

Idojour

Wedding Vendor Cheat Sheet

A GUIDE TO WEDDING VENDOR
QUESTIONS TO ASK & CONTRACT TIPS

YOUR TEAM OF INCREDIBLE WEDDING VENDORS

This is a wedding vendor cheat sheet that you can bring along with you as you begin interviewing and working with your wedding vendors including:

- Wedding planners
- Photographers
- Videographers
- Hair stylists & makeup artists
- Bands & DJ's
- Bakers and pastry chefs
- Transportation

You'll also find a list of general questions, contract tips and things to think about. Pick the ones that matter to you and seem helpful, and skip the rest.

At the end of the day, it's important that you find a group of professionals that can work together to bring your wedding vision to life – in a collaborative, responsive way that suits your budget and style.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

The below list highlights things to think about and questions to ask that apply to virtually all of your wedding vendors. Keep it handy as you meet with potential partners, and be sure to be prepared with your approximate wedding date, venue, budget, number of guests and general style/vision.

Questions to Ask

- How long have you been in business?
- How many weddings have you worked on?
- How many weddings per year do you work on?
- Is my date available and how many weddings do you have scheduled for that day/week?
- Are you familiar with my venue?
- What is your primary style or area of expertise?
- Can you provide complete images/examples of your work? Specifically weddings that fit my style/venue?
- Can you provide references?
- Has your work been featured in any blogs or magazines?
- Am I required to provide food and drinks?

Things to Look for in a Vendor

- Responsiveness: How quickly does the vendor respond to emails and phone calls? What is an appropriate time frame for you?
- Reliability: Does he/she follow through on things that were committed to being provided in the time frame given?
- Attitude: Is the vendor open to ideas, enthusiastic or is he/she condescending and short? Does the vendor put you at ease and do you have a good rapport?
- Vision: Is the vendor able to listen to you and articulate your vision while being able to offer ideas and suggestions at the same time?

Contract Tips

- *The basics*
 - The date, time (including preparation, setup and take down)
 - Fees: Total dollar value for services provided, payee, method of payment, and any penalties for late payment. I
 - Scope of work: Be as detailed as possible on what the services include, from setup time, arrival location, names and number of assistants and everything in between.
 - Payment schedule: A breakdown of deposits, billing dates, installment plans,

overtime fees etc.

- Contact information: The name/s and phone numbers for each vendor/point of contact that you will be working with on the day of your wedding.
- Arrival time, location and timeline
- *Changes and other special requests.* How will any change to the scope of work impact fees (additions, removals etc.) Sign follow up contracts.
- *Additional & unforeseen costs:* These are the “what if’s”. Are there any factors that could result in additional costs in the final bill?.
- Cancellation: Circumstances under which you are able to receive a refund should the vendor relationship be terminated including the vendor not fulfilling their end of the bargain, going out of business or a cancelled or postponed wedding.
- Review, sign and request a copy for yourself.

WEDDING PLANNER

If you decide that the wedding planner route is right for you, it is absolutely crucial that you find someone who you will want to work with and spend a lot of time on. Who you feel comfortable with talking numbers, discussing dicey situations, whose opinion you value, who you trust to help you plan and execute a flawless wedding.

Questions to Ask

- How many weddings have you planned? How many in my style, size and timeframe?
- How many do you take on a year? Is this your full time job?
- How much staff do you enlist to help?
- Will you be there on the actual day of and in what capacity?
- What kind of planning services do you offer? What is included in your services? What will you not do?
 - Ex: Will you help me scout locations? Will you help me secure vendors & contracts? Do you assist with invitations, wording an etiquette?
- Do you receive commission or referrals from other vendors?
- How aggressive are you in terms of negotiation, dealing with difficult vendors and situations?
 - Can you tell me about a time when you saved a bride money?
- How do you stay organized?
- What ideas do you have for me in order to maximize my budget of (\$X). You want to make sure that your planner keeps you in budget and doesn't push you towards things that you cannot afford.
- Are you able to use your connections to secure discounts and other perks/extras for me?
- What role will each of us play?
- How often will we meet prior to the wedding either in person or over the phone.
- How do you best like to communicate?
- Tell me about 2-3 of your biggest problem scenarios and how you fixed them.

