

## *So he's popped the question...and you've said yes. Follow this simple—we swear—step-by-step timeline to tend to tasks at hand*

### Twelve or more months ahead

- Arrange for your families to meet (if they haven't already).
- Do a little early planning. Determine the kind of wedding you want: location, formality, time of day, number of guests, etc.
- Set the date. Have backup dates in mind in case the site, caterer, or officiant is already booked.
- Set an initial budget and determine how expenses will be shared.
- Create preliminary guest lists.
- Reserve wedding and reception sites.
- Reserve officiant.
- Reserve photographer.
- Reserve caterer.

### Nine or more months ahead

- Announce your engagement.
- Buy a calendar to note all important activities: showers, luncheons, parties, get-togethers, etc.
- Hire a professional wedding consultant.
- Consolidate all guest lists (bride's, groom's, bride's family, groom's family) and organize as follows: those who must be invited; those who should be invited; and those who would be nice to invite. Decide if you want to include children among guests.
- Determine your color scheme.
- Select maid or matron of honor, best man, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, flower girl, and ring bearer.
- Select and order your bridal gown and accessories, including headpiece, jewelry, gloves, and shoes.
- Select attendants' gowns. Let both mothers know about the color selection so that they can plan their attire accordingly.
- Select attire for flower girl and ring bearer.
- If ceremony or reception is at home, arrange for home or garden improvements as needed.
- Order passport, visa, or birth certificate (if needed) for your honeymoon and marriage license.
- Reserve blocks of hotel rooms for out-of-town guests.
- Reserve a band or DJ.

- Make appointments with florists to review their work.
  - Create a bridal and/or engagement registry.
- ### Six to nine months ahead
- Reserve a florist and choose arrangements. Order bouquets and boutonnieres for the wedding party and corsages for the mothers.

- Make appointments with cake designers to review their work and sample their cakes.
- Select and book videographer.
- Schedule gown fittings and attire delivery dates for yourself, attendants, flower girl, and ring bearer.
- Plan and book honeymoon.
- Order save-the-date cards, invitations, stationery, and thank-you cards. Order maps to the ceremony and reception for guests.
- Book stylists for hair and makeup.
- The parents of the groom should begin to arrange the location and details of the rehearsal dinner.

### Four to six months ahead

- Reserve any rental equipment, such as tables, chairs, tents, etc.
- Schedule rehearsal time and rehearsal dinner.
- Order invitations to rehearsal dinner.
- Select wedding cake designer and order cake.
- Purchase or reserve groom's, groomsmen's, and ushers' attire.
- Purchase wedding rings.
- Choose favors. If you're making something or wrapping the favors, start as soon as possible.
- Book hotel room for your wedding night.
- Make appointments for physical exams if required for marriage license.
- Finalize guest list.
- Address save-the-date cards and invitations or hire a calligrapher.
- Select and book all miscellaneous services, e.g. gift and guestbook attendants, valet parking, etc.
- Begin a monthly facial or beauty treatment regimen.

### Two to four months ahead

- Mail save-the-date cards (especially for out-of-town guests who need to make travel arrangements).
- Confirm details of menu and décor with caterer—get all confirmations in writing.
- Check in with bridal salon, florist, photographer, musicians, and other vendors to confirm arrangements.
- Discuss service with officiant.
- Buy stockings and any special undergarments your dress requires.
- Choose readings and readers for ceremony. Give copies to those whom you've asked to read so they'll have time to practice.
- If you're writing your own vows, do so now.
- Plan the bridesmaids' luncheon and any other wedding weekend activities.
- Select and book transportation for wedding day.
- Purchase gifts for groom and wedding attendants.
- Begin to break in your shoes at home.
- Find "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue, and a sixpence (or shiny penny) for your shoe."

### Six to eight weeks ahead of time

- Mail invitations for wedding and rehearsal dinner. Include accommodation choices and a map to assist guests in finding the ceremony and reception sites.
- Have programs printed.
- Arrange final fitting of your gown.
- Have makeup artist do a trial run.
- Have your hairstylist do a trial run of your chosen hairstyle with the headpiece.
- Schedule to have your nails done for the wedding.
- Have your formal wedding portrait taken.
- Send wedding announcement and photograph to local newspapers.
- If you're changing your name and/or moving, complete proper documents to change name and address on driver's license, social security card, insurance policies, bank and credit card accounts, subscriptions, memberships, etc.
- If you're moving, send change-of-address information to post office.

