

CREATING PROPOSALS FOR ENQUIRIES

October 2020



NAILING THE SALES

A tutorial about how to manage
client enquiries

Handling clients enquiries is one of the most challenging parts of nailing that sale.

Much depends on your business module so here we will look at how the majority of wedding planning companies set out their services.

A Package Style Service - pre priced and without any or few changes the couple can make. There maybe one option to upgrade if they want extra flowers, or some small additions to their wedding.

A Bespoke Service - where nothing is packaged and it is all done for each clients individual requirements, i.e, venue, suppliers, etc.

You can already see the Bespoke service is going to require a lot more work than the packages but allows you to be really creative, not confined by a previously set wedding budget but much harder to sell the concept as clients need educating.

You already have your wedding planning services detailed out in a fabulous brochure that you send to clients but often there becomes a ping pong email or chats when clients start asking for more ideas, costs, etc.

This is when it can become hard work, trust me I have been there.

So how do you manage clients questions before they finally decide to book without spending far too much time sending them venues, and even suppliers, to look at as they constantly dig for more information.

Before I begin, there are two types of enquiries, the ones who are your ideal clients, they are sold and literally just want to hire you. This maybe from a recommendation or they just love your work they have seen so far.

The second type are the shoppers, they are trying to find out as much free information as possible. So whilst these might end up your ideal clients you have to take them on a journey with you first, without spending too much time on them.

Your first email reply should be to ask them a few questions, the most important question is their wedding budget. Clients don't contact estate agents asking for a 5 bedroomed house without telling them their budget, ideal location and the style of house they would love.

Try to find out as much as possible on that first email reply. This can be automatically generated but I don't recommend this. I recommend you reply to them personally asking them a few more details, most importantly what they are looking to spend.

When they reply you can decide if you are the right planner for them.

Don't waste your time on clients whose budgets are far too low for you to even contemplate doing their wedding but also educate them. If you get an enquiry for a 10K budget for 80 guests then tell them they should be ideally looking at around 250 to 350 per head to begin to even host a wedding or whatever your ideal clients budget would be. This will either eliminate them from your enquiries or they might come back and say they can go to that budget. If they can't then be kind, refer them to another planner that maybe able to help them. You never know who their friends are and if you are helpful at the enquiry stage they will rave about you to friends that maybe within your budget range saying they couldn't hire you but you were helpful.

If they are your ideal clients and have ticked all or most of the boxes then arrange a call with them. Don't make this any longer than an hour, this is all your free time at the moment. All you are doing during this call is prequalifying them and making sure they are worth pursuing further.





THE NEXT STAGE

How to avoid the ping pong match and never ending emails from the shopper.

The shoppers are genuine enquiries but are looking around, they are savvy and are looking for the best service they can get so don't write them off at this stage but do manage their expectations as to how much free information you are prepared to give out.

This month I cover pre-done proposals, they aren't venue details they are estimated budget sheets so you can start to educate your clients on how much their likely wedding budget is going to be.

It takes a bit of time to set these up but once done can quickly be personalised to that enquiries details.

All you will need to do is add their names, ideal wedding date and change the numbers of guests and bang you have a personalised proposal to send to your clients. You can make it look pretty and I do recommend you do this in excel. You can always upload it to a CRM system or add to a Canva template later.

CREATING PROPOSALS

Write down the areas you cover, this maybe local areas or different countries.
Try to keep this to five.

Write down the most popular wedding venues you love to work at in the locations
you have detailed out above.

If you are covering different areas I would suggest three in each as an example,
do remember these are just examples to send to enquiries. Also remember you are
working towards just working at your favourite venues that align with your business
module so use these and don't drag up venues you are not fussed about!

CREATING PROPOSALS

Once you have narrowed this down you will have a list of venues that you can create proposals for so you need the venue costs and if they have inhouse catering and other services such as DJ add these costs too.

Then list the suppliers you would bring in for a 'normal wedding' i,e, the celebrant, ceremony music, hair and makeup, photographer, DJ, cake, etc don't list the decor as this can vary wildly, i,e lighting, staging, flowers. Don't add in too much either, such as videographers, bands, etc as these are all extras.

Most weddings have generic costs, for example a DJ will cost x amount, hair and makeup is a general, a wedding cake, the photographers prices do not vary too much unless you are going to the top or bottom end of the market, the more weddings you have done the easier it is to know the general costs, so write these down and then you can make a sample spreadsheet.

You can then create spreadsheets like this example below.

This is an old one based on a popular venue that I have pulled up to show you.

It is the venue, catering provided by the venue and all the other general costs that would be necessary to host a wedding there.

You can see I have left florals, decor and lighting blank as this is what really creates the bespoke side of your wedding services.

Rental of Castillo de Santa Catalina	5000.00	1050.00	6050	1	6,050.00 €	Based on a week day hire Sunday to Thursday
Catering based on Traditional Menu 4	115	11.5	127	100	12,650.00 €	Price includes cocktail, menu, drinks during cocktail hour
Open Bar for 3 hours			0	100		Included in catering price
One hour extra open bar	600	60	660	1	660.00 €	
Late night snack				100		Included in catering price
Blessing set up	300	30	330	1	330.00 €	Ceremony table, flowers and 50 chairs, extra chairs wou
Ceremony officiant	450		450	1	450.00 €	Personalised ceremony
Spanish guitarist for ceremony and cocktail hour	350		350	1	350.00 €	
Hair and Make up	660		660	1	660.00 €	Based on one bridal hair and make up on the day and 2
Photographer	1700		1700	1	1,700.00 €	
DJ	450	94.5	545	1	544.50 €	Based on in house DJ which is compulsory for 3 hours
Extra hour DJ	50	10.5	61	1	60.50 €	Extra hour of DJ to coincide with extra hour of open bar
Florals, decor and lighting		0		1	0.00 €	To be quoted for individually
Wedding cake	350		350	1	350.00 €	Cake can be provided by the venue or bought in by prof
Staff meals	50	5	55	5	275	Based on average amount of external staff, planner, pho
Total estimated wedding budget					26,802.50 €	

WORKING SMARTER NOT HARDER

Simplifying Sales Enquiries

Here is another example for another style of wedding.

