

# EDINA

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## *The* WEDDING *Issue*

Edina newlyweds unveil  
their wedding stories

**A STEP by STEP** Guide to  
**Wedding Planning**

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Edina's **NEWEST** Brasserie

# Planning 101

How can a wedding planner help you?

By Jen Sandbo

Planning a wedding can sometimes be more stressful than fun for a newly engaged couple. Hiring a planner for a month, week or day when the organizing gets tough can reduce some of the frustration. Rita Swanson, Edina resident and owner of Premier Planning Services (952.922.3859, [www.premierplanningservices.com](http://www.premierplanningservices.com)), explains six ways a wedding planner can assist with your big day.

## 1 Create a vision

The first step is to sit down and envision your dream wedding. Decide with your planner whether you want a formal or informal event, what time of day you want your wedding, how many guests you want to invite and whether or not you want a civil or religious ceremony. As you discuss your ideal wedding, your planner can get ideas on how to make each detail come to life. As a main point in her presentation to potential clients, Swanson says that a planner's job is to help lead the couple and lend expertise when it is needed. Having a planner present to give her thoughts makes the beginning of the planning process go more smoothly.

## 2 Plan a budget

The next step is to create a budget. Chances are planners have been involved with weddings in the past, so they already know how much things will cost, and they can suggest less expensive alternatives that will make all paying parties content. Also, a wedding planner can advise a couple on where to allocate the majority of their money. "The budget is the biggest source of contention," Swanson explains. Finding a middle ground that is reasonable for the couple and both sets of parents takes time.

## 3 Develop a timeline

After creating a budget, the couple and their planner can begin developing a timeline. Wedding planners know from past experience how things should be timed throughout the planning process. "Planners know when things can wait and when things need to get done," says Swanson. If you are using a planner for the six months before your wedding, then she/he will map out everything you need to do during those six months. If you are only



using a planner on the day of your wedding, then the planner's responsibility is to create a timeline for that day—announcing when people need to get their boutonniere or corsage pinned and scheduling breaks for the bride and groom. As the couple, you should be able to go with the flow and not worry about timing.

## 4 Meet the vendors

After you have determined your timeline, you can start meeting vendors. Your planner should attend the meetings with you to make sure your planning needs are met. "Planners spend time creating relationships with vendors," Swanson states. Through these relationships, planners will be able to negotiate rates and find a good combination of vendors for your event. Also, planners know in advance which vendor will be in your price range, so your time will not be wasted meeting a florist or photographer that is too expensive for your budget. Ultimately, your planner acts as a liaison between you and the vendors you choose.

"Planners know when things can wait and when things need to get done."

— RITA SWANSON, OWNER OF PREMIER PLANNING SERVICES





The photos are from the more than 100 weddings Swanson has helped plan. She tends to every detail on the wedding day. Most of the time if something goes awry, the couple will never know until after the event because it is the planner's job to deal with mishaps, while the newlyweds enjoy their special day.

## 5 *Answer questions on etiquette*

Etiquette is another area where planners can lend their expertise. "Once the planning starts, the questions keep coming," states Swanson. Questions like: "should we have a receiving line," "who pays for what at the wedding," and "who should we invite to the rehearsal dinner," are common amongst couples. "I figure out how to make the code of behavior work best for them," comments Swanson. Rather than spending time researching answers to these questions, you can ask your planner and receive a quick explanation.

## 6 *Manage the wedding day*

Whether you hire a planner for the two weeks before your wedding or on the day of your event, wedding day management is still an essential part of the planner's job. "The most important role of a planner is the wedding day management," Swanson says. Wedding planners handle all of the little details on the actual day such as when the first guest will be arriving at the reception (to ensure the first glass of champagne is not poured too early), coordinating the vendors at the ceremony and reception site (in case someone's car breaks down) and making sure the couple is a guest at their own wedding (they should not be answering questions from vendors that day). You should be free of any planning burden on your wedding day. ■