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Event Catering Company

Central-kitchen production and on-site catering for weddings, corporate and institutional events

EVENTS

AISEVAK.IN · BY ABL DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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This document is confidential and prepared for planning purposes. All financial figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian MSME context and must be validated against live quotes, local rates and professional advice before any investment or borrowing decision.

1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out an **Event Catering Company** in India — a food-production business that cooks at scale in a central kitchen and serves **weddings, corporate events, conferences, exhibitions & institutional functions**, typically for several hundred to several thousand covers at a time. Revenue is **covers × per-plate rate**, and the business lives or dies on food cost, guest-count discipline and food safety.

Catering is where the events industry meets manufacturing. Unlike the agency businesses in this vertical, an event caterer *makes a physical product* — thousands of meals, cooked to a deadline that cannot move, transported hot, held safely and served in a two-hour window at a venue with no kitchen. It is a **principal, asset-owning, production business**: it buys ingredients, converts them, and sells plates.

How this plan measures revenue. An event caterer is a **principal**, not an agent — it buys and owns the food, carries the kitchen, equipment and staff, and takes the production risk. So **gross revenue is genuinely revenue** and food cost sits in the P&L as the largest expense line, exactly as in any food-manufacturing business. This is the opposite convention from the event-management and talent-booking plans in this vertical, and it is the correct one here.

Two numbers govern this business. The first is **food cost as a percentage of revenue** — modelled at 35% falling to 33.9%, and the single metric a caterer watches daily. The second is the **guaranteed minimum cover count** in the client contract: clients systematically under-declare guest numbers, and a caterer who cooks for the real crowd while billing the declared one loses money on a full hall. This plan models an event catering company requiring **₹1.2 crore** (₹50 lakh promoter + ₹70 lakh equipment/term finance), moving from **₹2.6 crore revenue and a ₹7 lakh loss** in Year 1 to **₹5.6 crore revenue and ₹51 lakh profit** by Year 3. (*Event catering; covers × per-plate, food-cost- & volume-driven, asset-backed production — figures illustrative.*)

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

Concept: An event catering company - central-kitchen production and on-site service of multi-cuisine menus for weddings, corporate events, conferences and institutional functions, priced per plate.

Vision: To be the caterer trusted with the meal everyone remembers - consistent food, immaculate service, never a safety incident.

Mission: Cook and serve at scale without compromise - disciplined food cost, tight cold chain, trained service and menus that suit the occasion.

Legal structure options

- **Private Limited / LLP** — recommended: equipment finance, corporate contracts, FSSAI licensing and — importantly — the liability profile of a food business all sit better in a company with proper governance and insurance.
- **Proprietorship** — common at small scale, but exposes the promoter personally to food-safety liability, which is a poor trade at event volumes.

Regulatory anchor — this is a licensed food business, not merely an event vendor. An **FSSAI licence is mandatory**, and at the turnover modelled here a **Central or State licence** (not a basic registration) applies, with kitchen conformance to Schedule 4 hygiene requirements. Also required: **health/medical fitness certificates for all food handlers**, water potability testing, pest control, waste & used-oil disposal, kitchen fire safety & gas (LPG/PNG) compliance, trade licence & local body permissions, labour compliance for kitchen and contract service staff, and **food-safety/product-**

liability insurance. Menu-linked obligations include allergen and — where claimed — vegetarian/jain/halal segregation integrity. Food cost, cover volume, safety discipline & service quality determine success.

3. Promoter & Ownership

Led by a promoter with catering, hotel F&B or large-scale kitchen experience. The decisive competences are *production planning* (cooking 1,200 covers to land hot at 8pm) and *procurement* (buying volatile fresh produce without letting food cost drift). The team includes an executive chef and kitchen brigade, operations/event managers, service supervisors, sales & client servicing, procurement, admin & accounts. Consistency, food-cost control, hygiene discipline & service standards are the differentiators. Ownership, equity & any chef-partner arrangement are editable inputs.

