

# Wedding Venue Business — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into the operating plan for your venue. Each section maps to a course module and moves you from cost model to a full, profitable booking calendar. Work the exercises, worksheets, and checklists in order, and use the templates to price packages, run dates, and measure revenue per event the way professional venues do.

## The Venue Business and Its Economics

Define your format, model startup and fixed costs, and find the number of events per year that makes the property profitable.

### Exercise: Define Your Format and Revenue Layers

Decide what your venue actually sells before you price anything. Be specific about format and capacity, because they drive every cost and price downstream.

- Which format are you running: dry-hire, hybrid, all-inclusive, or micro/elopement, and what is your daily capacity?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How many bookable prime dates do you have in a year (for example 52 Saturdays), and which day-of-week dates do you also intend to sell?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- List three on-site upsells you can sell directly to couples on top of the base fee (extra hours, suite, ceremony add-on, parking, rehearsal slot).  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which of the three revenue layers (package fee, on-site upsells, vendor-program revenue) are you currently ignoring, and what would it add?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Worksheet: Startup and Carrying-Cost Model

Fill in every line. Separate one-time startup costs from recurring monthly carrying costs so you can calculate break-even in the next section.

Property acquisition or first-and-last lease plus security deposit  
\_\_\_\_\_

Occupancy/assembly permitting, fire-code, and ADA accessibility upgrades  
\_\_\_\_\_

Restrooms, parking, and grounds/entrance lighting  
\_\_\_\_\_

Catering prep space, water, and electrical capacity upgrades  
\_\_\_\_\_

Core inventory included (tables, chairs, linens, owned rentals)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Insurance binder, signage, website, and launch photography  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Total one-time startup cost (sum above)

---

Monthly mortgage or lease payment

---

Monthly property tax + insurance allocation

---

Monthly utilities, grounds upkeep, base staffing, and software

---

Total monthly fixed carrying cost

---

Annual fixed nut (monthly fixed x 12)

---

### Checklist: Economics-Ready Checklist

- Confirm the property can legally host assemblies before committing to buy or lease
- Separate one-time startup costs from recurring monthly fixed costs
- List your variable per-event costs (event staff, cleaning, consumables, card fees)
- Write your total annual fixed nut so you know the number every booking must beat
- Estimate average contribution margin per event (revenue minus variable cost)
- Calculate break-even events per year (annual fixed nut / contribution margin)
- Count your bookable dates per year and note your realistic achievable bookings

### Pricing Packages for Profit

Design tiered packages, set seasonal and day-of-week pricing, and protect cash with deposits, minimums, and a solid contract.

### Exercise: Calculate Contribution Margin on Your Middle Tier

Price from numbers, not hope. Run the margin math on your target-seller package using the worked example in the course as your guide.

- For your Signature (middle) package, write the price and the guest count it assumes.

---

- List every variable cost for that event (event staff, cleaning, consumables, coordinator, card fees) and total them.

---

- Subtract variable cost from price to get contribution margin in dollars and as a percent of revenue.

---

- If you bundled catering at a per-person rate, how would total dollars and margin percent change, and which version do you want to push?

### Worksheet: Package and Date-Pricing Grid

Design your three tiers and your seasonal/day-of-week rates. Build the middle tier as the package you most want to sell, and price scarce dates highest.

Essential tier: included spaces/services and price

---

Signature tier (target seller): included spaces/services and price

---

All-Inclusive tier: included spaces/services and starting price

---

Flat fee vs. per-person pricing decision (and per-person rate if used)

---

Five add-ons with individual prices

---

Peak Saturday rate (your top price)

---

Shoulder Saturday / peak Friday rate (10 to 25 percent below peak)

---

Sunday / off-peak Friday rate (25 to 40 percent below peak)

---

Off-season weekday or micro-wedding fixed price

---

Threshold at which you will raise peak prices (e.g., 70 percent of peak Saturdays booked)

---

### Worksheet: Deposit, Minimum, and Contract Terms

Specify your money and contract terms so cash flow and your best dates are protected. Take the finished clause list to a lawyer for a one-time template review.

Non-refundable booking retainer percentage due at signing

---

Milestone payment timing (days before event)

---

Final balance due date (days before event, never after)

---

Refundable damage/security deposit amount and inspection/refund window

---

Peak-date minimum spend (if any) to protect scarce Saturdays

---

Cancellation and postponement terms at each stage

---

Force majeure events named and how the retainer applies to a new date

---

Required couple event-liability insurance and vendor COI requirement

---

Liability cap, noise curfew, and alcohol/decor rules

---

### Checklist: Profit-Protection Checklist

- Build three package tiers with a high anchor and a target-seller middle tier
- Decide flat vs. per-person pricing and protect against guest-count creep
- Set peak, shoulder, and off-peak rates by day of week
- Label the holding payment a non-refundable retainer in the contract

- [ ] Collect the full balance before the event, never after
- [ ] Set a peak-date minimum spend so small events do not occupy prime Saturdays
- [ ] Raise peak Saturday prices once you book more than 70 percent of them a year ahead
- [ ] Have a lawyer review your contract template once

## Bookings, Calendar, and Vendor Programs

Convert tours to contracts, run one source-of-truth calendar without double-booking, and build a vendor program that adds revenue and quality.

### Exercise: Script Your Tour-to-Contract Process

Speed and a confident ask win dates. Build the response and tour flow that turns inquiries into deposits.

- What does your inquiry auto-reply say, and how fast will a real human reply during business hours?

