

# Renovating Your Country Club

## Banquet and Dining Rooms



Shelby Williams®

White Paper



# Banquet and Dining Rooms Must Always Look Beautiful

yet still be able to withstand the rigors of exceptionally heavy use. While your club may not receive the abuse typical of a large convention center or hotel, it's important to understand that these rooms must look their best. **There is a big difference between furniture lasting a long time and furniture looking good for a long time.** An event planner or future bride will never select a banquet room for their event if it looks worn-out. **“When it comes to keeping banquet rooms in top-notch condition, there are three areas that require the most attention: chairs, fabric, and carpet.”**



## 1 Chairs

Tables, chairs, and booths are major capital expenditures that come with many choices.

First is lifecycle. **How long do you expect to use your seating and what is the anticipated life cycle cost?**

**Other important considerations when evaluating chairs start with the facility itself:**

- How much volume is the room designed to handle?
- Do the chairs get stacked and un-stacked several times a day or week, or less frequently?
- Will chairs be used for dining only, or also for meetings, weddings and other events?
- How much space does the facility have for storage?
- Will the furniture fit in the area in which it must be stored?

# Chairs Are Made Of Three Different Types Of Material:

**Steel, aluminum, and wood. While each material is commonly used, each has its pros and cons.**



## Wood

Wood chairs are often recommended for upscale facilities that do not often reconfigure their rooms. They create a warm and inviting space and can deliver luxurious comfort, but require greater maintenance than their aluminum or steel counterparts. Wood stacking chairs only stack 4-5 chairs high, thus limiting their storage capacity when compared to non-wood models.



## Steel

Banquet chairs, as we think of them today, were first invented in the early 1950s and originally made of steel. These simple forms have stood the test of time for several reasons, including low unit cost, strength of materials, and the need for compact size so that 10 chairs will fit around a 60-inch table. The ability to stack tall and straight is important for storing large numbers of chairs in a compact space. Stability when stacking is critical for a safe environment.



## Aluminum

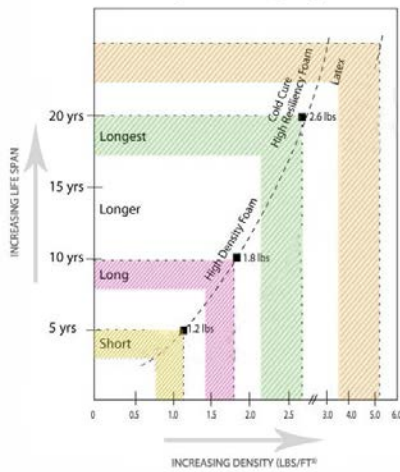
Through the last decade, banquet chairs made from aluminum have gained popularity. While generally more expensive than steel, aluminum usually offers a lower weight solution, contributing to efficiency in banquet room set up and tear down. The average steel chair may weigh 22 pounds, where an aluminum chair weighs about 15 pounds. Stacked 10 high, it's easy to see how 70 pounds per stack in saved weight adds up across a large room. If you have any concerns about weight related injuries and workman's compensation claims, then it is worth considering aluminum chairs.

***“Overall, we want chairs that are durable, functional, look good and provide guest comfort.”***

In addition, both steel and aluminum chairs are available with articulating backs, which add to guest comfort. This is important to clients, especially if guests will be using the chairs for several hours. “Overall, we want chairs that are durable, functional, look good and provide guest comfort,” says Brenda Hall, president of HDB Design Group, LLC, Daytona Beach. “Aluminum chairs provide all of that.”



Foam Strength and Longevity



## Foam

One common component on all seating products is foam. Good quality foam is critical for comfort and durability but, because it is hidden from view, is often given scant attention. Foam is measured by two factors: density and compression (ILD/IFD). Density is the measure of cubic weight. It is as simple as how much one cubic foot of foam weighs. Density is a measure of quality. The higher the weight the better the quality. Weight difference is created by the ratio of air to material. Commercial high-density foam carries a minimum standard of 1.8 pounds but better quality foam can be as high as 2.8 pounds per cubic foot. The softness of the foam comes from ILD, which is the reflex of the foam when compressed 25 percent. Commercial foam seats range between 35 and 75 pounds. Depending on the manufacturer, different combinations of materials create different comfort levels.

## Features to consider for stackable chairs

There are several other features to consider. Stacking bars prevent the seats from compressing under the weight of the chairs stacked above. Chair glides are often overlooked, that is until they fail in use. Quality glides will have a spring clip that holds the unit in the leg and will withstand the wear and tear of chairs being dragged across the floor. Be sure to purchase a chair cart or dolly from your chair vendor. Failing to use the correct dolly can damage the chair frames or fabric and can nullify the warranty.

## Before Considering Booths

Booths are available from a wide range of vendors. Be sure to select a vendor from the commercial furniture seating industry vs a general woodworker. A furniture manufacturer would be sensitive to both the geometry and suspension systems required to meet comfort expectations. Any creditable booth manufacturer will require a site visit to measure the location and insure proper fit.

