

When planning an offsite corporate meeting for your company there are many items to think about. But, the most important place to start is the location. You need to know:

- who is attending
- the number of guests attending
- is there travel involved and will you need overnight accommodations and amenities (restaurant, bar, health club, pool)
- do you need to wow your attendees with a Center City Hotel
- how many guests are attending the meeting

Once you have chosen the location, it is time to sit down with the sales person at the hotel you have chosen and work out the specifics. Roz Smith Conway from the Holiday Inn Select Bucks County has been in the hotel business for 20 years. She says that the sales manager you work with can be an invaluable resource in this process and can help you every step of the way. Although you don't always have to take their suggestions, remember that this is their hotel, and they have held many meetings and events similar to yours.

The next step after choosing a location is to work out the menu; that depends on the number of people attending the meeting. Linda Bone, Director of Catering at The Sheraton Bucks County Hotel offers a corporate meeting package which includes a continental breakfast, hot and cold lunch, snacks and beverages. But, when her clients are looking to have a meeting for 15-20, they typically opt for the a la carte menu. This is also called paying for consumption which means that you can order exactly what you need. For example: you can order two gallons of coffee and a dozen bagels for breakfast depending on how many people are attending.

The Holiday Inn Select Bucks County also offers a corporate meeting package which includes a continental breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack and some basic audio video equipment – flip chart, screen and overhead projector (an LCD projector is an extra charge). The larger hotels have audio visual technicians in house who will handle you're a/v needs including setting up and running your LCD projector if necessary for an additional fee. This is good to keep in mind because if you bring your own equipment and if there is a problem, there may not be anyone there who can troubleshoot for you. Conway also says that if you do bring your own equipment be sure to pack an extension cord because you never know where the plugs are located in conjunction with your set up needs. Many hotels charge for extension cords because they typically do not get returned. The Sheraton Bucks County Hotel contracts with an outside company to handle off of their audio/visual needs.

Be sure to arrive for your meeting with your printed materials ready to go or you can send them to the hotel in advance. Conway strongly suggests that you consult with your hotel contact to find out when you should send the materials and if there is a fee for doing so. And, always confirm that the materials did arrive.