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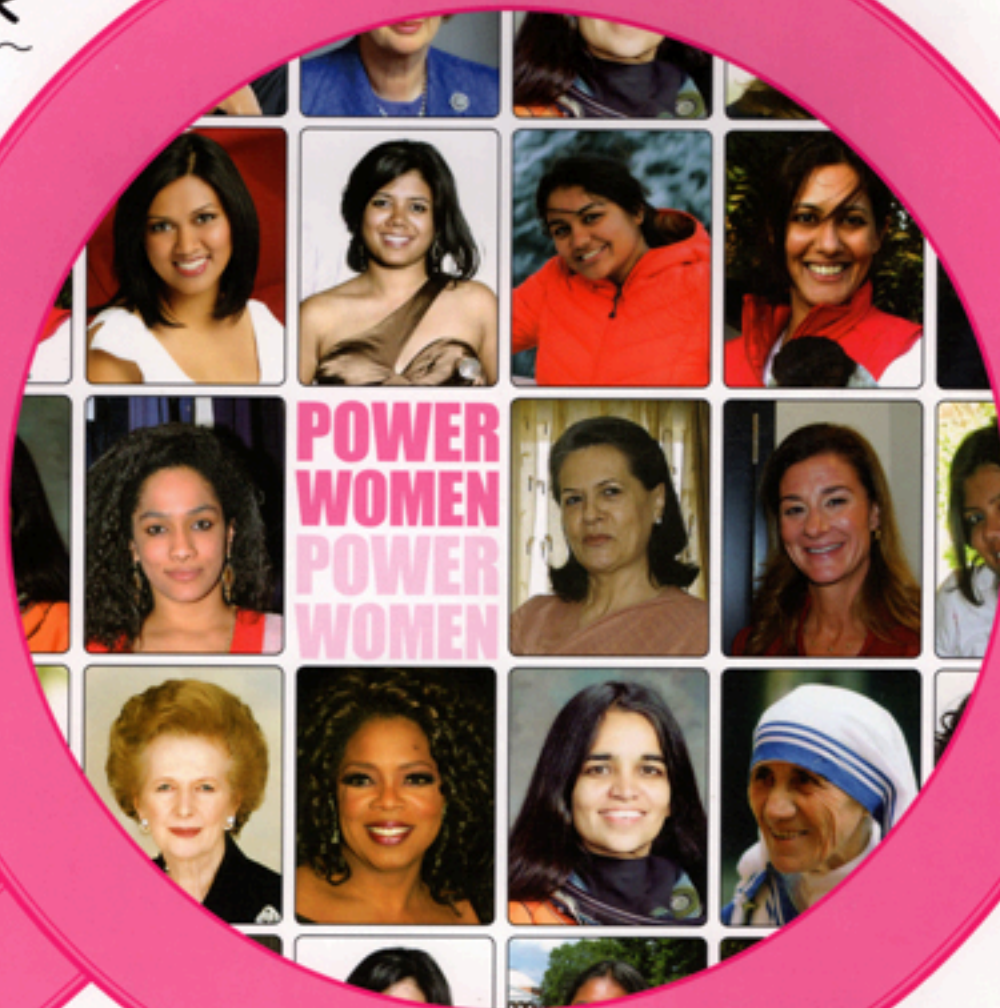
THE SUPERNATURAL FACTOR

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The **wedding** *Planner*

If movies like *The Wedding Planner* got you a tad excited to learn what it's like to be one, opt for a career in this satisfying field

In a busy society like ours, it's no wonder that a growing number of couples turn to a professional wedding planner to ensure that their wedding is as stress free as possible. After all, the very thought of planning a wedding can be exhilarating in itself and can tend to leave a couple tired and confused. Here is where a wedding planner comes in to ensure that every aspect of the wedding is taken care of. As

a wedding planner you can have a rewarding career that lets you use your creativity to organise the happiest day of people's lives. As long as you have the desire, you can become a wedding planner. Candice Pereira, co-founder and creative head – Marry Me Weddings says, "I grew up in a household where my parents have been in the wedding business for the last 25 years. I have seen so many weddings as I grew up and I understood client expectations. Attention to detail, organisational skills and creativity all came to me naturally. After doing many friends' and family weddings, one day we decided to start Marry Me – The Wedding Planners." If wedding planning sounds like the career of your dreams, then it's time to convert your love for organising parties and your creative and helpful disposition into a fulfilling career.

DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

Successful wedding planners have several traits in common. They are usually creative people with excellent interpersonal skills who love to plan events. While most of these traits are inborn for many wedding planners, a vital skill that some might need to develop is the ability to organise things and manage their time well. "One must be passionate about wedding planning or else working in this field can get challenging. Besides this, previous experience is a must. Brilliant organisational skills, a good deal of creativity as well as a background in hospitality and accounting for good money management helps," explains Pereira, who is known to have a keen eye for detail. Create timeline schedules and checklists and use organisational tools such as a day planner to keep track of wedding details, tasks and paperwork.

