

## Closing the Sale

### How to Get Every Bride to Say "I Do" to YOU!

Lead generation is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to increasing your wedding or catering business. Once the leads start pouring in, how do you close the sale? With increased competition and price often being cited as two of the main reasons a client chooses another venue over yours, it is more important than ever to educate the client and distinguish your venue from the competition. How do you do this? Below are some ideas to consider in getting every bride to say "I Do" to you.

1. **Determine your USP (Unique Selling Proposition)**  
Why do customers buy from you? What is it about your product or service that distinguishes you from your competition? You may have more than one for different product/service lines or segments of your business. Position this USP everywhere: letterhead, envelopes, brochures, banners, posters, ads, website, etc. Specialize in a niche market such as ethnic, religious or destination weddings. Create exclusivity with vendors.
2. **Think outside the box and set yourself apart (part of your USP)**  
Know your competition. Cultivate them. Use them as a resource for referrals. They can be one of your strongest advocates and should be treated as an ally, not the enemy. Offer something none of your competition does. Think outside the box and think beyond the wedding day only. For example, does your competition offer something for the couple's first year anniversary, bridal showers, rehearsal dinners, etc. What other strategic partners in your community can help you close the sale (wedding consultants, photographers, florists, spas, etc).
3. **Shut up and listen**  
Before even going into your sales pitch and what you offer, ask the bride to describe her wedding plans. Let her do the talking, dreaming, etc. From this dialogue you can determine in advance if your service/product is for her. How does your bride want to be communicated with? Is she direct and to the point, or does she prefer to hear a more flowery expression of how her wedding day will unfold?
4. **People buy people**  
The reality is that people will buy a product or service because of the person selling it and if there is trust and confidence. From the very first communication, building a relationship with your bride is key to a successful partnership. When a bride trusts you, your opinions and your judgment, price does not become the major factor in the decision making process.
5. **Zero in on the "decision-maker" up front**  
Is it the bride, bride and mother, bride and groom, bride and mother in law, bride and maid of honor, etc? Really focus on this key person and what it takes to make them comfortable in the decision making process.
6. **Handling price objections**  
Although in your sales process, you want the decision to be based on something other than price, some brides are very price focused, and if this does become the determining factor in their decision, focus on the price difference, not the price. Your price is higher for what? Focus on the "intangibles" such as service standards, culinary expertise, atmosphere...be specific. Compare RESULTS, not price. Also, make sure the bride is comparing total cost, not just menu item prices. Discuss the drawbacks of purchasing cheaper goods - you get what you pay for. Have a pre-scripted story from another service / industry where price is not a consideration.
7. **Host your own open house to showcase your services**  
Pull together your best suppliers and vendors and have them participate in the open house. Invite the community and all potential brides. Publicize it and use press releases and radio news announcements as complimentary advertising for your venue. This is also a great way to showcase items and services that are "upsells" for you and invite all of your "booked" brides in the hopes of increasing revenue of already booked weddings. At the Open House, you may choose to have a panel of "experts" hand-selected by you (vendors who are leaders in their field). Begin with 10 of the most commonly-asked questions. You act as moderator. One of the core principles of Guerilla Marketing is to be #1 at something and if not, create the category for being #1!
8. **Use testimonials from brides, mothers of brides, grooms, clergy, photographers, florists, etc.**  
These should be part of your collateral materials, your website and on display in an album in your office for all in-person appointments with potential brides. "Social Networking" is fast becoming one of the main referral sources for new business. Brides tend to trust other brides when they are speaking about past experiences. Let other people brag about you!
9. **Wedding-friendly website**  
Websites market you and your service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's not a cost, it's an investment. Business professionals with a solid Internet presence have much higher market acceptance, recognition, and typically command higher price because of the perception of superior

performance or service. Include up-to-date photos of clients, locations, vendors, tips, bios, testimonials, etc. The Internet and email are the most cost-efficient means to market and pre-qualify potential bridal clients. For high maintenance brides, email is excellent for aggregating questions throughout the week and then having a standing weekly conference based on those questions. Time is money. Work smarter not harder.

**Hopefully these tips will be helpful to you and will assist in turning leads into sales!**

For more information on the **Beverly Clark Hospitality Training Programs**, please contact **Lynne LaFond DeLuca** at [lynne@beverlyclarkenterprises.com](mailto:lynne@beverlyclarkenterprises.com) and visit our website at [www.beverlyclarktraining.com](http://www.beverlyclarktraining.com)

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