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FEATURES

AN EVENT SPACE

IN NEW YORK CITY

SHOULD HAVE

HELEN MILLS EVENT SPACE AND THEATER
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Venue selection can be one of the most exciting aspects to planning your next meeting or conference in New York City. **It takes creativity and vision to match all of your event ideas to the perfect space, especially in a city with so many options to choose from.** Time spent comparing venues can become an unforeseen item on your to-do list.

Experienced event planners know choosing the right venue and location for your meeting can make or break the success of your event. **Even a small oversight can cause major setbacks** for attendees and you or small hurdles during the already stressful process of planning and executing a meeting.

Choosing and booking your venue is invigorating because it's the first major step you take in the meeting planning process. It's also one of the first times you can truly imagine the meeting coming to life in a space. Researching and negotiating with meeting venues in NYC can be time-consuming, and in many cases, it's difficult to know if you are really finding what you are looking for. It's always important to keep in mind the needs of your guests and the organization you represent to ensure a successful meeting or conference.

Many of New York's venues are beautiful, classic and timeless. Unfortunately that doesn't mean that they are corporate event-ready. Finding a venue that can handle the **logistical, financial, legal,** and **creative** considerations of you and all of your guests **is just the beginning.**

We've created this venue selection checklist to help you exceed your meeting or conference goals and have a wonderful time doing it. Keep this list of **amenities, facilities, equipment, technology, catering,** and other services with you when researching venues and going on site visits.

"It's always important to keep in mind the needs of your guests and the organization you represent to ensure a successful meeting or conference."

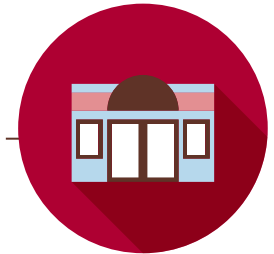
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LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Logistical considerations for choosing the right meeting venue include timing, location, facilities, catering, services, and event budget. The following are a few of the most important things to keep in mind when selecting a venue.

1 VENUE SIZE

What size venue do you need? Will the space comfortably accommodate the planned guest count and any possible changes? Consider how much additional space you'll need for things like registration tables, stage/s, break areas, food service, sponsor tables, etc. Are there separate spaces for all the different types of activities you may be hosting – e.g. food breaks, breakout sessions, post-meeting cocktail reception?



2 LOCATION

Is the venue in a neighborhood where people will feel comfortable, both safety and atmosphere-wise? Are there places around the venue where guests can take some time to relax or sightsee after the meeting – e.g. restaurants, parks, galleries, landmarks, and other attractions?



3 GUEST ACCESS

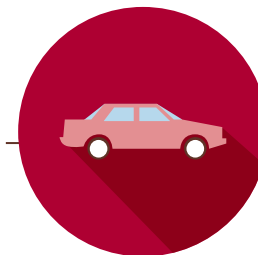
Can people enter/exit and arrive/depart from the venue easily? Street-level venues can eliminate the extra time using elevators might incur. Is the venue in close proximity to major transportation, including subways and hubs like Grand Central and Pennsylvania Station? Importantly, is the venue handicap-accessible? If not, can arrangements be made to make it so? These questions may play a big role in determining how many people attend the event and whether you hit your intended guest count.



4 **LODGING & PARKING**

Is there ample parking for your guests (either on the street or in parking lots)? When planning a multi-day event or an event with out of town guests, make sure there's lodging near the venue so guests can get to and from the venue easily.

Do the hotels nearby offer reduced rates for room blocks?



5 **LOAD-IN AND LOAD-OUT**

Does the rental period cover adequate time for setup and breakdown or will this incur additional overtime fees? Is the load-in easy for deliveries or rentals? Is there a way to discreetly load-in, even while event is in progress? If you're renting furniture or displaying large objects, can they fit through entrances and elevators? Is the venue able to accept and store event materials before the event and if so, is there a fee?



