

From Wedding Planner to Project Manager: Lessons in Implementation Success

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Published
May 2025



WHAT WEDDINGS TAUGHT ME ABOUT IMPLEMENTATIONS



Over the past year, my youngest daughter, along with a team of family members, has been meticulously planning her wedding. They've tackled everything from cake tastings and floral arrangements to seating charts. For anyone involved, the process can be intricate and demanding. Reflecting on this, I was reminded of my previous career as a Wedding Planner and Banquet Manager. This experience brought back memories of my earlier work and highlighted the similarities to what I do today.

Today, I guide clients through operational and system transformations, projects that can feel just as personal, high-stakes, and emotionally charged as walking down the aisle. And while most people might not draw a connection between weddings and consulting, the parallels are undeniable.

From managing timelines and expectations to delivering something that feels effortless (even when it's anything but), success comes down to the same thing: exceptional planning.

Planning for the Big Day - Whatever It May Be

Weddings and system implementations share more DNA than you might expect:

- They both involve a cast of stakeholders, each with their own vision and priorities.
- They come with high expectations, tight timelines, and limited room for error.
- And they require an experienced guide who can see the big picture, sweat the details, and stay calm when things don't go according to plan.

You wouldn't wait until the week before the wedding to book a venue or pick a caterer. Likewise, you don't throw an implementation together at the last minute. It's a carefully choreographed process that needs to account for dependencies, integrations, testing, training, and, most importantly, people.

THE TIMELINE



Timeline

WEDDING PLANNING	IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING
ENGAGEMENT	BUSINESS CASE APPROVAL / BUDGET PLANNING
SET THE DATE	DEFINE GO-LIVE AND PROJECT TIMELINE
BOOK THE VENUE	SELECT VENDOR AND SYSTEM PLATFORM
CHOOSE WEDDING PARTY	ASSEMBLE INTERNAL PROJECT TEAM & STAKEHOLDERS
INVITES SENT	COMMUNICATE PROJECT SCOPE AND EXPECTATIONS
DRESS FITTING & TASTINGS	CONDUCT DEMOS, SANDBOX TESTING, USER ALIGNMENT
REHEARSAL DINNER	END-TO-END TESTING, DRY RUN, CONTINGENCY PREP
WEDDING DAY!	GO LIVE!
HONEYMOON	POST GO-LIVE SUPPORT AND STABILIZATION PERIOD



The Skillset Is the Same, Only the Tools Change

Planning a wedding and managing a major implementation both require a blend of soft skills and technical knowledge. Here are a few project management traits that carry over from one world to the other:



Communication

·Whether you're explaining the timeline to the bride's mother or walking a client through test results, clarity matters. People need to know what's happening, when, and why.



Empathy

·Behind every event or transformation are people, sometimes stressed, often juggling other responsibilities, and always hoping for the best possible outcome. Listening with empathy goes a long way.



Adaptability

No matter how detailed your plan, something will go sideways. Weather changes. Technology hiccups. Stakeholders shift. Success depends on your ability to pivot calmly and find a path forward.



Attention to Detail

·From guest lists to data mapping, small things make or break the big picture. Missing a detail can throw everything off downstream.



Project Management

·Timelines, budgets, resource management, contingency plans, this is the foundation. You need someone keeping it all moving, without losing sight of the finish line.



Real-World Applications: What This Looks Like in Practice



Let's take a few moments in the wedding process and compare them to typical client engagements:

Booking the Venue = Selecting the Right System

The location sets the tone for the entire wedding. Similarly, picking the right platform, trading, performance, data, or accounting, determines what's possible and what compromises might need to be made.

Rehearsal Dinner = End-to-End Testing

You must rehearse before guests arrive, or a single trade runs through a new system. Testing ensures everyone knows their role and the tech performs under real conditions.

Wedding Day = Go-Live

When it all comes together, the client needs to feel supported, informed, and confident. If you've done your job well, they're able to focus on the experience, not the stress.

Let's Not Forget the Cake

Weddings are remembered for the moments: the first dance, the toast, the cake.

While not as "Instagrammable," implementations also leave a lasting impression. A seamless go-live can build momentum, boost morale, and create internal champions across the organization. A rocky one... well, you only get one shot at a first impression.

That's why preparation matters. That's why planning matters. And that's why the person at the helm of an implementation needs the same mindset you'd want in a wedding planner: calm under pressure, focused on the outcome, and committed to making the entire experience as smooth as possible.

Why Meradia



At Meradia, we bring more than technical expertise. We bring structure, empathy, and experience. From performance and risk to data and reporting, we help clients navigate complex transformations by aligning cross-functional teams around a shared goal. Much like a seasoned wedding planner, we manage the moving parts, ease tensions, and keep everything on track so that when the big day arrives, you're ready to go live confidently.

Whether you're preparing for a front-to-back transformation or rationalizing reports, we plan like it matters - because it does. Our consultants aren't just implementation specialists. They're planners, translators, problem-solvers, and partners.

And if you ask us, every good project deserves a little celebration. (Yes, even with cake.)



Josh Levitt

Joshua Levitt brings 20+ years of investment operations experience to Meradia. In his role as COO, Josh is accountable for managing Meradia's day-to-day consulting operations. His responsibilities include project execution, directing Meradia's strategic initiatives, talent development, financials, and technology resources.



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