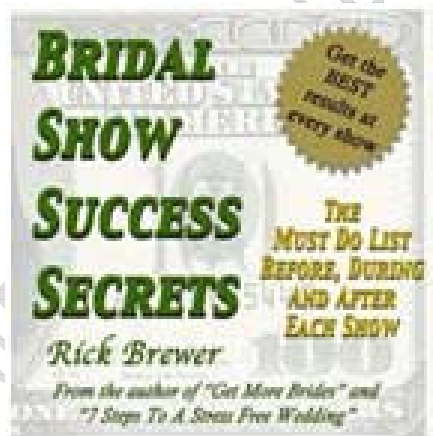


# Bridal Show Success Secrets!



**The Must do List Before, During, and After Each Show**

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## Introduction

Hi I'm Rick Brewer. I've been in the wedding industry for over 20 years. I have been a wedding vendor who worked bridal shows as well as a producer of 12 bridal shows. In that time I have seen people get fantastic results and have also seen the polar opposite. Now in this book, I hope to help you understand the ups and downs of bridal shows, how the bride things and how to work the show to get maximum results for your business.

Not everything in this program will work in every scenario for every business. That's why it's up to you to use this as a foundation to building what successes you've already found working shows and to fine tune those results to help your business to skyrocket. Now with this in mind, let's begin. Here's to your success!



## Chapter one; The typical bridal show scenario.

Have you ever shown up to a bridal show, had hundreds of brides pass by your booth and not get the results you want?

Let's set the stage.

You as a vendor have much to do to get ready for the show. You want to show your, well for lack of a better term, your stuff to all the brides that will attend the show that day. You will work to prepare a special offers, a booth that will dazzle the brides and prizes they can win, and simply trying to get as many bookings as you possibly can.

You not only have to pay the rent on the booth space, but you also have to print up literature, pay your employees to work the show, give out samples and treats and spend a lot of effort and energy to get in front of these brides. It simply costs you a lot of money and a lot of time.

The bride on the other hand shows up ready to look at all the different options she has available to her. She is looking for some of the stuff that is offered. Many times she is there with a specific purpose or agenda that is no more than three items large. Whether it be scoping out the entirety of what she needs, view the fashion show, or win prizes, she is there with that purpose. This show will cost her money to typically enter as well as her time to come to the show.

In theory, the bridal show should work for the bride and it should work for the vendor. Where else can a vendor see that many potential prospects in one day, and where else can a bride do a one stop shopping for all her wedding needs? Again, it seems as if it's a perfect matchmaker event of brides who need the stuff and the vendors who have stuff to sell.

The bridal shows in and of themselves have some inherent problems and these problems happen at the best of bridal shows, and at those bridal shows that are not so good. They are not the fault of the promoter. The job of the promoter is simply to get as many engaged or soon to be engaged girls to the show.

Here are some of the problems that you may encounter at any shows.

- 1) The girls are overwhelmed. Eighty-five percent of the girls have not been married before and the planning of their wedding, the one day of their lives which has to be perfect, becomes more than they can handle.

- 2) They're spending more money on that one day than they will any other day of the rest of their lives.
- 3) They also want to avoid the catastrophes as well as complete with their sisters, their mother's affections, keep their bridesmaids in line. You know, the singular girl who wants to wear a different color dress because that color makes her larger.
- 4) Another problem is they have come into the show at all stages of planning. Some have just begun planning their wedding. Many are in the middle stages of planning their wedding, and some have already bought everything they needed, but are there just to try to win something or get any last minute ideas. This being the case, you can plan on most of the girls there not needing your service, product, your stuff, depending on where you fall in the planning process.
- 5) A fifth problem, there are multiple vendors in the same category who have the similar things but have different outcomes. I say it often, that trust is the new currency. It is hard to build trust with a girl who is overwhelmed and has tried the other five cake places that happen to be at the show and she cannot really tell the difference between them all.
- 6) The sixth problem is the girls have multiple influencers. I would always congratulate grooms that accompany the brides as they rarely come to the show. The groom should be the most important influencer with the bride. However, he is usually not. You see the entire group. The mother, the sister, the friend, the future mother-in-law, etcetera and they all have their ideas. Many times they are gentle and kind, but not having bought this stuff before, none of the group knows how to go about getting the right stuff for this particular bride. Rarely has the bride prioritized her wants and needs to get the wedding that is in her mind.



