

Wedding Etiquette Secrets Revealed



**Learn How to Plan, Manage &
Adapt a Memorable Wedding
Event for Your Life**

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This manual is written in Georgia; therefore you are always encouraged to print this book for easy reading

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Introduction

This book is the direct result of my years of experience as a wedding planner as well as additional research I did just for this book. I know that planning a wedding is a onerous and frightening task, especially for a beginner and I also know that some of you can't afford to hire a wedding planner.

This book is an excellent alternative. I am not going to try to tell you that his contains everything I, or perhaps any other skilled wedding planner, actually learned during the course of a career. However, I do believe there is enough detail in this report to at least preclude those mistakes that would insult some people and be very embarrassing for you.



I want to emphasize though, that this is primarily based on old, traditional time-tested wedding etiquette and there is very little new ideas that alter the past standards. Possible exceptions to this rule are the two special situation chapters that I have recently added to this updated version of this book: Destination Weddings and Second Weddings which were not as common in the old days and did not really have any standards associated with them.

I hope you enjoy the book and I very sincerely wish you a successful wedding that you will remember for the rest of your life – for the good reasons obviously. If you really want a unique wedding please visit our sister website [Your Wedding Store](#) where you will find some special tools and ideas.

God Bless and Good Luck

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Chapter 1 - Why Etiquette Is Essential

It's your wedding, do it your way and forget about the rest, right? If you plan to make a few people unhappy and quite a few more wondering where your manners are, then that is the way to go.

Although we do not want to think or talk about it, wedding etiquette is essential. At this very important time in your life, you want everyone to know who you are and what kind of life you are planning to live. The way that you present yourself here is the way they will see you as a couple.

Even if you do not care much about what they do and think, it is still essential for you to find a way to make them feel welcome into your life.

Not To Worry, It's Not Hard!

The hardest part of wedding etiquette is learning about it. That you will do here. The easy part is doing it. There are very few things that are too hard to accommodate. Besides, a wedding is all about pomp and circumstance, so why not lay it all out there?

Wedding etiquette may seem like a difficult process but once you learn a few facts about it and how to easily execute it, you will be well on your way to pleasing your guests, your parents and even find yourself enjoying it all!

Worries Relieved

Another benefit of following the right etiquette for your wedding is that you can avoid problems like these:

- You forgot to invite someone to your wedding and now, they are upset with you!
- You do not know how to properly announce your wedding. Should you put it in the newspaper or send an announcement in the mail?
- Who should you invite to your wedding shower?
- Is it okay to do a gift registry for your wedding? If so, should you put expensive items on it? Does it imply that you want gifts?
- What should you do about guests that are out of town? Is it up to you to provide for them?
- Who's going to pay for what? Should your bridesmaids pay for their dresses? Should you fork over the money for gifts?
- Who should throw your bridal shower?
- Is email an acceptable form of thank you notes for your gifts?

There are plenty of things that are big 'ifs' and since most of us only get married one time, it is rather difficult to actually determine what the right way to go is.

That's why you need to take some time now to determine what the right way to handle these and other circumstances for your wedding is. When you handle them correctly, no one has hurt feelings, has to do too much and you don't look bad.

Wedding etiquette also shows respect and understanding for others. By doing what you can to provide for these things, you show those that you are inviting how much you really do care for them.

Getting Started

While it may be hard to get started with learning about wedding etiquette, it does not have to be. Here are some steps and tips to follow.

- Use this guidebook to insure you meet all the necessary requirements.

Learn How To Use Traditional Wedding Etiquette To Make Your Wedding Special

- If you question something along the way that is not provided here, use your best judgment to make the right decision.
- Make sure that in the end, it is you that comes out ahead of the game!

Now, let's start learning about wedding etiquette!

Chapter 2 - Who's doing what?

The first thing that needs to be figured out is who will be handling what aspects of your wedding day.

This is often a difficult situation because people will go one of two ways.

- They may want to do anything and everything for you. They may want to pay for everything, spoil you rotten and make sure that everything is perfect for you. They often want a controlling hand in the wedding planning to go along with this, though.

- They may instead want to play a minimal role in your wedding, making sure that you pay for and lead the way in your wedding decisions.

Of course, you are looking for the happy medium here. To make sure that this happens, the first thing that you need to do is to get together those that will play a large role in your wedding celebration and planning including those that do want to play a role and those that are close family.

This would include:

- Parents, step parents, and grandparents.
- Siblings.
- Godparents or mentors within the family or friend structure.
- Close friends.
- The wedding party.

When everyone can come together, they can make decisions as a whole or at least find out what role they will play in this very important day for you and for them. Now, who's doing what?

The Wedding Etiquette Breakdown of Who's Who

Here's a breakdown of some of the most important players and what they are traditionally supposed to do on your wedding day.

Mother of the Bride

#1 goal is to make sure that the bride's wishes are carried out the way that she wants them to be. The mother of the bride is there to help her to make sure that what she wants and what she needs happens.

It is very important that the mother of the bride allows for the bride's tastes, desires and needs to be provided for. This does not mean that they can dictate what happens, but rather should insure that what does is what the bride wants.

As one of the largest role players, here are her responsibilities:

- **The Wedding Attire.** The mother of the bride should help to find the perfect dress for the wedding, including undergarments and accessories. Not your tastes, but hers should come through.
- **Guest Lists.** The mother of the bride should help to organize guest lists, coordinating with the mother of the groom. If the mother of the groom does not contact her, she should make the first attempt.

- Help the bride and groom determine their wedding budget. While she should not do all the work, she should help them allocate where money is going and what are the important aspects to consider.
- Out of Town Guests. Those guests that are coming from out of town on the bride's side of the family should be well taken care of by the mother of the bride.

Arranging accommodations and transportation for them is her responsibility. Often this can be minimized if a block of rooms is available to guests at the local hotels as needed by the mother of the bride.

- Wedding Gowns. You will select your wedding dress first, but you need to immediately tell the mother of the groom what style and color it is so that she can match or coordinate hers with yours.
- Wedding Ceremony. The mother of the bride will need to insure that all the direction for the wedding is given and understood. Where will people stand, sit and how it all will happen are just a few of these concerns. Insure that the receiving line is set up properly as well.
- Hostess. As the mother of the bride, you are the hostess of the reception. Have someone help you to plan and execute it.

Mother of the Groom

The mother of the groom has a fine line when it comes to the planning and executing of the wedding. There are some very important things that she should do, but her role is largely dictated by the role that her son and her soon to be daughter in law encourage her to play.

Here are some of her responsibilities according to etiquette.

- The most important role is to congratulate. The mother of the groom should call the bride's parents and congratulate and introduce herself to them.

Announcing how happy she is for the couple, she may want to invite them to dinner at her home or out to a special dinner. A formal get together or an informal one, it is important to get together with them.

- The Guest List. The mother of the groom should work with the bride and groom to determine what the right amount of guests should be. Should there be a limit; the groom's mother should insure that she meets this limit. Providing a complete and accurate guest list quickly is essential.
- The Dress. The mother of the bride should select her gown first. The mother of the groom should match hers in style and in color. While it does not have to be exactly the same, it should coordinate. It should not match the bride or the bridesmaids.
- Out of Town Guests. The mother of the groom should provide for out of town guests that are on the groom's side. Making accommodations and transportation available to them is her job.
- The Rehearsal Dinner. The mother of the groom is responsible for the hosting of the rehearsal dinner. She should invite everyone that plays a role in the ceremony and should at least include his or her significant other. Children may also be invited. As for the type of dinner that it is, this is up to her. She can select an informal get together or a more elaborate dinner.
- Introduce the family and friends on the groom's side to the bride and her mother. This is usually done in the reception line.

The Maid Of Honor

As maid of honor, you have a special role and place in the wedding. You will insure that the bridesmaids are doing what they should and you set the tone for them. You also should insure that the wedding fits the bride's plans.

Here are some of the tasks that proper wedding etiquette says that the maid of honor should perform.

- Wedding invitations. The maid of honor should help to address and send the invitations as well as any announcements.
- Host the shower. The maid of honor should throw a party in honor of the couple. This may be the bridal shower. They should work with others in the family for planning and executing this very important event.
- Attend all parties and other pre nuptial events.
- Help the bride throughout the ceremony including help with her train, the receiving line, holding the bride's bouquet during the ceremony, witness the ceremony and sign the marriage certificate, and to carry the groom's ring until needed, unless best man does this.
- Help the bride to dress. Assist in her dressing as well as with the other bridesmaids. Help her to undress after the wedding.
- Assist the flower girl with directions and insure she performs her role effectively.

- Help the bride to leave the reception and to have her luggage packed for going away plans.
- Have her wedding dress taken care of including cleaning and preserving as per the wishes of the bride.
- Prepare Bridal Emergency Kit (See Chapter 16)

Best Man

The best man plays a large role in the wedding as well. Here are some of his responsibilities.

- Provide for the marriage license. He needs to make sure the groom has it!
- Provide the minister's fee to the minister. The groom should give it to him.
- Travel arrangements. The best man should provide for travel arrangements to each destination. He should also provide all the necessary help for planning a honeymoon too.
- Gets the groom to the church.
- Helps the groom to dress for the wedding. He should also help the ring bearer and other groomsmen do the same. The best man should help to insure the ring bearer is taken care of.
- Organize and monitor groomsmen. Insure they are where they are supposed to be on time.

- Provide for any errands that need to be done. The best man should coordinate with the bride's mother and the couple to make sure that they have all that is needed.
- Makes the first toast at the wedding reception. He should also be the first to arrive at the reception and greets guests and the bride and groom when they arrive.
- Acts as a host throughout the day, helping anyone that needs it.
- Helps the groom and bride to leave with the maid of honor's help.
- The best man should also take the tux for himself and the groom back to the rental location. He should take care of the cleaners if the tux is to stay with the groom.
- Has flowers delivered for the bride and the groom on their honeymoon.
- He also signs the marriage certificate as a witness.

These are the main players in the wedding. It is necessary to insure that anyone that wants to be included do so as long as the bride and groom agree to it. Following these wedding etiquette steps will help to keep things organized and keep people from having feelings hurt.

Chapter 3 - The Wedding Shower

The wedding shower is a very important part of the entire wedding planning session. Wedding etiquette has some pretty strong advice for those that are having one as well.

There are several key elements to remember here.

- You do not want to sound like you are having a shower to get gifts.
- You do not want to throw your own shower as a method of getting funds either.
- You do want to celebrate your engagement and upcoming life together.

So, how do we do it?

There are several ways to look at wedding shower etiquette. Let's break it down here.

Who's throwing it?

The first important aspect of the wedding shower is who will actually throw it. You should not throw your own shower, regardless. This is impolite and seems to say that everyone should give you gifts.

It is also impolite in most cultures throughout the United States for your mother to throw your shower as well. In fact, another close family member including your sister should not throw the shower for you.

But, if your sister is your maid of honor, it is acceptable for her to do this.

Who should do it then? Your maid of honor is responsible for hosting a wedding shower for you. It may be a surprise or it may be a large, formal get together.

As the bride, you really should not play a role in its planning other than offering opinions as suggested. This is a way for those that love you to show you so. In fact, it is often something they should plan from start to finish on their own.

More Etiquette to Consider

There are many more little things that factor into the wedding shower's etiquette rules. Consider each one of these if you are to have a proper shower!

- Only people that are invited to your actual wedding or reception should be invited to the wedding shower. For this reason, the maid of honor or whoever are hosting the shower may need to contact the mother of the bride for planning.

