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29

Starting off as a wedding planner

Wedding planning is growing at a massive rate, with a record number of people now setting up as co-ordinators. **Diane Baker** tells us her story...

JUNE 26 2004, 3pm. That was the day my husband and I got married. After two years and eight months of planning, our big day was finally here and everything was now out of my hands but I wasn't worried at all as I had planned the day down to the smallest detail.

After friends got engaged they asked me to help plan their wedding - I did everything for them from finding the



Diane Baker.



Diane says it is an honour to be involved in someone's wedding day. Picture courtesy of John Rahim Photography.

location for their civil ceremony and designing and printing their stationary, to finding ring boxes shaped as penguins - as this had special meaning to the couple.

Their day was amazing and they couldn't thank me enough for my help.

I loved every moment of the five and a half months I spent organising their wedding and I decided to look into wedding planner courses.

I registered with the International Wedding Professionals Association (IWPA) and completed my course at the end of 2005.

I have done a few weddings now and, I won't lie, it can be very tiring and rather stressful, but my job is to take the stress away from the bride and groom and I thrive on it.

As a newcomer to the industry I have done what most people do when starting up their own business - found out what the competition offer and what they charge.

Being a new face you want to make yourself known so you look at all the venues - charge less than the competition, make your advertising eye catching - but you have to make sure that you don't undercut yourself.

There are a lot of things to think about, but I think one of the biggest things to remember is that you have to spend money to make money.

For your business to be a success you have to want it to succeed.

You have to be prepared to put in a lot of hours and most importantly, when you are meeting with prospective bride and grooms, you have to be confident.

If you're not confident in yourself then how can you expect someone else to have confidence in you?

These people are trusting you with the biggest day of their lives and you need to show them that you can handle that responsibility. I personally feel that it is an honour and a privilege to be involved in someone's wedding day.