



WE DON'T JUST
PROVIDE HIGH-
QUALITY CONCESSIONS
AND CATERING.
WE HELP YOU SELL IT.

Discover how Sweet Hospitality Group partners with New York City Center to provide a premium food and beverage experience for their patrons and increase their concessions and event sales



"Sweet Hospitality Group understands the sales puzzle in each part of our business, from fundraising dinners, to family-friendly events, to concessions. They bring thoughtful insight about the types of mission-driven programming that will drive concession sales and how to increase sales with our rental clients. They also work with us to make sure we have quality concessions available at multiple price points so that all of our patrons have access — especially families. On top of that, Sweet Hospitality Group understands customer service and provides an elevated customer experience like nobody else."

MICHAEL S. ROSENBERG

PRESIDENT AND CEO, NEW YORK CITY CENTER



New York City Center has three venues including a 2,257 seat mainstage theater, a 299 seat Off-Broadway theater, and 150 seat Black Box theater, as well as rehearsal studios.

HIGHLIGHTS

Challenges

In 2014, New York City Center's contract for food and beverage services was coming to an end. They were looking for a new company to partner with that could provide an elevated experience to concessions as well as top-quality catering for their formal patron dinners, annual comedy benefit, and various rental events.

Solution

Enter Sweet Hospitality Group (SHG), a premier concessionaire and caterer who specializes in providing top-tier food and beverage service to the theater industry since 1986.

Results

- Increased concessions sales by 60%, including their highest one-night total of \$42,000 at their 2023 Patrice O'Neal Comedy Benefit
- Increased number of events by 5-10 events each year
- Increased event sales by 20%
- Have an invaluable partner who provides high-touch, strategic sales and operational services to both NYCC and their clients
- Experience seamless integration between teams from SHG and NYCC
- Enhanced relationships with patrons, thanks to SHG's low staff turnover
- Rental events that meet the needs + expectations of both NYCC and their clients

CASTING CALL FOR A NEW CONCESSIONAIRE

When New York City Center (NYCC) first reached out to Sweet Hospitality Group in 2015, their contract with their food and beverage vendor was expiring.

Ideally, they were looking for a new company to partner with that could bring an elevated experience to concessions for their three theaters as well as provide top-quality catering for their formal patron dinners, annual comedy benefit, and various rental events.

What they found in Sweet Hospitality Group was a premier concessionaire and caterer who has specialized in the theater industry since 1986 — and whose staff was composed almost entirely of current, former, and aspiring performing arts professionals.

Sweet Hospitality Group knew theater. They knew food and beverage. And they knew how to create an engaging and memorable experience.

Confident that Sweet Hospitality Group could provide the fresh and professional approach they were after, New York City Center brought them on as their new food and beverage partner.



FROM MAKING AN ENTRANCE TO LEAVING AN IMPRESSION

Like any great partnership, it took a few events for both parties to thoroughly familiarize themselves with each other's staff, standards, and ways of working, but once that flow was found, New York City Center quickly saw key areas where Sweet Hospitality Group shined — and has continued to shine since 2015.

Susan Strebel, NYCC's Director of Special Events and Development Operations, and Nadine Love, NYCC's Director of Rentals and Venue Operations, both said the most notable of these areas is the premium-quality manager Sweet Hospitality Group provided them to oversee their concessions and catering operations.

“The level of service we receive through our Manager of Catering and Concessions Operations, Rainer Coloma, is truly five-star, white-glove service, and not something I've had with other vendors in concessions or catering,” Nadine said.

“Rainer is fantastic, and has been a huge component to the successful partnership we've had with Sweet Hospitality Group for all of these years,” Susan said. “Everything we appreciate and value about working with Sweet Hospitality Group stems from the way Rainer partners with us.”

For Susan, who plans and oversees New York City Center's internally-produced “grand tier” patron dinners, those major points of value include:

- How *open and responsive* Sweet Hospitality Group is to feedback
- Their *dedication* to client satisfaction and providing the best experience for their patrons
- The *complete confidence* she feels that their food and beverage service is being handled by experts



“Our dinners are pre-show, which can be a little chaotic because we’re up against a strict time frame, but Sweet Hospitality really works with us on that,” Susan said. “Rainer himself is very calm and collected and always makes the timing happen the way we need it to. **I’m at every dinner, but even if I wasn’t, I’d be really confident the event would run successfully.**”



“Rainer is also very open to feedback. When we come to him with a need or a suggestion, he’s committed to doing whatever it takes to make it better the next time, and he also makes it easy and comfortable to maintain an open conversation about how to create the best experience for our patrons. I really appreciate that.”

Sweet Hospitality Group’s ability to provide an elevated customer experience is something that NYCC’s President and CEO, Michael Rosenberg, loves as well — and one he

experienced personally before coming to New York City Center in 2022.

“I was first introduced to Sweet Hospitality Group years ago when I went to see Moulin Rouge,” Mike said. “I went to the VIP lounge and **was completely knocked out by the whole experience:** the way the lounge was designed, the menu, and the service. It was completely amazing. So when I came to NYCC, I was so happy that Sweet Hospitality Group was already entrenched here.

