

How To Plan Your Wedding Over Your

Lunch Breaks



Step-by-step tips and checklists designed by experts to help you get the most out of your precious wedding planning time

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Photos by JBe Photography

Welcome

*Congratulations on your engagement!
You are embarking on such a fun
time in your life and your wedding
is only the start.*

Weddings are a celebration of you and your fiancé starting your life together, but the planning part can be a bit overwhelming. Unless you are an event planner for your day job, it may be the largest event you will ever plan in your life.

But don't let that scare you, having a plan laid out to pull off your awesomely amazing wedding is an invaluable step to not only plan your wedding, but reduce your stress and let you have fun with your wedding planning.

Covered in the following pages are tips to help you plan your wedding. Each step is listed in the order you should consider booking them.

Tackling each step and vendor booking individually allows for you to plan your wedding in smaller chunks of time, say over various lunch breaks.

Your wedding is going to be awesome. Good luck and happy planning!

Angela Quigley

Married In Milwaukee | marriedinmilwaukee.com

Angela Quigley is co-owner of Married In Milwaukee, a company dedicated to providing engaged couples the information they need to plan their awesome Milwaukee wedding. We help connect couples and vendors through our website, www.MarriedInMilwaukee.com, Bridal Networking Nights, Bridal Consults, and our extensive connections to the wedding industry.



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Weddings are among the most beautiful (yet stressful) events that you will ever plan. You have never done this before, so why not enlist the help of someone who has?

- ❑ **Make the Call:** Make your first wedding phone call be to a wedding planner. You are newly engaged, it is your responsibility to relax and enjoy! It does go very fast and before you know it, it is over!
- ❑ **Create and Finish your Guest List:** The people that will be part of your big day truly make it what it is! Knowing how many guests you are going to invite will help with venue selection, budget planning and basically everything else moving forward.
- ❑ **Establish a Budget:** Who's paying for the wedding? How much will you actually need? How much should you save? Plan on going over budget, keep track of spending, explore hidden costs and extras like tips, service charges, etc. But most of all, establish what is most important to you and work backwards from there.
- ❑ **Select Your Venue:** Now that you know how many people you are inviting, you know which venues can accommodate you. Secure the church you want for the ceremony first, then coordinate the date with the reception venue. Catering styles and time of your ceremony are all affected by your venue. Your venue may also have a preferred vendor list (photographers, floral, catering, music, boutiques, rental companies, stationary, dessert and even video) that they will share with you to make your shopping easier.
- ❑ **Work on Your Vows:** Writing your own vows will show the guests at your wedding how much your marriage means to the both of you and will allow you time to reflect on your relationship. Your vows will bring you together as husband and wife, ending your lives as single people.

Janelle Meyer-Brown

evenement | evenementplanning.com

Janelle Meyer-Brown opened evenement planning in 2011, an event planning, design consulting and rental company. Janelle has had a career spanning nearly 20 years, orchestrating, designing and planning more than 400 weddings. She has acquired an incredible array of expertise while managing events as large as 6,000 people. Through much attention to detail, Janelle and her team promise a flawless and memorable wedding day!



The venue you select for your wedding sets the tone for the big day. Whether you are looking for a grand ballroom or an intimate retreat, make booking a venue the first step on your journey.

- ❑ **Research:** Use websites and magazines from your area to research area venues. Also, ask friends where they had their receptions and ask for good recommendations. Word of mouth is a great way to find the perfect venue, so talk to your co-workers!
- ❑ **Check Them Out:** Set up appointments for each venue one day a week on your lunch break, and let them know you are on your lunch break to speed things along!
- ❑ **Ask Questions:** Is there heat/air? How many bathrooms? Can I get in early to set up? Is set up included in the rental? Determine if you will need to rent tables, chairs, etc. It is so important to ask directly who your contact person would be for day-of coordination. These people have a big impact on your day, so meet them in person! Make sure you double check capacities and ask what “Plan B” is if your ceremony is outside. Determine if you will need to rent a tent or pay extra to have your ceremony chairs moved.
- ❑ **Scout the Locations:** Walk around the neighborhood of the venues that you like. Look for good photo opportunities. Take pictures. Have a picnic nearby!
- ❑ **Choose Your Spot:** Make a decision on your venue! You should do this at least 12-18 months in advance to make sure you get your perfect venue. Remember, most venues can accommodate only one bride and groom a day, and Saturdays always go first!

