

Wedding Planner

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Inspired by the Association of Bridal Consultants



BREAKING DOWN THE BUDGET...CLOSING THE DEAL...
THE BUSINESS OF TASTINGS...PUTTING PRIDE IN PERSPECTIVE

ASK THE EXPERTS



Frank J. Andonoplas, MWP™
Frank Event Design



Merryl Brown, CWP™
Merryl Brown Events



Carmen Mesa, MWP™
Carmen Mesa
Weddings and Events



Shelby Tuck-Horton, MBC™
Exquisite Expressions
and Events

Q: "HOW DO YOU CONVINCe YOUR CLIENTS TO ONLY USE PROFESSIONAL VENDORS AND NOT FRIENDS AND FAMILY?"

- Alan Katz, *Great Officiants, Long Beach, Calif.*

"Part of my contract requires clients to hire vendors that I recommend. But I do ask them if they wouldn't rather have these friends and family be guests and enjoy the celebration? Then I tell them horror stories about centerpieces falling apart and cakes collapsing. It usually works."

- Frank

"I let clients know upfront that I cannot work with people that are not incorporated, are uninsured, or who do not have a website that I can view and assess. When clients hire me, I let them know that they are hiring my A+ team of vendors to create a top-notch event. If they are looking to cut corners, I am not the right event producer to hire, and I am very clear about this. I tell them that I am only as good as my weakest link, and I make it a point to have no weak links on my team. Be firm about this before you go to contract. I always ask potential bridal clients if they have hired any vendors yet or if they have vendors in mind."

- Merryl

"Friends and family should be guests not service providers, unless they are actually wedding professionals that are licensed and insured. You can explain that venues and vendors will only work with those that are an established and legal business. This is for the protection of the client, service providers, and guests."

- Carmen

"I always suggest using professionals because they are qualified to do the job. The professionals are usually trained and experienced to meet the needs of the couple. Also, they have the required licenses, insurance, and other requirements for doing business."

- Shelby

Q: "WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE APP OR SYSTEM THAT YOU USE IN YOUR BUSINESS AND WHY?"

- Bethel L. Nathan, *Elevate by Bethel, Bonsall, Calif.*

"Pantone for weddings upon occasion, but I rarely use an app for any of my work."

- Frank

"Quickbooks. It makes tracking your business income, expenses, and finances easy, and at tax time, you can print a report to hand over to your accountant."

- Carmen

"I like All Seated for room diagrams. It is easy to learn and training and support is always available."

- Shelby

Q: "IF YOU COULD PLAN A DESTINATION WEDDING ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD, WHERE WOULD IT BE, AND WHY?"

- Carolyn O'Brien, *Creative Celebrations Wedding & Event Planning, Lake Oswego, Ore.*

"I really don't do destination weddings, unless the destination is here in Chicago. My philosophy is to let the pros at the destination handle these. Just like those coming to Chicago who don't live here let me design, plan, and coordinate theirs. My feeling is that a local planner knows the best vendors and the ins and outs of the city. If there is too much unknown, you might set yourself up for failure. I know many do this, and bravo to those who do, but it's just my personal philosophy. Now, to answer your question, I'd love to do something in mountains. Such a different feel of the metropolitan city than I am used to."

- Frank

"I would work at any Aman Resort in the world. These properties are stunning and typically all have great food, service, and the best locations! Destination events are a lot of work and can be very time-consuming and frustrating when you are working long distance with different languages, customs, cultures, work ethics, time zones, etc. With properties of this caliber, one can expect a certain level of service that will reduce some of these issues and make the planning process much smoother."

- Merryl

"Well, for selfish reasons, as these are on my bucket list, Santorini, the Amalfi Coast, and Tuscany."

- Carmen

"I have had the opportunity to plan many destinations in the Caribbean. However, I would love to plan a wedding in Tuscany, because the countryside is beautiful and the ambience of the area is romantic."

- Shelby

Do you have a question? Ask our experts by emailing your question, along with your name, designation, business name, city, and state to editor@weddingplannermag.com. Be sure to put "Ask the Experts" in the subject line.