## Chapter two; Understanding the mind of the bride.

I've used this analogy before to help wedding vendors understand the mindset of the newly engaged bride. Let me use it again to further help sink in where she is at with her thinking so that you can better approach her in her terms, not yours. If you have ever built a house from the ground up, you'll understand this analogy exactly. Most people if they ever do a promise that they will never build their house from the ground up again, and there's a reason why. Here is the house building process that will compare to the wedding process;

Let's say that you decide that you want to build your own house. (This is the engagement step for the wedding portion). For here you have to decide where you want to build it, or in the wedding world, the when you want to have it. Next comes the architect engineering and permit process. (For weddings it's the where or the venue and the times of the day). Once you've submitted for permitting, you will have some areas to fix which will then cause for resubmitting the permits, or for weddings you may need to adjust your time because Uncle Lou and Aunt Carol can't stay out that late, etcetera.

Now in the house building process, once the permits are approved, then you have about 15 to 20 things that you need, i.e., land prep, foundation, plumbing, electrical, framing, roofing, drywall, interior finishing, cabinetry, flooring, painting, landscaping, and the list goes on. For the wedding, the bride or the groom needs to get and not in this particular order, a photographer, entertainment, wedding planner, cake, limo, dress, alterations, accessories, tuxedos, honeymoon,

videographer, invitation, hair, makeup, guest accommodations, rehearsal dinners, flowers and more.

In building your house, you find that each of the various steps requires the previous step to be done first and the process runs into overtime, delays, weather and other obstacles that usually are not planned on. For the bride, she will run into a headstrong mother-in-law, mothers of the bride, attendants who don't want to wear the style or the color of the dress she has chosen, a florist who cannot obtain the off season color of flower she intends on, and more things that she had not even considered or planned for.

In budgeting to build your house, you budget based on your research and you throw in an extra ten percent for overruns, delays and shortsighted flaws in your plans. What happens along the way is each and every vendor ends up bidding low and costing high as that is the industry norm. Not to mention the up sells where they will sell you a basic entry level product where you however fall in love with the higher end carpets or cabinets or upgrades. You end up way over budget and the end result and with each step you are spending more time and money than you originally thought. And for the wedding, the bride plans meticulously. However, most websites if you had to guess, advertise the low end entry product, not the high end.

Like the first time home builder, the bride has never bought the stuff before, let alone in this quantity or to the degree of emotion. Remember, she is not typically buying for herself, but she is buying to compete with a friend or a sister or to impress a loved auntie or future mother-in-law. There's a ton of emotional minutia going on in the back scenes of her mind. Like the homebuilder, she ends up going over budget on almost every item that she will buy for her wedding.

If we take a look at the builder at the end of the process, we will find that they have taken a lot more effort than planned, a lot more money typically than what was budgeted and have taken a lot more time. They're stressed out and as I mentioned, they typically won't ever do this again. The bride is not too far different. She's been overwhelmed with the task of planning her wedding, and like the builder is over on a lot of front, budget, time, energy to name a few. She's totally done with this and will burst if she has one more disappointment.

Taking this attitude into consideration will help you approach each bride differently. And that approach in and of itself will give you a key advantage in the possible booking of the bride for her wedding. I'm not suggesting that this makes you an automatic match, but simply to understand that if you can approach more brides who might be a match for you, to get them to open up you will naturally book more brides who are a match for you and your services.



Not every bride who shows up to the show will be a match. It's up to you to sift through those brides who are there who A, need your services, B, are potentially a good match for what you do and C, you are available to offer them what you have.



## Chapter three; The bridal buying process.

The bride has a buying process which a bridal show can take away two or more steps of. Here's the process I am speaking of. This applies to brides in general, and you will find some brides who don't follow this model, but large in part, some brides will follow this model.

Imagine a ladder against a building.. Your prospects are standing far from the ladder. The first step is to get the brides to the ladder. Some will, some won't. Not all brides need or want your stuff, so concentrate on getting as many brides to the ladder as you can. This is the marketing step. In a bridal show, this step is taken away from you as the show's promoter will hopefully do a great job in getting qualified brides to the show. Now outside of the bridal show, there are typically five steps in the bridal buying ladder.

Once they get to the ladder, here are the typical following steps. Number one, they go the web and check out your website. Number two, they contact you. Now this is through either email or phone. Number three, they like what they saw, they liked what they heard so they go ahead and they set an appointment with you and they show up and they meet face to face, nose to nose with you. Number four, everything seemed great at the appointment so they went ahead and they booked you. That's the fulfillment step. And then number five, they loved what they booked from you so they're going to tell their friends and they become evangelists.

Here are some rules that go along with the steps of the process. Each step requires that they are satisfied with the previous step. In other words, if they don't like what you present say, offer or



do, they will jump off the ladder and not proceed to the next step and they'll go over to somebody else's ladder and start going up that ladder. Another rule is you the vendor need to do only what is necessary to get them to the next step and nothing further. And then the last rule is they expect great on the fulfillment step. You need to go three or four notches above great to get the referral stream going.