KEEP ON LEARNING

There are numerous details involved in planning a wedding. You will be involved in the decision-making process with the couple right from selecting the wedding date to deciding

on the menu for the reception. You can learn how to plan weddings by opting for a short-term events management course. To teach yourself, attend and help out with as many weddings as possible, visit bridal shows, read wedding magazines and conduct informational interviews with recently married brides and anyone else connected to the wedding business such as florists and caterers.

CREATE A PORTFOLIO

A portfolio is a collection of photographs that show people your skill at planning weddings. To develop a portfolio, you might want to play wedding planner to friends and family who are getting married. You can ask them to write testimonials for your website as well.

SET UP YOUR OWN BUSINESS

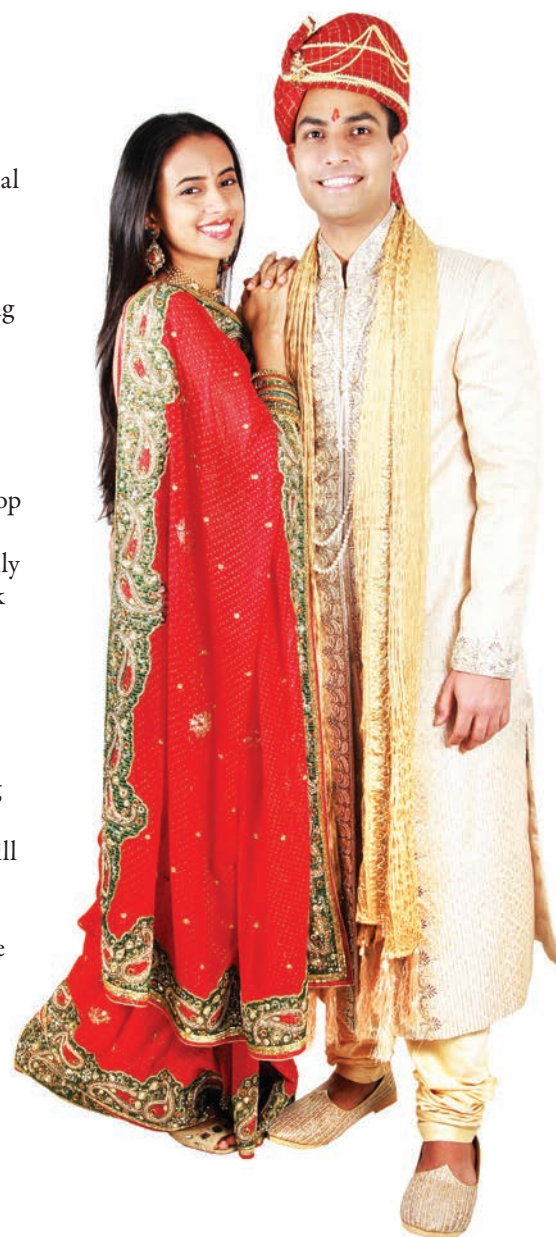
Setting up a wedding planning business is no different from starting any other business. It's important to set aside an office space where you will be able to conduct client meetings. Set up costs will be minimal but you will need a computer, business phone line, business cards and marketing materials such as a website.

PICK A SPECIALTY

Wedding planners offer a variety of services and packages based on their specific skills and interests. For example, you could offer complete wedding planning services or you might even want to offer consultation for brides and grooms or even choose to specialise in wedding decor. Some wedding planners only focus on arranging destination weddings.

DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH VENDORS

Vendors are suppliers of any product or service related to weddings, such as car services, musicians, photographers, party supply companies and invite designers. Vendors can be valued partners in planning a successful wedding and great networking allies. Thus, it's important to develop



conducive relationships with a wide range of vendors. Conduct informational meetings to learn about their services and what discounts they can offer you as a wedding planner. Before recommending a venue for a wedding ceremony or reception,

Over the last few years, Indians have started to understand the importance of engaging a professional to manage their weddings. Wedding planning is a lucrative career from a long-term perspective.



visit and inspect the premises. Take notes regarding the condition, size, cleanliness and capacity of each venue so that you can guide your clients in making suitable choices.

GET CLIENTS

One of the best ways to get clients is through your relationships with vendors. Word of mouth is also another great route to securing clients. Drop off your business cards and brochures to bridal stores, caterers, florists, photographers and other vendors you work with, and ask them to recommend your services to their customers. Other ways to market your services include advertising, networking, participating in bridal shows or even hosting your own events.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

“The trend of hiring a wedding planner has been popular in the West for a few years now. Only recently have Indians started to understand the importance of engaging a professional to manage their weddings. Hence, a career in wedding planning is definitely lucrative from a long-term perspective,” states Pereira. Speaking about the challenging nature of this out-of-the-box career, she says “One of the biggest challenges we faced (and continue to face) is the understanding of the role of a wedding planner. As a lot of clients are still not clear about the role of a planner, the scope can get very challenging at times. Also, weddings are about two families coming together and we usually have inputs and opinions from every member of the family and extended family. This too was very challenging especially when we just started out. The stress levels involved in planning a wedding and the erratic schedules, which at times can leave you with little or no time for yourself, also make it a challenging career.”

It's vital to remember that for every wedding successfully executed, you are likely to generate a new set of potential clients! So give it your best! ✓