

Chapter 11

Events

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11.1 Types of events

Event catering is the term used for the service of special events for specific groups of people at pre-set times, with the food and beverages provided being pre-determined. It includes occasions such as luncheon parties, conferences, cocktail parties, weddings and dinner dances. In larger establishments all functions take place within the banqueting suites and are under the administrative control of the banqueting/event manager. In a smaller operation these events normally take place in rooms set aside for the purpose and come under the jurisdiction of the manager or assistant manager. There are also specialist banqueting conference centres. Most of the staff available for events are employed on a casual basis. At busy periods there may be a number of events running at the same time.



Figure 11.1 Example of a room laid for a function (Palm Court at the Waldorf Hilton Hotel, London, image courtesy of FCSI, UK)

Events are as popular as ever but the purpose and style of events are changing. Theme evenings, for example, are becoming increasingly popular. There is also a trend towards less formality. Guests have higher expectations of the overall standard of decor, lighting effects and tableware used, as well as higher standards of food, beverages and comfort, while still seeking value for money as budgets are more fixed and scrutinised by booking organisations and budget holders.

There are two main types of events:

- Formal meals (sometimes called banquets):
 - luncheons
 - dinners
 - wedding breakfasts.
- Buffet receptions:
 - wedding receptions
 - cocktail parties
 - buffet teas
 - dances
 - anniversary parties
 - conferences.

A further breakdown of the types of events may be as follows:

- Social:
 - dinners
 - luncheons
 - receptions
 - cocktail parties
 - charity dinners.
- Public relations:
 - press party to launch a new product
 - fashion parade
- exhibition
- seminars.
- Conferences:
 - political
 - trade union
 - training seminars
 - national and international
 - sales conferences
 - academic conferences.

11.2 Event service staff roles

In larger establishments there is generally a small number of permanent staff dealing solely with events. This often includes a sales manager, banqueting/events manager, assistant managers, banqueting/events head waiters, service staff, technical staff and porters together with an administration office. In smaller establishments, where there are fewer events, the manager, assistant manager and food and beverage service staff undertake the administrative and organisational work as part of their regular duties.

Sales manager

The main role of the sales manager is to promote the event facilities of an establishment and, where necessary, to make the initial approaches and contacts. The sales manager must have an extensive knowledge of room specifications, size, light switches, electric points and output, IT capabilities, height and width of doorways, maximum floor loads and so on. This enables them to respond quickly to any queries at the initial meeting with a client. Most establishments offer various forms of banqueting and/or meetings and conference sales packages (see p.389) and these provide a range of information about the facilities available and the charges for them.

Banqueting/conference manager

The banqueting/conference manager is responsible for all administration, including meeting prospective clients and discussing the arrangements for the menu, table plans, costs, wines, band, and toastmaster. They must communicate to all the departments concerned the date of an event, numbers expected and any other details that might be required by a particular department, usually by the means of an 'event sheet' and a daily/weekly meeting.

Administration office staff

The administration staff work with the managers and are responsible for handling all incoming and outgoing mail, ensuring that information about an event is passed to the relevant internal departments and for record keeping. Administrative staff handle enquiries and may take provisional bookings for events, ensuring the details are entered on the events booking form (see p.389) which in turn becomes the details for the events sheet.

Banqueting/events head waiter

The banqueting/events head waiter is in charge of the events rooms plus the organisation required to prepare the rooms for various events. They may also be responsible for booking staff on a casual basis to cover the various duties at an event.

Dispense bar staff

The dispense bar staff are responsible for the allocation of bar stock for the various events, setting up the bars, organisation of the bar staff, control of stock and cash during service and stocktaking after an event has taken place. They are also responsible for restocking the event bars.

Banqueting/events head wine waiter

The banqueting/events head wine waiter may work in conjunction with dispense bar staff and is often responsible for organising and employing (if on a casual basis) the banqueting/events wine waiters. They will allocate the wine waiters' stations, give them cash floats if there are cash wines and discuss the service with them.

Permanent service staff

The permanent service staff are usually experienced staff that can turn their hand to any job concerning events and banqueting. They generally do most of the mise-en-place before the event, for example laying the tables.

Casual staff

Casual staff are hired on a part-time basis to work at the events as needed. These can be from a bank of staff the establishment run themselves or an agency specialising in waiting staff.

Porters

There are generally a number of porters on the permanent events staff. They are essential members of staff as there is often a great deal of work involved in preparing room layouts before and after events.

11.3 Event administration

Event sales

In order to promote the sale of events (meetings/conferences/banquets, etc.) most establishments now have banqueting/events and/or meetings and conference sales packs. These range from the very simple to the elaborate and complex, depending on the nature of the establishment. Examples of the content often included in these types of packs are:

- location and contact details of the establishment and the staff involved
- examples and descriptions of the type of events that can be accommodated
- information on how to get to the venue, local attractions and car parking availability
- examples and costs of set packages; for example, for conference delegates this might be day rates, overnight rates and meal rates
- room plans indicating size, possible layouts, availability of services (such as electric sockets, telephone and IT points), air-conditioning, access points and the maximum weight the floor will take, etc.
- provision for disabled visitors
- room hire charges
- list and description of styles of tables and chairs and other equipment available (e.g. meeting tables, conference chairs, lounge areas, technical equipment such as public address systems, multimedia players and TV monitors, flip chart stands and paper, lecterns, data projectors, computers, interactive white boards, blackout curtains, double glazing and sound proofing)
- charges for additional equipment such as projectors, etc.
- availability of room decoration, flowers and lighting systems
- availability of disco, resident bands, presenters, Masters of Ceremony, Toast Masters, etc.
- examples of meal packages (such as a set menus, snack menus and conference lunches) and details of the service methods available (such as formal table service, buffet and in-room service)
- other services such as car rental, limousine and private bus services, catwalks, business services and other services of the establishment such as restaurants and fitness and leisure facilities
- standard terms and conditions of bookings.

Booking and administrative procedures

When the client is ready to make a booking a file is opened; this can be hand-written or computerised depending on the establishment. The file will contain the client's details and will be used to hold all the requirements for the particular event, as well as all correspondence sent and received. At the meeting when the booking is confirmed an event booking form will be completed. The basic information that is recorded is shown below.

- Date and time of event (including access and clear down times)
- Client details
- Type of event
- Location of event within the establishment
- Food and beverage requirements
- Service methods (including wines and drinks being inclusive or cash)
- Expected number of people attending (and confirmation of final deadline for actual numbers attending)
- Table plan
- Price being charged (e.g. inclusive or per head)
- Inclusive or cash bar and wines
- Provision for guests with special needs
- Additional charges for equipment hire, etc.
- Contractual requirements (deposit payments, payment in advance, etc.).

The requirements for a function will depend upon the nature of the event and it is useful to have a checklist of these. In addition to the information listed above, the following might also be considered:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ● overnight accommodation | ● band, cabaret, dancing (and meal requirements) |
| ● list of toasts | ● photographer |
| ● date for final inspection visit by client | ● place cards |
| ● floral decor for the tables, rooms, reception area and button holes | ● seating plan |
| ● colour of linen if able to offer a choice | ● special liquor licence |
| ● telephones | ● music, dancing or entertainment licences |
| ● security | ● sign-posting |
| ● lectern | ● car parking |
| ● marketing | ● private bar facilities |
| ● secretarial facilities | ● cloakrooms |
| ● toastmaster | ● cancellation policies |
| ● audio-visual equipment | ● weddings – time of service, arrival time at venue, who is providing the wedding cake and stand and cake knife (client or venue). |
| ● syndicate/breakout/interview rooms | |

An example of a summary of the administrative procedures for events is given in Figure 11.2.

