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**Event Planning**

# Avoid pitfalls of using a non-traditional location for your event

San Antonio Business Journal - August 11, 2006 by [Jean James](#)

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When planning a meeting, your first instinct would probably lead you to a traditional location, such as a hotel ballroom or a country club. These venues generally have an assigned staff person whose only job is to handle all the details of a party. But there are plenty of other options. Non-traditional locations include block parties, office foyers, museums, churches, and city-owned locations (such as parks and plazas). But beware -- when reserving space at these locations, all the planning and detail management are up to you alone.

When "on your own" at a non-traditional location, avoid these pitfalls during the planning process:

**Pitfall No. 1 -- The Caterer:** Most events require food, beverages, tables, chairs, and linens. Make sure your preferred caterer can provide services at the location.

Find out if the caterer's liquor license (or lack of one) impacts your beverage plans. If the caterer doesn't have a license, ask the venue if you can bring in your own liquor.

If the caterer will only bring in a buffet line for one hour and then leave, you'll need to plan for clean-up and disposition of the tables, chairs, and linens.

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Check on liability insurance requirements, especially if you're bringing in your own liquor.

Your caterer will need to know details on power availability (for carving stations, an ice machine, etc.) and availability of parking for catering trucks.

Pitfall No. 2 -- The Entertainment: Check on the city's noise ordinance and its impact on your selected location. You may discover issues with an outdoor band or DJ. Also, most entertainment providers have specific power requirements, so coordinate these between the venue and the provider.

If you're planning on having dancing, make sure the location is suitable for dancing (uneven surfaces such as grass or uneven paving stones can produce falls and injuries).

Pitfall No. 3 -- The Decor: Check with the venue to determine their rules on attaching items to the walls, floor, etc. If the event is outside, make sure to address wind and weather issues, so your guests aren't in danger from flying objects.

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