

The Value of a GOOD Wedding Coordinator

Jen Haase, "Day of" LOVE

It seems today more and more couples are reaching out for a little help with their wedding day. And why wouldn't they? Hiring a wedding planner used to be considered a luxury but in today's wedding world it is rapidly becoming a necessity. With weddings becoming more unique with personal touches and much more elaborate with intricate details, it's no surprise that wedding coordinators are in high demand. Unfortunately, not all budgets make an allowance for these priceless vendors. Needing help on the big day seems to be more of an afterthought than a starting point, so most couples don't budget for a DOC ("day of" coordinator) in their initial budget. Unfortunately, it is almost always a last minute idea, long after most budgets have been exhausted, leaving little room for this invaluable service.

A good coordinator can be worth their weight in gold! Picture yourself getting ready on your big day. Your hair is being done, your make-up applied and you're being bombarded with phone calls from vendors, and everyone in between, asking you a million questions about where things go and what things are supposed to look like to fit into your vision. Now you're stressed and all you're thinking about is details! Did I do this, did I call that person, is my cake here, are my flowers on time, etc. Not a very fun position to be in on YOUR day. If you leave it to your family to assist you then they will be the ones calling you instead with even more questions since they are not familiar with what they're doing. Now you might think you have this part handled, but then the time comes to go down the aisle. When do you go? When does your family go? Are you lining everyone up personally? You get done with your ceremony... did the cake get where it needed to go? Is the reception room ready for your guests to see? Can't think now, picture time! Where's your family, his family, that aunt that loves to talk? Did someone leave too soon? You get to the reception, where do you go, who ques you in? Dinner is served, can't eat... no one to shoe off the guests from coming to your table and talking to you while you hold that one bite of food on your fork for 30 minuets. When do you dance, when do you cut the cake? Where's the help to go to the bathroom or bustle your dress? Now it's the end of the night, you're exhausted, possibly a little tipsy, and ready to go enjoy your first night as husband and wife. But wait! You need to stay to pick up all your personal belongings, make sure the venue cleanliness is up to par, take extra centerpieces away, pick up gifts and make sure you've called a taxi cab for those in need. This is NOT how you should have to spend your day!

A good "day of" coordinator would never even let you think about one of these details. You'll spend the whole day relaxed and ready to concentrate on the emotions this day has to offer. You can breathe a sigh of relief. So can your groom, your mom, his mom, and all of the rest of the family. Everyone knows a professional has it under control.

This is just a small example of what a professional coordinator can do to help. Along with being a person of contact, directing vendors, queing in bridal party members, cleaning, directing guests, and assisting your vendors; a great DOC will also put out all the little fires that come up in a day, fires you'll never even know about. They'll know exactly what to do in any situation and will remain calm and composed throughout the day.

While there are many things a bride can cut costs on, a good DOC should not be one of them. While some pricier coordinators might charge more for "day of" coordinating since they don't make as much as they do on a full planning wedding, look for a coordinator that is flexible, willing to work with you, and has suggestions on where to cut unnecessary costs. Beware though; it's also a good idea to be wary of inexperienced coordinators. The wedding industry is a great one to be a part of, but a lack of experience can be a huge downfall in the way a wedding day runs. If bargain shopping for a DOC you might run into many that "planned their own wedding and now want to get into the profession". They often offer their services for little to no money in order to "get their foot in the door". The only problem with this is the day of their wedding they were busy being a bride! They have no idea what went on behind the scenes and how to handle the details and problems that can arise; they're often inexperienced and unprepared. Instead look for experience! Make sure the coordinators you speak with have handled multiple weddings; they know how to put out those little fires, have helpful tips on where to save money, and make you feel comfortable and at ease knowing everything's going to be perfect.

Below you can see what real former and future brides had to say on the subject.

- "I consider myself a very organized person and thought I had thought of every single detail of my wedding. I was not planning on hiring a wedding coordinator since I had everything already planned. I was talking to a friend who recently got married and she recommended a "day of" coordinator to make sure the day went smoothly. I found "Day of" LOVE online and met with Jen Haase. I only wanted her for the rehearsal, the ceremony and the beginning of the reception. I was convinced that once all reception activities were over (first dance, garter toss, etc) I could handle everything from there. After speaking with Jen she asked me how the presents were going to get from the reception site to the hotel, who was going to stay to help the vendors pick up everything and what would happen with the end of the night site check. I quickly realized I needed her the whole night. She impressed me so much with her organization, planning and ideas. She had ideas that I would have never thought of, and now I cannot imagine my wedding without them. Jen is worth every penny! I feel so bad for anyone who does not have her, or someone like her, participate in their day. I want to enjoy my first moments as Mrs. Crafton and I know with Jens help I'll be able to just that!!"

