

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT *Wedding Correspondence*

Although there are many important details to decide when planning a wedding, the very first impression of the event takes place when guests open their invitation to your wedding. You may not realize your invitation carries this level of esteem, but it is indeed the very first glimpse that guests will have of your special day. The selection of wedding stationery is now larger than ever before. This can make finding the perfect “first impression” of your wedding a daunting task, however, with the right guidance from a stationer who specializes in the wedding industry and knows the associated etiquette, both the process and your choice should be much easier.

### **1. Determine Your Budget For Wedding Stationery**

Brides often do not take into account when working on their wedding budgets that a full suite of wedding stationery includes more than just your wedding invitation. Consider whether or not you will send Save the Dates. You will need thank you notes for the many shower and wedding gifts that you will be receiving. A program for the wedding ceremony should also be factored into your wedding stationery budget, along with event accessories such as table cards, place cards and menu cards, depending on the style of your event. Consider all of these items when determining your wedding stationery budget. An experienced stationer will work with you to select items within your budget and provide advice on how to best work within your means.

### **2. Determine The Personality Of Your Event**

Creative ways to personalize your wedding stationery and make it really unique are becoming increasingly popular. Does your event have a theme, image or location that make it significant for you? Do you share a love for an interesting hobby or destination that will come through in your event? Did you meet in a unique way that you can share through the design elements of your wedding? Do you want to use a duo-gram (a custom monogram that uses your two first initials, as you should refrain from using your new last initial until after your ceremony, at your reception.)

### **3. Determine The Color Palette For Your Wedding**

What colors would you like to see incorporated in your wedding? These colors may be used for fabrics, dresses, florals, stationery, etc. Bring any color samples/swatches or images that inspire you to your appointment with your stationer.

### **4. Work Within A Reasonable Timeline**

What’s a reasonable timeline you ask? You should begin meeting with a stationer 9-12 months prior to your wedding, even earlier if your timeframe permits. If you would like to send save the dates, they are typically mailed to guests 8-12 months prior to your wedding. Plan to order your wedding invitations 4-6 months prior to your wedding. They should be mailed to guests no more than 8 weeks prior to your wedding and no less than 6 weeks prior. Place orders for your programs, menu cards, place cards or other day of stationery items no later than 4 weeks prior to your event.

## **5. Determine The Number of Invitations You Need To Send and Any Other Items You May Want to Include with your Invitations**

Keep in mind that you do not need to order the same number of save the dates or invitations as your total number of individual guests. For the purpose of ordering items to be mailed, you need to count how many “household” mailing addresses you have on your guest list, not how many individual people are on your guest list. Although you may have some invitations going to a single individual, many of them will be sent 1 invitation for 2, possibly more people, to one household mailing address. \*Etiquette tip - Children in families who are 18 years or older should receive their own invitation, regardless of whether or not they still reside in the same household with their parents. Plan to add at least 10 extra invitations to your final number of addresses to allow for enough extra.

Also consider whether or not you would like to include additional items in your wedding invitation suite. A typical wedding invitation suite is comprised of your invitation, invitation mailing envelope (sometimes both an inner and outer invitation envelope, but not always), a reply card and envelope set OR a reply postcard which is a fairly new option and possibly a reception card (only necessary when your wedding ceremony and reception are at two separate venues.) In some cases you may need to include other pieces, such as: Accommodations Card, Directions Card, Event Timeline, etc.

## **6. Determine Who Will Be Issuing the Invitation**

Traditionally, wedding invitations have been issued by the bride’s parents as they are typically the hosts of the event. Nowadays, there are many different family situations that may vary from tradition which will affect how your invitation is worded. An experienced stationer, who specializes in weddings, will offer great guidance for you on the best wording for any situation that you may have, both traditional and non-traditional.

## **7. Think About How You Would Like To Have Your Envelopes Addressed**

Because a wedding invitation is likely the most formal invitation that you/your family will ever send and they are utmost personal in nature, they should always be hand addressed. Will you consider hiring a calligrapher to address your invitations? If so, a good stationer will be able to provide you with references of calligraphers in your area. Keep in mind, while calligraphy is a very nice option, it is not your only option. Will you address them yourself or have a friend or family member who has nice handwriting? How many extra envelopes do you feel that you may need? How much time would you like to allow yourself to get them addressed comfortably, without feeling rushed or pressured, which may lead to more errors? If you do decide to use a calligrapher, contacting them very early on in the stationery process will allow you to work within their availability timetable for your order as well.

**With this FREE advice in mind and guidance from a wonderful stationer like The Cordial Cricket, the process of choosing your perfect wedding correspondence items should be a wonderful experience!**