



The Riddlesbrood

TOURING THEATRE COMPANY

Hot Tips Check List!!!

Help us make your event a smash!

We have a few suggestions to help ensure that your event runs smoothly, as well as some tips to give you every advantage.

- The Venue**
- The Room**
- Table Layout**
- Food Service**
- Final Touches**

Now that you are in the planning stages, we would like to make a few recommendations that can make a good event a great event! The Riddlesbrood Touring Theater Company has performed over 1500 shows so you can rely on our experience, however it is important to remember that we control only the show itself, so event success can also be influenced by many other factors that are not under our control. Paying a little attention to some of these factors can make all the difference. It is also important to remember that these are only recommendations, sometimes circumstances may necessitate that you skip some of these details, we understand that. So if you're unable to implement some of these suggestions, don't worry, we can adapt to any situation. However, if this is your first time setting up an event with us, then much of this information will be of great use to you!

866-276-6399

The Check List in Greater Detail

The following information is meant to serve as a helpful guide for you in the weeks preceding your event. Some of these suggestions you may already be thinking of, and some may be new to you. Either way, take what you like, discard what you find irrelevant, but we hope that this information will be a helpful resource for you. Alternatively, if you're working with a banquet manager, event coordinator or similar person at the venue, please give us their contact information and we can go over these details with them on your behalf.

1] Your Venue: Choosing the right location for your event is the first and most important step in ensuring that your event is a smash. If you have not done so already, we always recommend choosing a restaurant, banquet facility, Hall, etc. that is both easy to find and has a good reputation for service. This sounds like a no brainer, but ask your friends. Have they had a bad experience? You might be surprised, so don't let the ghosts of a bad encounter haunt your event. We can provide you with a list of venues that we have used over the years to help you with this. Also, make every attempt to select a venue that has management who is easy and pleasant to work with, this should be a fun process! If they are difficult during the opening stages of your relationship, they will be difficult at the event as well. Below is a list of some particularly important questions to keep in mind:

- Is the facility easy for your guests to find?
- Is there sufficient parking for your guests?
- Is there handicapped access?
- Is the facility available on the days that would be optimal for your event?

2] The Room: Your event space is probably the most important of your decisions. This may vary based on the type of event you are doing and the number of guests expected, but in general we recommend using a room that has a wide open floor plan with little or no obstructions to viewing the entertainment. It is also important that the room be generally rectangular or square in shape. Try to avoid rooms that are "L", circular shaped or unusually orientated as some of your guests may have trouble seeing all of the show. Also:

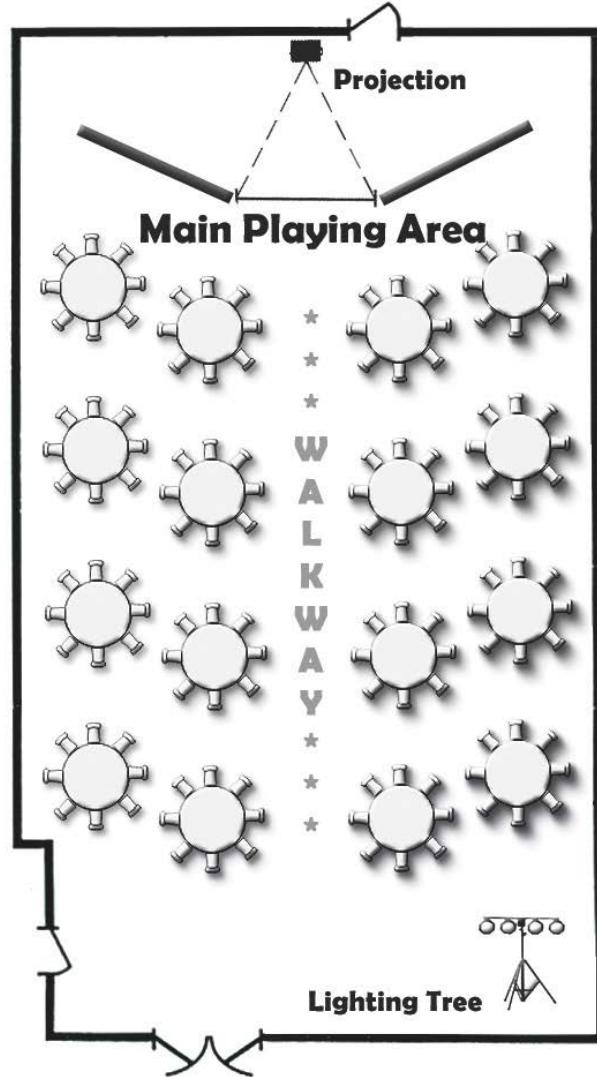
- Does the room have pillars, columns, or "half walls" that might obstruct views?
- Does the room have windows? We always try to provide a properly lit area for all of the guests to view and enjoy the show. However, rooms with large glass windows, and no curtains to block outside light could create increased challenges for proper stage lighting, which could make it more difficult to set the ambience.
- Are the ceilings very low? Unusually low ceilings (*7ft or lower*) can make setting up the equipment difficult. This occurs mostly in older buildings if your booking a room in a basement, or attic.
- Are the ceilings extraordinarily high? Unusually lofty rooms with cathedral, a-frame or domed ceilings can be troublesome for acoustical reasons. The echo of rooms like this will require a sound technician as well as wireless body microphones for the actors, especially for larger audiences. This seems to occur mostly with churches, temples, or public buildings.
- Do you know the Maximum Occupancy? You want to make sure that there will be enough room for your guests and the show. A good rule of thumb is to figure 16 people under the maximum occupancy (*Approximately 2 tables of 8*) If you're doing a buffet, try to figure 24 under the maximum (*If the buffet table will be in the room*)
- Is the room carpeted? If the room has hard flooring such as wood, tile or stone, make sure to let us know as this may affect the acoustics, especially with larger audiences. Rooms with hard surface walls (*Like stone or painted cinder block*) should also be avoided if the audience is a larger one.
- Is the lighting in the room on a dimmer? If at all possible, try to find a room where the lights can be dimmed to create a more elegant mood. These little touches can make all the difference!

