

Wedding Planner

SUMMER 2022

MAGAZINE

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letter from the staff

Welcome summer! This quarter we are focusing on YOUR business with articles on setting boundaries, finding your business niche and staying safe at events. We also have some great insight in our ask the experts column on asserting yourself with vendors and clients. We are featuring real weddings from Mexico, Washington and Idaho. Speaking of Real Weddings, we want to feature YOU! Find out how you can submit your real weddings to be featured in Wedding Planner Magazine on page 23.

We hope you are having a wonderful wedding Summer season and that you are reading this magazine in some lovely sun with an adult beverage beside you!



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Wedding Planner MAGAZINE

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Jordan Xu, PWP™, is the Principal Planner of Emily Jordan Events. Jordan has led over 150 weddings and events throughout the Southeastern United States. This experience allows her to seamlessly design and plan the events of clients'

dreams. Jordan's expertise as a planner and successful business owner allows her to train wedding industry professionals in creating the business they envisioned. Read her insight on page 15.



Holly Gray is the CEO of Anything But Gray Events. The Los Angeles based company specializes in planning and designing colorful wedding and social events for creative clients. As a second-generation event planner with a back-

ground in stage management, culinary arts, and hospitality, Holly strives to be an all-around expert in the events field and continues to push the envelope whenever possible. She chimes in on page 20.



Scott Coleman is the Vice President and Co-founder of Safe Kids Inc., a K-12 safety curriculum and consulting company located in Southern California. Scott's creative background as a published author

and expertise in safety helped define his current mission to prepare our youth to respond effectively to violence. He gives his advice on page 28.



Darryl Gaines, AWP™, CSM is a wedding & event planner, logistics guru, and security & safety expert for Lifetime Events by Jacqueline.

In addition to being an ABC member since 2010, Darryl is Master

Instructor for the National Safety Council and a sought-after worldwide expert in Safety & Security with over 30 years' experience. He gives advice on page 28.

Cathy Pedrayes is a lifestyle expert, media consultant, and former scientist, and is best known as TikTok's Mom Friend. She developed the reputation after sharing a video about the random items she keeps in her first aid kit, which prepares her for everything from eye punctures to diabetic emergencies. Originally from Miami, she currently lives with her husband in New Jersey. She shares her expertise on page 28.



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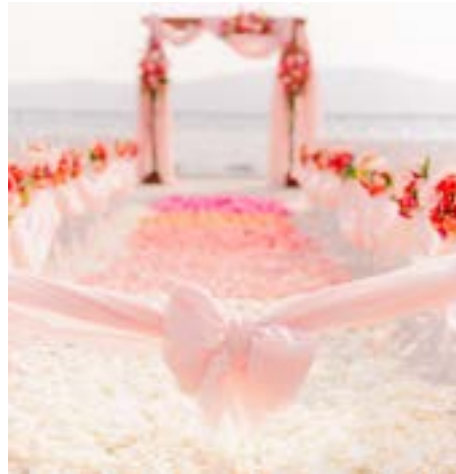
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- use honest, factual advertising.
- deal with employees and clients fairly, in an unbiased manner.
- disclose to clients any payments received from suppliers.
- operate an establishment that is a credit to the community.



GORGEOUS, OMBRE, LAKE WEDDING IN NORTH IDAHO

PLANNER: Robyn Bruns, MWP™, with Red Letter Event Planning

TIME IN INDUSTRY: 17 years

PHOTOGRAPHER: Rachel Jordan Photography

OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVED: Design House Floral, Event Rents, Design Events, Patina Events, Mango Ink, DJ Davey Dave, Jerry Lee Raines guitarist, Pop Balloon Bar, Stacies Cakes, Swish and Co, Coeur d Alene Resort Weddings, Three Birdies Bakery

WEDDING DATE: 8/14/2021

GUEST COUNT: 120

LOCATION: Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

COLOR PALETTE: Coral, peachy pink, white and copper

UNIQUE DESIGN ELEMENT: There were two: The floral wall that was used as a backdrop for pictures and the ombre flower aisle for the ceremony.

PLANNING INSPIRATION: Other than the explosion of flowers the other design elements were simple and clean, white linen, coral napkins, copper chargers and wood farm chairs; the inspiration was

beautiful but also had a simplicity with a backdrop of Lake Coeur D'Alene.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: The heat and wind of the day, delayed some set up so towards ceremony time there was some scrambling but I had planned on extra staff so it was all accomplished (just stressful). Additionally, the venue was less than ideal in the weather, there was no shade, and the concrete reflected all the heat. We were in an abnormally hot heatwave, so temperatures soared over 100. It got to a point that it got so hot even in the evening, that we moved to our after-party room 1 hour earlier so that guests could have some AC.

THE COUPLE: The couple were not only celebrating their union, but the blending of their families. The bride wanted an explosion of flowers she fell in love with a pinterest picture that showed a carpet of flowers down the aisle. She also wanted to make sure her guests felt special, so they were given monogrammed favors of a wine stopper or wine opener, and everyone got a monogrammed sugar cookie. A wine wall greeted guests as they arrived so they could have a glass of wine or champagne before the ceremony. Spoiling the guests was a huge priority for the couple.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY: I loved working on this wedding as the client trusted me with her vision I would not do anything differently with the design or vendor choices we made. However, the dinner tent area had shade but overall the venue did not provide much shade. Summer weddings can be challenging in the Inland Northwest as typically ceremonies are at the hottest part of the day. I would have added more shaded areas to the ceremony space.

SET UP AND STRIKE: We not only set up a ceremony and reception but also an after-party space. Total time on site was 17 hrs.

OTHER DETAILS: This wedding had many moving parts and vendors as we had an elaborate setup for the ceremony, the reception, and an afterparty. The venue was not ideal as it was open air and very hot and windy that day. Last minute we had to add misting fans and umbrellas for the comfort of guests.

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YUMI KATSURA, FASHION DESIGNER AND ABC HONORARY MEMBER, AND YOSHI KOHARA, DIRECTOR OF ASIA, SUGGEST DEVELOPING A BUSINESS AROUND ANNIVERSARY WEDDING EVENTS UNDER COVID

The Japanese Wedding Industry has lost more than \$8 billion US from Covid from 2020 to 2021.