Additional Contract Tips

- Detailed scope of work including approximate number of planning/working hours
- Frequency and medium of meetings

PHOTOGRAPHER

Questions to Ask

- What is your primary style? What are your influences?
- Can I see a complete wedding from start to finish? Ask to see both indoor and outdoor weddings to see how they capture the different light.
- How many weddings have you shot? Any similar to mine in terms of venue, style etc?
- How many weddings you do per weekend?
- How many pictures do you take per wedding?
- How do you back up your work?
- Do you have liability insurance?
- How much editing goes into the final product? Do you color correct all photos or select ones?
- What equipment do you use? Do you shoot digital or film?
- If my event runs longer than we agreed upon, are you able to stay?
- How do you stay incognito during the ceremony while capturing great shots?
- What will you be wearing?
- Will I own the rights to my photos?
- When can you expect to see the photos including proofs, albums and negatives?
- Are engagement photos included?
- What is the backup plan if you are ill or cannot make it at the last minute?

Additional Contract Tips

- Name of photographer and assistant including day of contact information
- Key dates (engagement shoot, dates to receive photos, albums etc.)
- Tentative timeline
- Ownership of photos and use of images including length of time photographer will keep the negatives.
- Event & Shot list – for formals, portraits, composition, etc.

VIDEOGRAPHER

Questions to Ask

- How many weddings have you shot/edited?
- Can I see examples of the various videos you have shot/edited?
- Will I have access to or own the raw footage of the wedding?
- Will I have input in the editing process?
 - Will I be able to suggest music? Are there any copyright restrictions on music?
 - Will there be captions and subtitles?
 - Will there be a DVD menu?
- How will I receive the finished product and how many copies can I expect?
- What is the turnaround time for receiving my edited video?
- How is the video backed up?
- What kind of equipment is used?
 - What video format do you use? Widescreen, high definition etc.
 - How do you ensure that we capture the best lighting and sound?
- What kind of insurance do you have?
- How many videographers will be present and how do you capture the different angles and perspectives?
- Are you familiar with my venue?
- What will you be wearing?
- How will you stay out of sight?
- Satisfaction guaranteed? What if you don't like the final edit of the video?
- Who is shooting and editing the wedding and is there a backup should you fall ill?

Additional Contract Tips

- Name of videographer and assistant including contact information
- Specific arrival times and locations for both ceremony and reception
- Tentative timeline
- Type of videos to be received, format and number of copies
- Event & Shot list
- Satisfaction guarantee

HAIR & MAKEUP

Questions to Ask

- How long have you been doing bridal hair/makeup?
- What kind of education/training have you done?
- Will you be doing my makeup or do you have an assistant/team?
- Will you have multiple brides on my wedding day?
- Can you show me a portfolio of some of the real weddings?
- Do you offer trials?
- How large a bridal party can you accommodate and how long does it take to complete each girl?
- Will you travel to my location and if so, is there an extra charge?
- What space/materials will you be requiring?
- What is your plan if you become ill or some emergency crops up?
- What products do you use? Airbrushing? False eyelashes? Waterproof mascara? Long lasting lipstick or hairspray? Eco/natural products?
- What happens if I (or someone in my wedding party) don't like how I look?

Additional Contract Tips

- What fees are involved? Include any potential additional fees: things such as early call times, transportation, parking or delays will likely be included in the contract.
- Number of people being worked on and by whom
- Satisfaction guaranteed – what if for some reason, you or someone in your wedding party does not like the wedding look.

FLORIST

Questions to Ask

- Can I see a portfolio of a variety of different styles and budgets?
- What is your particular style?
- Where do you source your flowers from?
- Are my favorite flowers in season? If not, what do you recommend?
- Will I be the only wedding you work on that day or weekend?
- Do you work alone or do you have a team?
- Are you familiar with both my ceremony and reception site?
- What recommendations can you give me to maximize my budget?
- Will you be able to make samples for me and if so, is there an additional cost or minimum that I must meet?
- Do you provide advice on linens, chairs and tableware?
- Will you be doing an onsite setup and take down?
- Do you have liability insurance?

Additional Contract Tips

- Services: Arrival and departure time (for both ceremony and reception), as well as arrival and transportation of the floral bouquets and boutonnieres
- Fees: Potential additional cost for breakdown, mocks, overtime and taxes
- Specific details on each bouquet, centerpiece, garland etc. including types of flowers used, number of stems, size, ribbons etc.