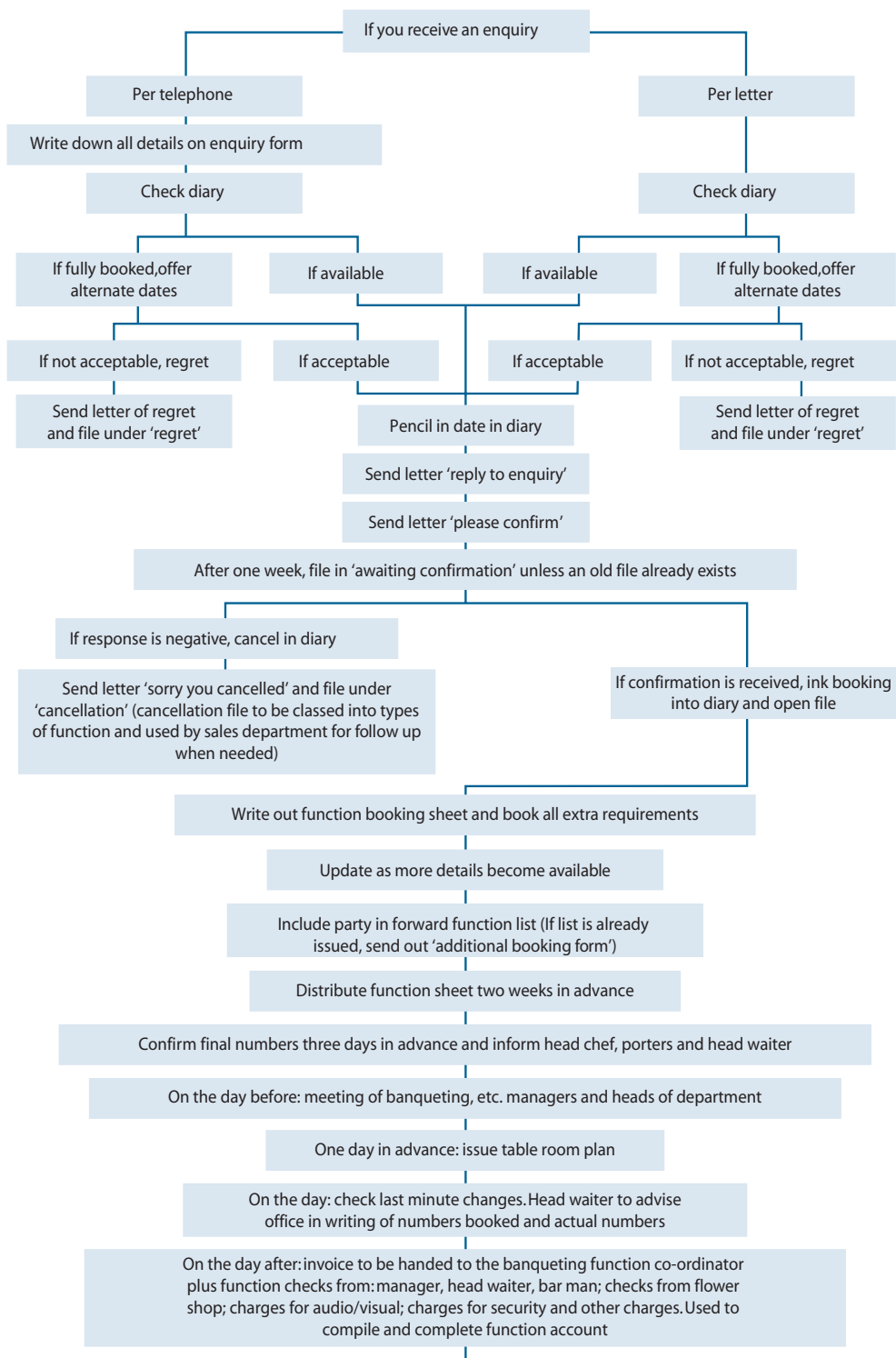


Figure 11.2 Summary of event administrative procedures (continues on following page)

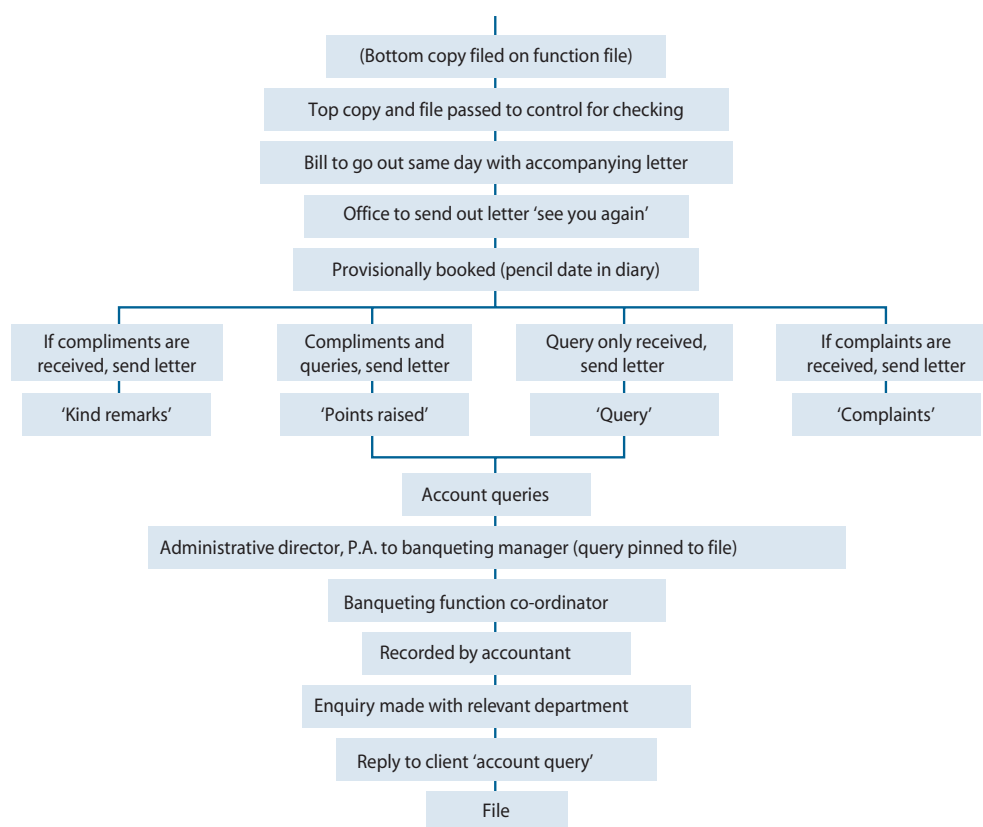


Figure 11.2 continued

11.4 Event organisation

Event menus

There should be a varied choice of menu within a wide price range, with special menus available for occasions such as weddings, twenty-first birthday parties and New Year's Eve. The number of courses at a banquet is normally four, plus beverages, but can be many more, and often includes:

- hors d'oeuvres or other appetisers
- soup or fish
- meat /vegetarian – with a selection of seasonal vegetables
- sweet
- coffee or tea – with a selection of petits fours.

