

THE
ENGAGEMENT
GUIDE





You're engaged! Now what?!

Getting engaged is an exciting time - another step on life's journey is commencing. We hope you spend time with your family and friends celebrating and when you are ready to start planning, you have this resource to use!

For so many couples figuring out what to do after getting engaged is overwhelming. We hear it every day from clients - "what do we do next?". There are a ton of online resources, advice from family and friends, but it can be hard to cut through the noise. The guide is meant to fill the gap between getting engaged and signing your first contract with a vendor! Giving you the tools to make educated decisions and get your planning off on the right foot.



THE GUEST LIST

Building a guest list can be a very daunting task. It'll start easy, as you list off the obvious people you want there, and wouldn't miss your wedding for the world! And then it starts to get tricky...I haven't talked to them in a year, but we used to go on double dates together? And your family will have a list of your great aunts and uncles that you met when you were six, or coworkers that they've been gushing about your relationship to for years. There truly can be no limit to who gets the golden ticket to your wedding.

But don't fear, you are ultimately in control!

It's your wedding and you are the ones that will look back and remember the people you celebrated with. Discuss what your top number might be, what your budget can cover, and go from there!



If you feel like you're beginning to struggle with who you should and shouldn't invite, or the list is beginning to get a little bit out of hand, there are flowcharts and great resources online that can help narrow it down. But, truly, the best place to start? Talking it over with your fiancée!

THE BIG QUESTIONS

- Would your special day be the same without them there?
- How often do you see them or hang out with them?
- Do these people have a special impact on you or your relationship?
- Is it important to the stakeholders that they are there?



It might feel like you're being mean or excluding people, but in the end - your friends and family around you are just excited to experience this special time with you, whether or not they were there!

Have people that you're really on the fence about?

On average, 20-25% of people on your original guest list either RSVP unable to attend, or don't show up.

So you can find some comfort in inviting a few more people than your ideal count and in the end, you'll have the perfect amount in attendance for your day!

THE BUDGET

One of the hardest parts of the wedding planning process is building your budget. How the heck are you supposed to know how much a wedding costs? Additionally, it can be difficult to have money conversations with all those involved in paying for the wedding. Before you place one deposit, make sure all key decision makers are on the same page in regards to budget.