4. Market Analysis — India

Demand is anchored by the Indian wedding — where catering is typically the single largest line in the budget — and extended by corporate events, conferences, exhibitions and institutional contracts. Demand is season-, occasion- & budget-driven. The market rewards food consistency, menu range, service presentation, reliability & price per plate; it is **severely seasonal, reputation-driven & intensely word-of-mouth**.

Demand drivers

- **Weddings & social functions** — the largest pool; food is where families spend and where they are judged by guests.
- **Multi-day wedding calendars** — multiplying covers per client across haldi, mehendi, sangeet, wedding and reception.
- **Corporate events & conferences** — smaller covers but calendar-spread and repeat, which is what the off-season needs.
- **Premiumisation** — live counters, regional and international cuisines, plated service, curated menus lifting per-plate realisation.
- **Exhibitions & institutional contracts** — predictable bulk volume at thinner margins.

Market sizing (illustrative framing)

Layer	Definition	Indicative scale
TAM	Organised event catering in India	Very large
SAM	Regional events within economical service radius	Serviceable
SOM (Yr 1-3)	Covers served per year	Scaling with kitchen capacity

Target segments

- Wedding & social clients (direct and via planners).
- Corporates, conferences & MICE organisers.
- Exhibition organisers & venue partnerships.
- Institutional & government function contracts (off-season utilisation).

5. Competition & Competitive Advantage

Landscape: established catering houses, traditional community caterers (the informal incumbents, often excellent and cheap), hotel banquet catering, venue-tied in-house caterers, and cloud-kitchen operators moving into events. The low end

competes purely on per-plate price; the opportunity is in *consistency, hygiene and presentation* at a professional standard.

The business's edge

- **Consistency at volume** — the same dish tasting identical at cover 100 and cover 1,100.
- **Hygiene & food-safety discipline** — increasingly a client selection criterion, not just a compliance box.
- **Menu range & live counters** — regional, international & premium formats that lift per-plate realisation.
- **Service presentation** — trained, uniformed service staff; guests judge the caterer as much on service as on food.
- **Reliability of delivery** — hot food, on time, at a venue with no kitchen; the operational core.

6. Services & Revenue Model

Revenue line	Model	Basis
Wedding & social catering	Covers × per-plate rate	Core (~56%)
Corporate & conference catering	Covers × per-plate / per-day	Calendar-spread
Exhibition, institutional & bulk contracts	Contract / per-cover	Off-season fill
Live counters & premium add-ons	Per-counter / per-cover premium	Margin lift
Beverages, desserts & specialty stations	Per-cover add-on	Margin lift
Service staff & equipment supply	Per-event charge	Ancillary

Revenue is **covers × per-plate rate**. Economics = revenue – (food + labour + logistics + kitchen overhead); **food cost % is the master metric**, followed by cover volume, per-plate realisation & wastage. Premium add-ons matter more than they appear: a live counter or specialty station raises the per-plate rate by a larger proportion than it raises food cost, so **menu mix is the most reliable margin lever available** — far more so than negotiating harder on raw material, where a caterer has limited power against volatile fresh-produce prices.

7. Go-to-Market — Clients & Covers

- **Wedding planner & event firm** relationships — planners bring repeat volume and consolidate several functions per client.
- **Venue & banquet tie-ups** as an empanelled or preferred caterer — the highest-quality recurring channel.
- **Referrals from served families** — guests at a wedding are the next season's clients; catering is judged publicly by hundreds of people at once.
- **Corporate empanelment** for conference and office event catering.
- **Tastings** — the decisive sales moment in catering; almost no client books without one.

Sales approach

Build a reliable core menu and kitchen discipline → win planner and venue empanelments for repeat volume → convert tastings at a high rate through consistency and presentation → earn referrals from every function served → grow per-plate realisation through live counters and premium formats → fill the off-season with corporate, exhibition and institutional contracts. The compounding mechanism is unusually direct here: every event is a live demonstration to several hundred prospective clients simultaneously.