Now I tell you this bridal buying process for a reason. You need to know how they buy in order to accommodate their reasons and style of buying. Your reasons of selling don't matter. The first three steps, the marketing, the web and the phone call are taken out of the equation for the bridal shows, making bridal shows much easier for selling purposes. So in other words, if marketing is something that you don't do so well, bridal shows are a great match for you. You need only to get them to make an appointment at the show. Unless they're willing to sign a contract. But again, go for the appointments outside of the show where you can speak one on one to them in a more controlled environment, rather than trying to go toe to toe with the energies, the noise, the distraction and the competition of the show.

Memorize these steps and look for them in all of your marketing efforts, but particularly at your bridal show. Understand that you need to get your brides to set an appointment with you at the show and that you need to get a reasonable amount of appointments at each show for it to be successful for you. Now we will speak about what to do with those appointments in chapter six after the show. I also want to cover the role of the bridal show producer.

There have been wedding vendors in every city who say both good things and bad things about the same show. Now why is it that some have a great show while others who are in the same exact show are really dissatisfied with the results of their show? I'd like to spend a few minutes with you to help you understand the difference between your role as a vendor in the show and the role of the bridal show producer. Perhaps this will help you to understand by you showing up and doing the right things that you have a lot more power in producing great results from any given show.

The number one job of a show producer is basically to be a matchmaker. They bring together brides who are looking for the various wedding stuff and the wedding vendors who have that stuff. That's the number one job of the show producer is to get those brides to the show.

Now there's a myth out there about capturing only high end brides. I say this is a myth because it is near impossible to segregate the good from the bad when it comes to brides. They all go to similar to bridal wedding places, they all read similar wedding magazines. They all visit similar websites. That being said, there have been some show producers who have done a really fantastic job of honing down where their high end brides come from and getting more of the high end brides to the show. These producers are typically the ones who have done the shows

multiple years and have a very good reputations in the market for producing solid shows. Now if it does cost more for these shows, they are almost always worth it. Again, the basic role of the bridal show producer is to create a meeting point where the brides and the vendors can meet.

Another point I'd like to bring up about the show producer, they have a responsibility to all involve to keep things running as they should. In other words, if you're the type of vendor who shows up late then wants to break down early, it makes it very hard on the other vendors and possibly confusing to the brides. I personally do not understand a vendor who wants to break down early or show up late as I would put my all into these shows. They're very expensive to do when you look at the overall costs. One of my vendors recently commented that the best bookings coming from the show were coming from the brides who showed up late. Brides who show up late or for the drawings or showing up fresh to a crowd of vendors who are worn out and want to go home. Now this vendor would drink an extra cup of coffee, throw some water on their face and then be ready for the last run of brides.

It's my suggestion that you look at the hours the show is set up as primetime and you stay until the very, very end, trying to sell and set up appointments with every bride possible. It's been my experience in my nine to five Monday through Friday world, that the best sales also come at the end of the week, Friday afternoon. That's when the competition is heading back to the office early or home to start their weekend. You need to be different in order to get ahead and that extra 15 to 30 minutes that you spend really trying to find the brides can make a huge difference.



## Chapter four; Before the show.

Working a bridal show really begins before the show. One of the biggest problems I have seen with vendors who work a bridal show is their failure to prepare in advance. In working bridal shows with those who have been extremely successful, I have found four key ingredients to the preparation or before the show stage which they have followed. I'll talk about these four ingredients and how you can use them to get ready for your next bridal show.

Key ingredient number one, research. In researching before the show, you need to drill down a few items. Polling your brides on which shows they attend, polling other vendors on what work for them and which shows worked, researching your brides to find out why and how they took action at shows. Poll your current and past brides on which local shows they have attended. Ask them which shows they liked and which ones they did not. You will probably not find consensus here, but will be better able to find the better shows to work. In choosing a good show, keep in mind that there are advantages and disadvantages to some of the features of each show.

Shows with great attendance can be a blessing or a curse. With too many brides they feel claustrophobic and rushed. With shows with a few brides you can typically spend more time with each bride but the quality of bride will still be there. Keep in mind that again it's hard to promise a show that will attract only the high quality bride that will spend some serious dough with you. The higher end bride is a hard target to get, but not impossible.

Brides of all budgets and flavors will attend any show typically, so be cautious of the show that promises only high end brides. The show will typically not insist on a W-2 form to prove that the bride is of a high income or high net worth. They'll let every bride who shows up enter and participate. *The key to you is whether the show will bring you customers who will spend money*

*with you because as you remember, the brides with priority will buy your stuff no matter what the price.*

A good show to one vendor may not be a good show for you. Most wedding vendors do not measure their success from a given show as they usually do not plan on measuring that success. Some vendors simply measure based on the number of girls who attend or the size of the lead list that is there. The best measurement is bookings that you get directly from the show. Some brides will come to the show who you have previously met with and book because they saw you there a second time, or this is the medium that throws them into booking mode. I would count this to the credit of the show as the bride may not have booked without the show.

