



CONGRATULATIONS!

You're engaged 😊

JUST ENGAGED!

Now that you're engaged, you've got an exciting journey ahead of you as you plan your wedding. One thing that's for certain, is that you'll have lots of decisions to make.

It's tempting to jump straight in, trying on dresses, sampling cake and looking at flowers. But before you start there's a few things that you should consider before you do anything!

By planning in the right order, it'll not only help you stay on budget, but help you create the wedding of your dreams, with all of the elements coming together perfectly to create a memorable day.



WHO IS PAYING?

Before you can do anything, you need to determine who is paying for the wedding.

Traditionally, the Bride's family paid for the majority of the wedding, with the Groom paying for the honeymoon and a few small items at the wedding itself.

However, there is now no "standard" – some brides and grooms pay for the entire wedding themselves, others have some support from their families, and there are some who follow the traditional route.

Once this is determined, you'll be able to set a budget for the wedding, which will enable you to start planning. You also need to decide early on how "flexible" your budget is, and what your absolute upper limit is! Don't forget to also budget for the honeymoon.

WHICH DATE?

Before you plan anything, you need to determine if you have a specific date that you want to get married on. Watch out for key sporting events or anything else that might be a distraction on your day!

If you don't have a specific date, then you'll have more flexibility when it comes to choosing a preferred venue. Bear in mind that Saturdays in "wedding season" (May – Sept) do get booked up first, often years in advance at popular venues.

Before getting too excited about a July wedding, bear in mind that a long and very hot day can be exhausting for your guests. Plus, with a late sunset, it often doesn't get dark until well after 10pm, which can affect your evening entertainment, and if the venue is warm, forces people outside to cool down.

A winter wedding can be magical, especially on a bright, crisp day – your photos will look like it was summer; but with an early sunset, everyone will be indoors for the evening entertainment, creating a much cosier wedding atmosphere.

WEDDING CEREMONY

The next step is to decide whether you want a Church wedding, or a Civil Ceremony. Should you want a Civil Ceremony at your venue, but it doesn't have a license, you can have a Celebrant perform a ceremony for you (you simply get "married" at the registry office the day before).

If you're planning on having a Church wedding, you'll need to consider which venues are nearby and how you'll transport guests between the Church and the venue. There are some venues that have an onsite, or very close by Church.

If you're planning on having a wedding in a marquee on private land, but don't wish to have a Church marriage, then a Celebrant can perform the ceremony for you, following the "legal marriage" in the registry office the day before.

A Celebrant also gives you more control over the contents of your wedding ceremony, and can provide a more personalised experience.

START BROWSING

It can be tempting to go ahead and book a venue first, but you may then find that what you had budgeted for suppliers isn't enough and your budget runs out.

Whilst now is the time to start looking at venues, also start looking for suppliers. Wedding Fairs are a great way to meet lots of suppliers in one afternoon, and usually gives you a chance to actually meet the person who will carry out the service. You'll also get lots of ideas and inspiration at a wedding fair, as well as helpful advice from the suppliers who are very experienced at creating amazing weddings. Suppliers can also give you advice about the venues you've been looking at and help give you tips on which venues would suit your wedding the best.

You can also search online for local suppliers and seek recommendations from friends and family who have got married.

