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Wedding Planning Handout

Firstly, let me congratulate you on your recent engagement. You have decided you want to spend the rest of your life with the one you love, now it's time to make it official.

Weddings are supposed to be a magical time in your lives, the day is supposed to reflect your journey as a couple and express your love story, but the reality is that the whole planning process can quickly become very overwhelming and frustrating leaving couples dreading the day instead of rejoicing in it.

Below are a few pieces of practical advice and tips that may help you along the way.

Like anything in life, it is best to not get overwhelmed by the thought of how much is involved in planning a wedding, it should be a fun process so make sure you get your checklists and spread sheets in order, enlist some helpers and happy planning.

The best place to start is with you and your fiancé. Have a chat about the kind of wedding you both want, one that will reflect your personalities, style and budget.



Guest List

Start by writing a rough guest list, this will help determine your budget and venue.



Developing a Budget

Easier said than done if you have no idea how much things cost.

Have a realistic approach to how much you can afford opposed to how much you are willing to spend on your wedding, these can be quite different.

Be realistic in your approach, do you need a long engagement to save for the wedding?

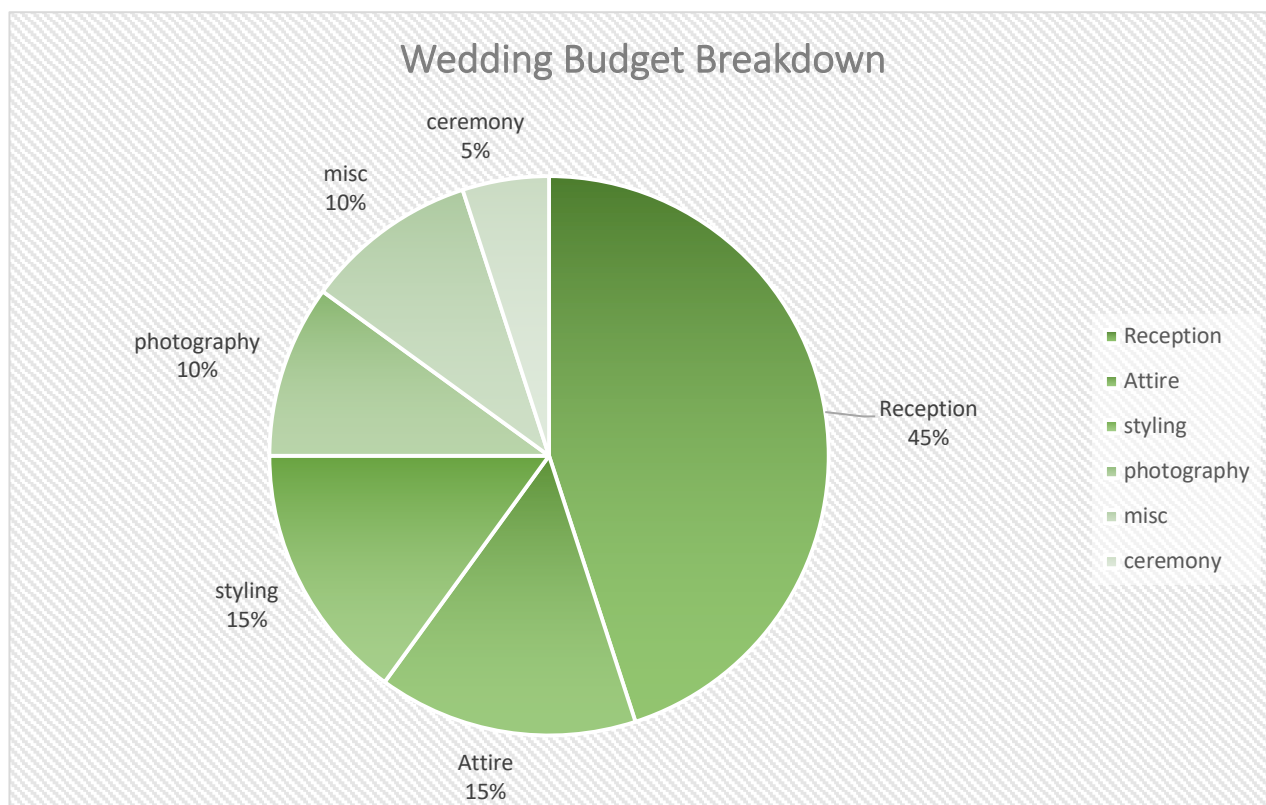
Have honest upfront conversations with family members about financial contributions. It is wonderful if they want to contribute financially but at what cost? Are they then going to expect that they can invite a whole bunch of distant relatives you haven't seen since you were a kid? Don't let their contribution come with the expectation that they need to have an input into your decision making.

