent (e.g., glassware, linens, chafers, and table decorations).
3. The **menu** is a detailed printed document listing all catered items for sale, including:
 - a. Prices are usually per person, but they are potentially by food weight or pan size.
 - b. Any ancillary items included with the food item ordered or available for rent or purchase will be listed.
 - c. Name, phone number, payment requirements (including deposits on big orders), acceptable payment methods, and time required between order and event date, any special options, and pick-up hours will be listed. The menu will include the price of delivery (if not included in the per person or fixed cost quote).

C. Off-premises catering rationale

1. Rationale: People cater food for numerous reasons, including lack of cooking skills, lack of available space or cooking equipment, lack of time, lower cost than catering “in-house” at a facility, and simple convenience. Convenience does cost, so it is not surprising that catered foods are notably more expensive than home-cooked foods. Sometimes venue is a prime rationale for an off-premises event. Sometimes venue is a prime rationale for an off-premises **event**, which is a personal or work-related celebration or gathering. For example, professional caterers may be the best choice to handle a beach wedding, a large family reunion event at a home, or a corporate business retreat in the woods. Catered foods are generally more expensive than home-cooked foods, but they are often less expensive than a served dinner in a sit-down facility (depending on the level of service and ancillary items required).
2. Food types: Off-premises catered foods can be casual in nature (e.g., sliced beef, fried chicken, pasta, and salad) or high-end for cocktail parties and receptions (e.g., fancy canapés, hors d’oeuvres, and savory pastries).
 - a. Events that utilize and benefit from carryout catered foods include home parties (e.g., anniversaries, weddings, birthdays, communions, holidays, graduations, business events, and school events), regardless of the event location.
 - b. Off-premises events may take place in a venue with minimal or no volume food preparation capability (e.g., homes, event halls, churches, schools, tailgate parties, block parties, and beaches).

D. Key catering contract terms glossary

1. A la minute: Food prepared to order in front of the guest
2. Amuse-bouche: Bite-size hors d’oeuvre specialty of the chef (literal translation is “mouth amusement”)
3. Bowl food: Small bowls of appetizing food passed among guests during a standing reception
4. Cover: The F&B (food and beverage) term for a guest (e.g., “We have 350 covers to prepare for the wedding reception.”)
5. Deposit: The amount paid in advance of and typically required at the time an event is booked
6. Dry hire: Hiring a venue, a room, etc. without any labor, staff, furniture, or delivery charges included
7. French service: A high-budget, labor-intense service method in which food is prepared by wait staff tableside
8. Napery: Linens (e.g., napkins, tablecloths, and draping)
9. Ops sheet: The “battle plan” for the event prepared by the caterer to share with the event staff (chefs, set-up, wait staff, maître d’, etc.); shortened or jargon terms ensure the event staff is fully informed of the targets and intended outcomes.

10. Outmess: Small, often casual meals, provided on the day of set-up and the event for catering staff and other hired staff (e.g., photographers, security, and hotel guides)
11. Plated service: A presentation method in which food is aesthetically arranged by the chef before it is served to the guests
12. Props: Catering aesthetics that help convey a theme, including flowers, center-pieces, wall hangings, and place cards
13. Set up or “the in:” The time required to move all equipment to the venue and set the room(s) and halls for the guests
14. Snake service: A service method in which wait staff line up with plated food and move together (winding like a snake) through tables, finally presenting food to individual guests
15. Table stationery: All items that would reside on the table near the placement (e.g., place card, small gift box, menu card, glitter to shower on the happy couple, masks, New Year’s Eve noisemakers, and individual flower)
16. Tasting: Pre-event in which the host participates in tasting portions of the menu and giving final approval to the selections

Teaching Strategy: Many techniques can be used to help students master this objective. Use VM–A, VM–B, and VM–C. Project the “Catering Room Setup” video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DBi56IAb34> to review basic banquet table set-up procedures. Assign LS–A.

Objective 2: Review equipment and packaging for off-premises catering.

Anticipated Problem: What equipment and packaging is necessary to conduct off-premises catering?

