

20 questions to ask your caterer about Brexit

To inspire confidence and spread knowledge, we have developed bartlett mitchell's recipe for success guides for workplace and contract catering. You can download other guides from our website www.bartlettmitchell.co.uk/category/expert-guides

The two main areas of Brexit focus for caterers are continuity of supply chain and recruitment. We have prepared a twenty point checklist of questions that clients need to ask their caterers.

Supply chain

There's been a huge amount of speculation about the effects of Brexit on the UK economy. Within the catering industry, the supply chain is one of the most obvious areas of concern. Especially, if the UK leaves the Single Market without a replacement trade deal. Most analysts are predicting a rise in food prices whatever the final 'shape' of Brexit. The loss of EU/UK free trade agreements, WTO tariffs on EU/UK trade and extra customs levies, will affect both the flow of goods and prices. To what degree will depend upon the final Brexit deal.



- 1. Have all your caterer's suppliers been assessed to see how any new regulations might affect operations?** A 'no deal' outcome will involve new regulations, new registrations and new processes. And, so will a 'softer' Brexit to some degree.
- 2. What contingency plans does your caterer have to mitigate the impact on the food supply chain, if there's a "no deal" Brexit?** They may not be needed, but this won't become clear until very close to the deadline.
- 3. Will your chefs have access to core ingredients so they deliver the quality and variety that clients and customers expect?**
- 4. Has training taken place to enable your chefs to create menus that overcome the potential scarcity of certain foods?**
- 5. Is a 'collaborative dialogue' with between your caterer and food suppliers taking place to agree actions to mitigate the potential effects of Brexit on your supply chain?** Caterers who have strong partner relationships with suppliers will realise their value during this uncertain time.
- 6. Check your caterers are confident that your meat supply will be given priority status.** If your fresh meat is sourced primarily from the UK, there won't be an issue with imports held up at ports. The concern is that other companies affected will try to switch to a UK meat supply and so create shortages and stress supply chains.
- 7. What plans are in place for maintaining a 'Salad Bar' offer?** Fresh produce is likely to be the main category where shortages may occur. Particularly salad items and soft fruits due to their short shelf life and because the UK relies on imports from Holland and Spain at this time of the year.
- 8. Is your caterer's Purchasing Director receiving daily updates from his/her fresh produce suppliers?**

9. **What recipes have been devised to substitute fresh ingredients with frozen or canned ingredients, pulses, or dehydrated ingredients?**

10. **Can your caterer confirm their stock levels (by days) of your top volume lines?**

11. **Will your caterer be collating stock level data from their suppliers every day?** Are food suppliers offering to warehouse additional stocks of fresh, ambient and frozen food for you? The majority of dairy products are UK-sourced.

12. **How will your caterer update the on-site catering manager and chefs so they know which products will be unavailable in order to adjust their menus for the following day, if necessary.**

13. **Has your caterer outlined if tariffs will be affected by Brexit?**



Recruitment

Immigration from the EU is at its lowest point in 4 years. An uncertain end result has led to some EU citizens moving back to mainland Europe. Research by UK Hospitality and reports in The Guardian predict that the catering industry may find it hard to recruit post-Brexit.

14. **Is team member retention a priority for your caterer?**

15. **Has your caterer made team members aware that the UK government has said that EU workers currently employed in the UK will be allowed to remain?**

16. **What team engagement initiatives does your caterer have in place?**

17. **What recruitment solutions has your caterer put in place to attract team members from outside the EU?**

18. **Are team members paid competitively with enhanced benefits as part of their package?**

19. **Does every team member have an appraisal and performance development plan.**

20. **Is succession planning taking place?**

It is impossible to predict what Brexit will bring. We find ourselves in an unprecedented political situation where nobody can tell what is going to happen or what the likely economic and social consequences will be. As an SME with a flat management structure, we are agile and dynamic. We can adapt and flex our business to every eventuality. Our approach is to consider all possible outcomes – including a 'no deal' scenario, and plan a course of action to be ready. We don't shy away from challenges – we embrace them and look for positives in every situation.

If you would like to find out how we can bring our agility and enthusiasm to your workplace catering please contact michelle@bartlettmitchell.co.uk

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5 ways bartlett mitchell powers your business

Great food, eaten in great surroundings, can make a huge difference to your business. It's our job to help you make the most of this, in five ways...

1. Attracting the best people

Today's employees expect more from their workplace, and the food you provide is a crucial part of that – especially as many people now care more about what they eat. We can help you enhance your 'employer brand' by creating a food and drink offer that sets you apart from other companies. You'll have a happier, healthier, more engaged workforce, and find it easier to recruit and retain the most talented people.

2. Improving productivity

Well-fed employees are more productive. In 2013, the Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine argued that employees who eat well are 25% more likely to perform better. And, of course, if there's an appealing restaurant or café in the workplace, they will stay on site. More importantly, taking lunch and coffee breaks with colleagues encourages interaction. People talk more freely, information flows more easily, and your business benefits.

3. Enhancing your reputation with customers

When customers and other guests visit, you want them to enjoy the experience and be impressed by your workplace. An appealing, well-run café, restaurant or executive dining facility, serving great food, says a lot about your business. We can ensure your food, drink and hospitality reflect your brand style and values, and uphold its reputation.

4. Providing return on investment

Every square foot of your business premises is highly valuable, and the space you dedicate to catering and hospitality has to work hard for you. We ensure these facilities work efficiently and cost-effectively, making best use of your resources. Also, choosing us to manage your food and drink services leaves you and your team free to focus on running all the other vital aspects of your business.

5. Collaboration

You want your business to have a positive impact on the environment and your community – and your customers, staff and shareholders want to know about it. We can boost your reputation as a responsible organisation through our strong track record in sustainability. Our achievements become your achievements. And inspiring stories – like the Thirsty Planet water we sell helping to pay for clean water in Malawi – can be associated with your brand.

About bartlett mitchell

bartlett mitchell 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're also a responsible company, and can help yours to be one, too. We were the first contract caterer to achieve the Sustainable Restaurant Association Three Star Champion Status, known as the Michelin stars of sustainability.



Fresh ideas every time

Because we're an entrepreneurial business, we don't have a one-size-fits-all template that we attempt to force on each client. Our catering focuses on tailor-made solutions using innovation. We take time to develop bespoke ideas to match the client culture, employees' tastes and the physical environment.

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.



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