HOTEL CONTRACT CHECKLIST

When reviewing or negotiating your hotel contract, use this checklist to protect yourself, save money, and ensure your event runs smoothly. Remember: **if it's not in the contract (or the BEO), it won't happen.**

Meeting Space

- Complimentary meeting space in exchange for food & beverage minimum
- Early access for setup (ideally one full day in advance)
- 24-hour access to rooms (not limited to 9–5)
- Flexibility to expand into additional space if needed
- Written confirmation of all breakout rooms requested

Food & Beverage

- Clear, realistic minimum spend (don't overcommit)
- Option to count all catering charges (VIP dinners, staff meals, receptions) toward minimum
- Separate space for meals (not in the main conference room)
- Waived or reduced service charges where possible
- Negotiated coffee breaks, snacks, or meals included in package

Sleeping Rooms

- Conservative room block (start low, add later if needed)
- Highest possible attrition allowance (25–30% or more)
- Attrition calculated on *peak night* (not across all nights)
- Resell credit for unused rooms (if hotel resells them, you aren't penalized)
- Guaranteed lowest published rate for your attendees

© Scott Whitaker

- Attendees responsible for their own reservations (not you)
- Deadline for group rate, negotiate as close to event date as possible (ideally 2 weeks)
- Complimentary room nights (e.g., 1 free for every 20–30 booked)
- Waived resort fees or complimentary suite upgrade for organizer

Audio/Visual & Technology

- Permission to use your own AV team (no penalties)
- Waived or reduced fees for in-house AV if you provide your own
- Complimentary or discounted Wi-Fi for meeting rooms and staff
- Access to necessary power for booths without additional surcharges

Logistics & Hidden Fees

- Shipping and receiving fees (ask upfront, negotiate free storage)
- Handling or drayage fees (negotiate limits or waivers)
- Union labor requirements clearly spelled out (understand restrictions + costs)
- Parking fees for attendees and staff, negotiate for discounts or complimentary passes
- Clear cancellation policy (reduced penalties, rollover deposits where possible)
- Act of God / Force Majeure clause protecting you from uncontrollable events

Documentation

- Ensure every negotiated item is in the **contract**
- Cross-check contract details with the **Banquet Event Order (BEO)**
- Verify dates, times, access windows, rates, and concessions match exactly
- Keep a master copy of both documents for quick reference on-site

© Scott Whitaker