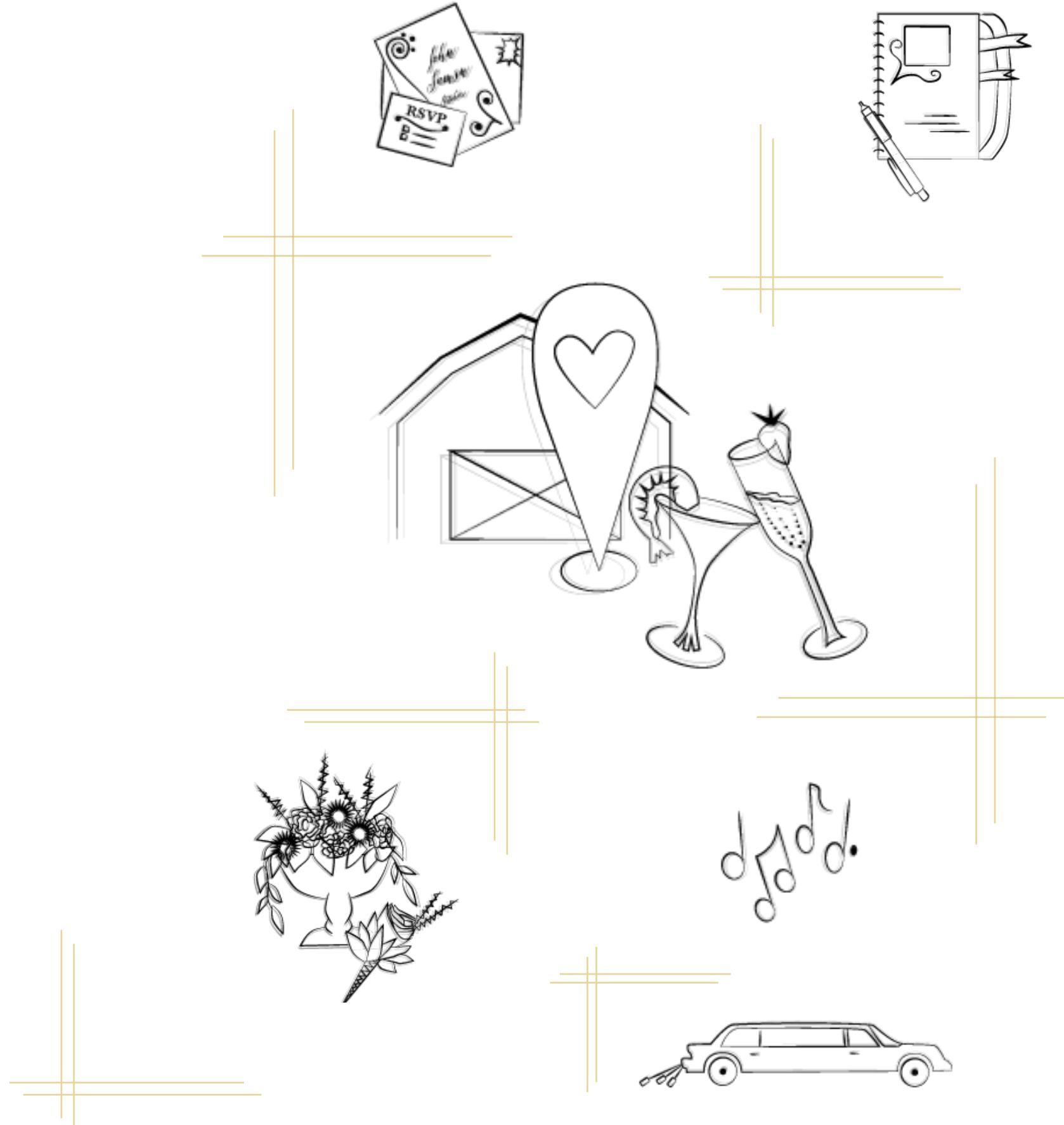
But how do you know if you have the budget for what you want to do? The biggest driver of budget is your guest count. An easy way to think about overall costs at the outset is to budget per person. The average wedding is 136 guests at \$258 a person according to The Knot.

Think about your guest count in relation to what kind of wedding you want to have. Are you wanting a huge party with a rocking band? You may need to increase your budget or cut back on other areas. Want a super fancy dinner? Keep the guest count lower so you don't have to sacrifice food quality.

Pick your top three priorities and focus your budget there, then scale back on everything else as needed.

Venue & Catering	50%
Planner	10%
Floral & Decor	15%
Photography	7%
Videography	5%
Music	5%
Attire	5%
Cake	1%
Invitations	1%
Transportation	1%

