Philippa Okoye-Strandberg

Catering Manager, Hotel Banquets and Off-Site Events

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SUMMARY

Catering manager with 9 years in hotel and off-site catering, currently running about 420 events a year with $3.1 million in catering revenue at a 280-room conference hotel. Grew catering sales 18% in 2 years, brought banquet food cost from 34% to 29% and keeps client scores above 4.7 out of 5. Comfortable with banquet event orders, menu costing, staffing plans and food safety rules.

EXPERIENCE

Catering Manager — Walnut Hollow Conference Hotel

Des Moines, IA · Apr 2021 – Present

- Plan and run about 420 events a year, from 15-guest board lunches to 650-guest galas, with $3.1 million in annual revenue.
- Grew catering sales 18% in 2 years by building 3 wedding packages and a corporate lunch menu with set pricing.
- Cut banquet food cost from 34% to 29% by rebuilding 40 recipes with the chef and ordering to final guest counts.
- Lead 4 banquet captains and up to 45 servers, keeping overtime under 6% of banquet payroll.

Assistant Catering Manager — Cottonwood Bend Event Kitchen

Ankeny, IA · Aug 2017 – Mar 2021

- Coordinated 260 off-site events a year, including 3 outdoor festivals serving over 2,000 guests each.
- Built a packing checklist for off-site events that cut missing equipment reports from 11 a season to 2.
- Kept every event above 90% on the county health inspection checklist for 4 seasons.

Banquet Captain — Cottonwood Bend Event Kitchen

Ankeny, IA · Jun 2015 – Jul 2017

- Ran service for events of up to 300 guests, leading teams of 20 servers on the floor.

SKILLS

Event operations: Banquet event orders, floor plans, timelines, off-site logistics, rentals and vendor coordination

Sales and clients: Proposals, menu tastings, contracts and deposits, wedding and corporate packages, upselling

Cost and kitchen: Menu costing, food cost control, ordering to counts, allergen tracking, food safety

Tools: Tripleseat, Delphi, Opera PMS, Excel, Canva

CERTIFICATIONS

ServSafe Food Protection Manager

Certified Professional in Catering and Events (CPCE)

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Hospitality Management, Iowa State University, 2015

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