8. Operations Plan (central-kitchen production & on-site service)

- **Menu & costing:** menu engineering to a target food cost per plate; per-plate pricing tiers; tasting sessions.
- **Procurement:** daily fresh produce, staples contracting, cold storage, vendor rate discipline — the front line of food-cost control.
- **Central kitchen production:** production planning back-calculated from service time, batch cooking, portion standardisation, quality checks.
- **Cold chain & transport:** insulated vehicles, hot boxes, **temperature and holding-time control between kitchen and service** — the safety-critical link.
- **On-site setup & service:** counters, chafing, live stations, trained service staff briefed on the menu, replenishment discipline.
- **Post-event:** equipment recovery, wastage recording, leftover handling policy, client feedback, settlement.

Event cycle

Stage	Activity	Metric
Enquiry	Menu, covers, budget, tasting	Tasting-to-booking %
Contract	Per-plate rate, guaranteed minimum covers , advance	Guarantee vs. actual
Plan	Indent, procurement, production schedule	Food cost per plate
Produce	Batch cooking & quality check	Consistency / on-time
Transport	Cold chain & holding time	Temperature compliance
Serve	Setup, service, replenishment	Zero shortfall / guest feedback
Close	Recovery, wastage record, settlement	Wastage % / margin vs. plan

Two operational realities that outsiders consistently underestimate. First, **running out of food is catastrophic** — it is the one failure guests notice immediately and never forget, so caterers deliberately over-produce by roughly 5–10%. That planned surplus is a real, budgeted cost, not waste to be eliminated; a caterer who optimises it away will eventually run short at a wedding and lose far more than the saving. Second, **guest counts are routinely under-declared**. Families quote 800 and 1,000 arrive. This is why the *guaranteed minimum covers* clause, with an agreed per-plate rate for excess covers, is the most commercially important line in the contract.

9. Regulatory, Licences & Compliance (India)

- **FSSAI:** mandatory licence — **Central/State licence** at this scale (not basic registration); **Schedule 4 hygiene & sanitary requirements** for the kitchen; FSSAI number on invoices; renewal discipline.
- **Food handlers:** medical fitness/health certificates for all kitchen & service staff, hygiene training, personal-hygiene protocols.
- **Kitchen premises:** trade licence, local body permissions, **fire safety & LPG/PNG gas compliance**, water potability testing, pest control contract, waste & used-cooking-oil disposal per norms.
- **Food safety practice:** temperature & holding-time control, FIFO stock rotation, **retained food samples** for events (standard practice and vital evidence if an incident is alleged), traceability of suppliers.

- **Menu integrity:** allergen disclosure; genuine segregation where vegetarian/jain/halal is claimed — a misrepresentation here is a serious reputational and legal exposure.
- **Labour:** kitchen & contract service staff compliance, PF/ESI where applicable, working-hours and safety.
- **Insurance: food-safety/product-liability cover,** public liability, equipment & vehicle insurance.
- **Tax:** GST on catering services; TDS on contractor payments; note that input-credit positions in food service require specific advice.

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Role	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Promoter / business head	1	1	2
Executive chef & kitchen brigade (on roll)	6	10	14
Operations & event managers	2	4	6
Service supervisors	2	4	5
Sales & client servicing	2	3	4
Admin, accounts & procurement	2	3	4
Total (on roll)	15	25	35

Service staff for events — often 40 to 100 people for a large wedding — are engaged as **trained contract staff per event** and sit in the labour cost line rather than in headcount. Retaining a consistent contract pool matters: untrained agency staff on a peak weekend is a common cause of service failure.

