



# International Caterers Association

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## Peer to Peer Learning – ICA Roundtable

*Who makes your Kitchen, warehouse and packing production sheets?*

Michael Smith – June 19, 2015

**Q: Who makes your Kitchen and/or Warehouse/Packing production sheets?**

**Right now we have our sales/planning team doing both of them. I am working on changing that, but it is a challenge to get the kitchen to understand caterease, and dont like paying chefs to sit in the office more than we need to... but I think we should make this change**

**A: Danni Rae Rodriguez Becker-** I am a very small operation, but I have someone just for that position. When he is not packing, he is organizing or unpacking deliveries, etc. He also helps out in the kitchen with prep and dishwashing or whatever is needed to keep him busy. He is in charge of all set up/break down onsite so everything runs smoothly. He is also in charge of ensuring our stocked van stays organized.

**Heidi Dietel Brice-** Caterease does them, Ops and Culinary have saved queries with appropriate criteria. Do you have prep areas defined and required items within each food item?

**Fernando Asencio-** I think Margot Jones can give Good info. A in 2013 Her chef gave a talk And It was really Good

**Roy Porter-** It is best not to have the sales reps make the packing king list for at least two reasons:

1. The time to make the list(s) takes away from bringing in revenue. So making the list is very, very expensive process when lost revenue is considered. Keep sales people selling. Making packing lists could cost you \$3-5-10-20K a month.

2. Have seen many instances where the salespeople added items to the packing list that were not charged to the client. Because there is not a checks and balances process. The little stuff OK. It's ovens, tables, chairs, generators etc. It all adds up.

I don't mind letting sales reps look at the list, It helps them to sell, plan, bill better, and catches the surprises before getting on site.

As for Caterease; there is some packing list capabilities. It's not perfect though getting better. Many caterers have created a template that the kitchen works off so they are not distracted with all the other

notes. However someone responsible from the kitchen needs to review the entire BEO before prepping begins.

**Michael Smith-** Roy, I agree 100%. It's one of those things that we just always did... so we never thought to change. Now we are in a place that some of the changes are going to be hard to make. I hope to have systems in place by the end of July.

**Kevin Lacassin-** Our operations team does the FOH packing and lists. Our culinary team does all of the BOH packing and lists.

**Margot Jones-** Sales reps do their own packing lists because they know how the party is going to be styled. We use TPP for our packing lists so they aren't that difficult. We have a production meeting for full service events and culinary decides what needs to be added for the BOH and adds to packing list. Operations packs everything.

**Kelly Early-** Again we need to talk smile emoticon I fell like your my little brother smile emoticon.

**Kelly Early-** And FYI, my Caterease packing list do end up perfect.

**Michael Smith-** Dang it Kelly Early... Since I'm stuck in Cleveland for a few months, why don't you come visit me!

**Kelly Early-** I thought about saying that 😊

**Kim Lauria-** I have total party planner and thinking of changing how do you like caterease, I do not fine my packing lists helpful with total , life should get easier with software not harder

**Ken Barrett-** Our sales people sell and have a team of producers behind them that are assigned to the event as it turns from prospective (inquiry) to tentative (deposit received but details still need to be ironed out). They are introduced as part of the team and are on all email and phone communication. Sometimes they take over after the contract is signed. For larger events, the sales person is still in contact, but the PA takes the lead. All \$\$ discussions are made with the sales planner. The producers make the list- even for the BOH after the first BEO meeting when the event is introduced- usually 10 days out. All lists are done in Caterease -some parts are auto created, others through styling and chef requests. The week of the event, at the BEO meeting further discussions are made and corrections made by operations. In regards to Caterease, the list is only as bad as the person who puts it in.

**Rosinne Chlala-** Our chefs write and review production sheets based on what sales has sold which lives in TPP. We review together what has been promised the client to make sure we hit all the marks. TPP holds the packing list for all but food from the rental list sales creates when they create a preliminary proposal..

**Kelly Early-** AMEN Ken!!!!

**Jim Israel-** Ken's approach is my first choice. If you company can support it let the sales people sell and let creativity and operations items fall on planners. I have even seen companies that hire a single event designer who creates packing lists along with the warehouse manager for all aspects of the event. Kim,

as for software there are a lot of choices, which one is right for you really depends on the size of your company, and what type of features you need to support the operation that you have already built. Synergy, Caterease, Total Party Planner are used by the vast majority of caterers who purchase software. Each of these products provides solutions in very different ways.

**Jim Israel-** In addition you can find success with all of the products, but success with software requires taking the time to understand what it can do for you, deciding how you want to use it, inputting data (typically about 7000 line items), training your crew to properly run the software and then and most importantly putting a plan in place to actually maintain your database so it remains reliable over the years.

**Jim Israel-** Successful implementation of any software program that manages; food, staff, equipment, beverages, misc revenue items, handles AR and deposits, produces operational reports and also produces WORD/Powerpoint style slick proposals can take anywhere from 700 to 1200 hours of company time. I am sure there are a lot of people in this forum that will tell you my time estimate is actually conservative.

**Kelly Early-** Amen Jim, but all must also know that putting that much time into making your software function is absolutely worth it when it's all said and done.