

BRIDAL BUSINESS *Solutions*

7 Step Guide to Building a Team

Ready to start building your team?
Here are 7 steps to help get you started!



BUILDING A TEAM TO HELP YOU SUCCESSFULLY GROW YOUR BUSINESS

You did it! You followed your passion and started your wedding business, and things have been going well for you. You think it might be time to start growing your business and building your team.

When I started my first business over 25 years ago, I had no idea what I was doing. I didn't have a business degree or any clue about running and growing a business. Like many of you, I followed my passion and made the rest up as I went along. That worked well for me UNTIL I started to try and grow the business. When it was just me, and I was doing everything myself, things were great...I knew I could count on my staff to live up to my standards and meet my expectations because I WAS my staff!

Expanding and growing your business will inevitably involve hiring people to work for you. You will be counting on people to uphold the standards of your business that have made you successful thus far. And, I hate to break it to you, but it's not as easy as just hiring people who are good at what they do. I hired the best people I could find, and things ran smoothly for a while...until they didn't anymore. It was only a matter of time before my lack of knowledge, structure, systems, policies, and leadership skills, along with the new responsibilities and pressures my growing business brought on, soon became too much for me to handle. It seemed like all of my time was spent putting out fires and trying to keep my head above water, and it almost drove me to call it quits on several different occasions. Flash forward 25+ years, and I am happy to say that I (obviously) did not call it quits. I instead decided to learn anything and everything I could about running a successful business and was able to turn things around and create multiple six-figure bridal companies that smoothly and successfully helped thousands of brides!

We live in a new world with a distinct advantage from when I started 25 years ago. You now have a world of knowledge at your fingertips. The internet has opened up opportunities that weren't around when I was starting out. You don't have to make the same mistakes I made, but you DO have to search out the information you need and implement it into your business.

I want to make sure that my many sleepless nights and years of trying to blindly "figure it out" will not be in vain and while I can't guarantee that there won't be any bumps in the road, I am confident that my advice will help you to start to get clear on the steps that you will need to take in order to build your team and help you successfully grow your business.

STEP ONE – CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM

I know you are excited to get going! Maybe you are starting to turn down weddings, and you keep thinking about how much money you could be making if you had other people working for you, or maybe you are turning down weddings that are too big because you don't have enough help. You are chomping at the bit to hire a team and start expanding your business, but I am telling you, the worst thing you can do is jump right in and hire people without a plan! Instead, use that excitement and enthusiasm to work smart and set the foundation for your future success!

STEP TWO – GET CRYSTAL CLEAR

Like dating, you need to figure out who YOU are to have the best chance of finding the most compatible partner. The same is true when it comes to finding your team. I hope you have figured out by now that doing the "work" of the business is only a tiny part of what makes a successful team. Yes, you heard me right, a SMALL part. Look...you can teach someone how to be a good stylist, coordinator, florist, or whatever it is you do that makes up the "work" of your business, but you can't teach someone how to fit into the culture that you have created. You can't teach someone how to uphold the standards that you have established or to have the same values that you do...these are things that are typically inherent to someone's character. It will help if you start by getting crystal clear on what exactly those standards and values are. Who are you? What is the culture you are trying to create? What does your "brand" stand for?

Answer the following questions to help you get crystal clear on who you are AND where you want to go.

- What is special and unique about my business?
- Why would a bride choose my company over anyone else?
 - NOTE: The answer CAN'T be vague or generic such as providing an excellent service or being good at what you do.
- Are there any services that I offer or a way I offer those services that a bride cannot find anywhere else?
- What is special or unique about ME personally that has helped me to achieve success?
- What are the fundamental values that are most important to me?
- What style of weddings am I known for?
- Who is my ideal client?
- How do I want my clients to feel after they work with one of my team members or me?
- If I could wave a magic wand...where would I want my business to be in the next five years?

STEP THREE – THIS IS HOW WE DO IT HERE

Once you have determined who you are and what unique place you hold in the industry, you must ensure that the business's logistics are running smoothly. Not having clearly defined systems, policies and procedures will be the number one reason you run into trouble when trying to grow and expand. It's time to take an inventory of every area of business to ensure that everything is systematized and that you have clearly defined policies for everything.

Using the checklist below, go through each area and clearly define how you do things. What is your step-by-step process when a bride contacts you for information? When a bride books with you? What is your wedding day system? EVERYTHING should have a step-by-step approach that you follow.

Next, go through and ask yourself, what are my policies for each area? What do I require for a bride to secure her date? How soon before the wedding day do I require payment? How exactly are things done on the wedding day? How will I schedule weddings for team members? Again, EVERY area of business should have clearly defined policies.

Finally, document EVERYTHING! I suggest you create a “Company Manual” where you keep track of your systems, policies, and procedures. This is going to be crucial for quick and successful growth. You don't want to waste time “reinventing the wheel”!

STEP FOUR – YOU CAN'T ALWAYS DEPEND ON PEOPLE

When it comes to growing your business and building a team it is crucial that you create a “system” dependent, NOT a “people” dependent business!

What this means is that YOU decide how you want everything handled in your business and then create clear procedures, systems, and policies that will help to guarantee that your standards are upheld. Make sure everything is documented, and then train your staff on how you expect things to be done. Do you think that Starbucks hires people because they know how to make a great cup of coffee and then gives them a green apron and lets them loose? Of course not! New hires go through a detailed training process in which they learn not only how to make excellent coffee but also an overview of the company's history and culture, where the coffee is grown, and how it is harvested and roasted. Because of Starbucks' strong vision and brand, they also feel it is important to educate their employees on how they treat their farmers and their commitment to social responsibility.