Tina Sanfilippo

Villa Filomena | villafilomena.com

Tina has been an event planner for almost seven years and has done more than 200 weddings. She runs a family-owned business for her parents and works with her mom, Janice. The Villa Filomena, located in downtown Milwaukee, is a spectacular Italian Villa and is Milwaukee's premiere event destination. They take pride in making your wedding (whether grand or intimate) nothing short of unforgettable.



It can seem so overwhelming. Magazine photography checklists? Pinterest? Your friends and family's advice? Here's how to book your dream photographer without breaking a sweat.

- ❑ **Search:** Start with recommendations from friends and maybe a quick Google search with keywords that represent your wedding style (ie: “non-traditional” or “unique” or “romantic,” or “boutique” + “photographer” + your city). Make a short list from there of those websites that speak to you through imagery and words. Send out a quick email to each to set up appointments to meet in person.
- ❑ **Make Formals List:** Discuss the formals process with your photographer to make sure this is in line with their process. Then, create your list so you know precisely what groups of family should be photographed together. Most of the time, it should be virtually as simple as:
 - Both of you with first side's parents
 - Add siblings (and significant others and children)
 - Both of you with first side's grandparents
 - Both of you with first side's siblings
 - Both of you with both sets of parents
 - Repeat for the other side
- ❑ **Choose Your Locations:** Assume your photographer needs a minimum of 30 minutes for photos at each location (add in extra time for traffic!). Think about your style and the vibe of your wedding. Waterfront? Urban? Romantic floral/park? Don't forget to plan a few backup indoor locations in case it's rainy. Your photographer probably already has a list of these for your city!
- ❑ **Create a Flexible Timeline:** Talk to your photographer about this! They've photographed many weddings in your city before and will be able to advise you on exactly how long it will take for your hair and makeup, receiving line, and that pesky late afternoon traffic.
- ❑ **Trust Your Photographer:** It's crucial you hire a photographer whose work you love and whom you trust. The style (candid, moment-based, fashion forward, etc.) should have already been established in your meeting and seeing their work. Discuss any thoughts or concerns you have and make sure you're on the same page about everything, then let go and let them do their job. It's what they are there for!

Jennifer Brindley

JBe Photography | jbe-photography.com

I am a photographer. I love my job, and I love my clients. It is my passion to provide you with gorgeous images, and to capture you with raw honesty, total attention and a laid back attitude. People with quirky and unique styles speak to me. I'm a gigantic nerd, and I usually wear gigantic glasses. When it comes to weddings, I'm in love with DIY details, homespun and organic elements, and creative, personal touches.



Food

JBe Photography

From tasty appetizers to the delectable main course, the food you serve at your wedding will no doubt have your guests talking. We're here to help you make sure they'll be saying good things!

- ❑ **Strategize:** Make a list of favorite local restaurants that you and your fiancé frequent. Make a list of meals you have had at prior weddings and what you liked/didn't like about them.
- ❑ **Ask Around:** Talk to your wedding party and immediate family members to determine if any of them have special dietary restrictions. There are an abundance of great menu items now that are gluten-free, vegetarian, etc. Never hesitate to ask your caterer about this during your initial meeting. We're here to help!
- ❑ **Pin It:** Create a Pinterest page (or other tracking mechanism like an Excel spreadsheet) to help keep track of and organize everything as it pertains to each aspect of your wedding.
- ❑ **Mind Your Budget:** Decide on a total budget for food and beverage for your event. By having a set budget by the time you meet with your caterer, it will help them create a menu that both exceeds your expectations and stays within your budget. Remember to account for any rentals you might need as part of your cost for food and beverage. This includes (but is not limited to) tables, chairs, flatware, linens, and banquet tables. Your venue may have some of these items available for you to use so make sure to check with them first before ordering anything from a rental company.
- ❑ **Do Your Homework:** The last (and perhaps most important) step is to ask your caterer and bartender if they are fully insured and licensed. The same goes for wedding venues and bar service. Be sure to ask if it's legal to serve alcohol at their venue, if they have a liquor license, and if there are any on-site restrictions that any wedding vendors would need to be aware of.