It is important to prioritise what's important to you for your wedding and budget accordingly, if your allergic to flowers there is no need to spend thousands on florals.

Don't include things just because you think you have to, if you don't like cake don't spend \$500 on a cake, have a cheese wheel instead or a dessert station.
Allow for a slush fund, you would be surprised at how much last-minute stuff pops up especially if planning a DIY wedding.

According to a survey by Bride to B magazine the average cost of an Australian Wedding today is \$65,482 a huge difference to the \$36,200 that moneysmart.gov.au state is the benchmark for Aussie weddings. You set a budget that works for your financial situation.

Below is a sample budget breakdown to be used as a guide, but as I stated your priorities don't need to fit the standard mould.



Reception: Venue hire, catering (food & Drink), hire equipment, entertainment, cake

Attire: Dress, alterations, suit, shoes, accessories, hair and make-up, rings, beauty treatments

Styling: Flowers, décor, lighting, props

Photography: Photographer, Videographer, engagement shoot, albums and prints

Miscellaneous: Stationary, transport, thank you gifts, entertainment

Ceremony: Celebrant/Minister fee, venue/location fee

Budgeting Tips

- You don't necessarily have to use a traditional wedding venue; your home could be the perfect back drop.
Consider a lovely picnic by the lake or a traditional Aussie BBQ. Think outside the box.
- Don't use too many suppliers, try to use the one stylist, it saves on delivery fees.
- Utilise your friends and family's skills. If someone you know has amazing hand writing, get them to write all your signage.
- Any day other than a Saturday will usually save you money and you will find vendors are more available.
- Reuse your ceremony chairs/florals for the reception.
- Consider having ceremony and reception in the one location, saves on transport.
- If having a wedding cake serve that instead of dessert.
- Look at buying a second-hand dress, there are plenty of beautiful designer dresses out there that have only been worn once and still in perfect condition after being dry-cleaned, it could save you \$1000's.
- Send Evites, save \$100's on stationary & postage.
- If you decide you want stationary and have menus on the tables consider having guest names printed at the top of the menu, it saves on needing a place card as well or leave guests to choose their own seats.
- Shop the sales and take advantage of expo specials.
- Buy in bulk, especially if you have to buy your own alcohol.
- If you are wanting a honeymoon but can't find the budget, ask guest to contribute to your honeymoon as a gift by setting up a registry with your travel agent.
- Remember time is money.



How long do I need to plan a wedding...?

How long is a piece of string? It all depends on how elaborate or simple you want things and how set you are on a date or using certain suppliers or a certain venue. A lot of well-established vendors will be booked out in peak wedding times up to 1-2 years in advance. If you are flexible on dates and suppliers, you will have a lot more luck.

Stay organised, this is key to eliminated stress during the planning process.

Create a wedding email address or at least a wedding folder so you can keep all your quotes and vendor correspondence together.

Create a to do/checklist to keep you on track. I have attached a sample one on the following page. The average wedding is planned in about 12-18 months, but the below checklist can be tailored to suit your timeframe.

The less time you have to plan the less time you have to overthink things and stress out.

Where do I start?

I often get asked, What vendors should I book first? My response – there is no set rule but generally, after you have an idea of the style of wedding you want and the number of guests you will be inviting, you will start researching a suitable venue this will set the tone for your wedding theme and everything will follow on from there.

Start by sending enquiries to all these venues asking for their package inclusions and prices. If you have a date in mind ask if they are available, if you are open to a date ask when they are available. Where possible, always have a site inspection at prospective venue locations.

Once you have a date and a venue it's time to start booking all your other vendors.

