

## Finding the Right Professional for Your Wedding or Other Special Event

Hiring the right team is critical to planning your wedding or other special event...and it can also be quite stressful.

How do I find the right match for me? How do I know who to trust? Where can I go for advice?

These are just some of the questions swirling around in your head. This is not an easy task and it's understandable to feel overwhelmed, frustrated or confused. It's not like you plan a events like this every day!

### Five tips to finding the right ones for you...

1. **Do Your Homework.** You'll get much more out of a meeting or conversation with a prospective vendor if you do a little background homework first. Spend some time on the internet or talking to friends. Find out the average prices in your area and what services are available. Get an idea of what you like and don't like. Wedding websites and related party planning sites can be a great resource. This way when you meet with a professional provider you'll be able to ask better questions and have an idea of what to look out for.
2. **Meet With Them.** An in person meeting is the best way to interview a potential vendor. It lets you get the full experience of their personality, style and professionalism. If that's not possible, have a phone conversation.
3. **Ask Questions.** There are no stupid questions! Make sure you get clear, specific answers to your questions. If you aren't sure what something means, ask them to clarify. Keep asking questions until you completely understand. If a vendor has a problem with you asking questions, they probably aren't the one for you. The best professionals are patient, understanding and take the time to help you make the best choices for your event.
4. **Listen.** Don't just hear the words they say, really listen. Watch the vendor's body language. Are they confident and comfortable with their response? Do they look and sound nervous? Do you get a "funny feeling" about them? Take all the sights, sounds and feelings into account along with their responses; if your gut tells you something isn't right, it probably isn't.
5. **Check References and Online Reviews.** Portfolios are hand-picked to show off the best work, but they may not represent the "average" wedding performance. Videos are edited for the optimum presentation. But real referrals from satisfied clients are hard to fake. Call up both client and professional references. Ask questions and use those listening skills. Even if they give a rave review, you'll often be able to "read between the lines" if there were any issues or problems.

Ask around and search the internet for reviews. Check the Better Business Bureau for any outstanding complaints against the business. Weigh all of this information into your choices.