

ABOUT WEDDING PLANNERS, WEDDING CONSULTANTS and FULL-SERVICE COORDINATORS

Knowledge shared from the [Preferred Vendor Directory](#)

A full-service wedding planner provides a much more profound level of service than does a day-of coordinator or wedding coordinator, and thus your interactions with your planner will be much more complex. A day-of coordinator will be able to give you an exact quote in advance of the wedding, and a wedding coordinator who simply helps you manage the vendors and rentals you yourself have chosen may be able to do the same. But a full-service wedding planner is working side-by-side with you to create the wedding of your dreams – he or she may be involved in planning almost every element of your ceremony and reception making it initially difficult to draw up a list of *exactly* what he or she will do.

Wedding planners are no longer the darlings only of the rich and famous. Nowadays, it's considered perfectly reasonable for a bride to utilize the services of an expert event planner who may bill him- or herself as a planner, consultant, or coordinator. These party professionals can handle as much or as little of the wedding planning as you prefer, though it's common for planners to take on everything from designing a wedding color scheme to choosing wedding favors to finding wedding vendors to helping the bride and groom write personalized wedding vows.

It may seem like hiring a wedding planner is an expense that can be safely avoided, and it's true that almost any bride should be capable of planning a wedding. But before you go on a wild DIY spree, consider carefully whether you truly have the time, energy, and resources necessary to plan not just a wedding, but the wedding of your dreams. You may think you can't afford to hire some to help you plan your wedding, but a wedding planner with extensive industry connections can actually save you money by finding discounts you'd never have gotten yourself.

There are three ways wedding planners are paid. Some offer their services for "free" – in reality they are paid percentage-based kickbacks by vendors for driving business their way. While this can seem like a great deal from the bride's perspective, the kickbacks could offer the planner an incentive to choose vendors or venues that will pay up instead of the best possible ones. A second group of wedding planners are paid via percentage fees (usually 10-20%) based on the total wedding budget. This is the most common form of payment when the planner is creating a wedding costing \$30,000 or more. Finally, a third set of planners charge flat-rate fees that pay for a specific number of hours of work. Many wedding planners will have both percentage-based and flat-fee packages.

Your planner's role can evolve as time passes and your wedding vision solidifies, which means that your contract should be somewhat more flexible than the usual wedding vendor contract. And because a wedding planner will be so instrumental in planning all the details of your ceremony and reception, you should be given plenty of time to review your contract, so you

understand it in its entirety. The overall importance of this one wedding service provider is such that some brides and grooms will ask someone with legal experience to review the subsequent contract.

Smart Hint: When you describe your wedding vision to your wedding planner, pay attention to his or her facial expressions and body language. Your chosen planner needs to be confident that he or she can deliver exactly what it is you ask for and forward enough to feel comfortable telling you that some of your wishes are impossible to fulfill (e.g., won't work with budget, out-of-season items, etc.).