The only exception to this is when you are throwing an office wedding shower. These are generally given to you by friends in the office; on their own. The wedding party does not need to play a role in the wedding shower here.

- It is acceptable for you to have several wedding showers. If you have one for each side of the family, that is fine as long as you stick to the rules here. But, it is much more commonly accepted that a family wedding shower will include both the bride and the groom's family. It is a time to get to know each other as well.
- The mother of the bride as well as the maid of honor should try to attend all wedding showers. They do not and should not bring a gift to all of them though. It is acceptable if they do not make it to an office wedding shower.

- Men can be invited to a wedding shower. Generally, men that will be there include fathers of the bride and groom, the best man and the groom himself. But, in some cultures, it is acceptable to have a larger shower that incorporates others as well.
- Only invite a guest to one shower. They should not be asked to come to more than one because they may feel obligated to bring two gifts.
- Those that have been married before can have a second wedding shower. There are no restrictions to this, but they may want to request no gifts if they already have most of what they need to start their new life. Often, the host can request donations for a trip or simpler items instead.
- Most wedding showers should be a surprise to the bride and the groom. While this is not necessary all the time, most brides and grooms do expect to have a wedding shower thrown for them.

Where's it going To Be?

The next big question is where to host the wedding shower. The good news is that there are no guidelines here. You can throw a wedding shower that is over the top formal with live entertainment and lots of food. Or, you can throw an informal get together.

The location of the wedding shower should be depicted by the style of the wedding shower, from informal to extravagant.

Insure that there is enough seating for all the guests. There should be enough room for gifts to be opened including tables for them to be stacked on.

The host of the wedding shower should provide for the means to record what is being given to the bride and groom in a notebook. It is also necessary for the host to welcome guests and greet them at the door.

A Wedding Shower Generally Entails:

- A greeting by the maid of honor, host and the mother of the bride.
- A wedding shower should include a meal of some sort. It can be as simple as a buffet or cold cuts or as complex as a formal dinner.
- The shower should provide comfortable tables for the guests to relax on. Assigned seating is generally not necessary in an informal wedding shower but can be used in a formal.
- The shower should provide for refreshments including a cake or other deserts.
- Most of the time there is some form of music, but generally it is not live entertainment.
- The opening of the presents is generally held after a meal is provided to the guests.
- The bride and the groom should walk around and talk to everyone, thanking them for coming and chatting with guests.
- The wedding party should be thanked by the bride and the groom before or after dinner is served.
- Afternoon wedding showers are the most popular, although they can be held at any time of the day. Weekends are the most common.

More Information

The wedding shower is a wonderful tradition. It is designed to help the new couple to get started on the journey of their lives. The gifts that are given are symbolic of providing the things they will need to have a good start.

Another customary thing that can be done at a wedding shower is for the bridesmaids to collect the ribbons from all presents that are open. These are placed together to create a bouquet that the bride will use in place of the real thing at her wedding rehearsal.

One of the other bridesmaids should take diligent notes about what has been given and who gave it. This will allow the bride to write thank you notes later.

Finally, the planning of a wedding shower should be done well in advance. The more formal that it is the more planning will be needed. Most of the time the shower will happen about one month before the actual wedding takes place. If this is not possible, a wedding shower can occur days before the wedding or even after the honeymoon.

Chapter 4 - Invitations and Announcements

Wedding etiquette is essential when it comes to letting the world know about your new upcoming marriage and the invitations that you send to your guests. Getting this right really does set the stage for what your guests will think and feel about you for the next months.

Wedding Invitation Design

One of the first things to determine is how the wedding invitation will be set up. Whose name goes first? What happens when things are more than just a simple wedding? The fact is that there are many questions that come up with the wedding invitation design.

First, here are a few etiquette friendly methods of writing an invitation:

- Start with the sponsor or the bride's parents names. "Mr. and Mrs. Bob Smith" should be the beginning of the invitations.
- Follow this with, " request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their daughter"
- Next, include the first names of the bride and the groom, " Ann Marie to Mr. Adam Jones"
- Follow this with the date and time of the wedding followed by the location.

The invitation should also include the groom's parents if both will be helping to pay for or sponsor the wedding. The bride's parent's names should be first, followed by the groom's.

If the bride and the groom are sending the invitations, their names should appear such as this:

Miss Ann Marie Smith

And

Mr. Adam Jones

Now, it gets a bit trickier when you add in the divorces and other complications. To determine what the right way to design the wedding invitation is, remember this.

The parents that are issuing the invitations, sponsoring the wedding, paying for the wedding should have their name go first. If you have more than one parent, start the invitation with the bride's parents (father first) and then the groom's parents second.

There are also special situations that can follow these rules such as brothers and sisters hosting the wedding, grandparents and many, many more. The goal is to give proper respect to the individuals that are sponsoring the wedding first and foremost.

List the purpose of the invitation on it. For example, this should be an invitation to the marriage of their daughter or, an invitation to the celebration of their daughter's marriage for a reception only. If there is no reception or only selected guests will be there, the invitation would be directed as an invitation for the ceremony of marriage of the daughter.

Include These Things in the Invitation:

- The name of who is sponsoring the wedding.
- The names of those getting married. The bride's surname may be left out but the groom's should be included. If you use Miss at the beginning of her name, her surname should also be included.
- The date of the wedding, include the day of the week with the date. It is proper to do this several ways including, "Saturday, the tenth day of June," or "Saturday, June tenth," as you see fit. The year can be eliminated or included.
- There should not be any abbreviations used in the invitation, excluding Mr. and Mrs. Do not abbreviates drive, street, or the state.
- No punctuation is used at the ends of sentences. You should use a comma to separate the city and state.
- After the date is listed, the next line should include the time of the event. This too should be spelled out. Do not use am or pm, but if the timing is not obvious, then you can add in "in the morning" for a sunrise wedding or "in the evening" for a sunset wedding.
- This should be followed by the location of the wedding. List the name of the location, Grace Church. On the following line is the church's address. You do not always have to include the address, especially if it is a church. You should include it if the wedding is being held at someone's home, though. People can easily find this information on maps included with the invitation or by a simple internet search.

What Else Goes In The Envelope?

If you have every received an invitation, you know that there are more pieces to it than just this. The method that you use is up to you, but in a traditional wedding, you will want to follow these guidelines.

Reception Card

The reception card is a small sized card that is included to provide the details of the wedding reception to the guests.

If you do not plan to provide this separately, it is important for you to include the reception information on the actual invitation. This is appropriate when the reception is being held at the same location. If not, you really do need to send a separate reception card.

The reception card should include the location of the reception and the time that it is being held. These may then be sent to just individuals that are invited to the reception while you send invitations to the ceremony for others that are not invited to the reception.

Response Cards

You should include response cards in your wedding invitations for your own sanity! Often, receptions will entail the cost per plate, so you will need to know how many guests will be coming to your wedding.

The response cards should state that the guests will or will not be coming as well as request the number of individuals coming. A common way to do this is to use this method:

The Favor of Your Reply Is Requested

___ Will be attending the reception.

___ Will not be attending the reception.

___ Number of guests in attendance

Please reply by May 10th

You can change this as long as it includes the necessary information. If you are providing response cards with your invitation, you should provide a self addressed envelop that is stamped with it. The response card should be filled out and sent back to those that are sponsoring the wedding.

If you decide that you do not want to use a response card, you can also use an R.S.V.P. You can add this to the bottom of your invitation or your reception card. Make sure to direct the guests to call a specific number by a specific date.

Often, it can be helpful to use one family member from either side of the family to gather these responses to allow for a more favorable response from the guests. They are more likely to respond to someone they know rather than someone they do not.

If you will be adding this to the invitation itself, keep it in the corner and only do so if the invitation remains uncluttered.

A master list of all those that are invited should be kept on hand. Once the individual's that are invited respond, their name on the list should include how many are coming to the reception and to the ceremony.

This way, the right plans can be made based on however many are coming. It is necessary to contact those that do not respond, especially when the reception is a per plate affair to find out if they are coming.

Design Touches

There are many ways that you can personalize your wedding invitation. The design of your invitation should be a direct reflection of the type and class of the ceremony and reception to follow. If the reception is informal, then there is no need for an elaborate invitation. It will simply confuse guests.

Yet, if the reception is a black tie event, it is necessary to insure that everyone realizes this through the eloquence of the invitation itself. If you are concerned that they may not know that the wedding is a black tie event, add a small notation of it in the corner of the invitation.

You can have your wedding invitation hand drawn or have your local print shop take care of it. If you love calligraphy or a special design, go for that.

There are excellent wedding invitation companies you can work with on the web as well. Make sure to book with them early on so that you have enough time to get your invitations done correctly and out at least a month in advance of your wedding.

The wedding invitation should go out 4-6 weeks prior to the wedding celebration itself. If the reception is a separate event, held on a separate day, there should be two separate invitations sent out in a timely fashion.

Announcements

Announcements can and should be sent out by the parents of the bride or the parents of the groom, or both. This usually serves as a pre cursor to a wedding invitation. An announcement can be placed in the newspaper as well to serve as a way of announcing the happy union. It is essential that an announcement be kept rather formal.

Who to Invite

The next tricky thing to consider about the wedding and the reception is who to invite. While this is completely up to the person that is paying for the wedding, it is customary that all family be invited. Anyone that is a mentor or has played a role in the bride or the groom's life in a significant way should be invited.

It is very important for the bride and the groom to have those around them that they love and cherish. This includes step parents and divorced relatives. While it may not be something that everyone would like, it is necessary to provide this ability to the guests.

For co workers, it is not necessary to invite them unless they are more than just a co worker, such as being a friend. The boss can and should be invited, but do not be offended if they turn you down.

Anyone that has been invited to the wedding shower should be invited. The wedding guest list should be made before that of the wedding shower list to insure there are no mistakes here.

If someone does not have something to do directly with the bride or the groom, or their parents, it is not necessary or obligatory to invite them. The size of the nuptials can also limit how many should be invited. Both families should be considered fairly, though.

Postage

With all the special design considerations and the cards included in the invitation it can cost extra to mail. Be sure and take a complete package to the post office to make sure you have the right amount.

If you later add additional notes or items to one or two of the invitations, be sure and adjust. The last thing you want is “Returned for lack of postage” because then you are late getting your invitations out and you have to open each invitation and readdress it.

Chapter 5 - Who Should Pay?

Who is footing the bill for a wedding is generally a hot topic among brides, grooms and their parents. While traditionally speaking the bride's parents are to pay for the wedding, this is generally falling by the wayside as couples pay their own way.

The wedding budget is something that simply must be worked out well before the wedding plans are underway. In fact, those that are likely to be paying for the wedding, including the parents of the bride and groom, should sit down and have a frank discussion about what their expectations and abilities are.

The budget can be a direct amount or can be broken down line by line. In either case, the goal is to provide the couple with guidelines to know just how much is expected to be paid by who throughout the course of the wedding.

Once you set the date, set a date to talk money. It is the most essential thing to do to insure that everyone is on the right track.

Where etiquette is concerned, though, there are some guidelines that should be followed. Yet, you may be surprised to find that the father of the bride is not the only person that is to be paying for the wedding. In fact, it now includes the groom's family and the couple themselves!

Decisions, Decisions

One of the first things that should be discussed is the overall style of the wedding. Do the bride and the groom want a formal, lavish wedding? If so, to what extreme do they want it to be? If not, do the bride and groom want an informal

wedding? Again, to what extreme do they want to take this? Determining the level of hopes that are there is essential to knowing how much will likely be spent.

