

◆ Everything I Needed To Know To Plan a Meeting I Learned at My Wedding

When I accepted the job of chair of the 2002 Program Committee, I thought that I would draw on my expertise as a professional writer to help plan the San Diego meeting.

Instead, I discovered that the best preparation was the experience of planning my own wedding. The tips I learned then turned out to be extremely useful.

1. You should start early. Our committee's planning started at the 2001 Washington meeting and continued throughout the year by telephone and e-mail. Fortunately for us, we didn't have to interview caterers, florists, or hotels—the competent staff at Drohan Management took care of selecting the site and negotiating the price.

2. You should listen to other

people.

Although weddings are popularly supposed to be the bride's big day, somehow I found that my family and friends had lots of ideas about how that big day should go. Similarly, I started with plenty of ideas about the ideal CSE meeting, but I found that working in a committee means that many other people have ideas about what the meeting should be and that most of their ideas are good ones.

3. Delegate! It turns out to be a good thing that you don't get it all your own way; if you



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did, you'd have to do all the work yourself. At my wedding, I got to delegate the music to my husband, the menu to my mother, and the table arrangements to my stepmother. At the CSE meeting, every committee member got to turn his or her own idea for a session into reality.

4. Don't let unexpected delays get you down. In planning our wedding, we didn't order enough invitations and had to pay through the nose for a rush order at the last minute. At CSE, the graphic designer who was supposed to lay out the preliminary program quit unexpectedly, and it took nearly a month to get a new designer. The key to dealing with both those problems, I found, was to take a deep breath and recognize that we'd

get there in the end.

5. On the big day, something will go wrong. At my wedding ceremony, my husband and I both forgot our vows. At the CSE meeting, two speakers failed to show up. Neither disaster was serious enough to derail the show.

6. Despite all the hassles, it's worth it! It's easy to forget all the troubles and hurdles of the past year when you're enjoying the activities you planned and greeting friends from near and far.

Jessica Ancker

JESSICA ANCKER was the chair of the 2002 Program Committee. She extends best wishes to the chair of the 2003 committee, Brenda Gregoline.

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