



*Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment Wedding Planning Newsletter #26*

## **Wedding Invitations Timeline**

**8 months before your wedding:** Browse wedding invitations and announcements. Begin interviewing wedding stationers.

**6 months before your wedding:** Select wedding stationer, invitations, and announcements.

**3-4 months before your wedding:** Order wedding invitations, response cards, inner envelopes, outer envelopes, and response card envelopes. Order reception cards, if necessary. Order the wedding announcements. Interview and hire Calligrapher, if necessary.

**2-3 months before your wedding:** Address Wedding Invitations, to be sent 6-8 weeks before the wedding; allow 10 weeks for interstate mailings.

**6-10 weeks before your wedding:** Send wedding invitations.

**2 weeks before your wedding:** All response cards should be returned.

**Day after the wedding:** Send wedding announcements.

### **Glossary**

*Understanding the various “languages” of certain wedding vendors can be challenging...we’ve provided a stationery glossary to help familiarize you with some of the words you may hear...*

*Blind-embossing:* A printing process that uses a die to print a raised “relief” surface consisting of colorless letters and images.

*Calligraphy:* The art of precise handwriting and penmanship. Often associated with ornate, fancy, curlicue script, calligraphy now consists of several styles.

*Corrugated:* A paper stock with thick wrinkles, ridges, and grooves.

*Cotton fiber:* A paper stock made from 100% cotton. It is considered the most elegant and traditional option for wedding invitations and announcements.

*Deckle edge:* A handmade paper stock with irregular, feathered, or “torn” edges.

*Die:* A metal plate that is etched and then used to create engraved or embossed images and type.

*Die-cutting:* The process of cutting various paper shapes, particularly with envelopes.

*Embossing:* A printing process that forms raised “relief” surface of letters and images. Most often it is used for large initials or borders.

*Engraving plate:* A steel die that is etched and then used to create engraved type or images.

*Engraving:* A printing process where the letters appear slightly raised from an impression formed on the back of the paper. This is the most formal of printing methods.

*Flourishes:* Calligraphic decorations, which accompany many ultra-formal invitations.

*Font:* The style and appearance of a letter or numeral. The meaning has become somewhat interchangeable with the word, “typeface”.

*Glassine:* A paper stock with a thin, slick, waxy, and shiny surface which is best suited for envelopes, as it is thinner than vellum.

*Handmade papers:* A paper stock made from natural organic materials including cotton, rag, hemp, and plant fibers which create an uneven or rough texture.

*Hands:* Different lettering styles and script that a skilled calligrapher can create.

*Industrial papers:* A paper stock with a rugged look which is often made from chipboard, newsprint, or recycled fibers.

*Initial cap:* The exaggerated, oversized first letter of a word used when using lavish calligraphy or a decorative typeface.

*Jacquard:* Paper that is screen-printed to create the illusion of lace-like layering.

*Laid:* A cotton blend paper stock with a frosted, translucent appearance and rough, bumpy finish.

*Letterpress:* A beautiful but labor-intensive printing method which dates back to the 1400’s. Even costlier than engraving, letter pressing involves inking an image to produce an impression which is transferred by placing paper against the image and manually applying pressure. The precise, rich images and typeface are stamped into the paper stock. Letterpress is a terrific option if you’re using unusual paper, motifs, typeface, or want to experiment with color pigments.

*Linen finish:* A paper stock with a grainier surface than pure cotton fiber type. It is known for its elegance and classic look for wedding stationery.

*Marbled paper:* A paper stock with decorative, swirling, and abstract patterns that emulate the surface of marble.

*Matte:* A paper stock with a non-reflective, opaque finish.

*Mylar:* A paper stock with a foil-like, shiny finish, best suited for envelopes.

*Offset printing:* A common “flat” printing method which is less expensive and allows for the use of several different colors of ink and highly textured paper stock.

*Parchment:* A translucent, cloudy paper stock which is noted for its dream-like looks.