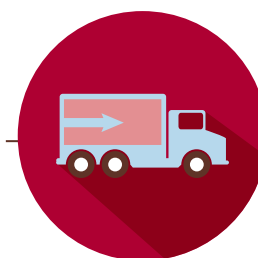
6 **CATERING**

Can the venue provide catering? If so, do their menus look appealing for the meeting or conference attendees? Does the venue have a liquor license? Are there any buyout fees or food or drink minimums?



7 **OUTSIDE VENDORS**

Does the venue allow outside caterers and other vendors or do they have preferred vendors you are required to work with? If you want to work with signage companies, DJs, photographers, specialty caterers, etc., do they allow this? Are there buyout fees? What insurance do they require outside vendors to have?



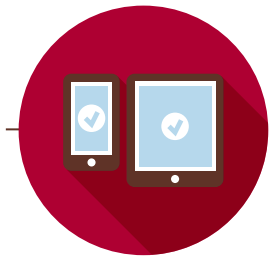
8 SECURITY

What kind of security personnel and equipment does the venue provide for guests? Are there surveillance cameras around the venue to ensure the safety of your guests and their property?



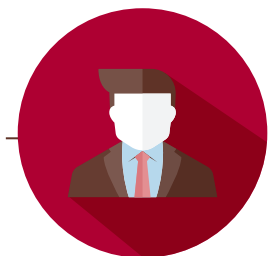
9 TECHNOLOGY

Does the venue offer wired/wireless, dedicated wifi sufficient for your meeting needs? Does the venue have in-house A/V equipment including microphones, projectors, speakers, extra computers, and sufficient electrical outlets? Is the venue set-up to live-stream events? Does the venue have a dedicated A/V technician who is familiar with the space and the equipment? Ensuring your event has adequate technology and experienced technicians is extremely important to avoid unwanted disruptions in the flow of your event such as wifi outages, microphones not working, and issues with projection. Finding out what is included will also determine additional costs for having the correct event tech.



10 STAFF

Do you have a good feeling when speaking to the staff? Can they answer your questions well and understand or anticipate your needs? Is the staff helpful and knowledgeable even before you've booked your event with them? Is the staff willing to make reasonable accommodations? It is crucial to not overlook this as one of the most important elements in choosing a venue as these are the people you will be working with before, during and after your event.





FINANCIAL & LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Financial and Legal considerations are extremely important when choosing a venue in order to stay on budget and ensure the safety of both your guests and your company. These are often the considerations that can be the most unclear and hardest to anticipate. New York City in particular requires a number of permits and licenses in order for a venue to operate legally and it's important to check that the venues you consider have the necessary permits, licenses and insurance. The list below points out some features that you need to think about and discuss with your possible venue, as they should have experience with **all of them**.

1 VENUE RENTAL RATE

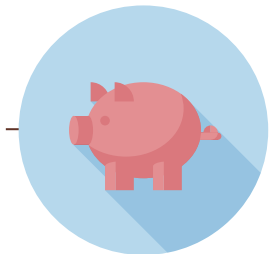
Is there a premium or discount for booking during certain times of the year? For instance, did you know that the event industry is seasonally less busy in the summer and on Sundays and Mondays? Be sure the venue is willing to have an open and honest about how this timing affects their rates. Do they offer packages and what do they (and don't they) include?



2 DEPOSITS

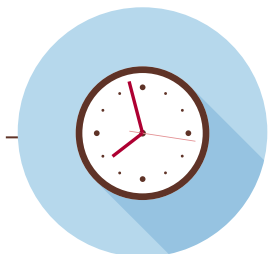
What is the required deposit or payment to book the venue? Very rarely will you find a venue willing to guarantee a space for a specific date without a deposit.

- What is the venue's payment schedule like?
- How much is the security deposit?
- Under what circumstances can the venue use the money from the security deposit?



3 OVERTIME

What are the venue's rates in case the event runs over time? Does the venue have a time that you must leave the venue (e.g. bars often open for the night after private events)?



