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Get Organized for Wedding Planning!

By Stacey Agin Murray

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You've had friends to your home for dinner. Maybe you've hosted a Super Bowl party or two. But have you ever planned and coordinated an event for 50–300 guests?

If you haven't, then welcome to the world of wedding planning.

Caterers, florists, and other wedding-related companies will be banging down your door to get your business. Friends and relatives will offer advice, phone numbers, and web sites for you to check out. How will you juggle the multitudes of research and information from those who want your day to be special? The key to smooth and stress-reducing wedding planning is...

Being Organized

Being organized is the art of having the things you need when you need them whether it is a brochure, a phone number, or a picture of your ultimate bridal bouquet. And no one recognizes the need to be organized more than someone who is planning a wedding. A few organizing techniques you can use to help you plan your wedding are the consistent use of a calendar/PDA and making 'to-do lists.' But what about all of those wedding-related papers you've accumulated? Estimates from caterers, song sheets from bands, and all of those pictures you tore out of magazines—how are you supposed to keep them all organized?

The Wedding Binder

The top tool for organized wedding planning is a 'Wedding Binder.' Besides your future spouse, your 'Wedding Binder' will be the closest thing to a best friend you'll have during your engagement period. The wedding binder is essentially a 'home' for all wedding-related information. Each topic will have a specific area in the binder allowing for quick referencing and retrieval.

Get Organized for Wedding Planning!

How should you build your wedding binder to work best for you?

The size of your wedding and how many 'extras' you incorporate into your wedding day (ex. ice sculptures, doves) will determine the size of your binder. If you are having a small, simple gathering or you're not doing much research, you may not need more than a 1" spine. Large gatherings with many 'extras' will probably require a binder with upwards of a 3" spine.

Besides the binder itself, you will need: three hole punched, two-sided pocket folders extra wide dividers or self adhesive divider tabs for the pocket folders three hole punched, zippered pocket for pen/pencils/paper clips (optional)

One, two-sided pocket folder is usually enough room for the paperwork of one vendor. One side of the pocket folder is for ideas and research and the other side is for estimates and contracts. Keeping these different types of information separate will allow you to locate them and retrieve at a moment's notice.

Examples of some categories for your pocket folders are... Catering Photography Bridal Gown Transportation Ceremony/Officiant(s) Honeymoon

Assemble the pocket folders in order of importance to you. If you are constantly making calls to your caterer, place that folder towards the front of the binder. Already know what favors you want to give out? Place that folder towards the back.

What other information can be stored in your wedding binder? Guest lists/gift lists E-mail/phone list of bridal party members Seating charts A print-out of your registry

Benefits to using a wedding binder Money-saving benefit: You're always prepared when a vendor wants to talk about price. If someone quotes you a price in writing and you can't produce the paper it's written on, they could try to charge you more money for their services. Time-saving benefit: Since all of your information has a 'home,' you won't be wasting your time printing duplicate information off the internet or repeatedly asking for the addresses of your guests. Sanity-saving benefit: All of your wedding information is in one place. No need to take apart your living room looking for what you need.

Tips for keeping an organized wedding binder: Label the pocket folders clearly Place new papers/information in the correct pocket of your binder as soon as you receive them. Sort and purge your binder once a month. Toss any information that is no longer relevant in the trash or in a folder for a friend or relative who may need it in the future.

Always bring your wedding binder with you when meeting with your vendors. You'll have all the information you need to compare prices and make educated decisions. You will be organized, prepared and in control of your special day.

Stacey Agin Murray, professional organizer and owner of Organized Artistry, LLC, transforms mess into masterpiece with patience, organizing know-how, and a sense of humor. For a free e-list of 'Top Ten Tips for Organized Living,' or to order your copy of '7 Steps to an Organized Wedding Thank You Note' visit

Hiring A Professional Wedding Planner: The Advantages

By Melissa Burton

Have you ever wondered why Jennifer Lopez had made such a great impact on her movie, "The Wedding Planner?" This is because most people, after watching the film, had finally realized the importance of hiring a wedding planner.

Long before, most couples are having second thoughts on the idea of hiring a wedding planner. They have doubts if hiring the services of a wedding planner is really worth their money, especially those who are in a tight budget.

Basically, hiring the services of a wedding planner is actually a matter of choice and personal preference. If you think that you and your fiancé can handle most of the wedding planning without any burden, then, go on with your plans.

But if you think that doing all the planning from the very beginning is already tedious, then, it is time for you to hire the services of a wedding planner.

Basically, a wedding planner is someone who is adept and knowledgeable when it comes to wedding plans. Wedding planners have already established their contacts with many businesses that are important in the wedding such as flower arrangers, caterers, venues, etc.

So, for most people who are not yet aware the benefits they can derive from hiring a wedding planner, here are some facts that you need to know:

1. Hiring a wedding planner will save you time.

Planning a wedding can be a daunting task. It can even be more tedious if the person who plans the wedding is a participant also like the bride or the groom. It can be really difficult to have an open mind especially with all the jitters and everything.

Moreover, planning a wedding does not happen overnight. Usually, it would take you 200 to 300 hours of planning, thinking, and brainstorming. Hence, to save you time and effort, it is best to hire the services of a wedding planner.

2. More savings

Many people contend that the reason why they do not hire a wedding planner is that it will be an additional cost on their part.

What they do not know is that hiring the services of a wedding planner can actually save you more money because most of the wedding planners have already established solid contacts with some of the common wedding businesses like flower arrangers, venues, and the like. Therefore, discounts are more likely to happen because they have their own connections already.

3. Organized planning

With wedding planners, weddings can be more organized because most wedding planners are very particular from the biggest down to the last details of the wedding.

After all, it is their job so they know what should be done best.

Moreover, wedding planners have actual timeline that they follow in order to have all the details be ready on time or even way ahead of time, leaving all the last-minute changes behind.

4. The decisions are still yours

With wedding planners, the decisions are still with the couple. The wedding planner will just guide, render some suggestions, and assist the couple in making the decision.

Hence, the couple will be able to, still, have their own style and preference with regards to the planning of their wedding.

5. Confidence boosters

One of the best things about wedding planners is that they act as confidence boosters for the bride and the groom.

We all know how jittery and edgy wedding couples can be especially if they are in a rush or having trouble finding the perfect item for their wedding. But wedding planner, they will be more at ease and more confident that their wedding will be perfect because they know that they have laid the details of their wedding upon the hands of a professional.

Indeed, there could be no better person who really knows the ins and outs of wedding planning more than what the wedding planner can do.

So, for great weddings, it is best to hire the services of a wedding planner.

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