

# How to get the most out of WEDDING FAIRS

When the time comes to start your wedding planning, it may all seem a little daunting. Expert wedding planner Valerie Mattinson shares her top tips on how wedding fairs can work for you

**A**tending wedding fairs as part of your wedding planning can provide you with wedding ideas and inspiration. However, with so many different fairs to choose from, each one with an array of exhibitors offering different products and services, it's important to be selective and decide what you want to get out of attending these events. Here are eight handy tips to help you make the most of attending wedding fairs.

**1 Do your homework.**  
Try to find out from the organiser which suppliers will be exhibiting at the wedding fair beforehand so that you can do a bit of homework. Make a note of those exhibitors you would like to find out more about, and any particular queries or questions you would like to ask them about their products and services.

**2 Take the opportunity to view the venue.**  
If you haven't booked your wedding venue and the wedding fair is being held at a wedding venue, ask to be shown around on the day and then book a follow-up visit for a more detailed tour so you can really take in everything that's important to you.

**3 Look out for special offers or discounts that suppliers are offering at the event.**  
You may be able to take advantage of an offer by registering your interest on the day (but be careful not to be pressurised into committing to /booking and/or paying there and then. Good suppliers should give you the opportunity to reflect and then sign up later). Some fairs offer the chance to win prizes relating to your wedding, such as honeymoons or complete wedding packages, and they may well offer a lot of money off services such as venue bookings – so get a good idea of the market beforehand so you

can recognise a good deal when you see one – and what savings you'll actually be making.

**4 Take your diary with you.**  
Then you can arrange follow-up meetings and consultations with suppliers you would like to have a more in-depth discussion with about your wedding plans. That way you'll come away feeling organised, rather than overwhelmed by the information you'll be taking in.

**5 Pre-register and book tickets in advance.**  
This may not only make your entry into the wedding fair more smooth but it may also entitle you to reduced ticket prices and access to any pre-registration offers.

**6 Ask plenty of questions.**  
Use the wedding fair as an opportunity to get some of your burning questions answered and to pick up tips from wedding suppliers who should be more than willing to share their knowledge and experience with you.

**7 Take a pen with you to make notes on the flyers and brochures you collect.**  
This is handy for noting something you want to remember about a particular supplier, what struck you about what they said, what they offered, any hints, etc. For example, you may meet more than one photographer, offering slightly different packages. When you get home and empty your goody bag full of flyers, you'll be pleased that you made your notes to distinguish which photographer said what!

**8 Take someone with you.**  
Another set of ears is always helpful for taking in what suppliers have to say – and of course it's another pair of hands to collect flyers and goodies! It's a great way to involve your friends and family in the planning and make a lovely day out of it.

## VALERIE MATTINSON, BENESSAMY EVENTS

### VALERIE IS A WEDDING PLANNER

and founder of Benessamy Events ([www.benessamy.co.uk](http://www.benessamy.co.uk)). She is an Associate Member of the UK Alliance of Wedding Planners and is professional, well organised and meticulous in her approach to planning.

Benessamy Events is a UK wedding planning and special events consultancy, based in Nottingham, who pay particular attention to 'turning brides' dreams into reality.

'Planning your wedding can be one of the most exciting but also the most stressful times of your life,' says Valerie. 'If you have a demanding job or hectic lifestyle too, the idea of spending every spare moment meeting potential suppliers and visiting venues may not be appealing. If you find negotiating a little difficult, leave it to us to lead these discussions on your behalf. We have great contacts and can help you to save money, or make your money go further by selecting the right suppliers to suit your needs and your wedding budget.'

You can read more tips and advice from Valerie at the Benessamy Weddings blog: [www.benessamy.co.uk/blog.html](http://www.benessamy.co.uk/blog.html)

