

ETIQUETTE

THE INS AND OUTS OF MODERN DAY ETIQUETTE

BE TOUGH WHEN NAMING THE NAMES ON THE GUEST LIST AND
END UP WITH THE PEOPLE WHO REALLY COUNT AT THE WEDDING.
A STRONG SENSE OF OBLIGATION CAN MESS UP THE DAY.

WHO'S WHO

It's a fact of life, so many people we all know and like...yet comparatively few guests can be invited, the imbalance is always the same no matter how big the wedding. Organising the final invitee list needs some planning techniques and a strong determination that only the truly deserving will end up dancing at your wedding. A process of elimination will lead to the right number and more importantly, the right people.

First of all, check out all the contenders so that nobody is overlooked. Trawl through email and address books and compile the names of all those you both would like to share the big day. From that group the cull can begin. When doing the sums, consider inviting a similar number from each family, it's good for balance and will avoid one side feeling badly done by.

On average, about 15 percent of guests will not be able to make it; with that in mind, make an A list with all the must-haves and a B list as the back ups. As the RSVPs arrive, for each regret send an invitation from the B list.

The most important people in the lives of the bride and groom will be at the top of the A list; these are the priority invitees who cannot be bumped.

When it comes to sorting through friends, try the one-year rule. If there hasn't been a meaningful conversation or a meal with a person within the past year, it is quite safe to draw a line through their name no matter how much fun they are at get togethers. Single friends without serious partners should not be asked to bring a guest.

Large families can be an emotional trap.

Compulsory invitations are a concept to be avoided. It's not essential to invite all cousins, aunts and uncles; invite only those who pass the truly up-close and meaningful test.

Don't be conned into playing the tit for tat game. It's easy to feel obliged to invite all the couples who have invited you to their weddings. Relationships change, invite those people who are important now and who you plan to keep in your life for years to come.

Workmates with purely professional relationships could be placed low on the B list. These relationships are strong in the workplace but often don't endure when people move on. Keep the list limited to personal friends.

A child-free wedding should be clearly emphasised on the invitation by leaving the children's names off the invitation should be a pretty clear hint. A phrase at the end of the reply card stating 'we hope the two of you will be able to join us' spells out how many guests are invited.

Show the final lists to parents, their wise eyes might spot an important name that's missing. They might even like a handful of invitations to send to their closest friends.

The guest list represents the tone of the wedding on paper, audit the names to see that caring friends who really share the happiness of the event and will give a joyous mood to the day are all there. Rent-a-crowd acquaintances after a free drink will not give the same heartfelt, emotional buzz.

Every name should be happily ticked off by the bride and groom so that there aren't any people there who could ruin the day for either one.