The average wedding expense per couple was around \$28,500.00 US, and the average number of guests per wedding was around 75 in recent years before the Covid pandemic. Those numbers have dramatically changed over the last two years. Wedding expense has decreased to approximately \$22,500.00 US, and the average number of guests rapidly reduced to around 42.8 per wedding.

The photography business has not been as impacted because it's unnecessary to invite guests while making photo memories. Most of the couples enjoyed photography with little or no Wedding Ceremony or Reception arranged (In Japan, a Marriage License does not require a Clergy's signature, so couples can prepare their licenses with only their signatures.).

The photo industry also named photo shooting a "Photo Wedding." Even though they are only taking pictures with the couples in their wedding attire, This reference gives the impression that the couple is

having a wedding. As a result, many couples have been satisfied only with a photoshoot.

This unique perspective has helped wedding photographers. Ideas like this are needed in the planning community as well.

In 2022, couples have returned to hotel or wedding venues for a Wedding Ceremony & Reception (most Japanese do not arrange a religious ceremony. Instead, a chapel ceremony is popular in a hotel or wedding venue). However, the number of guests is still lower than in previous years. Japanese couples are seriously following the Government's guidelines. Couples are still hesitant to invite many guests to the wedding for infection prevention, which is why the Japanese industry is still facing a difficult situation and lower sales.

Yumi Katsura (ABC appointed her as Honorary Member in 2010) has emphasized the importance of the Wedding Anniversary Ceremony. She has promoted these ceremony opportunities by cooperating with the Honorary Chief Priest of Ikuta Shrine. During the last few years, she has introduced her designed attires for Wed-

ding Anniversary Events at a fashion show where several celebrity couples were runway models.



Finally, Yumi Katsura (left in photo) and Yoshi Kohara (Director of ABC Asia & Pacific) spoke at the annual Bridal Industry Fair. The fair is for industrial and related workers, and they suggested business possibilities by developing Wedding Anniversary Events.

Yumi explained the Japanese history of the Wedding Anniversary Ceremony and introduced how we can celebrate each anniversary year.

Yoshi reported several Wedding Anniversary Events in Western countries. It included religious ceremonies like Sunday Vow Renewal at Catholic and Anniversary Parties designed with a particular theme.

Yoshi also appreciated presenting valuable American Anniversary Wedding photos from Victoria Angela. Yoshi hopes these could provide significant ideas for the Japanese wedding industry to develop unique Anniversary Wedding



Events. According to Yoshi "In the US, some couples who had to have small wedding ceremonies or receptions will plan events such as a Wedding Anniversary Event. The couple can invite the guests who could not attend their original wedding reception to this event. This idea should be shared with Japanese couples by wedding professionals in the Japanese market."

-Yoshi Kohara, Director of ABC Asia & Pacific

Both Yumi and Yoshi want to continue to present ideas on how the Japanese industry can survive this current difficult situation.



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COLORFUL, WILD, ART INSPIRED WEDDING IN MEXICO

PLANNER: Amelia Ávila & CO

TIME IN INDUSTRY: 10 years

PHOTOGRAPHER: Edel Armas Photographer

OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVED: Llanito 33 Venue, Ghal Catering and Furniture, Azul Cielo Art Boutique, DJ Nemo

WEDDING DATE: 4/23/22

GUEST COUNT AND BUDGET: 180, \$20,000

LOCATION: Veracruz, Mexico

UNIQUE DESIGN ELEMENT: It was a three day wedding. On Friday we had a "Callejoneada" and ice-breakers afterwards at a boutique hotel in Xico, which is one of the "pueblo mágico" (magic village) in the state of Veracruz. On Saturday we had the most incred-

ible reception and ceremony ever. On Sunday they recovered with a typical lunch of the region.

DESIGN INSPIRATION: The wedding took place in an antique house from the 1800's located in Xico. This is a town full of magic surrounded by mountains and waterfalls where you will feel the warmth of the locals the moment you arrive here, as we will welcome you with open arms. The inspiration was to make everyone feel at home. We used light colors as it was a daytime wedding, and a combination of furniture and floral decoration.

THE COUPLE: Kari is from Veracruz and Uri from Barcelona. Kari lives in Barcelona and she owns a commercial art boutique. She was always sure of what she wanted, she set up her board with colors, furniture and decoration

COLOR PALETTE: Dusty rose, dusty blue and green

ASK THE MASTERS



Tammy Waterman MWP™, Special Moments Event Planning, Pinellas Park, FL



Lois Pearce, MWP™, Lois Pearce & Associates, ABC Director, Ethnic Diversity

"How can planners best explain to their couples not to choose a friend to officiate their ceremony and choose a professional instead?"

-Alan Katz, Great Officiants, CA

Why put someone you love in the position of being responsible for something they know nothing about?" That's a quote from Judith Johnson on Huffington Post. I have had several clients over the years use a friend or family member to officiate the ceremony, and sometimes it goes well, and sometimes it goes not so well. For example, some friends or family members officiating do not know to tell the guests to be seated after the processional - and they end up standing for a large portion of the ceremony until they are tired and just start sitting down. They also do not know to move for the first kiss and instead stand there and are seen as a floating head above the couple kissing in the photos.

The biggest problem that arises with a friend or family member officiating is the actual marriage license, they just do not know how to fill it out correctly, or they forget to mail it in. I have caught them handing it back to the couple after they fill it out and tell them congrats - Not even realizing it needs to be mailed in and recorded with the clerk of the court .

- Tammy

In honor of the friendship, choose a professional. Remind the couple that everything may be planned perfectly, but you cannot anticipate your future feelings if something goes awry. The friend may have every intention to comply with their wishes; however, if anything goes wrong, it is a memory they

may hold over the friendship in the future. If it is a professional, it is their enterprise, and they will protect their performance and satisfy them to receive referrals. The couple may never see them again if there are any hard feelings about anything. **-Lois**

"How can I be more assertive with my clients and vendors without offending or making them angry?"

-Erika Sherek, PWP™, Plumtree Events, Montana

It is tough to be a people pleaser and also be able to be assertive at times. The three statements below helped me when I needed to take control of a situation or at least get my point across without offending anybody or creating a situation where somebody ends up angry at the other person. Use 'I' statements. Using I statements lets others know what you're thinking or feeling without sounding accusatory. For instance, say, "I disagree," rather than, "You're wrong." If you have a request, say, "I would like you to help with this" rather than, "You need to do this." Keep your requests simple, specific, and straight forward. Practice saying no. If you have difficulty turning down requests, try saying, "No, I can't do that now." Remember that no is a complete sentence, and you don't need to explain why you choose to say no. Don't hesitate – be direct. If an explanation is appropriate, keep it brief.

