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# MOBLZ

White Paper: Tips for Highly Successful Food Truck Events



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So many of our lives and businesses have been turned upside down since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic disease. Shut-downs and cancellation of events have become the norm. Hopefully those days will be in the rearview mirror very soon! With that in mind, these are our recommendations to create the perfect weekly food truck rodeo or lunchtime event once we can have the food trucks out to your offices again.

Millennials (those reaching adulthood in the 21st century) make up the food truck generation. Forty-seven percent of Millennials have eaten from a food truck, making them the most likely patrons of these mobile establishments. This same demographic is also more likely to use a mobile car wash, mobile fuel, or other mobile services. Most parents of Millennials remember the food trucks from days in the past. They may have even called them, “roach coaches” or “gut trucks.” Food trucks have been around in some form or another for over 50 years, but originally they were more culturally recognizable as fixtures of isolated workplaces like manufacturing plants and construction sites. Today, food trucks are estimated to be a \$2.9 billion industry and have been re-appropriated by the younger, more affluent, and more urban cultural ethos. We have seen many of our food trucks during this time of self-isolation become hot spots for family dinners and even groceries. The mass migration of Millennials into the modern workforce mirrors, to some extent, the proliferation of the food trucks. So do you just call up a few of your favorite trucks for your property? You could, but that is definitely not the most efficient way to execute bringing trucks to your park. We advise planning and developing your property to drive food trucks and millennials towards you!

We have compiled this document to help you and your team plan. As you will see there are a multitude of different factors you should consider before inviting trucks to your property. Everything from when to have trucks on your property to what type of regulations you need to consider will be covered below.

## Environment and Scheduling

- **PICKING THE PERFECT LOCATION**

Site selection is a big part of the event. You need an area that has enough parking spaces to hold 2-3 trucks and 75 people. This space should be 25 feet or more from your entry doors, but easy to walk to. The required distance from the building can vary state to state so be sure to check with your local municipality. If the location can accommodate a few extra cars pulling up, that is a plus. This allows friends, passers-by, and people from the neighboring buildings to easily join the event.

- **COMFORTING AMENITIES**

If you can have 5 or more picnic tables either at the event site or close by, it will help create an inviting and comfortable area, increasing the customers’ positive experience, which helps to create repeat business at your next event. These tables should be within 100 feet of the truck locations for customer convenience. We recommend 8 feet between each table to abide by social distancing protocols.

Another thought is having a drinking water fountain with a pet-friendly spout for the guests is a really good idea. Below we talk about a pavilion. If you do create a pavilion or exercise space, installing drinking water is a bonus that everyone will utilize, particularly if you have a bottle filler.

- **SANITATION**

Provide ample trash receptacles placed in highly visible and convenient locations. It is better to have the food waste confined to the food truck area rather than have people walk back into your lobby and stuff their trash into the first can they see. No one wants the lobby smelling like curry, chicken wings, or fried food! The majority of buildings that have a three truck event will have a ground and facilities crew that can easily pick up a couple of extra waste and recycling receptacles. This is a situation where you would rather have more than not enough trash cans.

Water hookups for the trucks is something we have seen done. However, in many cases, the trucks cannot take advantage of them due to health regulations. They have to get their potable

water from their commissary, then they have to account for their wastewater storage. When you only take on 30 gallons of water, you know you can hold 30 gallons of waste.

- **PICK THE RIGHT DAY OF THE WEEK**

This is a hard one. You have to look at the demographic makeup of the occupants that work for the tenants. Below are some generalities that we've seen.

**MONDAY** – Many restaurants are closed on Monday and food trucks normally have availability on Monday. CON: many workers have busy days and are more likely to bring lunch on Monday. Also, we find that people spend less money on Mondays. You may get decent traffic, but the average sale will be lower.

**TUESDAY** – Where many people have a slow start to their Monday, they don't have that same issue on Tuesday. People start to loosen their wallets a little on Tuesday.

**WEDNESDAY** – Fitness people find that Wednesday can be a peak day. Also referred to as Hump Day being mid-week. MOBLZ stats show that behind Friday, Wednesday is the highest spend day and shows great potential for a food truck event. Especially if it's a holiday week and the office is closed on Friday. Wednesday will be the top performer.

