

# DO YOU *Really* WANT TO PLAN YOUR OWN WEDDING?

*In the early stages of preparing for your big day, you may make the decision not to hire a wedding planner. But like any one else's job from the outside looking in, it's never as easy as it looks. Before you make that leap, consider these realities of wedding planning.*

## WEDDING TASKS AREN'T ALWAYS FUN.

Sure, it's a ball to ooh and aah over cake designs, but there's nothing enjoyable about researching party buses for guest transport or making seating charts. There isn't much joy in reviewing vendor contracts or keeping track of payments. Hiring a wedding planner doesn't mean outsourcing your entire wedding. A wedding planner only handles what you want them to: support at the start to get you on the right track, day-of coordination only, or indeed the whole shebang. If do you want to drive your wedding planning, you can focus on the fun parts and leave the boring bits to someone else.

## WEDDING PLANNING IS ALWAYS STRESSFUL.

Wedding planning is not the romantic experience it's portrayed to be. There are hundreds of details to track, while meddling family and friends might drive you crazy, and some vendors can be a source of drama. Ask your recently married friends, and they will tell you that in the final month before the wedding they were so exhausted that they just wanted the day to be over—even without the added burden of planning their wedding. Bringing a professional on board to carry some of the workload makes sense (and they can probably give you good advice on managing that family drama).

## PLANNERS KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A VENDOR.

Other than a little Google research before interrogating potential vendors via email, do you really know what to ask potential vendors? For example, after contacting 20 different hairdressers for quotes, you'll realize that you have to specify what hair style you want (up or down 'do, anyone?) to get accurate pricing. When you ask cake designers for price quotes for a three-tier cake, it might not occur to you to ask about the height of the tiers. What a shock on your wedding day to see that your wedding cake is only nine inches tall! Wedding planners know what questions to ask.

## WEDDING PLANNING TAKES TIME.

Until you really get into the preparations for your big day, it is impossible to fathom how much work is involved. Some brides even take leave from work in order to have more time to plan their weddings. If you work long hours, have lots of hobbies or have children to look after, a wedding planner could be a real lifesaver. And you really don't want to get in trouble at the office by doing wedding planning on company time.

## THINGS DO GO WRONG AT THE LAST MINUTE.


It's the day before your wedding. Imagine this: the cake baker claims they never received your order; your dance floor provider phones, claiming they haven't been paid; you realize one table setting is missing, so you have to get the rental company on the phone for an extra setting, plus re-confirm guest numbers with the caterer. These tiny but unnecessary things will ruin your wedding day. Someone to handle those details will create a Zen state for you that will be welcome on your big day.

## A PLANNER CAN HELP WITH COSTS.

Yes, it's true! While you will have to pay for his or her services, a planner can help you save money in other areas of your budget. Planners know what different services cost and can better spot when a vendor price is exorbitantly high. And, as with any other wedding vendor, you will agree in advance what services you want from your planner and how much that will cost. It is not in their interest to hand you a bill at the end of the wedding that you can't afford to pay.

## IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO FIND HELP ELSEWHERE.

There is much to do in preparing your special day, so without a planner you either must ask for help from others or handle everything yourself. Obviously family, friends and your wedding party are at the top of the help list, but do you really want to burden them with running errands on your wedding day? Do you want your groom driving all over town picking up cakes and buttonholes or your mother supervising the placement of the centerpieces? These are all tasks that a day-of wedding planner can handle for you.

At the beginning of your wedding planning, sit down as a couple and consider how much time, budget, and manpower you have for big-day preparations. Consider which areas could use professional support, and which planning areas you're happy to outsource. Talk to wedding planners in your area. Even if you're hesitant, it won't cost you anything to give them a call and find out the range and price of their services. It could be your best way to a less stressful and more romantic wedding planning experience. 

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