*Point Size:* The unit of measure which notes the size of an individual letter or character.

*Rice paper:* A non-traditional thin, soft paper stock which can only be used with letterpress printing. This elegant paper usually comes in ivory and cream.

*Stock:* The paper component of invitations, announcements, and envelopes described by the thickness and heaviness of paper. Hardy card stock is desirable for formal wedding invitations.

*Thermography:* A process that uses heat to fuse ink and resinous powder to create raised lettering. This style is the most popular printing method since it looks the same as engraved printing for less money. The only differences between thermography and engraving is thermographed text is slightly shiny and the back of the invitation remains smooth with no impression.

*Typeface:* The style and appearance of a letter or numeral. The meaning has become somewhat interchangeable with the word, “font”.

*Variiegated:* A paper or ribbon containing subtle hints of various colors.

*Vellum:* A cotton blend paper stock with a frosted, translucent appearance and smooth finish.

*Watermark:* A translucent emblem within fine paper stock that is noticeable when the paper is held in front of a light. This “beauty mark” is regarded as a sign of superior quality.

## **Styles**

*Understanding and identifying the various styles associated with weddings is important...Here is a look at Stationery styles...*

It is important that your announcements and invitations reflect the “style” of your wedding. Most wedding stationery tends to be conservative and traditional in its look.

**Traditional:** This popular look is usually achieved by using engraving print process. A high quality yet more economical look can also be found by using the thermography printing process. Accessories for the Traditional style include folded and bordered card stock, sans serif fonts, and black ink.

**Contemporary:** This look can be created by any of the printing processes. Usually a “serif” font is chosen on card stock without borders. Hand-made paper stock and colored paper stock are excellent options for modernizing your wedding stationery look. Calligraphy is also a great way to personalize the look of your invitations.

**Theme:** This is the perfect way to let your guests know of your special plans to create a themed wedding. Incorporate wording and images that convey your theme. Be sure to let your guests know of any special attire or equipment (i.e. scuba gear!) that might be appropriate to go with your theme.

## **What to Look For**

*It is sometimes difficult to know what makes a quality wedding vendor...we’ve provided a guide to help you identify the key things to look for when choosing a stationer as well as an invitation supplier...This will give you a good idea of quality as well as level of service.*

Is the stationer’s attitude one of service or do they take the “self-guided” approach where you are simply shown where the books of samples are?

If service is more your style, is the stationer available to personally sit with you and help you define the best look for your invitations and announcements? Then guide you to which books from different suppliers' best fit your needs.

Judging the work of a wedding invitation supplier is an important job that you face.

Things to inspect are: **Print Quality, Accuracy, Paper Quality, and Font Quality:**

**Print Quality:** Does the print look crisp and clear? Does it seem to bleed onto the fibers?

**Accuracy:** Are there any spelling, grammatical, or spacing mistakes on their samples?

**Paper Quality:** Does the paper seem substantial when you feel it? Do the hand-made papers look impressive?

**Fonts Quality:** Are there several types of fonts that look crisp and clear upon quality paper?

## **New Trends**

*Wedding trends change and evolve with each New Year...we've provided a run-down of the newest, hottest trends in wedding stationery...*

Hand-made or colored paper is a way to personalize your invitations and announcements.

Thermography is a printing process in which ink and powder are infused together to create raised letters which are similar to engraving, yet not as pricey.

Calligraphy is a labor-intensive ornate printing style which is usually hand-done. It can now be done by computers, but still only a couple at a time.

Sealing Wax is actually a practice that dates back centuries. It is a special way to personalize your wedding announcements and invitations. A popular choice is a stamp with your monogram.

The Postal Service has specialty "Love-themed" stamps that are the perfect choice for your announcements and invitations. Remember to determine the correct minimum postage for each item based on weight and size before you buy stamps.

Wedding Programs are a lovely keepsake of your special day for all whom attended the ceremony.

