



What's A Caterer To Do?

What's a Caterer to Do Part 11

Greetings on a beautiful evening here in Rochester, NY. It's hard to believe that we haven't spoken this month, and here we are halfway through June already. Last month and this month would normally be our busiest months of the year, catering graduation parties, weddings, corporate celebrations and gala fundraisers for non-profits. In the good old days we would be working round the clock, stretching and stressing our minds and bodies to the limit, grateful for wonderful weather and lots of events to cater. As one event after another cancelled due to the "you know what", we continue to plod along or shall we say "pivot" (new buzz word for shifting gears and regrouping) uncertain of where our focus should be, and uneasy about what may or may not be ahead for us. We have tuned into endless webinars, tons of industry-related ZOOM meetings, we've read stacks of documents, we've endured modifications to PPP, and we continue to listen to just 1/2 half hour of news in the evening (it's all I can tolerate) to hear the latest edicts of what we can do, when we can do it, how we can do it and what may happen if we don't. Hence, the title of this series, What's a caterer to do?

Yet, we remain grateful and humbled for all the great years of serving this community and beyond. So many people put their trust in us with their most important celebrations and events. Will we be on time? Will we have enough food? Will we pick up the ball when somebody else drops it? Will we clean up and leave the place looking better than when we arrived? Oh, by the way, will we take the trash with us? What do we do if it rains? What happens if the pet dog steals the 20# roast beef off the buffet table? What do we do if our beautiful desserts meet their demise when the dessert cooler isn't properly strapped into the van and does a 360 ruining all the contents? What about the sterno that didn't get extinguished before it was packed with the chafer in the box and put on the van? What about knocking out electrical power while brewing 2500 cups of coffee in one of the biggest venues in the city? What about stubbornly driving through wetlands to pull up close to the event tent, then getting our van stuck in the mud? Why didn't they bring the big tow truck so that the chain on the little tow truck wouldn't break when our van had sunk too deep in the muddy mire? What about the policeman that instructed us to park 1/2 mile from our client's event tent, and when he turned his head, we sped past him and parked nice and close so that the event could begin at the scheduled time and we wouldn't have to carry hundreds of pounds of equipment and food through a maze of people and obstacles.

Everyone gets a citation once in a while. What about driving on the sidewalk to avoid construction delays so we wouldn't disappoint our client by being tardy? No,

I did not make this up. This is the tip of the catering iceberg and oh, there's so much more.

So for now, we will treasure those memories of the good, the bad and the ugly; the best and the worst; the highs and the lows; and fondly remember the rush of adrenaline, the spunk and the drive that is critical in the world of catering. Racing the clock. Hurrying up to wait. Pulling "proverbial rabbits out of hats". Preparing for 100 and only 10 showing up. Preparing for 10 and 100 showing up! Never a dull moment. Always a surprise. Lots of variety. Sore feet. Aching backs. Excitement! Thrill of a flawless event. Multi-tasking. Run ragged. Fabulous guests. Cranky guests. Fun. Torture. It's all part of the job!

And tonight I sit at the sewing machine stitching grilling aprons with matching masks for our Father's day gift baskets, with the window open, enjoying the birds chirping, the soft and cool breeze and noticing the people...so many people walking their dogs. Have they always walked their dogs this much? Does everyone have a dog? Do they really like so many walks? And, a bright light came on! Maybe they have always had dogs and maybe they have always walked them this much but I wasn't here to see them. During our peak months, our evenings and weekends were spent at work catering parties. Our daytimes were spent at work preparing for the parties and booking more parties.

This is more than a pivot. This is being upside-down, inside out, not knowing which end is up. It is heart breaking as we hear of more casualties. Not just medical casualties, but industry casualties. Restaurants that aren't able to re-open because they can't afford to operate at 50%. Bars and diners that can't re-open because their loss of income has left them with limited choices. Party houses and banquet facilities that don't have a prayer of survival because you don't make any money if people aren't able to gather. It's tough out there. Everyone has a story. And many of them won't have happy endings.

Oops, my optimism sounds compromised tonight. Sorry about that. I'll pull up my bootstraps and carry on. No one can predict the future, so we'll take it day by day and do everything in our power to move forward, where ever that may lead us, no one knows. Good wishes to you and yours...

Enjoy the sunshine and the warm temps. Xoxo Sandra

Even if you stumble, you're still moving forward

~Victor Kiam

Previous editions of "Whats A Caterer To Do" [-available here](#)