This approach is generally popular, but extra or alternative courses such as entrées, cheese or savouries may be added. The sequence of courses is described in Section 4.2, p.90.

Wines

The banqueting/event wine list is often smaller than the main wine list of an establishment but usually contains a selection of good wines from the main wine list. Wines may be inclusive with the meal or on a cash basis, the money being payable to the sommeliers who may work on a float system. Very often the apéritif served before an event is also inclusive with the meal but if not, there may be a cash bar set up in the reception area.

Service methods in event catering

For events the service method may take any of the following forms (see Section 1.6, p.17 for definitions of service methods):

- silver
- plate
- self-service
- family
- assisted service.

The type of service method chosen is usually determined by the:

- host's wishes
- equipment available
- type of function
- food and beverages to be served
- time available for the function
- skills of the service staff available.

Formal seating arrangements

Of the total number of people attending an event, the number to be seated on the top table and the number on the sprigs, round or oblong tables that make up the full table plan will need to be known. The banqueting staff will also need to know whether the number on the top table includes the ends of the table, and in the UK care is normally taken to avoid seating 13 people on this table. (Other cultures may observe different numbers as being unlucky.)

All tables, with the exception of the top table, are numbered. Letters of the alphabet may also be used for the table designation rather than numbers. The table numbers themselves are usually on stands of such a height that they may be seen from the entrance of the banqueting room, the approximate height of the stands being 75 cm (30 in). After the guests are seated, and before the service commences, these stands are usually removed. However, if they are left on the table then they can provide an aid to the sommeliers when checking for cash wines.

Table seating plans

It is common now for table seating plans to be produced in two main ways:

- 1 An alphabetical list of the people attending, giving an indication of the table, or location on a sprig, where the person has been seated.
- 2 A listing of the people attending by table, showing all the people seated on a particular table or section of a sprig.

Before the event a copy of each of the two types of table seating plans are made. These go to:

- **the organiser:** before the event so that they may check all necessary arrangements.

Finalised plans are then prepared for:

- **the guests:** the table seating plans should be placed in a prominent position at the entrance of the banqueting suite so that all guests may see where they have been seated, the position of their table in the room, and who else is sitting at the same table or section of a sprig
- **the banqueting/events manager:** for reference purposes.

Table layout

The type of table layout used for a particular function will depend upon a number of factors, including the:

- organiser's wishes
- nature of the event
- size and shape of the room where the event is to be held
- number of covers attending.

For the smaller type of event a U- or T-shaped table may be used. Where the luncheon or dinner party is more formal there may be a top table and separate tables (round or rectangular) for the various parties of guests.

When an event is booked, careful consideration should be given to the type of table plan used, as the widths of covers, gangways and size of chairs will affect the space available. It is important to allow a reasonably comfortable seating space for each guest and, at the same time, to give waiting staff sufficient room for the service of the meal. The gangway space must be sufficient for two waiters to pass one another during the service without fear of any accident occurring.

The general considerations for table spacing are described below.

- Minimum space between sprigs should be 2 m (6 ft). This is made up of two chair widths (from the edge of the table to the back of the chair (46 cm or 18 in)) plus a gangway of 1 m (3 ft), allowing each waiter sufficient passing space: total of 2 m (6 ft).
- Table widths are approximately 75 cm (2 ft 6 in).
- The length along the table per cover should be 50–60 cm (20–24 in).
- The space from the wall to the edge of the table should be a minimum of 1.4 m (4 ft 6 in). This is made up of a 1 m (3 ft) gangway, plus one chair of width 46 cm (18 in).
- The height of the chair from the ground will vary according to the style and design, but is approximately 46–50 cm (18–20 in).
- The length of the table used is generally 2 m (6 ft) but 1.2 and 1.5 m lengths (4 and 5 ft) may be used to make up a sprig.
- Round tables are 1.0, 1.5 or 2 m (3, 5 or 6 ft) in diameter with the appropriate extensions.
- Suggested area allowance for sit-down functions per person is approximately 1.0–1.4 m² (12–15 sq ft); for buffets the allowance is 0.9–1.0 m² (10–12 sq ft).

Examples of banquet/event layouts

Top table and sprigs

- Event for 110 covers: 15 guests on top table; 3 sprigs required.
- Dimension of room = 18 m (60 ft) long by 11 m (36 ft) wide.

Method of working

- 1 Length of table required for top table:
15 guests x 60 cm (2 ft) cover width = 9 m (30 ft) or 5 x 2 m (6 ft) tables.
- 2 Number of covers on each sprig:
110 covers – 15 covers on top table = 95 covers
95 covers ÷ 3 sprigs = sprigs of 32, 32 and 31 covers
Therefore, each side of a sprig will have 16 covers, except one, which will have 15 covers.
- 3 Length of sprig:
16 covers x 60 cm (2 ft) cover width = 9.7 m (32 ft) or 5 x 2 m (6 ft) tables.
- 4 To check if three sprigs may be fitted on top table:
sprigs x 75 cm (2 ft 6 in) (width) = 2.25 m (7 ft 6 in)
2 gangways x 1 m (3 ft) (width) = 2 m (6 ft)
4 chair depths 46 cm (18 in) = 2 m (6 ft)
Total = 6.25 m (19 ft 6 in)
Thus, there is plenty of room (see Figure 11.3).

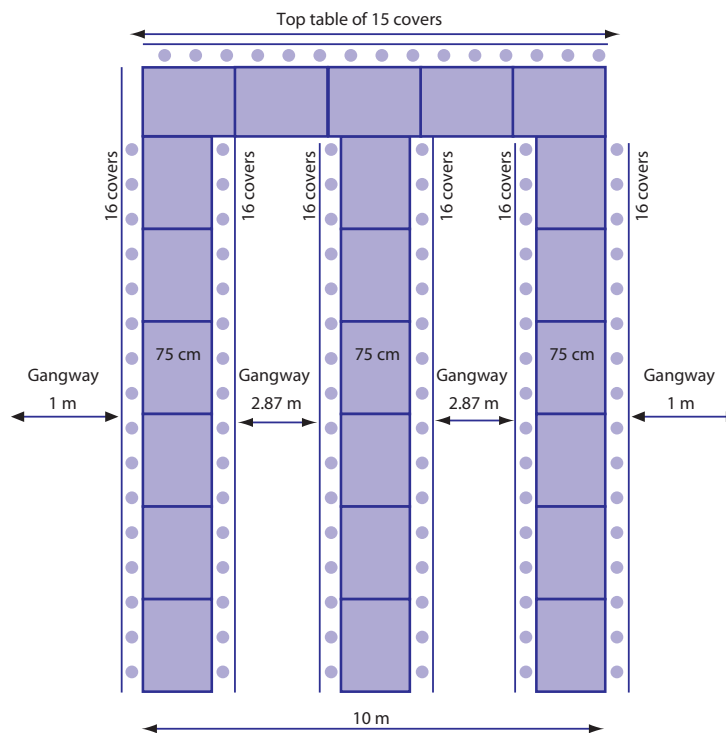


Figure 11.3 Top table and sprigs

This layout also allows for five extra covers in case of emergency. These are located:

1 either end of the top table	= 2
1 either end of the sprigs	= 3
Total	= 5

A similar plan could be developed to make the layout more compact, for use in a slightly smaller room. It would be possible to get four sprigs on a 9 m (30 ft) long top table.

