

ON SCHEDULE

Juggling a job while planning a wedding? Try these tips from the pros who know. By Hillary Quinn

Tip 1 Take on the latest technology

A computer can be an engaged girl's best friend. No one knows this better than Lauren Selig, who turned to her PC when planning her July 2003 wedding. "I kept all of my lists and notes on both my home laptop and my computer at the office," recalls the Seattle resident. "Anytime I made a change at work, I e-mailed it to myself at home." Her cyber folders—everything from "gift baskets" to "rehearsal dinner"—kept pockets of information neatly organized and instantly clickable. Excel spreadsheets (line-by-line graph charts), containing names and addresses of guests, budgets, and timelines, were also key. "They automatically update when you add information," explains Selig. Is condensing information more your style? Then forget about your work computer (most people don't have access to them on the weekends anyway), and consider purchasing a laptop; some models start as low as \$500, and are easy to carry back and forth to the office.

Tip 2 Get set and start talking

A personal call every now and then on your office phone is no big deal. But if you've got major chatting to do with wedding vendors, a cell phone is your best option. "You can duck out of the office on your lunch break and have a private phone available to use for making all those needed arrangements," points out Jana Kemp, author of *No! How One Word Can Transform Your Life* (Amacom Books, 2004). Some cell phones are free when you commit to a calling plan.

For quickie reminders and verbal notations, pick up a digital voice recorder. Just remember that you'll be the one who has to transcribe the tape—a task that can actually add minutes to your day. To that end, a handheld computerized address book with memo pad, like a Palm Pilot, may be a better option.

Tech tools

LAPTOP COMPUTER Work on the run, merge files from your home or office, and e-mail to your heart's content. Price: \$500–\$2,000.

ACCORDION FILE Divides and holds swatches, magazine clippings, receipts. Price: \$1 (for a traditional cardboard model) to \$50 for a leather version.

PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANT (PDA) This little wizard holds scads of information (addresses, names, maps). Price: \$100–\$500.

DIGITAL VOICE RECORDER Some can hold as much as nine hours of verbal notes. Price: \$50–\$200.

CELL PHONE Get one with e-mail capabilities and scrap the Palm Pilot entirely. Price: \$80–\$400.

WEDDING PLANNER Classic spiral or bound binder with planning pages for addresses, gift lists, notes, plus pocket files and dividers. Price: \$10–\$30.



Planning pals: cell, binder, and bench.

Tip 3 Start thinking outside the lunch box

Many working brides like to use their lunch hour to meet with wedding pros, so it's no surprise that these appointments can be hard to come by. And even if you do manage to snag a slot, you may have to wait awhile before it's your turn. Instead, try switching your "lunch" hour and booking your appointments either first thing in the morning or late in the day. This way you won't have to worry about being out of the office too long (and work piling up) or rushing back. You'll avoid rush-hour traffic, too.

Tip 4 Organize your day the easy way

While planning her New York summer nuptials, Doris Cooper turned to her friend, author and time-management expert Julie Morgenstern, for some sage organizational advice. "Julie told me to think about texturing my day in terms of the Morse code," explains Cooper. "A series of dashes were tasks that required large chunks of time, like a discussion with the florist, or arranging table seatings. The dots represented quick things like short phone calls, sending e-mails, or signing a check." Cooper did most of the dots at her office and saved the dashes for when she got home at night. Check out Morgenstern's *Time Management From the Inside* (Continued on page 120)



ask
SCOTT KAY
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PLATINUM AND BRIDAL JEWELRY

When planning your wedding, what would you say would be the most important thing to focus on: music, food, or the place you are having it at? What would hold up better to pass down to generations; gold or platinum?
Carla ~ Eggharbor Twp, NJ

Dear Carla, I have always felt that the music is the one element that makes a celebration the most festive. With the right music there's dancing, laughing, and a lot of fun. This is what a celebration is all about. With the right music and people, hotdogs and beer are all you need! Having fun at your celebration is by far the most important. As for your second question, platinum is the most durable and precious of all metals, but if you want to pass something down, attach some strong family values too. It will then become a family heirloom with meaning and will never be just a piece of jewelry.

If a woman is buying a piece of jewelry for herself, what is the style that is the best long-term investment?

Tamara ~ Corona del Mar, CA

Dear Tamara, When shopping for one's self, a product should spark an impulse to purchase something. Having the feeling that you can't wait to wear it, and enjoying all the times you accessorize with it, will fill you with happiness. Enjoy the pleasure and fulfillment of your purchase and therein lies your investment.

Is it customary for the groom's ex-wife and ex-mother-in-law to attend our wedding? My fiancé feels it is okay, but I have issues with this. Scott Kay, what do you think?

Camille ~ Briar Cliff Manor, NY

Dear Camille, I believe this is not the place for the groom's ex-wife or ex-mother-in-law to be. Your issues are a major sign of discomfort and nothing nor anyone should create this feeling within you on your wedding day. Your fiancé has closed one chapter in his life and is now opening a new one. The focus of his future is you and you only.

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wedding planner

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(Continued from page 110)

Out (Henry Holt and Company, 2000) for more time-saving tricks like avoiding spontaneous conversations, shutting off instant-messenger on your computer, and letting your answering machine pick up.

In addition to the dots-and-dash system, Kemp advises scheduling 15 to 30 minutes each day to devote to wedding tasks. "This helps you avoid procrastination," she says. "When someone has a task before them that's too large, they can't figure out how to break it down. But if you do a little each day, the job doesn't seem so daunting."

Tip 5 Delegate, delegate, delegate!

Don't be afraid to hand off a duty to someone who's willing to help. To get the most efficient use of your worker bee's time, give her a schedule to follow ("book the dj by October 21"). You can also ask her to screen potential vendors, leaving you to make the final decision. Jacqueline Watson, a firm believer in farming things out, kept her friends and family pretty busy while planning her Chicago wedding last year. Mom was given the task of getting the wedding programs printed, while her fiancé hired the band. "I was not as attached to the minutia as some brides, so it was easy for me to let go of certain things," explains Watson. "Besides, the more constructive help I got, the more time that gave me to focus on the thrill of getting married." ❧

SOLUTIONS

(Continued from page 114)

I totally spaced out and forgot to invite a good friend. How can I fix the situation?

"Be honest and up front," says Randie Pellegrini, of Cordially Invited in Los Angeles. "Explain that she's absolutely remembered in spirit, but, unfortunately, you forgot to send out her invite in all the planning craziness. Mail the invite pronto, then take her out to lunch or dinner and let her know how much she means to you."

My uncle sometimes has one drink too many. How can I keep him under control?

This problem occurs more often than you might think. "Assign a reliable friend or family member, one whom your uncle respects, to keep an eye out and let him know when it's time to switch to club soda," says Paul. "You might also give the bartenders a heads up, so they lighten up his drinks. And definitely arrange for his transportation home."

Yikes! I'm going to have my period on the day of my wedding! What can I do to delay it?

If you're on the Pill, forgo the placebo tablets, and continue onto your next pack without taking a break. If you're not on the Pill, consider going on it. "This is entirely safe," says Dr. Boris Petrikovsky, Chairman of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Nassau University Medical Center in New York. "Be sure to talk to your doctor at least three months in advance to ensure you're totally protected when your wedding day comes around." ❧