

Have you ever been to a conference or meeting where you have signed-up for breakout sessions? Then when you arrive at the designated room where your session is being held, there is a facilitator who is rearranging seating, trying to fix an audio-visual problem or dealing with some issue that needs to be fixed before that meeting can get underway? I certainly have and each time I have sympathized with the facilitator and at the same felt frustration myself knowing that these details could have been taken care of in advance of the meetings scheduled start time.

When you have the responsibility for prepping meeting rooms make sure you allow time for set-up and rehearsal and allow time between sessions to re-set meeting rooms. Book all meeting rooms in 24 hour time blocks. Verify when presenters will arrive and if they need rehearsal time before their scheduled start time.

1. **Seating Plan.** Are the tables and chairs arranged in the correct manner for the meeting format? Is the size of the room adequate for the number of people who will be in attendance? Are there removable walls and is the room sound proof from adjacent rooms and the foyer? Movable walls are not usually soundproof. A soundproof solution is to run two parallel air walls to create a narrow corridor between them
2. **Location of additional chairs.** Check that extra chairs are available and easily accessible.
3. **Room Temperature** Locate the room climate controls (air conditioning/heating). Start with the room cooler than usual, the room will warm-up with more people in the space and once the doors are closed.
4. **Teleprompter, translation equipment and Audio-Visual** Make sure that all of the equipment needed for the meeting is on-site and ready to go.(Hand-held microphone with stand, lavalier microphones, white board with markers or projector and screen with laser pointer)
5. **Check power capability and power outlets.** Are electrical outlets available for plugging in laptop computers? Is there telephone connectivity and is it needed? Internet connectivity? Wireless facility?
6. **Podium with light and riser.** Check to make sure that these items are available if requested by the speaker or facilitator.
7. **Presentation table** with water pitcher, drinking glasses, pencils and note pads.
8. **Decorations** that reinforce the meeting theme and color scheme. Check that all decorations conform to fire regulations.
9. Floral arrangements and plants.
10. **Signage** Check the location of signage – is it clear and visible?
11. **Tape recorder** if an audio recording is being made and operator. Depending at the length of the presentation make sure there are adequate supplies/audio tapes to accommodate.
12. **Lighting** e.g., over head, obscured, variable beam, spotlights, strobe lights, special effects, lights with dimmer switches
13. **Position of light switches.**
14. Is there closed circuit TV ? Is the security adequate?

15. Radio and TV broadcasting, Videotaping?

16. **Wheelchair access** and space allotment on aisle

Careful planning makes for flawless execution and a chance for attendees to get the most out of the sessions they attend.

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