4 sprigs x 75 cm (2 ft 6 in) width	= 3 m (10 ft)
3 gangways x 1 m (3 ft) width	= 3 m (9 ft)
6 chair depths = 46 cm (1 ft 6 in)	= 3 m (9 ft)
Total	= 9 m (28 ft)

Four sprigs would give a more compact layout and bring everyone closer to the speakers on the top table. This alternative plan allows for 12 covers on each side of the four sprigs and additional seating at the top table ends and sprig ends if required.

Top table and round tables

Event for 110 covers: 15 guests on top table, 95 covers on round tables.

Dimension of room = 18 m (60 ft) long by 12 m (36 ft) wide.

Note: When using round tables it is first necessary to calculate the number of covers that could be seated at round tables of different diameters. In all cases it is necessary first to calculate the circumference of the round table. This is done by multiplying the diameter measurement of the table by pi (π) (where $\pi = 22 \div 7$). Therefore, circumference is the diameter of the table x $22 \div 7$. A cover would normally require 60 cm (2 ft) width on the circumference of a round table.

The calculations for 1 m, 1.5 m and 2 m diameter tables are as follows:

Circumference of a round table 1 m (3 ft) in diameter:

$$1 \text{ m} \times 22 \div 7 = 3.1 \text{ m}$$

Number of covers available per round table (allowing 60 cm (2 ft) per person):

$$3 \text{ m} \div 0.6 \text{ m} = 5.0 \text{ m}$$

Therefore the number of covers will be 5 per 1 m diameter round table.

Circumference of a round table of diameter 1.5 m (5 ft):

$$1.5 \text{ m} \times 22 \div 7 = 4.7 \text{ m}$$

Number of covers available per round table (allowing 60 cm (2 ft) per person):

$$4.7 \text{ m} \div 0.6 \text{ m} = 7.9 \text{ m}$$

Therefore the number of covers could be up to 8 per 1.5 m diameter round table.

Circumference of a round table of diameter 2 m (7 ft):

$$2 \text{ m} \times 22 \div 7 = 6.3 \text{ m}$$

Number of covers available per round table (allowing 60 cm (2 ft) per person):

$$6.3 \text{ m} \div 0.6 \text{ m} = 10.5 \text{ m}$$

Therefore the number of covers could be up to 11 per 2 m diameter round table.

Method of working

- 1 Length of table required for top:

15 guests x 60 cm (2 ft) cover width	= 9 m (30 ft) or 5 x 2 m (6 ft) tables.
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- 2 Number of round tables required:

110 covers – 15 top table covers	= 95 covers to be laid on round tables.
Assuming using tables all same diameter (1.5 m/5 ft), i.e. 8 covers per table.	
Number of tables required is	
95 covers ÷ 8 covers per table	= 11.875 tables.
Therefore 12 tables will be required (11 x 8 covers and 1 x 7 covers).	
- 3 To check if the tables will fit in the length of the room, i.e. 18 m (60 ft), as per the table plan:

For top table:

Gangway behind top table to wall	= 1 m (3 ft)
Top table chair depth	= 0.46 m (1 ft 6 in)
Top table width	= 0.75 m (2 ft 6 in)
Gangway below top table	= 1 m (3 ft)
Total for top table	= 3 m approx (10 ft)
For round tables:	
Round table diameter	= 1.5 m (5 ft) diameter
Chairs depth x 2 per table	= 1 m (3 ft)
Gangways (allow below each table)	= 1 m (3 ft)
Total	= 3.5 m (11 ft)
Total for round tables x 4	= 14 m (44 ft)
Total length required = 3 m (10 ft) for top table	
plus 14 m (44 ft) for four round tables	
	= 17 m (54 ft).
The length of the room is 18 m (60 ft) so the proposed table plan fits.	

- 4 To check if the tables, as per the table plan, will fit in the 12 m width of the room:

3 round tables each 1.5 m (5 ft) diameter	= 4.5 m (15 ft)
6 chair widths each 0.46 m (1 ft 6 in)	= 3 m (9 ft)
4 gangways each at 1 m (3 ft)	= 4 m (12 ft)
Total	= 11.5 m (36 ft)

Thus the table plan will fit within the 12 m width of the room (see Figure 11.4).

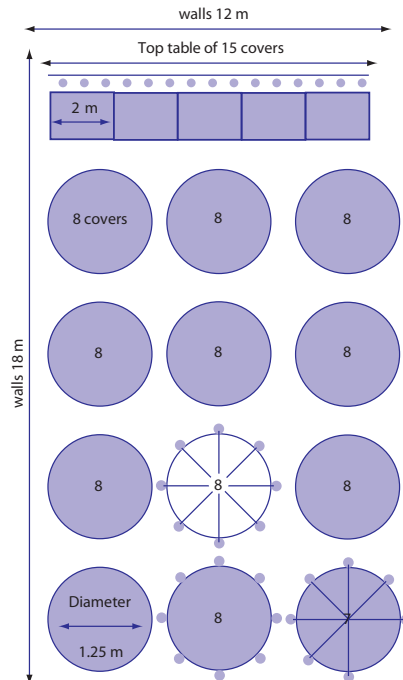


Figure 11.4 Top table and round tables

Clothing up

The minimum size of banqueting cloths is 2 m (6 ft) in width by 4 m (12 ft) in length. They are available in longer lengths, for example, 5.5 m or 18 ft. These cloths are used on top tables and sprigs, thus often avoiding the necessity of overlapping of the cloths that will occur when smaller-sized tablecloths are used. The front edge of a top tablecloth should always touch the floor and the ends should be 'boxed' to facilitate the modesty of the top table guests and neatness of the table's appearance.

When laid, the centre crease should run straight down the centre of the table, with the overlap the same all around the table. All cloths should be in the same fold and have the same pattern. Any overlap of cloths should face away from the main entrance so that the join is not visible to the guests as they look down the room on arrival. When laying the cloth it may require three or four waiters to manipulate it (depending on size), to ensure it is laid correctly, with the minimum of handling, and without creasing or becoming dirty.

For round tables square cloths are often used. The cloth will normally be 1.4 m larger diagonally than the diameter of the table. This is to ensure a maximum drop of 70 cm where the cloth hangs lowest (at the four corners of the cloth) and a minimum drop of 20 cm where the cloth hangs highest (at the centres of the four edges of the cloth).

The calculation for this is as follows:

Diameter of table plus the maximum drop each side of the table = diagonal measurement of tablecloth, corner to corner.

For example, a 200 cm diameter table plus 2 x 70 cm maximum drop = 340 cm.

Therefore the diagonal measurement of the tablecloth corner to corner = 340 cm.

To find the size of the square cloth then the formulae is:

Length of edge = $\sqrt{(\text{diameter}^2 \div 2)}$

For example:

$(340 \text{ cm diameter} \times 340 \text{ cm}) \div 2 = 57,800 \text{ cm}$

The square root of 57,800 cm = 240 cm

Therefore the cloth will be 240 cm by 240 cm.

A cloth of 240 cm by 240 cm will ensure that:

- the longest drop will be 70 cm $((340 \text{ cm} - 200 \text{ cm}) \div 2)$ at each of the four corners of the cloth (so that the corners of the cloth do not touch the floor)
- the shortest drop will be 20 cm $((240 \text{ cm} - 200 \text{ cm}) \div 2)$ at the centre of each of the four sides of the cloth (so that the table will be covered where the cloth has the shortest drop).