Numbers based off 136 guest count and \$35,000 budget



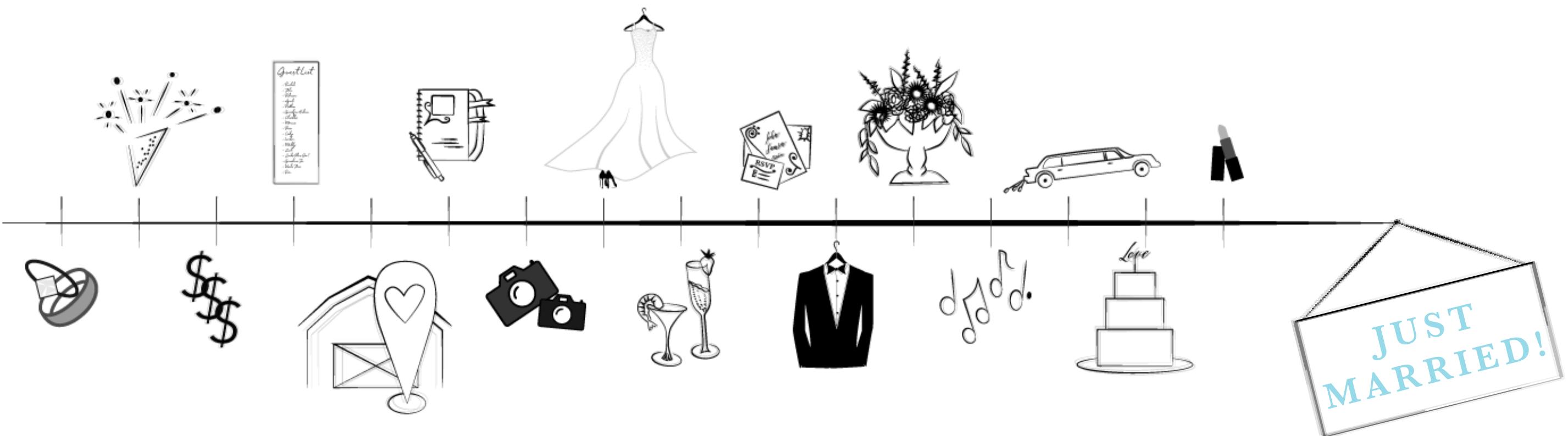
THE TIMELINE

Overall, there are a lot of vendors, parties, shopping, and overall logistic planning that you'll tackle over your engagement. But when is the right time to do it all?

First things first - celebrate!

Then it's time to move into the nitty gritty! Set a budget, create a guest list, find a venue, hire all your vendors, find that perfect outfit...Are you stressed out yet? Don't be! Not everything needs to be done at once. Research timing for your to do's and check them off the list one at a time.

You'll find that there are specific tasks and bookings that you are excited about - cake tasting anyone? So make sure you spread those out to keep yourself excited through the planning process. By the time your wedding day rolls around, you'll be so thrilled to see how it all come together!



THE 7 STAGES

Excitement...Panic...Overwhelmed...Grateful...You'll experience a little bit of everything right after your engagement. The biggest thing to remember? Everyone goes through these stages to some degree during the course of planning the perfect wedding!



Excitement

You cannot wait to get started! And tell everyone about it! And start looking into all the vendors you've heard about or seen on Instagram! And the venue? Oh my! It'll be so fun to go on tours and see so many different vibes! This is going to be great!

Confusion

Hold on...How much does it cost to get married? And who all is supposed to be on the guest list? Will people get offended if they hear I'm getting married but they're not on the guest list? Where do I actually begin with vendors?

Organization

Great! I found some resources online, I bought a book to help me through timeline and made myself a wedding website to spread the word. Now, I'll make a spreadsheet all about vendor research to rank and compare my top favorites to book the best!

Confidence

I can totally do this! I'm cruising through making all of these decisions and my fiancée and I are totally on budget. I don't know why people always say planning a wedding is so difficult? This feels like such a breeze and I could make a career out of this!

Exhaustion

Will there be an end to the emails, contracts and having to make so many final decisions? At what point can I finally feel like I'm in a good place in my planning and just take a quick break? Is there such a thing as skipping right to the honeymoon?

Panic

Oh no! The wedding is coming up and I'm not sure I got everything in order! I thought I told everyone the game plan, but now my mother-in-law is going rogue and planning something else that doesn't fit in my vision! Will it all work out?

Zen

It's finally here. I can't believe today is the day that I am getting married. My planning will all come together beautifully and there's nothing more that I can do so I'm going to focus on one thing I know I did right - marrying my best friend!

THE QUESTIONS

Along the way, you'll be in conversation with a lot of different vendors, artists, and planners. They'll all want to help you plan the perfect wedding and provide you with the best possible service. But how do you weed through all of the nonsense and find the perfect team of vendors?

There are specific questions that you'll want to know from your photographer about the photos they will take, from your florist about the types of flowers you can have or from your caterer about ensuring specific dietary needs are met. But in general, there are a few questions that should be asked across the board from every person that will play a role in your wedding day!



THE BIG QUESTIONS

WHO all will be with you day of, or who will deliver the product/service?

WHAT should I expect from you on the day of the wedding?

WHERE will we meet to discuss logistics and get through all the nitty gritty details once we have decided to book?

WHEN will we meet to talk about final logistics and details leading up to the wedding?

WHY do you do what you do?



HAPPY PLANNING!

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