



YOU'RE ENGAGED!

NOW WHAT?!

By Down the Aisle YYC
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IN OUR HUMBLE OPINION...

Congratulations on your engagement! You've flashed that beautiful rock all over town, you've shared the happy news with your friends, family, co-workers & the Instagram World, and you and your honey to be have toasted many glasses of champagne to this wild and crazy trip called Marriage that you are about to embark on together.

Now it is time to start this whole wedding planning thing and you are not too certain where to begin. Don't you stress, we are here to help get you started and believe it or not, with a little direction and a little momentum, this beast of a task starts to become more and more manageable.

There are many ways to do things and your mom, big sis, even your spouse may have something else in mind, but what we have for you today is The Big 3 that we always tackle first and foremost.



STORYBOARD

AKA DAY DREAM

The heading may be a bit vague but simply put this is the part where you and your sweetie verbalize how you see your wedding day playing out.

Are you local or on a beautiful beach somewhere hot? Is being outside important to you? Are you exchanging vows at an early ceremony to enjoy the full day together or is the plan to tie the knot later on so you can share the day with your amazing bridal party?

Are you interested in a First Look to allow more time for photos or is it your dream to have that first look be when you come down the aisle? Do you envision an epic reception to celebrate your nuptials with music, dance, drinks & social or do you prefer something a lot more intimate, focused on great conversation, connecting with your nearest & dearest and amazing food?

This is of course not a comprehensive list but you get the idea. Start talking about what your head and your heart want to experience on this special day and build your wedding around that.

Pro Tip – enjoy this conversation when you are out for a walk on a blue bird day or over that dessert you both love so damn much. This is one of the fun, dreamy parts to wedding planning so let it be. You don't have to commit to anything at this stage so let those daydreams flow and give them time to percolate.



SET YOUR

PRIORITIES

Ok, step 2 is a bit tougher and this may be your first lesson in 'marriage means learning to compromise' .

We have taken the time to really dream about our perfect wedding story, now it is time to hone that in and set our Top 3 priorities so we can start making plans.

This step is so important, because it will provide you direction on where to focus your time, money and energy. Having clear priorities will also help to keep you grounded and serve as an anchor when you are faced with a million different options, or a million different suggestions from friends, family or vendors who often all want to offer you their opinions.

Priorities give you a framework, or maybe we call it a lens that you can pass all these details through to ensure you don't get pulled away from what your overall vision is. Anyone who has spent a hot second on Pinterest will know what we mean. We log on to check out arbors for our rustic wedding theme and all of a sudden we are down the rabbit hole pinning celebrity wedding ceremonies on a yacht or a vineyard in the South of France. HomeSense has the same power. Go in for a dog dish and leave with a new living room set that will take you 2 years to payoff. Simply put, priorities act as your safety tether in wedding planning and we need them early on.



Still not sure what we mean by set your priorities, here are a few topics to get you thinking.

- Attire (dress, suit, shoes, accessories, hair, makeup anything that goes into Your Look)
- Photographer / Videographer (hired to capture your moments)
- Venue (where you will be married + reception celebration)
- Décor (decorations, tablescapes, centerpieces, lighting and all things that go into ambiance)
- Guest Experience (photobooth, favors, DJ or a band, specialty dessert table)
- Floral (bridal + bridesmaid bouquets, boutonniere, arches, centerpieces, general decor)
- Food & Beverage (meal service, appetizers, champagne, full bar service, wine pairing)
- Stationary (invitations, save the dates, programs, signage)
- Traditions (first dance, cake cutting, speeches, bouquet toss, garter, slideshow, sendoff)
- Alone Time (First Look, Dinner at Sweet Heart Table, Separate Limo than Wedding Party)

Our advice on this one is don't overthink it. If you find yourself stuck try this phrase 'on our wedding day, the most important thing to us is'. And keep going through that until you have a nice little list. Now circled the Top 3. BAM. You have just successfully articulated your biggest priorities.

FINE PRINT – If Mom or Dad or another incredible human has stepped up, and is financially contributing to your wedding in a significant way, you may want to allow them a voice in the priorities step. In the Corporate World we call this Investor Relations but that is a lesson my friends for another day.

GUEST LIST

WHO MAKES THE CUT

This one is straightforward and though you do not need to hammer it out straight away, you do need to start thinking about it early on.

Your guest count will have the largest impact on your budget and spoiler alert, we are heading there tout suite.

Entertaining for 10 is much different than entertaining for 100. That is an oversimplified example but you see the point. More people = more food, more drink, more rentals, more centerpieces, more invitations, more postage and so on and so forth.

Guest count will also affect your venue options as some facilities may not be able to accommodate 300 of your nearest and dearest. At this number your vendors may also need to charge you more as they will have to hire additional labour to support the logistics of a larger headcount.

Remember that priority list that you made up? Do the same thing here but with people. Start with who you can't dream of leaving out and work your way down. When it gets time to dollars and cents you can refer back to this and make the necessary adjustments so that your guest list aligns with your budget.

Having trouble narrowing it down or deciding if someone should 'make the cut'. Ask yourself this - are you happy to spend about \$100 to \$150 for this individual to join you on your big day? That is an average cost per head when budgeting a wedding and may be a helpful stat when building that guest list.

And now that you have a solid list of names, we have a very challenging task to finish this section. Repeat that same exercise but now pretend that you can only have 20 / 50 / 75 guests total. It is no secret that Covid has had a tremendous impact on the Wedding World and though it is looking more and more optimistic than it was a year ago, we are still not in the clear. The reality may very well be that you have to make some concessions and having already thought through your wedding plans with reduced numbers will prepare you should the pandemic still be looming come wedding day.

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