Key ingredient number two, booth preparation. The second item that you need to work on in your before the show preparations is the look and feel of your booth. In the look and feel of your booth, concentrate on the three second rule. This three second rule is simple. Make sure your prospects know what you do within three seconds of seeing your booth. Keep it simple and keep it consistent.

I have always recommended that you participate in more than one medium of advertising with your product or service. If you have an ad in a magazine or a website or a brochure, make sure all of them are consistent in their feel, their look and their colors. Perhaps you're using one image or logo. Use all of these ingredients consistently so that the bride will have a better feeling of trust when she sees your booth. They may or may not realize it, but studies have shown that by catching them in this manner their subconscious will trigger a feeling of trust as the reputation of your advertising has indicated that your business is stable and serious.

One further consideration in your booth prep is to make sure that your booth has a professional look and feel about it. You know what I'm talking about. Professional graphics, versus hand drawn signs. Professional signage provides a bigger than you look and feel about it that the brides can wrap their hands around it and feel comfortable with a professional quality vendor. The investment of a good graphic artist is worth its weight in gold when preparing your booth. Use professional signage and display materials so you don't look like a third grade science fair exhibit. These girls will be sending more money with you on their one day than they will every day of their lives and they want professionals who they can trust to do a good job. Look the part and they will begin the buying process by stopping by your booth.

Key item number three. The third item is to give the prospect a good reason to stop at your booth. As I mentioned before, not all brides will need or want your product or service. If you follow the three second rule, the bride will know what you do and either need you or not. Getting them to then stop if they need you is a different step. This can be as simple as saying to each bride, have you booked your photographer, deejay, cake, flowers, etcetera yet and then

being ready with a yes or no response. For example, she says yes. Great. Enjoy the show. If she says no, you can have a few responses available. Here are some examples. Would you like to register with us to see if you can win some free flowers? And then one person wins let's say a bouquet and two boutonnieres and everyone else wins a 25 dollar gift certificate good towards any wedding package. This requires being ready to call everyone on the following Tuesday to let them know that they won and please call or come by the shop to pick up your certificate. Note: I am not big on the idea of "prizes", but since that has been the Modus Operandi of the wedding industry since the beginning of time, I mention it here. I much more prefer you work your booth like crazy and engage the Bride. There will be a Bonus section on the most direct method to systematize your approach at the end of this book called "The 3-3-3 Method".

You can also respond with tell me what you were looking for in the way of wedding photography, and then try to get them to engage. I'll have more on this subject further later on what to have as a goal once they engage.

The other response that I might give them is, give me talk for 3 minutes and see if we have a potential reason for talking further. Everyone has 3 minutes. It's not that big of a commitment. When they can take a bit of the little stuff, the bigger stuff will come easier. If you try to get them to sit down for a 30 minute consultation free or otherwise, it's probably not going to happen as easily as will 3 minute chat. You can then move them into a 30 minute consultation if they are comfortable with the 3 minute chat because the 3 minute chats typically go two to five minutes anyhow. However, you shouldn't be doing these 30 minute consults at the show.

There should be more brides that you can see and speak with during that time. Having samples and signups for giveaways are also a reason to get them to stop. However, keep control over both of those. Everyone including many of your fellow vendors will stop for a free piece of cake. I remember one show I participated in years ago when chocolate fountains were just coming out (again- it was *many* years ago ☺). All the vendors thought it was really cool and the chocolate fountain guy didn't bring enough samples. Because of that he was shooing away people who could not only book but refer brides to him.

One of my photographer friends was shooed away quite curtly and he didn't take it well. The photographer was being kind in bringing over brides to this vendor as a friendly gesture, but the vendor was more worried about giving away a 25 cent sample than he was getting more bookings.

I have seen more shows where people put out a candy dish as though the Hershey's kiss with cause a bride to book. The little kids who come to the show grab all those candies and the brides take it and put it in their bags for later. Give them something if you want to but control it. In other words, give it to them after they speak to you or because they speak to you. This goes the

same with games that will you win some sort of prize. Everyone will want to play the game whether they need your service or not.

Keep your handouts at the back of the booth where you have to give them out. Brides have a habit at these shows of simply grabbing what's on the table. I have seen vendors lose expensive samples of their work because the bride thought it was a freebie and they thought it was there for them to take. Think of the step beforehand and you will get better results.