Using this approach for tables of 1 m, 1.5 m and 2 m the tablecloth will be as shown in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 Tablecloth sizes

Table diameter	Cloth size	Longest drop at the four corners of the cloth	Shortest drop at the centre of the four sides of the cloth
1 m	170 x 170 cm	70 cm	35 cm
1.5 m	205 x 205 cm	70 cm	27 cm
2 m	240 x 240 cm	70 cm	20 cm

Lay-up

For table service of banquets and formal meals the preparatory tasks will be similar to those identified in Section 6.2, p.193. With pre-ordered menus it is normal to lay the table for the whole meal. The key factors to take into account are:

- lay-ups are normally based on the table d'hôte lay-up (see Section 6.2, p.193)
- customers use the cutlery from the outside of the cover inwards
- glassware is normally laid at the top right of the cover and in order of use, usually with the lowest glass to the highest at the back
- some establishments will not lay for the whole meal – the sweet cutlery being laid at the time the course is to be served or the glassware being brought out onto the table before the later wines are served
- often the tableware for beverage service of tea and coffee will be laid when these are to be served.

Service organisation

Traditional

For formal events it is normal practice that the top table service staff always begin to serve/clear first. Therefore, the banqueting/events head waiter will organise his staff so that, at a given signal, the top table service staff can begin to serve, immediately followed by all the other service staff. The banqueting/events head waiter will not give a signal to clear a course until all guests have finished eating.

All staff should leave and enter the room led by the top table staff and followed by the other service staff in a pre-determined order. This pre-determined order generally means that those staff with stations furthest from the service doors should be nearer the top table service staff in the line-up (see Allocating stations, p.402). Theoretically this means that, when entering the room, all service staff reach their stations at more or less the same time. Each member of staff then serves their own table using the pre-determined service method – either full silver service or a combination of plated and silver service. When deciding on the pre-determined order, another factor that should influence the final decision is that of safety. As far as it is possible, any cross-flow of staff and bottlenecks in their movement to and from the room should be avoided.

Wave service

Wave service can be used mainly when meals are plated, although some establishments also use this style of service organisation for silver service and other forms of service. It is a way of saving on staffing for conventional service and/or speeding up service for plated systems. The term wave comes from the approach where tables are not served altogether but are served over a period of time, with individual guests on some tables being served quickly at one time before the service on other tables is started. There are two basic approaches to this:

- 1 For both plated service and traditional silver service the staff from two tables next to each other will work together as a team. This happens throughout the room. The pair work together to serve one of the tables completely and then will assist each other to completely serve the other table.
- 2 The alternative is for a larger group of staff to work as a team, serving one table completely at a time before going on to the next. This is especially useful when plated service is being used for the food.

The resulting effect of adopting these approaches is that tables are served throughout the room, over a period, but with each individual table's service being completed quickly.

Wave service may also be used for events where guests are seated on a top table and sprigs. In this case, sections of the banquet tables are served before moving to another section of the table layout.

For plated service, one of the difficulties is ensuring that the food is hot when being served. For table service the speed of the transfer of the plate from the kitchen can ensure that the food is hot when reaching the table, assuming of course that the food has always been first presented onto hot plates.

Buffets

There are three types of buffet:

- 1 **Finger buffet:** the guests select and consume the food with their fingers. The food and beverages may be available at a buffet or on trays that are carried by the waiters. Usually napkins are also available on the passed trays. The room is organised to ensure there is ample space for the guests to circulate and that a number of occasional tables and chairs are placed round the room. These occasional tables may be covered with linen cloths and may have a small vase of flowers placed on them. Any dirties are then removed from these tables by clearing staff as required.
- 2 **Fork buffet:** the guests select foods that are transferred onto a plate and they then eat the food using only a fork. In this case, the food should be of such a shape and size that this is easily accomplished. Glass holders are usually available which clip to the side of the plate in which a wine glass may be secured. Napkins are also available on the buffet. The room organisation is similar to that used for finger buffets.
- 3 **Display buffet:** the guests select their food and then eat at a table. Here the guests approach the buffet at its various service points to select their requirements course by course. Ancillary items such as rolls, butter, sauces, napkins and tableware may also be collected at the buffet. Guests then return to their tables to consume the meal. The table layouts are similar to the standard banquet layouts. Clearing tables takes place in the same way as for formal banquets.

Staff organisation

General considerations for service staff for events are given below.

- A waiter at a banquet is generally expected to serve between 10 and 12 covers on a station but this may be up to 20 depending on the service organisation (see above).
- A wine waiter will serve approximately 25 covers, but this depends on the type of event, the number of wines on offer and whether any wine is inclusive in the price of the menu or if cash drinks are being served. The wine waiters will also often assist the food waiters with the service of vegetables and sauces for the main course.
- The wine waiters may also be required to serve apéritifs at a reception before a meal. If so, they will be required to do the necessary mise-en-place to ensure the reception area is ready, for example, ashtrays (where allowed), cocktail snacks, setting up of a portable bar and polishing glasses.
- When cash wine and drinks are served the wine waiters are normally given a float with which they may pay the cashier or bar person as drinks are ordered and collected from the bar. The responsibility then rests with the wine waiter to collect the payments for any drinks served.

Using white gloves

In some establishments members of staff wear white cotton gloves when carrying out various preparation tasks. The gloves help to prevent soiling of clean service items and also avoid putting finger marks on cleaned and polished service equipment.

White gloves may also be used during service, instead of service cloths, when serving plated foods that are presented on hot plates. If white gloves are to be used then there must be a clean edge on the plate so that the food or sauces on the plates do not easily soil the gloves.

Allocating stations

When all the necessary mise-en-place has been completed and all the staff are assembled together, the stations are allocated to the waiters and wine waiters. More experienced and proficient members of staff are usually allocated to the top table.

The waiters (brigade) should queue up in an orderly fashion at the hotplate for each course, with the waiter for the top table at the head of the queue. The waiters or 'teams' then queue in order according to the distance of their station from the service hotplate. This order must be maintained throughout the service.

After the service of each course the brigade should remain outside the banqueting room in readiness to clear and serve the next course.

An example of allocating stations, the staff required and the order at the hotplate for a dinner of 84 covers (silver service) is given below.

- 12 covers on the top table and 24 covers on each sprig (12 on each side).
- Table requirements (see plan in Figure 11.5):
- Top: 4 x 2 m (6 ft) tables = 8 m allowing for 60 cm (24 in) table width per cover.
- Sprigs: 4 x 2 m (6 ft) tables = 8 m allowing for 60 cm (24 in) table width per cover. This will mean a total of 3 sprigs in all: 12 covers on each side.
- Stations will be:
 - top table: 12 cover = 12 covers
 - sprigs: 6 x 12 cover = 72 covers
- There will be 7 stations of 12 covers = total 84 covers. For the plan given in Figure 11.5, the order of staff at the hotplate, by station number, will be: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.
- The staff for stations 2, 4 and 6 will enter the room through the service doors and proceed down the room to their right. The staff for stations 3, 5 and 7 will enter through the service doors and proceed down the room to their left (see the plan in Figure 11.5).