-Tara Clark 7/10/2010

-“Jen was my day of coordinator and I don't know what I would have done without her! I had a lot of DIY elements to my wedding and the ceremony and reception were in 2 separate venues. The day of my wedding I was able to relax knowing that Jen had everything under control. She is prompt, thinks ahead, organized, calm, and knows how to do her job. She would think of things that I needed to consider that I would totally have forgotten to do without her. Even though I only hired her for the day of the wedding, she did quite a bit for me the entire week before the wedding. I would highly recommend hiring a coordinator to take the load off because no matter how much you think you will have things under control, there's always something you have missed. That's where Jen and other “docs” like her come in!”

-*Cherie Chu 5/2/2009*

Not only does hiring a wedding coordinator benefit the bride, the groom, and their families, but they can also be a huge blessing to other vendors. A lot can go wrong with so much on the line and other vendors love having some extra help. From assisting photographers to round up family members for photos and politely reminding them of timing, to helping out DJ's so they're not having to leave their booth to track down the bride and groom for events throughout the night; a good DOC will be your vendors' best friend. Below you'll see some personal quotes from industry professionals with their opinions on what a well-experienced wedding coordinator can do for a wedding day.

-“As a DJ, a wedding coordinator helps with all of the details of the wedding. They make our job SO much easier on the day-of. In the past, “Day of” LOVE, and other wedding coordinators, have helped with putting together the itinerary for the evening; notifying me of the schedule and making sure all parts of the ceremony and reception are executed to exception. Being engaged myself, I have learned that it is an absolute necessity to have a wedding coordinator. They take so much stress off, and I feel absolutely confident that there will be no problems whatsoever on the day of the wedding. I have friends who attempted to plan out their wedding on their own, only to fail or completely overload themselves into utter confusion and panic. That is why, as a DJ and as a fiancée, I recommend wedding coordinators to all of my friends and clients.” -Troy Cook *TNT Mobile DJ* www.tntmobiLEDJ.com

-“I think having a coordinator can make a really big difference in a wedding. I have performed at some weddings where problems arose that a coordinator would have foreseen and been able to avoid simply from experience. One such problem was seating families with young children near the speakers and drum kit of a band – way too loud. Coordinators usually know the locations well and know how to get groups to move without having everyone get held up.

Coordinators also help ensure that the ceremony runs well and can minimize tardiness of groomsmen and bridesmaids as well as the groom and bride themselves. I find that I am much more comfortable and know what is happening better while I am playing when a coordinator is involved, and find it uncomfortable without a coordinator because I do not know when the procession will begin or what changes need to happen while transitioning from parts of the procession. I also think that my work leaves a stronger, more positive impression on wedding guests when a coordinator is involved because it has been considered in the planning process by an experienced coordinator for best location, for the best sound, shade and enjoyment of the guests.

Every time I receive a call or email from a bride or groom, I ask if they are having a coordinator. If they are not planning to have one, I always gently suggest that they carefully consider having one. It is a very worthwhile investment.”

- Anthony Garcia *Flamenco Guitarist* www.agarciauitar.com

-“From a caterer's perspective, having a coordinator can be one of the most invaluable assets to a successful wedding day. No matter how much planning is done ahead of time, some detail is sure to change the day of the event and it's great to have someone there to make sure that the kitchen knows exactly when everyone will be sitting down to eat, if there are any special meals that they end up in front of the right guest, and to make sure that the other vendors get their meals. While our company often handles the table set up it's great to have someone on-site to work with. A coordinator has usually had more contact with the bride and is more familiar with the venue so they can make sure everything is set up exactly the way it should be. I have seen many couples sit through an entire meal and not have time to eat a single bite. A coordinator can help run interference so you have time to eat, or at the very least make sure to save a meal for later. I have also seen many an exhausted bride at the end of the night trying to figure out which family member is taking what presents where, who is going to freeze the cake topper and what happened to the guest book. The small cost of a "doc" seems well worth saving you from the stress and headaches associated with a very busy day.”- Andrew Halvorsen *ChileCo Catering*

To wrap things up; plan ahead for hiring at least a “day of” coordinator for help with your big day. Don't take a chance and get to the end of a year (or more) worth of hard work and planning only to be disappointed that you're wedding was nothing but stress. Realize that a “day of” coordinator could be one of the most important vendors you will hire for your special day and then you can just breathe.