Show appreciation for the other person. When you communicate assertively, you also recognize the other person's contributions. You can still ask for what you want, but you should acknowledge when the other person has made concessions or conveyed their feelings.

-Tammy

You must be knowledgeable and confident in your actions. Tell the stories when you have had experiences that may affect the outcome of their situation. Clarity on how you communicate should be made early in the working relationship. Assertive isn't being bossy. Choose your words and think of the outcome. If it is a safety issue, then be assertive. Everyone will appreciate that. For example, early in my career, a server spilled water from a pitcher while crossing the dance floor. I knew no one would see it, but a guest would slip and fall while dancing. I pointed it out to the banquet captain, who wasn't exactly happy to have a wedding planner on-site. After doing that and pointing out I was protecting the guests at their facility from being hurt, they were my buddy for the rest of the evening.

-Lois

"How do you deal with clients who do not pay on time? What do you recommend if the client's wedding day arrives and the client has not paid in full?"

-Cathy MacRae, Creative Weddings, Calgary Canada

I have not had a situation where they have not paid in full before the wedding day arrives. We usually require our final payment due ten days out from their wedding. If payment is not received, we are not working on your wedding until received. Also, most wedding professionals require payment in full about 30 days before the wedding. So the clients are conditioned to know that you should be treated the same after signing these contracts. Especially if you remind them what the final balance is due to each wedding professional and when. I have had a few clients pay later than the due date, and in our contract - we charge a late fee if past the due date and grace period, and work on their wedding stops until the late payment is made along with the late fee.

-Tammy

Very few of my clients did not pay on time. My agreement clearly stated my payment dates with a grace period. My payments were made monthly, so they were affordable and provided me with cash flow. When the contract was signed, I explained that I would be working for them for months to come, and a trust factor for both of us would be established. If they had a problem with anything I wasn't doing, they could hold that payment for the month until the issue was resolved. (I did everything to ensure there weren't issues on my part!) If I did not receive payment, I made it clear that my work would cease until their payment cleared my bank if late. This was stated in my agreement. When payment was not received on the due date, I called and reminded them of the grace period. Payment in full was completed ten days before the wedding date.

If there were any balance for additional services, we would have discussed it at our final meeting, and I provided an invoice that would be paid before the rehearsal. I also required a cash contingency for extra tips or purchases on the wedding day. Any balance of these funds was returned to them before I left the reception. In my experience, I only had one client who did not comply and gave me a final payment on the wedding day. (It cleared, however, while they were on their honeymoon.) **-Lois**



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Setting Boundaries for Business Success

Like many young planners, I started my company as a side hustle while working full-time. Starting a company while working a 40-50 hour a week job leads to bad working habits. The only time I had to communicate with my clients and work on my business was at night and on the weekends. When I decided to go full-time with my company, I did not let those habits go. While I claimed I had this fabulous life of owning my own company and setting my own hours, the truth was I worked more hours than when I had a full-time job and my side hustle. I realized that my work-life balance was non-existent. I needed to find a way to run the business I wanted while also living the life I wanted to live.

Whether it's time for dating, time to play with your kids, or having a night out with your friends, do you feel like you are never giving 100% to that activity because you are constantly focused on your clients? Do you think it will get more manageable if you can grow the company a little more? Here's the problem with that theory, if you book five more weddings this year than you booked last year, but you are following the same methods of running your business, it will not change or get any easier magically. What is that elusive magic formula to build the work-life balance you crave? Boundaries.

Boundaries with Yourself

First, we need to set boundaries with ourselves because if we don't respect ourselves, how can we expect anyone else to respect our time, talent, and energy? I want you to think of three things you like to do when you have free time. These should be whatever pops in your head first - keep

them simple and easy. Next, I want you to think of the last time you felt thrilled. Again, this should be what comes to mind first, not something you must think through in great depth. I'm going to hazard a guess here, but I imagine the last time you felt truly happy did not involve you out to dinner with friends while answering texts from a client simultaneously. I'm guessing it did not involve you sitting on the beach with your family while also answering emails from your client on a Sunday afternoon.

You cannot be at your best with your clients if you are not giving yourself time to recharge and recalibrate. I want you to take those three things you listed that you love to do in your free time and add them to your calendar over the next month. Determine what you need to do to recharge and set those boundaries yourself. I figured out that I was working an insane number of hours. Whether it was a Saturday wedding or client meetings spread throughout the weekend, I worked seven days a week. No human is meant to do that. You need time off to be at your best when you are working. If this is you, then pick one day you absolutely do not work each week. That means no checking email, no client meetings, nothing. Establish your "me" time and honor that for yourself. You deserve it.

Boundaries with Your Clients

The industry often touts that planners should be their client's new best friends. I've tried this method and learned the hard way that this is wrong. You are blurring the lines between professional and friend mindset, which sets you up to be treated as a friend, not a professional with boundaries. You can still have an excellent relationship with your

clients without the Friendster approach.

Your clients have hired you as the expert professional that you are, and therefore, this should be a professional relationship. Establishing the tone of the relationship comes from you. When your client is signing your contract, they should also sign a communication or working guidelines contract. In these guidelines, you need to tell your clients when you are available to them, how you are available to them when to expect responses, and how and when they should be communicating with you. Essentially you are telling them how to interact with you and building this working relationship together. Establishing boundaries leads to clients who value you as an expert and value your worth.

Maintaining Boundaries

I think it's important to acknowledge what we as an industry have been through in the last two years. We have been stretched to the limit with cancellations, postponements, and having to double book weekends - it's been nuts. This is why establishing boundaries is more important now than ever. Even those of us who previously set boundaries had difficulty maintaining them when our industry was chaotic. But we've survived that, so take this as your moment to figure out your new boundaries. Self-care is critical after what we've lived through in this industry. As they say on airplanes, make sure to put your oxygen mask on before assisting others.