With all suppliers it is probably best to get about 3 quotes to compare. Firstly, check their availability, there is no point getting excited about finding the perfect celebrant to then find out they are booked already. Once you know they are available ask questions about their inclusions don't assume anything. The service they provide is just as important as the product being offered. As a courtesy let the other vendors now if you haven't chosen to go with their services, it saves them having to follow up on the enquiry. Once you have booked your suppliers and given them a brief of what you want, trust in them, trust that you have picked the right supplier for you and let them do their job. Listen to their advice and guidance, chances are they have seen many different styles of weddings and will know if your ideas will work and how to best implement them.

Wedding Planning Checklist

Your monthly to do list



Congratulations you're engaged, firstly start by

- Discussing your vision/ideas for your special day – style, theme, time of year etc
- Decide on a budget
- Draft a guest list
- Choose your wedding party
- Consider hiring a wedding planner/coordinator
- Engagement party yah or nay?

18-12 months to go

- Select date and book venue
- Start researching vendors
- Book Celebrant
- Book photographer and/or videographer
- Look at honeymoon options
- Start trying on wedding dresses
- Book a caterer if your venue doesn't provide one, including beverage catering

10 months to go

- Book a florist
- Book a stylist or start sourcing own styling items if DIYing
- Book entertainment -DJ or band?
- Send save the dates
- Order dress
- Book hair and Make-up artist
- Plan and book honeymoon
- Start a gift registry if that's what you decide

6 months to go

- Book cake and arrange tastings if possible
- Shop for bridesmaid dresses
- Shop for accessories (shoes, jewellery headpieces etc for you and bridesmaids)
- Shop for Groom and Groomsman attire
- Arrange invites/stationary
- Finalise guest list
- Book transport if required

4-3 months to go

- Buy wedding rings
- Arrange room blocks at hotels for out of town guests
- Organise dress fittings
- Schedule hair and make-up trials
- Send invites
- Meet with Coordinator to develop run sheet – distribute to vendors
- Meet with celebrant
- Organise a menu tasting/select beverages

2 months to go

- Start choosing music selections
- Finalise readings and order of service for ceremony, write vows
- Allocate people who are doing speeches
- Designate a MC or hire a professional
- Book your beauty treatments
- Confirm all vendors ensure they have all relevant info and invoices up to date

4 weeks to go

- Follow up on RSVP's
- Arrange seating plan
- Get design items finalised (place cards, menus etc)
- Write wedding speech
- Arrange final payments
- Send dietary requirements and final numbers to your caterers/venue/vendors
- Organise a wedding rehearsal
- Bride haircut and colour
- Start wearing in bridal shoes
- Enjoy hens & bucks night

The week of....

- Groom to have haircut and shave
- Finalise all details with vendors
Bump in and out times, payments etc
- Get engagement ring cleaned
- Delegate small tasks for on the day
- Get mani & pedi plus facial
- Pick up dresses and grooms' attire
- Pack overnight bag plus honeymoon suitcase
- Have run sheet and table plans all printed out
- Deliver place cards & favours to venue with instructions
- Pack all relevant styling pieces for DIY wedding
- Remember to enjoy the day

Venue Considerations

Let's be honest, venue choice is probably one of the biggest decisions you will make while planning your wedding. It will set the tone for the whole day.

When researching your venue, make sure it will cater to your guest numbers, will work with your budget, has availability when you want to get married and fits into the theme and style of wedding you want. A few questions to consider,

- Do you want the convenience of ceremony and reception in the one location?
- If in different locations, consider transport expenses and travel time
- Do you want to make a weekend of it and have guests stay?
- If there is no accommodation on site, where is the closest accommodation?
- Is there a wet weather option?
- What are the access times for set up?
- Can you bring in your own vendors?
- Do they have restrictions for styling set ups, entertainment/noise?

Request their package prices and inclusions. Although one venue may appear a lot more expensive on paper take the inclusions into consideration and compare.

Make a short list of suitable venues then book a site inspection, you will know once you see the venue if it's the right one for you.

DIY venues can be amazing and truly unique as you have a blank canvas to work with, but you need to be willing to invest the time to source everything needed. Make sure you know exactly what you are up against when you book a DIY venue,

- Is there a kitchen or is it literally just a field and your caterers have to source every last bit of equipment?
- Are there toilets or do you need to hire a port a loo?
- Do you have access to power and water, or do you need generators?
- How long do you have the venue for? It will be really tricky coordinating set up and pack down for all your suppliers in one day, 3-day hire is ideal for these sorts of events.