“The way their staff is trained, the way they serve people, and the food and drinks they’re serving elevates the entire experience. I’m very familiar with fundraising catering, and the menus that their Executive Chef, Wilson Giampietri, puts together for the grand-tier dinners are really great. The food is fresh and

interesting, and the care he takes with the menu and the quality of the ingredients makes it a special night.”

For Nadine, who oversees concessions as well as catering for client rentals, the points of value she appreciates about Sweet Hospitality are vast.

On the concessions side, she loves that the quality of their snacks and beverages are higher than most other vendors; that they’re creative in matching cocktail options and snack displays to their venue and event; and that they’re committed to sustainability and reducing drink cup waste.

She also noted how seamlessly Sweet Hospitality’s staff integrates with her in-house team during performances and intermissions, and how their staff’s very low turnover allows them to develop ongoing relationships with their regular patrons.

“When Sweet Hospitality is in our venue they work beautifully with our house manager and team,” Nadine said. “They have an amazing staff that takes such pride in their work, and it’s created a wonderful collaboration between us.”

“We’ve also had the same bar manager for quite a while now, along with several bartenders, some of whom bartend every night in our Patrons Lounge,” Nadine said. “Over time they’ve gotten to know many of our patrons and what they like, which **ultimately creates a warmer atmosphere for everyone overall.**”

On the catering side, Nadine said she greatly values the extent that Rainer goes to to ensure their rental clients have an experience that exceeds their expectations.



“A lot of our clients attend dinners at The Plaza, so being able to compete to that standard is important,” Nadine said.

“Rainer knows how to add value for our clients and create a great client experience. He arranges the florals,

chooses the colors and the linens, and advises on ways to make the floor plans visually interesting. We love that the artistic elements and menus are up to the standard our clients are looking for, and that their entire staff is **committed to continually elevating the level of service they provide.**”



A SHOW-STOPPING COLLABORATION THAT RESULTS IN MORE SALES

Yet of all of the benefits that have come with their partnership, perhaps the most impactful is **Sweet Hospitality Group's dedication to helping New York City Center increase its sales** — both in concessions and events.

That dedication stems from both the extensive sales knowledge they've gathered from nearly 40 years in business, as well their eagerness to collaborate and innovate with NYCC to create new opportunities for revenue.

In regards to concessions, that's looked like:

- *Facilitating* the addition of extra bars for sold out events
- *Increasing* the speed and efficiency of ordering
- *Streamlining* logistics around crowd control and lines

“The more money we make in concessions, the bigger the percentage we get back, so I'm very interested in figuring out ways to increase sales,” Nadine said. “Sweet Hospitality Group has been very open to helping me do that.

“They've facilitated adding extra bars for our annual Patrice O'Neal Comedy Benefit, increasing bar coverage, and adjusting lines to make them move faster so we can serve more people.

Basically any time I come to them with an idea for making more money, they're open and ready to collaborate. It feels like we're all on the same team trying to make things happen.”

Michael said he also appreciates their willingness to make concessions more accessible at certain performances.



“One of our goals is to increase accessibility to our programming, which extends to making a portion of our concessions accessible, too. Sweet Hospitality Group is very open to working with us on that, and creating concession options that work for families or individuals who don’t have a lot extra to spend.

“Many food and beverage companies won’t even think about doing that, but Sweet Hospitality Group does because **they look at the bigger picture**. They may make less money on a family snack pack, but if it

elevates the customer experience and creates more demand overall it’s a good thing.”

As far as rental catering, Nadine said Sweet Hospitality Group’s sales expertise has been instrumental in giving their clients the best possible experience within their budget.

“For our rental events, I fully rely on Sweet Hospitality Group to maximize our catering sales, and they are very skilled at stretching the client’s budget, suggesting upsells, and making sure we’re creating the best event, both for us and for our clients.”

“Our clients really appreciate Sweet Hospitality Group’s ability to match whatever their budget is and they feel they do a great job of adding value for them.”

Sweet Hospitality Group’s strategic sales ability has extended beyond guidance and expertise — it’s also produced results.



The concessions sales from their 2023 Patrice O’Neal Comedy Benefit were the highest New York City Center had ever seen, totalling \$42,000.

“The highest we’d ever done was \$36,000 in one night, so this was a really nice increase,” Nadine said. “Obviously we don’t keep all of that increase, but it definitely shows good growth.”

NYCC’s events and event sales have increased, too. They’ve grown the number of events by five to 10 each year, and are **consistently bringing in an additional \$40,000 - \$60,000 in annual event sales.**

Happy with how their first 10-year contract with Sweet Hospitality Group turned out, New York City Center recently signed on for an additional 10

years — a commitment that everyone is excited about.

“Sweet Hospitality Group is a partner who fully understands and shares our vision and goals, which is very unique,” Nadine said. “They go above and beyond for us and our clients, and if we have a need or a problem, they are right there, problem solving alongside us. They are truly a part of our team, and that makes all the difference.”

Michael echoed the same.

“We truly share the same values. Yes, we need to make money to keep our doors open — and Sweet Hospitality Group helps us do that — but **we also share a belief in the power of the arts and creating an experience that people want to come back to again and again.** That’s what really drives our efforts and what makes them a great partner for us.”





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