

Photo: andrewrae.com

“DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS - THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR”



[Left] Bridesmaids in jewel tones gleam against the pale Georgian stone of the Trades Hall of Glasgow

[Far left] The Grand Hall never fails to impress, with its huge dome, dramatic ceiling and gold frieze



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▶ **LAURA COOK**
Wedding manager, The Trades Hall of Glasgow

How long have you been in this job?

A year now, although I've been in the business much longer than that. When I was offered the chance to work with the Trades Hall, I jumped at it. I love working here: I oversee big-day bookings from start to finish (we host around 40 weddings a year), deal with all enquiries, help with marketing for the venue and orchestrate our wedding fairs.

Tell us about a typical working week We get lots of enquiries and I always try to respond within an hour - it's so important that couples have all the information they need. I'll show potential clients around our rooms, getting to know them and building good working relationships, which is the key to wedding co-ordinator success. I'll also prep for upcoming nuptials and host planning meetings. My weekends are focused on weddings and setting up the ceremony room and the dinner tables.

How long will you spend with the average couple? Every wedding is different - some people book years in advance, some just six months before. Once all the paperwork is dealt with, I advise on timings, suppliers, menus, what we can offer in terms of decorations - anything at all.

What's the most creative wedding you've ever worked on? One bride and groom made 1,000 origami birds, some for their table decorations and the rest suspended around the venue. It was so unusual and colourful and such an amazing effort - it took hours to set up. But it looked fantastic.

How hands-on are you? I'm involved from the initial show-round to the wedding day. I keep an eye on my emails when I'm out of the office as well, so if I get a frantic message I can usually respond quickly. I don't like the idea of someone not sleeping over some detail that I can answer there and then.

How can couples make the most of a wedding co-ordinator?

Don't be afraid to ask questions - that's what we're here for. Pencil in a meeting after you've finalised your date, as this will give you a sense of the timeline and what to expect from the venue and the co-ordinator in the run-up to your big day.

What kind of questions should a couple be asking you? Do you ever have more than one wedding on the same day? What is the maximum capacity for each room? Are there minimum numbers? Is there flexibility in the packages and what is on offer? What are the start and finish times? What is access like for suppliers? Are there any restrictions?

What advice do you have for future brides and grooms? I always tell my couples that as soon as the venue is secured, book the celebrant, photographer, evening entertainment and videographer as soon as you can. Think about the little things: the soundtrack for your entrance into dinner and even the ceremony - it amazes me how many forget about it. Brief your photographer as to exactly what you want and how much time you should allow for pictures to be taken. I have seen this completely take over the drinks reception, with the couple losing precious time mingling with their guests.

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Photo: davidgrantsimpson.com

[Below] The Saloon's mahogany-paneled walls create a striking backdrop for the ceremony