II. Essential off-premises equipment

A. Holding and keeping equipment

1. Food safety is the first rule of foodservice. An expectation of the guest/client is that hot foods are served hot, and cold foods are served cold. This rule and expectation are further underscored by food safety codes that require specific temperatures for hot and cold food to prevent bacterial growth and potential foodborne illnesses. Hot foods are held at or above 135°F, and cold foods are kept at or below 41°F. Foodservice thermometers are used to verify these temperature ranges. With this in mind, off-premise caterers are required to have units that hold and keep proper temperatures for delivery and service. Two industry-standard equipment brands for off- and on-premises catering are:
 - a. **Alto-Shaam®** is a vendor of holding, cooking, and cooling equipment, including electrically heated units and electrically chilled units. Alto-Shaam® units can be small enough for transport to an off-premises event or “double-decker” for kitchen use.

- b. **Cambro®** is a vendor of commercial-grade insulated plastic units designed to hold and keep food at safe temperatures. Cambro® units are small enough for transport to an off-premises event or delivery or large enough for kitchen use.
 - 2. Off-premises catering requires delivery of food at safe temperatures. When caterers are serving the food off-site (rather than dropping it off), they must provide equipment to continue to hold and keep proper food temperatures until the food is served. For most caterers, that means mobile units, such as holding cabinets. **Holding cabinets** are upright units—similar in shape to a refrigerator—designed to hold hot food at temperatures high enough to protect it from bacterial growth. They are not designed to cook food—only to hold hot food at a constant temperature. For example:
 - a. Alto-Shaam’s electric upright cabinets can hold racks of hot food at minimum hot temperatures or racks of refrigerated foods at minimum cold temperatures.
 - b. Most electrical warming and cooling unit doors have built-in temperature gauges so the holding/keeping temperature is easily viewed without opening the door. (NOTE: Plastic holding units typically do not have built-in temperature gauges.)
 - 3. Liability: In addition to basic food safety required during food preparation, caterers have the responsibility to keep food safe through delivery (if dropping off) or through point of service (if serving food). **Liability** is the legal responsibility to keep food safe throughout the process. A caterer can be sued if guests become ill and the illness is related to the food consumption or service.
- B. Other equipment for large off-premises events
- 1. Portable cooking and cleaning equipment: Caterers bring portable grills, ovens, stoves, fryers, freezers, tables, sink and hand-washing stations, hand tools, etc. to multi-day events (e.g., festivals, carnivals, and sporting events). Whenever an event is held far from a kitchen venue (e.g., a golf course), caterers bring the food to the attendees.
 - 2. Transportation equipment: Off-premises catering businesses require commercial transportation equipment—from a single van to a fleet of trucks. Off-premises food would likely be served a distance from van and truck parking, so food must be safely moved and stored close to the point of service. (NOTE: Stress to students that off-premise catering is not like “carryout delivery” from the submarine sandwich shop where little is needed beyond the driver’s car.)
 - 3. Electrical equipment and cords: Off-premises caterers bring sufficient extension cords. In some cases, they may provide their own electric generator (when no power source is available).
 - 4. Casual events: Casual off-premises catering may require the client to purchase or rent a variety of supplies, tools, and/or equipment:
 - a. Chafer units
 - b. Tongs and serving spoons

- c. Condiments and dispensers
- d. Disposable tablecloths, etc.
- 5. Formal events: Formal off-premises catering may require the client to purchase or rent an extensive variety of supplies, tools, and/or equipment:
 - a. Linen cloths and napkins
 - b. Serving trays and tray jacks
 - c. Service plates, glasses, cups, and flatware
 - d. Glass or metal punch bowls
 - e. Bus tubs and stands
 - f. Mobile dishwashers or a dish rinse station (e.g., to eliminate packing and moving dirty dishes, glassware, utensils, and flatware)
 - g. Mobile storage units for breakable dishware
 - h. Outdoor heaters
 - i. Outdoor lighting
 - j. Tents and tent fans
 - k. Tables and chairs
 - l. Flowers and/or other table decorations
 - m. Garbage cans and recycle containers
 - n. Beverage dispensers and bar stools

[NOTE: An individual caterer may not provide the entire listing of supplies, tools, and equipment. So it is worth noting that different types of caterers are used in different markets for specific events. Further, stress to students the extraordinary challenge of providing full restaurant service for set-up and breakdown for an off-site single event. How does this impact the cost of weddings, parties, reunions, etc.?)

