

# RARE FORM

L I M O U S I N E

## *Choosing the Perfect Wedding Coordinator*

Coordinating a wedding can be stressful, especially if the individual elements of the coordination are disorganized. The last thing any couple wants to do is haggle over particulars and obsess over details. A professional wedding coordinator can take care of any item, no matter how small. Since she knows the couple's budget, she can weed out any vendor who doesn't fall within the confines of the bride and groom's spending range. In addition, she'll know the couple's likes and dislikes and will make sure even the most minor details are perfect.

The professional wedding coordinator will also have a timeline. Any newly engaged couple can be overwhelmed with thoughts of what to do first and how far in advance an issue should be addressed. Since she's done this many times before, the coordinator knows the proper sequence of events and how they should be handled.

### THINGS TO CONSIDER

Any couple who is considering whether to hire a wedding coordinator needs to know what parts of the wedding coordination are the responsibility of the coordinator. Typically, the wedding coordinator is responsible for many of the important, but potentially overlooked details.

The mechanistic details of a wedding are probably the least desirable part of the upcoming wedding for an excited bride and groom. A professional wedding coordinator will work according to an established timeline and let you know what you should be doing, and at what time. She will assist you in establishing a realistic budget that is tailored to meet the most important aspects of your wedding preferences. She will haggle over prices and negotiate discounts so you can have what you want at the lowest price, and advise you when payments are due to each vendor.

The culinary aspects of a wedding are a significant portion of the coordination effort. The wedding coordinator will help you select a menu that works for you as well as your guests. She will see that there are special foods for special diets, and see that all age groups are catered to. She will make sure that all food and drink items are of the very best quality that you can afford. Of course, she will assist you in selecting a tasty, tasteful wedding cake, within your price range.

Decorations, table linens, flowers, and favors need to be properly chosen. Logistics must be handled with pinpoint accuracy, from the arrival of the bridal party at the church or synagogue, to the limousine coordination, to the reception. The wedding coordinator will ensure everything is orchestrated smoothly from the walk down the aisle to the tossing of the bouquet, and on through the reception.

## CHOOSING A COORDINATOR

Before hiring a wedding coordinator, be sure to interview her thoroughly. Find out how many weddings she's handled in the past and ask for references. Contact vendors to check on her reputation. Check with the Better Business Bureau to make sure she has a good record and see if you can peek in on one of her events. Make sure you establish a price in advance and, above all, get everything in writing. You'll probably want to interview several coordinators to be sure you find the one best suiting your needs.

One of the great things about having a wedding consultant is that they can be objective. This can come in very handy if your mother and his mother have different opinions on some aspect of your ceremony. A good wedding consultant is used to being a moderator and can offer suggestions and alternatives in a calm, soothing manner. When you're interviewing your coordinator, ask for examples of how they've handled disputes in past situations. This will tell you what to expect if, heaven forbid, any should come up during your own planning.

## PROFESSIONAL RATES

When choosing your wedding coordinator there are a few things to consider with respect to rates. There are three ways that coordinators are paid:

1. Some coordinators offer "free" service and are paid by vendors with "kick backs." This occurs when the vendor provides a percentage of the service fee to the coordinator for bringing them the business. A word of caution: this may inhibit the coordinator's desire to send you to the best person in the business if the best person in the business is not giving them the highest "kick back."
2. Another form of payment is a percentage fee. coordinators using this method generally charge anywhere from 15–20% of the total budget for their services. This method is primarily used when a coordinator is orchestrating an elaborate, large wedding and reception and typically when the event has a cost of more than \$30,000.
3. Other coordinators offer flat rate fee services. These types of packages include a specific amount of hours dedicated to specific activities. Some consider this a better way to go because they feel that the wedding coordinator will be less inclined to find the most expensive vendors; however a good coordinator makes it his or her job to keep the bride within her budget, period. No coordinator wants to get a reputation of taking a bride outside of her budget on her special day and a good one will work very hard to stay under budget and provide the bride with savings if at all possible without compromising quality and style.

While there are many different methods coordinators use for fees, you will find that most coordinators offer packages that include both flat fee and percentage based packages with a variation of services that will suit your bridal needs.

Generally speaking, if you are planning a large wedding, you will do better on a percentage fee based package. With flat fee packages there are usually limitations as to how many hours will be dedicated to a wedding with a flat fee rate, and any hours over that amount are charged at an hourly rate. With percentage based packages there are usually an unlimited number of hours dedicated to the coordination. If the wedding is large, there are many details to tend to, and the coordinator's time flexibility will be invaluable.

Smaller weddings should go with a flat fee service. There are not as many hours that are needed and a couple could save by going this route.

## AFFORDABILITY

Wedding coordinators are no longer employees of the rich and famous. With affordable pricing, they're now the norm for couples from all walks of life. If you're overwhelmed with all that must be done for your wedding, why not hire a wedding coordinator?

In all actuality a wedding coordinator should be able to save you money in the end. Because of the repeat business wedding coordinators bring to wedding product and service providers, they are able to negotiate expert pricing.

In most cases, the monetary savings experienced by the couple through their wedding coordinator's keen negotiating skills pay for the cost of hiring the coordinator, if not more. So in the end the bride and groom are left with a beautifully orchestrated wedding, planned by a professional, with less stress.

Of course, the biggest savings that you achieve by hiring a wedding coordinator is your time savings. Spend the additional time wisely on other things like finding that perfect wedding dress, attending engagement parties and showers, or just enjoying your relationship. No matter how you look at it, couples who hire a wedding coordinator are able to better focus on the joy of the occasion.

Rare Form Limousine works with several outstanding wedding coordinators. Ask us for referrals if you are interested in having your wedding professionally coordinated.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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