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***Politely breaking up or rescheduling with a wedding vendor? Below are the situations that I've most commonly seen and how each impacts your work with a vendor.***

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- *The couple plans a smaller wedding that no longer requires the vendor's services. [Here's what I recommend you say.](#)*
- *The couple plans a smaller wedding that might require the vendor's services but the couple isn't sure. [Here's what I recommend you say.](#)*
- *The couple takes their original plan that they hired the vendor for and moves it to a new date. [Here's what I recommend you say.](#)*

***How do we send this?*** Keep it simple. Probably do this via email though, if the conversation gets heated and/or personal, I highly recommend a phone call. It's much easier to have human conversations when you can hear the other person's tone of voice, don't you think?

**Subject:** update about our wedding — **[INSERT YOU + YOUR PARTNER'S FIRST NAMES]**

Dear **[INSERT YOUR VENDOR'S FIRST NAME]**:

Thank you so much for your patience as we continue to respond and adapt to the pandemic. We have decided to **[INSERT WHAT YOU AND YOUR PARTNER HAVE DECIDED TO DO FOR YOUR WEDDING PLANS]**.

## **If you no longer require the vendor's services:**

Unfortunately, this new plan means we will no longer require your services. We understand that **our deposit with you is non-refundable and that we will not owe the balance of our contract.**

That said, we want to recognize your time and talent and so have **[IDEAS OF WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT THE PEOPLE YOU HIRED]**: recommended your work to our friends and family AND/OR written you a review on Google, Yelp, The Knot, WeddingWire, Facebook, etc. AND/OR paid out the remaining balance — if you can swing this last one, it is so, so, so meaningful for your vendor **who may very well be on unemployment** because of COVID].

- **Note to reader:** Anything in red is for you and your partner to **double-check against your specific contract with this vendor**. You may owe money, depending on when you send this message.

Don't have a contract? What were your stated (and ideally, written) expectations with this person or this team?

Also, if you read the above and were like “**Um, excuse me. My deposit is non-refundable?**” here's some context: Deposits couples pay wedding vendors are the money we live on. For example, when a couple pays me a deposit, that's the money I use to pay rent and buy groceries.

Sometimes, couples hear this and take issue with it, which, you know, I get. You hired this person to do a thing for you that they are no longer doing so why do they get to keep your money? Long story short: Your deposit didn't actually buy my *talent*. Your deposit bought my *time*. As a wedding vendor, the inventory I sell people is a day of the week (i.e. Saturdays in the summer). When a couple hires me, I am selling them that particular date. That's what the deposit covers.

Still not liking this? I understand. We are all in a place of scarcity right now and maybe you or your partner's own financial security has been threatened by COVID. If this is the case, I recommend you approach a conversation about deposits in this way: “We understand that, per the terms of our original contract, the deposit is non-refundable. That said, is there any chance we could discuss a way a partial refund OR to apply that deposit to another service OR perhaps ‘gift’ the deposit to another couple or an organization?”

You'll be surprised at the creative ways that wedding vendors are coming up with to make sure their clients retain some value from their services even when something completely out of all of our control — COVID — has messed everything up for everybody.

## **If you're not sure if you need the vendor's services:**

We're writing to you because we're not sure if/how your services best align with this new plan for our wedding. What do you recommend?

- **Note to reader:** Different wedding vendors can more easily scale their work to accommodate a change in wedding plans. For example, a photographer may very well be able to do the same level of work that you originally hired them while a florist may be able to take your original floral budget and get really creative with a totally amazing flower installation.

Other vendors may be willing to take your original contract and apply it to another service. For example, a hair and makeup artist might be open to taking your contract and apply it to another event (hair and makeup before a family photo shoot? a future big night out?).

Still other vendors may not be able to adapt their services to new plans at all. This is true for my particular wedding planning business. In many cases, my clients' safer, smaller weddings don't really need me and so we break up and each go on to our own happily ever afters.

That may sound bad — and, if they're not open to paying me at least part of the balance, it is bad

for me financially speaking. Them telling me the news also has two huge upsides: They're keeping me safe and I now know for sure if that date is back in my inventory (i.e. can I sell it to another couple?).

All to say: When in doubt, ask your vendor.

## **If you're moving your services with the vendor to a new date and want to keep them on your team:**

We're writing to you because we'd like to reschedule our services with you to **[INSERT THE NEW DATE]**. Are you available on that date?

- **Note to reader:** Some couples like to ask all of their vendors if they're free on a new date before they decide on the new date. Great! You can adapt this same language for that situation. Just make the wording earlier in the email more conditional (e.g. "We're researching our options and are curious if you are available on **[INSERT THE NEW DATE]** at **[INSERT THE LOCATION(S)]**?"

An important thing to keep in mind: **If you are rescheduling your services with vendors to a new date and particularly a new year, there is a good chance that they will charge you more money.** This is not because your vendors are bad people. It's because of that same logic I shared earlier in this resource about how what you really buy from a wedding vendor is *their time*.

It's an unfortunate consequence of the pandemic that many wedding vendors have sold the same couple one, two, or even three dates for the price of one at a rate set more than a year ago (i.e. an old rate that doesn't account for inflation, increased experience, etc.). As such, many vendors have started asking clients who reschedule to pay the new rate and/or honor a rescheduling fee.

I know this may be challenging to hear because it feels like you and your partner are being punished for something that was completely out of your control. I recognize that and my best advice is: Talk to your vendors. Be human about these conversations. In my experience, it is in a wedding vendor's best interest to find some kind of way forward with their clients.

And if you just can't find a way forward? Politely break up. You will likely lose any money you've already paid the person in question but you won't lose any more and, importantly, you'll gain peace of mind.

Thank you again so much for your support. This has been — and remains — an extremely difficult time and we so value your help. We look forward to hearing from you.

**[INSERT YOU + YOUR PARTNER'S FIRST NAMES]**

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