C. Containers and packaging

1. When deciding which container to use for packaging a specific catered food, a person must decide which elements are most important. Will the food be dropped off or served? This is a huge issue because foods being delivered and left by a caterer require disposable food packaging, while caterers that serve the event commonly use standard kitchen pans and containers. If food items are dropped off, an off-premise caterer that delivers and leaves that food must consider:
 - a. What packaging best supports safe movement of the food during transport?
 - b. What packaging best protects the integrity of the food?
 - c. Is the food hot or cold?
 - d. How long will the container remain intact with food inside?
 - e. Where will the filled container be stored prior to pick-up or service?
 - f. What is the storage environment after transport?
 - g. What is the container cost? (e.g., What is the cost of a plain container versus a container with a logo?)

- h. What does the client expect? (e.g., Would placing expensive food items in Styrofoam containers meet the client standard?)
 - i. How much space do the filled containers require?
 - j. Do the containers require assembly? (What is the associated labor cost to construct the container?)
 - k. Can a logo be placed on the container?
 - l. Is it possible to place labels on the containers?
 - m. Are sizes available that meet the needs of the business and client?
 - n. In what quantities are containers available for purchase? (e.g., only available in lots of 1,000)
2. Off-premise caterers that deliver and serve need to be sure they have sufficient commercial pans and tools to transport to the event while reserving enough for other events or in-house use.

Teaching Strategy: Many techniques can be used to help students master this objective. Use VM–D. Assign LS–B.

Objective 3: Explain service options for off-premises catering.

Anticipated Problem: What are the service options for off-premises catering?

III. Services that may be expected from off-premises caterers

A. Buffet set-up

- 1. Buffet line set-up is a service in addition to delivery that includes:
 - a. Setting up and draping buffet tables
 - b. Arranging plates, flatware, glassware, napkins, etc. for pick-up by guests
 - c. Setting up the chafers units for hot foods; adding and lighting Sterno cans
 - d. Placing food into hotel pans and covering the pans
 - e. Arranging cold foods and ice as necessary

B. Buffet line service

- 1. Caterers are often asked to provide servers to work a buffet line. This is a more formal approach to buffet service that includes:
 - a. Setting up and refilling pans with food during the event
 - b. Serving food from one side of the line to guests
- 2. At the conclusion of the event, the same catering staff is commonly paid to break down the line and conduct clean up.

C. Cater-waiter

- 1. A **cater-waiter** is a roaming waiter who is responsible for assisting all guests, rather than a particular set of tables, as he or she moves around the room. He or she must be able to stand and walk for long periods while politely interacting with guests. Events designed for guests to mingle, move, and socialize

(e.g., a cocktail party) may require one or more “cater-waiters.” These servers walk among the guests serving food from trays. The guests help themselves from the passing trays so they do not have to carry a beverage and a plate of appetizers from another location.

2. A server works from a kitchen or plating area to refill trays and then returns to the guests. Similarly, a server may walk about with trays of champagne, wine, or another beverage. Typically, a cater-waiter is responsible for cleaning the foodservice area, the glassware, and possibly the party area at the conclusion of the event.

