



MEETING MUNCHIES»

Sweet Tooth

Let Buttercream's handmade cupcakes perk up your gathering.

Looking for something Buttercream owner Kate Carrara refers to as "happiness personified?" Handmade cupcakes—in flavors such as chocolate cake with chocolate ganache frosting, chocolate chip cookie dough and banana cake with Nutella buttercream frosting—might be just the thing. Buttercream has a retail location in Philadelphia and a truck that you can hire for your event (which you can track via their Twitter feed: @ButtercreamPhl). "I love being a part of people's lives," says Carrara. Currently fine-tuning cookie recipes, Carrara plans to add ice cream sandwiches to Buttercream's offerings this summer. buttercreamphiladelphia.com —Carolee Noury



TIPS FROM A PRO»

SPEAK UP

Three tips for getting the most from your event speaker.

BY SHAWN KENT HAYASHI

A SPEAKER DOES MORE than establish the theme of your conference or meeting. Right from the start, he or she will determine the quality of your event, so it pays to do your homework and invest in someone who will make your event great before and after the keynote address. Here are a few suggestions to guide you in getting the most from your event speaker:

» **Before you book a speaker, ask questions about what he or she does to ensure that the presentation will be engaging.** Will she customize content and case examples to the audience? What techniques does the speaker use to make the presentation interactive? Will the speaker offer any giveaways or take-home resources (handouts, books, suggested readings or links)? Will there be time for a Q&A session? Can audience members submit questions ahead of time? A speaker who is a deep expert and lives the message will be willing to add value in many ways.

» **Asking the speaker to do more than deliver a keynote can be a win-win for the speaker and the event participants.** For example, inquire if the speaker would be willing to host or facilitate an additional panel discussion during your event. Panel discussions offer an opportunity to showcase expertise in a smaller, more intimate venue. If the speaker is an author, discuss the possibility of holding a book signing or break-out meeting to discuss the content of the book. Book signings also allow attendees an opportunity to ask follow-up questions, engage the speaker in informal conversations and encourage networking.

» **Think you're ready to sign that contract? Not yet!** Consider asking the speaker what he or she will do to follow up with the audience after the event. Some speakers will facilitate a debrief session to capture learning from the event or offer an ongoing informational exchange, such as a subscription to a free online newsletter, that keeps the theme alive. Others will solicit and disseminate best practices learned from attendees.

Speakers can do more than deliver a keynote or closing address. If you know what to ask for, speakers can help you create an even more memorable event by engaging the audience, offering additional interactions after the speech and providing follow-up once everyone has gone home.



SHAWN KENT HAYASHI is a high-performing teams consultant and executive coach from Center Valley who shares her expertise as a speaker and author. She has also written six books.