

A Wedding Planner, a Wedding Consultant, a Wedding Coordinator - Whatever the Title, Do We Need One?

Page 1 of 2

I am asked this question often, by brides and by grooms, especially those pressed for time because they hold jobs or professions go to school or both.

For the sake of simplicity, let us refer to all Wedding Planners, Wedding Consultants and Wedding Coordinators as Wedding Specialists. Actually the tone of the question varies between brides and grooms.

Brides get very emotional and excited about planning their dream wedding. Most want to plan it.

Grooms often would like to take an active role but believe, or think that their brides believes that it is the women who should plan the wedding. Many would like to, but do not volunteer because they do not want to "take away" the excitement their bride has toward planning their very special day.

The question whether you need to hire a wedding specialist is rather complex. It cannot be answered with a yes or a no. Many factors need to be considered, before you make your decision. The first step to answering the question is to determine;

What is a wedding specialist?

A wedding specialist is a professional who is familiar with the wedding circuit in your region, usually possesses a lot of experience, creative ideas, know-how, sense of organization, attention to details and strong contacts with vendors and service providers. Most experienced wedding specialists have over the years learned what to expect, what to ask and how to negotiate with their peers.

Now, consider the following;

How much time and energy do you have to devote to planning your wedding? Can you rely on friends and family to help?

Planning a wedding can and should be fun. However, you must remember and be prepared for the:

- Realistic wedding budgets you need to set and stay within,
- The various schedules you need to plan and keep,
- The endless details you need to take care of,
- The logistics you need to coordinate,
- The many vendors and service providers you need to hire, work with and supervise when necessary,
- Delegation of some responsibilities require your being on top of the - what, by whom and by when - to do lists,
- You must be conscientious at following up.

If you were to, to what degree would you like to engage the wedding specialist?

Options:

- To consult with regarding what needs to be done,
- To Help you come up with a realistic budget,
- To help you stay within your budget?
- To hire the vendors and service providers on your behalf and have you work with them?
- To hire the vendors and service providers for you, and also work with them and supervise them on your behalf?
- To do everything other than the attire, from the Save the date to the favors and everything in between and to supervise during the wedding itself,
- To supervise the wedding day itself – only,
- You do not want to engage a wedding specialist.

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Page 2 of 2

How much can you budget for the service of a wedding specialist?

This depends on the specialist charging method and your negotiating skills. The fee depends on the way it is calculated. Some charge:

- A flat fee that depends on what you want them to do,
- A percentage of the cost of your wedding,
- A fee from you and a fee from each vendor and service provider they offer your wedding to,

There are some other fee schedules but they are less common.

Are you planning a destination wedding?

Unless your wedding location offers their services as part of the wedding package, this is the only situation where you **must** budget and hire a local wedding specialist. Hire the most experienced wedding specialist where you plan to have your wedding, because it is impossible to plan a wedding from afar.

The only exception is if you have friends and/or family in the region who can plan on your behalf. However, I do not recommend it.

Many brides and grooms do not want to miss the excitement of planning their own wedding but are not sure quite how to achieve professional results. Following are a few tips.

Whether you hire a wedding professional, do everything completely by yourselves, or anywhere in between, you need to be organized. If you want to have keepsakes of your wedding planning, arm yourselves with a wedding comprehensive planning kit that includes:

- Planning calendars,
- An appointment book,
- A wedding planner and organizer in a 3 ring binder with pockets and sheet protectors,
- A notebook, unless you can write in your planner and it can serve as a notebook,
- A personal journal unless one is included in the planner,
- Pens to be able to jot ideas, observations and comments,
- A business card holder,
- A mini photo album,
- Scissors, tape, and a stapler
- A pretty box or a tote bag to house these items
- A computer, a printer and a camera are very helpful tools indeed.

You will be very busy on your wedding day. So, unless you can appoint others to oversee the wedding vendors and activities, consider hiring a wedding coordinator for the actual reception.