While many of our customers are seasoned Event Planners, just as many are inexperienced and perhaps even organizing an event for the first time – often doing so in addition to their regular ongoing and unrelated job responsibilities. This Information Sheet is primarily for them. It contains a few tips and insights that should be helpful in planning an event where Denise (or any other speaker) will be able to work with the tools and within the setting they need to deliver their work most effectively and maximizing the learning outcomes for their audience.

ROOM FEATURES

SEATING CAPACITIES – If you are renting meeting space, be cautious about the numbers that you are given about the capacities for different types of seating arrangements (e.g. banquet, classroom, theatre-style, etc.). The numbers you are given will typically have little to do with the comfort level of attendees, the adequacy presentation of presentation space for your speaker(s), your possible need for registration or display tables inside the room, etc. Basically, the "capacity" numbers of meeting facilities are an accurate response to the question; "How many people can we possibly cram into this room without breaking any laws?" The real question should be; "How many people can we seat in this room to provide each participant with a comfortable and effective learning experience?"

Theatre-style seating is adequate for shorter, lecture-style presentations, but can be totally uncomfortable and inappropriate for longer, more interactive, or more educational sessions. Theatre-seating was designed for audiences being passively "entertained" – not for learning environments where people are engaged in note-taking, group discussions, or "audience participation".

In our experience, "half-rounds" ("banquet style" with round tables with chairs only around half the table) provide the best seating for most seminars and workshops. They give everyone a comfortable amount of personal space, a writing surface, a good view of the presenter, and a ready-made group for any planned discussions.

Make sure that there is adequate room for people to move freely between tables – particularly for folks who may be using wheelchairs, service animals, etc. (If small group discussions are going to be part of the presentation, we often try to separate the tables even more than usual – so that groups are less-distracted by neighboring conversations.)

PRESENTATION SPACE – Before confirming any meeting space, be sure to find out what the space requirements are for your presenter(s).

Ensure that your presenters have the space that they need to be most effective. Every presenter will have his/her own style and will have their individual needs for presentation space. Be attentive to their requests! You don't want to cramp their style. You are investing a lot in them and you want them to be able to be at their best – so that your attendees have the best possible learning experience. Some presenters are most comfortable standing behind a lectern, some prefer to be seated, and some need to be on the move – some will even want to be able to walk around the room and engage attendees more directly.

Particularly in larger rooms, "risers" (a small stage – usually about 18" high) can be a great feature to ensure that everyone has a good view of the presenter. But, again, check this out in advance with your presenter. Some presenters, particularly those who speak behind a lectern,

require only a small presentation area - while others, those who are more animated, require a larger platform – and still others prefer no riser at all because they like to weave in and out of their audience.

If presenters are using visual images projected on a screen (e.g. PowerPoint), you will want to make certain that all attendees have a good view of the screen(s). This will likely mean that that seating will have to be set back considerable from the screen.

ROOM DIMENSIONS & FEATURES – The overall dimensions/shape of the room can be a critical factor in selecting a room. It is particularly important to ensure that all participants are in close proximity to the presenter – so they can see and hear them clearly and not feel like they are on "the outskirts". In this context, long & narrow rectangular rooms are particularly problematic. Rooms that are configured more like a square are generally the best – affording all participants with good proximity to the presenter. (When a rectangular room is all that is available, it is mush better to position the presenter in the middle of one of the long walls – rather than on a shorter one.)

Ceiling height is also an important consideration. Large rooms with low ceilings have a claustrophobic effect on folks – and cathedral ceilings can make the room feel cavernous. Watch out for pillars! Sometimes they are not shown on floor plans but they can seriously block the view and impair the engagement of participants. Natural lighting is rare, but a bonus. If it is available, be sure that it will not affect the view of the presenter (not a good idea to have a window directly behind the presenter) or the clarity of projected images.

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

Be certain that you meet all of your presenter's equipment needs. These are the "tools of their trade". Without them, you will not get the best of what your presenter has to offer! Handing a wired, handheld microphone to a presenter who has requested a wireless lapel-type microphone is like handing a ukulele to a rock guitarist & asking them to play "Stairway to Heaven"… you might get something, but it will pale in comparison to what you would have received with the proper equipment. Here are a few other tips:

- Be certain that all your participants will be able to hear the presenter (and any recorded audio content) clearly. You don't want to host an event where your attendees are straining to hear what is being said and your presenter is straining to be heard – rather than concentrating on delivering their content well. Familiarize yourself with the audio setup at the hotel before hand and arrive at least 45 minutes before the presentation to make sure that all the sound equipment is working properly.
- Similarly, make sure that that any projection equipment and screens are working and set up properly – long before the presentation itself starts. (It also never hurts to have a backup computer and projector readily available.)