The Event Planning Glossary

If you're not familiar with planning events, the vocabulary used in contracts and communications can seem like a foreign language. To help demystify the process, we've created a glossary of commonly used terms.

For more information on any specific terms, please contact your Westin sales representative.

A

**Action Station:** A table or area where chefs prepare food to order and serve it fresh to guests.

**Addendum:** A document that modifies or amends the specific terms of a contract.

**Advance Order:** An order for goods and/or services ordered before the move-in date for an exhibition. Usually less expensive than a floor order. See also floor order.

**American Plan:** A room rate that includes the price of the room and all meals.

**Ancillary Services:** All event-related support services within a facility that generate revenue, such as A/V, décor, parking, etc.

**Aspect Ratio:** The relationship between the width and height of an image or display; 4:3 is the aspect ratio for a standard screen, and 16:9 for a basic wide screen.

**Attrition:** The difference between the actual number of sleeping rooms picked up (or food and beverage covers or revenue projections) and the number agreed to in the terms of the facility’s contract. There is usually an allowable shortfall before damages are assessed.

**A/V:** An abbreviation for audiovisual. Equipment, materials, and teaching aids used in sound and visual presentations, such as television monitors, projectors and sound equipment. A/V requests at Westin hotels in North America are typically handled by PSAV, an event technology service provider with the expertise to meet all of your audio and visual needs.

**A/V Contractor:** A provider of A/V equipment and technical staff to set up and run the equipment.
**Bandwidth:** The volume of information per unit of time that an Internet connection can handle. An Internet connection with a larger bandwidth can move a set amount of data (e.g., a video file) much faster than an Internet connection with a lower bandwidth.

**BEO:** An abbreviation for banquet event order. A form used by hotels to provide details to personnel concerned with a specific food and beverage function or event room setup. These details include final menus, agreed-upon room setups, specific timing and agendas, staffing details, etc. Also referred to as EO.

**Bid:** A proposal submitted by a hotel or other supplier to an event organizer that includes detailed specifications such as dates, rates, concessions, etc.

**Block of Rooms:** A number of rooms, seats or space reserved in advance for a group. Also referred to as a Room Block.

**Break:** A short interval between sessions at which time coffee, tea and/or other refreshments are served.

**Buffet:** An assortment of foods, offered on a table, self-served.

**C**

**Canapé:** A small, prepared and usually decorative food, held in the fingers and often eaten in one bite.

**Cancellation:** Provision in a contract that outlines damages to be paid to the non-canceling party if cancellation occurs due to the canceling party's breach of the contract.

**Catering:** The provision of food and beverages.

**Change Order:** A facility form to advise departments of changes in reservations or functions.

**Concessions:** A contractual agreement in which one party provides something of value to the other party in exchange for something else, pending certain conditions.

**Conference Handbook:** A manual that provides information about a conference, including descriptions of programs, agendas, schedules of events, information on participants, speaker notes and logistical information. Also referred to as a Spec Book.

**Confidence Monitor:** An LCD screen on the floor near the stage that allows speakers to view their slides and/or notes as they’re being presented to the audience. Also referred to as Downstage Monitor or DSM.

**Continental Plan:** A room rate that includes a continental breakfast.

**Covers:** The actual number of meals served at a catered-meal function or in a restaurant.

**CrowdCompass by Event:** A customizable app that allows attendees to go paperless and view real-time content like event agendas, speaker bios, presentations and property information right from their mobile device.

**Cut-off Date:** A designated date when the facility will release a block of sleeping rooms to the general public. The date is typically three to four weeks before the event. The release of rooms does not always relieve you of liability for your guest-room block.

**D**

**Day Rate:** For equipment, "day rate" refers to the rental rate for the day (a day is considered 24 hours). For labor, it's the amount you pay a technician for the day (depending on the market, a "day" can be from 8 to 10 hours).

**Delay Screens:** Screens placed halfway back in the event space to allow people seated at a distance from the stage to see more clearly and have the main screen content "repeated." Also referred to as Repeaters.

**Delays:** Speakers located halfway back from the stage in an event space.
DMC: An abbreviation for destination management company. A professional services company possessing extensive local knowledge, expertise and resources, specializing in the design and implementation of events, activities, tours, transportation and program logistics.

Drayage: Delivery of exhibit materials from the dock to an assigned exhibit space, removal of empty crates, return of crates after the event for re-crating, and delivery of materials back to dock for carrier loading.

DSM: An abbreviation for downstage monitor. See Confidence Monitor.

eBill: A Westin tool that allows you to access your bill online from any location. You can quickly and easily view, download and print your bill for up to 90 days after your event, and settle the bill through the secure site.

eMenus: A website link provided by the hotel that allows meeting planners to review current and seasonal menus and make food and beverage selections.

Enhancements: Individual food items that can be added to an existing package or menu.

