10 Surprising Ways Great Coffee Can Elevate Your Event

So you're fed up with lackluster coffee at events like yours.

The kind of coffee you gulp down, wishing you hadn't poured yourself a full cup. Or the kind you smother with creamer because of its burnt taste.

You'd love to make your event sparkle. Serving finely crafted coffee to your guests sounds like a silver bullet. Except it's expensive. Way more than say, dumping some supermarket grounds in a 100-cup pot and plugging it in.

We get it. But you'd be surprised how many people who initially balked at the idea tell us how glad they are that they chose coffee catering.

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PROPELLER

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1. Leave a lasting impression.

Trust us. Surprise your guests with extraordinary coffee, and they'll be talking about your event with fondness long after it's over. Take Drew Byers, our client turned friend.

The case of Drew Byers

Drew hosts an annual business conference called "Ploughshares" for Christian business leaders in the northwestern United States. After their first conference in 2016, Drew realized that Ploughshares needed to go on. People were thirsty for authentic interactions with other entrepreneurs who shared their values.

Drew had some very specific goals for this conference. (1) The atmosphere needed to foster connections between attendees. (2) Times of quiet and respite needed to be woven into the schedule. (3) Their guests should walk away feeling loved and taken care of at each touchpoint of the event.

Drew knew instantly what one of those touchpoints would be–good coffee, make that amazing coffee. And he knew instantly who should do it–Propeller Coffee. Drew had attended a wedding several years earlier where we catered. "Out of any wedding reception I've been to, that's the one I remember the best. I talked about it for months," he recalls. "I walked away feeling distinctly like the bride and groom really appreciated all of us guests. And Propeller Coffee fits the atmosphere perfectly. It felt like they were enjoying the wedding as much as anyone."

We've been at every Ploughshares Conference since. In a year, we'll get about a dozen calls from people who say, "I've been to Ploughshares, and I want you to serve coffee at my company event, wedding, or conference." Or sometimes the caller says, "My [brother, cousin, aunt] can't stop talking about how special Ploughshares was. Will you cater at my event?"

Word of mouth is powerful. We should know. 9 out of 10 of our clients hear about us from a friend or say they've attended an event where we catered.

2. Reduce other catering costs.

No pressure to pull out all the stops on everything. We understand that budget is a concern for most folks. But you've got options. Here are creative ways our clients have cut costs in other ways to make room on the books for catered coffee.

A simpler dinner menu
Instead of opting for a large dinner with multiple meats, a dessert bar, and a salad bar, try a simpler meal. Some of the creative and wildly delicious catering menus our clients have opted for are:

- A specialty taco dinner + triple chocolate cake and ice cream (Spinning Tacos)
    - Slow-cooked beef and chicken with fresh pico de gallo, sour cream, avocado, and cabbage topped with roasted red onions and yellow peppers. Corn salsa, rice, and black beans on the side with an optional pineapple salsa.
    - Triple chocolate cake with whipped chocolate cream and a drizzle of ganache coupled with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

- Indian rice and curry + pies and ice cream (Royal Chai)
    - Chicken simmered in a tomato sauce packed with Asia's best spices. Served over basmati rice with freshly baked flatbread. A cucumber salad and a vegetable and hummus tray on the side.
    - Cherry, pecan, and shoofly pie with vanilla ice cream.

- Chicken or beef alfredo bar + trifles (Bella Lunar)
    - Grilled chicken or beef meatballs served in an artisan white sauce over fettuccine pasta. Sauteed peppers and mushrooms on the side with fresh pesto and an Italian lettuce salad.
    - Lemon-raspberry trifle and dark chocolate mint trifle.

- Artisan soups and breads + cobbler and ice cream (Zoupity)
    - Perfect for an autumn or winter event. Serve two soups, one cream-based and one tomato-based, with artisan bread and a cheese-meat-pickles-and-olive tray on the side.
    - Warm apple-pecan cobbler with vanilla ice cream.

Choose a simple menu and you'll have extra budget space for Propeller coffee. Better yet, your guests will have appetite space for it, too.

