

Seven Things to Know Before Hiring a Wedding Planner

Introduction

So, you're getting married? Congratulations! A wedding is one of the happiest, and most hopeful, events that life can offer. The symbolic joining of two people into one couple has always been a special time. We expect nothing but the best on this most wonderful of days. The traditions and ceremonies that surround all weddings, ancient and honored as they are, are still practiced because people have always considered marriage a very important act. Because of this, everyone hopes that the day of their wedding will be perfect.

However, perfection can come with a price. There are a thousand and one details involved in planning the perfect wedding. None of them can be overlooked and none of them can be ignored. Just trying to keep track of all them is enough to make your head swim. Flowers. Dresses. Tuxedos. Food. Drink. Seating. Music. Limos. The list goes on and on. It can be overwhelming. If one thing is wrong, if one thing is late or missing, it's enough to ruin the entire day.

A professional wedding planner can help insure that your special day is picture perfect. A planner takes care of all of the details and logistics leading up to the wedding. They can even help design the look and feel of the wedding to your specifications. On the day of the wedding, they are there, behind the scenes, orchestrating every detail and making sure everything goes off without a hitch. This takes the pressure off of you and your partner, allowing you both to fully enjoy the most important day in both of your lives.

Given this, it's important to choose a wedding planner who is the right fit for your budget and needs. Here are seven things that you must know before hiring a wedding planner. Keep these things in mind when selecting a wedding planner and you will have taken a giant step towards achieving the wedding of your dreams.

1. Understanding A Logistical Wedding Planner vs. A Design And Logistical Wedding Planner

When selecting a wedding planner, it's important to clearly understand the functions and services a planner can provide. Additionally, it's equally important for you to have a clear idea of what you want help with and what you plan on doing yourself. Doing both guarantees that you will hire a wedding planner who is right for your needs.

The tasks that need to be done prior to a wedding, as well as on the day of the wedding, can be broken up into two broad categories: logistics and design. Logistical tasks involve many of the jobs that need to be done before the wedding, as well as the hundreds of smaller details that need attention on big day itself. Design related tasks are concerned with the overall look of a wedding and are based on colors, fabric, lighting, music and a central theme, if any.

A logistical wedding planner will recommend and, with your approval and oversight, hire the venue for your reception (along with menu and bar items), the transportation involved in moving everyone around on the day of the wedding, the florist who will provide flowers and floral arrangements for the event, the music for dancing and entertainment, the photographer and videographer to record the event and much more. Additionally, on the day of the wedding, a logistical wedding planner will work to make sure everyone and everything is in the right place and right time.

A design and logistical wedding planner will perform all of the above logistical tasks. In addition, they will also recommend and, again with your approval and oversight, select the colors and fabrics for clothing, gowns, shoes, tablecloths, centerpieces, flowers and any decorations. If appropriate, they will also work with you to coordinate any theme you choose into these design elements. Finally, they can also coordinate any food, drink or music choices into the overall design scheme, as well.

2. Choosing The Right Wedding Planner - Will They Handle Everything Or Will You Handle Some Things On Your Own

Your wedding should be as unique as you are. Your wedding planner understand this. They will work with you to make sure that your wedding is a day to remember. How this gets done is completely up to you. It is important to remember that your wedding planner works for you. Their goal is your happiness and satisfaction. They can, and will, provide guidance and suggestion. They will also do all of the heavy lifting and take care of the most minute details, should you so desire. However, at the end of the day, it is your wedding.

You make the decisions and you call the shots. So, if you want your planner to handle every detail, consider it done. Also, if there are things you'd prefer to do yourself, your planner will step back and allow you all the room you need. In the end, you are both a part of the same team. working together to insure your big day is the best it can be.

3. How To Decide Whether You Want Different Package Options Or Completely Customized Planning

One of the biggest decisions facing you before your wedding is whether to choose a wedding package or a completely customized wedding plan. While both options have their pros and cons, a wedding planner can help you decide which option is best for you.

Generally, a wedding package allows you to select from a group of options available in different categories, such as menu items, bar items, venue room size, wedding cake, etc. Some wedding packages

also allow you to choose DJs, flowers, photographers and more. The options you can select from may be limited, in some cases, but this is offset by increased affordability.

Completely customized wedding planning is just that. In a completely customized wedding plan, every choice from A to Z is available. There are no limits to your options in any given category. This greater flexibility comes with a higher price tag when compared to a wedding package.

