1. AN INTRODUCTION TO WEDDING PLANNING

OVERVIEW

In this module, we will cover the following topics:

- The role of the wedding planner
- Personality matching
- Career benefits
- How to get started
- How to use this course
- Assess your strengths and weaknesses

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a career in wedding planning. Whether you’re studying this course because you want to plan your own wedding or you are interested in planning weddings as a career, we are going to discuss what it means to be a wedding planner.

THE ROLE OF THE WEDDING PLANNER

Wedding planning is a growing profession. Traditionally wedding planners were friends or family members who took on the burden of managing the wedding details.

Once upon a time, the bride’s parents were in charge of paying for and co-ordinating the wedding. The bride’s mother was often the wedding planner. However, modern wedding planning is a direct result of the new couple living miles apart from their immediate family.

When engaged couples live so far away from their families, the benefits of hiring a professional to handle all the details and co-ordinate their wedding can save them time and money, as well as providing them with enormous stress relief in the months, weeks and days leading up to the event itself.
As the wedding planner you will be the money manager, economic advisor, facilitator, mediator, organizer and artist. You will be the director of the fairytale and handle the setting, props and casting. You will hold hands, coax vendors, organize the decorators, offer advice, negotiate contracts, keep records and track data.

You will provide mental, emotional and physical support to the bride in a variety of ways. You will be there to guide, to protect, and ultimately, to plan the day that many consider to be one of the most important in their lives.

**WHAT YOUR CLIENTS WILL EXPECT OF YOU**

Couples expect wedding planners to fulfil their every need and to make sure nothing is forgotten on their special day. They have various expectations of their wedding planner. Among the issues couples consider when hiring a wedding planner are:

- Will you save me money?
- How much will you charge me?
- Will you stick to my budget?
- Will you create a proposal of all your plans in detail?
- What do you think would be an ideal location for me?
- Are you in contact with a number of florists, caterers, bands, photographers, and other important vendors in the area?
- Will you review all contracts for me?
- Can you provide a calendar that gives details on the planning process?
- Will you co-ordinate delivery and set-up times with the appropriate vendors?
- On the wedding day, will you supervise the whole event?

Knowing these expectations beforehand will enable you to provide your client with a high quality service; therefore resulting in a well-planned memorable wedding.

You are the facilitator of the fairytale and your responsibilities are enormous. It takes a special type of person to enjoy the challenge of the job, as well as to thrive on it. We'll show you how to take on that role.
**Exercise 1.1**

Think back to your own wedding, or a wedding that you have been involved in. Did you, or the couple getting married have a wedding planner? What tasks did this wedding planner fulfil?

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**Personality Matching**

When it comes to choosing wedding planning as a career, the truth is that this career is not for everyone. It takes a special type of person with a unique variety of skills to not only enjoy the work but to do well in this career choice.

The following is a list of the skills needed. You probably have many of them already, or you wouldn’t be studying this course. If you can answer yes to most or all of them, then you are a good candidate for a career in wedding planning. Tick the Yes/No boxes for each skill listed and then check your score with the ranges at the bottom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills of a Wedding Planner</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You are very organized</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Attention to detail is important to you</td>
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<td>3. You meet deadlines</td>
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<td>4. You leave nothing to the last minute</td>
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<td>5. You plan ahead</td>
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<td>6. You build and maintain schedules</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. You can juggle a lot of responsibilities simultaneously</td>
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</table>
8. You make a list for everything
9. Multi-tasking is a way of life and not stressful
10. You are creative
11. You are a romantic
12. You enjoy people
13. You communicate well
14. You have good intuition
15. You possess good interpersonal skills
16. You can handle stress
17. You are flexible and able to cope with unexpected situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of times you answered ‘yes’…</th>
<th>How qualified you are to be a wedding planner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13-17</td>
<td>You possess most of the skills of a wedding planner already. Well done!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>You have many useful skills needed to become a wedding planner. You need to do some work on developing the skills that you don’t yet possess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>You have some basic skills as a wedding planner. But don’t worry; this course will put you on the right track to obtaining the skills you currently lack.</td>
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</table>

If this list makes your head spin, don’t worry; we’re going to show you how to become a wedding planner, and help you develop the skills you already have.
Being detail oriented and able to keep your cool under pressure will be paramount to your success and happiness in this career.

You will wear many hats for many different people. You will be constantly honing your skills. You’ll learn new ones from every wedding that you plan. And each will give you ideas to help you with the next wedding.

**EXERCISE 1.2**

Which of the skills listed above do you need to improve? How will you do that?

**JOB TITLES**

Wedding planners are known under several different titles or job names depending on where they work and what country they live in.

Churches and other wedding venues will hire wedding consultants or directors to act as on-site staff to handle weddings planned at those venues.
The following is a list of some job titles associated with wedding planning:

- Wedding director
- Wedding consultant
- Bridal consultant
- Event planner
- Wedding planner

**DID YOU KNOW?**

June is the most popular month for weddings, then August, September and October. Here’s a monthly breakdown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>April</td>
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<td>June</td>
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<td>August</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
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**ASSESS YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

In the chart below, write your strengths and weaknesses. What are your best features? For example, attention to detail. And what are your failings? For example, lack of contacts.