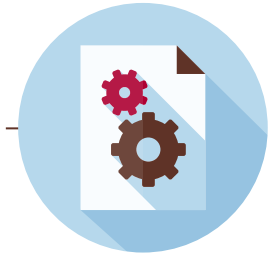
4 CONTRACT

Before reading the contract in depth, the following are a few questions you can ask the person showing you the venue: What are the venue's policies and contractual language on refunds, guarantees and culpability in case of cancellation, damage, force majeure, etc.? What is the cancellation fee?

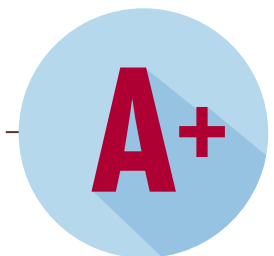


5 SERVICES

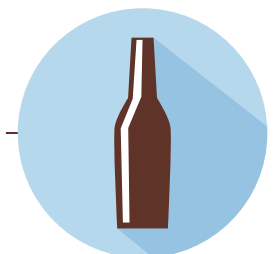
Ask the venue for a list of additional services and what the cost is for each. For example, how much does Wi-Fi or additional microphones cost? How much is additional staff? Try to factor in these services to your projected budget, even if they are not included in the original estimate.

**6 LETTER GRADE**

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene requires that all restaurants and catering establishments undergo inspection and display the letter grades they earn. If this applies to the venue, ask what grade they earned (an "A" is the best grade) and make sure the grade is displayed somewhere easily visible.

**7 LIQUOR LICENSE**

Does the venue and their caterer have a valid liquor license? If not, consider obtaining a temporary license for the day of the event. It is essential to have this license if liquor is being served at your meeting or post-meeting reception.

**8 INSURANCE**

What insurance does the venue require you to have? What insurance is required for vendors you hire (e.g. caterers, production companies, rental companies, etc.)? If your company does not have the correct insurance, ask the venue how much it will cost and what vendors they recommend. Does the venue have insurance? A Venue with the correct insurance is essential in order to protect you and your guests.



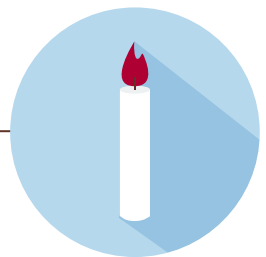
9 FIRE EXITS

Does the venue have enough fire exits? Are the fire exit signs visible to guests? Are the fire corridors unblocked during your site visit? The condition of the exit signs and fire corridors when you see the venue will serve to indicate how seriously the venue takes fire safety.



10 OPEN FLAME PERMIT

If you are having candles or votives at the event, does the venue have an open flame permit that will allow for this?



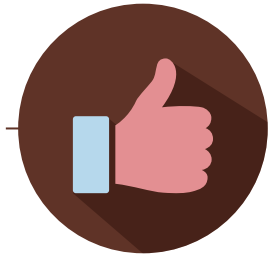


THE “IT” FACTOR & DÉCOR

After considering your budgetary, legal, and logistical needs, you will now need to take some time to consider whether the venues you see have that special **‘it’ factor** that will help your meeting or conference really **“wow”** the attendees. The venue should feel right when you see it in person and fit what you think your attendees will like. Do not overlook an event space that is slightly different than the typical conference center or meeting room. Remember, nearly everyone has been to a corporate meeting in a hotel ballroom, so look for an experience that is new. Don’t hesitate to ask the person showing you the venue for images to inspire you as well as recommendations for your specific event.

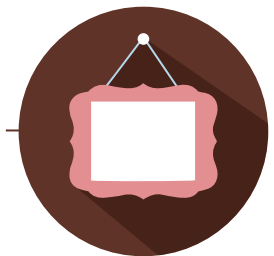
1 FEEL OF THE VENUE

How does it feel to be inside the venue? Does it feel bright and uplifting, cozy and intimate, both? Trust how the space makes "feel" when you first see it and do not allow yourself to be "sold" on the space if it does not feel right. Does the venue fit your overall theme/purpose or help enhance the feeling you'd like guests to have during the meeting or conference? At this point it might be good to think about the mission of your company and your goals as well as the guests you're inviting to the event.