Set up a toll-free phone number for your guests' R.S.V.P. This option is more appropriate for casual weddings and could replace the need to include separate Response Cards and their postage.

Another option is setting up an email address or website, however, proper etiquette dictates that you use mail-in response cards.

## **Package/Options**

*Understanding the typical wedding stationery packages and options is important...Here is a look at what is usually available for weddings...*

## **Package**

The term “standard package” is difficult to apply to wedding stationery since there are so many variations and options. Most couples send wedding invitations with RSVP cards.

## **Options**

*Engraved Printing:* The printing process where paper is pressed onto a metal plate, resulting in raised letters. The most expensive printing option.

*Thermography:* A printing process in which ink and powder are infused together to create raised letters which are similar to engraving, yet not as pricey.

*Calligraphy:* An ornate printing style which is usually hand-done. It can now be done by computers, but still only a couple a time.

*Offset Printing:* The standard printing process in which the ink lays flat on the paper. The least expensive printing option.

*Hand-made Paper:* Paper stock that is not processed by machine, resulting in a highly individualized look.

*Colored Paper:* Paper stock that is generally used with offset printing options as a way to enhance the look of the invitation.

*Ceremony Cards:* Invitations used when only a select number of guests are invited to the ceremony, in addition to the reception, to which every guest is invited.

*Reception Cards:* Invitations used when only a select number of guests are invited to the ceremony and the reception.

*Response Cards:* Separate cards and envelopes for guests to respond to the invitation.

*Map Cards:* Directions to your wedding ceremony and reception usually printed in the same style as your invitations.

*Weekend Wedding Program:* A program listing the order, details, appropriate attire, lodging, and travel arrangements for activities for your wedding weekend.

*Ceremony Program:* A program listing the order of your wedding ceremony including songs, prayers, and names of the attendants.

*Pew Cards:* Invitations that indicate special seating positions, generally used in formal weddings.

*Rain Cards:* An invitation that informs guests to an outdoor wedding about an alternative location in case of inclement weather.

*Napkins:* You can have your names printed on the cocktail and dessert napkins.

*Matchbooks:* You can have your names printed on matchbooks.

*Thank You Notes:* An excellent way to thank those responsible for your wonderful wedding gifts. They can be imprinted with your monogram.

*At-home Cards:* An announcement of a bride and groom's new address of residence. They should be ordered at the same time as the invitations or announcements. They are usually included in the invitation and sometimes sent separately after the wedding. It is a good way to let people know if you're keeping your maiden name.

## **Keys to Success**

*Here are some expert tips to make sure your wedding stationery experience is the best it possibly can be...*

- ✓ Type styles or "fonts" come in hundreds of looks. Fonts are either "serif" or "sans serif". Serif looks similar to cursive lettering. Sans serif does not have flourishes.
- ✓ Most traditional, classic-looking invitations use sans serif.
- ✓ Order about 25 extra invitations at the time of your order to account for mistakes and those last minute invites.
- ✓ Order extra envelopes to account for any addressing mistakes.
- ✓ If you are Catholic, arrange with your priest to have your wedding invitation sent to the Pope. A beautiful papal blessing will be sent to you, ideal for framing.
- ✓ If you send your wedding invitation to the President of the United States at the White House in Washington D.C., you will receive a lovely blessing of your marriage signed by the President and First Lady. Make sure to have it framed when you receive it.
- ✓ Put numbers on the upper corner of every reply card. This is helpful if you can't read a guest's writing.
- ✓ Communication between you and your stationer is crucial with so many wedding stationery options and formalities. Good rapport with your wedding stationer can result in making this complicated task much easier.
- ✓ Keeping your guest list to manageable numbers is an important task. Create a primary "A-list" and a secondary "B-list" of names. A general rule of thumb is 25% of those invited will not be able to attend; however, specific details such as date and time of your wedding, as well as number of out-of-town guests will affect that number.
- ✓ Match your font style to your wedding style. Serif fonts resemble cursive writing and can result in a contemporary look. Sans serif fonts are usually used for traditional looks.
- ✓ Proofread, proofread, proof read! Make certain to look at each different piece of stationery you've ordered, space-for-space, word-for-word, and line-for-line. Get a trusted friend with a keen eye to do the same before you sign off on your printing.

