

So You Want To Be a Wedding Consultant!

An E-book
by
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Introduction

“I want to be a wedding consultant, how do I start?”

If you've ever asked this question, this e-book is meant for you. As a wedding consultant and event planner who has been in the business for five years, and who now owns a successful company based in Portland, Oregon, I receive many emails every day, from people just like you. These emails came from as close as my own home city, and as far away as Virginia.

I wanted to help others, but didn't have the time to respond to each person individually AND run my own business. Answering an email about how to get started in the business could take up to an hour, because of my detail-oriented nature. Including information on how I got started was another hour. Some people actually asked if they could come to my office and watch me at work for an hour or two! The unnerving aspect of being watched aside, I doubted that anyone would want to be a wedding consultant after they watched me answer emails and talk on the phone for hours at a time.

Instead, I decided to write this e-book. Inside these pages, you'll find front-line stories of my personal experiences achieving the skills necessary to be successful in this business, and the tasks I undertook in order to set up shop. Real stories, including mistakes I made, which I hope you'll avoid, and my honest opinion on which educational programs and advertising are the best value for your money. I hope my book gives you a taste of what REAL life is like as a wedding consultant -- not the Hollywood glamour of Jennifer Lopez and her earphone, but the day-to-day business of customer service, follow up, marketing, and vendor relations -- all culminating in a well-run event that exceeds expectations and creates wonderful memories. My goal is to clear up the mystery of what a wedding consultant does, in order to encourage the best, most qualified people to pursue this career.

DISCLAIMER

This e-book is not intended to be a substitute for the educational services provided by trade associations, colleges, and career centers. There are many steps you'll need to take that I only touch on here, such as writing a business plan. I believe that there's no fast track to anything worthwhile, and especially not to a career in wedding consulting. This book is intended to give you the true story of how I got into the business, and to give you a glimpse into what being a wedding consultant is really like.

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Basics

Throughout this e-book I will refer to the term “wedding consultant” to describe what I do. You will also hear other terms, such as “wedding coordinator” and “wedding planner”. Here is a brief overview of how these terms are used in this publication:

Wedding consultant, to me is the most comprehensive and inclusive of the job titles. You may meet with clients twelve months, or only a month, prior to the wedding. You may plan the entire celebration from concept to execution, or only help them with a few parts, such as site selection or budgeting. You may be available for on-site help on the day of the wedding, or not. I like this term the best because of its universality.

Wedding coordinator is often used interchangeably with **wedding consultant**, but to me, this describes one who is actually on site at the wedding, overseeing the festivities to ensure that everything runs smoothly. For example, you could have a day-of wedding coordinator who did not have any consultations or input prior to the wedding.

Wedding planner is a term made famous by the 2001 Jennifer Lopez movie. Personally, I think of a book or organizer that you’d buy at Borders when I hear the phrase “wedding planner”. I don’t use this term to describe myself. I do, however, use the term “event planner” when referring to my work on non-wedding events. Go figure.

Other groups and associations maintain their own definitions of these terms. The book *Weddings As a Business*, published by the Association of Bridal Consultants, has a great discussion on the many tasks wedding consultants and coordinators do, and what you may call yourself. It is up to you to research your area and find out what will work best for you and your market.

p.s. I’m talking about Independent Wedding Consultants!

While there are event planning firms out there, where you could conceivably become an employee and plan weddings, this e-book is targeted towards people who want to know what it’s like to be an *independent wedding consultant*. By this I mean a self-employed sole proprietor, principal in a partnership, or owner of a small, privately held corporation such as an LLC.