Helpful Resources

- [One page flower guide](#)
- [Color wheel](#)
- [In season flowers by region](#)

WEDDING BAND

Questions to Ask

- Band background
 - How long has the band been playing together at weddings and events?
 - Can I arrange to see the group perform live? If not, can they provide a video of recent performances?
 - Will the band members featured in the video/recordings/website be the actual people playing your wedding?
 - Does the group have substitutes available to fill in at the last minute should one of the members fall ill?
 - Does the group play entirely live or do you use tracks?
 - How will members of the band be dressed?
- Requirements
 - How long will you need to set up?
 - What equipment (furniture, lighting, electrical) will you need and will your venue be able to accommodate it?
 - Am I required to provide food and drink for the band?
- Schedule & set list
 - Can I request specific songs?
 - Can I request that they learn a new song?
 - Can I include a “do not play” list?
 - How many breaks do you require, if at all?
 - What is your recommended timeline?

Additional Contract Tips

- What is their fee structure and how many hours of music does that include?
- When is the deposit / balance due?
- How much will you be charged for overtime?

WEDDING DJ

Questions to Ask

- Can I see a video of you working or go watch one of your sets live. (And make sure that the person you see in the demo is the one who will be playing your wedding – you don't want any surprises!)
- What will you be wearing?
- How do you keep the party flowing? (It's important that the DJ knows how to work the crowd and keep the energy high)
- How long will set up take?
- What equipment (furniture, lighting, electrical) is needed and will your venue be able to accommodate it?
- How extensive is your musical library? Does it cover all genres?
- What type of music do you typically play?
- Can I approve the music selection for the different segments of your wedding ceremony?
- Can I submit a play and do not play list?
- Do you allow karaoke? (for some weddings, this is a huge plus, for others, this is on their "do not do" list of requirements)
- How long/often are your breaks?

Additional Contract Tips

- Additional fees
- Specific songs to play or not play

PASTRY CHEF

Questions to Ask

- How do you price your cakes and what factors have the biggest impact on price?
- How many cakes do you schedule for the same day? You want to ensure that the bakery has sufficient bandwidth to accommodate your wedding.
- What the serving ranges are for different tiered cakes? Sometimes they have standard sizes that accommodate a tier of people (i.e. the same cake size feeds 150-200 people), in which case you can order the lowest number of people for a given range especially since you are paying by the slice.
- How long before the wedding will the cake be baked?
- Do you pre-make or freeze any of your cake layers or is everything made fresh from scratch?
- How will the cake be transported and stored?
- Are you familiar with my venue?
- How will the cake be displayed? Do I need to provide a cake stand, prop or tray or a cake cutting knife?
- What happens if the cake falls/breaks/melts during transport and setup? Or if there is an error in the design, flavor or size?
- Are there additional fees I need to be aware of such as shipping, delivery, equipment, setup etc?
- What options do I have for guests with allergies or other dietary restrictions?

Additional Contract Tips

You must make sure you are aware of any restrictions, requirements and/or additional fees, that your venue might have especially if you are working with an outside bakery.

- Time and location of delivery, including storage location
- All materials and services to be provided (ex: cutting knife, stand, tablecloth etc.)
- Detailed description of cake size, flavors, shapes and any additional designs or embellishments.
- Contingencies or errors

TRANSPORTATION

Questions to Ask

- How old is your fleet?
- How many people does each type of vehicle accommodate and for what price (if not available online)?
- How long has your driver been with the company? And make sure they are licensed and insured (obviously).
- Do you have more than one type of vehicle (i.e. shuttles, party buses and limos)? Is there a discount for booking multiple vehicles? Or any extras you can provide?
- Does each driver have a GPS or a map? Will he/she have studied the directions prior to the day of the event?
- What are the minimum hour requirements? Does it make more sense for the cars to wait or to have a pickup/drop off service?
- Do you have any wedding packages?
- Are there any amenities provided in your vehicles?
- A plug for an ipod?
- Champagne/water/ice?
- Air conditioning?
- What will the chauffeur wear?
- Is gratuity included in price?

Additional Contract Tips

- Exact type/model and number of vehicles to be rented
- Detailed schedule: Pickup and drop off times and locations, especially important when the cars are doing loops
 - Be sure you coordinate with your various venues on pickup/drop off and parking protocol, especially if they are waiting for the duration of the ceremony and reception
- Name and contact information of each driver
- Any additional amenities supplied in vehicle

Happy Imagining
Organizing
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Styling
Planning
Searching
Creating &
Shopping