## **Stationery Questions**

*When you meet with your prospective wedding stationer, you'll want to ask all the right questions...we've provided a list of what you should make sure to ask when you first speak with them about your wedding...*

1. Does your company specialize in wedding stationery? We recommend selecting a stationer who has at least three years wedding experience and who will take the time to personally familiarize you with all the possibilities.

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2. Do you have any sample albums to look at?

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3. Do you offer custom designs?

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4. Do you offer calligraphy services?

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5. Do you have a wording guide that we can use?

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6. After we've ordered, how long until we can see a proof?

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7. After we've signed off on the proof, how long until we receive the stationery

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8. What is your protocol for finding an error in the order?

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9. How do you price your invitations? Can we get a discount if we order other wedding stationery from you?

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10. Do you offer other personalized wedding accessories like champagne flutes, napkins, guest books, and/or matchbooks?

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## **Things to Avoid**

*Knowing the pitfalls and traps ahead of time can help save you money, time, and your sanity...When it comes to wedding stationery, here's a list of things to avoid...*

- ✓ Keep your Guest List to manageable numbers. One of the most difficult tasks you'll face in your wedding plans is deciding who will receive an invitation. A good way to split the list is into thirds between you, the bride's parents, and the groom's parents.
- ✓ Make sure to send only one invitation per address, unless you are sending to a family which includes a child 18 years or older, still living at home. In this case, each child 18 years or older should receive their own invitation.
- ✓ Make certain your font choice matches your wedding's "style". Make sure not to use "Serif" fonts on classic, traditional-style invitations. Most formal invitations are printed with "Sans serif" fonts.
- ✓ Avoid using printed address labels on any invitations or announcements. It is customary to hand-address each invitation. A special look can be achieved by using Calligraphy.
- ✓ If you're going to use a script font instead of a block font, be sure to use paper without a border so as not to clutter the invitation.
- ✓ You need to allow for addressing mistakes on your envelopes. Be sure to order extra envelopes, whether or not you're hand-addressing them or having them done by a professional calligrapher.

- ✓ Order some extra invitations as well. If you receive some last minute regrets you can still send out invitations to those on your “B-list”. Make sure to order at least the same amount of extra envelopes, too.

## References

*Checking the reputation, credentials, and service record of a prospective wedding stationer is important before you hire them...*

There are several resources available to check the references of a particular wedding stationer:

- ✓ Family and friends who have recently been married.
- ✓ Better Business Bureau (B.B.B.).
- ✓ Local Resorts/Country Clubs.
- ✓ Other local wedding vendor.

## Contract/Payment

*Knowing what to include in a contract with a wedding stationer is important...we've created a list of important points to consider...*

### Contract

- Name and contact information for you and the stationer.
- The precise wording of your invitation, announcements, and all enclosures to be printed with correct line breaks.
- The number of invitations, announcements, enclosures, and envelopes.
- The correct return address to be printed on the envelopes, if applicable.
- Color and paper stock.
- Ink color.
- Typeface to be used (attach sample).
- Style of printing (Thermography, Engraving, or other).
- Descriptions and totals of other wedding stationery ordered.
- Descriptions and totals of other accessories ordered.
- Date order will be ready.
- Total price.
- Deposit amount due.
- Balance and date due.
- Cancellation and refund policy.
- Name of acceptable substitute in case of problems with supplier(s).
- Stationer's signature
- Your signatures.

