



7 KEY SKILLS TO BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL WEDDING PLANNER

Becoming a wedding planner involves more than just planning a wedding. You must understand the business aspect of your service and learn to manage your time to earn the most profits. You will be the face of your business and your own public relations representative. Every day you will have the opportunity to build -- or damage -- your reputation as a businessperson.

As your business and your expertise grow, you will probably begin planning multiple weddings at once. It is essential that you strive to provide the best, personalized attention to each couple when planning their big day, without losing your sanity.

The 7 Key Skills

No one said that becoming a wedding planner was a job for the faint of heart. Not everyone can succeed as a wedding consultant. A good wedding planner is:

- **Calm.** You will be the bride's (and the groom's!) rock. From miscommunications with vendors to major meltdowns at the ceremony, you must be able to keep your cool in the wake of a calamity. A wedding planner should always have a Plan B ready for action in case of an emergency.
- **Charming.** You are the face of your business and your clients' representative. Impeccable communication and social skills are imperative. Your reputation as a wedding consultant depends on your ability to network and maintain great working relationships with vendors and venues. Wedding planners must know how to communicate and work with all personality types. Not everyone you encounter will be pleasant and easy to please. You must be able to defuse any situation to get the results your client desires.
- **A Great Negotiator.** The bride and groom will be counting on you to order flowers, hire the band and photographer, recommend a caterer, and help find venues for the ceremony and reception. You must be able to find the best service for the lowest price. This becomes easier as you create a reputation for yourself and develop professional relationships with vendors and venues. Your connections will get you better deals, which you can pass on to your customers.
- **Good with Money.** Starting a wedding planner business requires that you be able to manage your own expenses and stick to a budget, as well as be responsible for someone else's money and budget. Previous experience with money management is vital -- even if your only experience consists of controlling the household finances.
- **Organized.** A wedding consultant might be responsible for almost every aspect of the big day: the venues, theme, flowers, food, refreshments, attire, photography, honeymoon, and other details of the wedding. Keeping track of all the nuances, contract dates, and deadlines requires an enormous amount of organization and attention to detail. Your calendar will be your new best friend.
- **A Plethora of Knowledge.** A good wedding planner has fashion sense, good taste in music, and an eye for color, flowers, and themes. You must be able to keep up with the latest bridal trends and fads, hot honeymoon destinations, and of course, traditional wedding etiquette. Many wedding consultants also learn about different religious ceremonies and traditions so that they can accommodate couples of any faith.
- **Able to Maintain a Sense of Humor:** From indecisive or emotional brides to controlling parents and absentee vendors, your work is cut out for you. When you are dealing in dreams, the ability to keep things in perspective is essential.

Beginning your own wedding planning business will be a learning experience. No one knows everything from day one, and as the old saying goes, practice makes perfect.

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