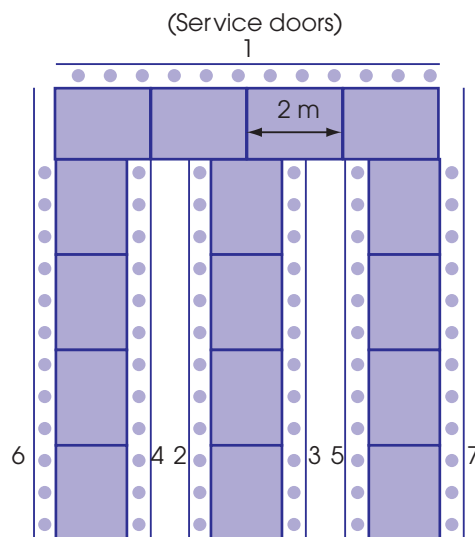


Figure 11.5 Example of allocating stations and the order at the hotplate

Staff instruction/event sheets

Staff instruction/event sheets are provided for each event. These sheets give detailed instructions for all staff working at the event. Their purpose is to ensure that all the required duties are covered, that a particular event is laid up correctly and everything is in order in the shortest possible time. They also provide guidance to casual staff.

Forms of address

For all events, formal and informal, etiquette is very important and great care should be taken to ensure the correct forms of address are used to suit the occasion. At very formal events, royalty or other dignitaries may be attending as guests. Etiquette therefore demands a certain order of precedence when proposing and replying to toasts, and the correct mode of address should be adhered to.

Table 11.2 gives some examples of the correct modes of introduction, address and place cards for both formal and social occasions.

Note: Formality is always followed on occasions involving members of the Royal Family. Table 11.2 below gives the social forms of address for Peers, Baronets and Knights. For details related to more formal events, *Debrett's Peerage and Baronetage* or *Debrett's Correct Form* should be consulted.

The Royalty listed in Table 11.2 are shown in order of precedence.

Table 11.2 Precedents and forms of address

Title	Introduction	Verbal address	Place cards
Royalty			
Monarch	'His/Her Majesty the King/Queen'	'Your Majesty' and subsequently 'Sir/Ma'am'	
Royal Prince	'His Royal Highness, Prince ...'	'Your Royal Highness' and subsequently 'Sir'	His Royal Highness, The Prince of ...
Royal Princess	'Her Royal Highness, The Princess ...'	'Your Royal Highness' and subsequently 'Ma'am'	Her Royal Highness, The Princess ...
Royal Duke	'His Royal Highness, The Duke of ...'	'Your Royal Highness' and subsequently 'Sir'	His Royal Highness, The Duke of ...
Royal Duchess	'Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of ...'	'Your Royal Highness' and subsequently 'Ma'am'	Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of ...
Peers, Baronets and Knights			
Duke	'The Duke of ...'	'Duke'	The Duke of ...
Duchess	'The Duchess of ...'	'Duchess'	The Duchess of ...
Earl	'Lord ...'	'Lord ...'	Lord ...
Countess	'Lady ...'	'Lady ...'	Lady ...
Viscount	'Lord ...'	'Lord ...'	Lord ...
Viscountess	'Lady ...'	'Lady ...'	Lady ...

Government members			
The Prime Minister	By appointment or by name	'Prime Minister' or by name	The Prime Minister
Chancellor of the Exchequer	By appointment or by name	'Chancellor' or by name	Chancellor of the Exchequer
Ministers	By name	'Minister' or 'Mr ...'	Mr ...
The clergy			
Archbishops	'The Archbishop of ...'	'Archbishop' (socially)	His Grace, The Archbishop of ...
Bishop	'The Bishop of ...'	'Bishop' (socially)	The Bishop of ...
Local government			
Lord/Lady Mayor	By appointment or appointment and name	'My Lord/Lady Mayor' or 'Lord/Lady Mayor'	The Lord/Lady Mayor
Mayor	By appointment or appointment and name	'Mr/Madam Mayor'	The Mayor of ...
Mayor's Consort	By appointment or appointment and name	'Mayoress' or if a man Mayor's Consort or by name	The Mayoress of ... or if a man Mayor's Consort or by name

The Loyal Toast

At any formal event it is common for the Loyal Toast to be made. The toastmaster generally announces this toast as soon as the sweet course has been cleared, but before the coffee/tea is to be served. Staff should ensure before this time that all glasses have been charged (topped up) in readiness for the coming toasts.

The Loyal Toast should be announced by the toastmaster and is then normally proposed by the host for the evening, for example, the Chairman or President of an Association. The Loyal Toast is a toast to the head of state, which may be a president or reigning monarch: the King/Queen.

Example of an order of service for a formal event (table service)

- 1 The toastmaster announces the luncheon or dinner.
- 2 Guests proceed to their places in the room.
- 3 Grace or some other prayer is sometimes said.
- 4 Guests are seated. Chairs pulled out by waiters.
- 5 The waiters place napkins across the guests' laps.
- 6 Water and first wine is served.
- 7 If first course is not already on the table, proceed to hotplate to collect first course.
- 8 Line up according to the conventional system (see p.400), top table first.
- 9 Serve first course – top table waiter to commence service first.
- 10 All food waiters to leave room after each course is served.
- 11 Take in fish course plates.

- 12 Clear first course.
- 13 Second wine is served.
- 14 Lay fish plates.
- 15 Take out dirties and collect fish course.
- 16 Serve fish course. Leave room taking dirty silver.
- 17 Take in meat plates.
- 18 Third wine is served.
- 19 Clear fish course.
- 20 Lay meat plates.
- 21 Take out dirties and collect potato and other vegetable dishes.
- 22 Place on a hotplate on a sideboard or side table.
- 23 Return to hotplate and collect main meat dish.
- 24 Present on each table and serve together with sauces if appropriate.
- 25 Serve accompanying potatoes and vegetables.
- 26 Leave room taking dirty silver.
- 27 Continue with a similar process for the remaining courses of the meal through to the beverages.

Note: The head waiter will control all the food waiters at the hotplate although variations on this service may be adopted according to the situation. The head waiter also controls the exit from the hotplate into the banqueting room.

The order of service on the top table at functions, especially very formal occasions, is the one time when the host might be served first or at exactly the same time as the Guest of Honour, should they be seated on different stations.

At formal events there may be speeches and toasts. These often take place at the end of a meal. However, it has become more common for these to take place at different times during the meal.

Ordering drinks and wines

If required, a bar must be set up in the reception area away from the main entrance so as to avoid overcrowding in one area as the guests are arriving and being announced by the toastmaster. The bar should be clothed up as a buffet, with the cloth within 1.3 cm (½ in) from the ground in the front, and with both ends boxed in (see Section 7.2, p.280). Keep the rear of the bar open so it may be used for storing extra supplies of drink, glasses and any necessary equipment such as glass jugs, soda syphons, extra ice and so on. Always allow ample working space behind the bar. The back of the bar is generally higher from the ground than the average table and, if no shelves are available for storage purposes, then sometimes smaller tables may be incorporated under the bar to be used for storage.

There should always be a good stock of drink, which is generally brought from the cellar approximately 45 minutes before the reception is due to commence. Once the drink stock is at the bar there should always be one barman on duty at all times. Depending on the event, drinks may be served either 'cash' or 'inclusive'. Whichever may be the case, stocktaking should be undertaken when the service is completed. Where necessary, do not forget to have on hand price lists, till, floats, notices regarding size of measures and liquor licence (if required).

