

TALKING WITH...

## Maitland event planner says 'I do' to show

Laura Brost | Sentinel Staff Writer  
May 1, 2007

Tracy Marini, 38, a Maitland event planner and bridal consultant whose company, Eventfully Yours, and a client couple are featured in the pilot of a new reality show on the TLC cable-television network, *I Do . . . Again!*, scheduled for May 23. Marini spoke with staff writer Laura Brost.

Question: What is this TLC show about?

Answer: It is about second marriages and, back in June, I got an e-mail from a producer at TLC looking for couples who were getting married for a second time and had at least four children between the two of them. . . . It's an hour show, so I'm guessing it'll be two minutes of wedding and 58 minutes of their life.

Q: How did you get chosen for the show? A: It was just a general e-mail like, "TLC is looking for a couple getting married for the second time with four or more children -- do you have anybody that fits that description?"

Q: How was it being followed around by a camera?

A: At first it was exciting, and then it got old. [Laughs.] After a few days -- because it was around the clock -- they pretty much moved in with my couple and had a camera crew set up in there. . . . It was nonstop for them for, I believe it was a week.

Q: Do you expect more business from the coverage?

A: I kind of go back and forth in my head and wonder what it's going to do. But I can't help but to think it would help.

Q: What made you want to get into this business?

A: I planned events for over 10 years through UCF and Florida Southern College [in Lakeland], and it was just something that I loved. And when I had David, my son, I decided to stay at home. Then realized I needed to do a little bit of work, and that was when I started the business. I started off very slow; I think my first year I only did maybe seven or eight weddings, but it was perfect for me because David was young and I knew I wanted to have another child. So it's grown the way I've wanted it to, so I'm hoping with the show coming out that it's just at the right time, because my kids are a little bit older now.

Q: Do you think Central Florida is a better-than-average market for wedding and event planning?

A: I guess if you are just talking the Florida area, I would think Miami would be pretty hot. But Orlando -- just because it's such a big attraction area -- just what I know of there're 23 coordinators in the Central Florida area, and we all do pretty good.

Q: What is "pretty good"?

### Interviews with area movers and shakers



- [Later success linked to early days on farm](#)
- [Owning a home is a dream gone bad for many](#)
- [Branding still name of game in advertising](#)

A: Right now I have 22 events on my calendar for this year. .... I would say, though, for any coordinator, typically two to three in a month is good. .... Three of those [22] are birthday parties, and the rest are weddings. I have four consults coming up, so hopefully it will go up to 26. But I have four coordinators that work with me [as employees], so we can do two weddings on a Saturday.

Q: What are the major components that go into planning a wedding?

A: I think the biggest thing is that everybody is so uniquely different. I do this almost every single weekend, and it amazes me that, even doing it every weekend, how different everything can be. Like right now, what's popular: "Oh, I want the enchanted forest theme for my reception." Well, one bride's vision of the enchanted forest is completely different from the other bride's. So, it's just interesting to me -- people can come in and say almost the exact same thing, but their vision is completely different, so the components are just so broad on what people are looking for. And, obviously, a lot of it depends on their budget.

Q: For your average wedding, what are the key things you have to focus on?

A: The biggest thing is your reception site, because that is almost 50 percent of your budget, so that is always huge in determining where it's going to be. And then your next key components are the photographer ..... and the florist.

Q: Are bigger weddings more difficult than smaller weddings?

A: In size or budget? Size is definitely a little crazier. .... I won't go to an event over 200 people without two assistants with me, just because I like to make sure the guests are taken care of, and that's where my assistants come in, while I'm focusing on the bride and the bridal party. As far as price, usually the smaller ones are just more fun. As far as budget, though, usually a higher budget means not as much stress, I would say, for the coordinator because they can afford a higher-quality vendor.

Q: What is your schedule like on a daily basis?

A: I have an office, which is where I mostly meet clients and with vendors, but I also work out of my house. My laptop is up and my e-mail is open 24/7. So typically it's up in the morning, check e-mails and then it's usually running errands, whether I have to get ribbon or paper to do the program or help with an invitation or something of that nature. And then it would be handle my kids, [laughs] cook dinner, do laundry, clean the house. And then, typically, if I have a meeting, it's usually later in the afternoon because most of my clients do work -- that's why they hire me -- so I would go into the office after 3 p.m. and have a meeting or two and usually stay for a little bit and do some work. Then come home, I set up my laptop again, and I'm on the computer until I go to bed. It's a wonderful life.

Q: Is June the busiest month for weddings? If so, why?

A: No, March typically is. I think it's just because of where we live. March is typically a beautiful time of year to get married. June is more popular up North, so it just depends on what region you're in. But usually March, April and May are very busy in Florida, and then October and November are pretty popular, too.

Q: How far in advance do you begin work on a wedding?

A: Average is about nine months to a year, which is perfect. .... Typically, the engagement time is the holidays, so I really start to feel it after March, because they've started their process and they realize they need a coordinator.

Q: Who's your typical client or bride who needs a planner?

A: It varies. I have clients from 20 years old up to early 40s. Its mostly a student -- somebody who is going to school, but not necessarily young -- or just a career women who just does not have time. It's not that they can't do it -- that's not what a coordinator is for. It's to help you with that time. Because you have to make a phone call, wait for them to call you back. If you don't like them, you have to call somebody else, and you don't even know who some of these people are.

Q: What was the most extravagant wedding you've ever planned.

A: I've had a couple really good ones -- like \$80,000 weddings. I've done two fabulous ones at Portofino Bay Hotel that were just spectacular. That's a gorgeous venue. They had money to spend. The one I just did spent \$10,000 on floral. It's not uncommon to spend \$6,000 to \$7,000 on floral. Everything about it was just gorgeous. I did one at the [Orange County Regional] History Center, and just because it was different -- it was black linens with these gorgeous, red centerpieces -- just the whole atmosphere of it was just fabulous. But I mean, I've had some that are under \$10,000 -- it can happen. Obviously, it's your guest list; if you have a lot of people, it's hard to have a function for pretty cheap. But I've done a couple in the backyard or a quite simple site like Winter Park Women's Club, and they've turned out gorgeous.

Q: What's the most difficult aspect of dealing with a bride-to-be?

A: When it gets down to less than four weeks, because the bride starts to panic a little bit. .... That to me is a joy, though, because then to see her face when she walks in for the wedding and to see it all come together after the nine months to a year of planning, it's like, yes! It's awesome.

Q: Who planned your wedding?

A: I did. It'll be eight years May 30.

Q: How was the planning process?

A: For me, I did it in less than four months. You really don't need that much time. For me it wasn't very stressful. I found the site -- it was really simple.

Q: Do you ever feel like recommending a couple just elope?

A: Um, sometimes I feel like recommending them maybe not to get married. [Laughs.] .... I've met with some people where they just sit and fight and it's kind of awkward. You're like, "Are you sure you want to go through this process for just one day?" I mean, obviously, you plan for a while, but you have the rest of your life, there are going to be so many more decisions to come. But no, when I recommend for photography and videography and everything they do for their wedding, too, I always try to tell them to look 10 years down the road. You don't want to go back and regret anything. So, if you really, really wanted something for your wedding, try to make it work. You don't want to look back in 10 years and think, "I spent \$30,000 -- why was I going crazy over 500 bucks?" And that's where, to me, a coordinator comes in. So for around \$1,000, to have someone come in for the day of the wedding, and you be able to enjoy your whole family, and nobody actually have to do any of the work for the day of the wedding, you just don't want to look back and regret. So that's why it's nice to have good photos, maybe a video. So, no, I really wouldn't encourage eloping. [Laughs.]