Also, as much as mom and dad want to, they should not force a style of wedding onto the couple, especially if they will not be footing the entire bill for it.

The Break Down

You can still follow etiquette guidelines especially when the wedding budget is being broken down by those that are in it. Here are some of the things that should be paid for and who should pay for them.

The Bride's Family

Here are some of the things that the bride's family should be paying for. They have by far the most to pay for. This should come from the parents of the bride or someone else that is sponsoring them.

- The wedding gown, the headpiece and the accessories for the bride to wear
- The bridesmaid's bouquet
- Corsages for the grandmothers
- Flowers for the reception and the ceremony
- Arches for the altar
- Canopy, carpeting, kneeling benches, candelabras for the wedding ceremony

- All rented items for the wedding ceremony and the reception
- Invitations, announcements and the production of them
- Napkins, wedding programs and other printed items
- The fees for the church including the musician
- The reception hall fees
- Catering for the reception and any other professional services required during the reception
- Wedding photography, videos, and the music at the reception
- The wedding cake and the wedding favors
- Brunch or lunch for the wedding party

The Groom

The groom traditionally pays his own way throughout the wedding. This may be helped by the groom's family more commonly today.

- Wedding ring for the bride
- Wedding gift for the bride
- Gifts for the ushers or groomsmen

- The bride's bouquet
- The mother's corsages
- Boutonnieres for the groom and the groomsmen
- The marriage license
- The fee for the official doing the wedding
- Limousine services
- Honeymoon arrangements
- All accessories for the groomsmen

The Bride

The bride too is supposed to handle some costs for the wedding.

- The wedding ring for the groom
- The wedding gift for the groom
- Bridesmaids gifts
- Bridesmaids luncheon

The Groom's Family

They help with the following needs

- Groom's cake
- Rehearsal dinner

Other Important Elements

- Bachelor Party is held by the best man
- Bridesmaid's gowns are paid for by the bridesmaids, including the maid of honor
- The groomsmen's formal wear is paid for by the groomsmen including the best man and the fathers.
- Formal wear for the children in the wedding is provided by their parents

Chapter 6 - Wedding Gifts

Wedding gifts are confusing. How much should be spent? Who should buy a gift for the couple? What should be done when the couple already has what they need to start their lives?

There are plenty of things to wonder about, but wedding etiquette dictates what you should and should not do when it comes to wedding gifts.

Whether you are on the receiving side or the giving side, it is essential that this touchy situation gets handled appropriately.

When Gifts Are Given

Wedding gifts are given at various times during the course of the wedding planning and ceremonies. If you are giving the gift, you should know when it is appropriate to give a gift to the bride and groom at each of these times.

- The engagement party- if there is an engagement party, small tokens can be given to the bride and the groom. Certainly a card is encouraged, but it is not necessary to go overboard with gifts here. Since this party is reserved for just the most intimate of guests, this can be handled individually as well.
- The wedding shower- The most common time to give a gift is at the wedding shower. We will get more into details about the wedding shower in just a minute. For the most part, you should only attend the shower if you are bringing a gift or something sentimental for the couple.

- The wedding- If you attend the wedding shower, you do not need to provide another gift for the wedding. But, it is customary to provide a monetary gift to the bride and groom at the wedding, to help them to pay for the wedding and to start off their life together.

The wedding gift, if given should be something of personalized or sentimental value for this special occasion.

Sometimes, the bride's family or close friends may give the bride or the groom something during odd times during the wedding preparations. For example, the maid of honor, a sister of the bride or the mother of the bride, may purchase a keepsake book for them to record their planning adventures.

This is not something that is necessarily required, but can provide sentimental value that can be used throughout the planning of the wedding itself.

Wedding Shower Gifts

When it comes to the wedding shower, gifts are almost a must. While there is no restriction that you should never go to a wedding shower without a gift, it is somewhat assumed that you will.

The gifts given at a wedding shower are designed to help the bride and the groom to begin their life together. For that reason, the gifts given are generally things for their household. You may give them things for the kitchen, the bath, the bedroom or any place else in the home that you know that they need something for.

If you are not sure what the bride and groom need for their new home, it is okay to ask the bride's parents or the groom's parents, or other close family members for advice.

You can give a monetary gift for the wedding shower if you feel that this is a more appropriate gift for the couple. Often, a monetary gift will be one of the most appreciated gifts given at any time simply because of the sheer cost of the wedding itself.

Yet, it is important to take note in the fact that a gift that is given at a wedding shower is the most customary thing given, and the most prized.

At the wedding shower, it is also customary that these gifts will be open for the guests to see. For that reason, gifts should be purchased with this kept in mind.

Other Appropriate Times

The co workers of the bride may decide to give the bride an office shower. At the office shower, those that know the bride well will give her a gift. Generally speaking the gifts are something for the home. But, they are often much less costly than the gifts given at a bridal shower.

The office shower is less formal, generally only being a 'lunch hour' occasion. There should also be a cake and/or a deli tray presented to those that come to the shower. The person closest to the bride will give her the shower but a boss can do so as well.

Guests invited to an office bridal shower do not have to be invited to the wedding shower and do not need to be invited to the wedding unless it was originally planned.

Appropriate Choices

Gifts at a wedding shower can be virtually anything that is needed for the home. While every family is different, gifts are usually given that are high in quality, something that is useful or something that has sentimental value.

The goal of the gift is to help the couple to prepare their new home for their arrival. For that reason, virtually anything for the home, from dishes and pots and pans to fine china and large appliances are acceptable.

Those that are closer to the bride and the groom generally will give a larger gift, but there is no hard rule for this either.

It is customary for the maid of honor and other bridesmaids to give gifts to the bride and groom as well. In most cases, the parents of the couple will also provide a gift to them at this occasion, unless they feel that it is necessary to keep it to themselves, in which case they can.

From The Other Point Of View

If you are the bride or the groom, you too have gifts to give out to those that are in your wedding party. It is customary for these gifts to be given, but what you give is really up to you and your budget. Wedding gifts are a sign of thank you, of welcome to our new life and of a significant start to the new life that you will be leading together.

Gifts for Groomsmen

Traditionally, the groom is responsible for providing some sort of thank you gift to the groomsmen in his wedding party. This does not necessarily need to be of high cost. It is commonly something that has an engraved message or has some value to it.

It is often appropriate to give a gift to the groomsmen that fit with the sense and relationship that the groom has with those individuals. For example, a groom may give a beer mug to his friend, an usher, as a token of appreciation and a tool to remember their friendship over the last years.

The gifts for the groomsmen can be presented to the groomsmen at the rehearsal dinner. If not, they can be presented by the groom to his groomsmen on the wedding day, as the men are preparing and getting ready for the day. It is also appropriate for the gifts for the groomsmen to be given out at the bachelor party if this occurs in the right manner for doing so.

The gift should be something that is worth something as it is a token of thanks and gratitude to the groomsmen for all that they have done to help the groom in preparation of this day and for serving next to him throughout it.

Gifts for the Bridesmaids

Typically, the bride should provide a gift of thanks to her bridesmaids. The gift selection is completely open to what she selects. It is often something significant, though not necessarily costly.

The appropriate gift for the bridesmaids can be chosen as something that is the same for all those in the wedding party. Or, the gifts can be individual items

given as a specific gift to each person. This is done at the discretion of the bride herself.

Since the gift is a token of thanks, it should be given as something that is meaningful to the ladies or something that is of value. They will use it as a way to remember this day and the bride.

The gifts for the bridesmaids are generally presented to the bridesmaids by the bride at the rehearsal dinner. They can also be given to the bridesmaids at the bridal luncheon where the bride hosts her bridesmaids for a meal together. If neither of these times is appropriate, the bride can give her bridesmaids a gift as they are preparing for their special day. But, often this is not the best choice as it can be very busy and stressful as it is.

Gifts to Guests

It is also necessary and etiquette dictates that the bride and groom, or those that are hosting the wedding reception and bridal shower, to give the guests that come a gift. This gift is often called a wedding favor.

A wedding favor is presented to the women that attend the event. While it is customary that the favors be given to all females in attendance, if the gift is something that is highly costly or inappropriate, a child can be given an alternative gift in lieu of the larger one.

The wedding favor can be any small token of thanks. There are plenty of wedding sites that offer a variety to select from right on the web. Selection of the wedding favor is completely up to the person hosting the wedding or shower.

Typically, the wedding favor will cost only a few dollars each. They should be marked with a tag that has the date of the event, the name of the couples and the occasion listed on it. Often, a small bouquet of candy is also included with the wedding favor.

Another tradition that is often used is the gift of cigars to the men that attend the wedding reception. The groom or the groom's father is to give one to each man that comes to the reception. It is a sign of welcoming the groom to manhood.

Other Gifts

There are other gifts that can be given throughout the nuptials. Gifts of sentimental value are often exchanged from mother to daughter and from grandmother to granddaughter. Also, fathers may give their son's something to honor the occasion.

While these gifts are not mandatory, they are often done as a token for the parents to honor their child's accomplishments and successes.

Gift Do's and Don'ts

Gifts should never be mentioned on any wedding invitation that is given out by the bride's parents, the groom's parents or the bride and groom. Gifts should not be expected at any time either.

Any gifts that are given should not be opened or used until after the couple has been married. Gifts should remain kept away until after the wedding ceremony.

If the wedding is called off, the gifts should be returned to those that have given them. It is often necessary to keep a record of who gave what to insure that this is easily done should the couple not stay together.

If a wedding is postponed indefinitely, gifts should be returned to the guests. If the wedding is postponed and a date is given, gifts may be kept but should never be opened or used until after the couple is actually married and living together.

Those that have been married in the past can still have a wedding shower thrown for them. It is often a necessary thing just as much as those that have not been married before. Depending on how large the wedding will be should determine how formal and lavish the wedding shower is and therefore the gifts that are given to the bride that has been married before.

For those that are having a wedding shower and do not need things for the home, especially those that already own homes, it is often appropriate to give a lifestyle gift in place of the standard bridal shower gift? This may include things like gift certifications to spas, hotels, or even favorite restaurants.

Other appropriate gifts in this type of situation include a vacation package or part of it or a gift of lodging at a bed and breakfast. Other gifts of the same type are most welcome.

Monetary gifts are always appreciated and are more than well used for any type of gift throughout the wedding shower or the wedding itself but monetary gifts may be more costly than the average gift for a bridal shower.

When it comes to gift registries, these are appropriate for the wedding shower. It is now proper etiquette to provide information with the wedding shower invitation about where the bride and the groom are registered for their wedding.

The bride and groom should register for their wedding gifts together. This should be done in several ways. It is appropriate to register at several locations to give guests options to select from. It is also appropriate and necessary to select gifts from all price ranges.

Gifts should be selected based on needs and tastes but should have a complete scope of prices so that no one feels obligated to purchase something that is too costly. On the other hand, those that do want to purchase a very nice gift for the couple should be able to find these items to select from as well.

The bride and groom should not send out invitations to the wedding shower, but it is appropriate for them to fill a gift registry.

Never request that only monetary gifts be given at either the bridal shower or the wedding itself. If this is the preferred method, the host of the wedding shower or the host of the wedding itself should encourage monetary gifts only through word of mouth.

Another option for this situation is to list a honeymoon registry where guests can provide gifts to help with the creation of the honeymoon or the costs of it. A fund can be set up on one of several websites to provide for this need as well.

Returning Gifts

Even with the best of efforts, gifts may be duplicated; the wrong size or it may not be of use to the bride and the groom. When this happens, it is okay to return the gift and purchase something that is useful instead.

