



Blog: In Any Event

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Jackson Terminal opens with 'UX' Event Calendar (<http://www.eventcheckknox.com/events/>)

A venue is nothing more than an empty building without two letters: "UX."

That's a unique experience, according to Neal Green, co-owner of All Occasion Catering.

All Occasion Catering

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(<http://www.eventcheckknox.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Jackson-Terminal-Wedding-e14483777736231.jpg>)

In this photo, Jackson Terminal is set up for an elegant wedding reception.

(<http://www.alloccasioncatering.com/>) opened the **Jackson Terminal**

(<http://www.alloccasioncatering.com/jackson-terminal/>) on Jackson Avenue in September of

2015, and it hosted multiple events before the end of the year. It also will be the site of **Clarence Brown Theatre's** (<http://clarencebrowntheatre.com/>) 2016 signature **gala** (<http://www.eventcheckknox.com/event/clarence-brown-theatre-gala-3/>).

The terminal's UX? History. It was built in the 1890s and has 54-foot beams without posts creating an unobstructed event space.

"All of a sudden you can take that historic wow factor and marry it with modern and elegant," Green said. "A unique experience every day – that's what drives our lives."

The unique experience of a venue doesn't have to be history or architecture, though. It can be a farm with breathtaking scenery or a riverfront location. In the case of Jackson Terminal, it is an old railroad freight depot in downtown Knoxville between Gay Street and the Old City.

"You can't just go out and build a building in the middle of the parking lot and say, 'Oh, I have a venue,' Green explained. "It has to be unique, workable and accessible – somewhere people want to go."



(<http://www.eventcheckknox.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Jackson-Terminal-space-e1449778266719.jpg>)

The open space of Jackson Terminal.

Once the “UX” of Jackson Terminal was determined, Green had his hook. That’s when the workability and accessibility came into play while preparing blueprints. The first must-have is obvious but sometimes overlooked – electrical outlets.

To really sell the venue, two walls need to have plenty of electrical outlets for a band, photographer, photo booth and lights. Extension cords and floor tape are to be avoided at all costs.

Workability of the space is next. When in the planning stages for the new venue, Kelly Webster, event sales coordinator for All Occasion Catering, said it was important to think about the potential clients and attendees.

“We wanted to hear the customer’s perspective and what they’re looking for out of the event,” Webster said.



Jackson Terminal has multiple options for setup, aided by the open floor space. A patio also is available and presents a nice feature for multiple reasons. Attendees, especially in pleasant weather, like an option to go outdoors. For weddings, a bride and groom may want access to a patio for photos. The wedding party also will have a spot to enjoy cigars.

Private space was incorporated into the plans for Jackson Terminal. Entertainers, whether band members or singers, need a dressing area.

Brides always want a separate area to change clothes, and Jackson Terminal offers a room that includes counter space for assorted items and a private restroom.

The 6,500-square-foot venue can accommodate plenty of guests without compromising setting, comfort and style.

Floor plans can be customized to include sit-down dinners, buffet lines, stages, dance floor and more options.

Once a venue capitalizes on its UX and is designed to be workable and accessible, it just needs to be sold. Jackson Terminal held an **open house**

(<http://www.alloccasioncatering.com/jackson-terminal-ribbon-cutting-and-holiday-open-house/>) in the fall and compiled a tailored guest list to get an early peek.

(<http://www.eventcheckknox.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Jackson-Terminal-outdoor-space-e1449779137459.jpg>)

The outdoor area of the venue wraps around the corner. It retains the charm of the old depot and provides access via street-level and viaduct.

“These are the people who are already throwing parties,” Neal said. “A lot of it is word of mouth.”

He noted that to sell a venue, a potential client must receive multiple “touches.” A touch can be a casual mention, targeted advertisement, social media, photos from another event or a drive-by of the building. The venue must raise its visibility in various ways.

Green said if enough people visit the venue, then the interest will naturally spread.



(http://www.eventcheckknox.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/DSC_0079-e1450369724787.jpg)

Train decorations atop a rolling display – in this case for salad selections..





“Get 3,000 to 4,000 people in the building,” he said. “If we can get 2,000 of those people to go tell 10 people, that’s 20,000 people,” Green said.

And if your venue is unique, workable and accessible, chances are much better that those visitors will indeed tell someone about their experience.

Once you have the customer, all that remains is the delivery.

“Always under-promise and over-deliver,” Green said. “Always take care of the people. It’s all about the UX – a unique experience.”

Cortney Roark, a fall intern at **Moxley Carmichael** (<http://www.moxleycarmichael.com/>), earned a Bachelor of Science in journalism and electronic media with a minor in cinema studies from the University of Tennessee. She fancies herself a professional board (or card) game player and Disney fanatic, and her ideal evening involves playing Pictionary with Jimmy Fallon and Wes Anderson.

 Cortney Roark (<http://www.eventcheckknox.com/author/cortney-roark/>) |  January 13, 2016
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