# 2 Fabric

**Fabric is a critical component to delivering furniture that creates a good-looking banquet room, there are a number of considerations in making the right choice.**



### Minimum Abrasion Rating

Wyzenbeek abrasion rating is a fabric's ability to withstand surface rubbing, and the industry standard is 30,000 double rubs. "We prefer to choose fabric rated for 40,000 to 50,000 double rubs," says Brenda Hall, President of which provides greater assurance that the fabric will retain its looks.



### Stain Blocking

Soil and stain resistance is a compelling component in protecting your furniture investment. According to Michael Dobin, owner of Valley Forge Fabrics in Pompano Beach, FL, stain blockers are finishes that are applied to fabric after it is woven. His firm automatically offers a non-branded backing and stain finish on every product, clients also have the option of choosing a branded stain blocker.

"It's one of the more important decisions," confirms Scott Bruce in the Design and Construction Department of IHG, Atlanta, who describes a specific stain blocker called Nano-Tex, which creates a barrier against liquids, protecting both the fabric and the foam beneath it. Liquid and oil-based spills, such as wine and sauce, bead up and roll off as opposed to soaking in. "It's a neat thing to see but, more importantly, it works," he advises.





### Fiber content

The right fiber content makes a positive contribution to fabric's wear and tear. "We prefer to choose a blend of polyester and nylon," says Brenda Hall, "which is a practical approach that ensures the fabric looks great now and four years from now. We try not to use too many natural fibers because they don't seem to hold up as well, even though you can get some nice products."

Dobin adds that 100% polyester is most commonly used, "because it's traditionally the most durable fiber for a banquet chair's price range. It also offers beauty and cleanability. Nylon is even more durable, but it's a lot more expensive so it's usually not in the budget."

Yet another option for high-use banquet facilities is coated fabric. "This is a generic term for polyurethane, vinyls, and silica," says Roseanne Veljkovic, director of Northeast sales for Irvine, Calif.-based Momentum Group. "It looks like vinyl. It is the highest-performance fabric you can choose, and it cleans easily with soap and water and almost any cleaner, per the manufacturer's instructions."



### Pattern and Color

Pattern and color is imperative to creating a great-looking banquet room, and there's more to it than one might initially believe. First, consider the scope of the project, including the banquet room's theme: Is it traditional? Transitional? Contemporary? Next, is pattern with some opting for small patterns are helpful in hiding dirt and stains. "I like to mix patterns for stain forgiveness that a solid color doesn't provide," says Hall. "And I like to keep patterns clean."

Finally, there is color, and Hall admits that it can be a fine line: "I like to use a combination of mostly neutral colors with little pops of color, opting to stay away from lighter tones that aren't forgiving, yet there must be some lighter tones so that the overall design isn't heavy." Dobin agrees, indicating that if you have a fabric that's nearly 100% stainproof, you can safely choose light or dark fabrics. However, a medium-colored print fabric is best for hiding stains, especially if the stain proof value is in the middle range.





### 3 Carpet

**While a dining room or banquet room's carpet is mostly hidden once it's set for an event, even more so when busy with guests, it is a vital element in the overall room design. Take the following factors into consideration:**



#### **Color and pattern trends**

Because carpeting is cycled out approximately every 10 to 15 years, choose classic colors and designs which will not become obsolete before the end of the planned lifecycle of the renovation. According to Mark Page, Senior Director of Color & Design, Hospitality, Mohawk Industries.



***I'm looking for a pattern that will help sell the banquet room but also help mask spills to make the space look clean longer between wet cleans.***

Another color and pattern consideration is that some banquet rooms are designed with retractable walls that divide the main space into smaller meeting rooms, requiring a carpet design that works for the main space but also continues to fit each smaller room. Similarly, Hall looks for patterns with some lineal aspects to them so that furniture can be quickly set up using the pattern as a point of reference. "These little things are often overlooked," she points out, "but they make a big difference in making a space look orderly."



#### **Maintenance**

Worn or dirty carpeting strongly detracts from a banquet room's appearance and simply can't be hidden. Once the right product is chosen, keep it looking beautiful by maintaining it per the manufacturer's directions in terms of dry vacuuming and wet cleaning. In addition, Page advocates for spot cleaning between recommended cleanings.



***In all but the smallest properties, function space is an essential ingredient of the successful property,***

says Rutes, Penner and Adams. For banquet rooms to drive success, they must be kept in top-notch condition by paying continual attention to furniture, fabric and carpet. A beautiful banquet room requires careful consideration in all aspects of design, planning, specification and purchasing. Experienced owners understand that these efforts are well worthwhile and that beautiful banquet rooms create memorable 'first impressions', on guests and visitors alike, as well as generate significant sales.



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