**THURSDAY** – Better than Monday, but not as good as Wednesday. Average spend shrinks a little; Meaning more people will skip the add-ons like soda. Headcounts also tend to be less than Tuesdays.

**FRIDAY** –The best day of the week for sure. Food Trucks bring in more cash and service more people on Friday than other days. The challenge with Friday is that people don't want to spend a lot of time waiting for food. Service needs to be quick or the truck reputation can suffer. If you notice, we don't mention that on other days, because of shorter lines, it's less of a factor. Getting the right number of trucks and capacity on a Friday is the challenge.

- **PROMOTION**

Talk to the tenants. If you have a company that does a Monday morning sales meeting that runs to 11:30am, encourage them to utilize the trucks and reward the team with food truck food. Another great strategy is to turn your slowest day into your busiest. If the trucks complain about slow traffic or lack of business, encourage them to offer coupons or offer a free promo to boost awareness. Discounts should not be done all the time, but promotions such as a free cookie when you bring a friend to the truck, or free soda with a meal, are simple, easy, and effective promos to get more people at the trucks and your property.

- **PARK ON PAVEMENT**

While this sounds logical, there have been a few locations where the trucks park on the grass. When you don't get big rainstorms, this works. However, tow trucks pulling a stuck food truck off your turf is not the image you want at your property. So use a paved area whenever possible. Safety Note: We very seldom see a flat parking lot. Every parking lot has a little slope to allow rainwater to drain. For safety reasons, make sure your trucks use wheel chocks and block their wheels.

- **FIRE SAFETY**

What is your emergency plan if a truck catches on fire in your parking lot? To ensure the safety of vendors and customers, you need to have a plan. Most buildings are required to have a very detailed evacuation plan and a diagram for fire safety. Ask your local Fire Marshall for some tips on what to include in your plan. This way, they can give feedback and suggestions to ensure safety throughout your property. Make sure your trucks are far enough from a building that if the truck catches fire, it cannot set your building or major structures on fire. It is very rare that something like this should happen, but it can.

- **SHORE POWER**

If you are committed to having food trucks, consider adding what we will call Shore Power. This is 120V or 240V hookups for the trucks which allows them to operate without having to run their generators. See our section below on Power-Relation Information. Trucks running on Shore Power don't generate much noise. Generators are loud and create an environment where it may be difficult for the customers to relax and have conversation after getting their food. It is pretty common for a truck operator to call out a name when food is ready. With even just one generator running, it is sometimes hard to hear them. The perfect time to install power hookups for trucks is when you are installing charging stations for EVs (electric vehicles, like Teslas). Tesla may cover most of the cost to install charging stations. When the trench is open for installing them, get the power to run to your food truck hookups.

- **GENERATORS**

If you do not install Shore Power for the trucks to tap into, make sure you have a policy on generator use. Almost all trucks already have a generator. If they are looking for suggestions. We suggest they have a generator like the Honda EU7000iS or the Briggs & Stratton 3067A, known as the Q6500 QuietPower. The target should be 80 decibels or less noise. Enforce these rules:

- Turn the generator off and let it cool down before refueling.
- Never put gas in a generator while it is running.
- Always have a fully charged, approved fire extinguisher located near your generator and inside your truck. Multiple locations are good!



- **SPONSORSHIP**

What? Sell sponsorships? Why not? Your buildings have many tenants. Check first to see if one of them would like to sponsor the event or even the gathering space for the trucks. Credit Unions, Banks and local businesses make great sponsors. The choices can be overwhelming when you're just starting out. But the reputation of potential sponsors and their perspective on events will determine what kind of partnership you'll ultimately have with them and even how successful your event will be overall. Feeling a bit lazy. Use an online service like [www.sponsormyevent.com](http://www.sponsormyevent.com) or [www.sponseasy.com](http://www.sponseasy.com).

Specifically identify both your goals for the event, and the incentives and benefits for a potential sponsor. Lean on data points about the event audience to make a compelling case to a potential sponsor whose target audience aligns well with your attendees. Focus on the sponsor, not the event, in your pitch. Kind Snacks, Edward Jones, Bank of America, Geico, Wells Fargo, Marriott, Dick's Sporting Goods, Whole Foods, State Farm, Pepsi, Budweiser, and Clif Bar.

At your event, make sure there is good signage for the sponsor. After the event, make sure you thank them. Both go a long way.