Key ingredient number four, create a target. Have a goal for the number of after show appointments. Now when you decide to participate in a show, you will probably have an idea in your head that you get only one wedding from the show or two weddings or whatever small number of weddings that you need to cover your costs, you'll be doing okay. As I mentioned earlier, there's always a next step. As I mentioned earlier, there's always a next step and you should be trying to get your bride to take that next step in the buying process.

You should do whatever you take to get your prospect to take the next step and nothing more.

It's like a treasure hunt. You go from one clue to the next. In this case the bride might be on your sales ladder. She may not yet be on your ladder. It is your job to sift through the total number of brides that are in attendance at the show and determine which ones could be a customer and which ones will not be.

You have had brides who spent 30 minutes with you only to find out that they have already booked their whatever it is you do. By having a goal at the beginning based on accurate forecast of attendance, you can then have a pass fail grade on the show, on your performance or on the results, however you choose to grade. A goal of five to ten percent appointments is a reasonable expectation. For every 100 brides in attendance you book appointments with five to ten of them. This certainly depends on the show itself. Now the mega shows with hundreds and hundreds of brides showing up can be less effective as the more intimate shows as I've mentioned earlier where you have more time to spend with each bride.

Work the show with your goal in the outset and you will find greater success. The shows are also a good reason to reconnect with brides who you may have already met with on a previous occasion and you use the show as an excuse to reach out to them.

Before the show it not only makes sense to invite your current batch of brides but to invite any current or previous prospects. By reaching out to them before the show you have a chance that they may not have booked with you simply because they put that on the back burner. Believe you me, if every vendor did this same thing for the show added to what the show promoter does to bring in brides, you would have a greater number of brides who are warmed up for the booking, the stuff that they came to book anyhow for their weddings.



In the worst case scenario, inviting a previous prospect may get another booking for a competitor but that does not hurt you, and the law of reciprocity will catch up and reward you later. I say it doesn't hurt you because if she hasn't booked with you yet, she's not your customer, and the sooner you understand that the brides who are only prospects are simply prospects, they're not customers, the better your attitude will be towards this principle.

## Chapter five; During the show.

Here are some ideas to help you find the success that you are working towards, at the same time overcoming those common roadblocks. By following these ideas, you will stand out and not end up as just another brochure or card in her bag that she promptly puts at the corner of her room when she gets home never to be looked at again.

First idea, show up early. Be prepared mentally and physically. As I mentioned before, when I produce bridal shows one of the biggest problems I had was the vendors who would show up with 30 minutes to go. The show would start and they would have multiple problems. They were inconsiderate of their neighbors, they were not prepared for the brides walking by and they left a lot to be desired with the presentation. I had vendors who would roll out of bed, load their cars in a hurry and scramble to get to the show. They didn't have time for breakfast and they were always sweaty and unprepared when the show started.

By showing up early, you not only have the ability to overcome all of these problems, but the ability to network with your friends at the show. You also can fine tune things to better present your products or services as well as get your mind into the game prior to the onslaught of brides. Not to mention, taking some of the heat off the shoulders of the show producer.

Plan ahead with a design that is conducive to your customers. In other words, make it attractive to the bride whom you want to attract. As potential customers their opinions matters. They have typically been to shows and they will tell you what they like and they don't like.



Tip number two, have a special offer that requires action after the show. Many vendors feel that they need to give away stuff at the shows. Not a bad idea, let's just tune up the delivery. You have probably seen vendors bring the little candy dish only to see it go into the little hands that show up with the brides at the show and they take it by the bagfuls when mom's busy speaking to that vendor. A special offer that requires action after the show may be as simple as printing up a card that gives away whatever you're going to give away at the show, only to have them come to your place of business where you can speak to them away from the glamour and the busyness of the show.

Let's say you are a photographer and you want to give away a free DVD of your pictures. Give them an incentive to come to your place of business to not only get the DVD, by then they won't need it. They will have taken the next step and know enough about your business to either go forward or get off the ladder, but to give something else. Many photographers for example give away a free engagement session with the idea that will lead them to getting the entire wedding.

Now one caveat to this is if you're giving away something in a small sample like for exactly a cake vendor obviously has to give away a little bit of cake because every other cake vendor is there. A bride's not going to typically book to just come and taste your cake when five other cake places are giving away their stuff. But if you can give away your product or your service, whatever it is that you're going to give away at your appointment instead of at the show then you'll number one not waste so much stuff that you're giving away and number two you'll get more realistic people showing up for appointments.

Tip number three, get appointments to meet after the show. As I mentioned earlier, if you are having meaningful conversations at the show you don't always have to give them something to get them to set an appointment. They will be more than glad to do so. You can simply say it looks like we should continue this conversation but I don't want to take away from you seeing other people. Does it make sense for us to set an appointment for some time next week?