For this reason, gift receipts, which are commonly found today in most department stores, should be provided to the couple. The couple can then make exchanges if they are necessary.

The only exception to this rule is when gifts are given for sentimental value or they are hand made. Then, the gifts should not be returned but displayed.

Do not be offended if the couple does return the gift that is given to them by you. It is more important that they have a gift that is of use to them to remember you by.

Chapter 7 – Wedding Reception Seating

Creating A Plan

If you are having a larger wedding reception a seating plan is usually needed to inject some order into a situation that is easily disorganized.

When a large number of guests are suddenly put in unfamiliar surroundings and expected to rapidly figure out where they should be or want to be seated, the result can be somewhat chaotic, resembling a rather panicked game of musical chairs.

By organizing the reception seating arrangements in advance you will eliminate much of the guesswork and stress for the wedding guests - and yourself.

Also, by placing friends, family and people that have something in common together you will likely help to make the wedding reception much more enjoyable for your wedding guests from beginning to end.

There are 3 basic options when designing the wedding reception seating plan.

1. The 1st option is to create a seating arrangement for just the wedding party head table and the table(s) of honor.
2. The 2nd option is Table Assignment where you simply assign wedding guests to tables but leave the actual seat selection up to the guests.
3. The 3rd option is a Seat Assignment where you actually designate the table and the specific chair that a wedding guest will be seated in.

Which option you select will depend upon how formal or how organized you want your wedding reception to be. In any case, it is a good idea to at the least create a floor plan indicating where the tables and other components of the wedding reception will be placed at the wedding reception facility.

When to Start

You can start working on your wedding reception seating arrangements as soon as the wedding invitation RSVPs start coming in.

You can create a basic table and seating chart in advance by utilizing a floor plan you receive from the wedding reception facility. If a floor plan is not available from the facility you can make your own or purchase seating assignment software that will help you with creating your seating arrangements.

How To Start

Since you probably know where the Head Table, the Table of Honor, the Cake Table, the Gift Table, the dance floor and other components will be placed, you can start by including those items on the floor plan to begin creating your table and seating plan chart.

If you are having a buffet rather than table service, you will need to find out from the wedding caterer the number and sizes of tables that will be used and where they will be positioned. You will also need to obtain the table sizes and seating capacity from the wedding reception facility or rental company to allow you to determine the required number and the placement of guest tables on your floor plan.

Once you have positioned the tables on the floor plan, simply assign the tables numbers.

If you are having a table service dinner you will want to coordinate with the caterer to determine the preferred method of seating assignment. You will ultimately want to give a copy of the completed floor plan and the seating plan chart to the reception facility coordinator, the caterer, and whoever else might need to know where things are to be placed at your wedding reception.

Once the wedding invitation RSVPs start rolling in you can begin to assign guests to groups. As groups are created you can then begin to assign the groups a number that will correspond to the specific numbered tables - or you can wait until all groups are created before assigning them to tables (and seats).

Etiquette dictates that men and women are seated alternately. In the case of rectangular banquet style table seating the male/female seating is alternated but couples are usually seated opposite each other.

There are instances where it may be necessary to move or remove tables to allow room for dancing or other activities. When table removal will be necessary be sure to avoid placing older or less mobile wedding guests at those tables.

Once you have determined who will be sitting where, you will create table cards indicating the table number so your wedding guests can easily find their table.

Those cards will be placed on the tables prior to the guest arrival at the reception location and will correspond to the table number that is indicated on the floor plan that you created.

If you are assigning specific seats to your wedding guests, place cards indicating the wedding guest's name will also be created. These place cards will be placed on the tables in front of the designated seat assignment prior to the guest's arrival.

In the case of a table service meal, these place cards can also indicate the individual's menu selection - which will assist the catering service staff.

TIP: A simple way to organize the table and place cards and ready them for placement is to put each table's cards in individual envelopes and write the table numbers on the outside of the envelopes.

How do your wedding guests find their table?

There is one more set of cards - the escort cards. These are usually either flat cards in envelopes or folded, tented cards that indicate the wedding guest's names on the outside and their table/seating assignments on the inside.

These cards are placed on a table (the escort card table) in alphabetical order according to the last name. The table is placed close to the entrance of the reception facility where guests can easily see it as they arrive. It is usually wise to have an attendant in the area to assist guests who may have overlooked the escort card table.

If your wedding reception is held outdoors be sure to weight the cards, place them in card holders or protect them from wind. Just one gust of wind and your guests may never find their seats...

Chapter 8 – The Receiving Line

How to organize a wedding receiving line

A receiving line might be appropriate depending upon the style and the level of formality of your wedding. Although a receiving line is not necessarily required, since it is unlikely that the bride and groom will have time to meet and mingle with every guest during the wedding reception, this tradition gives the bride and groom and the wedding party the opportunity to meet and greet all of the wedding guests.

By meeting and greeting everyone in the receiving line, in advance of the wedding reception, it takes some (a lot) of the pressure off of everyone during the reception allowing everyone to relax and enjoy the wedding celebration.

Although the receiving line is usually organized to take place either immediately after the wedding ceremony or just before the wedding reception, the exact timing of when the receiving line is to be formed is up to you based on the specific events and circumstances of the wedding day.

Be sure to consider the weather when considering the location for the receiving line and always have an alternative plan in mind should the weather change.

Since people do not usually enjoy standing in line for a long period of time, if you have a large wedding and anticipate a significant wait in line for the guests, consideration should be given to the comfort of your wedding guests.

Offering a beverage like champagne, sparkling water, water or punch to the guests can greatly lessen the discomfort of waiting in the receiving line to meet the bride and groom.

Having friends, relatives and other wedding party members mingle with the wedding guests who are in line will also create distraction and lessen the discomfort.

Once the guests reach the receiving line, do everyone a favor by having the wedding party keep the verbal exchanges brief to keep the receiving line moving smoothly - greet the wedding guests warmly, let them know how happy you are that they could join you on your wedding day and then introduce the guest(s) to the next person in line.

If anyone feels the need to carry on a lengthy conversation with a guest, there will be plenty of time...after the receiving line.

Traditionally the receiving line begins with the bride's mother, who is the official hostess. Depending upon the formality of the wedding and your individual wishes (and the length of time you want to be standing) you may have any or all of the wedding party members in the receiving line. Keep in mind however that more wedding party members in the receiving line means a much slower line.

Following is the customary traditional order of the wedding party in the receiving line;

Mother of the Bride
Father of the Bride (optional)
Mother of the Groom
Father of the Groom (optional)
Bride
Groom
Matron of honor (optional)
Maid of Honor (optional)
Bridesmaids (optional)

Other wedding party members are an optional addition to the receiving line and traditionally not part of the receiving line.

Chapter 9 - Wedding Tipping

Wedding etiquette is just like any other type of etiquette when it comes to tipping. If you are given a service, it is essential that you provide a tip to the person that is providing it to you.

Tipping is a way of thanking an individual for a job well done. Therefore, if they do not do a good job or there is some large problem that is not able to be rectified, the tip should be lessened or not provided. But, remember that this is the source of income for the service provider.

So, who do you tip and who is supposed to tip them? Here are some general rules to help you to decide what the right way to handle payment in the form of tips is.

Who to Tip

The first thing to take note of is just who you should be tipping. One rule of thumb for this is to take a look at the final bill. Today, most of the opportunities for tips are often applied right to the final bill.

For example, in most restaurants, a large party will have gratuity added to the bill. But, that does not mean that this is the right amount to tip (it may be too high or too low) and it does not mean that you have to pay for it at that level

If you pay gratuity in the final bill of your service provided for your wedding, should you give a tip on top of this to the service provider?

If you feel that the service provider has gone over and beyond what was expected of them, then it can be appropriate to provide them with more of a tip for your

needs. If you feel that the tip is not enough, then by all means, a larger tip can and should be left.

But, Which Services And How Much?

Knowing when to tip is just as important. There are several opportunities that you will have to give a tip at. Here's a breakdown of some you should take note of.

- Those that include a tip already in the final bill may be the caterer, the banquet managers, waiters, bartenders, and bridal consultants. Here, a tip is generally about 15%, but should only be provided if the service is over and beyond the standard since you are already tipping them in the bill.
- Your Limousine Driver. You should tip the limo driver for your service. Notice in the contract if there is an amount of gratuity already listed. If so, it is not necessary. If not, or you receive high levels of service, a tip of 15% is appropriate.
- Photographers, florists and musicians. If not provided in the contract, a tip in the amount of 15% to 20% is appreciated. Of course much more is for better service.
- Priests, Rabbis and Clergymen. This is one tip not to be forgotten as it is not provided elsewhere. The groom should provide a tip to be given by the best man to the official. Commonly, this amount should not be less than \$100. While it is a donation, it should always be provided. More should be provided if the official had to drive a long distance.

- **Civil Service.** Since there is no cost set here, it is appropriate to provide a tip of \$50 to \$100 for the civil servant that is providing the service. Often, there is a suggested donation posted in these offices.
- **Musicians and organists at the ceremony.** These services may have gratuity in the contract, so make sure that you check first. This is only the case if you actually rent the church for use. If not, then a tip should be provided as well. The tip can range from \$40 to \$75 depending on the amount of service and the quality that is provided.

Tipping should not be something that is forgotten. If the groom can not remember to do the tipping, then the best man should step in. It is necessary to show appreciation and follow proper etiquette for tipping.

Chapter 10 – Tips on Saving Money

Following are some general suggestions for saving money, sorted by major category. I know this can be difficult and some of them will be hard to swallow, but the total cost of your wedding and an appropriate budget is an important part of the process.

General Considerations

- Reduce the number of guests at the wedding. This is the most obvious way to cut expenses. Consider the purpose of your wedding, and then make your invitation decisions accordingly.
- Reduce the length of your reception. The length of a reception usually relates directly to the amount of money spent for food and beverages.
- Select a different day. Wedding facilities, caterers and other services usually cost more on Saturday's and during high demand seasons. Try to avoid holidays and peak prom and wedding seasons to get the best prices.
- Book in advance since last minute bookings are usually at a higher rate due to the additional work involved.
- Pay cash for all or part of the more expensive components of the wedding and ask for a cash discount. It costs merchants an average of 2% (or more) to process a credit card transaction. You can also try to reserve or guarantee something with a credit card and agree to pay for cash on receipt of the service or item.

The Ceremony and Reception Facility

- Booking your wedding a year or more in advance for dates in the lower demand months of late September through November and January through early April may give you leverage when attempting to negotiate a lower price. Many facilities would rather rapidly fill their event calendar rather than taking a gamble on filling a low demand date.
- Friday and Sunday weddings are usually less expensive than Saturday when it comes to rental costs because Saturday's are in high demand for weddings and other special events. Since Fridays and Sundays are in lower demand, some facilities will discount the rental rate. Some suppliers will also discount their rates on lower demand days.
- Consider lower cost alternative wedding locations like local parks or community centers, a church or synagogue hall, an aircraft hangar, a party room in an apartment complex or condominium, or a backyard. Some local universities and colleges, unions and professional associations also have very nice wedding reception facilities available for Alumni or member use that are free or relatively inexpensive.
- Avoid wedding facilities that charge caterers and other suppliers a "referral fee" since this fee can - and usually will - end up being paid by you in the form of higher catering or supplier costs.

Wedding Invitations

- Simple is the way to go to save money. Custom colored inks, special graphic enhancements, raised printing, decorated liners and multiple enclosures increase the cost.

