

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

In continuing to answer your questions from our webinar series, here are more great questions and answers! We look forward to having you on our next webinar on May 1, 2009. It's an "Encore" webinar on "Creating the Perfect Marketing Plan", due to the overwhelming response to the first webinar on the same topic last week. This webinar is value priced at only \$49.00 – a lot of benefit that keeps on giving year-round! We sold out our first webinar, so register early on our website at www.beverlyclarktraining.com and click on the "learning center" tab.

Here are more of your GREAT questions:

Q: How can we market a "one-stop shop" to include rehearsal dinners, ceremony, reception and brunch?

A: Our "time crunched" brides of today are looking for "ease of planning" and "value" as two of their top priorities. By offering a value priced package that includes all of your points above (or a multi-event discount), you are satisfying both concerns. Make sure that your marketing efforts reflect this change of position, though. Create a one or two sentence statement that is brief and brilliant and communicates this to the brides. Use it in every marketing avenue you use – website, print, referral business. Also, make sure that every wedding planner in your area is aware of your inclusive packages or multi-event discounts so that she can direct brides your way that are looking exactly for this. It's also wise to partner with your competition for referral business. Sometimes, a bride will want the wedding ceremony and reception itself at a completely separate location in order to maintain the "special" feel of the big event. You can refer, and your competition can refer back to you, all of the other events surrounding the wedding itself – showers, engagement parties, farewell brunches, groomsmen golf outings, bridal party spa days, etc.

Q: My business is an off-site venue. We do weddings, rehearsal dinners, receptions and "morning-after" brunches or lunches. Do you think that bridal shows are a good resource or are they just "cattle calls"?

A: Very good question! The answer is all in the strategy. . . yes, I believe bridal shows can yield some very good leads if you go into it with a follow-up plan in place. For venues, it *can* be more difficult to book from bridal shows, as the venue is typically one of the first things that a bride books. The further down in the "booking chain" (the order in which brides book vendors for their wedding) your product or service falls, the more you will book from a bridal show. However, if you have a great follow-up plan in place, good bookings are there for every venue as well. Meaning, you must go in with a strategy to make a certain number of appointments – getting the brides to your venues within a short period of time following the show is key. You can even schedule an "open house" a week after the show and hand out invitations at the show. Maybe offer an incentive for rehearsal dinners, showers, engagements parties and "farewell brunches" (anything other than the ceremony and reception). And, by the way, the term "farewell brunch" is a preferable term to "morning after" brunch – sounds less like a hangover!

Q: What do you think is some of the newer trends for weddings as far as in photography?

A: Every photography style is as individual as the brides themselves, and you will discover that every bride has a definite idea as to what they want their bridal photography style to be. Ask these questions up front to ensure a happy bride. Just because it's a trend doesn't mean that it's what the bride wants. In general terms, though, we have seen a huge upswing in the "photo-journalistic" style of photography making its way into the wedding scene. Most brides also want a combination of color and black and white, so make sure you are addressing these needs as well.

Q: How do you market for destination weddings?

A: With 53% of brides surveyed stating that they were planning destination weddings, this is definitely the fastest growing segment of the wedding industry – you are right to want to market to this group! A lot of brides, however, do not start off planning a destination wedding, but change to that early in the planning process. So, marketing to destination weddings is pretty much the same as wedding marketing in general – having a strong presence with a clear message, keeping your unique selling proposition in the forefront. Make sure that your website and all internet advertising addresses destination weddings – brides want to clearly see that this is something you are an expert in. Also, partnering with some travel agencies that specialize in destination weddings is a smart idea. And remember, destination weddings are all about the "one stop shop" for brides. Have every aspect of the wedding and honeymoon covered – it is all an upsell opportunity for you, and absolutely what the bride is looking for!

For more information on the Beverly Clark Hospitality Training Programs,
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