Hornblower offers two options both on the water and ashore. Whether it is a festive 3-hour dining cruise or your company holiday party, enjoy impeccable service and breathtaking views on your next Southern California Hornblower cruise.

**FOR A LIMITED TIME** Get your first round of drinks free when you book an event at The Abbey or on Hornblower.*

*Must book by 10/31/2016 and hold event by 1/31/2017. Offer applies to new bookings only. Event minimum $3000. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply.

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**Tips for Successful Corporate Event Planning**

**By Kathryn Dawson**

Have you been selected to plan your company’s next conference? Have you just volunteered to organize the next party? Here are some tips for making the event smooth and successful.

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**Initial Considerations for Corporate Event Planning**

Corporate event planning begins with a consideration of the look and feel you wish the event to have. Think about what kind of event are you holding, what the reason for the event or celebration is and what you wish to accomplish. Is it just conference management, or do you have to deal with arranging business accommodation as well?

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**Planning Your Event**

The actual process of corporate event planning becomes easier once you have defined the basic parameters.

**Make a Checklist** — Create a checklist to provide a step-by-step guide to organizing and executing a special event.

**Make a Budget** — If you are organizing a corporate event, you may have already been given the budget for it. Ensure that the budget is specific, and include revenue opportunities as well as expenses.

**Maintain a Record** — This will help you keep track of all the various elements you need to consider and the progress you are making with them.

**Conference Facilities** — Selecting a site is more than just finding out available rooms. The factors that you may need to consider are room capacity, purpose of event, need for ramps, podium and stage, special equipment and furniture.

**Have Plenty of Food and Drinks** — A critical factor for corporate event planning is the catering. The kind of food you will serve and careful decisions of whether it will be lunch, snack foods, dinner, buffet or a sit down, make a huge difference in conference management.

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**Plan Publicity and Marketing** — Great publicity and marketing are critical in successful corporate event planning. There are many different methods you can use. You can consider supplementing paid advertising with inexpensive flyers, handouts, email messages and word of mouth.

**Speaker or Entertainer** — Booking a speaker or entertainer can be tricky and add to the cost. However, this also can make your event extremely successful. Weigh the pros and cons of having a speaker or entertainer.

**Arrange for Parking** — All major events require ample parking space that is easily accessible from the event site. Ensure that the parking is convenient and that people do not have to walk too far to the venue site. If you have delivery trucks, caterers or special equipment being brought to the event, you will need to make sure everyone knows the best location for unloading.

**Evaluate the Event** — An often ignored but important element of corporate event planning is evaluation. Create an evaluation form to hand out at the end of the event. Make it anonymous and short.

**Finally**, once your event is over, take time to reflect back on it. Consider the entire corporate event planning process and the feedback you received. Were the guests provided with business accommodation comfortable? Did your conference management ensure a truly successful business event? Retrospection can help you continuously improve your planning and organizing skills.

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**About The Author**

Kathryn Dawson writes articles about Keele Conference and Events, providing complete conference management and corporate event planning, as well as a selection of en-suite business accommodation designed to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

www.kees-conference.com/6/event-management
Most professional party planners know that when it comes to organizing the company holiday party, you have to plan ahead. You will get your preferred date, venue and save money. Here’s a bit of sage advice from a seasoned party planner to help elevate you to “hero status” with your company!

**PLAN AHEAD**

Plan ahead of time, to save money. If you loved your holiday party location and service, rebook it at the same place as soon as you can in January. Your employees won’t mind a repeat if they loved it and most venues rates will go up slightly each year. If you’re wise enough to work ahead and rebook your holiday party right after the holidays, many venues will let you lock in at last year’s lower rates.

**THE EARLY BIRD**

Get the worm. Smart holiday party planners know the best holiday party dates are grabbed early. Like most years, there are only three Fridays and three Saturdays in December that are available in advance of Christmas for the holiday party. If you aren’t on top of your game, you’ll be stuck with a lame party location or be forced to book a mid-week date.

Ask about **HOLIDAY PACKAGES**. When venues create packages, typically they discount them to make them attractive. If you customize the entire party, it will typically cost more.

**LOYALTY PAYS OFF**

If your company or department already plans a couple of events each year, like a summer event and a holiday party, try negotiating two events at the same time at the same venue and see what they’ll pull out for your group as added incentives for your loyalty.

**GIVING BACK FEELS GOOD**

Many companies like to weave in a “charitable or community give back” element into their celebration. It’s easy to collect items for Toys for Tots or ask for canned goods for the local food bank. Consult with your colleagues and decide on your favorite nonprofit. Your group could collect gently used blankets for orphaned pets at the local Humane Society.

**CREATE A WOW!**

Surprise your guests with an unexpected touch. Try something interactive like a “scent blending” station or an ornament designing table. Check out what’s trending in themes, ideas, or an interactive photo booth. How about wowing guests as they depart with chocolate dipped strawberries or a festive cupcake to take home to the kids.