- Select a stock design. Many printers offer stock wedding invitations that can be personalized to meet your needs.
- Size does count! Avoid oversized or overweight mailings since this increases your postage costs.

Wedding Invitation RSVP

- To save time and money establish a toll free response telephone number or a response web site.
- If you are establishing a response web site be sure your wedding guests have an alternate method of responding as well since some may not have Internet access. Rather than inserting a RSVP card in the wedding invitations, simply print the RSVP toll free number/web address on the wedding invitations.

Wedding Rentals and Supplies

- If renting glassware, check the order when you pick it up or when it arrives AND before you sign for the order. You may find chipped, cracked or broken items that you will be charged a replacement fee for when returned to the rental company.

Note the items on the delivery ticket before you sign it. If items are dirty or if lipstick residue is visible, note those items as well and expect to receive a credit for those items.

- If renting plates, check the order as well. Note all chipped, cracked, broken or dirty items on the delivery slip before signing it and expect to receive a credit for those items.
- If renting ANYTHING, find out who your wedding caterer rents from and if they will be renting items for your wedding from the rental company.

Then, indicate to the rental company that you would like your order to be sent along with the caterer's order for your wedding. You can usually avoid a delivery charge on your rental items since both orders are going to the same location.

If the rental company is picking up items rented by the caterer at the end of your wedding, request that they also pick up your order at the same time.

- If it is your responsibility to return rental items, be sure that you assign the responsibility of returning all rental items to someone who will make sure they are returned on time to avoid late charges.
- Consider using disposable plastic ware plates and glasses rather than china and glass for more casual settings. Clear, heavyweight plastic plates and glasses are available with the look of etched glass at significant savings when compared to the cost of rental china and glassware.
- If real glassware is required for champagne service at your wedding reception consider using traditional "flat" champagne glasses rather than fluted champagne glasses. Flats usually cost less and breakage tends to be less frequent which will reduce the amount of replacement charges.
- If renting plates, be sure to rinse them so they are free of food before returning them so you will not be charged an extra cleaning charge for dried on food.
- If renting table linens, avoid candles on the tables that can ruin the items. Also, restrict smoking so that there will be no burn holes. Remember, if

the linens cannot be cleaned and rented again you will pay the replacement cost of the linen.

Wedding Reception Catering

- Book your caterer well in advance of your wedding date rather than last minute.
- Try to avoid holidays and other high demand event dates. Prices are usually higher on high demand dates. Try to avoid Saturday evenings if you can.
- Consider buffet style service rather than plated, sit down service. You will save a significant amount in labor costs that are required for plated service.
- Provide an appetizer table rather than butler passed appetizers which requires additional service labor at additional cost.
- Select a less expensive entree item. Talented caterers can prepare a variety of chicken entrees that are very appealing to the eye and palate and that cost significantly less than beef. Our apology to the cattle ranchers out there...
- Select themed or ethnic foods like Italian or Mexican which are less expensive. Doesn't just about everyone love Italian food anyway?
- Consider using upscale disposable plasticware rather than china and glassware. Clear, heavyweight plates and glasses that have the appearance of etched glass are available that cost less than renting china and glassware. You don't have to worry about cleaning or breakage charges either!

- Time your wedding reception for late afternoon so that a cocktail or beer/wine reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres is appropriate. That way wedding guests will not expect, nor will you have to foot the bill for, a full meal.
- Don't book a wedding caterer just because they have the biggest ad in the local telephone directory. Big ads only mean a big advertising cost - not better service or prices.
- Compare "Apples to Apples" when comparing wedding catering costs. Look for the "extra" charges like rental items, additional labor charges, delivery charges, gratuity rates, etc.
- Shop some of the components that may be provided by the caterer, i.e. decor or rental table cloths, napkins, glassware, china, silverware, etc. since you may sometimes (but not always) be able to save a significant amount of money by obtaining these items directly from another source.

Some caterers provide these items and include them as part of their "full service" at a cost that would be no higher than if you obtained the items from another source while other caterers simply rent the items from another source and mark them up.

The Wedding Cake

- Consider using a decorated "dummy" wedding cake for display and frosted sheet cakes for actual service of your wedding guests. Some larger wedding cake decorators have beautifully decorated display cakes available for rental that cost less than a real, decorated cake. The wedding guests

will never know...except for the little brat who only wanted to make a mess of the frosting on your wedding cake anyway.

- Consider a smaller decorated wedding cake for display while using frosted sheet cakes for service to the wedding guests.

Wedding Reception Beverages

- Some "professionals" still insist that you will save a bunch of money by offering only champagne or sparkling wine as the alcoholic beverage selection. "Sometimes" this can be true because people often don't drink as much champagne.

But, this is not always (or usually) the case. Just for the sake of argument...if a cheap bottle - and for this example we are going really cheap - of \$6.00 champagne (sparkling wine really) gives you only 5 to 7 portions (depending upon the size/type of champagne glass used) while a bottle of \$10.00 vodka gives you 25 portions, which has the lowest cost per portion? You decide which costs less...

If you are planning to serve champagne (which "usually" has a higher cost per portion than just about anything else you could serve) and you still want to save as much money as possible, offer it from the bar rather than by butler passing.

By offering it from the bar, where there are other beverage selections available, you will reduce champagne consumption by 30% to 50% because people will opt for the other selections at the bar. You will also save on the additional labor costs required for butler passing.

If serving champagne, consider offering it only for a limited time.

- Consider having an afternoon wedding. Alcoholic beverage consumption will be significantly less during an afternoon event versus an evening wedding reception.
- If you are hosting the bar try not to serve salty foods . Salt increases thirst which increases beverage consumption.
- Interrupt the initial beverage service period by scheduling dinner to start within 45 to 60 minutes from guest arrival. Keep in mind, the initial 2 hours of a wedding reception is the highest consumption period. By interrupting the high consumption period, people usually end up drinking less over the course of the evening.
- Consider putting a time limit on the hosted portion of the wedding reception beverage service.
- Consider hosting only beer, wine and soft drinks which (usually) have a lower cost per portion than mixed drinks.
- If a hosted full bar is required, consider staging the service by starting with beer, wine and soft drinks prior to dinner and adding mixed drinks to the available selections after dinner. By offering beer, wine and soft drinks initially you are establishing a consumption trend. After dinner many guests will continue to consume beer, wine and soft drinks and will not switch to the higher cost per portion mixed drinks.
- If you are hosting the bar, consider limiting the grade of liquor. Hosting a mid grade liquor selection rather than a combination of mid and premium grade can trim 10% to 15% off your bar bill.

- If you are hosting the bar, consider less costly wine selections for bar service, i.e. Chablis rather than Chardonnay, Blush rather than White Zinfandel and Burgundy rather than Cabernet Sauvignon.
- Consider using bulk (boxed) wine in carafes for dinner table service. It can save you 50% or more on the cost of wine.
- If you are serving wine with the meal, be sure the wine service/food service is timed properly. If wine is placed at the table prior to food service and the food service is delayed for some reason there will be significantly higher wine consumption since the wedding guests have little to do but sit, and talk, and drink.
- Consider using keg beer for larger groups. A keg is equal to 6.88 cases of beer which is equal to roughly 165 bottles (or cans) of beer. Assuming a 1 inch head in a 12 ounce glass, a keg will yield around 180 portions. You can figure out the savings from there...
- Purchase your own liquor (if the facility allows) from a liquor store that will allow you to return the full, unopened product or hire a beverage service company that will credit you for unused product.
- Consider using plastic glassware at the bar rather than glassware. Not only does plasticware cost you less on a per unit basis when compared to rental, you don't have to worry about additional breakage costs.
- Use proper glass sizes to avoid waste. Small glass sizes usually means more trips to the bar, more glasses used, more bartenders needed to serve the increased number of drinks and increase the total number of drinks - plus it makes you look cheap.

On the other hand, large glass sizes increase waste due to warmed product. A 12 ounce glass is the optimum size for mixed drinks, beer and soft drinks. A 6 ounce glass with a 4.5 to 5 ounce portion is the optimum size for wine.

- If providing your own beverages, hire a professional bartender to serve your wedding guests rather than using a volunteer friend, family member or associate. Although Uncle Harry might know his way around a bar he may not be the best choice for a bartender at your wedding reception. A professional bartender will usually save you more than the cost of their wage by using portion control, making fewer mistakes and not opening every bottle in sight.
- Close the bar 30 to 45 minutes before the end of the wedding reception and serve only soft drinks and coffee. This is a good guest safety idea anyway...

Wedding Planner or Consultant

- Select a wedding planner who charges by the hour rather than based on a percentage of the total bill. When the planner's fee is based on a percentage of the bill there is little incentive to save you money on the cost of your wedding.
- Avoid planners or consultants who charge the selected suppliers a "referral fee" since this fee may end up being passed on to you in the form of higher supplier charges.
- Select an experienced wedding planner or consultant. Experience can help you to avoid costly mistakes. Well known planners also have "connections" that can provide products or services at discount.

Wedding Music

- Book your entertainment well in advance.
- Avoid high demand event dates.
- Consider alternatives, i.e. taped background music rather than a pianist or vocalist, a d.j. rather than a band, etc.

Wedding Flowers

- Order your wedding floral items well in advance.
- Avoid high demand flower seasons and holidays like prom, Valentines Day, etc.
- Select "in season" floral items rather than exotics.
- Consider rental alternatives.

Wedding Photographer

- Compare "Apples to Apples". Do you receive the negatives as part of the package or do you have to go through the photographer every time you want a reprint?, etc.
- Shoot for quality not quantity! Specify the "MUST HAVE" shots that YOU want, limit the number of photos taken and limit your final photo selections.

Wedding Limousine

- Try to avoid prom season and other high demand dates.
- Book well in advance if you can.
- Compare prices to see if it may be less expensive to rent twice, scheduling 2 trips, rather than renting once and paying the driver to sit and wait between trips.
- Consider an alternative vehicle rental, i.e. a new rental convertible or luxury car driven by a friend or associate, a horse drawn carriage, etc.

Chapter 11 - Thank You's

Your wedding is a very important time for you. Of course, it is also one of the most costly events that will happen in your life as well.

Therefore, a big old thank you is appropriate for everyone that does anything for your wedding, little or small, to make it a memorable one.

The list goes on and on and while most people will say that they just want you to be happy, you should provide them all with appreciation in one form or another for what they are doing for you. This goes doubly for parents that are paying for the wedding (and all your desires and quirks!)

There are several important things to remember when it comes to saying thanks. You should be giving these throughout the next year or so in big ways to those that help you through this very stressful time.

Thank You Notes

The first thing that is a big thank you to provide is that of the bridal shower. If you have any type of celebration before this in which you are given gifts or special treatment, thank you notes should also be applied here.

In fact, head to the local stationery store and pick up a lot of thanks you notes. You'll need most of them! Pick out ones that match your wedding invitations or pick out something else. Just have them on hand to send out quickly.

The Wedding Shower

When it comes to the thank you notes that you will be writing for your wedding shower, you need to carefully consider what you are doing here. Here are some very important etiquette tips you need to follow for wedding thank you notes for your shower.