D. Full-service catering

1. Full-service catering is service similar to that of a sit-down restaurant. Plated food is served to seated guests. This service requires a “staging” area where foods are cooled, heated, chilled, plated, and assembled for service; a dishwashing area; and a beverage outlet. It also requires servers trained in full-dining service skills and vehicles to transport all needed equipment (e.g., tables, chairs, lighting, décor, and cooking/cooling units). It is similar to setting up and running a portable restaurant and can be challenging and expensive to operate. This type of off-premises catering is expensive and is often reserved for high-end weddings or similar events, sporting events, political events, etc.
2. Full-service caterers are primarily located in major cities and commonly fill a niche where the client may have extensive needs and particularly high expectations for service and detail. Caterers of this caliber may even coordinate a series of sub-contractors to supply services beyond their scope (similar to a home construction general contractor). **Sub-contractors** are companies or individuals hired by the catering service rather than by the host. These sub-contractors typically have a specialty service or product that warrants their hiring and expertise, including:
 - a. Ice carving
 - b. Live music or entertainment
 - c. Specialty cakes, confections, or desserts
 - d. Guest transportation
 - e. Fountain displays
 - f. Fireworks
 - g. Large plant and tree staging
 - h. Tents and gazebos
 - i. Outdoor heating and cooling

Teaching Strategy: Many techniques can be used to help students master this objective. Facilitate a discussion of off-premises buffet service, cater-waiters, and catering sub-contractors using VM–E through VM–G. Assign LS–C.

- **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Student responses can be used in determining which objectives need to be reviewed or taught from a different angle. Scenarios and role playing can be extremely useful in this unit. If a textbook is being used, questions at the ends of chapters may be included in the Review/Summary.
- **Application.** Use the included visual master(s) and lab sheet(s) to apply the information presented in the lesson.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

■ **Answers to Sample Test:**

Part One: Completion

1. Cambro®
2. liability
3. Sterno
4. sub-contractor
5. ancillary
6. table stationery

Part Two: Multiple Choice

1. b
2. d
3. c
4. d
5. b
6. a

Part Three: True/False

1. T
2. T
3. T
4. F
5. F
6. F

Catering: Off-Premises Service

► Part One: Completion

Instructions: Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

1. An industry standard in insulated plastic food storage units that keeps foods hot in off-premises catering is _____.
2. The legal responsibility for food safety that the caterer has to the guest is called _____.
3. The fuel cans that burn and keep foods warm on a buffet line are called _____.
4. A bakery hired by a wedding caterer to make a wedding cake is a _____ to the caterer.
5. Salad, rolls, lasagna, plates, forks, and napkins are all delivered to a school by a catering company. The plates, forks, and napkins are _____ items to the meal.
6. All items that would reside on the table near the placement (e.g., place card, small gift box, menu card, glitter, and masks) are called _____.

► Part Two: Multiple Choice

Instructions: Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Hot food brought to an event by a caterer must be delivered at a minimum temperature of _____.
 - a. 130°F
 - b. 135°F
 - c. 140°F
 - d. 145°F
2. Which of these is a false statement about catering menus?
 - a. Some menu items show price per pound.
 - b. Some menu items show price per person.
 - c. The menu may include non-food items, such as ancillary.
 - d. Ancillary items for rent are not included on the catering menu pricing.

3. An industry standard brand of commercial electric holding unit that can keep hot foods hot is ____.
- a. General Electric®
 - b. Samsung®
 - c. Alto-Shaam®
 - d. Vulcan®
4. A major piece of off-premises catering equipment that “pick-up only caterers” would not need is a/an ____.
- a. freezer
 - b. chafar
 - c. extension cord
 - d. van or truck
5. Of these, ____ is ancillary to a catered meal.
- a. dipping sauce for the chicken tenders
 - b. chafing units
 - c. salad
 - d. bottled water
6. Of these, ____ is a poor reason to choose off-premises catering.
- a. inconvenience
 - b. cost
 - c. lack of equipment
 - d. time

► Part Three: True/False

Instructions: Write *T* for true or *F* for false.

- ____ 1. Off-premise catering might take place in someone’s home.
- ____ 2. High-end full service catering businesses are more commonly found in major cities.
- ____ 3. The main difference between “catering” and having a large meal delivered is an event.
- ____ 4. Holding cabinets are upright units, similar in shape to a refrigerator, designed to cook food.
- ____ 5. Small, often casual, meals provided on the day of set-up and the event for catering staff and other hired staff is napery.
- ____ 6. Hiring a venue, a room, etc. without any labor, staff, furniture, or delivery charges included is an amuse-bouche.

OFF-PREMISE CATERING: BEACH BUFFET

Location plays a big part in the host's selection of off-premises catered food. Deciding on a beach location for a party or a reception has some challenges. List several challenges.