- **PRESS RELEASE**

Once per year, hold an event worthy of doing a press release. Many areas have local event papers. These are considered your Media Partners. Contact area media partners and ask how to submit event information to them. Then create and send them a 'press release' with all the details about your food truck event - make sure to include the where and when! The free press is a nice benefit.

- **RESEARCH**

Go to surrounding food truck events. Get an idea of the days they have trucks and if they are getting traffic. Just because they may be doing an event on a day you want, doesn't mean you cannot also. In many areas, if you have the trucks to support two adjacent properties having events, it can work! It depends on people, demand, and distance. The rule of thumb is around 300 employees (potential

customers) per truck; the 300 can be in adjacent buildings, not just one building. However, this also depends on the makeup of the employees: 300 tech employees will create long lines at any food truck, 300 lawyers may not. Remember, people younger than 35 are more likely to eat Street Food.

- **KNOW YOUR TRUCKS**

There is a little science in the matching of food trucks to properties. We all know that you typically will drink red wine with steak and white with a fish or salad. You want variety from your trucks, but sometimes you need to watch your pairing. For example: Don't have three trucks all doing fried food. If you have a truck that has dense, fried, cheesy food, pair that truck with a truck that serves something healthy, like salads or wraps. Look at how the trucks plate and serve food. Consider the combined menu of the trucks. If this were a restaurant and you were to take three coworkers with you, would you all find something each person would like?

- **UNSCHEDULED TRUCKS**

This is a problem in many areas. When an event place gets busy, there is demand. Make sure that only scheduled trucks, who have the proper COIs (certificate of insurance) and safety procedures in place, show up to the property. If you are on our email lists, you likely have seen some of our horror stories. Truck fires, fryer oil spills, breakdowns, bad service, etc. If the truck should not be on the property, get them to leave, especially if you have another truck scheduled.

## Promoting Your Trucks and Food Truck Events

- **MENUS**

We find it best to send out the menus a few days in advance, and again on the day of a truck showing up. If there will be specials, include the special!. This is typically done via email. This is a key feature of the MOBILZ platform and is extremely helpful for your tenants. The menus get your potential customers already thinking about what they would order, which helps to solidify their participation (think: purchase!) on the food truck day. With advance notice, they are much less likely to bring their lunch that day!

- **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Promote your event on Facebook as an Event. Make sure to create the event in advance so that it gains some traction. Schedule an Instagram post and a Twitter "tweet" a few days in advance, and on the day of. A post two hours before the event can be very beneficial in increasing attendance. If you don't post on Instagram and Twitter the day of, you are missing people and sales. People forget and attention spans are low. Posting to both of these platforms can draw likes and result in more people attending. Make sure you tag the trucks who will be at your event. If you can be at your event, do an Instagram or Facebook Story post to try and increase the amount of visitors. These get great traction when done right. Check out an [article](#) we did on this technique.

- **EMAIL MARKETING**

Of course you're doing email marketing. But, are you doing it effectively? Start with an eye-catching subject line and then follow up with some punchy and straight-to-the-point email copy about your event. We're all pushed for time so make sure that once you have your reader's attention, you get straight to the point: use great visual content with a clear call to action which encourages people to register for your (obviously incredible and completely unmissable) event.

- **PRINT / LOBBY PROMOTIONS**



Drop off flyers announcing when and where your events will be held. Include the food truck names and the types of food they will be serving. Entice employees with your offerings! You'll find that business owners are excited to offer this fun food option to their employees. If the building has digital signage, put it on the screens. Many buildings like to put the announcements up in the elevators. In your promotion planning remember, health savvy people take the stairs and never read the signs and people on the first floor rarely take the elevator. Consider getting the information on an easel and printed about 20"x 30". Quick tip: Walmart's photo has done this for MOBZ many times for \$15.00. We then mount the poster to a sheet of standard 20"x30" foam core (which cost about \$3.00). A can of spray mount is around \$12 and will last a long time. You can promote an event in the lobby for around \$20!

- **SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

**Permits** – Some cities require food trucks to get a permit to serve lunch. MOBZ has been successful at getting two cities to alter their stance. One Mayor did not realize how hurtful to food trucks their permits were. It was negotiated that the property could pay a single permit and hold events anytime.

