



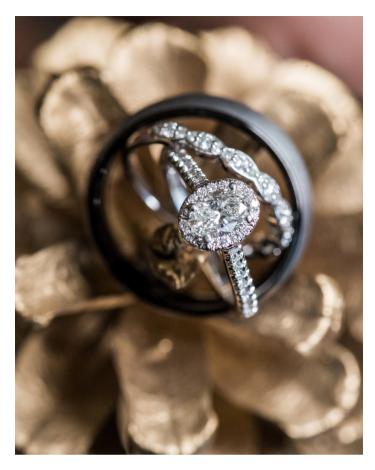
Introduction

You're engaged! Now you're ready to plan your wedding, and it's time to book your vendors. Here are four tried and true guiding principles for building an amazing team of professionals to produce your dream wedding celebration.



TIP NO 1. Know Your Budget & Be Realistic

Before you sign any contracts or make any commitments, you need to know the comprehensive scope of your wedding budget. It's imperative that you have the full financial picture in mind before signing a contract for a band, a photographer, a caterer, or even a venue. Many couples and families wind up spending considerably more than they bargained for because they fail to plan appropriately from the very beginning and not realizing there would be so many other things to think about and/ or add into the budget. Not sure where to begin? Budget development is one of the most valuable services a wedding planner provides. We even offer budget development as an a la carte service - in which, could be the best investment you ever make as it sets you up for success & avoiding costly mistakes.





TIP NO 2. Hire Professionals

When it comes to wedding planning, the old adage is true: you get what you pay for. Resist the urge to hire friends, relatives, and people offering their services for little or nothing at all. If you pay little to nothing, you just can't reasonably expect to have a good experience or receive a quality product. The creative partners and vendors you hire should be properly experienced, licensed, insured, knowledgeable, and accustomed to industry standards. If you hire a friend or relative, you may inadvertently be doing them (and your wedding) more harm than good. The process can easily strain your relationship, and you'll feel stuck without an recourse if something doesn't go as planned. True story: the last time we had a family member bake a cake, it fell over during the ceremony because they didn't understand the structural mechanics of a tiered cake.

TIP NO 3. Consider the Team Dynamic

When you hire professionals to provide services for your wedding, you're really building a team. All of these companies and individuals will need to work seamlessly together toward the same goal: delivering an exceptional celebration experience to you and your guests. It's easy to pick and choose talented folks from a Google search, but it's also easy to overlook the important fact that they need to play well with others and work together as a team. That might seem childish, but one bad apple in the bunch can sour the whole process behind the scenes and cause a domino-effect logistical nightmare. Take the time to research the people you want to hire and talk to references if need be. You're looking for experience, skill, talent, but also character, attitude, and ethics.





TIP NO 4. Negotiate Services, Not Value

If we had to pick the most important piece of advice from an industry insider's perspective, it would be this: do not demand wedding vendors to charge you less than what their standard pricing is. It's one thing to work collaboratively to fine-tune their service offerings to eliminate things you don't need, thus reducing your total cos. It's another thing to try to strong-arm your way into a negotiation of pricing. If you're successful in whittling away the price, chances are that the team you have hired will feel that you do not value them. And guess what? That feeling, whether intentional or not, will creep into the final product. If you want a team of vendors who will bend over backwards to exceed your expectations & go above and beyond to deliver an exceptional experience, then you need to be willing to invest in these people, both as artists and professionals.

