

What the Professional Toastmaster Does on Your Big Day.....'

Not all toastmasters are qualified, of course. So, firstly, what is a Professional Toastmaster?

Well, he or she will be undergoing continuous training with one of the leading bodies – like the National Association of Toastmasters. Society is changing – some customs are disappearing while others are modified and new acceptable 'ways of doing things' are always emerging. The NAT - I am an Associate Member, currently studying for my Fellowship examinations – keeps abreast of the changes in Etiquette and Protocol to ensure that we can give guidance where called upon, on what is thought to be "correct".

Of course a successful Wedding doesn't just happen and however smooth-running and relaxed the 'Big Day' appears to be, it only happens that way because of the many hours of careful planning that have been contributed to the preparations.

Thorough Preparation

The Professional Toastmaster plays a vital part in this preparation, because on the day it will be the Toastmaster who will co-ordinate all of the features of your celebration. He will add a touch of authority – just enough for everyone to know who is co-ordinating all aspects of the proceedings and to reassure you and your families that all will go smoothly with nothing being left to chance.

I will always meet the Bride and Bridegroom-to-be a month before the Wedding Day. By then, all of the principal arrangements will be in place and thought can be given to the style and formality of the event. Many options will be open to you which will help to shape the celebration – some couples want a no-holds-barred party while others will feel that a quiet gathering will be more their style. A professional toastmaster will reflect those wishes by having had the chance to get to know you and the expectations of your families and friends.

So when I come to meet you, we will chat about your approach to your wedding, and together we will complete a Questionnaire which becomes my planner for the Big Day. Beforehand I will encourage you to download my **Guide to Etiquette and Protocol** from my web-site, www.ChilternToastmaster.co.uk .

Above all it is my job to make sure that you, your families and your friends enjoy the occasion. Not only does our meeting help guide me about the level of formality that you feel to be right but you may have a particular request or query – which can lead to an interesting and unique variation from the norm. So together we complete a Toastmaster's Planner which reflects your wishes in minute detail and covers all the options, such as:

- (If a Civil Wedding, I liaise with the Registrar re timings, announcements etc)
- Arrangements for Photography and Contact Numbers (and I will be helping the photographer to get the various groups together for pictures to be taken)
- Receiving Line?
- Grace?
- Unusual features (for example, all divorced parents attending)?
- Disabled Guests? (access issues)
- Wedding Book to be circulated?
- Order of Speeches? More than the usual three?
- Availability of Microphones?
- Cake-cutting Ceremony?
- Floral Tributes? Gifts?
- Tossing the Bouquet tradition?
- Evening Entertainment and Contact Numbers

Behind the scenes – working with the venue

The Toastmaster must touch base with everyone involved – the Bride and Bridegroom, the Parents, the Best Man and anyone else who is to give a toast.

But much of what I do is behind the scenes: a key task is to keep constant contact with the Catering team – adhering to the timing set for the start of the wedding breakfast is of critical importance to

the chef. A signal is agreed with the Banqueting Manager to ensure he or she is ready for each announcement.

The photographer has an important job to do – he gets no second chances – he or she wants to be briefed in advance of each stage of the proceedings – so I only make announcements **when everyone is ready.**

I arrive at the venue 90 minutes before the time set for the Ceremony or Reception. My first task is to check everything:

- (at a Civil Wedding) I meet the Registrar
- the location of emergency exits, washrooms, changing areas
- access for the disabled
- timings with the catering staff between their schedule and my planner
- timings and arrangements with photographers and entertainers
- the location of Table Plan and individual name cards, the siting of the Wedding Cake and knife
- the safe storage of gifts and floral tributes
- table settings and favours
- arrangements for the Evening Entertainment

and 'front of house'. I will

- meet and greet the Bride and Bridegroom on arrival, welcoming them to the venue
- meet and greet the Families and Guests - offering help with the disabled and giving directions as required
- assist the caterers in ensuring prompt service at the Reception
- if appropriate, assist the Registrar with preparations
- assist the photographer at the Photo-Call – working through the wedding party's list of family and guest groupings
- place the Receiving Line and Announce the guests
- announce the entrance of the Bride and Bridegroom
- say Grace if appropriate
- announce the Cutting of the Cake – and invite the Guests to take photographs
- introduce the Toasts and Speeches
- help present Gifts and Floral Tributes
- lead the Bride and Groom from the Wedding Breakfast
- announce the time of the Evening Entertainment – and the arrangements for the Guests in the interim
- greet the Guests and the Bride and Bridegroom at the start of the Evening Entertainment
- announce the First Dance and escort the Bride and Groom to the floor and announce their choice of music

and throughout I am available to offer last-minute help – with speeches, as a stand-in photographer and, on occasion, with a safety-pin!

So, think about the arrangements for your day – If there is anything else not mentioned here which you would like to include, just tell me. This is your Big Day and I will do my best to make it as individual as you want it to be.

Very best wishes

ChilternToastmaster

Peter West
1 Friars Gardens
Hughenden Valley
Bucks HP14 4LT

0845 226 5899
07908 692708 - mobile
enquiries@chilterntoastmaster.co.uk
www.chilterntoastmaster.co.uk
National Association of Toastmasters