**Single Tenant Buildings** – If you have a single tenant in a building where the trucks will be, involve the business. First thing, make sure they support having the truck. Then make sure your time works with their business schedule. If they have a mandatory staff meeting at 1 pm on Thursday, you want to avoid it. That would impact the event and their meeting.

**Health Parks** – Medical is a big business that wants trucks. They typically have limited options for lunch. BUT, some medical businesses get free food from drug reps. Free food will impact food truck sales. Check with the tenants and see if they have "medical reps" every day or only certain days.

**Dietary Restrictions** – While still pretty rare, we have seen tenants who want to make sure there is a vegan option at every event. This is fine as long as the vegans support the trucks. Again, this is where reviewing the demographics of the occupants is helpful.

- **PAVILION**



While an expensive addition, it does establish the location as a destination on the property. Some locations now have added a Sonos amplifier and a few outdoor speakers to provide a little music. Pavilions become gathering spaces on the property and show well on your amenities brochure. You can have a few fixed-based games like Corn Hole (for those in the South). Frisbee Golf or KanJam (even cheaper) are options to have near your pavilion. An outdoor pavilion at a technology park we visited in North Carolina has a few 120V receptacles for plugging in a laptop and even has some permanent mounted iPhone and Android charging cables. We have also seen jumbo-sized Jenga games, but these don't seem to weather all that well and the landscape crews seem to turn them into mulch. If you get toys like this for your outdoor space or pavilion, make sure they are as

safe for 3-year olds as they are for a college freshmen. They need to be safe and indestructible.

## Power-Related Information

When planning for any necessary electrical work, use an electrician who has experience with installing RV hookups, marina, micro-breweries, fire / ambulance bays, or other food truck venues. Unfortunately, we've seen some very strange setups including one electrician who used a residential box from Home Depot and a few non-GFCI outlets. Nothing was really watertight. How it passed the building inspection was a mystery to us.

- **GFCI**

Normal outlets, like in your office, are 120V and typically 20A. GFCI or GFI = Ground Fault Circuit Interruption. This means if someone is standing in water and there is a short when something is plugged in, the breaker should trip and the people will not be injured. We will not say they would not get some shock, but they should not get electrocuted. GFCI is safer than standard outlets.

- **VOLTS**

Volts are the "push" that makes electricity move. When referring to 240V it's important to know that it takes 120V from two different breakers or "legs" to achieve 240V. Note that 230V and 240V are the same. Likewise, 110V and 120V are the same. Many trucks can plug into two outlets on different circuits to get 240v. In contrast, you take a standard wall outlet and try to combine both plugs, you still only get 120v. You also only get the same number of AMPS.

- **AMP**

Amperage is the strength of an electrical current. When you use a higher voltage you need fewer amps. For example, 30 amps at 240V runs more equipment than 30 amps at 120v. Another word for amperage is draw, and that is what causes things to overheat and to trip breakers. Most modern trucks have internal power banks that regulate usage and will trip the truck before tripping the Shore Power breaker. Consider that 50amps at 240v will run 3.33 times more truck appliances than 30amps. The truck builder we spoke with said many locations do not have 50amps, but when it is available, he instructs his trucks to use 50. While looking at the micro brew bars around our area, we see a lot of 30amp heavy-duty outlets at 120v. Not sure how many AMPS your connector is or that a truck needs? You can tell by looking at the connector: a 30amp cord has three prongs and a 50amp has four.

- **WATTS**

What is a watt? Wattage is defined as amps multiplied by volts (Or  $W = A \times V$ ). So for example, 50 amps x 120V = 6000 watts. In other words, it's the amount of power available on a circuit or the amount of power used by a device. You will see many trucks running off a 6500-watt generator.. We have seen many hookups of 30 amp x 120V which will provide 3600 watts. We rarely see trucks with that size generator, so they will use every bit of that circuit. On a 50 amp hookup, they should run 32 amp max.

- **ELECTRICAL CONDITION**

If you see a truck that doesn't look safe, don't let them hook up. Demand they get a licensed electrician to review and perform any repairs needed. If a truck plugs in and it trips the GFCI, they likely have a problem. Most of the time it is a grounding issue, and grounding equals safety! Our truck builder said a very common issue they see when rewiring a truck is coupled AC neutral conductors (white wires) and the safety ground (green wires). Since trucks are never really grounded they have to put a grounding rod in the ground when they park, this then causes the issue. The truck is depending on the white and green wires to provide a safe ground path for the electricity back.



