

## **Your InstantWeddingPro Insider Questions that will make securing the right wedding vendors a Piece of Cake!**

*When you meet with your prospective wedding vendors, you'll want to ask all the right questions...we've provided a list of what you should make sure to ask when you first speak with them about your wedding. Their responses as well as their attitude will tell you volumes about whether you'll want to include them on your "dream team".*

### **WEDDING FLORIST QUESTIONS:**

1. How much wedding floral design experience does the florist have? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends that the designers have at least three years of wedding experience.

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2. What is the design philosophy of the florist? Traditional? Minimal? Elegant? Modern? Do the florist's views match your own ideas?

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3. Do the designers in the shop attend any national conferences or trade shows? When was the last one they attended? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends choosing a florist that frequents national trade shows, as that keeps the designers up on new trends.

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4. Does the style of the florist and overall look of the shop fit your style?

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5. Can you see live examples or photographs of past work? Are they pictures of actual works or representative of what they can do?

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6. Can you go to an actual wedding that they will be setting up? e-Wedding Pro™ highly recommends this, it is an excellent way to preview your florist at work and see the designs they have created.

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7. How big is the staff and who will work on your wedding? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends that due to the complexity of the average wedding, that there be at least three designers who prepare your flowers. Will the floral designer you're speaking with actually create the arrangements?

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8. What flowers will be in season on your wedding day? What are some less expensive alternatives to flowers beyond your price range?

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9. How many suppliers does the florist work with? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends that a florist have relationships with at least three to four suppliers from different regions in case of weather or political challenges.

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10. What are the most popular floral trends right now? Why do they work or not work? What's the most progressive concept the florist has recently brought to a design project?

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11. Do they offer balloon service? This might be an option you will want.

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12. If your wedding is during the summer, which flowers are least likely to wilt in hot weather? What are some hot weather tips?

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13. What is the florist's approach to decorating an outdoor event vs. indoor?

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14. Has the florist done weddings at your ceremony and/or reception sites before? If so, they may have pictures of arrangements done at your site. They should know which sizes, shapes, and colors already work in that space.

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15. Will the florist deliver flowers for your wedding or spend time at the site, setting up, pinning on corsages/boutonnieres, and making sure everything is in order?

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16. On your wedding day and weekend is the florist doing any other weddings? How many? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends that in order to receive the best possible service that the florist limits their day to two weddings, based on timings.

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17. Are rental items like vases, potted plants, arches, trellises, candelabras, and urns available through the florist or must you contact a rental company?

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18. Does the florist preserve bouquets? It may be necessary to make an appointment before your wedding in order for your bouquet to be preserved directly afterward.

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19. In general, assess the attitude of the florist, are they excited about your wedding dreams? Are they eager to work with you within your budget? Are they helpful by offering ideas and suggestions?

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## **WEDDING LIVE MUSIC QUESTIONS:**

### **Music Agency or Musicians:**

1. How many years has the agency or musicians been handling weddings? What percentage of your business is wedding-related? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends choosing an agency or musician that has provided wedding music for a minimum of 3 years. It's best to choose a musician(s) who performs at least 5-6 weddings per month during the busy wedding season. Choose an agency whose business is at least 75% weddings.

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2. If talking with a music agency, ask "how many different musicians or groups do you represent and how do you select your musicians?" A qualified music agent will develop a roster of musicians they have auditioned as well as have checked track records. Musicians need to have at least 3 years of experience performing at weddings.

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3. How do I preview the musicians? Do you have pictures, audio tapes, CD's or videos, as well as song lists for us to review? e-Wedding Pro™ suggests you review videos if possible as it is a truer representation.

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4. If talking with an agent, ask if you are able to choose the specific musicians and are those musicians listed on the contract? e-Wedding Pro™ highly recommends working with an agent who is up front about who you are listening to and that that will be the same musicians who perform at your wedding.

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5. Can we see the musicians perform live? e-Wedding Pro™ does not recommend you attend other people's private events to "audition" the group.

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6. If we request a selection of music you don't know, would you be willing to learn it? What will we need to provide you and are there any fees for making this arrangement?

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7. Will you help me choose the music selections and is that done in person? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends choosing a musician or agency that will gladly help familiarize you with all the appropriate possibilities.

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8. What is the musicians' set-up requirements, i.e. shading, electricity, staging/risers, space, etc.?

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9. How much time do the musicians need to set up?