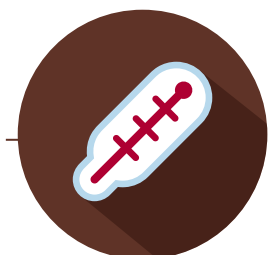
2 DÉCOR

What kind of decorations, if any are allowed? Will the condition, color and decor of the venue compliment the event? Does the venue include décor in the rental (e.g. votives, furniture, etc.)? Are there shelves, gallery molding, columns, large walls or other elements of the venue that will provide space for you to place decorations, signage, etc.?



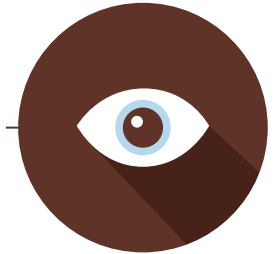
3 VENUE CONDITION

What is the condition of the venue inside and the grounds outside? Often, what you see during your site visit will indicate the appearance, cleanliness and noise in and around the venue on the day of your event. Always visit a venue in-person, in addition to seeing it online, before making any decisions.



4 VISIBILITY

Are there any visual obstructions in the room? Are there examples of layouts available to view? If the venue has columns, is there a way to seat people so that the columns serve as an architectural detail or place to put signage. Is there an option to hang curtains or put dividers in the space if you'd like to break up the room or create visual barriers?



5 BRANDING & SIGNAGE OPPORTUNITIES

Is there street-level signage, how much? How much of the venue can you brand? Can you create an immersive brand experience inside the venue? Does the venue allow for event signage or displays? Can you hang items and post on walls, floor, etc.? How easy is it? Is there a ceiling grid for you to use?



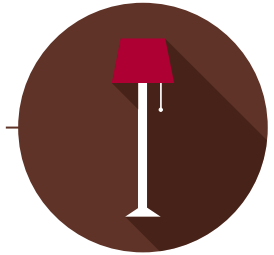
6 AMENITIES

What amenities are available? Other amenities may include food and beverage service, wait staff, set up and clean up, kitchen space, etc. Note that some venues will be more inclusive than others. It's always good to ask the venue to send a comprehensive list of what's included with the venue rental as there may be more than shows on the estimate.



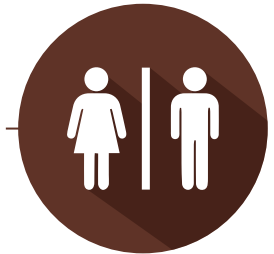
7 LIGHTING

Can you control the indoor lighting and natural light from outside (i.e. shades and curtains)? Is there a way to light any part of the room you'd like (e.g. hanging lights from a ceiling grid)? Does the venue have adequate in-house lighting (e.g. gobos, up-lights, wall wash) or will you have to use an outside lighting vendor?



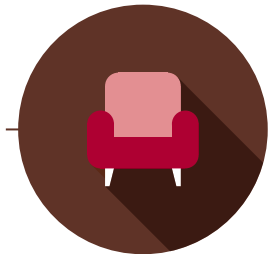
8 BATHROOMS

Are the bathrooms large enough for your guest count? Will there be lines for big meetings with short breaks?



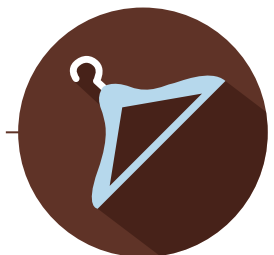
9 FURNITURE

Depending on your needs, it may be good to find a space that includes furniture already. This will reduce rental costs and work going into renting furniture.