EO: An abbreviation for event order. See BEO.

EPO: An abbreviation for each pays own. Charges to be paid directly by individual guests rather than billed to the master account. Also referred to as Pay Own or IPO (individual pays own) and Master Account.

European Plan: A room rate that does not include meals.

Event Portfolio: A web-based application available at most Westin hotels that replaces emails and paper-based planning.

F&B: An abbreviation for food and beverage. This may be used in reference to your menu or to the food and beverage team at the hotel.

Family Style: A sit-down meal at which dishes of food are placed on the table, allowing diners to serve themselves.

Fixed Seating: Chairs in event rooms that are permanently affixed to the floor.

Floor Order: An order for exhibitor services placed on-site after exhibit setup begins. Usually more expensive than an advance order. See also Advance Order.

Force Majeure: An “act of God” or event (e.g., war, labor strike, extreme weather) that cannot be reasonably anticipated or controlled by either party.

Force Majeure Clause: Part of a contract that limits liability should a force majeure make performance by a party impractical or impossible.

Front Projection: Matte-white screen with a projector situated in the audience or in front of the screen.

GFX: Graphics. Either PowerPoint (PPT) or Keynote coming from the GFX machines.

GOBO: A pre-cut, etched pattern fabricated from metal or glass that fits in the focal pane of a lighting instrument to form projected light into a shape (e.g., a logo, graphic or even scenery). Templates can form light images on ceilings and walls. The pattern or template can be used in a projection.

Grab and Go: Pre-packed boxes containing food items and a drink, often used for instances when attendees need to eat on the go.

Green Room: Room stocked with refreshments for artists, featured speakers and entourage to meet guests and media representatives. Also referred to
as a Holding Room or Ready Room.

**Group Rate:** Confirmed rate extended to attendees booking their sleeping room accommodations as part of a group room block.

**Guarantee:** A promise or commitment to provide a minimum amount of food and beverage, sleeping rooms or other revenues. There is usually financial liability if the commitment is not met. The final number of persons to be served is usually required three business days in advance of a food and beverage event.

**Guest Programs:** Educational and/or social events planned for spouses and guests of event participants. Also referred to as Spouse Programs.

**HD:** An abbreviation for high definition. Video content that has a screen resolution of 720x1280 pixels or higher. Most new digital content is being created in HD.

**Hosted Bar:** An arrangement in which the host pays for all drinks, either by the hour, by the bottle, by the drink or per person.

**IMAG:** An abbreviation for image magnification. Live feed from the room camera that shows the presenter and allows audience members seated at a distance to better see expressions, body language, etc.

**Image Mapping:** Projecting an image onto a three-dimensional object. Also referred to as Pixel Mapping or 3D Mapping.

**Incidentals:** Expenses other than room rate and tax, billed to a guest’s account (phone, room service, etc.).

**Inclusive Rate:** Quoted cost with no extra fees to be added. Usually includes tax and gratuity for food and beverage functions. Also referred to as Inclusive Price.

**Indemnity:** A contract clause in which one party agrees to pay damages or claims that the other party may be required to pay to another. For example, if a hotel is sued by an attendee who is injured at an event due to the fault of the group, an indemnification clause might require the group to reimburse the hotel. Sometimes the law requires one party to indemnify another even without a specific clause. Generally, the terms of the clause take precedence over state law.

**IPO:** An abbreviation for individual pays own. See EPO.

**ISO:** An abbreviation for isolated records. A video recording that includes only what the camera sees during an event or presentation. See also Program Records.

**Labor:** A method of charging for services on a time-spent plus actual-cost-of-materials basis. Also referred to as Time and Materials.

**LED:** A flat-panel display that uses an array of light emitting diodes as pixels for video display. LEDs are very bright and come in square modules that click together.

**Liquidated Damages:** The agreement between parties at the time of contract formation about what the consequences of a breach will be. Usually, a reasonable estimate of the hotel’s potential losses, factoring in its ability to mitigate its losses through resale.

**Load In/Out:** Scheduled times for crew to load and unload.

**Lumens:** A measure of the total amount of visible light emitted from a projector. The brighter the light, the shaper the image. Rooms that are larger and naturally brighter require brighter projectors.
Master Account: A record of transactions during an event for which the resulting balance is paid directly by the group. May include room, tax, incidentals, food and beverage, AV equipment, decor, etc. Also referred to as Master Bill.

Minimum: The smallest number of covers and/or beverages served at a catered event. A surcharge may be added to the client's bill if the minimum is not reached.

Minimum Revenue: The minimum amount of revenue expected by the hotel based on room and meal counts. If not met, attrition charges may apply.

MIR: An abbreviation for meeting impact report. A Westin report that recaps all the sustainable initiatives you selected and the impact of your efforts.

Modified American Plan (MAP): A room rate that includes two meals a day - usually breakfast and dinner.