Dan Nowak

Tall Guy and a Grill | tallguyandagrill.com

Dan Nowak is the Owner and Founder of Tall Guy and a Grill Catering, which has been in operation since 2009. Dan has been in the food/beverage industry since 2002 and has extensive industry experience. At Tall Guy, we recognize the importance of quality ingredients that are also locally sourced. Our clients expect us to deliver great-tasting, family-style meals and want to see those same, delicious comfort foods available at their local grocer.



Music is the lifeblood of any amazing wedding reception, and the person spinning the tunes has a lot to do with how the evening goes. Here's how to find the right emcee for your big night.

- ❑ **Ask Around:** Consult with family and friends who were married in the last few years. Ask them about their experience with their DJ. Both good and bad reviews will help you narrow your search. Ask some of the other vendors you have already hired whom they would recommend.
- ❑ **Contact Your Favorites:** Reach out to the companies you have on your list via email. Create a series of questions that will help you eliminate some of the companies. For example: Cost, date availability, hours of service, professional experience, can you customize a playlist, do they emcee the night, etc.
- ❑ **Meet The Prospects:** Set up a meeting with the 2-3 leading candidates. Ask all of the questions you need until you feel comfortable moving ahead. Once you know who you want to go with, get the contract signed. Good DJs fill up fast!
- ❑ **Make Your Playlist:** Choose your special songs: First dance, father/daughter, mother/son, etc. Do you want a formal introduction of the wedding party/grand march? If so, what song?
- ❑ **Plan the Night:** Who is giving speeches and when will they? Do you want to cut the cake? If so how do you envision that happening? What is the general feel you would like during cocktail, dinner, and dancing? Schedule the general timeline you would like from beginning to end of the night in 15-minute increments!

Tyler Curran

Milwaukee Airwaves | milwaukeeairwaves.com

In today's times, professionalism and customization are paramount. When we strive to make your event memorable, getting to know your needs and preferences comes first. We give you an experience through music, and meeting with your DJ to discuss these details will ensure you get the experience you deserve. Whatever your event may be, Milwaukee Airwaves will bring the party out of the air and into reality.

Dress



Whether you're looking for classical elegance or modern chic, here's how to make finding your dream dress a breeze. Going to the bathroom once it's on... well that's another story.

- ❑ **Find Your Style:** What are you looking for? Create a Pinterest board of what you are drawn to. This is a great tool to get a bearing on the latest trends.
- ❑ **Prioritize:** Determine what is most important to you: weight of the dress, color, price point? Most brides today wear ivory, but watch out because the champagne trend is becoming popular. Stores generally have their price ranges posted online, so shop where you know you won't be extending your limits.
- ❑ **Choose Your Fabric:** Research fabrics to find out what you like and don't like. If you want lightweight and airy, you will love an organza or chiffon material. If structure and fit are important, a satin or a Mikado are a great fabric. Lace is very popular right now, but do you love it or hate it? Have you found the right lace?
- ❑ **Select Your Boutique:** Research the boutique you are going to shop at. Take a look at their collections and find out if there is anything specific you want to try on. Most websites for stores have a lookbook with everything they have in the store. This is a great reference and place to start!
- ❑ **Schedule Your Appointment:** Who will be the most crucial opinions to have with you at your appointments? It's always best to keep your guest list small for shopping, so keep the ones who matter most! We recommend shopping with 3-4 people. Think of your accessories. Do you want a veil? Do you want a sash? How about a hair piece? If so, you should try some on while trying on dresses.