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10. How many weddings do you have scheduled on our wedding day? If this is an agency they may easily handle 30-40 weddings pre weekend during the busy season. If it is a musician you are talking with, they should, depending on timing and location, perform no more than 3 weddings on one day.

11. If the musicians play in the ceremony, will they be available for the rehearsal ceremony? e-Wedding Pro™ tip: usually musicians do not attend the rehearsal ceremony.

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12. With the band, does the band leader also act as MC?

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13. What will their performance attire be?

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14. How many breaks will your musicians take?

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15. During the breaks will there be recorded music?

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16. What is the fee for performing at the ceremony? What is the fee for performing at the reception? Is there a time minimum or maximum? e-Wedding Pro tip: The way they answer this is key. A service-oriented agency will ask you a lot of questions about details of your wedding before giving you a rate quote.

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17. Is there any additional mileage fee to our wedding venue?

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18. Do you issue a contract to me and to the musicians?

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19. What is your backup plan in case of illness or emergency?

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## **WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the primary style of the photographer: Traditional, Photojournalism, or Contemporary?

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2. What's the philosophy of the photographer about shooting weddings?

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3. Will the photographer you meet with be the one who actually takes your wedding pictures?

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4. Does the photographer utilize color, black and white, special effects, or all?

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5. How many weddings has the photographer shot? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends a minimum of three years wedding experience, with weddings comprising at least 50% of their business.

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6. How many other weddings will the photographer shoot on your wedding day? e-Wedding Pro™ suggests, that depending on logistics, a maximum of two weddings per day for the photographer results in the best service.

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7. Is the photographer open to a must-take photo list provided by you?

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8. How does the photographer determine price? Are there any additional fees that may come up?

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9. How many rolls of film will be shot, and how many proofs and final prints will result?

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10. Are travel costs included or separate?

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11. Are packages available? Can you get a price list?

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12. What types of cameras does the photographer use for weddings?

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13. What types of lighting and other equipment (such as tripods) does the photographer use?

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14. Does the photographer bring backup equipment in case of emergency?

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15. How long does he keep negatives? Can you buy your negatives from the photographer?

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16. Can I see a completed album from one wedding, vs. a show album from many different weddings? If you are working with a company or team situation, insist on seeing a completed album done by the photographer you would be getting for your wedding.

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17. What is your emergency plan if you are unable to shoot my wedding? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends they have a named back-up person who meets with your approval

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18. How much time do you require after the ceremony to complete all the posed shots?

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19. Is the photographer a member of PPA or WPPI? Find out if they are active by asking when they last attended a conference and if they ever compete for awards.

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20. Ask yourself: Is this person eager and interested? Do I feel comfortable with this person? Does this seem like someone I would trust and enjoy working with throughout my wedding day?

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21. When looking at sample albums, notice whether: photos are all from one wedding, if they are framed and centered well, if they are neither over- or underexposed, if the lighting is effective, if the details are visible, if the people look comfortable and relaxed.

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22. Call references and ask: Were you satisfied overall? Did the photographer get the shots you wanted? Has the photographer responded promptly to orders?

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## **WEDDING VIDEOGRAPHER QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the primary style of the videographer: Documentary, artsy, or direct?

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2. What is his or her experience? How many weddings has the videographer done or how many does he or she average a year? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends the videographer has at least 3 years of wedding experience and that they shoot 30 or more weddings a year.

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3. Is he or she a member of W.E.V.A.? Active participation in this professional association gives the videographer exposure to the latest in techniques and technology. e-Wedding Pro™ recommends choosing a videographer who regularly attends these national conferences.

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4. What is their philosophy when it comes to videotaping a wedding?

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5. Do they know the photographer you are using?

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6. Do they try to coordinate with the photographer before the wedding?

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7. Have they ever shot at your ceremony and/or reception location before? If so, may we view the tape?

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8. How many other weddings will they be doing on your wedding day and weekend? Depending on timing, e-Wedding Pro™ recommends choosing a videographer who limits the number of weddings to two per day.

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9. Will the videographer you're meeting with be the one who will shoot your wedding?

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10. What types of cameras will he or she plan to use? How new are the cameras? How many cameras? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends the cameras be no more than 5 years old and that the videographer have quality backup equipment on site.

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11. What other types of equipment will they bring like microphones, lights, backup gear, etc.?

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12. What kind of editing system do they use to edit the videos? Do they use non-linear digital editing equipment?

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13. How noticeable is the video crew? Do they plan to use bright lights and put the camera in people's faces?

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14. Do they offer different levels of wedding video packages for different budgets?