It may seem like a cheaper alternative but there are a lot more variables to work into the budget. You know exactly what you are getting if you book at a licenced venue, service will be quicker as they have everything on hand, but many other people have probably had the same style wedding. It's completely a personal choice. You're either a DIY kind of person or not.

If you do decide to go with a DIY venue, a wedding coordinator could become your best friend. No one wants to spend 12 hours the day before their wedding positioning tables, hanging lighting, arranging candles etc This may sound fun to you at the start of your planning process, but reality is that it's not going to end up that way.

Peace of mind on your wedding day is priceless, you do not want any unwanted stress.

A coordinator will also be the point of contact on the day so instead of you getting dozens of phone calls in regard to access points and positioning it can all go through your coordinator.

Bump in and Bump out times can be tricky to coordinate as chances are, your vendors are delivering and setting up for other weddings too. This can take up a lot of time in the week leading up to the big day, be prepared for it if you don't have a coordinator looking after this for you.

How to not make your wedding look and feel like everyone else's?

The secret to having a unique wedding is to make it a reflection of you 2 as a couple. Being different for the sake of being different can get really expensive. There is no point in competing with your 2nd cousins extravagant wedding if the 2 of you enjoy the simpler things in life. Be true to yourselves and that's how you will have a truly unique magical day.

Pinterest & Instagram are really great tools for developing ideas for the look and feel of your wedding, but it can lead to things just being replicated. Brief your vendors on what elements you love, it's also a good idea to let them know what you don't like then to trust in their creativity to provide you with something unique for your wedding.



The importance of a run sheet and tips for writing one

A run sheet for the day is super important and can quite often be overlooked. The day goes by so quickly that you want to make sure everything is scheduled in, so you don't miss anything. In saying this you still need to be flexible. Nobody likes an over planner, we don't want to schedule things in to the minute - Bride and Groom Intro at 5:36 because chances are that's not going to happen. You need to be flexible and this is where a coordinator comes in handy. They can liaise with all your vendors to ensure the day runs as smoothly as possible – Confirm with photographer that they have an hour to go offsite for photos, Let the MC know that the bridal intro is happening in 5 minutes, Let the caterers know that the speeches are looking to run 5 minutes late so we need to hold off on mains, nobody wants cold food served. This way none of your guests have to stress about trying to keep the day moving.

A run sheet is mostly important for the venue, coordinator, caterers and MC. Your guests don't need to know every single detail of the reception so no need to display a run sheet.

If you have booked a venue like The Entertainment grounds with all your catering inclusions and an in-house coordinator you won't need to develop a run sheet for your reception, but it can still be used for your ceremony.

It is also a good idea to have a run sheet of sorts for the bride & groom outlaying times for hair & make-up, timings to get dressed, when photographers are coming and who is responsible for bringing certain things, for example best man to bring rings, Maid of honour to pack emergency bridal pack.

Make sure you take a moment to take it all in.

Don't stress about the small things, take 5 minutes to yourselves, a great time to do this is after the bridal photos and just before the bridal introduction to the reception.



SAMPLE RUNSHEET

NAME:		DATE:	GUESTS:
Venue : Contact on Day : Celebrant: Photographer: Caterer: Bar Staff:		DJ & MC: Photobooth: Florist: Stylist :	
TIME	EVENT	VENUE/LOCATION	SETUP/ PACKDOWN
3pm	Wedding ceremony	Lawns in front of hall	25 chairs, rug, florals, welcome sign, water station
3:30pm (straight after ceremony)	Reception start -Arrival drink Group photo, family shots	Hall Verandah–	Ceremony chairs packed away, bring florals into hall, welcome sign moved to gate
4-5pm	Canapes served x 3	Verandah/lawns	Bridal party photos 1hr - offsite
5:30	Guests Seated Housekeeping (casual and low key)	Inside hall	
5:45	Bridal party entrance		
6pm	Entrée served		Entrée plates cleared before speeches start
6:30	Speeches x 2	Have lectern to side for speeches	Ensure drinks are topped up before speeches
6:45	Mains served (after 1 st round of speeches concluded)		Mains cleared before 2 nd round of speeches
7:30	Speeches x 2		Ensure drinks are topped up before speeches
7:50	Cut cake – served on T&C table	In front of stage	Move table as soon as cut for first dance
7:55	First dance Father daughter dance	In front of stage	Espresso martini shots served on dancefloor
8pm	Photo booth and dancing		Photobooth to right of stage 8pm-12am
11:45	Bridal farewell - sparklers	Make a tunnel from gate to road	put sparklers and lighters on table
12am	Reception concludes		Shuttle & taxis