Sarah Vieth

Miss Ruby Boutique | missrubyboutique.com

Miss Ruby is owned by Erin and Pauline, a mother/daughter team celebrating 6 years in business. At Miss Ruby, simple luxury, pure design, clean lines and feminine details are our focus. Our bridal gowns and bridesmaid dresses are not overly embellished and are perfect for brides and bridal parties wanting to channel the classic elegance of Grace Kelly, Jackie O and Audrey Hepburn for their elegant, intimate, outdoor or destination weddings.



Even if you plan the most incredible wedding in history, no one will show up if they don't know about it. It's time to get the word out with these simple steps to creating stunning stationery.

- ❑ **Keep Your Guest List Updated:** Spend a couple of minutes every day going over your guest list spreadsheet updating names and addresses. Create a separate column for each line of your addresses (use another column for children or extra guests). Write out all abbreviations including directionals, streets and states, (i.e. North, South, Avenue, Street, Apartment, Wisconsin, Illinois, etc.)
- ❑ **Consult:** Book your consultations with one or more stationers. When booking online or calling, have your calendar handy to coordinate dates and times that are open to both.
- ❑ **List Your Needs:** Make a list of items you will want or need for the wedding planning such as save the date cards/postcards, wedding invitations and day of wedding items such as programs, seating charts, escort cards, menu cards, favor boxes, signage for the reception hall, thank you notes, etc.
- ❑ **Get The Details:** Collect important information that your stationer will need. Contact venues for details. For example your venue may need entree details/specifications for escort cards, hotels may have specific information for room blocks and reservations/directions, your officiant and family members on both sides may have wording considerations for the invite or program, etc.
- ❑ **Proofread:** Once you get your proofs, have 2-3 co-workers or friends not involved in the wedding process review to check for grammar, punctuation or information you may have missed. Small details are often overlooked by those involved in the planning process!

Denise Merkel

Coqui Design | coquidesign.com

Coqui is a mother/daughter-owned stationery and gift boutique in Brookfield, WI. What sets Coqui Design apart from other stationers is the individual time they spend getting to know a couples' personality and discovering the perfect invitation suite. Elizabeth and Denise make the process seem easy and give each couple the personal attention their invitations deserve.



If a picture is worth a thousand words, a gorgeous video of the day you said “I do” is worth a million. Follow these tips and you’ll be reliving your big day in HD for the rest of your lives.

- ❑ **Watch Videos:** Watch multiple films from different companies. Even though two films from two different people might look ‘similar,’ each person is going to have their own style and creativity. Most wedding films are 3-4 minutes, so they are short and fun to watch. You could watch multiple films over your lunch break to become familiar with the cinematographers style and vision. Create a list of what you liked about the 2-3 films from the company you choose so they know what aspects were appealing to you.
- ❑ **Compile Information:** Make a list of the most important people in your wedding (family members, bridesmaids, groomsmen, etc.), their cell numbers and the addresses/contact info for the ceremony and reception locations. This will help the cinematographer plan how to shoot and how to edit your final film. Be open, honest and willing to share the details of your wedding. Some people leave out whole events or important parts that are a surprise to us during the wedding. This can be avoided with proper planning and open communication.
- ❑ **Think Big Picture:** Determine if you would like to incorporate other films. Not only do we provide wedding films, but we also offer video invitations, thanks yous, love stories, engagement films, etc. So you can be very creative and have a few films that go together throughout the engagement/wedding process.
- ❑ **Make a New Friend:** Meet, talk or Skype with your cinematographer and make sure you get along before you book them. They will be with you the whole day and through some very personal and emotional times. You need to be comfortable with them!
- ❑ **Prepare Your Party:** Mentally prepare yourself (and the people who will be around) for the fact that you’ll have cameras around. Most likely you’ve never been married, along with the fact you’ve never had someone filming you all day before. Tell everyone what to expect so the videographer showing up isn’t a surprise to your family and friends.

Craig Sikora

Champagne Studios | champagne-studios.com

Champagne Studios photography, film and design is a creative media studio here to tell the story of your day the way you will always want to remember it. Our process begins with a toast, to you, to celebrate the beginning of our creative relationship! By combining story-telling photography, cinematography and graphic design, our images and films convey the feeling, emotions and spirit that make your special day, exclusive to you.