OFF-PREMISES CATERING: DINING SET-UP

High-end off-premises caterers may supply everything you see here—floor, tables, linens, glassware, flatware, stemware, chandeliers—and the tent. They may provide the wedding cake.



PROPS AND TABLE STATIONERY

What catering props and table stationery are used in these table settings?



CAMBRO® AND ALTO-SHAAM® EQUIPMENT

- ◆ Access images and information about Cambro® food transport equipment at http://www.cambro.com/Insulated_Food_Transport/Front_Loading_Food_Pan_Carriers/10737421495/1033.aspx. Cambro's plastic food transport and holding units are a standard of the industry.
- ◆ Access images and information about Alto-Shaam's food warmer on wheels as well as cook and hold equipment at <http://www.alto-shaam.com/en/products/cook-and-hold-oven/1000-th-ii>. Alto-Shaam's warmer and cook-and-hold equipment is a standard of the industry; note the double-decker capacity option.



BUFFET LINE SERVICE

Buffet line set-up is a service in addition to delivery that includes setting up and draping buffet tables; arranging plates, flatware, glassware, napkins, etc. for pick-up; setting up the chafer units; placing food into hotel pans; and arranging cold foods (as well as icing foods, as necessary).



FULL-SERVICE CATERING: CATER-WAITERS

Full-service catering has guest services similar to that of a sit-down restaurant; plated food is served to seated guests. This service requires a “staging” area where foods are cooled, heated, plated, and assembled for service; a dishwashing area; and a beverage outlet, etc. It also requires servers trained in full-dining service skills.



FULL-SERVICE CATERING: SUB-CONTRACTORS

Sub-contractors are companies or individuals hired by the catering service rather than the host. A sub-contractor typically has a specialty service or product that warrants the hiring and expertise, including:

- ◆ Ice carving
- ◆ Live music or entertainment
- ◆ Specialty cakes, confections, or desserts
- ◆ Guest transportation
- ◆ Fountain displays
- ◆ Fireworks
- ◆ Large plant and tree staging
- ◆ Tents and gazebos
- ◆ Outdoor heating and cooling



Off-Premises Catering for an Event

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to brainstorm reasons to select off-premises catering for a series of given events.

Objectives

1. Evaluate a given catering scenario.
2. Brainstorm possible rationales to select off-premises catering.
3. Review your brainstormed lists, and circle the idea or ideas most likely to influence the selection.
4. Note any common reasons among all the different events, and place those ideas in the two categories used for brainstorming.
5. Participate in a class discussion of the reasons to select off-premises catering.

Materials

- ◆ lab sheet
- ◆ writing utensil
- ◆ class notes
- ◆ paper
- ◆ text and related resources
- ◆ stapler

Procedure

1. Review your class notes about off-premises catering. Work independently or with two classmates to complete this brainstorming activity.



2. People cater events for all kinds of reasons. Knowing why people choose to cater helps your business grow, develop, and better serve the guest. Below are common events for which clients often arrange off-premises catering services. On your paper, write as many reasons as you can think of to explain why the host would order food catered and why the host would choose to have it off-premises (as opposed to carry-out or on-premise catering). After the brainstorming is complete, circle the idea or ideas most likely to influence the selection.
 - a. EVENT #1: Business conference at a corporate training center
 - (1) Why select catered food for this event?
 - (2) Why select off-premises for this event?
 - b. EVENT #2: High school graduation party at a home
 - (1) Why select catered food for this event?
 - (2) Why select off-premises for this event?
 - c. EVENT #3: “Welcome Back” day for teachers at the start of the school year prior to student arrival
 - (1) Why select catered food for this event?
 - (2) Why select off-premises for this event?
 - d. EVENT #4: Funeral luncheon at the church hall
 - (1) Why select catered food for this event?
 - (2) Why select off-premises for this event?
 - e. EVENT #5: Wedding rehearsal dinner at the VFW Hall
 - (1) Why select catered food for this event?
 - (2) Why select off-premises for this event?
 - f. EVENT #6: Super Bowl block party at a neighborhood home
 - (1) Why select catered food for this event?
 - (2) Why select off-premises for this event?
 - g. EVENT #7: Election night results party at a mayoral campaign’s headquarters
 - (1) Why select catered food for this event?
 - (2) Why select off-premises for this event?
 - h. EVENT #8: Holiday party at corporate headquarters (e.g., appetizers, drinks, and dessert)
 - (1) Why select catered food for this event?
 - (2) Why select off-premises for this event?
3. Review your lists and your “circled” ideas. Then note any common reasons among all these different events. Place those ideas in the two categories used for brainstorming.
 - a. Common reasons to select catered food
 - b. Common reasons to select off-premises catering
4. Participate in a class discussion facilitated by your instructor. Add your comments about common reasons (from Procedure 2) to the discussion.
5. Turn in your completed lab sheet to your instructor.