Never lose control of the sale. But on the other hand, if this is not phrased in a manner that it can then be the idea of the bride to make the appointment, you have a better chance of getting a good appointment. She'll never argue with her own ideas.

By having the appointment after the show, you will then have a better chance of getting all the right decision makers to the appointment. I would put the appointment on the calendar and then a reminder call to confirm. When you call to confirm, invite the groom, invite the mother, invite anybody that matters and ask is there any other important person who should be there? When you get the right people to the appointment, you have a slimmer chance of hearing, sounds great. Let me think about it.

By the way, don't get yourself into believing that once she leaves that she's actually going to be thinking about you. Once she leaves, the only one that's thinking about it is you. The same principle applies even more so to girls who say this at the show.

Tip number four of what to do during the show. Politely ignore your competition. Most bridal shows have more than one vendor in any given category. With this being the case, I have seen at times up to 20 or more of any given category. It is under that situation that I suggest that you politely ignore your competition.

Too many times I have seen one company who will play a one-upmanship game with their competition. The competition offers X, therefore I must offer X plus one, or X times two. Now what happens is this tinkling contest only pushes each other into what you may or may not be doing that works. And it also trains the bride to look for a deal from everybody. You do what you do differently albeit sometime very similarly from the others who also do what you do. This particularly applies to those who provide a service.

Whether it be your personality, you style, your flavor, your quality, your service, whatever it is you offer, it is probably most likely different than anyone else in town. For that reason, you need to design your presentation on your strengths, not following after what somebody else may or may not be doing. Of course you want to be friendly and cordial with your competition who's at the show. There's enough business there for each of you and there is no reason to worry about who does what or who is or isn't at the show.

Tip number five, rule of first glance. The rules of first glance state that you should be able to tell what the person does at first glance without trying hard. In other words if you are a caterer, the bride should be able to stand back and look at the sometimes hundreds of booths and determine what you are by simply looking for three seconds or first glance. It doesn't mean that you should not look pretty or use some marketing principles like a pattern interrupt in your design, i.e. don't hire a deejay posted on an obvious deejay booth. Then they have to explain why they need an entertainer instead of just a guy who spins records.

Now I've seen booths that put a bridal dress on a mannequin, fill the booth with flowers when what they do is invitations. It doesn't say invitations. If anything it says bridal dress or maybe wedding flowers. Let me say this. You are at the bridal show. The brides coming know that they are at a bridal show. You don't have to put all the bridal peripheral there unless you are at a show that is not a bridal show like a women's show or a chamber of commerce event.

The bride is there with a mental list of things that she needs to get for her wedding. As she goes through the show, if it becomes easier for her to notice you, most of the brides have about 100 yard stare anyhow and she's keeping her eyes open for the sniper salesman type who plan on

holding her down and taking her wallet. Then you have a good chance of getting her over to your booth to begin the bridal buying process.

Tip number six, look the part. Active, attractive and energetic. Everyone loves someone who is full of enthusiasm. Imagine going down the aisles of the show and people are just standing there. Does that sound like someone who you want to do business with?

I remember one show where the vendor sent up her booth, put her table up in the front of the booth ( a big “no-no” by the way because it sends out a signal that you don’t want them in your space, and then proceeded to work on her needlepoint for the entire show). Now how would you receive a person like this? Would you be anxious to do business with them? If you are absolutely certain as a bride that you knew what the vendor did and that you knew that they were the only vendor represented of that vendor type at the show, you might as a bride stop by the booth. That being said, this person was not the only one there and her booth was confusing at what she did. So you can imagine the results.

Now imagine walking down the aisle and there is someone who is energetic and friendly. They greet you with a smile and ask if you are looking for the product or service they offer. Whether you are looking for it or not, you are open to that person. Being fully engaged at the show will definitely help your chances of landing the right brides. Prepare yourself as mentioned above. Have your goals (also spoke of prior to this). Where else can you see so many prospects face to face in one day? This is an exciting moment for your business. If you can pull it off, you can land enough business to potentially last you for the year in many cases.

Be energetic about your prospects. Be attractive. In other words, look well, dress well, groom yourself well. Have breath mints and water to combat bad breath and dry mouth from talking to all those brides. Make sure your attire is fresh and that it is pressed and not worn. Shine your shoes and look professional. These girls could potentially spend more money with you than they ever will again, so look like you deserve to get that money. If you have attire like shirts with logos on it, wear them if they are in good repair. My advice is to not wear silly things to catch attention. A wedding is the most important day in the life of this girl and she wants to know that you take it seriously. If you have colors that are used in your advertising, try to integrate them into your attire and your booth decorating strategy. Again, look the part of what she’s expecting to book from you.