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Setup	Month 0–3	Kitchen, FSSAI licence, equipment, vehicles, chef team, menu
Ramp	Month 3–12	Planner/venue empanelments, first season; ₹2.6cr revenue, ₹7L loss
Grow	Year 2	Cover volume & premium mix, off-season contracts; ₹4.2cr, ₹24L profit
Scale	Year 3	₹5.6cr revenue, ₹51L profit; food cost & kitchen utilisation optimised

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

All figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian context, shown so the promoter can replace them with live rates. They are not projections of guaranteed results. **This is a principal, food-production business — revenue is gross and food cost is the largest expense.** Food cost %, cover volume, per-plate realisation, wastage & kitchen utilisation are the levers.

12.1 Project cost & means of finance

Capital requirement	₹
Central kitchen setup, equipment & cold storage	45,00,000

Service equipment (chafing, crockery, cutlery, live counters, hot boxes)	28,00,000
Transport vehicles (insulated)	18,00,000
Working capital (ingredients + salaries runway)	17,00,000
Premises fit-out, licensing & compliance setup	12,00,000
Total project cost	1,20,00,000
Promoter contribution	50,00,000
Equipment / term loan & WC finance	70,00,000

12.2 Projected Profit & Loss (3 years)

Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Wedding & social catering	1,45,00,000	2,30,00,000	3,05,00,000
Corporate & conference catering	65,00,000	1,05,00,000	1,40,00,000
Exhibition, institutional & bulk contracts	30,00,000	50,00,000	68,00,000
Live counters, premium add-ons & beverages	20,00,000	35,00,000	47,00,000
Total revenue	2,60,00,000	4,20,00,000	5,60,00,000
Food & ingredient cost	91,00,000	1,45,00,000	1,90,00,000
Kitchen & service labour (incl. contract event staff)	62,00,000	95,00,000	1,25,00,000
Kitchen rent, utilities, gas & consumables	28,00,000	40,00,000	50,00,000
Team salaries (on roll)	30,00,000	42,00,000	55,00,000
Transport, fuel & logistics	20,00,000	30,00,000	38,00,000
Overheads, licences, insurance & BD	12,00,000	18,00,000	23,00,000
Depreciation, interest & other	24,00,000	26,00,000	28,00,000
Total expenses	2,67,00,000	3,96,00,000	5,09,00,000
Net profit / (loss) before tax	(7,00,000)	24,00,000	51,00,000
Net margin	(2.7%)	5.7%	9.1%
Food cost as % of revenue	35.0%	34.5%	33.9%

12.3 Unit economics & break-even

- **Food cost % is the master metric:** at ₹5.6 crore of revenue, a **one percentage point drift in food cost is ₹5.6 lakh** — more than a tenth of Year-3 profit, lost invisibly through portioning slippage, procurement drift or uncontrolled wastage. It is checked per event, not per quarter.
- **Per-plate mix beats price negotiation:** live counters and premium stations raise the per-plate rate proportionately more than they raise food cost, so menu mix is the most dependable margin lever. Fresh-produce prices are volatile and largely outside the caterer's control; menu design is not.
- **Covers drive absorption:** the kitchen, cold storage and on-roll brigade are fixed. A 1,200-cover event and a 400-cover event consume similar planning and supervision, so **average event size matters as much as event count**.

- **Planned over-production is budgeted, not eliminated:** ~5-10% surplus is the insurance premium against running short. Wastage above that band is a control failure and is where margin quietly disappears.
- **Break-even:** at the cover volume/per-plate level covering food, labour, kitchen overhead & finance — typically reached in year two as season volume builds. Margins expand with average event size, premium mix, food-cost discipline & off-season utilisation.

