

The 7 Common Mistakes Brides Make

**Avoid the Common
Mistakes Brides Make
That Lead To a
Wedding Day
DISASTER...**

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7 Common Mistakes Brides Make That Lead to a Wedding Day DISASTER

Let's face it: planning a wedding is no walk in the park.

Sure, it's exciting and inspiring to check out all the details, dresses, jewelry, exotic locations and honeymoon destinations. But there is a lot to do and everyone and their mother (and *your* mother) seems to have an opinion about your day.

If you don't watch out for these common mistakes, you could end up with a wedding day nightmare: a party where no one dances, wedding vendors who don't show up, even guests who cause a scene.

On the other hand, as long as you watch out for these mistakes, having an unforgettable wedding day where everything runs smoothly and you actually get to have fun is almost guaranteed.

WARNING: Make these mistakes at your own risk!

Mistake #1 – Setting the Date FIRST.

The first thing many couples do when they get engaged, after they stop jumping up and down with excitement and screaming it from the rooftops, is set the date.

This is a **HUGE** mistake.

It's kind of like deciding what town you want to move to before you even visit, or before you check out the weather and job situation.

Setting the date before setting your budget or choosing your location can lead the following disaster scenarios:

- You end up accidentally choosing the most popular time of the year in your area. You can't afford your dream location and the best wedding vendors and services are already booked up, so you have to settle for the leftovers.
- You don't have the flexibility to take advantage of the deals that come up which could have allowed you to afford your dream location.
- Your wedding date may fall on a religious holiday or other unpopular day that means many of your friends and family can't come.
- You might unknowingly pick a date during your town's annual Lima Bean Festival and find out that all the hotel rooms are booked up and your out of town guests have no where to stay.

Of course, you want to set the date as soon as you can. Even if it's just so that you have something to answer your nosy friends when they ask!

But it's vitally important to figure out how much money you have to spend, what parts of the wedding are most important to you and to do your homework FIRST. That way you'll avoid a world of pain.

MISTAKE #2 – Having No Gap of Time Between Your Ceremony and Reception.

In life...and especially when it comes to planning a wedding...everything takes longer than you think.

If you have your ceremony and reception at the same location...

Or if you leave *exactly* enough time for the 8 minute drive between the church and the reception hall...

You will be stressed, miserable and end up with a wedding album featuring the bride frowning on every page.

Maybe I'm exaggerating a little. But do you really want to be pushed and prodded on your wedding day? Do you want to be rushed and pulled in every direction just to fit everything in?

Do yourself a favor and allow MORE time than you think you will need between the ceremony and reception. Your guests are creative enough to find something to do to amuse themselves.

Use your wedding professionals as the expert resources they are. Ask them how long they recommend for getting ready, receiving lines and photos.

And if you *do* decide to have your ceremony and reception in the same location, automatically assume that you don't have enough time.

Opt for as many time savers as possible: take your formal portraits before the ceremony, skip the receiving line, add an extra 30 minutes to your cocktail hour.



MISTAKE #3 – Hiring Amateurs or Friends for Your Wedding Day.

Don't get me wrong, I'm a big fan of including your guests in the wedding day. By all means, have Aunt Sally sing "Ave Maria" for your ceremony or ask your brother to perform a song he wrote on guitar.

But DON'T expect amateurs and hobbyists to deliver a professional performance at your wedding.

There will be awkward gaps. They will miss capturing some of those important moments. An amateur won't know what to do when something goes wrong...which usually means things get worse.

The temptation to save money by hiring an amateur or having a friend provide a service for your wedding can be hard to resist. But it gets a little weird when something is donating a service for free and you aren't happy with their performance.

If you like your friends and family...and you'd like to keep it that way...don't hire them for your wedding day.

WARNING: If you decide to hire an amateur or a talented friend to provide a service for your wedding day, make sure you adjust your expectations. If less than perfect performance in that area is going to make you unhappy, please don't do it.

MISTAKE #4 – Planning the Ceremony LAST.

We talked about how disastrous it can be to choose your wedding date first. Well, making your ceremony arrangements *last* can be almost as bad.

Let's take this scenario:

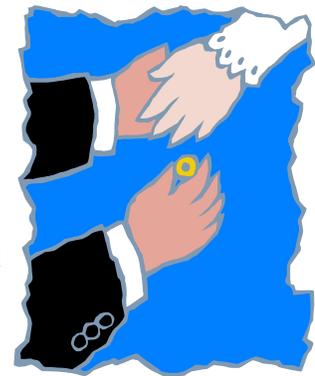
Jill and Kevin find the perfect wedding location at a rustic winery on the hilltop near the couple's home. They plunk down a big deposit, book the band and photographer. Then they start looking at churches...

