

It's His Wedding Too

How involved should your groom be?

No matter what the season, all year round brides-to-be are busy planning for the most important day of their lives. And although we always hear about brides making the wedding 'to-do' lists, many grooms are taking part too. But whether they want to be involved in the planning process or not is the big question. So we decided to ask: how involved should your groom be in the pre-wedding planning process?

"My husband was a sweetheart when it came to helping me out," says Sarita George. She got married last summer and wanted her husband's opinion on everything. "He was off work and I was working, so he did a lot of the research and would call and update me on pricing, options and all the little details." To sum it up, it's all about team work." And it's that teamwork and having a second opinion that can often help a couple stick to their wedding budget. What can often be a major source of stress can easily become a manageable part of wedding planning if you just tackle it with an open mind. "If he wasn't there to knock some sense into me regarding things that I should and shouldn't spend money on, then we probably would have been in debt by now!"

Suzzette Patten - a wedding and event planner for Exquisite Occassions, agrees that it's important to have both people in the loop when it comes to how much money is being spent. "From the moment a guy pops the question and the girl says yes, the wedding planning process begins."

There's money for the cake, limo, dress, decorator and DJ, the list seems never ending. "This is definitely not a one person job," says Patten. "It used to be that the bride's parents would pay for the wedding, but nowadays in many cases couples are paying for their own weddings or at least contributing towards many of the services. Having said that, the bride and groom should both be involved in the process to make sure that they are getting the best bang for their buck." From the point of engagement onwards, two budgets ultimately become one. It is for that reason that couples need to consider what they could be doing with that money after the wedding is over. Some couples may decide that the wedding is the most important day of their lives to date and they want to spend whatever they can to make it unique. Other couples may decide that the money they could spend on an extravagant wedding could be better spent as down payment on a new home.

28-year-old Rohit Chopra agrees that it's important to let the grooms feel part of the process. "I am heavily involved in every aspect of the wedding plans," says Chopra. "I want my guests to be a part of a memorable wedding so I am making the effort to be a part of all the planning." Chopra and his fiancé have been preparing for their June 2009 wedding for a couple of months. "If you want a smooth wedding that is enjoyable for you and your guests then a lot of work is needed in order to manage the details," says Chopra. "The details make the difference between a great wedding and an average wedding." And although Chopra and his fiancé are working together on the little things, it can sometimes lead to some big arguments.

"Being heavily involved with the wedding plans has been difficult at times. Neha and I debate endlessly on the little details, the prices, the guest list and the negotiation process. It gets frustrating," says Chopra.

"The wedding industry offers so many choices that a couple can easily get overwhelmed and end up in 'analysis paralysis.'"
Rohit Chopra

So what does a couple do to cut down on the arguments? Chopra and his fiancé have decided to split their responsibilities. "She'll be in charge of the decorations and I'll be in charge of the catering."

Wedding planner Suzzette Patten says it's always a good idea to split up the list. "Some aspects of wedding planning will be boring to the groom." The best way to keep your guy in the loop is to check in with him from time to time and make sure that he feels like he's part of the decision making process, and of course that his efforts are appreciated.

"The groom should be the bride's right hand man when it comes to planning "their" wedding," says Patten. But some couples say the best way to avoid conflict is to just have one partner prepare the wedding completely. Lisa Bhatt, who got married a year ago, lived in Burlington and her fiancé lived in Windsor. "It made things a bit difficult because he couldn't be too involved in planning due to the distance. I also found it a lot easier because I was able to make the decisions on my own and go ahead with what I wanted."

Rohit Chopra says if they didn't have much time between the engagement and wedding, he probably would have just let his fiancé make most of the decisions too. But if you do have the time and are willing to put in the effort, Chopra says that potential grooms need to start feeling the wedding fever. "This is his day just as much as it is hers. His guests are just as important as hers and he should want his guests to enjoy the day."

Sarita George, agrees that in the end the day is about both people, not just the bride. "God brought the two together for a reason and the two should plan how the day they exchange their vows should be."

So ladies, here's a list of ways in which to involve your groom in the wedding planning process without giving up the special feminine touches that only a bride can add:

Transportation is an important part of the planning process that can be a great item to hand off to the groom. Most guys love cars and are also quite knowledgeable about them. Let them suggest some ideas for transportation, research the options and then you can proceed to make final decisions together.

Alcohol and the liquor license are other important items that the groom could manage. If you are going to be having a bar at your wedding, let him discuss the cocktail options with the venue and negotiate pricing within your package.

Although many brides expect the groom's attire to match with her outfit, allow

him to play a big role from this perspective. Ask him what he would like to wear before you even suggest anything. If you're lucky, he may just say "whatever you would like me to wear." If not however, you could both discuss the options and come up with something that suits his personality and your theme for the wedding.

On the topic of attire, if you are having groomsmen as part of your wedding, you may want to have your groom coordinate the fittings and selections for their outfits. This could end up being a fun day out for 'the boys' and it's a chance for the groom to manage another important aspect of the planning process.

His guest list is another important item that the groom should be managing. Often times, the bride will attempt to manage this process, however in actuality, no one can do a better job with this item than the groom and his family. So be sure that he knows the timelines and the expectations for the RSVP process and then just trust that he will execute accordingly.

Technical items such as videography, screen rentals, sound equipment etc... could easily be handed off to the groom as well. It's important that the couple make these decisions and attend meetings together. But managing final details, signing contracts and paying deposits can easily be handled by the groom himself.

The hotel room for your wedding night is another item that can be passed off to the groom. Agree on a location and the type of suite that you would like to book, and then once again, he can research the options and the proceed to book the room once he finds something that suits your needs.

Finally, remember that planning a wedding can be both an enjoyable and stressful time. Be sure to always remember what you both expect to get out of your wedding, and try not to get caught up in the unlimited options that present themselves during the planning process. Stay focussed, split the tasks and always communicate - Good luck!