---
- Map your tour route in event order: arrival/parking, getting-ready suite, ceremony, cocktail, reception, exit.

---
- Write the exact sentence you will use to ask for the booking and explain that the date is not held until the retainer is paid.

---
- What is your current or target tour-to-contract conversion rate, and if it is below 30 percent, is the gap pricing, the tour experience, or unqualified inquiries?

---

### Worksheet: Calendar and Hold-Rules Worksheet

Define the single-source-of-truth system that prevents double-bookings and stale holds.

Booking-calendar tool chosen (HoneyBook, Tripleseat, Perfect Venue, Aisle Planner, other)

---

Courtesy-hold length and automatic expiry rule

---

Definition of held (logged hold) vs. booked (retainer cleared)

---

One-event-per-day policy (and minimum turnaround time if hosting two)

---

Public availability sync (yes/no) so couples see live open dates

---

Long-lead gap plan: how you will spot and fill thin future seasons

---

### Worksheet: Preferred-Vendor Program Design

Decide your vendor model and revenue method, keeping everything transparent and insured.

Categories that are required/exclusive (e.g., catering, bar)

---

Categories that are preferred (e.g., photography, florals, music)

---

Outside-vendor policy and fee for non-listed vendors

---

Vendor revenue model (listing fee, referral fee, or catering commission percent)

---

Disclosure language telling couples that listed vendors support the venue

---

Certificate-of-insurance requirement naming the venue as additional insured

---

---

Vendor guide contents (load-in, power/kitchen access, curfew, strike rules)

---

### Checklist: Booking and Vendor Checklist

- Reply to every inquiry within an hour during business hours with an auto-reply plus a personal follow-up
- Present packages and ask for the deposit on the tour, not days later
- Run all inquiries, holds, and contracts through one authoritative calendar
- Give every courtesy hold an automatic expiry and never verbally promise a date
- Make catering and bar required for food-safety and alcohol-liability control
- Collect a certificate of insurance from every working vendor
- Disclose any referral fee or commission and only recommend vendors you would book anyway
- Issue each vendor a written venue guide with load-in, rules, and strike requirements

## Operations, Risk, and Growth

Staff and run event days, stay legally open and insured, and grow revenue per available date and the value of the property.

### Exercise: Plan Event-Day Staffing and Turnover

Keep building-control and timeline jobs separate. Plan the staff and the setup-and-strike sequence for one real or sample event.

- For a sample guest count, how many venue attendants do you need (about one per 75 to 100 guests for larger weddings)?
- Which tasks belong to your venue staff (building, access, restrooms, curfew, parking) versus the planner (ceremony and reception flow)?
- What is your setup-and-strike sequence, including COI confirmation and a before-and-after photo record?
- Who runs the damage-inspection walk-through before you release the refundable deposit?

### Worksheet: Permits, Alcohol, and Insurance Tracker

Confirm you can legally operate and that your liability is covered. Do not host an event until the occupancy and insurance lines are complete.

Zoning status and any special/conditional-use permit for commercial events

---

Certificate of occupancy rated for assembly use and posted capacity limit

---

Fire-code, exits, and ADA accessibility compliance confirmed

---

Alcohol-service model (licensed caterer/bartender vs. venue-held license)

---

Liquor liability / host-liquor coverage in place (provider and limit)

---

Commercial property insurance provider and coverage limit

---

Commercial general liability provider and limit

---

Couple event-liability insurance required in contract (yes/no)

---

Vendor COI naming venue as additional insured required (yes/no)

---

Workers compensation and umbrella policy status

---

### Worksheet: Revenue-Per-Available-Date Growth Plan

Track the metrics that run the business and pick the levers that fill more dates and lift the value of the property.

Current revenue per event and target

---

Current revenue per available date and target

---

Tour-to-contract conversion rate and target (30 to 50 percent)

---

Off-peak fill rate (share of Friday/Sunday/off-season dates booked) and target

---

One off-peak lever to launch (micro-weddings, counter-seasonal events, marketplace listings)

---

Counter-seasonal event types to add (corporate, holiday parties, fundraisers, shoots)

---

Capacity/season improvement that would raise both bookings and property value

---

### Checklist: Operations and Growth Checklist

- Confirm zoning and assembly-occupancy approval before signing for the property
- Require licensed, insured bar service and liquor-liability coverage wherever alcohol is served
- Keep venue-staff (building) and planner (timeline) roles distinct on event day
- Confirm vendor COIs and photograph the space before and after every event
- Maintain rich listings with real-wedding photos on The Knot, WeddingWire, and Zola
- Request a review within a week of each wedding on Google and the marketplaces
- Fill off-peak dates with micro-weddings and counter-seasonal events
- Document operations as SOPs and review revenue per available date quarterly

### Your Action Plan

1. Confirm the property is zoned and occupancy-rated for assembly use before you buy or lease
2. Build the startup and monthly fixed-cost model and calculate your annual fixed nut
3. Estimate contribution margin per event and your break-even number of events per year
4. Design three package tiers with a high anchor and a target-seller middle tier
5. Set peak, shoulder, and off-peak rates by day of week and your price-raise threshold
6. Write your deposit schedule, peak-date minimum, and the six core contract clauses, then have a lawyer review the template
7. Choose a booking-calendar tool and define hold, expiry, and one-event-per-day rules

8. Design your preferred-vendor program: required vs. preferred, revenue model, COI, and disclosure
9. Put the insurance stack in place and require couple and vendor coverage in every contract
10. Pick one lever to lift revenue per available date and launch it within 90 days