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## **WEDDING VENUES QUESTIONS:**

### **Ceremony Venue:**

1. Is your site available on our requested date?

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2. How many hours is the site available for?

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3. How many weddings typically go on at the same time and how is that handled? eWedding Pro™ suggests you choose a venue that is not a “wedding line-up”, but instead offers you a sense of seclusion.

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4. Will there be an on-site coordinator there for us during the ceremony?

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5. Does your site charge a standard fee, donation, or officiant’s fee?

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6. Can the site handle our estimated guest list?

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7. Are there any restrictions on attire, decorations, music, photography, and/or videography?

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8. Can outside musicians be brought in?

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9. Is a permit needed for an outdoor, public location? If so, where/when should we apply?

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### **Reception Venue:**

1. Is your site available on our requested date?

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2. How many hours is the site available for?

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3. Do you charge for overtime?

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4. Do you charge by flat fee, per hour, or per guest?

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5. Can we bring in outside caterers, cake designers and/or floral designers?

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6. Does the site have a liquor license?

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7. May we provide our own liquor?

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8. Do you have a sample floor plan with pictures?

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9. What is your waiter-to-guest ratio? (if applicable)

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10. Does the facility have food preparation areas?

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11. Does the facility have electrical power?

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12. Is there a dance floor or can one be rented?

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13. Are there any dress code restrictions?

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14. Are there any entertainment, decoration, or photo restrictions?

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15. Do you have parking facilities?

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16. Do you have adequate rest room facilities?

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17. Will there be other weddings at the same time as ours? If the answer is “yes” e-Wedding Pro™ recommends finding out exactly how the venue separates them. Consider sound as well as view. Make sure this is acceptable to you.

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18. Should we hire security or do you provide it, if necessary?

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19. Will there be an on-site coordinator present at our reception?

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**BRIDAL SALON QUESTIONS:**

**Questions To Ask Before Shopping:**

1. Is it necessary to make an appointment?

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2. What hours and days of the week is the store open?

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3. What designers/manufacturers does the store carry?

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4. Within my price and size range, are there choices available through this store?

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5. How much on-site inventory do you have so that I can try on dresses in my size?

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6. Are there any trunk shows soon at the store?

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7. Does the store carry shoes, undergarments, veils and accessories?

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8. Can the store order a sample of a gown that they don't normally carry?

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9. Does the store carry bride's maids gowns, flower girl dresses as well as mother's dresses?

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10. Are tuxedos offered at the store?

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11. Can the store perform alterations there or is that sent out?

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**Questions To Ask Upon Finding A Gown:**

12. Who is the designer/manufacturer of the dress?

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13. Can this gown be altered with different sleeves, neckline, or train length?

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14. How soon will the dress be available for pickup?

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15. Are rush orders available? (Hopefully this won't apply to you!)

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16. Will the gown I select look precisely like this one?

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17. Does the store have fabric samples?

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18. Is there a matching headpiece for the dress?

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19. If headpieces are not offered at the salon, can the salon refer me to other stores?

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20. Are you able to alter the headpieces?

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21. How much are dress alterations?

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22. What types of alterations are offered?

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23. Do the alterations come with a written estimate?

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24. Once the dress arrives and I decide to change the sleeve or train length, how much will that cost?

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25. If I want to use the dress for pre-wedding pictures, can I pickup the dress and then return it to the store to be pressed for the wedding?

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26. If the bridesmaids' and flower girl's dresses are bought through this store, will we receive a discount and/or free alterations?

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27. What is the standard cancellation/refund policy?

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28. How much is the deposit?

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29. When is the final balance due?

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30. Which credit cards does the store accept?

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31. Does the contract/receipt contain the designer's name, manufacturer information, gown size, color, fabric, style number, price, and delivery date?

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32. When I come in for my fittings, will I work with the same salesperson?

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**CATERING QUESTIONS:**

1. How long have you been catering weddings? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends at least 3 years of experience, with 25% or more of their business being wedding receptions.

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2. How many events do you normally do in one day during the same season as my wedding? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends a caterer who limits their events to 2/day.

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3. Have you catered a reception at the venue we've chosen?

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4. Do you have any extra fees or considerations due to the venue we have chosen?

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5. What is your guest to waiter ratio?

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6. What is the staffs' attire, including on-location chefs?

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7. For my budget range and number of guests, what type of menu items do you recommend?

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8. Which type of service (buffet or sit-down) would be the best?

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9. Are linens included or are they an additional fee?