A competent wedding planner can help you decide whether to go with a wedding package, a customized plan or a hybrid plan that takes elements from both. No matter what you decide, the planner will keep you within your budget and fulfill your particular needs and desires so that your wedding day is memorable.

4. Understand That Wedding Planners May Earn Revenue From Their Recommended Vendors

A wedding planner is well versed in the art and science of planning a large and important event. Additionally, the most important goal for any wedding planner is guaranteeing that your wedding is as close to perfect as possible. Your satisfaction is their reward. It is also the basis upon which their business is built. That being said, you should be aware that a wedding planner may earn revenue from a vendor that they recommend to you.

While not always the case, in some instances particular vendors may provide compensation to your planner in return for the business the planner sends their way. This referral fee does not influence your planner's recommendation. It is simply a way for the venue or service provider to thank the planner for the opportunity to participate in your big day. It also insures that the planner will keep that vendor in mind for the next event they are planning. No professional wedding planner will ever recommend a substandard vendor, no matter the referral fee.

5. Getting Your Wedding Planner to Provide You With A Breakdown Of Cost Allocation

While you don't want, and shouldn't, put a price tag on the biggest day of your life, you do want to make sure that every dollar you spend on you wedding is being put to good use. An excellent way to do this is through a breakdown of costs and allocation. A cost allocation allows you to see exactly how much is being spent on each wedding category, as well as what percentage of your total budget that category is using up. When you have this information, you can keep tabs on your spending. You can also make sure that one category isn't eating up so much of your budget that the other categories are underfunded.

Typically, about 40% to 50% of any wedding budget goes towards the reception. This would include venue rental, food and drink. Clothing, flowers, music and photography/videography each account for about 10% of the budget, or 40% in the aggregate. Finally, transportation, gifts, stationary, cost for the ceremony and other miscellaneous items account for the remainder of the budget.

Keep in mind this is the budget for an average wedding. Your wedding is as unique as you are. The allocation of costs for your particular wedding could be very different, depending on your tastes, needs and desires. Your wedding planner will help you determine where money should be allocated so that those tastes, needs and desires are met. They will then provide you a breakdown of your specific cost allocations so that you can be sure your special day remains special.

6. Making Sure That Your Wedding Planner Is Prepared For An Emergency In The Event They Can't Attend The Wedding

The time leading up to your wedding day is both joyful and nerve wracking. Every bride and groom worries about things going wrong. What if the weather is bad? What if the flowers don't arrive? What if they drop the cake? The number of things to worry about can seem endless.

If you have a professional wedding planner by your side, you can relax. They are there to handle all of the "what ifs" you can think of, as well as the ones you can't imagine. They've been there and they've done that. They know the ropes, they know how to prevent mistakes from happening and, most importantly, they know what to do when mistakes do happen. Let's face it. Life happens, even on your wedding day. Your wedding planner knows this and is prepared for any contingency. This even includes having an emergency plan in place should they not be able to attend your wedding.

Every wedding planner works with a network of fellow professionals. If your wedding planner is unable to be present on your wedding day, another planner from this network will be there. They will be fully versed in all the details, big and small, needed to make your day perfect.

7. Other Important Questions To Ask Your Wedding Planner

You are trusting the success of your wedding to the wedding planner you choose. Could anything be more important? Therefore, when selecting a planner make sure you ask the tough, but necessary, questions that will insure the planner you select is the right one for you. Any wedding planner worth their salt will be more than willing to provide forthright answers to these questions.

First off, ask the wedding planner for references. A good wedding planner will be able to provide you with the contact information for previous satisfied clients. Get in touch with these people. Ask them about the planner's performance. Ask them whether they would recommend the planner to others. If previous clients have good things to say about the wedding planner, you can be more confident in choosing that planner to help you with your wedding.

Also ask the planner about their business. How many weddings do they handle a year? Are they a full-time planner? Are they available on the day of your wedding? Do they have other weddings planned on the day you've chosen? Why and how did they get involved in wedding planning? Again, the answers to these questions will help you select a wedding planner that is the best fit for your needs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, remember that a professional wedding planner is there to help you achieve your dream wedding. Your goal is their goal. They are there to work with you and they will be there along every step of the way, from the very initial planning right through to the big day itself. They will provide expert advice and guidance in all matters relating to your wedding. They will handle the big issues and the small details. They are there for you when you need them the most. In fact, choosing the right wedding planner is probably the best way to guarantee that your special day is both memorable and beautiful.