3] Table Layout: The way the tables are arranged will generally be dictated by the room itself, and the number of guests expected. That being said, you should insist that the tables be configured with priority on the show, not set up simply at random. Tables are best laid out in rows, and columns almost like a checker board. (*See Figure below*)

The show should be performed at one end of the room, and the guests seated like a movie theater, where everyone faces the screen. This allows everyone to look in the same direction to enjoy the show. Below are some particularly important questions to keep in mind:

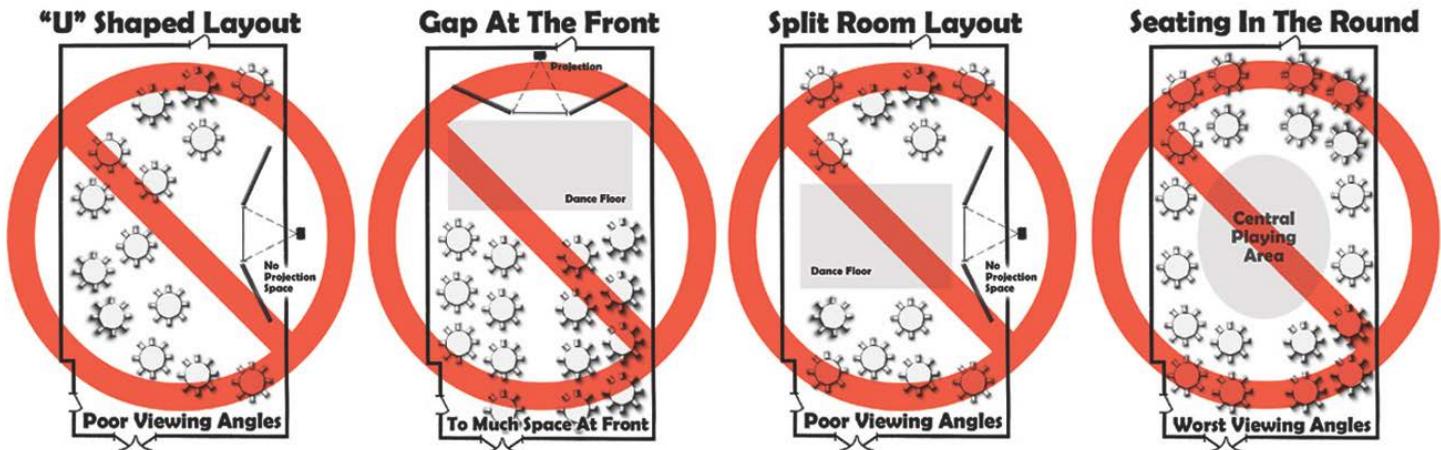
- Will everyone have a good view? One should avoid using “horseshoe” or “U” style layouts that leave a large open gap in the middle of the room. These configurations force the audience to look at the actors back, or side instead of seeing them straight on. (*See “Most Common Mistakes” below*)
- Are candles permitted on the tables? Candles are one of those small things that goes a long way! They look great, and help illuminate the table, while allowing the house lights to be lower. Candles keep the magic in your event!
- Is there space between the tables? Placing the tables tightly together may allow the venue to squeeze in more seats, but it will make the event less comfortable for both your guests and the wait staff. In addition to this, the actors interact with the crowd, and need to be able to move about the room freely to get everyone involved. Ensure that no one in your group gets left out, allow for some space.
- Will there be centerpieces on the tables? If so, do not make them more than 12 inches high. A room filled with high center pieces can obstruct the views and annoy people during the show. Be careful with balloons as well.
- Is there a dance floor? If so, (*and it will not be used later*), ask to have it removed. If this cannot be done, let them know that it is not needed for our show. Check with them to make sure you can place tables on it. Do not allow them to set your room up in a undesirable pattern simply because of this. In our experience, only 1 in 20 places will care about placing tables on the dance floor, but some do. It is best to check to make sure.

