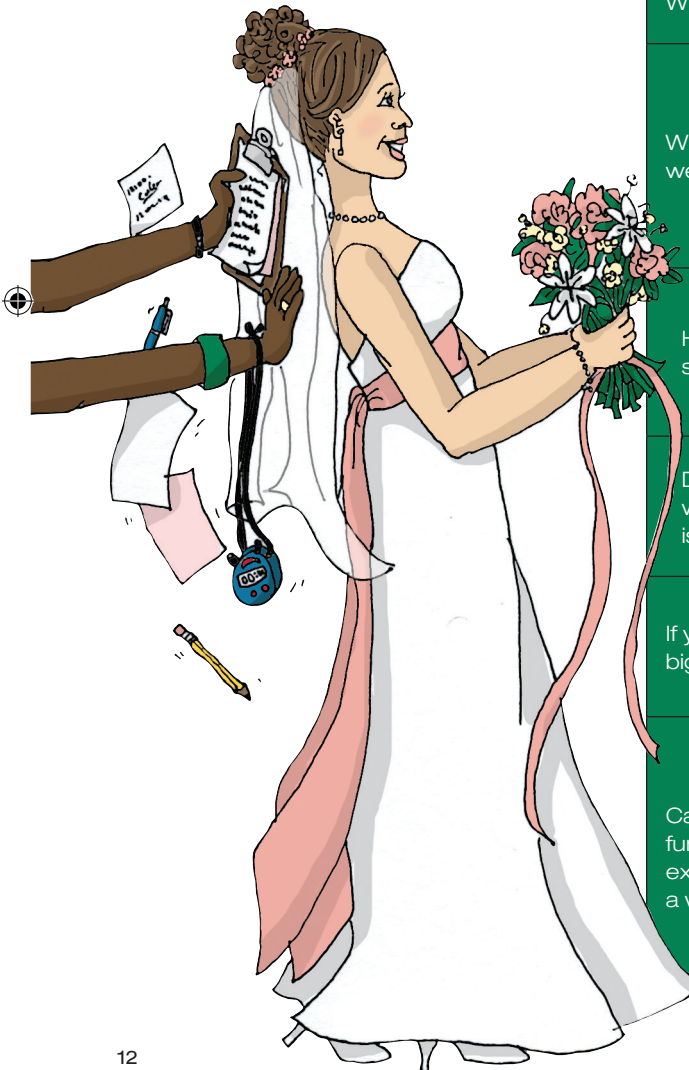




Tying the knot

reporting by Martha Gilchrist

Our comp shopper walked down the aisle to find out why wedding planners love coordinating the details and taking away the stress of a couple's big day.



Who we talked to

What's the advantage of hiring a wedding planner for your big day?

How do you charge for your services and what's the cost?

Do you personally attend every wedding and rehearsal? If so, is there an extra fee for this?

If you become unavailable on the big day, do you have a backup?

Can you describe one funny, horrifying or memorable experience that happened at a wedding you planned?





C O M P A R A T I V E S H O P P E R

<p>Elegant Event Planning Damascus 240-498-2889 eleganteventdesign.com</p>	<p>By Design Events Germantown 240-676-8248 bydesignevents.com</p>	<p>Elite Elegant Events Frederick 301-432-5781 eliteelegant.com</p>
<p>LISA R. NELSON, OWNER</p>	<p>SAMARA A. MENDOZA, OWNER</p>	<p>MARIE EARLINGTON-CRAWFORD, OWNER</p>
<p>“Basically to have things move smoothly. Most people don’t know how to orchestrate such a big event, so hiring a planner saves time and money.”</p>	<p>“We streamline the process of interviewing vendors. We serve as the go-to person for any needs, plus negotiate the cost of hired services.”</p>	<p>“Planners are the repeat customers of vendors, so we know the best and most dependable businesses.”</p>
<p>“I basically have three packages: day-of, partial and full service. When it’s a huge wedding, we work on a percentage.”</p>	<p>“We charge based on a percentage of the budget. We can also customize packages. Our services start at \$1,600.”</p>	<p>“I charge \$65 per hour or a contract fee. Each couple is different, so I offer a free consultation to discuss their needs.”</p>
<p>“Yes, I go personally. It’s included in the package.”</p>	<p>“Each client is assigned a planner, but I’ll gladly attend. There’s no extra fee for this.”</p>	<p>“Yes, I personally attend. If I’m not able, I’ll send one of my senior assistants.”</p>
<p>“Yes, but I’ve never had that happen. I’ve gone to a wedding on crutches.”</p>	<p>“We most definitely have a backup planner available and ready.”</p>	<p>“Yes, and a backup for my backup!”</p>
<p>“My assistant had all the wedding reception materials in her car, and her car broke down. Before I knew it, she was already at the church. She had hitched a ride with a stranger to get there on time.”</p>	<p>“The bride’s father started having a diabetic episode on the church steps. The ambulance techs checked him out and we sent him to the hotel to rest. The father daughter dance later that evening was really special.”</p>	<p>“I always tell my wedding party to get plenty of rest the night before and to make sure they eat breakfast. One wedding, the groom didn’t heed my advice and fainted while he was waiting for his bride to come down the aisle.”</p>