Flowers

JBe Photography

From the bridal bouquet to the vibrant centerpieces, your beautiful floral arrangements will have all of your guests stopping to smell the roses... or the hydrangeas!

- ❑ **Select Your Colors:** Having a hard time picking your wedding colors? Not sure what flower colors will look best with your bridesmaid dresses? Run to your nearest hardware store and pick up a few paint color swatches. This will give you a mini inspirational color palette to work off of.
- ❑ **Construct Your Timeline:** Just like a busy bride on her wedding day running from her hair appointment to making it on time to her wedding, flowers need a schedule, too! When should the flowers be picked up or delivered? Who will pin on the flowers? Who will set up the ceremony and reception? Who will be responsible to clean up all the centerpieces at the end of the night? Write a timeline of when and where you will need your flowers. Check with your florist to see how they can accommodate and customize where you will need them.
- ❑ **Pin It:** Pinterest is a great tool for your florist. It is a way to gather pictures that inspire you. Don't get hung up on types of flowers, just "pin" color combinations and textures that you love. Your florist will be able to get a feel of your taste after just a few of your pictures and can guide you on what types of flowers will be in season.
- ❑ **Compile Vendor Info:** Create a list of all of your vendors with contact name and phone numbers on one sheet and make lots of copies. This information is great to pass on to all your vendors. They are all connected in some way, like the cake might need to have flowers placed on it, the DJ might need to have a contact at your venue or your photographer might need to plan their route from hotel to church.
- ❑ **Make a List:** Jot down all the people who will need flowers, everyone from mother of the bride to your readers. This will make sure you do not forget anyone during your floral consultation. Think about your ceremony site. Where will you need flowers? At the reception, how many people will be sitting at each table? Have an idea how many tables will you need centerpieces for.

Melissa Maas

Bank of Memories & Flowers | bankofflowers.net

Owner and operator Melissa Maas grew up with a love for flowers. At age 24, she made her dreams a reality and bought Bank of Memories & Flowers, a unique and chic flower shop specializing in magnificent fresh flowers. Our talented florist can design the most current trends to traditional classic elegance. We believe in working with our clients to give them creative personalized attention to design quality, elegant flowers for any occasion.



Planning a wedding can be overwhelming, but choosing your wedding desserts is the sweetest part. You've never had a better excuse to treat yourself, so enjoy the process!

- ❑ **Traditional or Trendy:** Decide if your vision of the perfect wedding desserts includes a traditional tiered cake, wedding cupcake display, dessert buffet, or something in between. Making that decision will help narrow your choices and focus your budget.
- ❑ **Don't Forget the Groom:** Weddings are often more about the bride, so honor your man with a special groom's cake that reflects his interests. Groom's cakes are usually richer than wedding cakes (think chocolate mousse and ganache) and can be decorated according to his favorite sport or hobby.
- ❑ **Consider Your Colors:** Wedding desserts should express your personality as a couple and complement the overall design of your big day. Keep desserts in mind when choosing wedding colors, as dark or brightly colored frosting can stain everyone's teeth in your wedding photos.
- ❑ **Keep Cost In Mind:** If cost is key, wedding cupcakes usually eliminate the cake cutting fee charged by your caterer. For tiered cakes, buttercream frosting tastes better and costs less than fondant. The simpler the design, the lower the cost. Consider using your wedding cupcakes or gourmet layer cakes as centerpieces on each dining table. You'll save money on flowers, lower serving costs, and eliminate lines at the dessert table!
- ❑ **Get a Taste:** Use your lunch break to pop in and try a couple treats from local bakeries. Ask if they bake fresh from scratch. If you like what you see, schedule a wedding consultation. Make sure to bring photos of designs you like, fabric swatches, and budget info. Once you've chosen a baker, keep a copy of their contract, quote, and deposit receipts. If you've booked early, e-mail your baker every few months, as some bakeries have high staffing turnover. Confirm your guest count, flavors, design choices, and delivery timing a month before, and again the last business day before your wedding.

