



WEDDING ADVICE *A Helping Hand*

Wedding planners pop up in many films and TV show, often playing out with an overbearing stereotype. The reality, however, is a helping hand to plan your wedding and save you money. This month we meet Amy Thorne to find out how useful a real wedding planner can be...



It's unlikely you'll find a role so mis-represented as that of a wedding planner. Often portrayed as overbearing in movies and TV, the reality is, thankfully, quite different. Amy Thorne left a career as a senior PA to set up her wedding planning business in 2012 and works with brides to create their wedding, working with budgets between £10,000 and £40,000... best of all she guarantees to be able to save brides the total cost of her consultation fee with canny negotiation and money saving tips.

How does hiring a Wedding Planner work?

My services range from a simple venue search or supplier search to Final Countdown - that's when brides have planned most of their day but are struggling with the finishing touches or find themselves panicking that their wedding is getting closer and there's still a lot to do. This even includes half a spa day for two.

Planning a wedding can quickly become overwhelming, and it can be really stressful, spoiling the run up to the big day. Brides suffering from what I call wedding planning fatigue usually consult me for this service six to eight weeks before the wedding.

Another popular package is The Big Day which involves venue styling - especially for marquee weddings - and

Amy works with brides whose wedding budgets range from £10,000 to £40,000. A typical budget is £17,000 and Amy says she can usually save a bride at least her £2,500 wedding planning fee

support on the day itself, creating and managing an itinerary for the day and helping with anything from dressing the bridal party to creating contingency plans should anything go awry.

Do you make decisions for the bride?

No! I work with the bride and help her to match her expectations and what she has in mind to suppliers and venues I know. My full package is called Total Support. This involves creating an itinerary, managing budgets and suppliers, choosing a dress, arranging their honeymoon - everything.

Wedding planners can potentially save a great deal of money - and stress - working with a bride to help her to organise her day.

It usually involves more than 250 hours work, and I charge from £2,500 for this service, promising brides that on an average budget - around £17,000 - I can save them at least this amount of money with skilful negotiation, planning and money saving ideas.

The service also includes wedding day management, venue dressing and a few other treats along the way!

What areas of their wedding planning do brides need most help with?

It's fun making creative decisions but knowing which services to book, when to book them and how to manage a budget. As a PA I was always super-organised so it comes naturally to me.

It also helps to have a sort of objective voice to bounce ideas off, and I do become a sort of surrogate counsellor - someone objective but honest and who won't tire of hearing about weddings!

What are the key skills of a successful wedding planner?

Lots of patience, an unflappable personality - especially on the morning of the wedding - and excellent organisational skills as well as the ability to negotiate with suppliers.

I also think a wedding planner should be naturally creative and have an eye for detail, and a flair for colours & themes. I also have a Diploma in Interior Design, and you'll be surprised how often the skills prove transferable!

Do you ever feel annoyed with the way wedding planners are portrayed when they appear on TV and in film?

They're always far-fetched characters. It is a little unfair, so I only hope people realise we're not in the least bit like our TV alter-egos.

Above all, a wedding planner should be an objective voice of reason, someone calm you can trust to help you out. At no point should a wedding planner ever become over-bearing; we're there to help and our job is to work for the bride, with the bride.

It's a great job, I've never been happier and my brides all tell me they couldn't have planned their day without me... it's a real compliment, and makes all the hard work worthwhile!

Amy helps brides across the county to plan their wedding and can offer as much or as little help as bride needs; for more information call 07971 384473 or see www.amaranthyne.co.uk.