- A personal note is the only way to go. Just telling someone thank you is not enough and is considered very impolite. You need to pen a personal note to them to tell them how grateful you are that they took the time to provide you with this gift.
- Do not send pre printed thank you notes. This is tacky and can give the impression of just being after the gift. You should hand write your thank you notes so you provide your gift givers with a clean appreciation of what their gift has meant to you.
- Your thank you note should mention the type of gift that they gave you. Thanking them for the beautiful china with a pattern that you love is more appropriate and better taken than just saying thanks for the gift. Make sure to personally mention what gifts have been given to you.
- Those that throw the wedding shower for you should also be thanked through a personal, hand written thank you note. If they also provide you with a gift as well as the shower help, then you can thank them for both in the same thank you note.
- Thank your guests quickly for the gifts that they give you. You should send out thank you notes within ten days of your wedding shower. You should send out thank you notes for your wedding gifts within two weeks of

returning from a honeymoon. If you get a wedding gift at a different time, then send a thank you note as soon as possible.

- Personalize the thank you note by using this trick. Instead of saying “I” throughout the note, say, “you” in it. This way, the information is provided to your gift giver in a way that shows the value that they have by giving this gift.
- Use black or blue ink to write your thank you notes. This is the best method for doing so as it can provide the clearest reading ability as well as provides for a formal tone.
- If you receive more than one gift from anyone on separate occasions, you should pen two separate thank you notes, one for each. If they give you two gifts on the same day, then both can be included in the thank you note.
- When you address your envelopes, make sure that your new address, if you have one, is what is used on the front, return address. This allows your gift givers to have your new address.
- If more than one person gave you the gift, you should write an individual thank you note for each person. If there are more than ten people that have given you the gift, then one note to all of them is sufficient. This depends on the size and cost of a gift. A very expensive gift should warrant a thank you note for each person regardless.
- Take you time when writing your thank you notes, to make sure that they are neat and well written. It shows that you took the time to care for them and thank them in a personal way.

Wedding Gifts

When your wedding rolls around, you will likely have even more gifts to write thank you notes for. These gifts are likely to be more of a monetary nature though. Yet, any type of gift that you get for your wedding you need to properly take note of.

Wedding gifts of a monetary nature should be thanked in a generic way.

“Thank you so much for your check” or “Thank you so much for your monetary gift” is appropriate here. You should not include the amount of the gift in the thank you note. But, you can tell the person that is sending you the gift what you will use the money for should you have this figured out.

For example, telling them that you are putting the money towards your down payment on a new home is a great way to show them how well spent their money will be.

All gifts given to you at your wedding should receive the same type of personal thank you note. If you are getting something from anyone, provide them with a note of thanks that comes from the heart as it will make many people quite happy.

Make sure to provide thank you notes to all of those that have helped to make your wedding what it is too. This would include those that paid for it and those that helped in your wedding party.

Chapter 12 - Calling It All Off

If you are reading this section, our sympathy goes out to you. Not because you are calling off your wedding, but the tasks that are ahead of you from this front. It is not easy to call on those that you were talking about being so happy with and telling them that things just did not work out.

But, it is a must to do. The good news is that if you find yourself in a position to call off your wedding, you can get some others to help you to handle this situation.

More than likely, you are in no mood to be telling the world your story as to why it just did not work out. You may even be a bit overwhelmed with how to do this the right way. One step at a time is how you will get through it.

By the way, we do mean both of you since the groom and the bride are responsible for calling off their wedding.

Here are some things to consider about how you should properly call off your wedding.

No Announcement Sent

If no announcement has been sent out about your wedding just yet, then the word about calling off the wedding can be done by simple word of mouth. In fact, you should only have to tell those that you told yourself.

Announcement Sent

If you or your parents have sent an announcement to your family and friends telling them that you were being engaged, it is important that another formal announcement go out on paper saying that the wedding has been called off.

Newspaper Announcements

If there has been an announcement in the newspaper, then there should be another to say that the nuptials have ended by mutual consent. No blame or details need to be provided.

Wedding Invitations Sent

If the wedding invitations have been sent out inviting people to your wedding, another formal wedding invitation needs to go out, letting everyone know that the wedding has been canceled.

Close To the Wedding Day

If the wedding day is fast approaching, it is imperative that guests be called and told about the called off state of events. The first ones to be called are traveling guests. You should allow everyone to know that things just have not worked out the best and leave it at that. Do not feel you need to elaborate because things just get twisted here.

Postponing the Wedding

If you have to postpone the wedding, you can do this following the same rules as above. But, you will want to tell your guests just what has caused the delay in this case. Whether it be illness or a death, they are likely to understand if you tell them in time.

If you know when the new wedding will take place, that information can be included. If you do not, another invitation will need to be sent out when the time does come to inform guests. Do not have a second wedding shower, though.

Calling Off the Wedding after the Wedding Shower

If you have had your wedding shower and you are now canceling your wedding, you will need to take some important steps with your guests and the gifts that you received.

The gifts given at a wedding shower are given for the bride and the groom to start their new life. If that is not going to happen, you need to return the gifts to your guest promptly.

You should not open any of your wedding shower gifts until after the bride and groom have been married so as to avoid a problem in this situation. It is often that a gift may need to be returned for other reasons as well.

If you have opened the wedding gift that was given to you, contact the gift giver and arrange to pay back the gift giver for the gift itself. If this is not possible, there should be restitution made in some way.

Chapter 13 – Frequently Asked Sensitive Questions

I don't take credit for these answers but they come from another qualified, experienced Wedding Planner. I include them here more because they brought some smiles than as important advice.

1. It's okay to ask for cash instead of gifts. Do you agree? - I DON'T
2. Since you were invited to a friend's wedding two years ago, you have to reciprocate and invite them to your wedding even though you're not close anymore. Do you agree? - I DON'T
3. Uncle Art calls and asks if he can bring a plus one. You have to say yes since he's family. Do you agree? - I DON'T
4. You've gone way over budget on your wedding, so it's okay to forego bridesmaids and groomsmen gifts. Do you agree? - I DON'T
5. You don't have to give wedding favors to your guests. Do you agree? - I DO
6. You're paying for your own wedding but you should still get your parents a thank you gift. Do you agree? - I DO
7. You do not need to send a thank you card if you did not receive a wedding gift. Do you agree? - I DON'T
8. A parent requested the DJ play the Macarena and you hate those kinds of songs. You can tell the DJ not to play it. Do you agree? - I DO

9. You're having a large wedding so you've decided it's okay to have a cash bar at the reception. Do you agree? - I DON'T

Chapter 14 – Special Situation: Destination Wedding

Destination weddings are becoming increasingly popular. In fact, in some ways, etiquette rules have not yet caught up to the destination theme at all! Yet, when it comes to this type of wedding style, you really do have a lot to think about before you go off to get married.

Destination weddings are weddings in which you will travel to a location other than any place near to you, to be married. These weddings are common in resorts and other fabulous places. Yet, although they are so popular, that does not mean that they are the best choice for everyone, especially those with a large family that is expecting a large celebration of the wedding.

While the ultimate decision about a destination wedding is all up to you, it is common practice to insure that the wedding satisfies everyone's needs. Here are some basic tips that we will expand on later.

Tip One:

Do not expect the world to follow you to your destination wedding. Not many of your guests will be able to afford it, find travel arrangements or get off of work to go. So, expect for some not to be able to come with you for your wedding.

Tip Two:

Send out invitations and 'hold the date' cards to your guest well in advance. Several months should be given if you expect them to come so that they can get the proper travel arrangements made including the necessary legal documents if it is out of the country.

Tip Three:

Do something for those that can not make it to your wedding but are close enough to you that want to celebrate your wedding with you at home. For example, you can have your wedding ceremony in Hawaii, but have a reception back at home too for those that could not make it.

Etiquette for the Wedding

There are several things that come into play when it comes to a destination wedding ceremony. The first is the cost. Unlike a traditional wedding ceremony, it is not going to fly for the parents to pay for this type of wedding celebration, especially when most are counting on that big wedding to celebrate your marriage.

So, if you plan to have a destination wedding, plan to sit down and talk to those that will be paying for it. There are many additional costs folded into the wedding itself here.

One benefit to the wedding destination is that most will take care of all of the planning for your wedding for you. They can help you to make arrangements for the ceremony, lodging, foods, and even for legal requirements. This does lessen the amount of planning that you will be required to do, but it may also limit you to what you can do yourself. Depending on the level of comfort you have in giving someone else the ability to handle your wedding, should be a consideration here.

Once you figure out money, determine who is coming.

You will want to invite many people to your wedding ceremony, but you may be limited to those that you can pay to come. Now, not everyone you invite is someone that you are going to have to pay for, but some you may.

Be quite frank with those that you invite about what you are covering in costs and what they will have to. Realize that some may not be able to make it and that should be okay with you. Do not pressure those that have financial or employment strains to come to your destination wedding unless you plan to pay for them to do so.

You should pay for the lodging of your wedding party though. The people that are sponsoring the wedding need to pay for the lodging and the needs of the bridesmaids and the groomsmen. Insure that this is factored into the cost of the wedding itself.

If you will have more guests coming for your destination wedding, make sure that you do everything you can to help them to get the lowest rates. For example, you may be able to arrange group rates or book a block of rooms for them to stay in. While they may be paying for it, this can be more encouragement to those that have not visited the area to come down.

Define the Dress Code

Another thing that is necessary for the host of the destination to do is to help the guests to know what to wear when they get there. There are two things to consider here. First, the attire for the wedding may be different at a destination wedding. If so, it may be necessary to determine what the right attire is and then insure that the wedding party and the guests know what that attire should be.

If they have not traveled to the location before, it is necessary for you to give them help with knowing what the right type of clothing to bring and wear is. This should include clothing for time spent not with the wedding party as well. You should allow your guests to know what the theme, informal or formal, of the wedding ceremony will be. Any other gatherings that happen should also be considered and communicated as well.

What to Do

Another factor to consider about the destination wedding is what should be done during it.

If you will be inviting guests to your destination wedding, make sure you provide enough for them to do when they are there.

The wedding ceremony is only the start of what you should do. You should have a welcoming dinner or cocktail where you will inform the guests, once they arrive what the agenda is. Even if it is limited by just the ceremony and a small reception, this information should be presented to the guests even before they arrive.

Some will want to spend the entire time with you while others will be more responsive to heading out to explore the area on their own. Make sure that as the bride and groom and the parents of them sponsoring the wedding that you cater to their needs here.

It is customary for some meals to be spent with various guests that come to the wedding. Often, these can include dinner each night or it may just be a get together on the beach. Whatever it is, make sure guests are aware of what your plans are for the time that they spend with you.

What to Do Back Home

No matter if three people come or if 103 people come to your destination wedding, there are likely to be those that did not come to it but still would like to celebrate with you. A reception is appropriate and should be given to the bride and groom.

It is acceptable for the bride and the groom to host their own reception following their destination wedding. It is also acceptable for the parents of the bride or the groom, or both to host it. It serves the same purpose as the reception of a standard wedding reception would. The same etiquette settings apply here.

Most commonly, the reception following a destination wedding is somewhat informal. For that reason, it is often important to convey to the guests that are being invited just how formal it will be. Make sure guests know if your wedding reception will be in the backyard or if it will be a formal affair. While either is appropriate, it is necessary to insure that the guests know what is right to wear and to give.

You should not register for a wedding registry for gifts. You should not imply that you want or expect gifts at your wedding reception either. While most guests will bring a card, they may not give a large number of gifts for informal celebrations.

The reception should include anyone that you would like to share your wedding celebration with. It is necessary to insure that guests do not feel slighted if they were not invited to the wedding by allowing them to come to the reception.

Anyone that may not feel comfortable with you having a destination wedding should be talked to, one on one about it. Provide them with information about

why you want to have this style of wedding, how it will work and encourage them to come. Insure them that they can come and join you and that you will have a reception to celebrate when you come back as well.

What About The Wedding Shower?