When the drinks are to be served on a cash basis, this can very often be a lengthy process. To speed this up there should be wine waiters on duty near the table plan in the reception area together with commis. They should have:

- menus
- wine lists
- check pads
- table plan
- list of stations
- wine waiters' names.

Note: The objective here is to get as many orders as possible for wine to accompany the meal, prior to the meal service commencing.

The order should be written in duplicate with the guest's name at the top of the check to assist in identifying customers' orders at the tables. One copy should go to the cellar or dispense bar and the duplicate to the correct wine waiter. The order should be prepared by the dispense barman or cellarman and when the wine waiter shows the duplicate he should be given the required order. Do not open the wine until the guests arrive at the table – this avoids wastage if the wrong wine is presented. Red wine should be at room temperature and white wine should be chilled. At a cash reception the wine waiters very often act as lounge waiters and therefore are always to hand to receive any orders in readiness for the service.

As for food service, the top table must always be served first with drink. The toasts very often commence immediately the coffee is served. By this stage the wine waiters should have taken all the liqueur orders, served them and collected all the cash outstanding in the case of cash drinks. While the speeches are going on all the food waiters should be out of the room. The wine waiters may circulate if necessary.

On completion of the event, and when the food and wine waiters have cleared their stations and the latter returned any floats, they should be paid off or signed out, after returning service cloths, jackets and other equipment provided for the service.

11.5 Weddings

There are two main types of wedding celebration: wedding breakfast and wedding reception.

At the initial meeting between the client and the banqueting manager to arrange a wedding breakfast/reception, the approaches are similar to those detailed in Section 11.3 (see p.389).

The requirements of the client will depend on the type of wedding breakfast/reception, the number of guests attending and the cost per head to be paid. The type of wedding (civil or religious) will also affect the arrangements and have implications for the specific requirements for the wedding breakfast/reception. Other considerations are requirements concerning a wedding cake, stand and knife, whether a room should be available for the bride and bridegroom to change prior to leaving the breakfast/reception to go on their honeymoon, whether the wedding presents will be displayed and, if so, how much space will be needed and whether the services of a photographer will be required.

The menu may be printed by the venue using various publishing packages now available, together with the names of the couple and the date. As the menus are often kept as souvenirs, this should be carefully discussed with the couple prior to the day to ensure they are happy with the design. Alternatively the couple may have menus professionally printed but care must be taken to have the copy checked before it goes to printing.

For a wedding the content of the menu and beverages will be affected by cultural and religious dietary influences, as well as any special dietary needs (see Section 4.4, p.97).

Wedding breakfast (banquet)

When the wedding breakfast is to be a formal banquet then the details given in Section 11.4 will apply. This includes the same considerations for:

- seating arrangements
- table plans
- table layouts
- clothing up
- service organisation
- staff organisation
- order of service.

In addition, consideration needs to be given to:

- time and venue of wedding ceremony (may be on site)
- due arrival time at venue
- who is providing the wedding cake, stand and knife
- additional floral arrangements
- time for evening reception.

In addition to the customary toasts, the cutting of the wedding cake will need to be organised. This is usually at the end of the meal, after the tea/coffee has been served.

Wedding reception (buffet)

Where the reception is to be a buffet then the buffet itself should be placed in such a position that it is on view to all guests as they enter the room, but within access of the service doors for ease of clearing and restocking. The buffet should be clothed up so that the buffet cloth reaches within 1.3 cm (½ in) of the floor and both ends should be boxed neatly (see Section 7.2, p.257 and Section 11.4, p.360). The creases along the top and front of the buffet should be lined up. Adequate room should be left between the buffet and wall to allow two people to pass and for any extra supplies and equipment required.

If the breakfast/reception is being carried out in a marquee then the ground is normally boarded or covered with canvas or a form of corded matting. Behind the buffet and in the service areas duckboards may be used on canvas to avoid walking on wet ground or in mud and carrying it into the main part of the marquee.

The buffet itself may be split into three sections for ease of service, as described in Table 11.3.

Table 11.3 Service sections of a buffet

Section	Requirements
Service of food	Should be presented appetisingly and attractively on the buffet with the cutlery and crockery required placed in a decorative manner, conveniently near the service points. Food for replenishing the buffet should be close to hand. The centre of the buffet may be raised in order to show off the dishes to greater effect
Service of tea and coffee	This section should have all the necessary equipment close to hand. This will include teacups and saucers, teaspoons, sugar basins, cold milk jugs, tea and coffee urns and hotplates for the pots of hot milk. The service of beverages does not normally take place until after all the toasts have been completed. It is advisable to allow a little more in quantity than is actually required

Section	Requirements
Service of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks	This section of the buffet should have all the correct size glasses for the drinks to be served (spirits, soft drinks and mineral waters, cocktails, wines and Champagne), plus ice buckets for the white, sparkling and rosé wines to be chilled, service salvers, waiters' cloths and all the ancillary equipment required for mixing drinks and cocktails to give the correct form of service. A surplus of glasses should be kept under the buffet in their appropriate boxes. Diet, juices and non-alcoholic drinks should be on hand if required

As an alternative the buffet itself may be used entirely for displaying the food and separate service points may be set up for the service of beverages, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. This depends upon the exact nature of the function, the room available, number of guests, requirements of the client and the type and amount of drinks to be served.

Floral arrangements

The floral arrangements are an important aspect of the decoration and help show off the room to best effect. A large floral arrangement should normally be placed near the entrance to be noted on arrival by all the guests. A further large centrepiece of flowers may be placed in the centre of the buffet and other smaller arrangements of flowers placed at intervals around the room on the occasional tables. The final floral arrangements will depend on the cost involved. The front of the buffet cloth may be decorated with some greenery of some sort, or some coloured velvet may be draped along in order to take away the plainness of the white buffet cloth. Purpose-made pleating can also be used to enhance the front and overall appearance of the buffet. This pleating may be purchased in a variety of colours.

The wedding cake

The wedding cake may be used as a separate focal point away from the buffet and should be placed upon its stand with a knife on a special table clothed-up for the purpose. This is a very important aspect of the dressing of the room, as the main formalities of the breakfast/reception take place, at a certain stage of the proceedings, around the wedding cake. The cake must therefore be in full view to everyone in the room. The bride's and bridesmaids' bouquets are often placed on the table around the base of the wedding cake, together with any telegrams of congratulations that are to be read out by the best man or toastmaster as part of the speeches.

Arrangement of the room

Occasional tables should be placed at regular intervals around the room and clothed up in a suitable manner. Groups of chairs should be placed around each table, ensuring there is still space for people to walk around and meet.

All the ancillary items required for the efficient service of the meal should be placed upon the occasional tables. Items might include butter, rolls/French bread, side plates, side knives, napkins, sugar basins and tongs, accompaniments for cold meats and salads and ashtrays (depending on the smoking policy of the establishment/country). Thus, the majority of the brigade on duty can be either serving drinks or clearing away items, and not be involved in the service of food which will be done from the buffet by other members of the brigade or one or two chefs if there is any carving involved.

Other requirements

The client may request that you arrange for a photographer to be present and this then is a further charge that has to be made; however, it is advisable to leave this booking to the clients to arrange personally. The photographer will usually take photographs of the bride and bridegroom on arrival at the reception, together with a group photo of those in the receiving line, one of the bride and bridegroom cutting the cake and maybe one or two of the buffet while it is complete.

Fully attended cloakrooms must be available for all guests on arrival.

