

Your Questions - Answered!

Questions continue rolling in from our webinar series, so here are some more answers to your GREAT questions.

Here we go. . . !

Q: Where do you buy wedding prospecting lists - are they worth the money

A: Any prospecting tool is worth the money if you book business from it. Sound too simple? Well, every product and service in our industry has a slightly different booking cycle for their target market with a different marketing spin. What works beautifully for one may not for another. The key is to TRACK YOUR RESULTS and see what works for you. And, do not get in a rut and keep spending your precious advertising dollars in the same way if you are not getting a high enough return. Try different combinations of internet, print, referral and direct mail until you find the right combination. That said, wedding prospecting lists can be a viable source of business if:

1. The information is delivered to you in a timely manner (it is still current)
2. You immediately make initial contact
3. You determine if the list is appropriate for where your business falls in the "booking cycle" (meaning, if you are a venue, jewelry store or bridal shop, you are booked early in the planning phases by the bride. If you are a bakery or florist, you are booked later in the planning process and have a longer period of time in which you can make contact, and therefore the lists are more viable)
4. You have excellent follow-up skills
5. You track your results to determine if you should buy lists again in the future.

Also, many of the print and/or internet sites you advertise with will provide lists of brides included with the advertising package that you buy. Make sure you determine if your advertising partners provide this great service. Good luck!

Q: What is the most important thing a couple is looking for when they inquire about a property? What should be the core focus of the initial conversation?

A: I love this question. Without a doubt, the core focus of that initial conversation is to start building a solid relationship with your client. Show your professionalism, flexibility, listening skills and desire to create the event of their dreams. More often than not, brides will book with the person that they feel the most comfortable with. You will become a true confidant for them over the next several months and they need to feel as they can trust that you have their best interests at heart. Beyond that, all of your presentation materials (menus, photo albums, website, etc.) need to reflect the fact that you specialize in weddings. Brides are looking for an expert in the industry. Also, in this economic environment, even weddings are showing some cutbacks. The number of weddings is remaining pretty consistent, but brides are trying to save where they can.

Help them out and point out to them where and how they can cut without affecting the overall look/feel or their event. They will appreciate your honesty and flexibility.

Q: How do you create urgency without pressuring the client?

A: Every now and then, (especially in today's market), clients need a little "nudge" to commit and sign the contract. Letting them know that you have other clients interested in the same date is a good start. Then, providing staggered time frames for deposit/commitment levels is a good way to ease the client into a deposit schedule that doesn't sound too overwhelming. Also, providing a "grace period" for receiving their deposit back can be an effective tool (keep it short, though – about 3 days following the initial deposit payment). In this economic environment, flexibility is the name of the game.

We look forward to having you on our next webinar on June 17, 2009, when the topic will be "Creating the Perfect Marketing Plan". This webinar is value priced at only \$49.00 – low cost with a high return! Register early on our website at www.beverlyclarktraining.com and click on the "learning center" tab.

For more information on the **Beverly Clark Hospitality Training Programs**, please contact **Lynne LaFond DeLuca** at lynne@beverlyclarkenterprises.com and visit our website at www.beverlyclarktraining.com

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