If you are having a destination wedding, one of the most commonly wondered things is if you should have a wedding shower or not. It is not a guarantee that you will have one, since guests should be invited to a wedding shower only if they are invited to the wedding itself.

Yet, if there will be a reception for the wedding when you get back, it may be acceptable. Also, it is necessary for you to insure that you do not have your own wedding shower, or anyone that is paying for your destination wedding. It should be a friend or the maid of honor that hosts your wedding shower.

It is appropriate to have a gift registry for your wedding shower. You should follow the same etiquette guidelines here as you did for a standard wedding shower.

Chapter 15 – Special Situation: Second Weddings

Not that long ago, popular thought dictated that second weddings should not be elaborate, formal or extravagant; rather, one should aim for smaller, quieter and more intimate.

Today, however, more than 30 percent of today's weddings are encore weddings and decidedly more commonplace.

The focus is on celebrating two people who have found each other, discovering love again and embarking on a new beginning. In truth, celebrations can be as elaborate or as intimate as you desire, without fearing social stigma.

Announcing Your Engagement

When planning your encore wedding, one of your major concerns will be the effect it has on your children. They should be the first to know of your decision to remarry. After all, you will be uniting two families, and two sets of children will naturally experience stress.

Your parents should be informed next, followed by your ex, if you have joint custody. Your ex may be an asset when it comes to reassuring your children about their role in the new family.

Note: Don't wear engagement rings from the past. Once you begin planning and announcing the news, all signs of former loves should disappear.

Announce your plans to marry in the newspaper, by email, phone, and at an engagement party.

Even though there is no ‘rule’ against it, the couple’s parents will probably not be hosting this party. Friends and family may wish to, which is fine.

Typically, the couple doesn’t host one either, but they can host a party in which they announce that they are now engaged. This is not considered a gift-giving event.

Note : If hosting your engagement party, do not expect gifts. We don’t host gift giving events for ourselves.

And, speaking of gifts, go ahead and register. Even if you don’t want gifts, there will be people who love you and want to give you something and they will need guidance. Plus, it is perfectly appropriate for encore couples to register.

Whom to Invite?

When planning your special event, realize that you can invite anyone you want to your wedding. You may want to avoid inviting former in-laws and ex-spouses, even if you’re on good terms. They may become a bit melancholy, and some guests may feel awkward around them.

Since most couples pay for, and plan, a second wedding, discuss your budget realistically and stick to it, while sharing all of your dreams and expectations with each other.

This is a second chance to make your wedding your own—your plan, your style. It can be as extravagant, elegant or intimate as you wish.

Etiquette for Wordings Second Wedding Invitations

Announce your second wedding in the same way you’d handle a first. Mail announcements after the ceremony to those who were not invited to the wedding.

While most couples announce their marriages today, parents may do so, if they wish.

Jane Lynn Moore
and
James John Smith
announce their marriage
Date, location

Ceremonies and Vows

Civil ceremonies tend to be the most popular with encore brides, but a religious ceremony is entirely appropriate. If you choose a religious ceremony, meet with your officiant, clergy member, etc. about any “hoops” through which you might need to jump.

There are endless possibilities for making your second wedding even more special.

Writing personalized vows is very popular for encore couples, and entire books are devoted to the subject.

Including your children in the ceremony is a wonderful way to symbolize the joining of your two families and to help them feel as though they are an essential part of your celebration. They can escort you down the aisle, read a poem or scripture, serve as attendants or as a part of my favorite ritual: the lighting of a unity candle.

Who will walk you down that aisle? Happily for us, these days it can be anyone: your mother, child, two children or best friend—or you can choose not to have anyone do so.

Traditional Jewish processions include both sets of grandparents and parents. The parents stand with the bridal party under the chuppah (wedding canopy) during the ceremony. You can create your own tradition, with all of your children walking beside you and your groom and standing with you at the altar. You're bound only by your imagination.

Bridal showers for second marriages?

Sure, showers are often held for second brides, but be sure to follow second wedding etiquette rules.

As with first weddings, only wedding guests (those invited to the ceremony) should be invited.

Office, club and school showers are also appropriate; these are the only showers where attendees are not limited to wedding guests.

Usually, guests invited to a bride's shower for her first marriage aren't invited to a shower for the second marriage. If they are, for whatever reason, they are not expected to bring a gift.

Because the bride and groom may already have the typical shower/home items, gifts are often lifestyle presents—items that reflect the new couple's interests, such as cooking, camping, tools and sports equipment.

But shower gifts should not be expensive and may be presented jointly by several guests.

Note - Showers are optional, pre-wedding events which should never be hosted by family, unless they are members of the bridal party. Please do not host these

for yourself. These are small gatherings of those nearest and dearest - not a repeat of the wedding guest list.

Wedding Gifts and Registry

And speaking of gifts, be sure to register. Even if you don't want gifts, some guests who love you may still want to give you something and need guidance.

It's also perfectly appropriate for encore couples to register.

Gift Ideas for Second Marriages

- * DVD player and DVDs
- * Gift baskets
- * Gift certificates—restaurants, spas, stores
- * Donations to charities
- * Espresso maker, pasta maker, with cookbooks, etc.
- * More second wedding gifts appropriate for the encore couple.

Wedding Receptions and Parties

Your reception can be as elaborate or as simple as you wish. One distinctive difference may be your receiving line, as parents may or may not be included.

Typically, the couple is at the head of the line, with their children next to them.

Many encore couples also choose to omit the garter and bridal bouquet toss. Use common sense and plan what seems appropriate for your situation.

Not Necessary

- * Attendants
- * Someone to walk the bride down the aisle

- * Rehearsal dinner
- * Procession

All of these elements are always optional.

Please Don't

- * Duplicate your first wedding
- * Marry in the same location
- * Wear the same dress as your first wedding
- * Use rings from a former relationship
- * Discuss or berate former spouses

May Include

- * Engagement party
- * Announcement in the paper
- * Showers
- * Rehearsal dinner, edit the toasting
- * A large formal wedding with attendants
- * Mom, children, or best friend can walk the bride down the aisle
- * Brides can wear white or any other color they desire. White symbolizes joy, not purity

You may wish to omit some of the traditional toasts for your rehearsal dinner, which may seem out of place, for example: father to daughter toasts. The same is true for the reception.

Some Questions You May Have

- Question: How can I tell my guests where I'm registered?

Reply: The best way to inform your guests is by "word of mouth" or by using a wedding website. Tell all of your friends and family about your wishes so they can broadcast the news. And in today's Internet-dominated world, starting your own website is very easy these days! You can set up a personal site—usually at no charge, through your Internet service providers—to share your love story and include all pertinent information concerning your wedding (location, maps, date, and registry information).

- Question: Because we have both been married before, we're not really interested in the flower-toss and garterbelt traditions. Are there alternatives that can take their place?

Reply: Interesting question. Let's first discuss how these customs originated:
Throwing the Garter

Many years ago, wedding guests would rip pieces of the bride's dress, ribbons and anything they could grab for good luck. She eventually started throwing her garter to them.

In England, the groomsmen would follow the couple to their room to throw their stockings at him. The first to hit the groom was the next to wed.

Tossing the Bouquet

Tossing the bouquet to a friend was designed to bring her good luck and marriage. But due to the pungent odor of the flowers, it was also used to ward off evil spirits.

As you can see, we have adopted these traditions without truly knowing where or why they began. Today, we can create our own new traditions for reasons that reflect our personal belief systems and reasoning. You are limited only by your imagination and creativity.

That said, I haven't heard of anything specific to replace these traditions. Many couples are now simply omitting them in favor of their own rituals. Perhaps you can invite some friends over, have a few glasses of wine and brainstorm ideas you'd like to introduce.

- Question: A coworker and her fiancé are planning their wedding, have previously been married and both have homes. We coworkers are confused about proper gift-giving etiquette because she isn't inviting everyone in the office. Can we all chip in for a gift, have it delivered to their home and not attend the affair?

Reply: Commonly, coworkers will organize a work shower where they present individual gifts or a joint gift. The party is usually very simple, with cookies or a cake and a beverage. It is usually only 20–30 minutes long. Don't worry about attending the wedding. Traditionally, this is the only type of shower in which the guests are not guests to the wedding.

- Question: This will be my second wedding and my fiancé's third. We are both well into our 50s. I want to announce our engagement in the newspaper. Is this appropriate—and do we announce it as though my parents are announcing it?

Reply: Congratulations! Yes, your plan is quite appropriate. It's best for you and your fiancé to announce your engagement, although your parents could

do so, if you wish. If you want to announce it on your own, here's a good example:

Jane Lynn Moore, first-grade teacher at Pioneer Elementary School, is to be married in July to James John Smith, an accountant for the city of Los Angeles. Jane Lynn Moore is the daughter of XXXX of California, and XXX of Nevada. Mr. Smith is the son of etc.

Children Involvement In Wedding Ceremonies

If you are trying to think of a way to involve a child in your second wedding there are plenty of imaginative and exciting ways children can be involved, especially in the ceremonies.

Having children from a previous relationship, whether the bride, the groom, or both, the question to address very early on is 'what will the children do on the wedding day?'. Whatever you do, don't leave this until the last moment.

The roles which come easily to mind are bridesmaids (for second marriages with older children), ring bearers (page boys), best man or maid of honor, again for older children, flower girls, and ushers- and if everyone is willing there is a lot to be said for this.

Even if you are planning a very small civil wedding, it is still a good excuse to have those extra special outfits bought for the children, as long as they are ones they will enjoy wearing! And do tread carefully here.

Chapter 16 – Bridal Emergency Kit

The best type of maid of honor is like a boyscout – always prepared and always helpful. To earn your merit badge, put together a bridal emergency kit, full of those oh-so-useful things everyone seems to want on the day of a big event. but no one has – except you! Brides, in case your maid-of-honor prefers boy watching to boy scouting, you could either ask someone to help you put this bridal emergency kit together, or pull it together yourself.

Essentials

Sewing Kit, including safety pins and small scissors

Clear nail polish (helpful for stocking runs)

Nail file

Nail polish in the bride's shade

Makeup (you'll probably have this there anyway!)

Straws (for drinking without messing up lipstick)

Extra stockings

Hairspray

Brush and comb

Bobbypins and hair elastics

Hairdryer

Static-cling spray

Tissues

Handkerchiefs

Lint brush

Earring backs

Iron

Baby powder (also useful for getting out last-minute spills on a white dress)

Eye-drops (look for redness reducing)

Contact lens solution

Acid relief

Smelling salts

Antacid

Mints

Tampons and pads

Headache medicine (bring two different kinds in case one of the bridal party is allergic)

Band-Aids

If you're getting dressed in a place that won't have a bathroom near, you'll also want to bring a mirror, bottle of water, and moist towelettes.

Good extras: charged cell phone, camera for taking getting dressed candid, list of vendor's phone numbers, wristwatch.

Chapter 17: 15 Most Common Wedding Mistakes

- **Not Having A Budget**

Unless you are so rich that money is not even a consideration, you must set a reasonable budget in advance and you must set it line item by line item. This will take some research into costs initially but it will be worth it in the end. It is imperative that you include a reserve after you have added up all your costs – I guarantee you will have either forgotten some items or underestimated some items. I recommend a 20% reserve be included.

The wedding industry is just that - an industry. So while there is a lot of good advice out there, there is also advice from people who'll profit from it. Be careful you're not spending money where you don't need to - whether it's being talked into a more expensive wedding dress, or having a limousine when your wedding and reception are at the same location. Make sure you know your budget, what's important to you - and what isn't.