Off-Premises Catering for an Event

Answers will vary. The following are potential responses.

2a. EVENT #1: Business conference at a corporate training center

Why select catered food for this event?

No time to cook; no cooking skills; no place to cook at this location; budget to purchase available from the business; etc.

Why select off-premises for this event?

Location is essential for the activity; a meal is needed due to the length of the workday; catering promotes a desirable image to the staff; special services may be required from the caterer (e.g., serving, set-up, and clean up)

2b. EVENT #2: High school graduation party at home

Why select catered food for this event?

No time to cook; no cooking skills; inadequate food storage and display space; catering adds to the specialness of the celebration; budget to purchase available from the business; catering at home is cheaper than going out, particularly for a crowd; etc.

Why select off-premises for this event?

Location adds to the comfort level and relaxed atmosphere for the desired event; delivery service adds to convenience; etc.

2c. EVENT #3: “Welcome Back” day for teachers at the start of the school year before students arrive

Why select catered food for this event?

No time to cook; school staff not in place yet to order food or to prepare it; budget allows for a modest treat; etc.

Why select off-premises for this event?

It is time-effective to keep staff on campus for a meal rather than everyone going out for lunch; provided treat promotes a positive spirit for the return to school; eating together promotes teaming; volume may be too large for pickup-delivery requirements; etc.

2d. EVENT #4: Funeral luncheon at the church hall

Why select catered food for this event?

Difficult for the family to be responsible for volume cooking at this time; church does not have cooking facilities and/or no church staff available to cook; etc.

Why select off-premises for this event?

Convenience and effectiveness of catered food option; less expensive than providing a restaurant meal for a crowd (especially following the expense of a funeral); etc.

2e. EVENT #5: Wedding rehearsal dinner at the VFW Hall

Why select catered food for this event?

No time to cook; no cooking skills; inadequate food storage and display space; catering adds to the specialness of the celebration; etc.

Why select off-premises for this event?

Catering at the hall is less expensive than going to a restaurant, particularly for a crowd; location adds to the comfort level and relaxed atmosphere of the event; delivery service is added convenience; no “wear and tear” on the hall; less stress for the host; etc.

2f. EVENT #6: Super Bowl block party at a neighborhood home

Why select catered food for this event?

Catered food would be a treat, particularly for working people; cooking at home could have been done, so this is a celebration treat; any special food offerings add to the festivities; time to prepare and adequate food storage may be an issue; etc.

Why select off-premises for this event?

Multiple families contributing to the cost would allow for more expensive food options; home environment makes the party atmosphere more relaxed; not necessary to have a neighbor drive out for pick-up that could promote safety; etc.

2g. EVENT #7: Election night results at a mayoral campaign headquarters

Why select catered food for this event?

No time to cook; no cooking skills; inadequate food storage and display space; catering adds to the special celebration for the workers; etc.

Why select off-premises for this event?

Catering is a common foodservice option for political events; the food must come to them due to the nature of the event; budget allows for the expense; delivery is a time-effective option; pick-up may not be viable due to the size and nature of the food order; set-up, display, and even servers may be needed; etc.

2h. EVENT #8: Holiday cocktail party and appetizers at corporate headquarters

Why select catered food for this event?

