

QUESTIONS-AND-ANSWERS LIST FROM THE DWHSA SUMMER SCHOOL

Part 3: From Group Communications Through the Ceremony (and Back Home)

Thanks for sticking with us through Part 3 of this training program! We collected the questions you submitted during the live Zoom on Sept. 17, 2025, or you sent to us at support@dwhsa.com. (Please keep sending us anything you want to ask about!)

Thanks again for your interest in DWs!

Q. Where do you make your [wedding] web site?/What software do you use to create wedding web sites?

A. Both Nancy and Tami mentioned that they have created individual pages on their agency web sites that they give clients to use as their wedding web sites. On those single pages, they can post the trip details (e.g., the wedding itinerary, the available room categories), links to booking pages, and even photos of the couple and the story of how they met. They use these pages as templates - copying them and switching out the information for each new couple they work with. Another option is building the sites using popular vendors such as Zola, Wedding Wire, The Knot, etc. DWHSA also recommends Appy Couple - a software program that includes the couple's wedding site plus a mobile-app version of the site they can give guests as well as digital invitations.

Remember that, as the advisor, it's your choice whether you set up the wedding site for your couples or you let them set up the site on their own but you give them the trip details and links so they can add that content to the site for you.

Q. Do you have a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) that DW guests ask?

A. DWHSA hasn't created a list like this because it may be so different agent to agent. But, if you sit down with a blank legal pad or Word document on your computer, it would be easy to start generating a list of FAQs - just think about the wedding trip as a consumer and jot down every question you might ask if you didn't have a travel background. Examples include the expected weather for the trip, the wedding dress code, the itinerary, suggested packing tips, travel insurance, DW etiquette (e.g., should they buy wedding gifts if they're paying to go on the trip), and other rules such as whether "plus ones" and children will be allowed to attend.

Q. When you talk about the benefits of a guest booking with the group (as opposed to booking directly with the resort), what do you say those benefits are? I talk about the perks the wedding couple earn, but above and beyond that, what other benefits do you mention to the guest?

A. Encouraging invited guests to book within the couple's room block can be one of the biggest challenges in handling DW groups! Guests will be so tempted to compare the couple's group room rates against prices they can find on online travel agency sites or the resort's own web site (or use their loyalty points or even timeshare rates!) to book their stays. This whole process starts with explaining to your couples the importance of having guests book within the room/cabin block (e.g., helping them earn "perks" such as a free wedding ceremony or reception for filling the room block, avoiding financial penalties if too many guests book outside the block). Then, the couple can stress to guests why it's so important to book through you. Then, when you start taking bookings from individual guests, you can stress the reasons for staying within the block, including the following:

- By booking with the couple's block, they're supporting the couple as they try to manage the ceremony/reception expenses.
- Some couples get very strict about the block by saying guests must book that way to attend the ceremony and reception.
- Other couples keep things positive by offering "extras" such as a paid-for group excursion or a rehearsal dinner on site to which only guests within the block will be invited.
- If guests book outside the block, you can tell them you're not allowed to answer their questions or help them with travel problems because, technically, they're not your clients. (This also applies if the resort goes into renovations during the DW trip or a hurricane threatens to close the property - you can only help those guests whose reservations you control because they were booked through you.)

Q. If couples bring an outside photographer with them on the trip, do you book them just like any other guest into the group (even though they won't part of the actual guest list and part of the guest count for things like the reception)?

A. Instead of hiring outside vendors who're based in the local destination, some couples want to bring a vendor - especially their preferred photographer, videographer, or officiant - with them as one of the guests staying in their room block. In other words, the photographer will be on the guest list just like wedding party members and family members, staying in a room at the resort (paid by the couple). Every resort has different rules, so check the details - but, generally, these vendors are booked just like any other guest. Some properties might still charge an "outside vendor fee" if the photographer will be taking pictures during the ceremony and reception (while others don't because the vendor is staying as a paid guest). And, depending on the destination, the photographer might have to submit a government form and/or pay a government fee for official permission to "work" as a paid photographer in that country. Our best advice? Check with the resort's on-site coordinator on these questions - but couples who bring their own vendors will have greater choice of the people they want working on their weddings (and might even save a little money by having them stay as paid guests).

Q. Can I keep myself out of the logistics of bringing in an outside vendor by having the resort's wedding department handle these questions?

A. Yes! If you have decided as an agent that you want to focus on the travel bookings for your DW couples and let them manage their own ceremonies, you can definitely introduce them to the property's on-site wedding coordinator and tell them to discuss with that person any questions about booking outside/off-site vendors.

Q. What automation services and tools do you use for your return clients?

A. This is a huge question because (especially with the growth of AI) there are just so many tools out there to encourage repeat bookings from past DW couples and guests! Let's start with marketing emails - you can use services such as MailChimp or Flodesk to pre-write regular email messages sent to your DW clients recommending future trips and sharing travel tips. AI services such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Toby AI (Travel Leaders) can help you draft those marketing messages (not just emails, but social media posts as well. Most of all, don't forget your CRM! During the recent pandemic, many popular CRMs for agents expanded their features - they now offer itinerary builder tools, email services, automated reminders for clients, to-do lists for you as the agent, etc., that will help you pursue repeat bookings from DW clients.

Q. When you're reaching out to guests after the wedding trip, are you doing that via email? What are you asking/saying?

A. Generally, you'll have two levels of following up after a DW trip: the couple and then the individual guests.

The couple: Within 24 hours of their return home, you should reach out personally to the couple. Many members do this with a quick phone call, an email, or even a text (depending on how the couple has preferred working with you already on the DW plans). Welcome them home, ask them how the trip went (and if there's anything you need to address with the resort/cruise line), and give them the link to any post-trip survey you might use. Later, you can also follow up requesting a review and a testimonial (though many members might do this during the initial follow-up by, for example, putting their Google review link in the follow-up email). Make sure you've noted their wedding date in your CRM so you can follow up later about anniversary trips, vow renewals, etc. And, if you give a "thank you" to your DW couples, arrange for that to be delivered once they're home.

The guests: While you'll give your DW couples a very personable follow-up (e.g., calling them), many of us use emails to do the follow-up with guests after a DW trip. Consider using a survey link to get their thoughts about the trip (you can use tools like Survey Monkey or check your CRM and your email services vendor like MailChimp or Flodesk to see if they offer a survey feature you can use).

Q. Do you think destination wedding travel advisors have been needed now more than ever?

A. Yes, no question! Couples (and guests) love doing their own trip research online - but, for critically important trips like a DW, many of them really value having your support as an objective DW specialist as they plan what should be one of the biggest trips of their lifetimes. DWHSA predicts the whole DW sector will continue growing year after year for the foreseeable future, so there will be plenty of business out there for you to target!