

**Avoid unexpected costs by asking these key questions in advance.**

### What other fees can I expect?

- ✓ You may know the stated cost of each item on your list, but don't drop that number into the budget until you know what it includes—or excludes. "Some delivery companies have additional fees like card processing fees, transportation or facility-to-facility transfer fees, separate labor and delivery fees, and after-hours or weekend fees. When comparing prices, ensure you compare a whole quote to a whole quote."

### What is your damage policy?

- ✓ It's a simple question, but an important one—and could end up making a big difference to an event's bottom line. Make sure you know not only the damage policy, but also specifically what constitutes damage.

### What design and planning assistance do you provide?

- ✓ how much design assistance your vendor provides, and who is responsible for planning the layout ahead of the event. Does the rental company provide 2-D and 3-D models of all their products to create plans that assure everything fits into the event space? Does the rental house can provide scale floor plans or offer CAD renderings of its furniture that can be used to get an accurate depiction of spacing.

### What can be customized?

- ✓ Many hosts want every part of their event to match the message or overall theme, so knowing which items can be personalized for the occasion in advance can save time and money later. If pieces can be customized, be sure to ask whether or not a design proof will be provided for review.

### How much access will I have to train rental staff—and when?

- ✓ Aside from helping during load-in and load-out, rental staff can also assist with time-sensitive needs that may come up during the event. Make sure you double-check your rental contract for any phone numbers you may need during your set up.

### Do you have what I need nationwide?

- ✓ If you're planning an event as part of a larger series across the country, make sure your rental house can supply the same or similar pieces for the entire run. "If doing multiple events nationwide, ask if the rental company can provide the same furniture in every major market in the United States for a consistent brand message," suggests Dana.

### What's new in stock?

- ✓ Ask what's new in the rental provider's inventory: even if it's not what you need for the event at hand, it may spark ideas for your next big project. "We welcome clients into our warehouse to view our collection," he says. "It can be beneficial to see the furniture in person for the current event you're planning, but it also gives you the opportunity to mentally catalog items for future events as well."

### What's your style specialty?

- ✓ If you're specifically looking for a certain aesthetic or niche design style, ask up front if your rental company has a solid inventory of the kind of pieces you'll need. "Oftentimes boutique furniture rental organizations collect and curate around a certain aesthetic," Williams says. "If you're looking for mid-century or modern furniture, for instance, you'll want to check with specialty firms."

