

Event buyer tips on the benefits of booking an arena venue

To many, arenas are the place to go to see your favourite band or sporting team play. However, increasingly arenas are becoming the 'hidden gem' of the business events world - offering flexibility and capability to enhance and elevate an event from wonderful to wondrous.



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Alison Tovey, events director at MYOB, leads an in-house team who together deliver in excess of 150 events annually. From product launches to incentive trips, Tovey has established herself as a master of event curation – and with a new-found love of utilising the unique landscape of arenas.

Here, Tovey shares her top insights on how arenas are reinventing the business events experience:

Flexibility to do absolutely anything

"First and foremost, arenas are inherently built for flexibility. They're able to adapt to the latest shows and tours – from sporting events like the Australian Open to theatrical spectacles like Cirque du Soleil.

"Event organisers will look for a venue with the capabilities to cater to their specific needs, which might include venue capacity, stage location and catering accessibility. However, with arenas, remember the venue is interchangeable and the entire space can be built from the ground up.

"This means you can bring your event vision to life without limitations."

MYOB recently ran MYOB Partner Connect 2018 at Melbourne & Olympic Parks' Melbourne Arena. Partner Connect is a

two-day event attended by more than a thousand people. "We used Melbourne Arena's floor to host our day events, then converted the space for an intimate gala dinner in the evening – an approach that maximised the use of space and had the flexibility to adapt to our needs."

Maximising what's available

Don't discount an arena purely based on size. A good venue will work with you to help identify options and guide you on possibilities for the best outcome.

More than often, arenas will be able to use the existing infrastructure and equipment to help bring your vision to life. This means, when you're at the quoting stage with a venue, make sure you question the approximate costs for all services. **Ask: Do we need carpet? Do we need signage? Do we need staging?**

This will help you determine the remaining event components that might need to be outsourced, says Tovey.

Create the WOW factor

"What I love most about working with arenas is that while many people might have experienced a venue before, when they go back for a business event they scarcely recognise it. It becomes a "WOW" moment to see the identity of the venue space change.

"When we held our MYOB event at Melbourne Arena, turning the show floor into an intimate dinner for 150 people became breathtaking. The response was priceless – our guests were in awe of the transformation, which took place in only a few hours.

"Arenas allow you to dream big, think outside the box, and unleash your creativity."

Convenience is key

"At our most recent arena event, we considered every inch of detail – from the moment guests arrived at the event to the last sip of champagne on closing. We collaborated with Melbourne & Olympic Parks to help us organise everything under one roof, including roadside billboards to guide entry and interior wayfinding.

"Melbourne & Olympic Parks' Premier Events team helped turn the pre-made facilities into bespoke event booths, including changing the signage on merch zones to reflect MYOB's branding – and tweaking the offerings at built-in food stalls to become MYOB branded coffee stalls that guests could enjoy throughout the day. From our creative ideas on catering, they helped facilitate the line-up."

Location and proximity to parking and transport will be appreciated by your guests on event day, making it easy for them to attend, adds Tovey.

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