

Duty Free

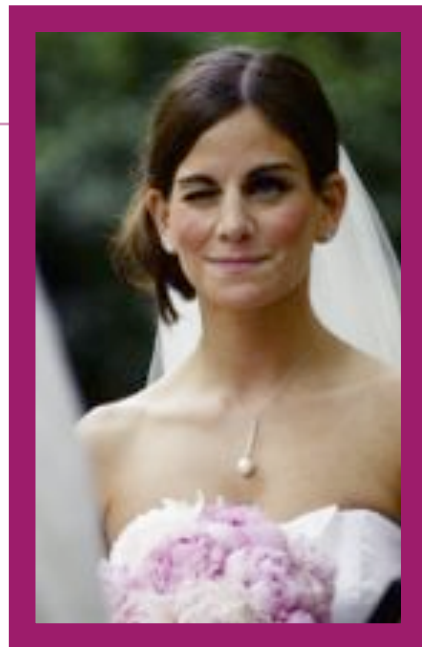
BY MARY DANN-MCNAMEE,

MARY DANN WEDDING & PARTY COORDINATORS

Just because you have a beautiful hotel, country club or home chosen for your wedding doesn't mean that the venue catering manager or the caterer's event coordinator will be a professional wedding planner. A catering manager is employed by the venue and primarily specializes in food and beverage sales for the venue. They are usually there on your wedding day, but often depart after the first course is served. A wedding planner is your personal consultant that interfaces with all aspects of the planning process and, without hesitation, will mediate, negotiate and co-create with you and for you. Bottom line: you employ the wedding planner and you do not employ the catering manager. Knowing who will provide you with each of these services throughout the planning process will ensure no last minute surprises, and keep you "duty free."

TYPICAL CATERING MANAGER/ COORDINATOR DUTIES

- Provide a personalized tour of the venue
- Recommend special event professionals to provide wedding coordination, music, flowers, photography, invitations and more
- Act as a menu consultant for all food and beverage selections
- Detail your banquet event order or catering contract, outlining all of your event specifics, and ensure that it is communicated flawlessly to the operational team of the venue
- Create an estimate of charges outlining your financial commitments to the venue
- Create a floor plan of your function space in order for you to provide seating arrangements
- Arrange and attend your menu tasting
- Oversee the ceremony and reception room(s) set up, food preparation and other venue operations
- Act as the on-site liaison between your wedding planner and venue operations staff
- Ensure a seamless transition to the venue's banquet captain once the grand entrance has occurred (typically this is when the catering manager leaves the reception)
- Review your banquet checks for accuracy, prior to the completion of the final bill



JENNIFER S. RAU

TYPICAL WEDDING PLANNER/COORDINATOR DUTIES

- Assist with etiquette and protocol for invitations, family matters, ceremony and toasts
- Create a comprehensive time line
- Organize and coordinate your ceremony rehearsal
- Remind the bridal party of all pertinent "call times" and "don't forgets" on the wedding day
- Confirm "call times" and details with all vendors
- Be available to have conversations in the evenings and weekends, long after your catering manager has gone home
- Act as the liaison between your family, bridal party and other vendors to create a seamless operation
- Deliver and arrange ceremony programs, escort cards, place cards, favors and any personal items
- Coordinate your actual ceremony (line up the bridal party, assist you with your gown)
- Coordinate your reception (grand entrance, first dance, toasts and cake cutting, etc.)
- Collect any personal items you may have brought at the conclusion of the reception
- Review your banquet check for accuracy
- Establish room blocks at various hotels
- Create a vendor payment schedule
- Review your catering contracts to ensure all of your requests are communicated to the catering manager
- Give a wide variety of professional referrals that fit with every kind of budget and taste