### Payment

- Pay Deposit
- Pay Remaining Balance
- Cancellation Policy

## Backup Plans

*Having a “Plan B” is always a good idea when it comes to planning your wedding...Here’s a look at some ways to cover your bases...*

It is important to have contingency plans in place with your wedding stationer in case of emergencies.

**Backup Suppliers:** Each stationer should provide you with recommended backup invitation suppliers in case of any unforeseen problems with that supplier.

Make a note of your second choice of paper and features in case of supply shortages.

If you change your wedding ceremony and/or reception plans, be sure to notify your stationer as soon as possible, especially if your invitations have not been printed and/or mailed yet.

## Checklists

### Styles

- Determine Announcement Style
- Determine Invitation Style
- Select Stationer
- Order Invites, Cards, Envelopes, etc.
- Hire Calligrapher
- Address and Mail Announcements
- Address and Mail Invitations
- Determine Stationery Style
- Sans Serif for Traditional
- Black Ink for Traditional
- Serif for Contemporary
- Specialty Card Stock
- Theme
- Determine Level of Service
- Determine Print Quality
- Check for Accuracy
- Check Paper Quality
- Check Fonts Quality

### What to Look For

- Hand-made Paper
- Colored Paper
- Thermography
- Calligraphy
- Use Sealing Wax
- Use Monogrammed Stamp
- Use “Love” Stamps
- Create Wedding Program
- Set Up R.S.V.P. Hotline
- Set Up E-mail or Website

## New Trends

- Engraved Printing
- Thermography Printing
- Calligraphy Printing
- Offset Printing
- Hand-made Paper
- Colored Paper
- Ceremony Cards
- Reception Cards
- Response Cards
- Map Cards
- Weekend Wedding Program
- Ceremony Program
- Pew Cards
- Rain Cards
- Thank You Notes
- At-home Cards

## Keys to Success

- Pick Font Style
- Order Extra Invitations
- Order Extra Envelopes
- Send Invitation to Pope
- Send Invitation to President
- Reply Numbers on Backs
- Good Communication
- Limit Guest List
- Create Primary Guest List
- Create Secondary Guest List
- Contemporary Fonts
- Traditional Fonts
- Proofread Your Stationery
- Limit Guest List
- Pick Font Style
- No Address Labels
- One Invite Per Address
- No Border with Script Font
- Extra Envelopes
- Extra Invitations

## Contract/Payment

- Review Contract
- Revise Contract
- Sign Contract
- Pay Deposit
- Pay Balance

*Deciding on the themes and styles of your wedding is a complex task...Here's a worksheet to help you plan out your ideal wedding stationery experience...*

## Style

- Formal
- Casual
- Contemporary

## Paper

- White
- Ecu
- Handmade
- Colored

## Wording

- Bride's parents as hosts
- Groom's parents as hosts
- Couple as hosts
- All parents listed

## Information to be listed

- Bride's name
- Groom's name
- Bride's parents', stepparents' name
- Groom's parents', stepparents' name
- Wedding date and time
- Ceremony site name and address
- Reception site name and address

## Lettering

- Traditional type
- Modern type

## Ink

- Black ink
- Colored ink

## Printing Format

- Engraving
- Thermography
- Flat Print

## Envelopes

- Plain envelopes
- Oversized envelopes

## Envelope Extras

- Decorative envelope linings

## Invitations

- Traditional, folded
- Oversize, unfolded
- Flat Cards

## Enclosures

- Response cards
- Menu Choices
- Reception cards
- Map cards
- Lodging information

- Pew cards
- Rain cards

Special Requests/Instructions

- Attire
- Meal Choices
- Gifts
- Children
- Inclement weather
- Other

Number of Invites \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Stationery Budget \_\_\_\_\_

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This guide is provided by Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment to assist new couples as they navigate their way through the year leading up to their wedding day. Included are only suggestions and ultimate decisions need to be made by the couple. Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment is not responsible for negative outcomes as a result of following guidelines.