

Webinar News and . . .
The Answers to Your Questions!

Thank you for your tremendous participation in our first Webinar on February 25th. We had over 700 people login to participate, and we reached over 1,000 people on that day! That's powerful stuff!

We are now launching a series of four webinars between now and year-end. For dates and topics, please visit the **Learning Center** on our website at www.beverlyclarktraining.com

Due to the large number of participants, we were not able to take questions "live", but many people sent questions in, so I will be answering them in the newsletter and in their entirety soon on the website. Here's the first few:

Q: Do you think the current economic downturn is resulting in longer engagements therefore decreasing the number of weddings annually?

A: Great question! As of yet, you have not seen this reflect in the engagement length, but that might be simply because it has not been long enough yet since the biggest hit to our economy in 2008. The average engagement is currently 6-9 months. If this were to happen, we would see it reflected in all the engagements that took place in the busiest "engagement season" from Thanksgiving, 2008 through Valentine's Day, 2009, and that is yet to be seen. Should you start to hear this comment from your brides, that they are looking to delay their weddings into 2010, you can also remind them that due to the economic "squeeze", most vendors and services are willing to be a little more flexible in their pricing and options if she books within 2009. Beyond that, when our economy starts bouncing back, I'm sure the negotiating power of the bride will decrease and prices will start to inch their way up again. Might be a little incentive to book into 2009!

Q: How can get more info regarding the Honeymoon Registry, how does it work and how can we get more info?

A: Honeymoon registries are definitely on the "hot list", due in part to the average age of the bride and groom being a little older, and also due to all the second marriages that now make up part of the statistics on the number of weddings each year. These two profiles may already have established households and instead of traditional gifts, might opt for an incredible honeymoon experience instead. Brides and grooms simply register for their dream honeymoon on one of the many online registries out there, such as www.honeymoonwishes.com, www.travelersjoy.com, or www.honeyfund.com. There are lots to choose from. If the bride and groom are using a travel agent, the agent may have one as well. Then, guests go to the site and can either contribute a monetary amount to the overall "honeymoon fund", or select a specific activity that they would like to pay for. Fun for the bride and groom, easy for the guests!

Q: How can hotels compete with private estates? In my area, alot of weddings are being hosted at estates.

A: We have definitely seen the rise of different and unique venues as a trend among brides. But, hotels and resorts, do not despair! In this **120 billion dollar** industry of ours, there is plenty to go around. Brides are a unique bunch because they are so diverse, with so many different tastes and needs, and that's good news for everyone involved. Every property, product or service in our industry must take the time to determine what their "unique selling proposition" is, and

market using that information. In other words, market yourself based on what is unique and different about you compared to your competition, not on the similarities. For hotels and resorts, you might include the ease of planning, tenure and experience of the staff, on-site amenities, and packages that highlight a “no rental charges” marketing slant. Brides sometimes forget about all the “extras” and rentals that are needed when hosting their event at a venue that does not have their own tables, chairs, china, glass, silver, A/V equipment, etc.

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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