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On To Plan B

Preventing (Or Surviving!) Common Wedding Calamities

Picture it: you wake up on the morning of your wedding, bright eyed and well rested, ready to begin one of the most magical days of your life, when suddenly you're overcome with a gripping terror as you realize you forgot to..., you didn't bring..., you never managed to finish...! And with that, my friend, you've found yourself victim to one of any number of common wedding calamities.

From uncooperative weather to losing the dress (it's happened), weddings are filled with opportunities for mistakes, misfortune, and mayhem. But the good news is, you definitely don't have to let any of the above ruin the big day. By planning ahead, plotting out a Plan B, and having faith in your amazing team of wedding vendors and your bridal party, you can avoid – and

prepare for – anything that might go a little differently than what you had planned.

“Over the course of 5-plus years and more than 100 weddings, we’ve seen it all! From missing rings, to broken bustles, to the curse of Chicago traffic, to missing ceremony readers, and more – there is always something,” says Leanne Valdes, owner, founder, and wedding and event planner at **You Name It Events**. “The best Plan B’s we’ve seen are more about how couples approach their day than about the logistics. No matter your priorities or budget, hiring an experienced, professional wedding planner or coordinator is the single best thing you can do to protect your overall investment in your wedding. The peace of mind you get when there is a knowledgeable, experienced point person there to handle the day is invaluable.”

Denise Bonds, owner of **Windermere Elegant Weddings & Special Events**, agrees. “Don’t sweat the small stuff,” she advises. “We’re the planners. We take care of the details. That’s why we’re here.”

“Brides planning their own weddings should make a list of everything they’ll need to take with them to the wedding,” recommends Bonds. “Everything from their underwear and veil to safety pins and hairspray – basically the emergency kit. That should really be prepared at least a week before the wedding, and that’s something a wedding planner can help coordinate ahead of time.”

Patty Basche, associate at **Windermere Elegant Weddings & Special Events**, remembers more than one occasion when such a list would have come in handy. “We worked with one couple who forgot

the marriage license at home, and that’s a very important part of the wedding since it needs to be signed by the officiant, the bride, and the groom. While they were having the ceremony, someone went back to the house to retrieve the marriage license. The officiant actually slowed down the ‘do you take so-and-so,’ part in

order to give them time to get back with the license.”

“We’ve had couples forget the rings, and then have to borrow rings from guests or from the wedding planner,” adds Basche.

“We’ve even had a bride whose dress got misplaced! The photographer was ready to take the pre-wedding pictures with the

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dress, the shoes, and the ring, and we couldn't find the dress anywhere. We had to check with the hotel's security, and search the entire hotel to find the dress. We finally found it with the groomsmen's clothing — luckily."

One of the biggest elements to plan for, says Bonds, is the weather. "Always look at the weather, and anticipate what will have to happen if you need to switch. Figure it out before the last minute," she recommends. "If you wait to account for rain until the last minute, remember that everything has to be reset. We've had groomsmen and bridesmaids who helped rearrange an entire venue due to weather. This can cause delays up to an hour. Don't be too emotional or too committed to your plan, and be willing to be flexible. You'll still have a very pretty wedding, even if your outdoor plans are forced to move indoors."

When things start to go awry, be sure to rely on your bridal party as well. Make



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sure your expectations for them are clearly established before the big day. "The best advice I give bridal parties is to let the big day be 100 percent about the bride and groom," says Kristina Fossbakk Ferris, owner, lead designer, stylist, and planner of **Vision of Elegance Events**. "All too often, you run into bridesmaids having 'diva' moments, shifting the focus from the bride to them. It's simple: leave your ego at the door and be there for the bride and groom on one of the biggest days of their lives."

And don't forget – sometimes something that seems like a total disaster can actually turn out to be one of your all-time favorite memories. "At one couple's reception, there was a fountain surrounded by a pond of water. People were dancing all around it and a guest fell into the pond," remembers Basche. "It was an outdoor event in the middle of this beautiful, natural setting, and she ended up completely submerged in this 3-foot pond – her dress and everything. Another guest pulled her out, and she just shook it off and kept dancing! By the time the reception was over her dress was dry." Definitely sounds like the kind of guest I want at my next party!

Valdes has experienced a wedding 'oops' turn into a favorite memory as well. "We had a couple with a gorgeous six-tier wedding cake that had a few dummy layers to it," she recalls. "When they cut the cake, they forgot which layers were foam and tried cutting into a fake layer. Needless to say, the knife did not go through smoothly! Once they figured it out, they laughed it off and moved on to a regular layer. To this day, that is one of the



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sweetest memories of their wedding. I love that it showed they could laugh off something unplanned and still have a great day!"

Above all – no matter what happens – don't forget you're there to have fun. "Guests take their cues from the couple. If

the couple is having a wonderful time no matter what, the guests will, too," says Valdes. "We try to remind folks just before their big day that a wedding is a party, not a performance. If at the end of the day you're married to the one you love, then it all went perfectly!" 

PLANNING NOTES

7 Reasons to Hire a Wedding Planner

1. Because navigating four vendor contracts at a time can get a little complicated. Luckily, professional wedding planners handle them daily!
2. Because when you look at a venue, you see a room. Your planner sees an event.
3. Because you don't want to be DIY-ing favors at 3:00 A.M. the night before the wedding.
4. Because you don't want to know what that crash was in the kitchen right before your beautiful cake is supposed to be wheeled out. No, you want to gaze into your new spouse's eyes and let someone else handle clean up.
5. Because even though you paid for chiavari chairs, somewhere along the line someone thought you said you wanted to sit on bean bag chairs. In comes the wedding planner to fix it – or make it work. Either way.
6. Because you forgot your shoes.
7. Because you want to actually enjoy your day and not worry about anything other than saying your vows correctly. Which, let's be honest, is no easy feat. 



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