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10. Do you have a selection of linens in colors other than white?

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11. Are glasses, plates, and silverware included?

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12. Is rental equipment like tables, chairs, and serving pieces available through you?

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13. How much time will be needed to set up?

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14. What type of bar service do you recommend?

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15. Is liquor included?

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16. How much do you charge per drink?

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17. Do you charge extra corkage and cake-cutting fees?

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18. Are gratuities included or separate?

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19. Do you have a minimum require guest count?

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20. When do you need a final guest count?

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21. Is there an additional charge for pouring coffee?

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22. Is cleanup included?

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23. Will you return any rental items?

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24. How do you handle overtime?

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**WEDDING CAKE DESIGNER QUESTIONS:**

1. Does the cake designer specialize in wedding cakes? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends 30% or more of their business is wedding cakes.

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2. How many years have they been baking wedding cakes? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends the company has a minimum of three years experience.

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3. Does the designer do custom cakes or do you choose from specific styles?

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4. What types of ingredients are utilized?

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5. When, in relation to your wedding day, will the cake be made? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends finding a baker who bakes the cake on the wedding day.

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6. How many staff will work on your cake? Is it one person, a baker and designer, more? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends choosing a company who has a separate designer and baker.

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7. How many wedding cakes are prepared a weekend?

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8. Does the cake designer work with floral designers to decorate the cake?

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9. How are the cakes priced? By the slice or per cake?

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10. Is there special pricing for different fillings and/or flavors?

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11. Is the top tier of the cake included or extra?

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12. Does the cake baker have a state health department license?

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13. Is cake delivery included? How much extra does it cost?

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**WEDDING JEWELER QUESTIONS:**

1. Do you have a G.I.A.-certified Gemologist on-staff?

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2. Can I have the ring I like independently appraised? e-Wedding Pro™ highly recommends having this done.

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3. What is your return policy in case she doesn't like the ring? e-Wedding Pro™ suggests choosing a jeweler who will exchange the ring with no hassle or penalty.

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4. Will you create a custom ring?

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5. What other stones besides diamonds do you offer for rings?

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6. Can you modify a family heirloom ring?

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7. What is your warranty policy?

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8. What is your guarantee policy?

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9. Do you charge for sizing?

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10. Do you offer an upgrade or trade-in program?

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11. Do you offer a cleaning and stone tightening service?

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**WEDDING FORMALWEAR QUESTIONS:**

1. Do you stock formalwear options I can try on? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends choosing a company that has a large selection of tuxedos in-store.

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2. How many years has your store been in business? e-Wedding Pro™ suggest choosing a company that has been in business a minimum of 5 years.

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3. What's the typical starting price for a tuxedo rental?

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4. Do you have package deals if we rent a certain amount of tuxedos?

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5. What is included in a full rental package?

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6. Do you sell tuxedos? If so, how much do you charge?

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7. Do you offer last-minute alterations? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends choosing a company that can do in-store alterations.

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8. When should I come back for a final fitting?

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9. What brands of formalwear do you stock?

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10. Are you open on Sundays for a return of rental items?

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11. How do you handle damaged or lost tuxedos?

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12. How do you handle out-of-town guests?

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**WEDDING OFFICIANT QUESTIONS:**

**Religious Ceremony:**

1. Are you available on our date?

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2. If our wedding is at another location other than your place of worship, will you travel, and what are your requirements?

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3. For our first meeting, which documents do we need to bring?

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4. Are there any special rules or restrictions, i.e. music, readings, video taping, etc.?

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5. Are you willing to have personalized vows, readings, poems, and/or music?

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6. Do you plan to give a sermon or speech?

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7. How would you describe your style?

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8. Can we attend one of your ceremonies in advance? e-Wedding Pro™ highly recommends you dress appropriately and attend a ceremony this person is officiating so that you know exactly what his or her ceremony is like.

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9. Do we need to fulfill any pre-wedding counseling?

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10. How much is your ceremony fee?

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11. Can you provide your thoughts on our vows and/or potential readings?

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12. Can you provide assistance with any family conflicts over the ceremony?

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13. Do we need to bring our marriage license to the wedding?

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14. What day should our rehearsal be held?

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15. Can you attend the Rehearsal Dinner and/or the Reception?

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**Civil Ceremony:**

1. Are you available on our wedding date?

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2. Will you travel to our ceremony site?

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3. How would you describe your style?

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4. Can we attend one of your ceremonies in advance? e-Wedding Pro™ highly recommends you dress appropriately and attend a ceremony this person is officiating so that you know exactly what his or her ceremony is like.