Sample Room Layout



Most Common Mistakes in Table Layout

To guarantee that your event goes as smoothly as possible, be aware of the danger signs. Often restaurants and banquet facilities may not be used to setting up for a performance and it benefits you that we educate them.



"U" Shaped Layout- This is a bad way to set up the tables because the audience is spread out thinly around the playing area. This means that if actors move forward, the people seated on the outside tables will be watching the actor's backs 80% of the time. This will result in guests avoiding these seats at best, or if they are forced to sit there, complaints at worst.

Gap At The Front- It is unwise to allow a great distance to exist between the stage and the guest's tables; mostly because the actors will be far away from the audience. The shows that we perform are comedies and are very audience interactive; the actors are trained to engage the audience to give them a lot of attention. If there is a lot of space separating the actors from the guests, the intimacy is gone and humor is less effective. Let the actors play to the audience and your group will have a great time!

Split Room Layout- This is an extremely ill advised way to orient the tables for your event. A split room generally occurs when the room is long and narrow and the facility wishes us to perform in the middle. It can also exist if a dance floor is in the center and they do not want tables on it. The unfortunate result of this is that the actors have to play to one side or the other, but cannot play to both. This situation can often result in one side of the room feeling neglected. We HIGHLY recommend preventing the facility from subjecting your event to this kind of adverse layout.

Seating In The Round- Of all of the possible layouts, this is probably the most important to avoid. Seating in the round exists when the tables are positioned in a circular formation, and the show is intended to be performed in the middle. The main reason this is detrimental is that there is no room to set up our equipment, as we are surrounded on all sides with customers, the next reason is that it is impossible to light the playing area, since the lighting instruments would shine into people eyes. Lastly, the actors will only be able to play to 30% of the audience, while the rest look at the actors backs for most of the show. Do everything possible to avoid this. It is important to note that this applies only to Standard and Deluxe Packages which require equipment to be set up. Budget Package shows with a small intimate crowd can play in the round without difficulty. If you have questions about this, give your salesperson a call.

Questions?

If you are unsure about table layout, or suspect an issue, please give us a call so we can prepare for it.

4] Buffet, Sit Down or Family Style: When planning your event, keep in mind that the manner of the food service will also dictate the pace of the show. Depending on how you decide to feed everyone, there are several ways in which we can work with the food service plans. Below are the most common styles:

1. **Buffet:** Doing a buffet is a common way to do a dinner theater event. In this case, it is usual for us to perform the show completely through, as opposed to breaking it up into acts. A typical evening itinerary might look like this-
 - a. Buffet opens
 - b. Lines dwindle down to a few people
 - c. We give a 10 minute warning
 - d. Perform the show
2. **Sit-Down Meal:** Doing a sit-down style is great for a dinner theater event, especially in a restaurant setting. In these cases, you have a few more options. Depending on the number of courses, we can break the show up so that your guests are entertained in between courses. A typical evening itinerary might look like this-
 - a. Customers are seated
 - b. 1st course is served
 - c. We perform a short “teaser” scene lasting 10-15 minutes
 - d. Entrée is served
 - e. We perform the main section of the show
 - f. Dessert is served
 - g. We finish the show

5] Tipping Actors: Sometimes clients feel that the actors’ performance was good enough to give them a tip. This is fine; however it is best to follow the following industry expectations.

- If you desire to leave a tip, it is recommended that you give the money to the actors themselves in cash and not to include it on the check.
- If you wish to give a tip to a specific actor only, give it to them personally and discreetly.
- If you want the actors to split the tip, give it to the team leader and he will pool the tip among all of the actors.