12.4 Projected Cash Flow — Year 1 (quarterly, illustrative)

Particulars (₹)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Opening balance	17,00,000	10,00,000	8,00,000	12,00,000
Collections (advances & settlements)	48,00,000	60,00,000	82,00,000	65,00,000
Food, labour, kitchen, transport, salaries & loan servicing	55,00,000	62,00,000	78,00,000	62,00,000
Closing balance	10,00,000	8,00,000	12,00,000	15,00,000

Catering has a favourable cash cycle that must not be squandered. Clients pay staged advances before the event while ingredients are bought days before it and settled on short vendor credit — so the business can run close to cash-neutral working capital in season. The dangers are three. **Ingredient purchasing is daily and cash-hungry at peak**, when several large events fall in one week. **Loan servicing starts immediately** against a first season that is still building volume. And **the final balance must be collected at or before the event** — a caterer chasing money after the guests have eaten has no leverage whatever. Season concentration means Q3 carries the year; that surplus funds the off-season, and should not be treated as profit.

12.5 Key Performance Indicators to Monitor

- **Cost: food cost % per event** (the headline); cost per plate vs. quoted; wastage %; procurement price variance.
- **Volume:** covers served; average event size; events per month; kitchen utilisation; off-season cover share.
- **Commercial:** per-plate realisation; premium add-on attach rate; tasting-to-booking %; **guaranteed vs. actual covers billed**.
- **Safety & quality:** temperature-compliance checks passed; hygiene audit scores; food-handler certification currency; complaints per event; **zero food-safety incidents**.

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Total ask: **₹70 lakh equipment/term loan & WC finance** against ₹50 lakh promoter contribution — for the central kitchen, service equipment, insulated vehicles, licensing & working capital. Kitchen equipment and vehicles are tangible and financeable, so — like event rentals and unlike the agency models in this vertical — **this business offers a lender real security**, and food-processing/MSME equipment finance lines apply. Fundability rests on the kitchen asset base, the booking pipeline, planner/venue empanelments & the promoter's catering track record. Year 1 is a modest planned loss of ₹7 lakh, driven by full depreciation and interest against a first season still building volume, while remaining broadly cash-positive at the operating level; profit reaches ₹51 lakh by Year 3 as covers, premium mix and food-cost discipline mature. PMEGP, Mudra, CGTMSE and food-processing scheme routes are all relevant to this profile. Lenders should note the seasonality explicitly: this business earns its year in a few months, and the working-capital line must be sized for peak ingredient purchasing rather than average.

13.1 Funding utilisation

Use of funds	₹	% of total
Central kitchen setup, equipment & cold storage	45,00,000	37.5%
Service equipment (chafing, crockery, live counters, hot boxes)	28,00,000	23.3%
Transport vehicles (insulated)	18,00,000	15.0%
Working capital (ingredients + salaries runway)	17,00,000	14.2%
Premises fit-out, licensing & compliance setup	12,00,000	10.0%
Total	1,20,00,000	100%

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Food-safety incident / mass food poisoning	The existential risk — FSSAI Schedule 4 compliance, temperature & holding-time control, retained food samples, supplier traceability, handler health certificates, hygiene audits, product-liability insurance. This risk can carry criminal liability and end the business outright; it is managed as a first-order priority, not a compliance chore
Guest counts under-declared by clients	Guaranteed minimum covers clause with an agreed per-plate rate for excess; on-site count reconciliation signed by the client
Food cost drift (portioning, procurement, wastage)	Per-event food-cost review, standardised portions & recipes, indent discipline, vendor rate contracts, wastage recording
Ingredient price volatility	Menu engineering, seasonal substitution, staples contracting, price-escalation clause on advance bookings
Running short of food at an event	Planned 5–10% over-production, buffer dishes, on-site replenishment capability — never optimised away
Cold-chain / holding-time failure in transit	Insulated vehicles & hot boxes, temperature logging, route & timing planning, service-window discipline
Severe seasonality against year-round fixed cost	Corporate, exhibition & institutional contracts for off-season; contract service staff; reserve season surplus
Service failure from untrained peak-season staff	Retained trained contract pool, pre-event briefing, supervisor ratios, uniform & grooming standards
Receivables after the event	Staged advances; final balance collected at or before the event ; credit discipline with planners
Demand shock halting gatherings (2020–21 precedent)	Lean on-roll headcount, cloud-kitchen/meal-delivery pivot capability, institutional contracts, debt headroom