If you want **HIGH ATTENDANCE** at your party, pick a unique venue, pinnacle city event or a trending theme everyone would look forward to. Here’s a few local examples:

- **LARGE GROUPS 500-1000.** Inspiration Hornblower is the ultimate super yacht for an epic party on the bay! Need something bigger, USS Midway Aircraft Carrier Museum.
- **Looking for a cool theme in an amazing venue?** How about a Gatsby era or Speakeasy Party at a beautiful historical site such as The Abbey on Fifth Avenue with flappers and gangsters for up to 500 guests?
- **Ask for an early bird incentive.** When you book a Hornblower Yacht for your group, you get to choose from a free round of drinks or free DJ!

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**Holiday Party Planning Insights from a San Diego Party Planner**

**By Rebecca Milkey**

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Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego is an iconic waterfront urban hotel offering 1,628 Pacific Ocean and city view guest rooms including 76 suites, all just steps from the San Diego Convention Center, Seaport Village, The Headquarters at Seaport District, Petco Park and the exciting nightlife of the Gaslamp Quarter. Manchester Grand Hyatt features a total of 316,000 square feet of flexible event venues, 136,000 square feet of which are newly renovated indoor meeting and exhibit spaces.

Under the direction of Executive Chef Suttichai Sripolpa, skilled culinary professionals create exquisite cuisine that is “Thoughtfully Sourced. Carefully Served.”

Manchester Grand Hyatt and its hotel-wide transformations and modernized approach to event planning and execution have taken this world-class hotel to the upper echelon. In addition to recently reinventing the property's 1,628 guestrooms, suites and dining outlets, Grand Hyatt offers all-new event space high up on the 32nd floor. Home to more than 7,000 square feet of event space, the unique 32nd floor boasts the city's highest private outdoor terrace with seemingly endless San Diego Bay and Pacific Ocean views.

But it's not just the modern look or approach to its services that is bringing Manchester Grand Hyatt so much attention. This particular hotel is the premiere meeting destination in San Diego because of more intangible offerings. Recently named in Events Top 25 Meeting Hotels in the United States, the overall service and event execution has kept clients returning through their front doors for more than 20 years.

A truly memorable event always includes deliciously tempting food and drink. Under the direction of Executive Chef Suttichai Sripolpa, skilled culinary professionals create exquisite cuisine that is “Thoughtfully Sourced. Carefully Served.” Dedication to this philosophy ensures fare that is good for your health, community and planet. From Mediterranean and Asian Fusion to comfort foods or specialty menus that meet dietary needs, the seasoned and experienced staff will amaze your guests with their creativity and finesse.

Skilled chefs prepare innovative creations using the freshest ingredients available in the market. Additionally, signature wine “Canvas by Michael Mondavi” was developed specifically for Hyatt guests and their discerning palettes. The artisan-wine approach and process of fruit sourcing, barrel aging and blending are evident at first sip.

Not only is the team knowledgeable of current trends, they also practice Green Initiatives regularly, including donations of leftover food to local organizations and purchasing locally grown and organic food to support the community and the environment. Manchester Grand Hyatt has been awarded four green keys in the Green Key Eco-rating Program. Four keys equates to a hotel that has shown national industry leadership and commitment to protecting the environment through wide-ranging policies and practices.

Grand Hyatt San Diego takes pride in serving groups of any size with decadent, creative options. The signature Hyatt program “Personal Preference” allows guests to choose their own entrée from a custom menu. This is an option designed to satisfy individual tastes and preferences.

The events team brings the party practically anywhere. From the USS Midway Museum, to San Diego’s Embarcadero Park, the museums in Balboa Park, the Birch Aquarium and more. Whether serving up to 3,000 people in one of their grand ballrooms, taking your group of 9,000 to the San Diego Embarcadero Park, or having an intimate dinner for 25, Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego event professionals will make it truly memorable.

Submitted by Manchester Grand Hyatt

Home to more than 7,000 square feet of event space, the unique 32nd floor boasts the city’s highest private outdoor terrace with seemingly endless San Diego Bay and Pacific Ocean views.
Plan your Most Memorable Event in San Diego’s Iconic Boutique Hotel

Refined and intimate, The Westgate is an inspired choice when a higher standard and close attention to detail is required. From the hotel’s incomparable architectural features to our award-winning French California cuisine; from the outstanding location to an attentive staff that anticipates your next desire — you’ve arrived.

In San Diego, there is nothing else like it. Designed to rival the finest palaces of Europe, every room is drenched in natural light from windows framing views of harbor yachts, a sunset sky or the shimmering city. Enter the Grand Lobby and you’re transported by the carpets and eighteenth-century tapestries, bronze sculptures, Baccarat crystal chandeliers and antique furnishings. The eleven event rooms are of equal style and grace, as is the Fountain Terrace or the Rooftop pool and lounge area high above the city. So beautiful, so different — so perfect for your event.

WHERE CELEBRATION IS AN ART

In San Diego, there is nothing like it. For a holiday event or Gala dinner, the Westgate Hotel is the inspired choice for your successful event. From the hotel’s incomparable architecture to our award-winning California cuisine and attentive service, let us exceed your expectations.

Submitted by The Westgate Hotel
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