



Kristen Winters is the Queen Bee and Creative Director of Beehive Creative Events, LLC. Kristen's approach to wedding planning and design is to create truly meaningful, fun, one-of-kind celebrations inspired by her clients. Each wedding is unique and customized to reflect the couple's personality and style of living. Born and raised in the south, Kristen now calls Rockport, Maine home. In her down time she enjoys spending time with her family, hosting playdates, and entering the world of make-believe with her daughter, Molly.

By Kristen Winters, Queen Bee and Creative Director of [Beehive Creative Events, LLC](#)

You've taken a moment to celebrate your engagement. Now what?

It's important to sit down together and discuss what kind of wedding you want. Often times, couples have different visions for their celebration based on their personal interests, styles, upbringing, and experiences. Here are some questions to consider to get the conversation going: Time of year? Indoor or outdoor wedding? Maybe a combination of both? Local or destination? A small, intimate celebration or a blowout with all your family and friends? Elegant or casual? What do you want your guest experience to be? After taking some time to think about these things you can prioritize!

Evaluate what you have in common and where you're willing to compromise.

Now that you've determined your priorities, it's time to set the budget. Be realistic! Very rarely does a wedding come under budget, so I encourage couples to come up with two numbers: the target and the max. Know the maximum amount you and your families are willing to spend on the wedding. Once everyone comes to an agreement, you can set the target number. My formula for setting the target number is to subtract at least 10% from the max number. This helps to create a safety net for last minute changes or additions that could impact the overall budget. You might think that \$500 more here or a \$1,000 more there does not seem like a big deal, but keep in mind it can add up quickly. After the wedding is over, and all the bills have been tallied, I never want a couple to regret a decision because they were over budget.

Look over your priorities and your target budget. Will your priorities work within the set budget? It's not uncommon to make sacrifices when planning a wedding. Let's say you have found an awesome band for \$8,000, but you have determined that a welcome party before the wedding is a top priority. You may opt for the \$5,000 band that's good in order to make the welcome party doable. Knowing your priorities and your budget will help make the important financial decisions easier throughout the planning process.

What should I expect from a wedding planner versus a wedding coordinator?

Many people are confused about the roles of a wedding planner versus a wedding coordinator. The confusion arises because so often these terms are used interchangeably, even within the wedding industry. However, there is a distinct difference in services provided by a wedding planner and a wedding coordinator.

A wedding planner is with you throughout the planning process. After sharing your vision for your wedding, a planner will offer guidance and advice on how to make your vision a reality. Planners will help with creating

and maintaining a budget, finding a venue, and recommending a team of wedding vendors who are the right fit for you. They will also create a layout of your ceremony and reception, manage logistics, and facilitate production schedule. It's important to note that not all wedding planners provide wedding design and styling, but those who do not will have wedding designers with whom they collaborate.

The biggest difference between a wedding planner and a wedding coordinator is a wedding coordinator provides a "day-of" or "month-of" service. They are responsible for managing the wedding day, overseeing the logistics and schedule, and potentially creating a timeline for how the day will flow. Coordinators act as a liaison on your behalf to ensure all the work you spent the last year planning is executed as you envisioned. This way you can kick back, relax, and celebrate the day!

How do I create my guest list?

If you have prioritized what's important to you and know your budget, then you will have a clear idea of how many guests to invite to your wedding.

Before you start jotting down names, decide if you want guests to bring a plus-one. If you cannot afford to allow everyone to bring a date, it's best to determine it on a case-by-case basis. I often suggest extending a plus-one invite to engaged couples, those who are in a long-term relationship (year or more), and couples who live together.

Another decision to make when creating your guest list is whether you plan to include children. Inviting children is a personal preference, and may be influenced by the time of the wedding or the age of the child. If you opt not to include children, please be sure to notify family and friends so they can make arrangements for childcare. If you elect not to include children, you will likely receive some pushback--hold your ground! Keep in mind you are making decisions that are best for YOUR wedding.

Lastly, with more and more couples paying for their own wedding these days, the question arises about parents inviting their friends. If you are

paying for your wedding, and can allocate a number of invitees for your parents, it would be the thoughtful and considerate thing to do.

What should I consider when planning a Maine destination wedding?

Maine is one of the top places to host a destination wedding. Those of us who are lucky enough to call Maine home know exactly the reasons why! With so many diverse locations, from the mountains to the coast to the lakes and farmlands in between, there is something for everyone. If you have never traveled to Maine, then the first place you will want to start conducting research is online. Take some time to browse and see all that Maine has to offer. Traveled to Maine before? Well, then it's likely you already have an idea of where you want to get married.

Next, decide on a setting and the season. Are you envisioning a mountainside wedding in a rustic barn highlighted by the beautiful fall colors? Maybe your dream is to dance the night away under a tent on warm summer evening with the moonlight glistening on the water. After you decide on the region, setting, and time of year, it's time to begin the task of finding the right venue. When researching venues, keep in mind the size of your guest list; proximity to airports, train stations, and overnight accommodations; and if it fits the style and vision for your wedding. Now that you've selected your venue, hire local vendors. They're familiar with area and can keep true to the Maine experience and feel.

Should we provide transportation for our wedding guests?

Although not necessary, providing transportation for your guests is a kind and thoughtful gesture. It's one of the wedding details not often on the forefront of most couples' minds when it comes to planning their wedding, but is the sort of attention to detail noticed by their guests and overwhelmingly appreciated. Transportation allows your guests to relax and enjoy the wedding celebration rather than being concerned with directions, parking, and getting home after consuming one too many cocktails. Not everyone is able to work transportation into their budget, but if you are planning a destination wedding or have a lot of out of town guests, try to

Published in *Real Maine Weddings*, July 2017

<http://realmaineweddings.com/Planning-Tools/Ask-The-Expert.aspx>

make it a part of your budget planning. It's important to remember these guests have likely gone to a great expense to be there for you in creating a memorable wedding celebration.

<http://realmaineweddings.com/Planning-Tools/Ask-The-Expert.aspx>