

## Who needs a Wedding Planner?

Wedding Chaos has carried out a survey, resulting in over 1,000 votes, to find out how brides and grooms viewed 'Wedding Planners' and the services that they have to offer.

The results showed that the majority (51%) of wedding couples either did not, or would not, use a wedding planner for their wedding – a figure that cuts the current market in half for the wedding planning industry.

The underlying reasons for these results could be the increase in wedding planning websites and the growth of bridal magazines – both aiming to help the brides and grooms to plan their own wedding, whilst steering them away from the pitfalls and stress that can often go hand in hand with wedding planning.

Canvassing specific reasons from the WeddingChaos forums, member Ally explained: *"I would not use one because weddings are expensive enough as it is, it would be cheaper to just plan it myself. There are enough resources and forums on the web that I don't feel it's necessary to pay someone to do my planning for me"*.

The cost seemed to be one of the two main reasons to not utilise a Wedding Planner – the other main reason was the fear that the couple would lose control over their own wedding. Steve told us; *".....we wanted to control our day and plan it together. It was, after all, our day and we didn't want to lose it to somebody else's idea of 'our' big day"*.

This view was repeated by many brides and grooms – they felt that their limited budget would be better allocated elsewhere, and even if they did have room in their budget, they felt that the Wedding Planner would take control of their big day and so would shy away from using one. Simply, it seems that the perception of Wedding Planners is one of something to be reserved for the rich and famous, the likes of 'Posh and Becks' and 'Pete and Jordan', who both have the finances, and the need, for a Wedding Planner to organise their lavish weddings.

However, it is not all doom and gloom for the Wedding Planners – the results also show that 13% of voters said that they either did, or would, employ the services of a wedding planner and 22% say that they may use one – that is more than 1 in 3 weddings that would potentially engage the services of a planner.

As Kaz suggests: *"....wedding planners are a good idea, but I am not using one myself as I like the stress and pressure"*. Kaz goes on to say: *"..... If I wanted less stress, and have the money, then I think I would hire somebody else to do it for me"*.

Events manager G Jay believes: *".....wedding planners should be viewed as 'fairy godmothers' - yes they DO charge BUT if they are professional and good at what they do the amount of money they should be able to save you with their links to suppliers should cover their costs and therefore not add anything at all to your wedding budget"*.

Demonstrating that the Wedding Planning industry is not yet considered fully mainstream, 14% of wedding couples stated that they did not know what a Wedding Planner did - a section of the market that once awareness has been raised, could tip the scales in favour of the planners.

The survey and supporting comments draw a very clear conclusion – a lot, perhaps the majority, of brides and grooms do not appreciate the value a professional Wedding Planner can add to their wedding.

The industry needs to position itself far better with its target audience; they need to make it clear that whilst they charge a fee, they will in turn make savings as they negotiate with their professional contacts to get better deals for their couples; they need to demonstrate that they are there to enhance and broaden the range of ideas available to the couples, not to dictate how things should be done; finally, they need to shake the image that the Wedding Planner is somebody employed only by the rich and famous.