



Ask SCORE for Business Advice

“Ask SCORE” Column
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A Business Built on Love by Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt

If your Valentine’s Day includes a wedding proposal, you might be interested in knowing that a wedding for 250 people takes a minimum of 100 hours to plan. That information comes courtesy of *Seize the Day*, an event planning and rental company that opened for business in April 2006.

Owned by Peggy George and her daughters, Kate Hess and Becky George, the business idea started with a comment from Kate. “Mom, you do this for your friends, family and places you have worked. You should do this for a living.”

The women have various skills, all suited to the business. Kate has a degree in planning and is a certified wedding planner. Becky has a Management Information Systems degree and does the computer and website work. Peggy has years of hands on planning, fund raising, and project management experience.

To gain business knowledge, they visited SCORE and took the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) Business Plan Boot Camp. “We set up a firm business strategy,” Kate noted. “We constantly use the contacts and resources we received.”

Part of their strategy involved providing services not offered by many wedding and event planners. They consider themselves a resource center for couples and have a showroom with wedding magazines, vendor brochures, invitation, linens, and rentals. They want to make sure that couples know exactly what’s available in the area so they can plan accordingly.

According to Kate, the demand for wedding planners is growing. A recent survey in *Premier Bride* found that 72% of recently married brides who did not use a wedding coordinator for their weddings said that they would if they had it to do over again. This is even more important when the couple has a specific vision or idea for their wedding.

“We have custom designed and hung fabric over twenty feet high, decorated ships, and re-designed event layouts over and over again with the changing needs of the client to ensure everything was perfect,” Kate said. When the event is complicated, they rely on the help of friends and family to pull everything together.

The effort has paid off, and *Seize the Day* tripled their business from 2007 to 2008. While they limit the number of events per weekend, they have done up to eight weddings in one weekend for rentals and linens only. The full service events are much more intense and involve design, layout, color coordination, vendor selection and contract review.

The success of the events and appreciation from clients keeps them motivated. If they had to do it over, they all agree they would. For other people who are contemplating starting a business, Kate has this advice. “Be prepared, if possible, for a lot of time away from your family. Don’t expect it to happen overnight and stay positive. If it’s something you love to do, you’ll do great. Definitely use SCORE as a resource.”

If you’re thinking of starting a business, contact the Green Bay Chapter of SCORE. Visit www.greenbayscore.org or call Cindy Gokey at 920-496-8930 for information.

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