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5. Do you have any suggestions for civil ceremony sites?

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6. Is there a standard officiant's fee? Should the fee be a donation?

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7. How many years have you been performing weddings?

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8. Why do you perform weddings?

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9. Do you have any sample vows, ceremonies, or wordings we can see?

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10. Can we personalize our ceremony by writing our vows, using special music, etc.?

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11. Will you be available for a rehearsal of the ceremony?

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**WEDDING STATIONER QUESTIONS:**

1. Does your company specialize in wedding stationery? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends selecting a stationer who has at least 3 years wedding experience and who will take the time to personally familiarize you with all the possibilities.

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2. Do you have any sample albums to look at?

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3. Do you offer custom designs?

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4. Do you offer calligraphy services?

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5. Do you have a wording guide that we can use?

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6. After we've ordered, how long until we can see a proof?

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7. After we've signed off on the proof, how long until we receive the stationery?

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8. What is your protocol for finding an error in the order?

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9. How do you price your invitations? Can we get a discount if we order other wedding stationery from you?

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10. Do you offer other personalized wedding accessories like champagne flutes, napkins, guest books, and/or matchbooks?

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**WEDDING TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS:**

1. What types of cars, years, colors, and sizes do you offer? e-Wedding Pro™ reminder, if the company says the vehicles are “new”, ask them to be specific—what year?

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2. Can I specify the exact type, color and year of the vehicle on the contract? This is an e-Wedding Pro™ must!

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3. How many people do you recommend per car? e-Wedding Pro™ advises you to take into consideration the fact that your dress will probably take up the space of 2 passengers, so factor in extra space requirements for gowns.

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4. How many cars does your company have?

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5. Does your company do “farm-outs” in case of availability issues? With which company and can they guarantee a particular vehicle and year?

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6. Does the limousine or coach come with amenities like TV, sunroof, telephone and/or bar?

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7. Does your company offer special wedding packages? What is included?

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8. Does your company belong to the National Limousine Association?

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9. If we plan to rent more than one vehicle, do you have a group discount?

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10. Is gas or mileage included or separate?

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11. What is the standard attire for your drivers?

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12. How do you handle overtime?

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13. Do you have a copy of the insurance certificate and operating license?

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14. What is the minimum amount of hours you will book?

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15. Do you offer multiple pickup and drop-off services?

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If your wedding day venues lack adequate parking or you are planning a formal affair or you have security issues with your event, you may want to hire a valet parking service...Here's some questions to ask your prospective valet company...

**VALET PARKING SERVICE QUESTIONS:**

Questions You Should Ask:

1. How many valets will I need and why?

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2. How much insurance do you have? e-Wedding Pro™ recommends they have a \$2,000,000 minimum policy.

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3. Should I charge per car or provide free valet?

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4. Will my guests be expected to tip?

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5. What will your valets be wearing the day of our event?

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6. What are your company's attire and grooming guidelines for the attendants?

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7. What system do you use to organize the cars and keys?

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8. Will the keys be in a locked box?

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9. Will you provide signs directing my guests?

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10. How much will this cost?

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**Questions The Valet Company Should Ask You:**

1. How many guests are you expecting?

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2. Where is the event being held?

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3. How much parking is available?

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4. Are we guaranteed it is available?

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5. Is it a ceremony and reception or will it just be the guests arriving at the reception?

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6. What time does the event start?

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7. What time does the event end?

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8. How does the event end? Will all the guests be leaving at once?

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9. What is the theme of the event?

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10. Who will be my contact the day of the event?

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**HONEYMOON TRAVEL AGENT QUESTIONS:**

1. Have they booked many honeymoons before? e-WeddingPro™ recommends at least 3 years of experience in booking honeymoons, with the amount of leisure travel being 30% or more of their business.

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2. May we have some references of previous honeymoon clients?

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3. Based on our interests and wants, what ideas does the agent have?

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4. Has the agent visited any of the destinations themselves?

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5. Are there any brochures we should look at?

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6. Upon booking, will the agent deliver all tickets and confirmations?

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7. In case of travel emergency, is there a toll-free number to call? e-WeddingPro™ suggests choosing a travel agent who is consistently available and easily accessible.

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8. Can the agent assist with acquiring necessary documents such as passports and/or visas?

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9. Is the agent as willing to work for me whether I am planning an extravagant honeymoon or if I'm just needing good pricing on airline tickets and hotels?

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