No time to cook; no cooking skills; inadequate food storage and display space; catering adds to the special celebration for the holiday guests; etc.

Why select off-premises for this event?

Catering is a common foodservice option for holiday business events; the food must come to them due to the nature of the event; budget allows for expense; delivery is a time-effective option; pick-up may not be viable due to the size and nature of the food order; set-up, display, and even servers may be needed; etc.

What Equipment and Tools Will You Need?

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to evaluate a given event and anticipate all the items required to cater the off-premises event.

Objectives

1. Evaluate a given event party information sheet.
2. List all the food-related and ancillary items necessary to execute the event.
3. Participate in a class discussion of the off-premises food-related and ancillary items to execute the event.

Materials

- ◆ lab sheet
- ◆ paper
- ◆ class notes
- ◆ writing utensil
- ◆ device with Internet access
- ◆ printer
- ◆ textbook and related reference materials

Procedure

1. Review your class notes about catering for foodservice and ancillary items (e.g., supplies, tools, and equipment) for off-premises catering events.



2. Work independently or with a partner to complete this lab.
3. Task: Evaluate a given event scenario. Identify all the foodservice and all the ancillary items (e.g., supplies, tools, and equipment) needed to cater the event.
4. Background: You are an off-premises full-service caterer with an upcoming event for which you must prepare. Read the details of the “Party Information Sheet” carefully. Then list every food-related item and the ancillary items (e.g., supplies, tools, and pieces of equipment) your company needs to assemble and deliver to execute the party. Think three-dimensionally (e.g., Walk around the off-site location in your head. What do you see? What do you need to assemble?). Plan well. [Remember: Guests notice the most minute and minor details that are overlooked. Think the task through.]

5. Party Information Sheet

EVENT: Smith–Jones Engagement Party

DATE: October 30

TIME: 7 to 11 p.m.

COVERS: 125 guests

LOCATION: Public Park Pavilion, Wilderness Nature Preserve

Site resources: None

On-site visit notes: Pavilion is a large concrete slab covered by a roof with no walls, no power, and no water. Slab surrounded by grass, and grass surrounded by forest. Paved roadway leads to a parking area adjacent to the pavilion.

MENU:

Sliced roast turkey and gravy

Sliced roast beef

Baked Cajun shrimp and pasta

Dinner rolls with butter and spreads

Side Dishes: Baked potatoes, fresh asparagus, and a medley of fresh broccoli, cauliflower, and carrot

Salads: Tossed salad and three dressings, bean salad, gelatin salad, and cottage cheese

Desserts: Cookie trays, brownie trays, and five types of pies

Beverages: Coffee, iced tea, soft drinks (from a tap), beer (bottles only), and wine

CLIENT BRINGS: Sound system and music

CLIENT REQUIRES: Tables, chairs, and all related materials for food, gifts, and a party environment. [NOTE: No need to list the number of each item, just list each required item.]

DESIRED ENVIRONMENT: Semi-formal; Buffet-style meal; No disposable goods

6. Create your list of supplies, ancillary items, tools, and equipment on a separate sheet of paper. Key your brainstorming list into a word-processing document. Print copies for each person on your team and for your instructor. [NOTE: No need to include the food items in your list—that is a given based on the menu.]
7. Share your list with one other classmate or another team. Make any needed adjustments to your listing.
8. Participate in a class discussion to create the master list of off-premises supplies, ancillary items, tools, and equipment for the engagement party.
9. Turn in your completed lab sheet, with the list attached, to your instructor.

What Equipment and Tools Will You Need?

Student responses may vary. Use this listing as a reasonable guide to the discussion.

