DETERMINE THE BEST SEATING OPTIONS FOR YOUR EVENT

WRITTEN BY TRACY FULLER

www.Innovativevents.com

i.e. innovativevents inc.

www.Innovativevents.com

Some people are born to follow a specific career path, and some people are born to forge their own path. Those people are called entrepreneurs. Tracy Fuller became an entrepreneur 27 years ago when she started her first company, Happy Occasions, in response to a personal tragedy. Nearly three decades later, she leads the team at InnovativEvents, providing event décor, backstage management, and overall coordination and management of all production aspects. She has produced dozens of corporate events – sometimes for an intimate group of corporate board members, other times for crowds as large as 3,000. There are definitely some nice benefits; she has worked with Elton John, Bon Jovi, and Keith Urban and companies like Google, Oracle and Allstate Insurance.

Venue Seating Options

Choosing the right seating for your guests can make or break your event. Determining how to seat your attendees for the most optimal experience is important.

Not only do you have to choose the venue to meet the needs of the event's message, but also the needs of the guests. Seating can affect your attendees' attention span, so will you be putting attendees in a classroom style seating? This style is better for learning and if guests are expected to take notes or will have their computers open for reference. Or, is seating them at round tables a better option? At round tables, there is more interaction, and the room is easier to rearrange for the gala dinner that evening.

Knowing how many people can be seated at each table, how the arrangements lay out in a room, and what type of program you will be running are all important points in your planning process. We've laid out the options for tables, table sizes, seating configurations, and other must consider items, so you can choose the best seating options for your event.
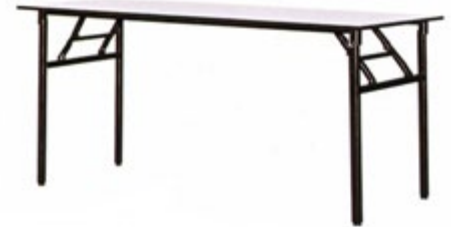
Table Size

Square Table Sizes:

- 24" Square: 2 People
- 30" Square: 4 People
- 32" Square: 4 People
- 36" Square: 4 People
- 42" Square: 8 People
- 60" Square: 8-12 People (12 is a "little" tight)

Rectangular Table Sizes:

- 18" x 60" Seminar Seat 2 (1 Sided)
- 18" x 72" Seminar Seat 3 (1 Sided)
- 18" x 96" Seminar Seat 4 (1 Sided)
- 30" x 48" Rectangles Seat 4 People
- 30" x 72" Rectangles Seat 6 People
- 30" x 96" Rectangles Seat 8 People (Cap the ends to make 10)

Round Table Sizes:

- 30" Round Seat 2-3 People
- 36" Round Seat 4 People
- 42" Round Seat 5 People
- 48" Round Seat 6 People
- 54" Round Seat 7-8 People
- 60" Round Seat 8-10 People (Most popular size in most venues)
- 66" Round Seat 9-10 People
- 72" Round Seat 10-12 People (second most popular size in venues)

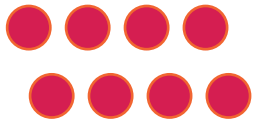## Standard Banquet Table Width

For banquet dinners and other functions when people will sit on both sides of the table, 30" is the most common table width.

If aligning 8 foot banquet tables end to end, you may add 1 chair for each "joint" on each side. (See picture to right) make sure the table legs are not uncomfortable for your attendees.
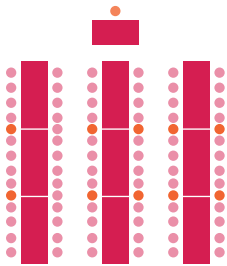
In order to maximize the amount of round banquet tables you can fit in a room, place them as illustrated in the picture to the right. Diagonal placement is more space efficient than lateral rows.

Classic Banquet Style Placement

Classic banquet style table placement consist of long rows of rectangle banquet tables with seats on both sides. This setup will allow for the most seats in a room. Notice in the picture to the right an extra person is added at the "joint" of each table. The setup allows for a head table or the stage to be placed at the front of the room, like shown in the illustration. Long rows of banquet tables can be difficult for conversation for your attendees.
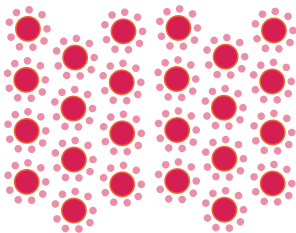
Banquet Round Style

This picture illustrates banquet style with round tables. Notice the rows are off center in order to maximize seating. You can also line up the tables for a different look. 60" rounds will seat 8 comfortably and 10 tightly. 72" rounds will seat 10 comfortably and 12 tightly. 60" tables are more conducive to conversation for the entire table.
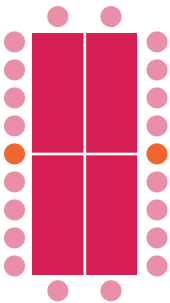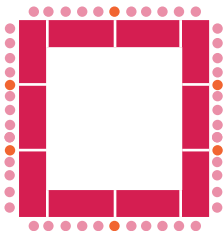
Conference Style

Conference style is great for critical thinking discussions, board meetings and strategic meetings. This set up is used best when your attendees is around 22 people.
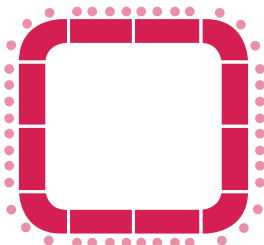
Kings Table

This style of tables are also called Kings table and can be used for social events, galas and award shows.