SET UP REQUIREMENTS	CATERING REQUIREMENTS	BEVERAGE REQUIREMENTS
<p>Ceremony on lawns in between trees</p> <p>25 chairs, round rug, 2 x low florals, welcome sign, table cloth to cover BBQ, water station</p> <p>Small table, Florals paper towel and soap for toilets</p> <p>Wet weather ceremony option on stage in hall, move tables slightly to create aisle</p> <p>Bar set up on verandah</p> <p>Umbrellas and furniture on the lawns, bar tables on verandah</p> <p>Pimm's station on vintage trolley with water station on verandah</p> <p>Reception – 4 long tables, 2 floral arrangements per table, place cards.</p> <p>Move Piano</p> <p>Fairy lights and bunting – no hall lighting just fairy lights</p> <p>Cake table in front of stage</p> <p>Wishing well and sign in book at back of hall</p> <p>T&C station in front of kitchen- cake served from this table</p> <p>DJ to left of stage – doing ceremony music and MC</p> <p>Photobooth to right of stage</p> <p>Organza backdrop with Neon Sign</p>	<p>Menu- 3x canapes Sliders Duck pancakes Arancini</p> <p>Entrée – Alternate service Scallops Quail</p> <p>Main – Alternate service Beef Cheeks Duck</p> <p>Sides Bread and butter Herb roasted potatoes</p> <p>Dessert Wedding cake served on platters with T&C</p> <p><u>Dietaries</u></p> <p>Table 1 2 Pescatarian 1 seafood allergy 1 GF</p> <p>Table 2 2 No seafood 1 No beef 1 no beef or lamb 1 No pork</p> <p>Table 3 1 vego 1 vegan 1 dairy & GF 1 bird meat allergy</p> <p>Table 4 2 GF</p>	<p>Pimm's cocktail on arrival</p> <p><u>Beer</u></p> <p>Corona Asahi Great Northern</p> <p><u>Sparkling</u></p> <p>Croser Sacred Hill Brut</p> <p><u>White Wine</u></p> <p>King Valley Pinot Gris Stoneleigh S/B</p> <p><u>Red Wine</u></p> <p><u>Rawsons Retreat C/S</u></p> <p><u>Spirits – bridal party only</u></p> <p>Jim Beam Vodka Espresso Martini Shots all round</p>

Ceremony - you want everything completely set up at least 30 minutes prior to ceremony start time as this is when guests will start to arrive. Ideally an hour before.

Depending on what type of service you are having allow 30-45 minutes for the ceremony and about 15 for congratulations then another 15 minutes for family/group photos.

Talk to your photographer about how long you need for photos, are you going offsite? this will determine how long your pre-reception drinks are – usually around an hour. If it is longer, make sure your guests are looked after with canapes or a grazing table along with entertainment. You also need to take into consideration the sunset times for photos.

Make sure you have allocated who is responsible for certain things e.g. Does someone need to queue the music? Are the floral arrangements been used at the reception as well? Who will be responsible for your marriage certificate?