6] Competing Entertainment: Be careful not to over book entertainment for your event. Although it may seem counter intuitive, having multiple amusements going on at the same time is often more harm than good. (*With the exception of fairs, tradeshows.*) Instead of people having a better time, instead often it creates a “Competition” where invariably the loudest wins. This can impact the show in a negative way. Examples of this can be a DJ, face painter, photo booth, cartoonist, comics and the like occurring at the same event. Different types of entertainment have different energies and moods. A few examples of common issues are the following:

- A DJ playing dance music prior to the show. This creates a high energy environment right away and creates a party mood too early. The audience may decide that they want to keep dancing and not watch a show, the result will be complaints and problems.
- A photo-booth being used during or just prior to a show. People leaving the show to get their pictures taken is not only disruptive but can negatively impact the psychology of an event. It results in a “Vote of no confidence” in the show and presents the impression that the show is not “Popular”. With some audiences, especially teenagers, this will create an environment where leaving seems “Cool”.
- An open bar in another room. Yes, even this can sometimes be a problem if key people in the group decide that it’s more “cool” to sit at the bar.

7] Prepping your

Audience: While Riddlesbrood and our actors will do everything in our power to deliver a great show to you and your audience, it is important to understand that live entertainment can be largely effected by the audience themselves. Ensuring that your group conducts themselves with some general Theater Etiquette is very important. Below are some of the most important audience behaviors which can negatively impact your event:



Talking during the Performance: A theatrical performance must be

heard to be enjoyed. It is IMERATIVE that the audience refrains from talking during the performance. As obvious as this may seem, it may be important to remind your group of this, especially if your group contains large amounts of teens, children or if your event is "Compulsory" such as a company meeting. If talking becomes excessive it will likely cause great disruption.

Heckling: The shows that we perform are improvisational and interactive. We may take people from the audience as volunteers and include them. Your group should feel free to have honest reactions to what is happening around them. It's ok to laugh, applaud and enjoy the performance. Applause is anticipated after a good joke or funny word play. However it is important that you're group respect basic and common sense boundaries and not overdo it. Everyone knows what it is like when a "loud mouth" becomes insulting, disrespectful or offensive. If you feel that your group may be prone to this, be ready to intervene, speak to them and prevent them from becoming a disruption. If hecklers are not deterred early, then the behavior will be considered acceptable and others may join them, unlimitedly ruining the event for the rest of your guests.

Expectations: Make sure that the show is right for you and your audience. Everyone has different tastes in humor, from Jerry Lewis to Seinfeld. Dinner theater and murder mystery entertainment (*And Riddlesbrood in particular*) focuses on interaction, comedy and exciting jokes and wordplay. We invite you to visit our YouTube page and experience some of your antics in action! <http://www.youtube.com/user/ClydeRiddlesbrood>

The Shows "Rating": We perform at nightclubs, churches and for adults; children and everything in between. Let us know what you feel is the appropriate limitation of more mature subject matter. While no cursing ever takes place in our shows, there are lines that may contain double meanings with sexual overtones. If your group is composed of a wild drinking crowd you may not care, however if your group is more sensitive just let us know and we can adjust the content accordingly.

8] Other Details: There are some other small but important details that can really add to an event. Below are some particularly important details to keep in mind:

- Make sure people are seated from front to back. Sometimes people will come into the room from the back and fill the tables from rear to front. The problem with this is that it can leave the front tables empty. For both lighting and psychological reasons this can have a negative impact on your event. As our shows are comedies, and interactive, empty tables hamper the actor's ability to work with the audience up close, which often can result in less contagious laughter. One of our actors will also be present during seating to help ensure that this does not happen.
- If you're going to be thinking of having a DJ, WAIT! For only \$100 we can DJ the event as well. Why? For starters, the equipment that we bring is a high quality DJ sound system anyway, so it's already there. Also, the group will have a relationship with the actors by then, and will enjoy working with them. In addition there are some logistical factors, such as placement of equipment. If you're going to have another DJ, it will be difficult for them to set up their equipment or they may have to set it up during the event. Save yourself some aggravation, and allow us to DJ the event. Your will be happy you did.
- Is the event meant as a prestige-builder? If you're looking to add even more excitement, consider using some extra walk-around characters for your event. These actors can mingle with your guests prior to the show (Such as a cocktail hour) and perform other fun and exciting things like open doors as guest arrive, escort them to their tables, etc.

For More Information

We invite you to visit our Blog at:

<http://riddlesbrood-murder-mystery.blogspot.com/>

Or Call

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