- Maintain a record of RSVPs and all gifts received.
- Write thank-you notes as you receive gifts.
- Obtain marriage license.
- Finish shopping for wedding-day accessories, such as toasting glasses, ring pillow, guestbook, etc.
- Set up an area or a table in your home to display gifts as you receive them.
- If you're having a guestbook, decide where and when to have guests sign in.
- Finalize the reception menu and estimate the expected number of guests. Finalize the beverage and alcohol order.
- Purchase a going-away outfit if you'll be changing out of your dress.
- Pick up your wedding rings and check fit.
- Plan reception room layout and seating with your reception site manager or caterer. Write names on place cards for arranged seating.

### Two to six weeks ahead of time

- Confirm ceremony details with your officiant.
- Schedule final fitting of bridesmaids' dresses.
- Book limousine or other transportation for wedding day.
- Finalize rehearsal dinner plans. Plan seating and write place cards.
- Choose the music for your ceremony, first dance, parent dances, and party, and give information to band, DJ, and other musicians.
- Decide if you want to have a receiving line. If so, determine when and where to form the line.
- Meet with photographer and confirm any special photos you want.
- Meet with videographer and confirm special events or people you want videotaped.
- Make a detailed timeline for your wedding party and service providers.
- Confirm details with all service providers.
- Contact guests who haven't responded.
- Continue writing thank-you notes as gifts arrive.
- Remind bridesmaids of when and where to pick up their wedding attire.
- Purchase lipstick, nail polish, and any other

accessories you want your bridesmaids to wear.

- Start packing for your honeymoon.
- Determine ceremony seating for special guests. Give a list to the ushers.
- Write toasts for rehearsal dinner and reception.
- Continue breaking in wedding shoes at home.
- Delegate wedding-related duties to friends and family for the wedding.

### One to two weeks ahead

- Finish packing for honeymoon.
- Confirm travel arrangements. Pick up tickets and traveler's checks.
- Arrange for the post office or a neighbor to hold your mail while you're away on your honeymoon.
- Make sure all wedding attire fits properly.
- Make sure all clothing and accessories—including makeup and jewelry—for the bridal party are ready.
- Do final guest count and notify your caterer or reception site manager.
- Gather everything you will need for the rehearsal and wedding day.
- Give timeline to service providers and review the schedule of events and last-minute arrangements with them.
- Familiarize yourself with guests' names. It will help during the receiving line and reception.
- Make arrangements to have your wedding gifts delivered to your home.
- Reconfirm your guests' accommodations.
- Wrap the gifts for members of the wedding party.

### One day before

- Relax with a manicure and massage.
- Assign different responsibilities, such as handing out corsages and boutonnieres, to members of bridal party.
- Arrange for someone to bring accessories, such as flower basket, ring pillow, guestbook and pen, toasting glasses, cake knife, etc., to the ceremony and/or reception site.

- Provide each member of your bridal party with the detailed timeline for the wedding day.
- Remind the maid or matron of honor and best man to sign the wedding certificate.
- Review list of things to bring to the rehearsal.
- Confirm limousines or other transportation.
- Put suitcases in getaway car.
- Review the schedule of events with your service providers.
- Give each member of the bridal party their gift, along with a personal note, if you haven't already done so.
- Give best man the officiant's fee and any other checks for service providers. Instruct him to deliver these checks the day of the wedding.
- Arrange for someone to mail announcements the day after the wedding.
- Arrange for someone to return rental items, such as tuxedos and cake stand, after the wedding.
- Review list of things to bring to the ceremony.
- Rehearse ceremony and all other details with those who will participate in the wedding.
- Hold rehearsal dinner.

### Wedding Day

- Give the groom's ring to the maid or matron of honor. Give the bride's ring to the best man.
- Follow your detailed schedule of events.
- Thank your parents and your guests.
- Enjoy the day!