Whether it is a couple who has postponed or a newly engaged couple, I am sure I am not the only one who has dealt with a change in clients' attitudes. There is a new sense of entitlement from our clients that no matter what is happening in the world around us, be it supply chain issues or

labor shortages; they should be able to get what they want when they want it. As planners who want to make our clients happy, it is difficult to deal with some of these unrealistic expectations.

When clients make unrealistic demands, they are testing your boundaries. After the experience of the last two years in our industry, it is so easy to fall into the habit of always saying yes to our clients. We want them to be happy, we empathize with them that this is not the wedding experience they dreamed of, and we will do almost anything to make them happy. Clients want us to provide them with boundaries, so when they test them, it is our responsibility to hold firm. If they request something that is beyond your scope of work, is a safety risk to your team, or is simply unreasonable, it is perfectly ok to let them know you need to think about it and get back to them. This provides you with time to evaluate and come up with a different solution. Not every request a client makes needs to happen - you have a responsibility to your client, your business, and yourself to bring them back to reality and set a different expectation.

Whether you are a new planner or have been in business for 30 years, setting boundaries is vital to your business's success and happiness as a business owner. Taking the time to establish these boundaries will give you the business and life you want and deserve!

-Jordan Xu, PWP™



FLIGHT INSPIRED WEDDING OF PILOTS IN WASHINGTON STATE

PLANNER: Patricia Naumoff, with Satin N Sage Events

TIME IN INDUSTRY: 10 years

PHOTOGRAPHER: Brent Looyenga

OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVED: Historic Flight, Cathedral Of Our Lady of Lourdes, Alpha Omega, ECW Elizabeth Williams, Delectable Catering, Ruby Frog, Lily Garland

WEDDING DATE: 5/28/22

GUEST COUNT: 150

BUDGET: \$35,000

LOCATION: Spokane, Washington

UNIQUE DESIGN ELEMENT: As pilots they were able to request the planes they were most passionate about and place them strategically throughout the venue. Guests were able to board the planes and tour the airport in an awesome vehicle called the Jammer Bus originally from Glacier National Park.

PLANNING INSPIRATION: Christine and Ryan, especially Ryan, were very involved creating an elegant and luxurious feel. Accents of gold were incorporated to give that aesthetic along with burgundy napkins, florals and gold framed table numbers.

THE COUPLE: Christine and Ryan come from a family of pilots and they themselves are pilots. The Venue fulfilled all their dreams about aviation and their love for flight and planes!

KEY LEARNINGS: Review all decor elements and ensure they all arrive at the venue. I.e. unwrap items day before, triple check with the couple that I have everything at the venue for setup.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: Forgotten items that family members were tasked to bring. I worked with the maid of honor to assign people to go back to hotel and retrieve items. Catering had a hands off approach with the alcohol supplies. Had to get involved with the missing inventory that the couple was responsible for. I took care of everything that was needed by sending my assistant to buy supplies.



HAS A WEDDING PARTY MEMBER, GUEST, OR VENDOR EVER MADE YOU FEEL UNSAFE OR UNCOMFORTABLE DURING THE WEDDING DAY? IF SO, HOW DID YOU RESPOND?

"One of my planners had a very uncomfortable situation happen. There was a very drunk groomsman that was overly friendly with her. Right after this, we added a clause to our contract called "Respect" We also added to our questionnaire doc should we have an issue like this, who will be our contact. It usually is the father of the bride."

-Colleen Bauer, MWP™, Fairy Godmother Events
Instagram: @fairygodmotherinc
Bakersfield, CA

"I once had a guest get belligerent due to the state alcohol cutoff time. The individual was not accepting the bartender or my explanation of the law that we are required to enforce. I then notified the individuals I was under contract with that if the guest did not calm down, legally, due to my contract, I had the right to end the event at that moment or remove myself from harm's way. My clients asked the guest to leave. The guest started yelling, and the venue manager called the police. After the police arrived, the unruly guest was compliant."

-Marian Hilliard, AWP™
Unveiled Events, LLC
Stokesdale, NC

"Yes! Over the years, safety has always been a concern for myself and my team. There have been times where we start an install at 5:30 am and aren't done until about 1:30 am- both times, it's pitch black outside. Even if the area seems "good," you never know. Other times, the guests get scary after having a couple of drinks. I've always had my team move in two, either just them or them and me, always call or text when you are home, and then most times, I'll let my husband know when we are near done so he can meet us outside. Even though I don't do local weddings anymore (just destination weddings), I am scheduled to take a Conceal and Carry class in August because the world is getting weirder by the day."

-Veronica Foster, MWP™, Behind The Scenes Inc
Instagram: @NCPlanner
Gibsonville, NC

"I officiated a backyard wedding. It was a beautiful home in Palos Verdes overlooking the city. Perfect day, fantastic couple, and a mean dog. I love dogs, and dogs love me, well, most dogs, but not this one. It started off as barking, then growling, then he snipped at my leg. That was enough. I asked the groom to put the dog in the house for my safety and the safety of the guests. I told him that in my contract, there was a

clause that required safety.

CLAUSE

SAFETY. CLIENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT AT THE CEREMONY, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO RESTRAINING ALL PETS FROM THE CEREMONY AREA, PREVENTING DRUNKEN AND UNRULY BRIDAL PARTY MEMBERS, ETC. IF AT ANY TIME OFFICIANT OR NOTARY FEELS UNSAFE OR THREATENED IN ANY MANNER, THEY SHALL HAVE NO OBLIGATION TO REMAIN AT THE CEREMONY LOCATION, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEIR SERVICES HAVE BEEN RENDERED. CLIENTS AGREE AND UNDERSTAND THAT THEY WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYMENT IN FULL OF ANY FEES DUE UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE SERVICES HAVE BEEN RENDERED.

So, he put the dog in the house. When the ceremony was over I was chatting with the guests when, someone inadvertently let the dog out. The dog made a beeline toward me. I hid behind the groom, and we backed up toward the gate, where I was able to slip away to safety. This Ceremony was RUFF!! The story's moral is to ensure you have safety provisions in your contract and assert them when necessary."

-Alan Katz, Great Officiants

Instagram: @Greatofficiants

Orange County, CA

"This is a topic that is not talked about and should be. I have had a couple of experiences with both clients and vendors and feeling uncomfortable with them. Years ago, when I started in this industry, I had a bride's father who had issues keeping his hands to himself. My catering team told me that he would pat the waitresses on their butt when they walked by. Needless to say, that did not go over well with me, and despite him being the FOB, he was told he could keep his hands to himself or leave. He ended up leaving that night much earlier than he anticipated.