None of the Catholic churches in the area will agree to marry them because they aren't members. The beautiful Methodist Church is already booked up on their date...leaving only one church available, a run down school house with no air conditioning that is too small to fit all of their guests.

Their parents are outraged that Jill and Kevin might not get married in a Catholic church. The couple faces the painful decision of dealing with parental rage and an ugly, overheated church or losing a large chunk of change in lost deposits.

If you are planning a ceremony in a location separate from your reception, make sure you can find an available, *acceptable* church or space BEFORE you book your venue.

If you have your heart set on a particular church or minister, make sure they are available before you put down your deposit. Otherwise, you can find yourself facing some tough decisions.



MISTAKE #5 – Not Considering the Weather.

If you don't carefully consider the effect of the weather on your wedding day...on your particular location and at that specific time of year...you can end up with a wedding day disaster.

What follows is a true story. The names have been changed to protect the innocent.

Sara and Bob were getting married at beautiful Mills Mansion on the banks of the Hudson River. Beautiful views, gorgeous mansion, amazing gardens nearby.

Of course, they imagined their wedding day as a perfect June afternoon. Instead, they ended up with a monsoon.

They didn't have sides for the tent, so the guests got soaked. The DJ moved onto the tiny dance floor to protect his equipment, which meant there was no room for dancing. Everyone slogged through the mud for five miserable hours.

Before you chose your location, consider the worst case scenario when it comes to the weather.

What if it rains? What if it is blistering hot? What if it snows?

Imagine the worst case scenario in vivid detail. Make sure you are comfortable with your ceremony and reception location in EVERY possible situation.

The one thing you can't control is the weather. Make sure your dream wedding will hold up under the worst the weather can possibly throw at you. That way you can be confident that your day will rock no matter what.

MISTAKE #6 – Having an Unrealistic Wedding Day Timeline...or No Timeline at All.

This often goes hand in hand with Mistake #2. I'll say it until I'm blue in the face:

Everything takes more time than you think.

Even some of our smartest brides...the ones who are always on time for everything...end up rushed and panicked on their wedding day because they didn't allow extra time.

If you fall behind schedule on your wedding day, there is no catching up. You can't get those minutes and hours back. Your party ends at the contracted time and there is nothing more painful than watching a bride who doesn't get to relax and enjoy her day.

Get realistic estimates for the time it takes to do something, then add on some extra time for good measure.

BEWARE: The most common time mistakes are not allowing enough time to get ready and not allowing enough time for traveling. It takes longer than 5 minutes for your girls to pile into the limo; remember to allow time to rearrange dresses, gather bouquets left in the church and take a quick bathroom break.

MISTAKE #7 – Trying to Please Everyone / Not Considering Your Guests.

This two-fold mistake is one of the most disastrous mistakes brides make and it's also one of the trickiest to prevent.

Every wedding website and book on wedding planning seems to know the "right way" to do plan a wedding. Your family and friends are more than happy to tell you what **THEY** think you should do.

Trying to make everyone happy is exhausting. Plus, it's an effort that's doomed to failure.

When I got engaged, I had my heart set on a beach wedding in Gasparilla Island, Florida.

Then, people started telling me what they wanted, and it *wasn't* a beach wedding. So I caved.

I ended up with a wedding day that was still great, but it was more traditional than what I wanted. It really didn't feel like "me" because I was trying to make my family happy.

Choose your battles. If something is really important to you, stick to your guns. You won't be able to make everyone happy anyway. Just make sure you make *yourself* happy.



On the other hand, if you don't think about your guests *at all* you can end up with a wedding day disaster.

Here's another story from my own wedding...

We finally decided to host the wedding at our home, set the date, called up our caterer friends, and made it happen...without stopping to think about our family and friends.

Not talking to my family meant that my father almost couldn't make the wedding. Jeff and I picked out really great, gourmet food...which half my family didn't eat because it was something they didn't recognize.

If you forget to take your guests into account, they might get bored and leave early. Or they may not enjoy themselves.

If you don't think about your guests when you set the date, they might not even attend your wedding at all.

The feeling of being surrounded by the love of your closest family and friends on your wedding day is **INDESCRIBABLE**. You'll miss out if you don't consider your guests, too.

The Bottom Line

If you've already made some of these mistakes, never fear. Now that you know, you can fix them. Just being prepared is the best way to avoid a wedding day disaster.

And if you haven't made any of these mistakes...**CONGRATULATIONS!** Learn from the bridal sisters who have gone before you. Have fun planning your wedding and decide to make it your best day ever, no matter what.

You're marrying the one you love. In the end, how can that ever be a disaster?