

20 QUESTIONS *for your planner*

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Is there a charge for our first meeting or consultation?

How do you charge for your services?
Typically fees are billed in one of three ways: a flat rate, an hourly rate, or a percentage of the fees you pay to your vendors.

How will you save us money? Can you advise us on where best to spend our money?
A good consultant will help you stay within your budget and possibly save as much as, or more than, the fee.

Do you require a deposit or retainer?
This varies, and should not exceed 50 percent of a planner's fees.

Is this your primary business?
A planner who dabbles in organizing weddings is not the same as a well-rounded professional who specializes in all aspects of a wedding celebration.

What are your experience, training, and accreditation?
Experience accounts for a lot. Membership in a professional association has its privileges...for you. Organizations like the Association of Bridal Consultants regulate their members with customer-friendly business guidelines.

Do you have experience in planning the style of wedding we have envisioned?
Your wedding may be anything from ultra formal to downright casual, so make sure your coordinator is comfortable in helping you make the most of the style you have chosen.

Do you have any references from former clients?
References from vendors can be useful to some extent, but it's best to check with another couple who have actually paid for your coordinator's services.

Are you affiliated with any other companies?
Your consultant may have preferred vendors, but make sure that her *raison d'être* is not to push you toward hiring a certain vendor.

Do you have preferred vendors who will give you discounts? Do you have a variety of vendors for all budgets?

Are you able to work and negotiate with vendors we may have already chosen?

Will you ensure that all of our chosen vendors are coordinated with each other?

What levels of service do you offer?
Most planners will cater their services to your needs, from planning everything to simply directing activities on the big day.

What items or services will you not handle?

Are you the individual I will deal with in all circumstances?
You need to know whom to call when you need assistance.

How do you view your role in general?

What specifically will your role be on the day of the wedding?

Do you get involved as a mediator and go-between for family members?
Having someone deal with, and shield you from, those not-so-little family difficulties can save you a lot of stress.

Can you advise us on issues of etiquette? How do you keep up with changes in the industry?
Because, let's face it, what was hot in the 90's is hot no longer.

