

# 10 tips for a successful catering refurbishment or new build

To inspire confidence and spread knowledge, we have developed BM's 'Recipe for Success' guides for workplace and contract catering. You can download other guides from our website too.  
[www.bmcaterers.co.uk/category/expert-guides](http://www.bmcaterers.co.uk/category/expert-guides)

**Planning a refurbishment project for your current catering space or a brand-new restaurant? Read our top tips to ensure you get the best return on your investment.**

## 1. Set clear objectives

The main goal of a building's catering is to support its occupants to do their jobs. Beyond this, there will be other objectives too. Teams and visitors want to feel welcome and connected through shared experiences, in settings that offer a variety of conveniences and amenities. The importance of the workplace feeling like a destination should not be underestimated.

Depending on the catering services' location, it could be;

- A reception cafe that sends a powerful welcome statement to visitors
- A casual coffee bar alongside an IT help desk
- A social hub for collaboration or shared experiences
- Impressive client dining that helps to cement deals and relationships

Whatever the objectives, it is vital to agree a clear brief between the client and caterer. Designs must be future-proofed to ensure that space is optimised now and in the future. And all environmental and social obligations should be met.



## 2. A dedicated project manager

It pays dividends to work with experts when undertaking a refurbishment or new catering fit-out project. We always appoint an experienced and dedicated project manager from our senior team. The project manager leads the catering refurbishment or build project. The role includes weekly updates with the client and project team. The tasks include managing the online project plan, budgets and risk register. We always receive great feedback from clients about our project manager and the support they provide.

**"The BM project manager's knowledge, support and experience provided me with reassurance and confidence from start to finish"**



## 3. Engage stakeholders

To meet the changing needs of both the business and employees it is important to engage with users and understand what they expect from catering. During the planning stage we always propose a survey. We ask customers what they like and dislike and uncover their ambitions for the new catering spaces. We do this for both staff dining and hospitality. Tailored focus groups with Executive PAs and super-users also provide valuable insights into hospitality and fine dining requirements.

We always suggest a collaboration meeting with our client's other FM service providers. Meeting the cleaning, waste, reception or concierge suppliers is essential during stakeholder engagement. This collaborative approach ensures a seamless FM services provision.



## 4. Optimise the space

We understand clients' expectations for a building that provides an inspiring and intuitive workplace. Good buildings enhance employee wellness, and catering can act as the hub and heartbeat. Clients increasingly want more experiential catering with informal meeting spaces. With the war for talent intensifying, companies now view their workplace as a differentiation tool. This assists them to attract and keep great people, as well as enables employees to work and collaborate successfully.



## 5. Design in flexibility

As part of the planning and design process it is important to create a service that caters for hybrid working. Creating a space that is multi-functional and can transform into another genre of catering is what our clients expect from a design. A catering facility that can offer a vibrant barista style coffee service by day and then effortlessly turn into contemporary evening bar maximises ROI. It also delivers an aspirational office and provides added value from catering.

## 6. Consult design experts

At BM caterers we work with several specialist catering design firms. After we have defined the business and customers' needs, we engage with our interior and kitchen suppliers to design the space. We also work closely with BM's subject matter experts. These include Pete Redman, Chef Director, Miguel Camera, Head of Coffee and Tea, and other specialists from our team. Led by our clients we may also re-engage with stakeholders during the process to ensure our designs meet their objectives.

## 7. Take a holistic approach

There are many project components involved to create amazing catering facilities. Everyone needs to share the client's vision. Whether it's a refurbishment or new build, a diverse range of partners will create everything from CADs to mood boards. From experience we know that it is important to invest the time to create one vision document to share with all partners. This sets out our client's aspirations. It includes the customer journey, experience, food and beverage offer, alongside the architectural and design elements. It's the most successful way to gain buy in and deliver a cohesive and on-point catering service.

**"BM's vision pack was an effective way to focus everyone on our goal. Which enabled all partners to contribute the very best of what they do."**

## 8. Meet social and environmental obligations

Responsible businesses want to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. Sustainable restaurant design in the workplace underpins this. Clients want spaces that conserve resources and avoid waste. Employees expect their employers to be responsible and Gen Z in particular are more attracted to ethical workplaces.

As a leader in sustainable food, we create sustainable catering facilities that also deliver an amazing experience. When designing a new catering facility, we ask what impact the operation will have on the environment? This includes everything from building materials to energy usage, pollution prevention to waste reduction and recycling. A new catering facility is an opportunity to create a lower-carbon footprint, and higher energy efficiency.

We always aim to dispose of excess pre-loved equipment in a responsible way. Our options include re-purposing, selling the equipment and donating it to a charity. Closed loop recycling allows equipment and furniture to be re-purposed or re-manufactured.



## 9. Effective communications

Many aspects of the management of a project take place behind closed meeting room doors. But we don't forget the ultimate stakeholder - the end user. Through the duration of the planning and build process we organise many workshops with different audiences. This includes equipment showcases, food presentations and food and coffee tastings.

Once the countdown to a grand opening begins, tempting our customers' taste buds is a pre-requisite for success. We create messaging that builds excitement and as launch day gets nearer we evolve them into practical and factual communications. For example, where there's a facility refurbishment, we use the construction hoarding to publicise the offer and launch. It's a bold and visual way to shout about what is to come. Digital teaser campaigns promote the food and beverage offer and present discount codes to encourage participation from the outset.

Pop-ups to allow our customers to have 'a taste of what's to come' is a great opportunity to secure loyalty in advance. A counter 'takeover' in an existing restaurant or a food truck outside on induction day - anything is possible. These live experiences should always be explored as they add huge employee value as well as encourage future customer commitment.

## 10. Plan and test!

As the opening approaches the project manager's robust mobilisation plan will be actioned. This project time-line will capture every task. Included will be a handover from the contractors, team training, receipt of catering goods and equipment testing. A soft launch for the facilities plays a vital part in the successful launch. The ideal period for the team to settle into their new environment is two weeks.

As employees' expectations change, businesses will need to work hard to create inspiring, sustainable, and efficient workplaces that invite people in and inspire them to connect, socialise, and collaborate.

**To find out on how BM caterers can help you with a successful catering refurbishment or new build project please contact Michelle Jugessur or Heather Day**  
 mjugessur@bmcaterers.co.uk  
 hday@bmcaterers.co.uk

# About bm

BM Caterers is a multi-award-winning contract caterer. Our experienced, energetic and enthusiastic team takes a fresh approach to food and drink - with delicious results for you and your business.

We've grown steadily to a team of over 900 experienced foodies, serving 45,000 customers every day in over 90 locations in the UK.

We are a responsible company. We work hard to support our clients' sustainability objectives, with a laser focus on reducing carbon. We are the only caterer to hold Planet Mark accreditation which measures and reports on our carbon and social data.

### Fresh ideas every time

Because we're an entrepreneurial business, our catering focuses on tailor-made solutions driven by innovation. We take time to develop bespoke concepts which match the client culture, employees' tastes and the physical environment. We don't have a one-size-fits-all approach.

We also recognise the importance of value for money. We work as a tight, agile team to develop solutions that reduce costs and use resources more smartly.