Once you have a budget, you must live with it. Do not use up all the reserve on the first items you purchase figuring you can live within the rest of the budget. You do not want to be in a situation where you overspend in the beginning and then have to go cheap in the end to make up for it.

- **Not Considering Possible Vendor Non-Performance**

The best way to avoid vendor non-performance is to choose carefully in the beginning. Ask for references and then call them, ask to see examples of previous weddings, check with the Better Business Bureau and be sure they know your requirements and are willing to meet them. This includes quality of service and of course arrival times at the ceremony.

You will want to talk to at least two or three different vendors in each category so that you will have something to compare. Try to decide in

advance exactly what you want so that you can tell each participant the same thing to ensure a fair comparison. It is not a bad idea, especially with the key vendors like the caterer and photographer, to talk to the vendor that came in second and ask how long it would take them to take over if you have trouble with your first choice – you will find all the experienced ones have had to do that at one time or another.

- Invitation Errors

This is an obvious error that can be very time consuming to correct. Be sure and review all addresses and spelling carefully and have a second person look over the invitations for you. It is so easy for you to keep looking over an error without even knowing it.

Be sure and get a draft proof before the final printing and again you look over it carefully and have someone else look over it also.

One of the most common invitation errors is to not include enough postage. Wedding invitations come in all shapes and sizes, from multi-layered elegant invitations tied with satin ribbons to pocket invitations stuffed with response cards, reception cards and more. Square formats require additional postage as do those heavy envelopes filled with multiple cards and return envelopes. The last thing you want is to receive all of your invitations back with "Postage Due" stamped in red across your beautiful hand calligraphy addressed envelopes! Not only will you have to order new envelopes and address them all again, you will lose valuable time too! Avoid this major mistake by taking your invitations to the post office to be hand weighed and evaluated so you have just the right amount of postage on them before you drop them in the mailbox!

- **Inviting Too Many Guests**

This is primarily a cost consideration but be sure you understand the capacity of your church and your reception site. What makes this subject difficult is guessing how many people will accept and how many will decline your invitation and that can largely be a function of geography. Do not invite 500 people and then estimate that only 250 will show up. The normal factor recommended is that 80% will say “yes” to the ceremony and the reception but keep a running total as your cards come in and adjust the caterer as necessary either up or down.

- **Procrastinating on Placing Orders**

This is easy to do because some of the decisions are so difficult to make but the last thing you want is to be worrying about items arriving on time as the event gets closer and closer.

Dresses – If your heart is set on a couture wedding dress be sure to plan on ordering at least six months in advance since your dress will be custom made and often done overseas. Also, most off-the-rack dresses will require alterations – be sure and factor in that time as well. This applies to the bridesmaid dresses also.

Hotel Rooms – It is important that you block out rooms for guests that will be arriving from out of town. Do not wait until the last minute or you may find there will not be adequate rooms and then you have a real mess. You normally will not have to pay for the rooms in advance – the guest will pay for their rooms with their credit cards when they arrive.

Presents – A common error is to wait too long to order your presents, especially today when they are commonly not purchased locally, but rather over the internet. Be sure and provide enough time for shipping as this is not a problem you want to deal with as time is running out prior to the big event.

- Errors on Marriage License

There can be so many rules surrounding marriage licenses that this can often be a stumbling block. Just make sure you do it early enough to correct any errors that crop up before you have to present it to the minister at the wedding. A common error for those marrying a second time is to forget to bring official divorce papers when you go to get the marriage certificate.

- Inappropriate Wedding Presents

The most common mistake is to spend too much for these gifts. It is easy to fear that you will insult your friends and family by purchasing cheap gifts for the wedding party but that misses the point. The phrase, “It’s the thought that counts” is never more appropriate than it is here and overspending here can mean you have to cut corners later on some of the really important items to stay on budget.

Try to make the gifts practical. Purchasing a hip flask for the groomsmen may seem funny at the time but they will end up going into a drawer and never seeing the light of day again until they are finally just thrown out. Even a simple key ring is probably a better gift than the hip flask, but that brings up the second point – try to personalize your gift. This could mean for example if you are purchasing the same gift for each person in a category, you could personalize it by having the item engraved with each participant’s initials. Another alternative if you are comfortable with the likes and dislikes of each in your party to purchase a unique gift for each, but be sure and keep the value of each as close as possible.

- Trying To Do It All Yourself

Chapter Two is all about who should be doing what – try to follow it. You must delegate some of the responsibility because you are going to want to be sure you have someone responsible once the item nears conclusion and you do not have the time to make corrections if necessary. You are going to be very busy at the end – make sure it is on the items that are most

important to you. Be sure and assign one person the responsibility to make sure everything is going smoothly on the final day -- Ushers are in place, the caterer is on schedule, the photographer has arrived early and is taking pictures, etc. You are going to be too busy getting ready in your dress to want to worry about last minute problems.

- **Color Errors**

I am not going to spend a lot of time on this because I feel it is too personal an item but I am going to give you some advice that the experts propose – you can decide if you want to pay attention to it or not.

Do not try to match every part – your bridesmaid dresses do not have to match the color of your groomsmen ties. What you want in the decorations is a touch of color here and there but too much color or trying to match every part will make it look artificial and fake. Try to stay as much as possible with pure colors like whites, creams, silvers, golds, browns, natural greens and black for your decorations at the reception. Use brighter colors sparingly to provide an accent here or there. The reception area can also affect your choice of colors – if it is very bland and boring you might get away with a little more color, but if it is busy you will want to stick with the more basic colors.

- **Inappropriate Speeches**

This is in my opinion the most common “error” at weddings and the impact can be lasting. It can be any one of the speeches, but the most common errors come from the best man trying to be funny or a faux-pas by the master of ceremony.

Talk to each of your speech givers and try to emphasize to them not to include any controversial content – best man, don’t talk about old girl friends. It’s OK to try to include a joke or two, or even to try to get a blush or two out of the bride or the groom, but do not make them too personal or embarrassing to either the bride or the groom.

Although it might seem too much, you could ask to see a copy of the speech before the big day if you are really worried about one or two of the participants.

If you need help on how to prepare a really good and professional speech for any of the participants go to [Your Wedding Shop](#).

- No Weather Backup Plan

This primarily applies to those of you that have chosen to roll the dice and have an outdoor ceremony or reception. This is obviously more risky in some areas more than other and also more risky at some times of the year but you should **always have a backup plan just in case the weather is bad**. The easiest way to do this is to choose a church or wedding hall that has both indoor and outdoor facilities but at least have an indoor facility ready should the need arise. I guess the alternative is to have a lot of umbrellas ready, but have some backup plan or your wedding could be ruined.

- Ignoring Religious Restrictions

It is conceivable in some situations that inappropriate attire for the church or temple, or skipping the pre-canae could keep the officiant from marrying you when the big day comes around. To avoid this, meet with your officiant within one month of getting engaged and discuss in detail any special requirements.

- Last Minute Confusion

Yes, you have had the rehearsal and you are sure everyone is ready but it always seems that someone is confused when the actual event comes due and you as the bride do not have time to deal with it. This is where that person mentioned above comes into play – this is the person who is responsible for all last minute problems. It is the wedding planner if you have one, but if not be sure and appoint someone to make sure everyone is in their proper place.

This is probably a good time to talk about drinking the night before – there is nothing worse on the final day than having the best man or the bridesmaids hung over from the night before. Do not have the bachelor party or the bachelorette party the night before the ceremony and limit drinking at the rehearsal party.

- Ceremony Too Long

This is another faux pas to avoid – having a ceremony that is too long. There is nothing worse than standing at the alter listening to snoring from the audience. Making them sit through an hour or two ceremony will only make them sleepy and irritable and it is not necessary – you can get everything said and done in a much shorter period of time.

- Lack of Focus

The wedding ceremony is the main even – the reception is just a celebration of it. Make sure that you put enough thought into the music, reading, and vows to ensure that it will be memorable.

Keep in mind the end result – you are getting married and about to start a new life together – you are not just planning a wedding. Some tension is natural between the participants and even between the bride and groom due to the inevitable stress involved with such a complicated event, but do not let things get out of control. In the final analysis, there will be some mistakes and you will even laugh about them later – some of them may even make the event more memorable. Don't panic – enjoy yourself.

Conclusion

Following proper wedding etiquette is not hard nor is it an option. If you are planning your wedding and would like all of those that are around you be find it to be a wonderful event, then take the notes that you find here to heart.

Wedding etiquette does not have to be too hard to do. If you have questions that are not answered here, you always have the option of finding out the right solution elsewhere or taking a good guess at what it is. When you think of all those that are effected by the decision you will make, then you will find yourself having the right answer ultimately.

Wedding etiquette is also always changing. With more and more events taking place, look for some changes to come to what you think wedding etiquette should be too.

The Wedding Shop

We have attempted to accumulate some of the best tools on the internet to help make your wedding not only error free but also unique and special. Here are some of the items you can find at our Wedding Shop:

Photo Stamps – This is one of the most unique things you can do to add some pizzazz to your wedding and something that people will be talking about. You can take your custom photos and put them on the stamps you use to send out your invitations, thank-you cards, etc. Imagine an invitation stamp with a picture of your and your fiancé on the invitation or a wedding picture of the bride and groom on the thank you notes.

Speeches – Help writing a professional speech from the top online source available. All participants covered: best man, master of ceremony, brides mother, bride, bridesmaid and father of the bride.

Vows – Help drafting a vow for every special occasion.

The Knot Store – This is the top internet store for all those special needs from wedding favors to gifts for the groomsmen or bridesmaids. You won't believe the prices, and they even have special sales periodically, and much of what they offer can be personalized free of charge.

Relationships – A couple of really great e-books on building relationship that will last forever.

You can access our store here: [Your Wedding Shop](#)

“Wealth With Time Team” Offer

This is not something you want to worry about while planning your wedding but money is one of the most common problems in forming a lasting marriage. Our Wealth With Time Team is designed to provide you with lasting financial security and immediate income if required.

Once you have settled down you might want to take a look at joining our team. Our team goals are very simple – we have two:

1. Earn Immediate Income – We have a proven internet marketing package that offers a new, hot Niche Market Business Package every month plus the training to make it work. Are they any good – the ability to market this e-book and the Wedding Shop mentioned above is our first Business Package offered at signup.
2. Build Retirement Recurring Income – We have a very simple and inexpensive business that builds long term recurring income at the same time you are earning immediate income above. The potential earnings from this program is more than most people dream is possible.

So it must be expensive to join this team, right?

Wrong. The cost to join our team is only \$10 per month and you get the monthly business package each month at no additional cost and you get other ways to make back end income as well. You also get all the training you need to succeed and it is designed to work for newbies. Plus, **we allow you to collect 100% of all membership fees collected** on people you get to sign up for our team – think about how much that could add to your monthly income.

All right, so I admit it is not for everyone, because it does take some work, but it can be done on a part time basis and it can be done from home anywhere in the world.

In a nutshell, this is what team membership offers:

- Simple – Anyone can do it
- Inexpensive – Anyone can afford it.
- Income -- \$2,500 per month in 10 months or less with no upside limit in the future

We are so confident that anyone can do it

We will even guarantee that you will earn \$2,500 per month at the end of 10 months or we will reimburse all of your expenses.

For more information go to:

[Wealth With Time Team Homepage](#)

I wish you the best and if you have any questions please feel free to give me a call.

Steve Story

(720) 271-3303 or email support@wealthwithtime.com

Good Luck and God Bless – I hope this report helps you find what you are looking for.