

Questions to Ask Every Vendor Before They're Booked

Use this checklist to manage your questions and take note of the answers from the vendor

Venue

Question

Is the venue handicap accessible? (This is especially important if you have elderly guests or need to accommodate wheelchairs or walkers)

For outdoor spaces, do you have a contingency plan for bad weather?

How early can I get into the space on the day of the event for set-up and is there an overtime fee if I stay longer?

Are there restrictions on the event décor? Can I move things around or do I have to leave everything as is?

Answers

Do you provide a coat check service and if not, is there an area that can be used and staffed for that purpose?

Do you have an in-house caterer I would need to use or can I use an outside caterer? If I hire an outside caterer, will they have access to the kitchen facilities?

Do you have a list of preferred caterers you've worked with in the past?

Are tables, linens, chairs, plates, silverware and glassware provided?

Can I bring my own alcohol and is there a corkage fee if I do?

Are you licensed to provide alcohol service? What is the pricing structure?

Are there any sound restrictions (i.e. on the types of music that can be played, a set-time when music must end, etc.)? Can the space accommodate a live band?

Is there parking on site? If so, is it complimentary? Is valet parking an option and if so, at what cost?

If there is no parking on site, where will the guests park?

Are cabs easily accessible from here?

How many restrooms are there? (Ideally, you want at least 4 restrooms per 100 people)

Do you provide any kind of security services?

Band/DJ

Question

Have you done events at this venue before?

What sets you apart from other bands/DJs?

Are there any additional services that you can provide (lighting, photobooth, fog machine, etc.)?

Would you be able to help me choose suitable music for the event?

How extensive is your library of songs? Can I check out your collection?

Will you take breaks and if so, what music will be provided during those breaks?

Answer

How do you motivate a crowd if the dance floor is empty?

Will you take requests from the guests?

Will you accommodate a "Do Not Play" list?

Band Specific – How long have you been performing together? Do you perform at more than one event in a day?

Florist

Question

What design styles (i.e. traditional, modern, European, Oriental) do you work with?

What recommendations can you give me based on my color scheme that will maximize my budget?

What flowers are in season for the month of the event?

Can you accommodate requests for organic, pesticide-free or sustainably grown flowers?

Can you provide any other event décor such as aisle runners, trees, candelabras, arches, votives or mirrors?

Answer

Can you recreate a floral arrangement from a photo?

Do you have live samples of the flowers I want?

Do you charge a delivery fee?

Photographer

Question

Have you worked at any events with a similar guest size and style to this one?

What is your photography style (i.e. traditional, abstract, photojournalistic, creative)?

What's your working style? Do you blend into the background or choreograph shots?

What sets you apart from other photographers?

What type of equipment do you use (digital cameras or film format)? Do you have backup equipment?

If I want specific shots, can I give you a list to choreograph on the day of the event?

Answer

Do you offer slideshow services?

Do you charge travel fees to get to the venue?

How do you dress for shooting events?

Can other guests take photos while you're shooting?

Are you familiar with the chosen venue site? Will you need to check it out in advance?

When will you arrive to setup? If the event is delayed, will you stay longer than scheduled? Would there be an additional charge for that?

What other services do you provide (i.e. retouching, color adjustments, etc.)?

When will I get the proofs and how will I receive them (i.e. online format, CD)?

Do I get to keep the negatives or digital images?



Caterer

Question

Are you licensed to serve alcohol? Do you provide alcoholic beverages and bartenders?

Can you accommodate specialty cocktails?

Is there a corkage fee if we provide our own wine or champagne?

Will I need any permits? Do I have to obtain them or will you?

Is there an on-site coordinator who will run the entire event?

What food choices would you recommend for my guest count and budget?

Do you specialize in certain cuisines?

Is there a preset menu or can I customize?

Do you use all fresh ingredients (i.e. produce, meat, fish, etc.)?

Answer

Can you source organic or sustainably farmed ingredients?

Can you accommodate dietary restrictions (gluten-free, kosher, vegan, etc.)?

Do you handle rental equipment (tables, chairs, linens, glassware, plates, flatware)? (Find out the quality of what's offered as well, i.e. are they real dishes or disposable?)

What is your cleanup policy? (If the caterer will be responsible for clean-up then make sure you get this in writing! If they don't follow through, it will be your responsibility to handle it)

What happens with the leftover food? Can it be wrapped up for guests or delivered to a shelter?

What is the ratio of servers to guests?

How will the servers be dressed?

How much time do you need for set-up and break down? Does this cost extra?

What are your overtime fees (in case the event runs longer than anticipated)?

When do I need to provide the final guest count?

Cake Designer

Question

Are there delivery and setup fees?

Can you decorate the cake table as well? Does that cost extra?

What happens if the cake gets damaged in transit or at the site? Do you have a backup plan?

Do you provide any other cake related supplies (i.e. cake toppers, cutting knife, cake stand) and if so, what are the fees?

How far in advance should I put in my order?

Do you have any specialties I should know about?

What flavors and fillings do you offer?

What are the different ingredients you typically use? Do you offer all organic or vegan options?

Answer

Can you create edible flowers? Can you incorporate fresh flowers into the design?

Can you design a custom cake to match the theme, dress or color scheme?

Can you create a custom design from a photo? Does custom design cost extra?

Can you adapt an old family recipe for the wedding cake design?

Do you have cake tastings? Is there a charge?

Can you preserve the top tier of my cake for my first wedding anniversary? If not, do you provide a special anniversary cake instead?

