



THE INVISIBLE ARMY BEHIND ME

No matter how good you are at your job,
you are only as good as your suppliers.

You could dream up the most exquisite concept. If your suppliers aren't up to it, the job will look lacking.

I once walked onto someone's stage to test it and put my foot through the stage. Having watched a line of over 350 metres of draping fall over just 30 minutes before doors opened, and having seen some of the dodgy stuff done on events, I not only appreciate my suppliers but also stick with the good ones.

It's so tempting when you are starting out, or working with a really tight budget, to head for the cheapest price – only to get bitten down the track. It should be noted that price does not always equate to quality. But I do know that my suppliers help me out and look after me when I need it.

It was 5pm on a Friday, we were doing a small event and the budget meant I stupidly went to the cheapest supplier for some gear. The oven that came onsite not only didn't work, but was shorting out the venue every time it got turned on. I rang the supplier who told me there was nothing they could do at this time. Time was ticking away and I had visions of guests and no food. The caterer was trying not to panic and doing relatively well, given the circumstance.

I rang my usual supplier and asked if they could help. Without missing a beat and with no remonstrations as to why I hadn't called them

first, she told me there were no vans available, but she would load an oven into her car and drive it to me in the city. She would be as quick as she could, but with traffic, it would be at least an hour. Now I was starting to panic! And not doing nearly as well as the caterer. I went to the caterer and explained the situation. Guests were due to arrive in 45 minutes.

Suddenly she smiled, made a phone call and with a wave, grabbed the trays of food put them back on the trolley and rushed off, yelling at me she would be back.

She returned 55 minutes later with hot food, the cold canapés already starting to go out and served the food as if nothing had happened. She had used another kitchen down the road at one of her other clients, to heat and cook the food.

God love her! I did that night.

I have three rules with my suppliers: I pay them as fast as I can, I always feed them on the job, and I always treat them like my clients.

It's very seldom that the client will know or see the AV company, or the people who supply the chairs and tables they sit at, or even know who made the food they are eating. They know it was organised by Eventify and that is as far as it goes, but I know that if one of my guests has a nut allergy and the kitchen served a pesto sauce underneath the fish by mistake, I am the one going to wear the egg on my face and the wrath of the client. So it is a symbiotic relationship. We can't do our job without each other.

We tend to get the accolade; however, our suppliers are the ones that make our concept happen. They help turn our vision into a reality.

I will always remember our launch event where guests were due to arrive through a long unlit corridor to get to the event space. We couldn't work out how to make the corridor work. Everything else on the night had a *raison d'être* but the corridor. I confided this to my technical director at the time. He came back five minutes later with an idea. Change the horrible fluoros for black lighting and tag the wall in fluoro black light paint. We cleared it with the venue and his rigger, who was a "tagger", grabbed a spray can of fluoro black light paint and tagged the wall with "eventify". The corridor suddenly worked and was a great segue from the outside into the event space. Collaborative save, yet again!

That invisible army of wait staff, loaders and lifters, lighting crew, florists, chefs and kitchen hands, those roving performers, truck and forklift drivers, riggers and venue managers, all of whom make us shine and ultimately make our clients happy and keep them coming back... look after them and they will look after you! **m**