

**Bride's Name:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Groom's Name:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Wedding Date:**\_\_\_\_\_

# **How to choose and work with wedding vendors, professionals and service providers**

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Congratulations! You got engaged and are looking forward with anticipation, to your dream wedding but do not know where to start and what to do. This article is dedicated to the many engaged couples facing this dilemma and those who want to be focused.

## **About Weddings:**

Weddings are very personal and each has its own unique character.

It is very difficult to list every possible scenario.

The common denominator basics for every wedding are the wedding:

- **Style** can range from a classic, elegant and glitzy black tie affair to a picnic in a park.
- **Size** depends on the number of guests.
- **Budget** can range from a few hundred to many thousands of dollars.
- **Location** local or a destination wedding.
- **BRIDE and GROOM** choose the setting, the colors, the music, the wedding theme and other specifics that reflect their personalities and interests.

Some couples hire a Wedding Planner; some rely on the experience of friends and family, but most opt to plan their wedding by themselves.

The wedding day is only part of the term wedding as a whole. Wedding as it will be referred to in this article includes the preparations for, and the activities following the big day including the honeymoon.

It is very important that both of you, bride and groom, start planning your wedding as soon after the engagement as possible. This allows you to:

- Take your time, brain storm leisurely and discuss your needs and desires,
- Divide the tasks into small easy to handle assignments,
- Prevent and correct any occurring errors,
- Deal with delays,
- Handle any possible mishaps,
- Have fun and enjoy planning your wedding rather than stressing over it.

## **Notes and Comments:**

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Your first step is to choose your priorities and write down everything that is:  
Very important - urgent,  
Less important - allows for flexibility and  
Least important - most adaptable for changes and compromises.

### **For example:**

#### **Very important – urgent**

Time of year time of day, Date, Budget, Location of ceremony, Location of reception, Size of guest list, Officiant – Clergy, A specific wedding vendor or service provider.

Having prioritized, put together your wedding information and a list of questions and requests, to present to the vendor or service provider, or just fill in the forms that are included in this wedding planning organizer.

**Of secondary importance** - less urgent but needs time to organize. You can be flexible.

Items and services you need to have but where you can be flexible about some details, are: Attire, Menu and Beverages, Florist, Cake, Photographer, Videographer, Invitations, Musicians, A wedding gift from the bride to the groom, A wedding gift from the groom to the bride, Gifts for family and wedding attendants, Wedding day help - before, during and after the wedding.

**Least important** – items most acceptable for flexibility. You are willing to make changes and to compromise. Wedding day schedule, Readings at ceremony, Music selection, Final flower selection, Wedding favors, Centerpieces, Reception seating arrangements etc.

### **How to find the appropriate wedding vendors, professionals and service providers?**

Before setting any appointments it is a good idea to:

- ✓ Ask your friends, acquaintances and family for recommendations,
- ✓ Attend bridal shows
- ✓ Ask for recommendations from Ceremony and Reception Locations
- ✓ Visit bridal shops and ask for referrals,
- ✓ Check the internet
- ✓ Check Local Bridal Magazines
- ✓ Check the yellow pages

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Go over your written notes and organize them by priority and ease of use.

Armed with a list of vendors and service providers, it is time for you to pick up the phone and set appointments. Schedule your appointments by PRIORITY. So, if a specific person or company's participation at the wedding is a must, you should contact them FIRST to find out when they have an opening. If the date is a priority you need to focus on securing an officiant, and a location for the ceremony and the reception, and so on. Do not limit your search to wedding specific service providers such as wedding consultants, caterers, florists, DJs and-or musicians, photographers, ceremony and reception sites and videographers. Many vendors automatically raise their prices when they hear the word WEDDING. So, you may be in a better position to negotiate with those who also provide services to other types of parties, business events, conventions etc., as they may be open to negotiations. You may be able to secure their services at reduced rates or receive a free gift. Actually, while on the phone to set an interview appointment, request a price quote for a party, or an event. Give the service providers the basic party or event information including the anticipated number of guests, date and hours requested, and ask for a quote. When you arrive at the interview, with the price quote in hand let them know that the party or event is a wedding.

Do not, however, commit until you have accumulated at least a few bids and found the person(s) you interviewed accommodating and easy to work with.

Oh, yes! One more thing you need to do before booking any of your vendors. Check them out at the Better Business Bureau to make sure no complaints have been filed against them. Once you made your choice do not look for other alternatives or you'll drive yourselves crazy. Instead go on to the next detail that requires your attention.

Be prepared! Go to each interview ready with your questions and information neatly written. It is easy. Just fill in the appropriate forms in this planning organizer and take them with you to the interview. Bring a pen and paper and take notes at meetings with the different wedding professionals, service providers and wedding vendors. These notes, placed in your binder with your other wedding planning documents and receipts, will become a fun wedding keepsake.

### **Most Important**

Once you hired a vendor who will provide you with what you want, stay within your budget and is comfortable to work with, be sure to get a written contract. The contract must specify dates, times, names, the services and – or products provided, the payment plans including the down payment received and the refund and cancellation policies. Before you sign any contract, go over the appropriate **contract checklist** in your planning organizer to be sure that every item you discussed is included in the contract and that you fully understand and agree with all the details within it. A contract is the best way of ensuring that you and the vendor are fully aware of what is expected by whom and when. Keep every contract secured in your wedding planning binder.

**For Vendors, Professionals and Service Providers' information at a glance, refer to your Business Card Holder.**

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