3. Share the coffee love.

Coffee is a created good that's always surprising us with its kaleidoscope of flavors. **Sharing those flavors for God's glory is a delightful part of being human.**

If you're reading this, you're probably somebody who loves a full-bodied cup of coffee. Let's be honest. Not everybody out there has experienced noteworthy coffee, even if they're a regular coffee drinker. Introduce them.

Approximately 50,000 cups of Propeller Coffee are served per year. Want to know a secret? Per event, we try to get one non-coffee-drinker to say they enjoyed their cup. Is it happening? We don't always know. However, sometimes we do. For 6 out of every 10 events where we've served, we've heard that somebody in the crowd enjoyed coffee for the first time.

4. Bring pizzazz to the crowd.

Delicious coffee creates a buzz that goes far beyond the caffeine. But the caffeine is something. Whether you're hosting an extended wedding reception or a lengthy conference, people will thank you for the alertness boost.

5. Delight Everyone

You'll see eyes lighting up. Beelines for the coffee stand. Happy chatter. Lots of smiles. Because you can have something for everyone.

Table-to-table service
We make one kind of coffee and specialty tea that we serve table-to-table throughout the meal with optional sugar, non-dairy creamers, and cream, for those who need the trimmings.

Trailer
You pay a fee and your guests pay for their coffee at a reduced rate. Our menu includes our normal line of craft coffees, espressos, and lattes with specialty teas and bottled chocolate milk.

Coffee table packages

- **The Glide (Craft Coffees and Espressos + Specialty Teas)**
  Our line of craft coffees and espressos. We use a silky Colombian blend for our craft coffees. For lattes, we offer five classic flavor shots: vanilla, caramel, mocha, hazelnut, and almond. In addition, we offer two seasonal lattes.
- **The Wings (Hot Chocolate Bar + Cold Brews + Pour Over Coffees)**
  Pour-over coffee is the coffee available in this option. We make our hot chocolate from scratch with milk (non-dairy options are available by request), cocoa powder, chocolate bars, vanilla, and sugar. Toppings encompass whipped cream, chocolate shavings, Twix crumbles, crushed candy cane, and caramel sauce. Our cold brews come in 3 main flavors: chocolate raspberry, Irish creme, and caramel.
- **Full Flight (All stops pulled)**
  You get everything. Craft coffee, espressos, cold brew, hot chocolate bar, fruit-infused waters, specialty teas, and bottled chocolate milk.
- **Custom**
  We'll help you pick out the best options from the lists above so you can have the perfect beverage selection for your event.

6. Get 2-for-1: coffee and entertainment.

Our setup is a marriage of art and science–beautiful brewing techniques coupled with an eclectic, but stylish collection of the finest coffee instruments. The juxtaposition of wooden, copper, and glass instruments and utensils never fails to make an impression. You'll see people congregating just to watch it all unfold.

Here are a few of the big ones:

Siphon Coffee Brewer
This one will catch your eye and captivate your senses. It's our favorite instrument, too, and makes a lot of people stop to watch.

Here's how it works. Two chambers together resemble a sort of hourglass: an open cylinder on top and a round chamber below it. The bottom chamber is filled with water. As it heats, water is forced into the top chamber where it mixes with the ground coffee. As the pressure drops in the bottom chamber, the brew is sucked through a filter back down into the lower chamber. What you get is a coffee bursting with flavor and oh-so-lovely to drink.

Espresso
We use the La Marzocco Linea Classic and the La Marzocco KB90. They give us the results we expect and save us so much time at busy conferences.

Pour-Over
We love clear glass Chemex pitchers so you can see the hue and shades of the coffee. Coffee is more than taste; it's also about the experience.

7. Enjoy watching everyone else enjoy great coffee.

Is there any greater reward than seeing people enjoy what you have made possible?

“Propeller’s coffee made our reception spectacular. The coffee dazzled our guests. Seeing our guests’ faces as they lined up for Propeller Coffee made us laugh for pure joy,” says Annalisse, who married Grayson Hurst in April 2022.

Annalise and Grayson both grew up in coffee-loving homes. Many of their friends are coffee fanatics, too. But not Annalise and Grayson.

“We were baffled by the enthusiasm for coffee,” says Grayson.