“The biggest mistake that you can make is to believe that you are working for somebody else...The driving force of a career must come from the individual. Remember: Jobs are owned by the company, you own your career!” – Earl Nightingale, Motivational Speaker

## Chapter six; After the show.

Okay I think I've mentioned this a few times. Bridal shows are a fantastic opportunity to get in front of real prospects who may need your services. Most of the time the girls who show up for the shows are engaged or close enough to count, so the shows become a fantastic lead generation tool. Not all the girls at the show however are looking for your products or service. Not all of those who are looking for your products or service would be a good match for what you do either.

Use the show to be able to find the brides who would be a good match for you and your business. Plan on getting a fraction of the brides in attendance as appointments, and then take them to the next step when they meet with you.

Typically you should come away from the show with three vital information groups. They are number one, the appointments that you have set at the show. This includes their name, wedding date and any and all contact information you will need, emails, phone numbers, cell phone and addresses to make those work for your advantage. Number two, the leads of brides who have potentially filled out a paper at your booth to win a prize or that they are further interested but didn't spend time to set an appointment with you. And number three, the general leads which go out to all the vendors which the show has provided. You'll have to check with your show promoter as not all shows provide these leads. Which by the way, if they don't, go for you because you're going to be ahead of 80 percent of your vendors by listening to this CD. Let's discuss what to do with these groups of information after the show is over.

The first step, it is critical that you act and act quickly and do not let things cool down. By acting quickly, you keep the relationship that you have made warm. Reaching out to these girls the hour after the show is a bit unreasonable. But my suggestion is within four days while the memories are still somewhat fresh is a good thing.

I would start with the girls who have set appointments. Start by sending them a thank you card. On the thank you card by the way, handwrite it in blue ink. A little detail but you win through the little details. Thank them for coming to the show and tell them that you look forward to seeing them on blank day and blank time at such and such location. Should they have any questions between now and then, give you a call or if they're having any challenges, here's my personal cell phone number and then give them your cell phone number.

This will end up acting as a reminder, a gentle reminder as well as give them another touch to help them build trust. But think about it. If you had an appointment with a carpet cleaning service for example that you had met at let's say a local home and garden show and this same thing were done to you, you would all feel that warm and fuzzy feeling about it as well. You are also giving them a gentle reminder without seeming self-serving. If there was confusion and most brides experience confusion often throughout their engagement because they are so overwhelmed, this will either help to clear it up, give them the information to correct it or at least put the ball in their court to solve any issues.

Now one other important piece of information, it's crucial for you to know how long it takes for the post office to deliver these thank you cards. You may want to get a head start on them by starting them right after the show is done. This way if you happen to have an appointment scheduled for three days after the show, you can get the thank you card in the mail right away. Most post offices will deliver within one day to the same metro area, but again check with your local people on the timing of this.

After you have gotten something in the mail to them, put something in the mail to the brides who filled out the registration information. In other words, the second point, the girls who filled out to win the prize or that they are further interested, they just didn't take the time to meet with you and set an appointment. This can also be a "thanks for meeting with us" but I would strongly advise that you link this piece to another touch that will be coming. Now, let me explain what I mean.

You send out a card that says thanks for spending some time with us at the show on Saturday. I will be giving you a call in the next day or two to let you know the outcome of the drawing that you signed up for. In the meantime if you have any questions, please feel free to call me on my personal cell. I am big on this personal cell because it seems like you have the key to the executive washroom when you say it like this. But be careful that this personal cell isn't

published all over everything that you already gave to them. I usually have two numbers for those reasons specifically.

After you send out these cards to this second group, you give them a call and let them know that they were second place unless they were actually the winner and by the way, do your drawings live on the internet or live in front of a group. It gives you one more touch or one more chance to talk about your product or service. You can have them do a webinar type conference and before the conference begins, give a two minute commercial.

The Next step, after you have called all the girls up (By the way, most of the girls are going to go straight to voicemail so be aware of that), Send out a blast email. Now I know that you're thinking, "Rick, I'm going to look obnoxious to these girls by doing so much". Well maybe you will look obvious to only the ones who never intended on purchasing and only wanted to win the prize. Those who are semi interested can be swung around if you do these steps in this manner though. I have seen it work before and I know that you can do it as well.

Don't worry about the customers that you don't have yet. I've mentioned that before. If they haven't signed a contract with you and the check hasn't cleared the bank, they're not a customer, they are only a prospect. It is vitally important that you separate the girls from the different groups as you don't want the girls who have appointments being treated like the girls who signed up for the prize and so on.

And now for the third group, send out a blast email first, then call, then mail out those that are further interested and follow up on that call to make sure that they got what you mailed. The attention span of a stressed out overwhelmed bride is short and by doing these steps in this manner, you will get in front of most brides at the least cost. These lists are very important and history has shown that 90 percent of the vendors will not do anything with the list.