My second uncomfortable situation was with a vendor. This particular vendor wanted to work with us, and I, at that time, did not have a client to match. More importantly, I felt he did not fit our company's ethics and integrity, as his initial email stated that he was the best and I would be a fool not to work with him. When I politely and professionally declined, things got scary, and he emailed and called multiple times, saying he would discredit my company if I did not refer him. Ultimately, I did not bow down to his threats, and he did not get referred. I also told everyone I knew to run if he called or emailed.

Many things can make us feel uncomfortable, and the best way to handle them is by staying professional, calm, and honest."

-Jaclyn Watson, Jaclyn Watson Events

Instagram: @JACLYNWATSONEVENTS

Vermont, New York and Florida

"I have felt uncomfortable several times at weddings, most typically at the reception. At that point, the wedding party (which I likely bantered with earlier in the day) gets a little too drunk and a little too comfortable. Inhibitions go away, and I've been blatantly hit on, to the point where I was very uncomfortable. I found the best way to deal with it was to remove myself from the situation and buddy up with one of my associate planners, so we were not alone during the evening. In addition, when I was single, I would wear a ring on my ring finger to try to deter any interested groomsman!"

-Nora Sheils, Co-Founder Rock Paper Coin, Founder Bridal Bliss

Instagram: @bridalblissnw

Portland, OR

"In the early days of my career, I did multiple weddings where I got hit on by a guest. In some cases, letting them down was just awkward due to the setting. But in others, the advance was more forward and physical. I wasn't sure how to handle it at the time, so I just sidled away and kept my distance. But if it happened now, I would be more vocal, clear, and assertive."

-Jamie Chang, Mango Muse Events

Instagram: @mangomuseevents

"As a woman in a position of authority at an event, you can come up against very uncomfortable situations. Being hit on by groomsman, dismissive behavior, and disregarding your boundaries are all very challenging to deal with gracefully on the spot.

To avoid any unforeseen problems, I include a clause in my contract that outlines exactly what I'll do in the event of any type of harassment. Clients and their guests get two warnings. After a third strike, I retain the ability to choose to terminate the project immediately without a refund. We don't have an HR department to outline and maintain appropriate workplace behavior, so we must advocate for ourselves both in advance of and during an event."

-Jenna Porter, Jenna Noelle Creative

Instagram: @jennanoellecreative

"Being that we deal with animals at EVERY wedding, there have been a few instances where safety concerns arise. We respond to each on a case-by-case basis and use it as an opportunity to learn and educate. We've made modifications to our contract. And we continue to educate other vendors on including pets and weddings, making them aware of potential safety issues and how to best navigate those scenarios."

-Veronica Silghigian, Pawfect for You, Inc.

Instagram: @pawfectforyou

Northeast US

GETTING REAL, NICHING DOWN, AND LIVING YOUR BRAND LIKE A BOSS

It's been said a hundred different ways, but it bears repeating a thousand more times.

"If you try to please everyone, you'll please no one."

As wedding vendors, when we strive to fit into a pretty little box and please everyone, we never make our mark outside the lines and, therefore, please anyone.

The hospitality industry has trained us to please, over-satisfy continually, and exceed expectations to our detriment. The margins for human error have become narrower and narrower. While we should strive for excellence in serving our clients, there is an overwhelming feeling of needing to be everything for everyone. This can also lead us down a path of sameness, cause self-esteem issues, and create a cookie-cutter definition of what we individually bring to the table as wedding industry professionals. This flawed plan we have outlined for ourselves to succeed won't lead to the perfection we think we're seeking. Quite the opposite; we fail ourselves.

Cue the lifestyle of living your brand. Whether you just started your business on the ground floor or are as

well-seasoned as a cast iron pan in your career journey, you are here, now. If you were like me, you got into the wedding industry with a specific skillset, the unendingly positive drive to succeed, and the best of intentions.



Photo cred: Peterson Design & Photography

Indeed, along the way, life changed. Doubts, exhaustion, and burnout have set to varying degrees. Like a sprinkler head, it's human nature for us to look from right to left at the 'competitors' flanking us in the same fields or region for indirect guidance on how our businesses "should be" instead of looking within and questioning ourselves for what we want our business 'to be.'

What makes YOU unique? Instead of copying other successful companies in your area, as many people think they should do, look

within YOURSELF to define your brand and live that to the fullest. It doesn't have to be wacky; it doesn't have to be crazy, but it does have to be YOU!

The keys component for your business, whatever it may be, are simple. It's YOU. YOU are the reason clients seek your specific services. So often, instead of embodying our brands and amplifying them across all aspects of our personal and professional lives, we fall into a sea of sameness and begin to drown slowly.

Your brand is the overview your business inwardly and outwardly projects to the world about the PERSON behind the company. By living the brand, you embody your company and what it represents and supports. When you live your brand fully, your clients, potential clients, and peers SEE it and FEEL it too!

YOU are your best form of advertisement for your business. Who you are and your business brand should be aligned 110%! More than ever, clients want to connect with the people behind the businesses and services they are putting their investment into. You hurt your bottom line when you

hide who you are from your potential clients. By living your brand, you will ultimately:

- Attract your ideal clients and vendor partners.
- Create the Like, Know, and Trust factor.
- Showcases the value of your services.
- Humanize yourself.

Photo cred: Mary Costa Photography



COVID hit our hospitality and events industry like a typhoon in 2020 and has continued to ripple in 2022 and beyond. The more I speak with fellow vendors in all fields; they are niching down, making more specific and intentional choices about their business, being choosier with the clients they take on, and are putting themselves and their mental/physical/emotional/spiritual well-being over profits.

It's ok to finally say, "I am not ok".

A big part of living your brand is being honest. Transparency can be complicated

and very vulnerable, especially in a Teflon industry striving for perfection. We don't want to look tired, weak, desperate, sad, or challenged as business owners. We are somehow supposed to be superhuman and exempt from this pain. Why is that? This year, I have spoken to many vendors across the board who have been affected by death, loss, divorce, illness, burn out, bankruptcy, depression, suicide, and the world's discourse. Unimaginable pain we try to conceal, so our clients are none the wiser. I have been affected by several of those myself. Have you?