In the months leading up to their wedding, their friends and families often joked about suffering through a coffee-less wedding reception. One day as Grayson and Annalise were planning together, they stumbled upon Propeller’s website.

Annalise says, “We liked Propeller immediately. It seemed the perfect way to say thank you to our friends and families who were so generous with their love and support. And we certainly felt a mischievous delight on putting the joke back on them.”

“Propeller Coffee was a huge hit. It’s one of the many great memories from our reception. A lot of our friends came up and said thank you for the coffee,” says Grayson.

And you want to know the best part? Grayson and Annalise each tried one of our signature lattes, and they were hooked. “In the end, the joke was on us because we now both love coffee, especially Propeller’s coffee,” says Annalise.

8. Be generously hospitable.

People aren’t expecting you to be so radically generous. Giving attention to a detail like the coffee you serve shows attendees that you care about how they are experiencing the occasion.

9. Show your gratitude.

Are you looking for a way to say thank you? It's your wedding, and you want your family and friends to know how much you value them. Or you're a business owner whose employees have worked extra hard to keep your business going. Serve your guests gratitude they can taste.

The case of Miller's Custom Cabinetry
2021 was a rough year for Miller's Custom Cabinetry. COVID-19 had thrown a wrench that tangled the supply chain, leaving Miller's trying to match demands without adequate materials. Two key employees had also moved out of the area. In addition, another cabinet shop opened in town and blossomed overnight.

But they pushed on, determined to get through this roadblock, as they had done before in their thirty years in business. James Miller, the owner of Miller's, says, "We've always been a stubborn lot here at Miller's, and our employees are solidly loyal. We couldn't have done it without their positive outlook and conscientious work ethic."

As 2022 progressed, the supply chain straightened out, and the work began flowing more consistently again. "We got numerous large orders that year. . . . it was like everything took a 180-degree turn. Our team had gotten close during the hard times, and so it felt like a victory for everyone every time we got a big order. You could feel the energy in the shop."

As James and his brother, Alfie, sat down to plan their 2023 Spring Banquet, James began, "Last year was special. I just feel that our banquet should reflect that somehow."

Alfie agreed. "Yes, exactly. I want our employees to know just how much we notice and appreciate their hard work and great attitudes."

They toyed with several options, but nothing quite seemed right. James says, "We gave ourselves a week to develop some ideas, but the next day Alphie came charging into the office, shouting 'I got it! Propeller Coffee Company!' I was confused, but Alphie quickly explained."

It was perfect. Coffee breaks always brought out the best conversations at work, and nobody tired of trying out a unique flavor or interesting roast.

They announced the banquet to their team, hinting broadly that something extra special was in the works this year.

The banquet was a wild success! They chose the "Full Flight" plan which brought Propeller's full coffee menu to their banquet.

Mahlon, one of Miller's long-timers says, "I enjoyed the delicious brunch, the inspirational talk, and the extra big bonus this year, but it was the coffee that blew me away."

Other employees agree. "The coffee was phenomenal." "I won't forget that 'Colonel Caramel Latte' that I drank there." "I can tell Miller's appreciates its employees. I wouldn't want to work for anyone else, that's for sure." "My family said this was the best company banquet ever."

Alphie says, "Three months later, and the guys are still talking about it. I guess I am, too. I would highly recommend Propeller Coffee for anyone's event. They were just amazing–from their creative set-up, extreme flexibility and politeness, and, of course, the best coffee I've ever tasted."

10. Feel good about where your money goes.

In addition to sourcing all of our coffees fairly, we also will give 10% of the profits from your event to a non-profit or charity of your choice. If your organization qualifies for our non-profit discount, you'll receive 10% off your invoice. Some of the causes are clients have supported are:

- **He's Got the Whole World,** an international organization dedicated to building quality homes in poor communities through local construction companies. $50,000 raised.
- **Eyes Again,** a non-profit organization in Columbia that provides prescription glasses for school-aged children. $20,000 raised.
- **In His Season,** a church-planting organization that provides funding for African missionaries who are going "into all the world." $30,000 raised.

Making your attendees feel cared for with delicious coffee and landing your event smoothly–that's why we're here. Peek at our calendar for take off or give us a call. Then pick a tier and choose the package that fits you best. Let's make this a joy flight!

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