

## EVENT PLANNING

# The Ways a Catering Manager and Wedding Planner Differ

You may think that because you have a beautiful hotel, country club, or home in place as your venue that the catering manager, catering company, or event coordinator will be a professional wedding planner. This fallacy can be a major detriment to your wedding day. 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, however, is a personal consultant who is present in all aspects of the planning process, and will without hesitation mediate, negotiate, and co-create either with you or on your behalf. The bottom-line is: You employ the planner and you don't employ the catering manager. Knowing the specific services the two roles provide – and having accurate expectations of each – will help ensure there are no last-minute surprises on your wedding day.

### Your Catering Manager/Coordinator (usually) will:

- Provide a personalized tour of the venue
- Recommend special-event professionals to provide wedding planning, entertainment, floral decor, photography and invitations
- Act as a menu consultant for all food and beverage selections
- Detail your banquet event order/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
- 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

### Your Wedding Planner/Consultant (usually) will:

- Assist with etiquette and protocol for invitations, family matters, ceremony, and toasts



- Create a comprehensive timeline for your rehearsal and wedding day, including the ceremony and reception
- Work with you to organize and coordinate your ceremony rehearsal
- Remind bridal party of all pertinent call times and “don't forgets” on the wedding day
- Confirm call times and details with all vendors several days prior to the wedding day
- Be available to have conversations in the evenings and weekends
- Act as the liaison between your family, bridal party, band/DJ, florist, photographer, videographer, and other vendors to create a seamless operation
- Assist the bride and bridal party with dressing
- Ensure that the ladies have their corsages and bouquets, etc., and assist with the pinning of boutonnieres
- Deliver and arrange ceremony programs, escort cards, place cards, favors and any personal items
- Coordinate the ceremony (line up bridal party, assist bride with dress, etc.)
- Coordinate the reception (grand entrance, first dance, toasts, and cake cutting, etc.)
- Collect any personal items at the conclusion of the reception
- Assist with full-service coordinating from your engagement to your honeymoon
- Review banquet check for accuracy at the end of the reception
- Establish room blocks at various hotels to ensure that guests have accommodations of their choice
- Create a vendor payment schedule
- Review catering contracts to ensure all your requests are communicated to the catering manager
- Provide a wide variety of professional referrals that correspond to a variety of price points and tastes

The jobs of both the wedding planner and the catering manager are extremely important entities for a large event, and need to be looked at as complementary forces, not as competitive ones. In that same vein, they each have separate and very different job functions and should not be depended upon do the job of the other. Having this information, and knowing what you should expect, will help you to get all the necessary support staff in place for your wedding day.

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