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths Largest line in most wedding budgets; favourable advance-funded cash cycle; tangible financeable kitchen assets; every event is a live demonstration to hundreds of prospects; premium mix lifts margin reliably; repeat planner & venue channels.	Weaknesses Thin net margins with food cost at ~34%; severe seasonality against fixed kitchen & brigade cost; food-safety liability exposure; labour-intensive at peak; perishable inventory; quality failure is public and immediate.
Opportunities Premiumisation & live-counter formats; regional/international cuisine specialisation; corporate & institutional contracts for off-season; venue exclusivity arrangements; cloud-kitchen or packaged-meal extension using the same kitchen; multi-day wedding calendars.	Threats Ingredient inflation compressing per-plate margins; informal community caterers on price; hotels & venues bundling in-house catering; gathering restrictions; food-safety incident at any competitor raising client scrutiny; skilled chef attrition.

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

This event catering company would use AiSevak's Events vertical tools in operations:

- **Food cost & menu:** per-event food-cost %, cost-per-plate vs. quoted, menu-engineering & wastage-tracking tools.
- **Events & covers:** booking & guaranteed-vs-actual cover reconciliation, production-indent & advance-collection tools.
- **Compliance:** FSSAI licence & handler-certificate currency, temperature-log & hygiene-audit tools (with Healthcare/Wellness verticals).
- **Practice:** Business Plan, break-even and food-cost-economics tools to model the business.

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- Event catering: PRINCIPAL food-PRODUCTION business - central-kitchen cooking at scale + on-site service for weddings/corporate/conferences/institutional; revenue = **covers x per-plate rate**, gross (food cost is the largest expense, exactly as in food manufacturing).
- **FOOD COST % is the master metric** (35.0% → 33.9%): at ₹5.6cr revenue a ONE-POINT drift = ₹5.6L, more than a tenth of Y3 profit, lost invisibly via portioning slippage/procurement drift/wastage. Reviewed per event, not per quarter.
- **Menu mix beats price negotiation** - live counters & premium stations lift per-plate rate proportionately more than food cost; fresh-produce prices are volatile and outside the caterer's control, menu design is not.
- **The GUARANTEED MINIMUM COVERS clause is the most commercially important line in the contract** - clients systematically under-declare guest counts (quote 800, 1,000 arrive); needs an agreed per-plate rate for excess covers plus signed on-site reconciliation.
- **Planned 5-10% OVER-PRODUCTION is a budgeted cost, not waste to eliminate** - running short is the one failure guests never forget; a caterer who optimises it away eventually runs short at a wedding and loses far more than the saving.
- **Food safety is the EXISTENTIAL risk and can carry criminal liability** - FSSAI Central/State licence (not basic registration) + Schedule 4 hygiene, handler health certificates, temperature/holding-time control, RETAINED FOOD SAMPLES, supplier traceability, product-liability insurance. Also: genuine veg/jain/halal segregation integrity where claimed.

- Favourable cash cycle (client advances precede ingredient purchase) but three dangers: daily cash-hungry peak-week procurement, immediate loan servicing against a ramping first season, and the final balance which **MUST** be collected at or before the event — after the guests have eaten there is no leverage.
- **Y1 = ₹7L planned LOSS** (full dep+interest against a building first season) turning to ₹51L by Y3. Tangible financeable kitchen assets make this — with event-rentals — one of only two events businesses offering a lender real security. Figures illustrative, exclude GST; severely seasonal (the year is earned in a few months, so size WC for peak not average).

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Every tool referenced in this plan is available on aisevak.in. Open the [Events toolkit](https://aisevak.in/verticals/events) to browse and use them all at <https://aisevak.in/verticals/events> — or go straight to any specific tool at <https://aisevak.in/service/<tool-name>>. No signup needed to explore; each tool guides you step by step.

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