

Tips for Working with Difficult Clients

A Client Roundtable Discussion Summary

Working with difficult clients can be challenging, but there are a handful of ways that you can lead your team to overcome tough situations and conversations when hosting events at your venue. Unique Venues clients gathered for a Virtual Roundtable Discussion to learn about operations and policies that their peers administer at their unique site. Here is a summary of the tips and ideas that came from our enlightening conversation.

● **Types of Difficult Clients:**

- Difficult clients may extend beyond being angry or disrespectful, including issues such as not receiving final numbers on time, non-compliance with required insurance certificates, and negative responses when unable to accommodate specific dates.

● **Empowerment:**

- Overcoming difficult clients involves empowering all team members to handle concerns, work on solutions, and enact them independently.
- Training and cross-training are key strategies to ensure each team member has the knowledge to resolve issues efficiently.

● **Managing Client Expectations:**

- Unique sites face challenges in making clients understand different operating standards compared to hotels/convention centers.
- Highlighting unique contractual items and providing a one-sheet for clients when booking can help set expectations.

● **Consistency and Boundaries:**

- Consistency among the team is crucial for setting and enforcing boundaries.
- It may be necessary to terminate relationships with customers who do not adhere to established boundaries.

● **Ownership of Mistakes:**

- Taking ownership of errors, whether by you, your team, or service members at your venue, is critical in resolving issues with clients.
- Owning up to mistakes is viewed as a strength, not a weakness.

● **Conflict Resolution:**

- Avoid escalating conflicts by not responding to fire with fire.
- Debriefing after events is important for continuous improvement.

● **Feedback from Clients:**

- Proactively seek feedback from clients after events through emails, asking for suggestions for improvement.
- Request short testimonials about the client's experience, even focusing on specific areas like catering or A/V.
- Arrange a 15-minute meeting with the lead contact to gather honest feedback about the event.