Staffing

The number of staff required will depend on the nature and requirements of a particular event. As a guide, at a buffet-type reception, the following staffing would be required:

- Brigade:
 - 1 head waiter/banqueting head waiter
 - 1 waiter to every 25–30 covers
 - 1 wine waiter to every 40 covers
 - 1 barman to every 3 wine waiters
 - 1–2 commis for fetching, carrying and clearing
 - 1 chef to every 35–40 guests for service

Procedure at a wedding buffet reception

- 1 Any casual staff required should report approximately one hour beforehand to complete the necessary mise-en-place, to be allocated duties and to be briefed on the procedure to be carried out.
- 2 If a toastmaster is required, he should arrive approximately 30 minutes before the arrival of the bride and bridegroom to acquaint himself with the room where the buffet is being held and to enquire what his duties will be with regard to announcing the guests on arrival. He must liaise with the best man to discuss the timing of cutting the cake and the toasts and who is to give them. If there is to be a social evening afterwards then the toastmaster may act as master of ceremonies (MC) for the duration of the event.
- 3 The bride and bridegroom should arrive first. Some photographs may be taken at this stage and an apéritif offered or a glass of Champagne.
- 4 Immediately following the bride and bridegroom should be the parents of the bride and bridegroom and bridesmaids and/or pages. These people will generally make up the 'receiving line' to greet the guests as the toastmaster announces them.
- 5 All the guests should generally arrive together. Cloakrooms at this stage must be fully staffed. Guests announced by the toastmaster then pass down the receiving line and enter the room.
- 6 The wine waiters should be placed at strategic points in the reception area for the service of apéritifs or Champagne to the guests as they move on from the receiving line. These trays should be replenished with full, fresh glasses. The wine waiters at the initial briefing should be allocated different sections of the room for service after the reception to ensure efficient service for all guests in the room.

- 7 After the reception the buffet should be open for service. The turnover on the buffet should be quick and efficient to avoid any major delays that may cause congestion. The wine waiter should be going round serving drinks and topping up glasses. An important factor to note during the service of the food and drink is to ensure that there are always some members of staff circulating, keeping the tables clear of any dirty equipment.
- 8 At the agreed time the toastmaster should announce the cutting of the cake by the bride and bridegroom. Portions of the cake should then be passed around to all guests and Champagne taken round by the wine waiters. When this has been done the toastmaster will begin the toasts. All the principal people concerned should be in a group by the wedding cake or in a central position so they can be seen and heard by everyone present.
- 9 After the toasts any remaining cake and tiers must be packed, ready to be taken away by the host. The top tier is sometimes kept for a christening.
- 10 The bride and bridegroom may then change. If required, food and Champagne should be placed in the changing rooms. Here, liaison is required between floor service, housekeeping and banqueting staff to ensure that timing is correct as far as the movements of the bride and bridegroom are concerned.
- 11 When the bride and bridegroom have left the reception the flowers should be packed up for the host to take away.

Family line-up to greet guests at a wedding breakfast or wedding reception

There are two basic approaches for the family line-up:

Approach A

Toastmaster

Entrance

- 1 Bride's mother
- 2 Bride's father
- 3 Bridegroom's mother
- 4 Bridegroom's father
- 5 Bride
- 6 Bridegroom
- 7 Best man
- 8 Bridesmaid/Matron of honour

Approach B

Toastmaster

Entrance

- 1 Bride's mother
- 2 Bride's father
- 3 Bride
- 4 Bridegroom
- 5 Bridegroom's mother
- 6 Bridegroom's father
- 7 Bridesmaid/Matron of honour
- 8 Best man

Note: The best man is responsible for ensuring that everyone leaves the place where the wedding ceremony has taken place and that no one is left behind. He therefore does not always arrive in time for the beginning of the reception.

Table arrangement for the top table at a wedding

Below is a general arrangement for the seating for the top table.

Looking from the front of the table left to right:

Approach A

- 1 Best man
- 2 Groom's mother
- 3 Groom's father
- 4 Bride
- 5 Bridegroom
- 6 Bride's mother
- 7 Bride's father
- 8 Matron of Honour/Principal Bridesmaid

Approach B

- 1 Best man
- 2 Groom's mother
- 3 Bride's father
- 4 Bride
- 5 Bridegroom
- 6 Bride's mother
- 7 Groom's father
- 8 Matron of Honour/Principal Bridesmaid

Procedure for toasts at a wedding

Method A

- 1 Cutting of the cake.
- 2 While it is being cut the best man may read out telegrams.
- 3 Pass the cake and Champagne or alternative for toasts.
- 4 Toastmaster announces a toast to the bride and bridegroom, proposed by the bride's father or near relation.
- 5 Response of the bridegroom who also proposes a toast to the best man and bridesmaids.
- 6 Response of the best man who also replies on behalf of the bridesmaids.
- 7 Any other toasts: close relative of bride or bridegroom.

Method B

- 1 Pass the Champagne or alternative for toasts.
- 2 Toastmaster announces a toast to the bride and bridegroom, proposed by the bride's father or near relation.
- 3 Response by the bridegroom who also proposes a toast to the best man and bridesmaids.
- 4 Response by the best man who also replies on behalf of the bridesmaids.
- 5 Any other toasts: close relative of the bride or bridegroom.
- 6 Cutting of the cake: telegrams of congratulations read by the best man.
- 7 Pass cake and more Champagne.

11.6 Outdoor catering (off-premises catering)

The business of an outdoor catering firm should, as far as possible, continue throughout the year to ensure the plant (equipment provided for a particular event) and staff are used to the full. At each event carried out the organiser should aim to give a fully comprehensive sales service, covering not only meals and drinks but also such things as confectionery and snack kiosks. As in event catering the organisation must be planned to the last detail and an initial survey should be exact and thorough. The following points are usually included in the initial survey:

- type of event
- date of event
- any special liquor or other licences or permissions required and when needed to be applied for and received
- site and distance from depot/premises
- local transport
- local commodity purchase
- staff recruitment
- layout of site
- number of people expected to attend
- provision for people with special needs
- availability of water, gas, electricity, drainage and refrigeration
- spending power of people attending
- kiosk and stand details
- time allowed for setting up and dismantling catering units
- mobile units adaptable to hot and cold food
- lines of communication to ensure control of staff and continuous supplies
- photographers
- press
- changing room and toilets
- insurance against weather/fire
- first aid
- cost of overheads on a particular site
- type of service (the type most suited to each particular catering operation will need to be decided), for example:
 - buffet-style service may be preferred to restaurant service
 - provision of takeaway meal service in disposable containers
 - supply of some simple hot dishes – soup, fish and chips, etc.
 - flexibility of drink service: hot or cold – according to weather
- washing-up facilities
- containers supplied for litter and disposable items.

Each outdoor catering operation is different and so the main points to be noted during the initial survey will vary. From the basic list shown above it is clear that organisation beforehand is the key to success. The person in charge needs to be decisive, quick-thinking, able to command, adaptable to varying situations and circumstances and, above all, needs to have the respect of the staff working under them.

The majority of staff employed at outdoor catering events are taken on as casual staff. This involves a high administration load for the organisers and also the scrutiny checks of the staff must be very thorough to ensure the quality of the personnel.

The organisation of outdoor catering events must be very thorough too, because once on site it is often virtually impossible to rectify errors. Any items forgotten or not packed on the transport will have to be gone without. This can affect the success of the event and can also damage the reputation of the service provider.