

There are many things to consider in choosing a celebrant



Like a jigsaw puzzle, there are many things to consider before you have the full picture.

Some people go on first impressions or "gut feelings". Others choose on price - the least or most expensive. Yet others look for value for money.

Each of these on its own is rather limited when you consider the celebration can never be repeated! But each has something of value to consider, when trying to make the best decision for your situation.

Consider the celebrant 's

Availability: Is the celebrant available on the date and time you have in mind?

Whilst this is the first question you are likely to ask, if at all possible, it may be best to be flexible about when the occasion is to be held. It may make all the difference to the quality of your celebration to wait for the celebrant best suited to your needs rather than taking the only celebrant available.

Association membership: Does the celebrant belong to a celebrant association or network?

Association membership usually indicates that the celebrant has the opportunity to keep up to date with current knowledge and practice related to celebrancy, and more likely to have back-up and support if the celebrant unable to proceed with his or her commitment to you due to an emergency or ill health.

Reputation: Does the celebrant have a good reputation?

Word of mouth is often a good guide to the quality of the celebrant's work. However, check that expectations are realistic if feedback about a particular celebrant is poor. Also, current high numbers of celebrants mean not all have had the opportunity to be well known as yet.

Training: Has the celebrant done some training programs in celebrancy or workshops held by celebrant associations?

Training, whether on-the-job or through a formal training courses, is one way to assess your celebrant's competence. The more skilled your celebrant the more likely they will be able to perform their duties in the manner you require.

Experience: How much experience does the celebrant have in conducting ceremonies?

Experience is another way to learn. The more experience your celebrant has, the more likely they will be able to perform their duties in the manner you require. However, some celebrants may have been around a long time, but are not necessarily keeping their knowledge and skills up-to-date. See training note above.

Personality: Does the celebrant have the sort of personality that you find attractive?

Obviously you will want to choose a celebrant in whose presence you feel comfortable and confident. Not every celebrant will suit everyone. But most celebrants suit most people.

As well as that important consideration, remember too that you need to choose a celebrant who will be able to provide the ceremony you need, in a group setting, in a professional, competent, sensitive and manner appropriate to the situation.

Attitude: Does the celebrant listen to your ideas and concerns? Is the celebrant keen to ensure they understand what you expect from them and that you understand what is required of you?

If your ceremony is to suit your needs then you need to know that the celebrant cares about your needs and expectations and will their best to meet them. Remember though that the celebrant has a lot more experience in designing and delivering ceremonies than you do, so consider their suggestions seriously.

Equipment: Does the celebrant have or have access to appropriate equipment such as a PA system, computer and internet facilities, appropriate clothing, a reliable car, etc?

Modern celebrants need a range of equipment to perform well. Computer and internet facilities are required to keep up-to-date and research ceremony resources as well as being useful to communicate with their clients. PA systems are especially important in outdoor venues, as most complaints about ceremonies are related to the guests not being able to hear what is happening. Being dressed appropriately and arriving on time are obviously also very important.

Remember though that it is far more likely that you will be late and disappoint your guests if you do not allow plenty to time to ensure that you and everyone else is on time. It is now considered rude, rather than fashionable, to be late.

Location: Is the celebrant within reasonable travelling distance to the venue?

Celebrants are prepared to travel, some longer distances than others. Remember though that local celebrants are less likely to get caught in traffic and to know the venues better. However, if the celebrant you really want is coming a distance, be prepared ask what strategies they will use to ensure they are on time, and be prepared to pay more to ensure they are not disadvantaged by making that extra effort for you.

Price: Is the celebrant charging a fee commensurate with the amount of work they will be doing?

Your budget is important. What you allocate to the various aspects of your day shows how important each part is to you. Most people don't realise how really important the celebrant is to

their special occasion.

If the fee seems excessively low, beware. If excessively high, ask for a detailed breakdown of what is being provided.

The time spent in front of guests is only the tip of the iceberg. In terms of the time, most celebrants spend many hours behind the scenes, in ensuring that the final performance runs smoothly.

So if the fee quoted seems high, consider the time spent with you and behind the scenes, the travel expenses, the cost of equipment and all the other running costs professional celebrants as small businesses need to meet.

Given that this special day never comes again, paying more to get quality may be the best investment you can make.

That's why this point was left until last. If you have satisfied yourself about all the other points then the fee question will answer itself.

Tips:

Phone interviews can tell you a lot about the celebrants attitudes and values, as well as their speaking voice which is an "important tool of trade". Information from their websites can also assist. Usually you will find answers to many of the questions above from either.

Don't see lots of celebrants. Trying to interview celebrants, as if they were at job interview, is a waste of your time and theirs. Mainly because an "objective" assessment is not really possible. You have extra information as you interview more celebrants, and so are not judging from the same base.

It is best to do your homework, before you spend time interviewing face to face.

Short list two, three at the most. See the person who you consider most likely first, and proceed to the second if you have any reservations.

All the very best and remember to have a great day!

Kind regards

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