Remember I said that you're going to be ahead of 80 percent of the vendors? Because you're going to have more lists that are going to be more finally tuned. Of that ten percent who do use the lists, most will email only and they will do it in a buy my stuff manner that really turns off the bride. You may have heard me speak about this in my other materials where I said brides love to buy but they hate to be sold and most vendors will approach them on the buy my stuff or selling type mannerisms.

I want you to think about the movie Father of the Bride, the one with Steve Martin in it. When Steve Martin his daughter and Diane Keaton went to meet Franck the wedding planner, do you remember what the assistant said when they walked in? He asked, would any of you like some champagne? Now while the mom and the bride got all giggly about this, Franck came out and hit them with a huge price tag. He was able to do this because he was a trusted figure with mom and the bride. They felt all warm and fuzzy. Treat your brides like this and you two will build a



trust. The thank you cards go a long way in starting the relationship of trust with these brides. Bridal shows for a long time have been looked at as kind of a necessary evil.

Use as many of these techniques that we've spoken about in this audio book and you can look forward to doing bridal shows because of all the brides you will get in the end result.

Thanks again for your attention and here's to your success~!

## **BONUS : The 3-3-3 Method**

I want you to use this method as a way to sort out all the Brides who are walking down the aisles past your booth. This is the most direct, and candidly, the most effective way to figure out which Brides may or may not need what you sell. It is quite simple, but requires repetition to master and to be effective. What you will see here is to be used as more of an outline, which you fill in the particulars with what fits you best. Here is what the 3-3-3 method is;

**You have 3 seconds to capture her attention**

**Wherein you can ask for 3 minutes of her time**

**When you can ask her three questions.**

Here is what it looks like:

A Bride is coming down the aisle (usually with her entourage)

**You approach her with the first "3"**

"Hi, Are you considering (fill in what you sell here) for your wedding?"

Or

"Have you purchased/booked/hired (fill in what you do here) yet?"

The answer will be "yes" or "no". Here is your reply for each:

Yes (they have booked it ): Great- enjoy the show! (or something cordial to get them moving along). You don't want them trying to bond with you and asking you fifteen questions while 33 Brides walk past your booth and make you kind of nutty. These Brides can take your time without thinking while never intending on spending a dime with you.

No (they have not booked it) **Great- do you have three minutes? (2<sup>nd</sup> Three)**



Again- yes- or no. If she does not have three minutes, move her along (sometimes she may be in a rush to see the fashion show or some other time related event- have her come back if this is the case). If she is simply being shy or giving a little push back, let her go. It is reasonable that a person who came to a place where she can get information about the stuff she is trying to purchase to find three minutes to spend with you. Those who are not going to give you three minutes, no problem; there are others there, so find one who will.

Yes- Proceed.(3<sup>rd</sup> Three)

### 3 questions:

1. Have you ever Bought/purchased (insert what you sell) before?

Yes- Question 2- What was it you really liked about (insert what you sell)

Question 3 Did you have anything you didn't like or wanted to change?

No- Question 2

2. What were you Hoping for? Or Have you seen \_\_\_\_\_ that you liked before? Or Have you been to a wedding where you saw \_\_\_\_\_ that you really liked?

3. What were you trying to avoid? Or Have you been to a wedding where you saw \_\_\_\_\_ that you really didn't like?

You are basically trying to accomplish this with each question:

1. Establish they haven't done it before and potentially put them in a position of needing someone to help (hopefully you, but you are the expert at this point asking the right questions that will help you to build trust)
2. Find out what they are hoping for
3. Find out what they are trying to avoid.

Once you have put them through these steps, if you feel it is appropriate (and 98% of the time it will be) – try to set an appointment by saying something along the following lines:

“sounds like we have something worth talking more about. Most Brides like to chat outside of craziness of the show- how is your schedule next week?”

Try to get her to make an appointment where you have the one on one attention you need to figure out if you are a match.

If you use this method, pretend you get 25 Brides who agree to meet for an appointment, 20 show up for their scheduled times (usually not all Brides will keep their appointments) and you have a 50% closing ratio (maybe yours is higher), is 10 Brides a good show? (most say yes).

**Homework assignment: Practice this 5 times each with 5 different people so you will be versed and prepared for the next show.**

When used consistently, you will find this systematic approach to work well and give you a better result with your bridal shows that you participate in.

**Rick Brewer is the Nation's foremost expert on Marketing and Selling to Brides. Bridal Show Success Secrets! is one of 14 books Rick has written on the subject. Rick can be seen at seminars where he speaks across the country. Sign up for Rick's weekly newsletter, Marketing to Brides Tip of the Week at his website [www.GetMoreBrides.com](http://www.GetMoreBrides.com)**