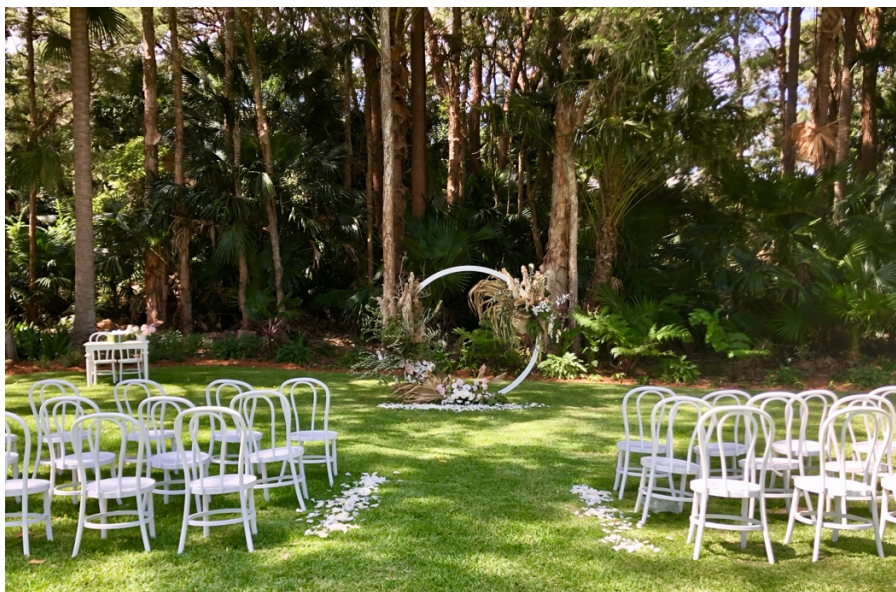
If you are having an outdoor ceremony always have a Wet weather option in place, hope and pray that you don't have to use it, but have one. You don't want to be scrambling the week of trying to figure out where to have your ceremony because your garden ceremony location has been flooded. Don't stress about the weather, you cannot control it. The weather won't ruin your day, it will be your attitude. If you can't bare the thought of your garden ceremony being rained out, you might be best booking an indoor location.

Reception – You will need to start with your start and finish times and work from there. Allow about 10-15 minutes for your guests to get seated and settled, get your MC to do housekeeping before bridal introduction. Once bridal party has entered, do you want to get formalities out of the way straight up or start with your meals? Your caterers will be able to advise you on their service timings which will depend on the number of guests and the conditions they are working in e.g. full kitchen or make shift one in a field.

Consider who you want to give a speech and how much time this will take up. Guests get very restless if they are sitting there for an hour listening to speeches. Insist on short speeches around 5 minutes especially if you have decided to break your speeches up between entrée and mains.

Are you including the traditional elements like cutting of the cake, first dance, bouquet throw, garter and farewell?

Make sure you send a copy of your draft run sheet to all vendors involved so they can approve timings



Master of Ceremonies – professional or friend

Let's face it an MC plays a pretty big part in your day, especially if you don't have a coordinator. They are likely to be the ones to make sure you are running on time and communicating with the caterers.

It's always a lot nicer to have personal touches on your wedding day but there is no point in using Uncle Bill to MC if he is petrified of public speaking or you know is going to write himself off by mains. Only choose a guest if you are 100% sure they are comfortable taking on the job and are going to bring a positive vibe to your wedding, if you don't instantly have one of those people in your life best to go with a professional. Most DJ's can double up as an MC, just like with a celebrant you can give them personal information about yourselves to try and make it a bit more personable. Or they can literally just do the formalities – housekeeping, bridal introduction, cutting the cake, first dance, farewell.

Either choice is fine, but you should definitely have someone responsible for this role.

In conclusion, try to avoid dealing with last minute jobs. Planning and organisation are key to staying on top of things.

You want to be as organised as possible so the week leading up to your big day is as relaxing and as enjoyable as possible.

Confirm all your suppliers at least a month out and make sure they have everything they need from you. A lot of Vendors won't be able to provide bump in and out times until the week of the wedding but at least you won't have to be giving them dietary requirements in the lead up.

Stick to your check list and to do list.

Ask for help, enlist your bridal party with things to do. Family members and friends are usually happy and willing to help.

Get groomsmen to pick up suits etc

Don't leave your seating chart until the last minute better yet leave it open to guests sitting where ever they like. Start a rough draft before all your RSVP's come in and adjust once you have final numbers.

If you decide to have allotted seats arrange your place cards by tables and positioning so they can be easily laid out on the tables.

If DIYing your centrepieces and styling, make sure everything is packed and organised in relevant boxes/bags to make set up easier. Have everything labelled so when you unload the boxes they can be put in the relevant places and you are not scrambling last minute to try and find the tea lights.

I hope you have found this hand out helpful.

If you think you may need a wedding coordinator, please get in contact to see how we can help make your day stress free.

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