FOODSERVICE NEEDS:

- Chafers (about 6)
- Sterno
- Beverage dispenser, carbonator, water source
- Cambro® units (cold platters)
- Alto-Shaam® (or similar for hot food storage)
- Refrigerators
- Ice storage unit
- Dinnerware, glassware, flatware, coffee cups and saucers
- Bread baskets/trays
- Salad dressing containers
- Tongs, serving spoons, pie servers
- Bus tubs
- Dish rinse station or dishwasher or storage for soiled plates and cups
- Salt and pepper sets for tables
- Pitchers for water and beer
- Ice scoops
- Corkscrews for wine
- Additional condiments:
 - ◆ Grated cheese for pasta
 - ◆ Butter and sour cream for baked potatoes and containers for each
 - ◆ Cream, sugar, and alternate sweeteners for coffee and tea
 - ◆ Lemon slices/wedges for iced tea

ANCILLARY ITEMS:

Tables and chairs (including tables for gifts, buffet, and work tables for staff)

Lighting (the timeframe is 7 to 11 p.m.)

Linen table covers

Linen napkins

Table decorations (area decorations)

Butane heaters or firepit (some type of heating system)

Garbage cans

Recycle containers (beer bottles)

Trucks/vans

Power generator and extension cords

STAFF (This list could be quite varied.)

Evaluate Two Caterers

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to evaluate two caterers and to determine which events each is best suited to handle.

Objectives

1. Select an English-speaking city to conduct an investigation of catering businesses.
2. Select an off-premises caterer and one more caterer.
3. Investigate the two caterers.
4. Compare and contrast the two catering businesses.
5. Explain events to which each business is best suited.
6. Explain any connection between menu, costs, and services.
7. Discuss the use of sub-contractors for catering services.
8. Discuss the degree to which the city selected affected the menus and services offered.
9. Participate in a class discussion of the catering business research you conducted.

Materials

- ◆ lab sheet
- ◆ paper
- ◆ class notes
- ◆ writing utensil
- ◆ device with Internet access
- ◆ printer



Procedure

1. Review your class notes about catering service options.
2. Work independently or with a partner to complete this lab research activity.
3. INTRODUCTION: This is a small project with an open-ended outcome, and you will not know the outcome until it is over. You are investigating two catering businesses in a random selection process.
4. GOAL: Fully evaluate each catering business, and determine which events you think each caterer is best suited to deliver. To conduct this investigation, look carefully with a critical eye. When reaching your conclusions, remember services are as important as the food.
5. Conduct the investigation.

Step 1: Chose a city in the United States, Canada, or England (or any English-speaking country). List that city on your paper.

Step 2: Go online, and find two catering businesses in that city. One must offer off-premises catering, and the other can be any type of caterer (e.g., pick-up, on-premises, another off-premises, fast-food, or chain operator). Choose blindly. Do not investigate the offerings; just make sure one has off-premises service. List the two business names, type of business, and the URL on your paper.

Step 3: Compare the menu offerings and services between the two. List the differences. Do not worry about the actual food, but rather the “food-type” (e.g., sandwiches, fried chicken, or filet mignon). (NOTE: Pay close attention to the difference in services offered, and list those service options.)

Step 4: Next, compare the overall price difference between the menus (e.g., per person or per pound). List the average price for each business. Is one notably higher than the other overall? If so, state the reasons you detected for the higher pricing from that establishment.

Step 5: Finally, write a few paragraphs comparing and contrasting the two companies. For example, if one business is notably more expensive than the other, explain why you think that is. Are there services one business offers that the other does not? If so, reflect on any reasons for the difference (as both businesses are in the same city). (NOTE: It is important to answer this question clearly. Your response to this question is critical to completing the final part of this assignment.)

6. On your paper, list events that each business could “easily” cater (e.g., graduation party, Super Bowl party, and wedding).
7. Then compare the two lists.
 - a. Is one catering business better able to service some types of clients compared to the other? If so, describe. Then list the clients each would best serve.

- b. Is one company better suited to execute:
 - (1) Smaller events, more casual events? If yes, which one? Describe.
 - (2) High-end events, more formal events? If yes, which one? Describe.
 - c. What is the connection between each menu, the costs, and the services offered? Explain the connection.
 - d. Based on your investigation, does either company use sub-contractors for any of its services? If yes, explain how you know that. Then list any sub-contractors.
 - e. To what degree did the city you chose affect the menus and services offered? Explain.
8. Participate in a class discussion of the catering business research you conducted.
9. Turn in your completed lab sheet to your instructor.