This was created using a standard template for a private villa rental but we quickly edited this template to make it feel more personalised for that client hence adding in the Jewish chuppah and Rabbi costs.

This client had also come to us with a budget of 60K so extras were added.

We chose to add in a higher end catering service, a band and videographer, they also wanted to know transport costs at the initial stage.

Description of Services	Cost	VAT	Subtotal	130	Total	Comments
Venue rental cost	10500		10500		10500	Based on a 3 night rental
Ceremony set up						
Chuppah structure with florals sim	2300	483	2783		2783	
Rabbi	900		900		900	
Ceremony music	800		800		800	Based on a string quartet
Florals and decoration						This can be quoted once known
Goyo Catering based on menu 3	146	14.6	160.60	130	20878	
Standard 4 open bar and midnight	20	2	22	130	2860	
Lighting, Audio and Staging						To be quoted once known
Band	3000		3000		3000	An approximate cost for a good band
Wedding cake	550		550		550	An approximate cost for a tiered wedding cake
DJ	650		650		650	
Transport for guests based on 300	1200		1200		1200	Again a rough guide but can quote once locations known
Photographer	2000		2000		2000	
Videographer	2000		2000		2000	
Hair and Make up	800		800		800	One bride and 2 bridesmaids
					48921	Total wedding budget

By creating standard templates for your top venues you can see how easily they can be changed within minutes.

You can change guest numbers, add in or take away services you feel that wedding would require, add their names and preferred wedding date and there is your personalised proposal.

WORKING SMARTER NOT HARDER

Here is a summary of the stages I have taken a client through.

1. Initial enquiry received by email, or through social media. If through social media ask for email address.
2. Ask more details with the most important question being budget.
3. Once you know their budget you will have a selection of venues that fit it.
4. If this is a client you can work with then arrange a call with them.
5. Establish the style of wedding they would like, city, smart, country, laid back.
6. Always listen to the clients on the call, don't just talk about you and your business.
7. Always leave them with a great takeaway tip after the call, this could be something like telling them to create a wedmin email address.
8. After the call take a look at which venues you think will suit them and their budget.
9. You will know having created the template sheets what that client can afford and will love, so for example if they say they want to spend 35K for 100 guests you can look at the templates you have and send them the venue choices based on their budget and style.
10. The key here you have immediately eliminated the wild goose chase venue hunt.
11. You have narrowed down the venues for them, taken away all the choices that would be unsuitable, i.e, not their style, too expensive or too cheap.
12. Within an hour they have wedding budget sheets personalised to them.
13. You are being very clear and concise, you aren't taking them on a long venue hunt journey.

I go back to the estate agent analogy, you have narrowed down their budget, narrowed down the area they want to live in and the style of house they want. You have chosen all the houses you think they will love and eliminating a lot of house hunting for them.

By being able to move quickly you are grabbing clients whilst they are hot leads. If you are not able to create proposals quickly after the call then they will start to cool off and be looking elsewhere.

The key here is you have shown up as a professional, you know your business and already taken them on an impressive journey.

Many coaches will tell you never to put any work in until you are booked. This is bad advice, you would never walk into an estate agents and be told to part with your hard earned cash before they gave you any house details. You must show up as being helpful, knowing your stuff and being the right person for that client to hire you.

But, and a big but, without spending huge amounts of time trying to nail that sale.

The next stage is you will have a response from your potential clients which can be a few different ones.

- 1.They loved a particular venue and would like to book it
- 2.They have narrowed it down to a few and would like to organise a venue viewing day.
- 3.They come back to you asking if there are more venues they can see details on.
- 4.They are not interested.

Here is how I respond to each response.

.1. Send them your services and a sample contract and ask if they wish to go ahead and confirm my services. We can then get working, book the venue, check the contracts, etc.

2. Send them your services and a sample contract which includes a venue viewing day. If they don't want to book until they have seen the venues you charge them a fee, this will be deducted from your fee if they book you, or it is a separate fee not deductible depending on how you have set out your services.

3. Don't get involved in a wild goose chase, just be firm and tell them they have all the suitable venues you work with and you have sent them the best choices. (These are the shoppers)

4. Follow up after a week, it maybe they are busy.



FINAL WORDS

The key is to not spend too much time being sucked down the rabbit hole of enquiries.

So many planners spend weeks creating venue sheets with nice images of each venue beautifully laid out.

Whilst this is pretty it means nothing to the clients, they want to see what they can get for their wedding budget not read pages and pages about venues that may well be out of the budget or style range.

Venue details always need constantly updating too which is a faff if you have to go back in and change everything, a template is far quicker to change if any prices or details are updated.

Creating quick wedding budget templates sheets can also be pretty, you can have a pre-done branded PDF, for example on Canva or on your CRM system and just screenshot the updated template and paste it onto your PDF.

The most important thing is how you show up, give great information and offer value to your clients, gaining their trust from the minute they have emailed you.