

## Wedding planners (Part II)

### Price and creativity rank highest when choosing a planner

Following Part I of *Information International's* survey on wedding planners in Lebanon, which examined some trends and spending habits on weddings, Part II takes a look at the public's knowledge of planners, their general perceptions of them and their services.

#### Knowledge and recognition of wedding planners

While the wedding planning business in Lebanon is fairly recent, awareness is high, with 72.6% of those surveyed having heard of them (see [Graph 1](#)). The most well-known was Zifaf, which was named offhand by 26.7% of respondents. The wedding and event planner, Amareyn, was identified by 24.8%, while Nagham Plus and Weddings for Life were each recognized by 13.4%, followed by Caractere (9.2%), Zawajcom (8%), Weddings R Us and Together 4 Ever (5.7% each).

The largest proportion of respondents, or 32.1%, became familiar with wedding planners through specialized magazines, followed by 22.1% who heard about them on television. The importance of word-of-mouth communication in spreading awareness about this kind of business was also apparent, with 21% learning about wedding planners through their friends. Another 20.2% mentioned newspapers and 11.8% noted billboards. The remaining mediums registered less than 10% as shown in [Graph 2](#).

#### Advertising

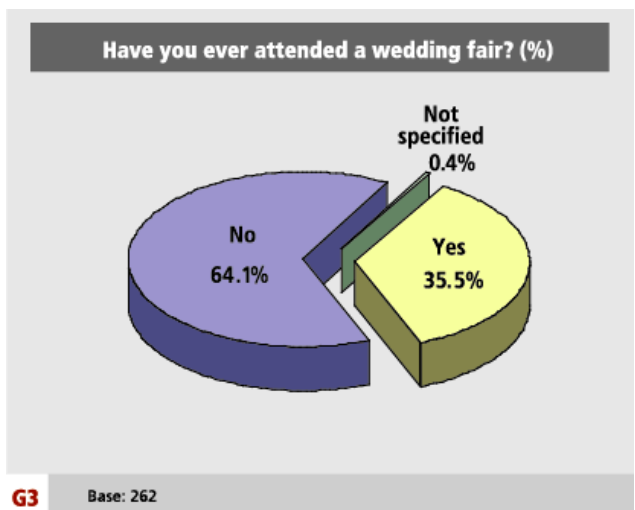
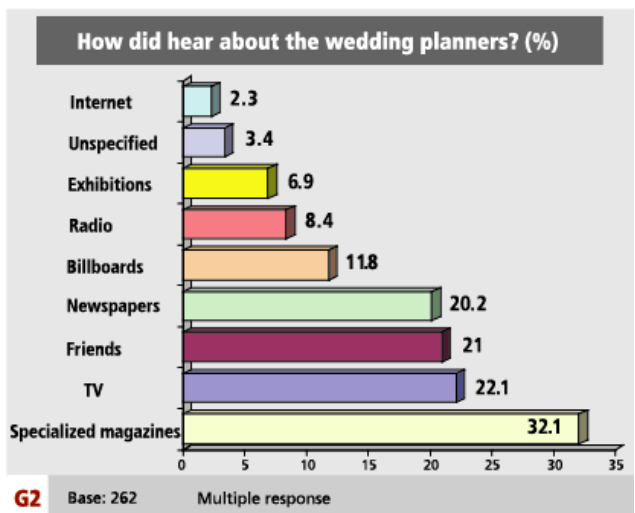
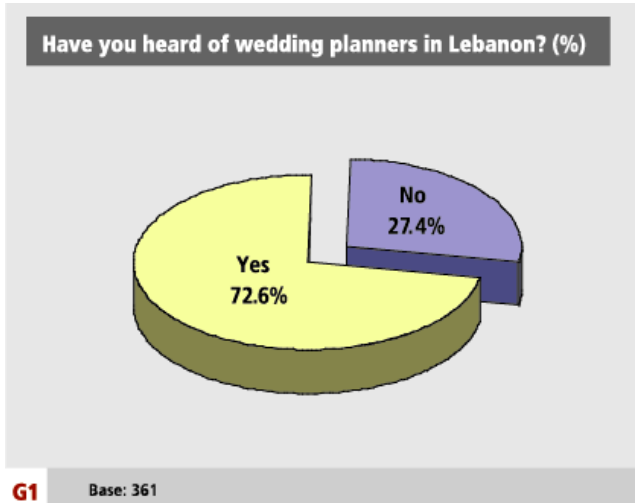
In terms of advertising, 71.2% of those surveyed had seen some form of advertisement for a wedding planner. Amareyn topped the list with 30.1%, closely followed by Zifaf at 28.5%, Weddings for Life at 19.4% and Caractere at 10.2%.

#### Exhibitions

Wedding fairs were also a good venue to meet with planners. Around 35% of those polled had attended a fair (see [Graph 3](#)), with 43% of them going to check out what's new in the market. Another 18.3% said it was beneficial to meet and compare several suppliers of the same service, while 11.8% thought it was good to have suppliers of different services under the same roof.

Those who did not attend said they simply did not have the time (54.8%), while others thought the exhibitions would be too crowded (14.3%) and some considered them a waste of time (13.7%), as shown in [Graph 4](#).

Respondents who recruited a wedding planner were more likely to have attended a fair, according to the survey. Results showed that 58.3% of those who hired a planner had been to a fair.



**Fees**

Out of those who used wedding planners, 52.1% found the fees high, while 22.9% found them extremely high. Another 22.9% felt the fees were reasonable and 2.1% did not specify.

The largest proportion of respondents (33.2%) felt that a fee ranging around 10% of the wedding budget was a fair commission for wedding planners. Another 30.2% considered a 5% fee to be fair, followed by 15.2% who suggested less than 5%. The remaining responses are illustrated in Graph 5.

**Most important features of a wedding planner**

It is interesting to note that the ranking of a wedding planner's most important features is different in the eyes of users than it is in the general public's view.

Based on the survey, the general public considers the price of a wedding planner to be the most important criteria (76%). This is followed by a planner's creativity (73.7%), reputation (65.6%), professionalism (57.3%) and the need to account for the client's ideas (53.4%). Other significant characteristics of a wedding planner were previous accomplishments (45%), advertisements (44.3%), pushing and offering their ideas (42.4%), location (42%) and their availability and timely response to the client (41.6%).

In contrast, those who had worked with wedding planners, as shown in Graph 6, ranked creativity as the most important feature (75%), followed by price (72.9%) and thirdly, the planner's availability and timely response to the client. Next came reputation (56.3%), pushing their own ideas (54.2%), accounting for the client's suggestions (52.1%) and whether the company was a local or regional one (52.1%). Previous accomplishments and the planner's list of associates were also important (50%). Other factors were personal chemistry and the company's advertising (47.9%), as well as personalized services (45.8%) and recommendations from friends and professionalism (43.8%). ■

**Sample and methodology**  
 The survey, conducted between 13 and 20 April 2004, was based on a quota sample of 400 respondents derived from residents across different areas of Greater Beirut. In each area, respondents were randomly selected in line with the following restrictions:  
 50%: 200 questionnaires for engaged couples.  
 30%: 120 questionnaires for couples married less than five years (who have not used wedding planners).  
 20%: 80 questionnaires for couples married less than five years (who have used wedding planners).  
 A sample of 361 was achieved through this technique, while the remaining questionnaires (for those who have used wedding planners) were covered through the snowball technique. Respondents were interviewed in person and the survey's margin of error was  $\pm 2.4\%$ .