Then write the threats and opportunities that might affect your future. These are the outside influences that could impact on you. For example, having a large city nearby might offer you an opportunity, whilst having many competitors would be a threat.

**STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES (SWOT) CHART**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
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To become a successful wedding planner, you have to be aware of yourself. So what does this chart tell you? Which quadrant is the fullest? What can you do to:

- Overcome your weaknesses
- Build on your strengths
- Take advantage of the opportunities
- Pre-empt the risks?

**EXERCISE 1.3**

Write some action points here from your SWOT analysis.

**CAREER BENEFITS**

The workload and responsibilities of a wedding planner are tremendous. The career benefits are equally rewarding. From a financial aspect, the growth potential of a good wedding planner is enormous. Wedding planners who are good at what they do are in high demand.

Among the career benefits a wedding planner will enjoy are:

- Personal fulfilment
- Personal growth
- Income
- Employment flexibility and freedom
As a wedding planner, you will meet hundreds of people and you will have numerous opportunities to plan creative and adventurous ceremonies.

Every wedding you plan will be different. Every couple will have different needs. You will have a chance to expand your repertoire through each experience. And you will discover the joy of making others peoples dreams come true.

By helping brides and grooms through the maze of planning that a wedding requires, you will be the linchpin in the chapter that begins their married life together.

You will have the joy of envisioning how the wedding will pan out, and then the joy of making it happen. You will enjoy the fruits of your labour as much as your clients will. You will stretch your creative skills with every wedding.

Due to the nature of wedding planning, it is an ideal career for someone wanting to work out of their own home. You can set your own schedule based on the clients you accept, and this flexibility is one of the greatest attributes of the business.

**Exercise 1.4**

What career benefits appeal to you the most?

**How to get started**

Taking this course is the first step towards beginning your career as a wedding planner. As you work through the modules, we will tell you to do a number of things to help you develop your skills.
There are many different skills and talents you will want to develop, as you move into a new and exciting career.

The following three skill areas are what you want to focus on throughout all of the exercises you perform:

- Interpersonal skills
- Organization skills
- Creative skills

You need to be effective in all three areas as you engage in conversations and relationships with vendors and clients. You need to work diligently on your organizational skills so that details are never missed. You must:

- Look for ways to maximize your efficiency and your organizational skills.
- Look for ways to maximize your creative output.
- Actively work on brainstorming different ideas from the ‘conservative’ to the most ‘outlandish.’

Brush up on your research and subscribe to wedding and bridal magazines. Look into travel articles, especially those focusing on weddings and honeymoons. You want to know what’s hot and what’s not. You also want to keep your own assessment of what unique ideas haven’t been used yet.

Remember, you want to have fun in this job and these are the skills that will help you become successful, and let you enjoy that success. When you are enjoying what you do, you will do it better and everyone will benefit.

**HOW TO USE THIS COURSE**

You will find that every module in this course is set up similarly to this one. You will be introduced to concepts and ideas. You will be given exercises to do.

You will get out of this course, what you put into it. You will be given the story of wedding planning. You will learn the fundamentals behind what goes into a wedding and what will be expected of you as the planner.
You cannot, however, rely only on this course to give you all the instruction you will need. You must do your own research as well.

You need to apply the information you learn through practical experience. The best way to use this course is a guideline and a mentor. It will provide you with tools and solutions to tasks ahead. How you use them and apply them will be up to you.
REMINDER

Have you completed the following exercises?

☐ Exercise 1.1
☐ Exercise 1.2
☐ Exercise 1.3
☐ Exercise 1.4

Tick each box when you have completed the exercises. Then you can move on to the assignment that follows.

SUMMARY

1. You know the role of the wedding planner.
2. You understand the skills and personality traits associated with a wedding planner.
3. You know the different titles associated with wedding planning.
4. You have assessed your strengths and weaknesses.
5. You have learned about the different career benefits associated with wedding planning.
6. You have been given the information on how to get started on a career in wedding planning.
7. You understand how to use this course.
ASSIGNMENT 1

Welcome to the world of wedding planning. For this assignment we’d like you to write an essay about yourself.

Tell us about what you do at the moment, your interests and why you want to become a wedding planner. Include the following information:

1. How do you plan to use this course?
2. What are your wedding planning goals?
3. How do you see wedding planning fitting into your life?
4. What are the skills you currently have that you can apply to your new career?
5. Is wedding planning a major change for you, or an extension of what you already do?
6. Will wedding planning fit with your domestic responsibilities?
7. What do you see as your strengths and weaknesses?

At this point, we are not looking for a plan of action, merely a view of your situation and your goals.

The purpose of this assignment is to help us (and you) understand what you hope to get out of the course, and to set your sights on the future.

Every student has their own individual requirements, and we aim to help you fulfil your goals.

We will provide you with feedback that relates directly to your comments.

When you have completed this assignment, send it to your tutor for marking. If you email your assignment, make sure you include your name and assignment number at the top of your work.

If you send the assignment by post, attach the cover sheet, which is on the following page.
**ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

Please put your name and the date in the arrowed boxes. Then staple the sheet to your assignment, and send it to your tutor.

Your tutor will keep the lower section of this form, returning the top portion to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Diploma in Wedding Planning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module number</td>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>Date returned by tutor</td>
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<td>Mark</td>
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Comments:

To be retained by tutor

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<td>Date returned by tutor</td>
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