

# Spell out service requirements in contract



Connie and Curtis Harper show off their wedding rings.

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the event planning industry, I've met brides who invariably make bad decisions when venturing out into the unfamiliar territory that we call "the wedding industry" without a strong knowledge base of vendors and their services.

What happens when the daunting bride decides to take the plunge on her own? Where should she start? What are major considerations? Again, having a good preliminary list of prospective service providers will be essential. Asking key questions of each professional should help the bride through her process of eliminating the "not so qualified" vendor.

## The Videographer

- \* Review the work of qualified vendors, looking for visual elements that appeal to you
- \* Check with professional associations, such as the Wedding & Event Videographers Association
- \* Clarify all specifics surrounding pricing and delivery times
- \* Make sure the person that you interview will be the one who will service your wedding

## The Caterer

- \* Discuss everything from hors d'oeuvres to desserts
- \* Ask the caterer for recommendations on meal options
- \* Require a tasting of the food items that you are considering for your meal
- \* Require your caterer to visit your reception site
- \* Reach an agreement on the number of staff who will service your reception
- \* Ask about the cancellation policy and deadline requirements for confirming your final count of expected guests

## The Photographer

- \* Review photo albums of prospective photographers for work quality
- \* Share your vision and style for your wedding photographs
- \* Review photo packages for price options-portraits and wedding day pictures are sometimes priced separately
- \* Seasoned photographers will seek a list of important shots that you want on your wedding day
- \* Set timeline for upfront engagement pictures, bridal portrait and other special photo sittings

## The Florist

- \* Visit your florist armed with samples of dress colors and magazine pictures
- \* Tell the florist about flowers that hold special meaning for you and your fiancé
- \* Make sure your flower selections make economic sense-seasonal flower are usually the most affordable
- \* Time of day and time of year will influence your floral selections
- \* Determine whether you will use fresh or silk flowers for your ceremony
- \* Outline a plan for all floral requirements-wedding party, ceremony and reception decorations

## The Cake Baker

- \* Review picture samples of the baker's work
- \* Is the baker experienced at creating custom-designed cakes

- \* How soon before the wedding day is the cake baked
- \* Discuss cake fillings, flavors and frosting options
- \* Ask for cake samples
- \* Will the cake baker set up your cake table and cake on your wedding day
- \* Will the baker stay and cut your cake, if needed
- \* What is the per person cost for the cake

Spelling out all service requirements in a professional contract is an essential step and represent the only real leverage that you possess as a client or customer. Equally important will be the task of checking references provided by each wedding professional.

Approaching each professional with caution and objectivity will increase your chances of finding seasoned and qualified professionals. Sound professionals will usually have one goal-to service you 'til it hurts.

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