There is a real-life person behind your business. One we don't often let our clients see unless it's in a shiny, polished, put together, and in a curated package. Why? We don't like pulling the curtain for our clients for fear they might not want us anymore.

I challenge you to get honest not only with yourself and your business but for yourself and your business. To be real is to be human. We have all been challenged since 2020, and by sharing your story within your level of comfort, you become a more authentic brand with a transparent message. Living your brand takes on a new meaning when you are truly living.

For my own business as a wedding planner and designer in a heavily saturated city like Los Angeles, I knew if

I were to continue to try to be everything for everyone, always put on a bright and shiny visage, and compare myself to others, it would be the death of my business and my own



Photo cred: Visuals by Arpit

spirit. Focusing inward and getting real about what I wanted, needed, and strived for in my business made me feel at peace. By just being myself, I found the colorful, creative, and untraditional clients I longed for and who were longing for me as their planner in a sea of wedding sameness—all I had to do was stop trying and start being. From there, the joy started flooding into my business and fear drained away.

I was afraid to be more but certainly did not what to be less than the business next to mine. Subsequently, without knowing it, we have created an industry-standard of sameness that is veiled in a sugar coating of unsustainable standards and expectations. We have defined what weddings mean for everyone, and what weddings look like for everyone, what weddings feel like

for everyone. All while unconsciously homogenizing our clients and ourselves as individuals in the process. So, in trying to please everyone, we might have accidentally pleased no one, including ourselves.

While the ripples of 2020 were devastating on so many levels, especially for small businesses, I find the changes we see to be positive ones. We can't be everything to everyone, and for our well-being, we need to stop trying for it.

Not sure where to start in the pursuit of living your brand and getting real? Here are some quick and easy tips that you can implement today.

- Make sure you have a headshot that you love on your website and email signature.

- Put your name in your social media bios for networking purposes! Don't make other vendors and potential clients hunt for the person behind the company name.

- Share a personal story from your life on your blog or social media that gives insight into who you are.

- Be honest about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the wedding industry and you as a business.

- Make sure you have an 'About Me' section on your website with a photo and de-

scription that gives insight into who you are both as a professional AND as a human being.

- Get in the habit of regularly checking in with yourself to see if the business you have created is one you love and feel proud of.

Trying to be someone else is much more complicated than just being yourself. As we move into 2023, consider what you want for yourself, your business, and your brand. Are you living that?

-Holly Gray, Anything But Gray Events

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Are YOU Submitting Your Weddings For Print Publication?

"Thank you so much!! How fun!! Excited to share with their whole wedding team!" This is how ABC member Lynne Kennedy, MWP™ felt when she learned one of the weddings she worked on would be featured in the magazine and on the cover. We love featuring real weddings that have beautiful details and a great story.

See your work in PRINT! While blogs and Instagram are a great way to feature your business, there is something special when you see your work in a printed magazine. Photographers also love to see their work in magazines as the picture is captured the way they intended, printed.

Clients will be thrilled! What couple wouldn't be excited to see their wedding in a magazine that they can share with their friends and family? In return, they will further promote you as their wedding planner.

Cover photo! The main cover photos

and inside cover images are from Real Weddings submitted to Wedding Planner Magazine; what a great way to feature your business with bragging rights on the cover photo.

Point, Points, Points! A Real Wedding submitted and published by Wedding Planner Magazine is eligible for points towards your next ABC designation; what an easy way to gain points!

Content sharing! Your real wedding will be shared across ABC platforms, such as the ABC Instagram, website, and Facebook.

Show your expertise! Unlike a blog feature that tells only the couple's story and has pretty photos, a Wedding Planner Magazine Real Wedding wants to know YOUR story as the planner. What was your aha moment? How many staff did you use? What would you do differently, and why? Learning from professionals makes a real wedding feature in Wedding Planner Magazine different.



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What makes a successful Real Wedding feature?

- Professional high-resolution Pictures
- Please get permission from the couple and photographer
- Choose vertical and horizontal pictures
- Choose the best 50-70 pictures of details, the couple, and that tells the story of the wedding day
- Information about how the design was conceived and executed
- What makes the design unique, how does it reflect the couple?
- Details about the work that went into the wedding (number of staff and hours)
- Insight from the planner about what lessons were learned.
- Every wedding is a learning experience. Was the time of the day less than ideal? Did the shuttle company not have directions? The more information, the better, tell a story;

what can you teach others?

- A complete list of vendors, we want to provide credit to all of our vendor partners so you can share the feature with them, and they, in turn, will promote you.

If you follow these guidelines, you will have a successful submission for a Real Wedding to Wedding Planner Magazine! Submissions are accepted on an ongoing basis so submit anytime. Please visit <https://www.ab-cweddingplanners.com/submissions>.

We look forward to featuring all of your gorgeous weddings. If you have any questions, please email editor@weddingplannermag.com

We can't wait to see your Real Wedding submissions!



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ABC News

Longtime ABC Member and Master Wedding Planner, Jacqueline Vazquez has been sharing her knowledge in the wedding and event industry for close to 15 years, including speaking, teaching and mentoring. Two years ago she launched her first book, *The Creative Mind of an Elite Event Planner* which shares insights from customer service experience to building relationships to considering the future from the perspective of an experienced event planner. She received inquiries from the Latin community in the industry about a Spanish version of the book, and now the wait is over. In July 2022, Jacqueline announced the launch of her 2nd edition of the book fully translated in Spanish, *La Vida Creative de una Organizadora de Eventos Elite*. You can find both versions of the book on Amazon (Softcover or Kindle).



For more on upcoming projects Jacqueline is working on following her on www.ClassyandInspiring.com

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MASTER PROFILE



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MASTER WEDDING PLANNER™ Colleen Bauer, **MWP™**, Fairy Godmother Events, Inc.

FAMILY: I married my high school sweetheart, and we have a 23-year-old son.

LOCATION: Bakersfield, California

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: Associate of Arts in Business from Fresno City College.

A MISTAKE YOUVE MADE: February 2020 when business really slowed down due to Covid. I didn't share this with our team in the beginning. Another month went by and I felt I had to share with them we were in for a very tough year. They were incredible, we brainstormed ideas to bring business in, we looked for areas to save with office expenses, etc. This taught me to trust them, and share with them, they are a powerful group! I am very lucky.