Erica Elia

Classy Girl Cupcakes | classygirlcupcakes.com

Erica Elia baked her own wedding cupcakes in 2009, which she doesn't recommend if you want your sanity intact on your wedding day! But everyone loved them, and Erica saw a business opportunity. She started a cupcake catering company that quickly grew. She left her career as an attorney in 2010 to open Classy Girl Cupcakes in downtown Milwaukee, which caters cakes and cupcakes to hundreds of weddings every year.



With a little creativity, your wedding programs are capable of so much more than simply listing the day's itinerary. And best of all, they're fun and easy to create!

- ❑ **Decide What You Want:** What's your wedding style: vintage, modern, elegant, offbeat? Do you just want your itinerary listed, or would you like more of a “wow” factor solution? Spend a lunch hour scouring Pinterest for amazingly unique ideas that you may not have thought of, and be sure to read customer reviews of your favorites!
- ❑ **Finalize Your Details:** Because your programs will contain a lot of “day-of” information, it's important that you have everything finalized before creating them. This includes dates, times, number of guests, ceremony/reception location addresses, readings, etc. Be sure to discuss the contents of your program with any key people, including your officiant, family, wedding party, etc.
- ❑ **Collect Photos:** You will probably spend a lot of time and energy getting beautiful engagement photos taken. Why not find a program solution that will properly showcase your stunning photos? Be sure to contact your photographer to obtain hi-resolution versions of the photos you want to use. Another fun option is to dig through old photos from your family, childhood and college years and incorporate those into your programs. Your guests will absolutely love the trip down memory lane!
- ❑ **Write Copy:** Your programs are a great opportunity to let your guests know all about the wedding party, your love story and how grateful you are to have them there. Take a little time during your lunch break to reflect on these things and jot down some thoughts. That way you'll be prepared when it comes time to write your program copy.
- ❑ **Create Your Programs:** Once you've found your dream programs and collected all of your thoughts and photos, it's time to get creating! Most reputable businesses will let you see a digital proof before you pay for anything, so review it carefully. Be sure the solution you've found is simple to use and straightforward, and include your fiancé in the process. It's a great way to get him involved in the planning!

Kevin Kosterman

The Album Factory | thealbumfactory.com

As a graphic designer, Kevin Kosterman was tasked by his bride-to-be to create stunning, totally unique programs for their wedding. He ended up creating full-size magazines that told the couple's story, introduced the wedding party and showcased their engagement photos. Their guests went wild for the idea and a business was born. The Album Factory lets you create your own work of art that will have your guests talking for years to come!



Beauty

JBe Photography

You've taken care of every last detail in planning your immaculate wedding. Don't you think it's time to take care of yourself? Follow these tips to add those final elements of elegance (and pampering)!

- ❑ **Establish Your Bridal Style:** This is easily the best place to start. Do you consider yourself glamorous, bohemian, classic, vintage, etc?
- ❑ **Create a Vision Board:** Use Pinterest or magazine cut-outs to narrow down your favorite bridal hairstyles and makeup. Keep in mind that sometimes knowing what you don't want can help your stylist just as much as what you do want.
- ❑ **Do Your Homework:** Research the best salon and stylist for you and your wedding party. The internet can be very handy in this process, but an amazing referral can be everything, too. Many salons offer wedding packages and some will also travel to you!
- ❑ **Try Before You Buy:** Schedule your hair and makeup trial. Remember to be open-minded. Your stylist is experienced and may be able to suggest something that looks even better than your picture!
- ❑ **Pamper Yourself:** Give your skin, nails and hair a little TLC. Use a lunch hour here and there to go get a facial, manicure or a haircut. Being regular with all of these will make you feel great and get you camera-ready for your big day!

Kaley Wittnik

Hair & Body Solutions | hairandbodysolutions.com

Kaley Wittnik currently works at Hair & Body Solutions in New Berlin, WI and has been a hair and makeup artist in the Milwaukee area since 2012. Her editorial experience and love for designing accessories makes her a creative and passionate bridal stylist.