120V GFCI



240V External  
Outlet

## Ideas for Events

In the last area of our paper we will discuss event ideas for “HUB” or cowork spaces. A good event could help boost your office park as well as build a stronger community within it. The tenant experience matters more today than any other time in commercial real estate history, and food truck events can help bolster that. Why is this important? High tenant satisfaction can mean lease renewals for existing lessees and having a well-reputed highly-sought-after building can lead to faster close times for new leases, higher average rents, and more square footage under contract.

- **LUNCH AND LEARNS**

Lunch and learn sessions feed both your body and your mind by providing members with a free or low-cost food truck lunch and a way to find out more about what other companies do at your office park. Many times, you can get the “Sponsor” to pay for lunch. Here’s a suggestion for a policy to keep costs down: if you register “for lunch and learn” and miss two sessions, you are out. NO FREE LUNCH FOR YOU!

- **DEMO DAYS**

Startups and companies who develop products are always looking for feedback and beta testers. If you want to move beyond a simple lunch and learn, try hosting a demo day. These are a great way to get your community interacting and talking about what they know best – their business!

You could also invite external businesses and startups to talk on a demo day. This will help your members network and boost their industry knowledge. Who knows, guests may even want to transfer over to your property after they visit. Don’t be afraid to invite new restaurants or food trucks too. If they want to build or refine their catering menu, a demo day could allow them to get feedback from a group of office managers who can be future customers.

- **MONTHLY BREAKFASTS**

Once a month or even once a quarter, try a breakfast food truck. Something to look forward to when they arrive at the office can be a morale booster for your tenants’ employees, and happy tenants renew their leases!

- **HAPPY HOURS**

Trendy micro-breweries and micro distilleries are a great asset to a community. Alcohol is definitely a social lubricant. A weekly happy hour will help bring your community together in a relaxed environment. If you want to mix things up a bit, you could choose a theme for each happy hour. Look into getting a company that sells 401Ks, Financial Planning, or other lead-centric services to sponsor this type of event.

- **WELLNESS SESSIONS**

Bring everyone together and get them sweating. We suggest either first thing in the morning or at 5 pm, not at lunch! Bring in a fitness expert, some good music, and a cooler of water. Many facilities don’t have massive gyms or fitness areas where these events could be hosted indoors. Depending on the time of year, you can host this outside. Luckily, with the increase in mobile and traveling fitness instructors, this can be accomplished easily!

- **CORPORATE GUEST SPEAKERS**

If you are in an office park full of successful companies, you may have good access to a well-known CEO. Look at the local investor and business landscape, and then invite a local business leader or venture capitalist to do a team-building exercise. If you have a company that sells team building, invite them. Companies like BeeDowntown run a great program and get good crowds and CEOs to speak. This provides your occupants with a fantastic networking opportunity and valuable insights into building their business or an emerging industry trend.



- **LAUNCH PARTIES**

Celebrate your members' successes with a launch party when they reach a major business milestone. This could be the release of a new product, service, website, or a funding win.

- **PECHAKUCHA NIGHT**

Right now, 95% of you are about to Google, "What the heck is PechaKucha". No, it doesn't have to do with the Pokemon GO game. PechaKucha is where speakers share 20 images and are given 20 seconds to present each slide. It's an unusual and fun way to help your tenants share their work and ideas. If you

do happen to Google this, you will see it's a worldwide phenomenon. Combine this event with a Happy Hour and this is loads of fun. This is a great draw for Millennials.



## **MOBLZ**

While you can do all of the research, planning, vetting, and execution needed for food truck events on your own, the work will be much easier and your events more successful with MOBZ. Our Mobile Vendor Management System gives you our marketing, web, social media, email, text messages, and app. We deliver branded digital tenant experiences, localized to your park, and scalable across entire portfolios.

Your current and future tenants want to attract top talent and offer their employees options to interact with the community and services that make up the "2020 Workplace Experience." Providing your tenants with an engaging and stimulating atmosphere to help them attract and foster top talent will help push your property to the top.

Contact us to learn how MOBZ can take your entire commercial real estate team's performance to the next level.

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