



ALAN &amp; JACKIE RANKINE-PHOTOGRAPHERS

# Take over control

Stephanie Telfer gets the lowdown on hiring a wedding co-ordinator

**A**s any of my friends will testify – whether it's nights out, birthday presents or holidays, I'm the one with the plan. I pride myself on being a good organiser (who said control freak?) but when it comes to organising the biggest day of my life, I think even I could become overwhelmed. It takes a little more effort and dedication than setting a few reminders in your iCal. But that's where the services of a fantastic wedding co-ordinator come in...

## MONEY TALKS

You might think that wedding co-ordinators are reserved for people with bigger budgets, but you'd be wrong. "We often find that couples

working with smaller budgets are in greater need of a wedding planner," says Emma Douglas from Aberdeen-based Timeless White. "We've got extensive knowledge of cheaper alternatives and most of our packages come in at fixed prices, so your budget

*We just didn't have the time to research it properly and we really needed some help*

doesn't affect what you pay us for the support and help that we provide."

Janice Grimley-Evans, managing director at Blue Thistle Weddings, agrees and explains that a good wedding planner will tailor packages to

accommodate each couple's budget and wedding size. "Our prices are reasonable and a full planning package costs around £750. Most couples are planning their wedding over at least one year, so that works out at just over £2 per day or less for an entirely personal service."

And it's useful to note that hiring a wedding planner may also help you make savings elsewhere. As well as brilliant recommendations

and shortcuts, they often have established deals with local wedding suppliers and will be able to pass on discounts and savings.

## EXCLUSIVELY YOURS

Another common



ALICE DEER DAVID MCNEIL PHOTOGRAPHY

misconception is that hiring a wedding planner means giving over complete control of your wedding. "We had no idea what to expect; how much would they be involved and what would they actually be able to do?" says Louise Campbell, who married James Killough on 15th February this year at Ballathie House Hotel, Perthshire with the help of Janice from Blue Thistle Weddings. "Janice would give us suggestions and if we didn't like the idea of something we said so. It wasn't a problem at all and it didn't feel like someone else was planning our big day; she was just there to help us." Kimmie Brown is a director of Fife-based Litu Ltd with husband George. She advises couples seek out a co-ordinator that has a passion for the work and is a people person. "I don't think you need to be a particular type of person but you do need people skills and the ability to put yourself in the client's position at all times," says Kimmie. "It's one of those professions where you cross the client/professional line and learn about the couple, their family relationships and any

potential pitfalls that could become apparent."

## HELPING HANDS

A solution was exactly what Carolyn Sweeney-Wilson and Brian Wilson needed when they married on June 2012 at Dunblane Cathedral followed by a reception in Doubletree by Hilton Dunblane Hydro. They hired Janice from Blue Thistle Weddings after their original venue went out of business just three months before the wedding day. "I realised the enormity of planning a completely different type of wedding in such a short space of time," recalls Carolyn. "Our original venue had a small chapel, whereas our new venue had a larger ceremony space and I wanted to make it feel as intimate as possible. We just didn't have the time to research this properly and at that point I realised we really needed some help."

After a few meetings and email exchanges, Janice and Carolyn started working together to create her perfect day. "I was already halfway along with my plans but Janice was there with her contacts and experience



LOUISE CAMPBELL AND JAMES KILLOUGH JENNI BROWNE PHOTOGRAPHY



CAROLYN SWEENEY-WILSON AND BRIAN WILSON

for me to bounce ideas off. Her attention to detail was fantastic and she put so much effort into making everything just as I wanted it," she adds.

## TIME AFTER TIME

Planning a wedding takes time and, unless you're planning on a lengthy engagement, you'll probably find that planning every detail of your day takes over your life. In that case, you need someone to take the pressure off!

As a career woman and owner of two businesses, Alice Deer started to find wedding planning was a little more time consuming than she expected, so enlisted the help of Emma from Timeless White to lighten the load.

"We had multiple meetings and communicated via email," says Alice, who married hubby James in July 2012 at St Palladius Church then Drumtochty Castle, Auchenblae near Laurencekirk. "We used Pinterest collaboratively to share ideas. Something that initially had been rather daunting became a fun process!"

## SPOTLIGHT ON...toastmasters



Professional toastmaster Brian Baxter explains what a toastmaster does on the day

"Over the years the use of a toastmaster at wedding receptions has increased. Couples want a stress free day and if an unlikely occurrence were to happen, I'm there to deal with it. I arrive around an hour before to get organised and stay until the end of the table formalities. My job is to announce the couple into the dining area, the speeches and the cutting of the cake. I'll also execute any other formalities of the evening."

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*In the lead up a co-ordinator can...*

- Help finalise table plans and décor; the little details
- Confirm final details with suppliers
- Give you a checklist and itinerary of the day with timings

**TOP TIP** Have a couple of meetings with your planner to make sure everything is on track and progressing as agreed.

*Starting out a co-ordinator can...*

- Do an initial venue search and budget plan
- Help with finalising venue arrangements
- Recommend potential suppliers, source quotes and be the initial point of contact
- Get to know you and the kind of day you'd like to create

**TOP TIP** Don't be scared to email and call your co-ordinator often; the more they know about what you want, the better they can meet your needs!

*On the day a co-ordinator can...*

- Arrive at the venue to make sure everything is in place
- Keep the day running smoothly
- Take care of everything so that you can relax and enjoy your day!

**TOP TIP** As long as you've had good communication with your co-ordinator then the day should run perfectly. ■

*Where to shop...* **CO-ORDINATORS**

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- ARGYLL WEDDING PLANNER** \_\_\_\_\_ 07825 302118  
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