ON BECOMING A MASTER: I started the process in mid-2020 and became a Master in November of 2021. I wanted to become a Master Wedding Planner for my own sense of personal accomplishment. I am so proud of this accomplishment.

MENTORS: My Dad, who taught me how to start a business, work hard and stay disciplined. My Mom, who taught me the art of hosting amazing parties with warmth and enthusiasm. Fellow event professionals: Diana, Kyle, Jared, Mark, Eliseo, and Mark R. and even my own team of event producers. I've had the best in the industry guide and support me. Shelby, from ABC, has also given me clear and strategic guidance over the years.

MARKETING: Hire the best Social Media Manager! We are fortunate to have Janae Bowman from 3 AM Marketing. She ensures we are maximizing our engagement, staying on top of trends, and expanding our online community.

information

ABC MEMBER SINCE: 2016. **REVENUE:** 50% full wedding planning, 30% corporate events, 10% social events, 10% wedding day management **EMPLOYEES:** 12 total. **TIME IN INDUSTRY:** 12 years. **CONTACT:** colleen@fairy-godmotherevents.net, www.FairyGodmotherCo.com

ADVICE: Find good mentors. They don't necessarily have to be in the wedding industry, you can learn from any service provider. I believe to be successful you must have the heart of a servant and enjoy taking care of others. Be kind and do what you say you are going to do.

HOW DID YOU START: I started Fairy Godmother in 2010. In 2009 I was the Chairperson of a large business conference in our community. Several board members and event partners remarked that I was a natural at event planning and encouraged me to pursue more opportunities in the industry. I started by managing a friend's wedding at no charge!

BIGGEST INFLUENCE IN THE INDUSTRY: Wedding trends seem to follow the fashion industry, Hollywood, and social media.

FAVORITE (NON BUSINESS) BOOK OR MOVIE: My favorite movie is The Notebook. It's the ultimate love story.

FAVORITE BUSINESS BOOK OR SHOW: I have several, I love to read For books: "The E-Myth Revisited", "The Bear Necessities of Business", "Doing Business with our Hearts" by Preston Bailey, "The Gold Standard" by Colin Cowie, "The Big White Book of Weddings" by David Tutera, and "The Martha Rules" by Martha Stuart. It's also been fun to watch "Say Yes to the Dress" and "Married at First Sight".

IDEAL CLIENT: I love to work with clients who are warm, fun, and kind. It's a special treat when they are close to their family! I love clients that are involved but also trust us!

LITTLE KNOWN FACT: I've always been passionate about horses and used to show jump. Show jump is a competitive equestrian event in which a horse and rider are required to jump, usually within a time limit.

Managing Your Safety During Events

Safety in the wedding industry is a hot topic. Wedding Planner Magazine convened a panel of 3 experts to discuss best practices and answer pressing safety concerns.

Editors Note: If you ever feel unsafe at an event, your first action should be to call or text 911.

Our panel included:

Scott Coleman is Vice President and Co-founder of Safe Kids Inc., a K-12 safety curriculum and consulting company located in Southern California. Before founding Safe Kids Inc., Scott served for 12 years as a police officer in Orange County, California

Cathy Pedrayes is best known as TikTok's "Mom Friend" to her 2.4 million followers who tune into her safety life hack videos. Her safety tips have been covered in top news outlets like The Today Show, Newsweek, and Good Morning America, as well as in her new book, published by Simon & Schuster.

Darryl Gaines, AWP™, CSM, is a wedding & event planner, logistics guru, and security/safety expert for Lifetime Events by Jacqueline. Darryl is Master Instructor for the National Safety Council and a sought-after worldwide safety and security expert with over 30 years of experience.

What is the one tip you think is essential to remain safe at an event?

Have a Safety Plan

All events have a process to ensure everything goes well; it is the same with security. It is very advantageous to be proactive when it comes to your safety and your team's safety.

Always plan ahead for safety. Survey the area regarding lighting outside, exits, and camera locations. Ensure to meet the security team at the site, and if there is no onsite security team, use the buddy system (always have someone with you during late night hours) for safety. Survey your travel routes for day and night travel for safety and adjust your course when needed.

Stay alert when loading in and out, and never leave your vehicle running or unattended if not locked. Always stay alert. When your team manages transportation logistics, it is essential to have the right tools to direct buses or any vehicle. For instance, a high visibility vest is recommended to ensure visibility and the person's safety. -Darryl

Whether at home, a grocery store, or at an event, the most important thing you can do is remain situationally aware. All too often, people harmed by accidents or violence aren't paying attention to situations around them. For instance, many thieves target victims who are focused on

their phones. Similarly, millions of Americans are injured every year in car accidents, slip-and-fall incidents, and other minor dust-ups for the same reason: they're focused more on their phones than what's happening around them. Hyper-vigilance isn't a healthy alternative, but being familiar with the people and things interacting with you can go a long way to keep you safe. -Scott

This is apropos, but planning! Know the venue, nearby parking, hours of parking or public transit, access to rideshare services, the distance between facilities, hotel access, etc. Avoid parking garages, stairwells, and other isolated places - instead, plan a path where you can stay in well-lit, public areas when walking to and from the event. Planning in advance means you'll be able to walk confidently and seem like you know where you're going - attackers tend to look for distracted targets who seem confused or preoccupied. -Cathy

Please describe how you would advise handling safety as a wedding professional when you have to leave late at night or early morning for an event?

I would plan for a ride-share service or drive. Also, because I worked with Kleinfeld Hotel Blocks, most of my travel was focused on the hotel, and I would choose full-service hotels with 24-hour services and staff

whenever possible.

At times I've asked staff to watch me walk to my car or walk with me if that was an option. You can also use your car alarm as a personal alarm if you're walking to your car alone at night. Set it off, and it might scare someone away.

Trust your gut. Know that sometimes, it's helpful to tell a lie. If someone asks if you're working alone, say, "nope! My boss is in the back!" even if your boss isn't actually there, so it doesn't seem like you're alone and an easy target. -Cathy

The first step is to survey your area and know where you are and where you are going. Walk the venue or outside location before the event to enhance your awareness of the site. Park in an area that has good lighting and in view of cameras if available. Ensure you have visibility around your vehicle to see if anyone is in the area. Have a team member with you or on the phone on speaker or Bluetooth. Do not look at your phone; stay security alert.