Hollow Square

Hollow square setup is much like conference style, except the inside of the square is hollow. The illustration to the right shows a hollow square setup for 50 people using 10 — 30" x 96" tables. Dimensions are 2 ft. x 24 ft.
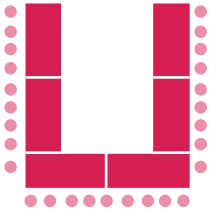
Hollow Square with Serpentine Tables U Shaped Setup

The hollow square diagram to the right utilizes serpentine tables at the corners. The illustration is setup for 44 people. It uses 4 serpentine tables, and 8 — 30" x 96" rectangle tables.
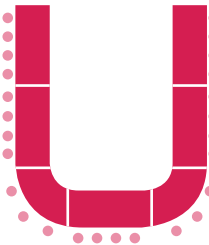
The U Shaped Setup

This set up works well for presentations where there will be interaction between the guests, and the speaker. The speaker can walk up and down the hollow box inside the "U" interacting with the guests. This style setup can be used for meetings, dinners, or watching films. When setting up "U" shaped, you may place a video projector etc. at the front of the hollow part of the "U".
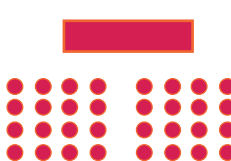
U Shaped Setup w/ Serpentine Tables

The U Shaped diagram to the right utilizes serpentine tables at the corners. The diagram is setup for 26 people. It uses 8 — 8 foot tables, and 2 serpentine tables.
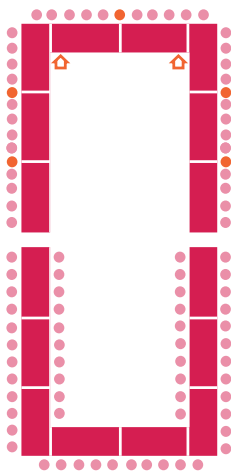
U Shaped w/ Head Table Inside U

You may also place the head table inside the legs of the "U" like shown in the picture to the right. This table placement adds 3 seats to the front of the U.

U Shaped Plus Theatre Style Setup

The U shaped plus style can be used when space is limited. Chairs are placed in the "hollow" part of the U. This takes away some of the advantages of the hollow part of the U.

Theatre Style Setup

Theatre style banquet setup is the most space saving design. If your event is a speech, lecture, or corporate meeting.
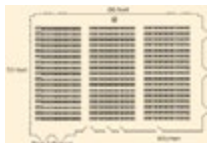
Theater seating

This is like the seating you would find in a theater — in a ballroom the chairs would be lined up next to each other and behind each other.

School Room Seating

This style seating creates a room specifically for learning. This will allow attendees to take notes during sessions. Usually the facility will use a table that is 18" x 6' or 8'. You can seat 2 to 3 people at a 6 ft. and 3 to 4 people at an 8 ft. These tables are not as wide as tables you would use for a banquet.

Front of House

Usually a table or two on a small stage at the back of the room — this area is for your audio tech, your producer, your show caller and possibly others. This area is sometimes placed on a stage so they can see over the heads of the attendees and see what is happening on stage.

To 'Flip' a Room

To change the room seating from one configuration to another. For example, during the day, the room might be set in a classroom for the presentation and then turn it into a gala party for the evening and change the seating to banquet rounds.

If the room is impossible to 'flip' try seating at rounds with chairs in crescents during the meeting and just add chairs around the table for the banquet

1. **Capacity** – to determine capacity, figure out what items (like A/V) you need in the room, how best to seat them. Figure around 6-8 square feet for person, stage size, backstage size and front of house (where A/V and Technicians sit during a show)

2. **Seating** – figure out how to seat for optimum communication. Will it be at round tables or Schoolroom, theater seating or some other type of seating? See chart.

3. **Columns and obtrusive items.** What kind of things will impede site lines?

4. **Ceiling height** – how high does the ceiling need to be? What décor items are you bringing in and how big is your crowd.

5. Is the venue too large for your group? Consider closing in the space with drape or other items.

6. Will you need to 'flip' the space? Is the facility capable of making the change in the time you need it 'flipped'.

www.Innovativevents.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO
PLAN YOU NEXT EVENT CONTACT:

www.Innovativevents.com