I mentioned it before, but it's worth mentioning again...the "work" of the business is a SMALL part of what makes a successful team! Hire on character first, and then train your staff on all the “logistics” of the business, such as being a great florist, coordinator, stylist, DJ, etc.

STEP FIVE – A GREAT TEAM NEEDS A GREAT LEADER

When building your team, it is essential to remember that this is YOUR business, and you get to make the rules. Besides not having your systems, policies, and procedures in place...this is the number one thing that will bring you THE most headaches when you start growing your team. People are, by nature, self-centered. This isn't a judgment, and it's not even a bad thing...it's just human nature. Most people want what they want when they want it. Again, it doesn't make them bad people. It's just the way it is.

The key is to remember this and also know that while people may challenge you, it is your job as the boss to set your expectations and boundaries and clearly articulate and enforce those expectations and boundaries. Most people will respect this and, as a matter of fact, most people want and need boundaries to be able to feel as though they are effectively doing their job. When you don't set firm boundaries, and your staff does not know what is expected of them, it can lead to, at the least, confusion and, at the worst, distrust and resentment.

The biggest obstacle to doing this is going to be your mindset. When I started my business, I was such a people pleaser! I wanted my staff to like me so badly that I didn't set clear expectations and boundaries. I drove myself crazy trying to make everything "fair" for everyone. The problem is (in case it isn't obvious) that this is impossible! It's impossible because fair is a subjective term...it means something different to everyone.

Try always to consider all sides and make decisions that can be of the most benefit to the most involved, but at the end of the day...you get to decide what "fair" is for you AND your business and then find people who are willing to work within those parameters.

STEP SIX - BUILDING YOUR TEAM

- **Determine What You Are Looking For**

- Based on the questions you answered in step two, determine what is important to you and your business. This will help you determine what is essential to look for in a potential staff member.

- **Create an Avatar**

- Just like you have (hopefully) done with your ideal bride, you now want to create an avatar of your ideal team member. What are their character traits? What do they value? What is their skill set? What do you require as far as availability? What about equipment and supplies? Think of anything and everything that you could want in your ideal team member and write it down.

- **Create a Hiring System**

- Just like with every other area of your business, it's essential to create a system for hiring staff. What steps will you take to find, interview and hire your new team members? Where will you find them? How will you give them information about the job? How will you interview them? Determine what will work for you and how you want to do things when it comes to hiring stylists, and create a step-by-step system and checklist.

- **Create a Training System**

- As far as the "work" of the business, you can choose to hire based on talent and then let the team member do what they like when it comes to working your weddings, but I highly discourage you from taking this approach. You, no doubt, have a certain way that you want things done. Protecting your brand's integrity is essential by ensuring that all your team members are on the same page. How will you do this if you are planning to train your staff? In-person? Via Zoom? On the job? Along with doing the work of the business, you will also need to train team members on the systems, policies, and procedures you determined in step three. When training staff, determine what will work for you and how you want to do things, and create a step-by-step system and checklist.

- **Managing Your Team**

- The more time you take to define AND clearly articulate your expectations to your staff and to train them on your policies and procedures, the easier it is going to be to manage them, but...when you bring other people on in your business, there are always going to be things that come up that need to be dealt with. Play devil's advocate and think about possible things that could go wrong. What do you do if a client isn't happy with one of your team members? What will you do if a staff member is late? What is your policy on staff availability, and what will you do if a staff member does not adhere to your policy? Think of these things before they happen, and better yet, create policies for these things and include them in your training. The more someone knows upfront what to expect, the better. Let your staff know what they can expect to happen if they are late, if they are consistently unavailable or if a client isn't happy. Set clearly defined policies and procedures and make them clear to everyone involved.

STEP SEVEN - GIVE YOURSELF SOME GRACE

In this age of the internet and social media, it may look like everyone else has it all figured out while you are struggling to keep it together. Business can be confusing and overwhelming, and you are not always going to get it right, and that's ok! This will be true throughout your business journey, not just at the beginning and especially when building your team. Growth and learning never stop if you are committed to success and growing your business and have big dreams for yourself. Remember that no matter how great it seems like everyone else is doing, everyone struggles in business and life; no one has it all figured out...no matter what it looks like on Instagram!

Building a successful business is a constant work in progress, and the fact that you are taking the time to read this and check out valuable resources to gain more knowledge says a lot about who you are. You should be very proud of yourself and are on the right track! Keep searching out the information you need and keep moving forward and working hard towards your dreams but most importantly, remember to give yourself some grace along the way! You got this!

If you are at the point in your business where you are thinking about growing your team, we offer a targeted "Leadership Strategy Session" that can help. [CLICK HERE](#) for more info!



BRIDAL
BUSINESS Solutions

Gina Ludwig is the founder and CEO of Bridal Business Solutions, Hair Comes the Bride and Hair Comes the Bride PRO. She started her first wedding business over 20 years ago now focuses her attention on helping bridal and wedding business owners build their dream businesses by providing resources, education and business consulting.

gina@bridalbusinesssolutions.com

949-868-8640