

Say "I Do"

TO WORRY FREE WEDDING PLANNING

By Stephanie Tate, Savior-Faire Weddings



Why Every Bride Should Hire A Wedding Planner

The ring has been purchased and the proposal has been made. After much consideration, the date has finally been set and the official planning has begun. Where do you start? What do you do first? Do you look at reception sites or do you begin to hunt for the perfect gown? It is normal to experience some anxiety when thinking about planning the most important day of your life. There are several vendors that need to be hired, countless details that cannot go overlooked, and hundreds of etiquette rules that should be considered. Chances are you will plan only one wedding in your lifetime; therefore, this can be quite a task to undertake on your own. Perhaps the smartest choice you can make when preparing for the big day is to hire a wedding planner. In addition to knowing which caterers specialize in your favorite cuisine, when you should cut the cake at the reception, and how to discreetly organize the seating of feuding family members at the ceremony, a coordinator can alleviate the strain that you and your family undertake when making your dream wedding become a reality.

Why Hire A Wedding Planner?

A wedding planner has an intimate knowledge of local wedding vendors. She can save you time and money by recommending vendors that will fit into your budget and those that will complement your overall wedding style. For instance, if you have a limited amount of money to spend on flowers, she will know which florists you should consult. If you prefer a more journalistic approach to photography, she will set up meetings with photographers who practice that style. Or, perhaps you must have a kosher wedding cake. Instead of having to contact every cake baker in town to determine which one has kosher cakes, a wedding planner will know which bakers to recommend. By hiring a coordinator, you won't have to spend countless hours searching for vendors. She can refer you to those who will best suit your wedding needs, and by doing so, allow you to focus on the commitment that you are making to your future husband.

continued

In addition to being an excellent reference source, a coordinator can also be a wedding financial planner. After assisting you with appropriately distributing your wedding budget, she can help keep track of expenditures and predict upcoming costs that you might encounter. She can also give you advice on which details you can trim or skip on to help you stay within, or even under, your allotted budget. In the long run, a wedding planner may very well save you money and even possibly cover the costs of her services.

For most brides, the scariest part of planning a wedding is the fear of not following proper etiquette. The rules of etiquette are complex and often down right confusing. By hiring a planner, you have your own personal Emily Post readily available. If your remarried parents are both hosting the event, she will know that your mother and stepfather's names are listed first on the invitation followed by your father's and his wife's. She will also know that it is fashion faux pas for the groomsmen to wear cutaway jackets at a semi-formal evening wedding. Her understanding of etiquette will ensure that your wedding will be properly planned and you won't have to worry about offending persnickety great Aunt Harriet by not having a corsage for the guest book attendant to wear.

If planning is not stressful enough, properly organizing the wedding day is possibly the most difficult part of coordinating a wedding. It should not be your responsibility to make sure that the day is running smoothly and that everyone is doing their job. Your sole task on your wedding day is to relax, have fun, and enjoy being with your new husband, family, and friends. It is a wedding planner's job to arrange the minute details for you. In addition to overseeing the setup and cleanup of the vendors, she will also supervise your bridal party and family. At the ceremony, you won't have to worry that your grandparents know when to walk down the aisle. Your coordinator will assist your family with their seating and cue the bridesmaids and groomsmen. After the ceremony, she will be at the reception site to assure that all reception events run smoothly so that you, your husband, and families may thoroughly enjoy the evening. You will not have to worry that your parents will miss you sharing your first dance because they are busy handling diminutive details.

Without a doubt, the most important reason for hiring a wedding planner is to lift the burden off you, your family, and friends. By hiring a coordinator, it becomes her responsibility, not your mother's, to count that there are five votive candles on each guest table. She, not your cousin, will make sure that the guest book makes it from the ceremony to the reception. You will not have to worry about getting your grandmother's cake knife back from the caterer after the event. Your coordinator can make sure that all of your personal items are returned. After the wedding, you and your family can reminisce on how much you enjoyed the day, not how tired you were from supervising the event.

Aspects to Consider When Hiring a Wedding Planner

Now that you have decided to hire someone to assist you in planning your big day, there are several factors to consider. Since you are entrusting her to help plan the biggest day of your life, you want to make sure that you have hired the right person for the job. Undoubtedly, one of the most important aspects to consider is personality. Does she make you feel at ease? Does she seem trustworthy? You will be spending more time with this person than any other vendor that you hire; you want to be assured that your personalities mesh. After your initial meeting, if you don't feel like you can spend another five minutes in the room with her, then she is probably not the person you want to hire to help plan your wedding. A wedding planner's job is to ease the strain of organizing and planning a wedding, so an experienced planner should leave you feeling relaxed and enthusiastic.

When hiring a planner, also consider her experience. How long has she been planning weddings? It is important for a wedding coordinator to have a

number of weddings under her belt, but remember; sometimes less experienced wedding planners bring new perspectives and possess an energy that might have been lost through the years. In addition to knowing traditional wedding customs, it is also important that she is aware of current trends and styles. Request to see a portfolio of her work so that you may assess the spectrum of weddings that she has managed. A good portfolio should include pictures of some of her past events, sample invitations or programs, selected menus, and testimonials from brides and vendors. When looking at her wedding portfolio, do all of her weddings look alike or is each one unique? When you share some of your ideas with her, does she offer creative thoughts and alternatives? Just because someone has been planning weddings for over twenty years, doesn't automatically make her the best person for the job. You should hire someone who you feel can best represent you and complement your personal style.

In addition to helping you plan the event, your coordinator will be acting as your liaison to your other wedding vendors. Therefore, it is imperative that you ask to see her references. Make sure that they include both vendors and past brides. By doing this, you will be able to hear opinions of her from both sides. For example, she might get rave reviews from former clients but several vendors seem to have complaints. While it is crucial that your planner is able to please her brides, the vendors will be the ones working your event with her, not previous clients.

After hiring your wedding planner, keep in mind that this is still your wedding. Your coordinator does not expect you to do everything that she tells you. She is there to assist you in making your dream day a reality. If you don't agree with her idea to plaster red roses across the ballroom, tell her. If you feel passionate about having your great uncle sing at the ceremony, don't let her talk you out of it. She should respect your opinion and work with you to make your wedding reflective of your individual style.

Planning your wedding will be stressful at times, there is just no way around that. Hiring a wedding coordinator will lift a heavy burden from you and allow you to focus your attention on such details as which color boutonniere best compliments your groom's eyes. A wedding planner is a professional in her field. She possesses a level of knowledge and experience that only comes with planning several weddings. She has an established rapport with local vendors, she knows the easiest ways to save money, and has the most efficient means of organizing the day. She is there to ease your worries and make the planning process as stress-free as possible. Sure, you could plan the wedding on your own—you could also create your own floral arrangements and bake your own cake. Nevertheless, you'll probably hire professionals for those tasks, so why would you try to plan the biggest day of your life without the assistance of an experienced professional? ❖



Savoir-Faire Weddings

**PERSONALIZED WEDDING PLANNING
FOR THE CONTEMPORARY BRIDE**

Stephanie S. Tate, Certified Wedding Consultant 352-514-1231
www.savoirfaireweddings.com • Stephanie@savoirfaireweddings.com

Reprinted with permission. *Wedding & Reception Services Magazine*. © 2005