-Darryl

There's a reason human beings are afraid of the dark - when the lights go down; things get more dangerous. We (humans) rely heavily on our solar-powered color vision, so we're naturally more vulnerable at night and early in the morning. Career criminals understand human vulnerability and exploit it regularly. For instance, most cars are stolen from the front of convenience stores in the wee morning hours. While it seems harmless to run in and grab a cup of coffee while your car is warming up, if

the wrong person is watching, your vehicle won't be there for you when you return. If you have to leave your vehicle somewhere (even a loading ramp at an event), make sure you shut off your ignition, lock the doors, and take your keys with you. -Scott

Are there any tools or classes you recommend to wedding professionals to remain safe before, during, or after an event?

Stick to the basics. While training (such as self-defense courses) can be very effective when paired with dedicated practice, many of us don't have the time to put in the "reps" to achieve mastery under stress. Several years ago, I set out (along with a team of educators) to help prepare K-12 students on how to deal with an active shooter situation. We didn't teach them Jiu-jitsu or Kung Fu but instead focused on cultivating a mindset of healthy vigilance (situational awareness) coupled with four simple steps: Hide! Escape! Run! Overcome! (H.E.R.O.)

Baked into these curricula was the idea that kids can respond appropriately to danger if they practice simple safety skills in a safe environment. They were taught simple things, such as knowing when (and how) to lock a door, being aware of exit (Escape) routes, identifying strange behaviors, and understanding that you can "Overcome" (fight back) against an intruder in a worst-case scenario. By knowing your surroundings and recognizing your innate ability to overcome adversity, you'll not only be safer but also feel safer. -Scott

It will vary based on the

individual's comfort level. There is safety jewelry (like InvisiWear and Flare) with video chatting services. A live agent can record your movement via phone to accompany you to your car or wherever you might feel vulnerable. There are also tools such as pepper spray, gel, and Taser devices. There are a variety of apps, such as BSafe, which can also call emergency services on your behalf. -Cathy

Communication is critical, and being able to read body language. I highly recommend security awareness and first-level defense classes for your safety. It is easier said than done, so consistently talk with your team and reemphasize the importance of safety. Talk about safety. If you do not have a safety mindset, it will be "Out of sight, Out of mind." -Darryl

If a wedding professional feels unsafe other than calling 911, what else should they do?

My team has a code signal that we use and change for every event. If a team member feels unsafe, they will call over another team member and ask a common question. Another signal we use is to pull an earlobe; this action signals that something is wrong and the team member should not be left alone. Your signal could be a phone call, where you use a code name, for example, a cartoon name. So, if a team member calls and says Mickey Mouse is here, we know they need help and respond ASAP.

The process for safety is reviewed during every team meeting before the event with a clear

understanding that our employees have the full support of the company when they feel unsafe. -Darryl

In many places, you can also text 911, but alternatively, you can turn to safety apps; there are many on the market. You also can plan for those uncomfortable moments by preparing for an escape ahead of time. That could look like having a fake call come in, meeting in public places, or not giving out your cell phone number. It's best to give a business phone number or a VoIP number so that you can set strict boundaries. If you get in an elevator alone and someone who gives you a bad gut feeling walks in, pretend you forgot something and step out. -Cathy

For most event planners, the most significant personal safety threat they'll face is dealing with intoxicated guests/customers. When I first started as a rookie cop, I worked the graveyard shift, where I would have the opportunity to interact with thousands of unruly drunk people. My field supervisor told me my first night: "You can't negotiate with a drunk." That said, always try to avoid and de-escalate an intoxicated or angry person. Trying to have an argument with them will only escalate tensions. When in doubt, de-escalate, and walk (or drive) away - it's not worth it.

If you happen to find yourself in a confrontation, call 911 when it's safe to do so. Get out of harm's way first, then reach for your phone. And remember, your safety is far more critical than filming a dangerous encounter on your phone. After all, you're a wedding planner, not a wildlife photographer! -Scott

Provide any examples of when you or someone you knew felt unsafe at an event and how it was handled.

I've seen hundreds of incidents at events over the years; the majority were caused by allowing too many intoxicated people to occupy too small a space. Make sure you work with your clients (and venues) to understand the maximum capacity of the venue space, the safety mechanisms in place (such as fire extinguishers and emergency exits), and the availability of security. Most importantly, if you feel like a crowd may be inherently unruly, trust your instincts and take a "pass" on that particular event (or client). If you end up working with a client and a disaster ensues (Google "Astroworld"), you will be sued. In other words, if you feel like an event may become dangerous, run the other way - sometimes, literally. -Scott

Ninety percent of the team I work with are female, and there is no tolerance for any type of harassment or disrespect. During an event, one of the ladies was working in the ballroom, and one of the vendors was very rude and was disrespectful of the female team member. During my rounds (Security), the young lady called me over and asked a question and also pulled her earlobe, signaling me that something was wrong and not to leave the area. I stayed in the room and saw the vendors disrespecting the female worker. I spoke with the vendor's manager, and the manager removed them from the location ASAP. -Darryl

A friend was followed to her car by drunk guests; she also experienced being groped on the dance floor and had to add a safety clause to her booking contract. These situations are tough to manage, but hiring a valet and prioritizing having a well-staffed venue can help. You can also communicate with bartenders that they're authorized to cut someone off if it seems they can't hold their alcohol. In some cases, people also hire security. I'd argue it should be a conversation with clients where you discuss if they're concerned about any guests attending and what their concerns might be so you are adequately prepared. -Cathy

Provide any advice you have for safety at events.

Safety is everyone's responsibility, and it is part of what everyone should keep in mind. Always be Pro-Active with safety and not reactive. Safety is not a program; it is a culture. -Darryl

Trust your instincts. We (humans) have evolved over hundreds of thousands of years to detect danger. We do this by recognizing threats and categorizing them instantaneously, a tilt of the eyes, a hand motion, a strange sound in the bushes. Don't ignore these warning signs. And remember, you won't pick up on these warning signs if you're glued to your phone. Be safe out there! -Scott

Other resources for wedding planners can be found at:

Eventsafetyalliance.org
specialeventsafety.com



Association of Bridal Consultants

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