



How To Get More Bookings For Your Venue

5 tips on how to get more corporate bookings for your venue

At VenYou we spend a lot of time visiting venues and working with them to bring them more corporate enquiries and bookings. We run two linked corporate brands – [Let Me Out](#) (team building, conferences, retreats and events) and [VenYou](#) (a dedicated platform that profiles venues for corporate meetings and events) – and in doing so, these places and the people behind them have become our life. Over the past 12 years we've seen a lot of places succeed in getting more corporate business and we've also seen some who've tried and failed and some that we can see have the potential but aren't quite ready to deliver to the corporate market's needs.

Below we share with you what we've learnt and hope it might help you if you are a venue who'd like to get more corporate bookings. You can use the points below as a simple audit to assess your own venue to make sure that everything is as good as it can be to help you succeed in this sector.



Particular Needs

The corporate sector is a very particular market with, typically, very specific needs. Corporate buyers know what their staff expect when they visit a venue for a meeting, conference, event or away day and they are not big risk takers so presenting your venue in a way that puts their minds at ease from the very first interaction is really important. They want to feel you understand them and that you can confidently deliver to their requirements. The essential components of that are to succinctly describe your venue spaces with a clear indication of how many people it can hold in a variety of set up styles. For example, theatre style – seats up to ‘x’ number of people. Boardroom style – seats ‘x’ number of people, U shape style – seats up to ‘x’ number of people, cabaret style – seats up to ‘x’ number of people. You get the idea. All of the styles you list and talk about should be shown with images, diagrams, tables and good design. Even if you’ve never run an event for a corporate group in that style before, it pays to set up the space and take some high quality images so that they can see what you mean. At times we’ve seen venues show images of an empty space, a blank canvas. And while that may give a sense of potential, it’s not enough to convince most corporate groups to book with you as they have to work harder to visualise it for themselves. Make it easy for them by showing how it will look. You’ll have more chance of getting an enquiry if you do.

Clean, uncluttered spaces

We’ve sometimes come across venues that are filled with character and by that we mean, there are personal touches, ornaments, artwork, decorations and furniture pieces that mean something to the venue

owners and may have been there for a long time. To put in bluntly, they are stuck in a time warp. We once visited a boutique hotel that had the most spectacular water views and all the bedrooms had been upgraded. But the lounge and meeting room was like something out of the 80's! There were oversized vases with dried flowers, an old TV mounted onto the wall with ugly cables reaching up to a powerpoint on the ceiling, there was a bar in the corner that looked like it came from a TV film set. Great location but awful decor and so we couldn't list their venue or bring them corporate enquiries until they had decluttered and dealt with those eyesores. It was such a shame. To appeal to the corporate market get rid of all clutter and clear the space of all personal touches. The spaces need to feel clean, modern, up to date and professional. Be hyper critical when you look at what's in the room. If it's old, damaged, of a particular era or just taking up space, get rid of it. You might love it and it might bring back memories but it won't help you get corporate bookings. Be honest with yourselves about what you see and imagine what a Personal Assistant or Executive Assistant (those who typically make the bookings) would think when they walked into the space.



Great Photography

Make sure your website has a good selection of high quality images that reflect what you are selling. It's astonishing how many people will respond to beautiful photos on a website, social media post or advert. The better the photos, the greater the opportunity. But make them specific, for example if you are targeting corporate market a wedding photo doesn't really cut it. The visitor to your site needs to see images that show your capability in hosting their type of events, they need to feel like they are dealing with professionals who've done this many times before.



Check Your Rates

Getting your rates right is one of the most important aspects of getting ready for corporate bookings. The buyers are very clued up on what good rates look like. They are regularly looking at options for corporate events so your rates need to reflect this particular market's expectations not what you might get from a different market. A prime example of where we find venues struggling with this is when they are already successful in another market, for example the wedding market. They then look to apply the same venue hire fees to corporate enquiries and more often than not it doesn't work. The wedding market is a one off booking, a very special occasion where people will often spend a huge amount of money to mark that very special day. But a high venue hire price for a corporate booking won't be competitive with other good quality corporate venues and so you'll usually find that they won't go any further than an initial enquiry. To get this right, it's best to do your own consumer research into what other venues are charging for venue hire for something of a similar size and style to your venue. That will give you the best opportunity of converting enquiries from corporate buyers when they come in.



Tailor Your Proposals

If you're really serious about getting corporate enquiries it's really important that you put time and effort into creating proposals that are specific to that market. Often we see proposals that have so much included that's not relevant to the enquiry they've received. It doesn't take too long to create a template where you can delete sections based on what the client is actually looking for before you send it. They'll thank you for keeping it short and sweet and to the point.

The same applies with menus. A corporate buyer asking you for a proposal for a meeting is not interested in seeing your party menus. They want to see the options for coffees/teas, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea. They'll also be interested in lighter, healthier lunch time options where they can take a quick break then get back into the flow of their meeting. It's rare, in our experience, for a corporate group who are booking a venue for a meeting, to want to stop for a long lunch. This does vary according to the type of event but it's really great if you can show the light lunch or 'working lunch' option separately from a buffet lunch for example. Keep the party menus for times when people are enquiring for that type of event and stick to the specifics that meet their enquiry needs.



Get Technology Right

When a client books a venue for a meeting or conference the technical side is either working or it's a complete let down. You don't often get a second chance when it comes to technology so you'll need to put a lot of thought into what is the right equipment to have available, your policy for testing that equipment before every single event where it's being used and a back up plan for what you will do if that technology doesn't work suddenly. It's a really tricky one because technology regularly breaks down but if you've done your pre-meeting checks and you have your backup plan in place you'll be able to sleep at night knowing it's going to be just as the client expects. Don't be afraid to put a table of different technology options in your proposals. You can offer a plug and play option with no professional technical support (although there will be no excuse if it doesn't work even if it was a cheaper option for the client), recommend a reliable audio visual company who can quote them separately. It will cost them more but that's sometimes what they'd prefer to do. Make sure you have WIFI speeds that match the client's needs and if for some reason your WIFI or broadband isn't very good, make sure you're upfront about that when you send a proposal – under promise, over deliver every time.

Stay Connected

Businesses sometimes make the mistake of thinking that because they've posted or promoted their venue fairly recently that business will start flowing in immediately. It rarely works like that. To get noticed and be remembered you have to be sharing content on a regular basis and there are many ways that you can do that.

If you are listing on VenYou.co.nz or our sister brand letmeout.co.nz share your new images, new menus, special packages and venue changes with us on a regular basis. We make it our mission to share those with

our network of corporate buyers all the time so when you list and then share with us you get more value from your listing. Don't be shy and don't be quiet. The squeaky wheel really does get more attention.

Do the same on your own website, social media pages and through your database. Be seen, be visible, be appealing, always be there.

In summary, your corporate buyer is very different from other people who might make enquiries with you. The more specific you are the higher your chance of getting bookings from the corporate market. Clean spaces, clear offering and prices that are competitive with other venues in the industry will all make a difference.

Benefits of listing on aggregated site

An aggregated site like VenYou is one where there are many listings in different categories for business and services. The benefits of listing on sites like ours is that Google, with its complex algorithms and search criteria is far more likely to pick up an aggregated site than it does a single venue site. Therefore, as well as having a high quality, optimised site for your own venue, it's good practice to be visible on aggregated sites too. While your business will be listed alongside many others, the odds are that you'll be more visible and will also gain traction from having inbound links from the aggregated site to yours.

To find out more about listing on Venyou and see if it's right for your business.