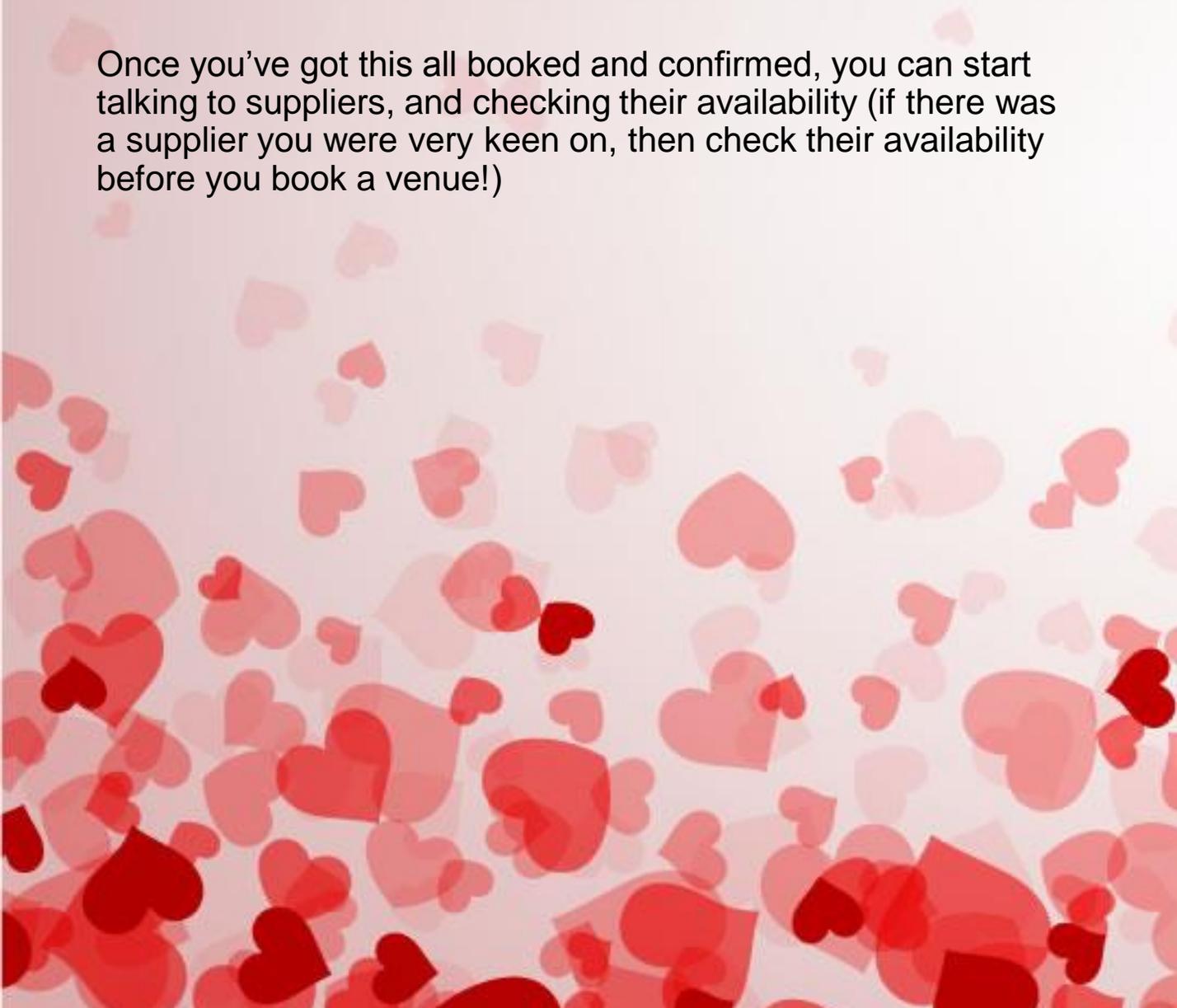
You'll soon start to build up a budget for everything you need that accurately reflects the costs of the different services.

BOOK THE VENUE

Whilst you've been looking at suppliers to help formulate a budget, you can't book any suppliers until you have a date! And for this you'll need to book your venue.

There's a bit of a juggling act here, as you'll also need to confirm your ceremony at the same time (whether it's a Church or Civil Ceremony), because a wedding venue without a marriage doesn't quite work!

Once you've got this all booked and confirmed, you can start talking to suppliers, and checking their availability (if there was a supplier you were very keen on, then check their availability before you book a venue!)



WHAT NEXT

Now you've got a date sorted and a venue, don't forget to send out "Save The Date" cards to your guest list, so they know not to book their holiday during your wedding!

Then it's a case of selecting the suppliers you need and bringing everything together. Be careful how much you DIY – whilst it's lovely hand making your wedding, it can be very time consuming making 100 of everything you DIY! So balance your available time (of which lots will be taken up with planning), with getting the pros to do it for you (which with certain suppliers will still be made by hand).

When it comes to selecting suppliers, take time to research and speak to suppliers – each one is different, and they'll be there with you on your special day, so it's vital you get on with them and share the same vision.

It's far better to have a few high quality suppliers, than lots of budget ones. If your entertainment budget is getting squeezed, you're better off getting a great DJ than getting a budget DJ and a starlit dancefloor and love letters – ultimately, the dancefloor won't get filled without a great DJ!

MORE ADVICE?

As an All Day DJ and Host, I am one of the few suppliers who is involved in the wedding day from beginning to end.

Part of my service includes assisting with the timeline of the day, ensuring that everything flows, and there's no long gaps where no-one knows what is happening.

I've seen a wide range of venues, photographers and other wedding suppliers, and am very happy to provide you with as much advice as you need.

Don't hesitate to get in contact with me at www.freestyleentertainment.co.uk to discuss further.

Gavin Harris

Specialist Wedding DJ & Host