On-site Specialty Events: An option available at Westin hotels that allows you to plan a memorable on-site activity for your group through your primary hotel contact. These events range from charitable giving to interactive culinary adventures.

Overset: The number of covers set over the guarantee. Paid for by the client only if actually consumed.

Passed Hors d’Oeuvres: Finger-friendly foods (or canapés) passed by servers, along with cocktail napkins.

Pay Own: See EPO.

Per Diem: An allowance for daily expenses. Usually refers to what the group reimburses an individual.

Pin Spot: A spotlight with an extremely narrow beam.

Pipe and Drape: Lightweight aluminum tubing and drapery used to separate exhibit booths/stands, staging areas and other similar locations.

Plated Service: Foods arranged on individual plates in the kitchen and then served to guests seated at a table.

Plus Plus: The addition of taxes and service charges to a price when not included, usually designated by "++.

Porterage: A charge to guests for luggage handling.

Post-stay: A type of stay in which guests stay at the hotel past the event departure date.

Pre-con Meeting: A meeting at the event facility just prior to the event beginning, typically involving the primary event organizer, representatives of the event organizer/host organization, department heads at the facility, other facility staff as appropriate, and contractors. The agenda focuses on reviewing the purpose and details of the event and making any final adjustments. Also referred to as a Pre-event Meeting.

Pre-stay: A type of stay in which guests arrive at the hotel before the event arrival date.

Prix Fixe: A multicourse meal at a set per-person price.

Pro Forma Invoice: An estimated invoice sent to meeting planners in advance of the event, detailing the scope of services to be provided and associated costs. Also referred to as an Event Estimator.

Program Records: A video recording that includes all content sent to screens (such as GFX, IMAG and video) during an event or presentation. See also ISO.

Proposal: A communication sent by a supplier to a potential customer detailing the supplier’s offerings and prices.
**R**

**Rack Rate:** A facility’s standard, pre-established guest room rates.

**Rear Projection:** A translucent screen with a projector situated behind the screen and hidden from the audience’s view.

**Reception:** A stand-up social function at which beverages and light foods are served. Foods may be presented on small buffet tables or passed by servers. May precede a meal function.

**Repeaters:** See Delay Screens.

**Reservation Connect:** A Westin tool that helps event planners manage their attendees’ reservation details and automatically uploads room lists into the hotel’s reservation system.

**Reservation Crosscheck:** A Westin tool that compares event registration lists with an in-house guest room reservation list in minutes. It also provides real-time views of room-block performance, including room nights, cancellations and total associated revenue.

**RFP:** An abbreviation for request for proposal. A document that stipulates what services the organization wants from an outside contractor and requests a bid to perform such services.

**Rider:** An additional clause in a contract stipulating special requirements.

**Rigging:** The process of attaching the cable on a crane to a piece of machinery or equipment. Also referred to as Rigging Points.

**Room Block:** See Block of Rooms.

**Rooming List:** A list, either printed or electronic, by which an event organizer and/or their designates deliver multiple reservations to a hotel. This includes arrival and departure dates and room requirements for guests.

**Run of Show (ROS):** Also called cue sheet or show flow. A document that communicates to the A/V crew what they will be doing and when. It’s a minute-by-minute document with every cue written in.

**S**

**SD:** An abbreviation for standard definition. Any image with a resolution that’s lower than 720x1280 pixels.

**Second Option:** Second place on a waiting list. The organization holding the second option for specific dates at a facility, for example, may book those dates only if the organization holding the first option decides not to book within a certain period of time.

**Service Charge:** A mandatory and automatic amount added to standard food and beverage charges – usually to defray the cost of labor, such as housemen, servers, technicians, etc. – of which the facility receives a portion of the charge. In return, the meeting planner is relieved of responsibility for tipping.

**Signage:** All informational and directional signs and placards at an event.

**Spec Book:** See Conference Handbook.

**SPG Pro:** A Starwood program that allows meeting and event planners to earn Starpoints and elite status for their professional bookings. Learn more at spg.com/pro.

**Spouse Programs:** See Guest Programs.

**StarGroups Customized Event Websites:** Complimentary custom websites for your meeting or event at a Westin or Starwood hotel.
**Starwood ProMeetings App:** A mobile or tablet application that allows meeting planners to submit real-time, on-site requests directly to the hotel’s central response system.

**Stations:** Similar to the buffet concept, but tables are broken out by food concept/item.

**Step and Repeat:** An area with a publicity backdrop used primarily for event photography. Brand logos or emblems are printed in a repeating pattern on the backdrop, visible to individuals standing in front of the banner or wall.

**Tech Through:** A technical rehearsal during which the stage manager calls every cue in order to ensure that the crew knows what to do when and that all content plays back without glitches.

**Throw Distance:** The distance between a projector and the image on the screen.