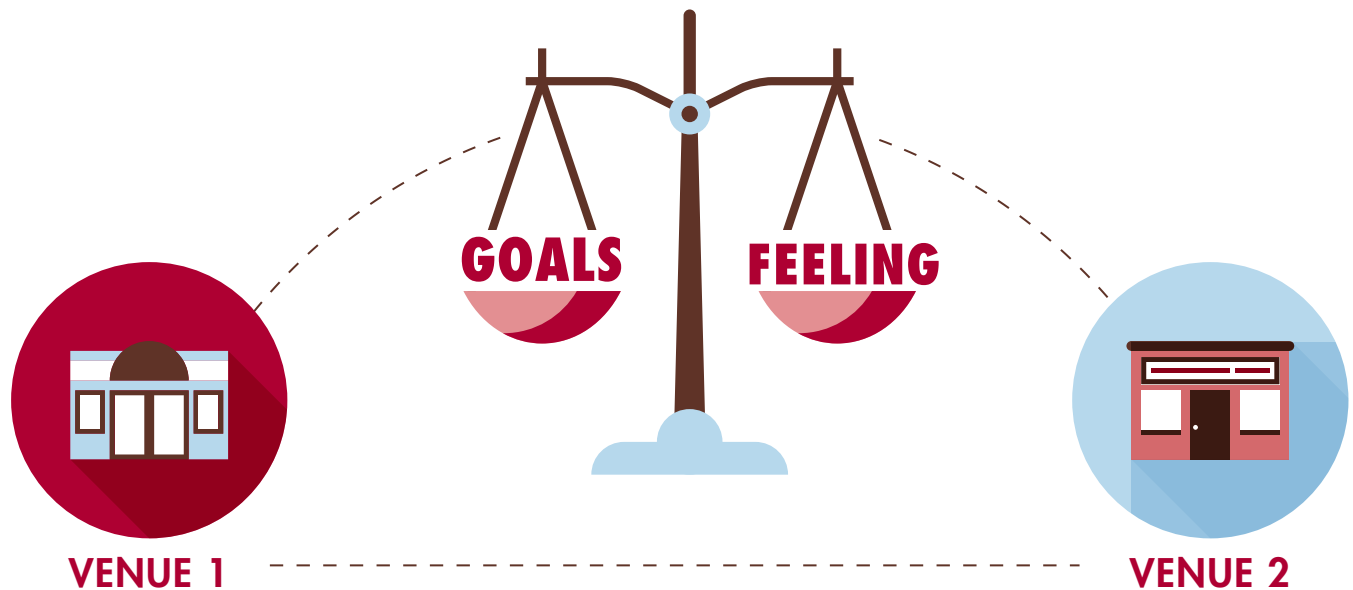


10 COAT CHECK

Does the venue have a coat check? Is this convenient to guests entering? Is there room for all guests at the event?



Now that you know your budget and you know what you need in a space, **it is time to start comparing venues.** When doing so, make sure to keep your initial event goals in mind and always trust how the event space makes you feel.



When you're talking to the venue salesperson, don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions. A good venue will have the answers to all your questions and more, and if not, then they should be happy to find out the answers needed.



Another tip: if the venue you are visiting is well known for holding events, check sites like Yelp to give you an idea of how others have enjoyed or not enjoyed there experience

ABOUT US

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LOOKING FOR A VENUE?
HELEN MILLS EVENT SPACE AND THEATER
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HELEN MILLS is one of New York City's most unique venues, featuring a spectacular street-level Event Space and an adjoining 140-seat Theater & Screening Room. Each space offers state-of-the-art sound and digital-video projection systems, high-speed, wireless Internet, a dedicated A/V technician, and catering packages to suit your needs. The staff is committed to excellence and providing flawless service, before, during, and after your event.

We were established in 2005 by real estate entrepreneur and arts patron Helen Mills, who has a passion for creating beautiful spaces with the idea of bringing people together, whether in business, celebration or for the arts.

We have been hosting meetings and conferences in New York City since 2005. While clients have come from a number of industries and the meetings have varied in size and length, the years of experience have made our team experts in anticipating the needs of our clients/meeting planners and helping to plan flawless meetings and conferences.

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