



# THE VENUE BUSINESS BOOT CAMP

Smart, usable advice for running your wedding venue.

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## How To Give An Effective Site Tour

**A virtual site tour isn't much different from a [regular site tour](#)!** Other than the glaring “not actually there in person” difference, the goal of each walkthrough remains the same: You want to build a relationship with the couple and get them excited to host their wedding at your venue.

**If you're thinking a virtual site tour may seem a bit detached, we're here to dispel that myth!** These face-to-face walkthrough tours can be incredibly personalized and interactive—filled with meaningful connection and conversation.

**Plus, they're not just useful during the current COVID-19 climate.** They're an evergreen service you can continue to offer for destination couples.

**Our top tip is simple:** Do everything you would normally do in person. Take lots of time in each space, let the couple really see it, and encourage them to ask questions. Be authentic. Smile. Laugh when it feels appropriate. Be genuinely excited to get to know this couple, to show off your event space, and to make their vision come to life.

**Ready to grab your digital device and walk a couple through your wedding venue in real time?** Let's do it!



## Before the Tour

### Set Up The Tech

- **First thing's first:** Make sure you have the preferred phone number for the couple, and know what type of device they'll be using so you can choose a compatible video app.
- **Decide which platform you'll be using for your tour.** The most popular are [FaceTime](#) (iPhone), [Google Duo](#) (Android or iOS), [Zoom Mobile App](#) (Android or iOS), and [Skype](#) (Windows, Mac OS X and Linux).
- **Make sure your phone or other digital device is fully charged** in advance of the call.
- **Make sure you have a snappy connection!** If any areas of your venue have poor reception, give the couples a heads' up that the call may drop during that portion of the tour, and if it does, you'll call them right back.
  - **Pro Tip:** If you know there's a spot in your venue where calls historically drop, consider filming a video of that space in advance that you can send over to the couple. That way, they won't feel like they're missing out on a piece of your property that they didn't get to see on the call.
- **If possible, try to schedule your virtual tour during the day** so the couple can easily see the event spaces in natural light. But if the tour is taking place in the evening, a [simple ring light](#) will help the couple see any dimly-lit details.
  - Another option would be to light some candles around the space (per fire code, of course) to add ambience and give it a more romantic feel.
- **For better sound quality**, you may want to use a [mic + earpiece](#) that connects to your device via Bluetooth. *(Again, do a run through in advance to make sure all your tech works properly!)*
- **If you're worried your tablet or smartphone may lose power** during the tour, invest in a [portable charger](#) and bring it along with you for extra peace of mind.

### Do a Dry Run

- **Ask a trusted (and honest!) friend to do a practice run with you in advance.** We're talking a full-on "dress rehearsal" of the site tour to make sure things flow smoothly, your technology works well, and you're comfortable with the process from start to finish.
  - **Pro Tip:** Remember, you can zoom in and out on your device! If you want to give your couples a close-up of the amazing view or another far-off detail, give it a try.



- **Most phones have the option to record your screen.** Practice recording the call with video *and* sound if you'd like to reference it later.
  - **Pro Tip:** This really comes in handy during the consultation—and saves you from having to take copious notes! (Just make sure the couple is comfortable with you recording the tour for your own internal use.)

## Prep the Couple

- **About a week before the tour, give the couple a fun homework assignment** in the form of a shared Pinterest board! Ask them to pin images to help you understand their wedding style, vision, and aesthetic in advance of the tour.
  - **Pro Tip:** If the couple isn't familiar with Pinterest, you may want to set up an "Inspiration" folder in your shared Google Drive (more on that below) where they can compile their ideas, photos, color swatches, etc. in one place.
- **Share a Google Drive of photos, diagrams, and layouts of your venue's event spaces** in advance of the tour. Tell the couple to take a look now, but also to have them readily available to reference during the walkthrough.
  - **Pro Tip:** Be sure to include images that show off items specific to your packages. Think beyond just basic tables and chairs. Couples love seeing décor items, upgraded chairs + linens, signage, furniture, etc. Be clear that what they are looking at either comes with the rental fee, or is included with Package A, etc.
  - If you'll be referencing these images/documents on the tour, see if the couple has a laptop or tablet they can have in front of them during the call for easy access.
- **As you visit each new event space**, you can instruct them to open various images or documents to help them visualize the possibilities.
  - **Pro Tip:** Compile the images/diagrams/layouts into folders named by each event space, and clearly label all file names within each folder as well. For example, one folder may be named "Main Ballroom" while an image inside the folder may be named "Main Ballroom – Dance Floor". Also consider having a folder for real weddings that have occurred in the same season the couple is getting married (e.g. "Fall Weddings") or in the same style (e.g. "Boho Outdoor Real Wedding").



## Send a Reminder

- **A couple days before your scheduled tour, confirm your appointment** by reaching out to the couple via email and/or phone.
  - Remind the couple:
    - Of the appointment day and time
    - What platform you'll be using to call them on
    - That they'll want to fully charge their device in advance of the call
    - To have a laptop or tablet in front of them if you'll be referencing images or documents
    - To settle into a distraction-free space, get cozy with a cup of coffee, and be ready to dedicate at least X minutes to this tour.
  - **Pro Tip:** Send an iCal or Google Calendar invitation when they schedule their tour so a notification will pop up as an added reminder.
  - **This is also a good time to mention recording the call.** Are they okay with you doing this? Would they like you to share the recording with them for easy reference after the tour?

## Prep the Space

- **The day of the tour, take a few minutes to walk around your venue** making sure lights are turned on, doors are unlocked, things are picked up, and everything's looking its best.
- **If you can, have the space set up like they would be using it.** Remember that this is most likely their first time planning a wedding, so help them realize the space's full potential like only you can do!



## During the Tour

### Break the Ice

- **We've created a PDF for you to use as a pre-tour questionnaire.** We highly recommend kicking off the virtual tour with a consultation so you can begin to develop a connection with the couple. But don't make it feel like a job interview. Make it fun!
  - **These questions will help you get to know their story,** the traditions they are most excited for, their vision for the wedding (also a great chance to hone in on your sales pitch!), and address any pre-emptive questions or concerns they may have before you even start your tour. This is SO important!!
  - **Pro Tip:** Print out this sheet so you can jot down a few key points as you chat (not too many – don't forget to stay engaged!) and then fill it out once you're done with the tour. Or have someone there sitting next to you off camera that can jot down some clear notes for you as you chat.
    - **If you're concerned about missing something,** record the consultation with the couple's consent so you can go back through later and make sure you have all of the important details covered.

### Make Them Feel Welcome

- **When a site tour is done remotely it's even more crucial to make your couples feel welcome.** Get creative! Send them a Starbucks gift card in advance of the meeting and invite them to grab a couple lattes before it starts, ship them your favorite sweet treat to enjoy during the tour, or a couple mini bottles of champagne to pop! These small gestures will make a big impact on couples—making them feel special before they even see your event space.
- **Call them at your set appointment time. On the dot.** And greet them with enthusiasm!
- **As you walk through the property, introduce them to any key players** that may be on site (e.g. chef, banquet captain, GM, etc.). Even though the couple isn't physically there, this small touch will make them feel like VIPs.



## Paint the Picture

- **Refer back to their Pinterest board and consultation answers often.** Point out the most perfect spot for their deeply-desired donut wall, and show them the outdoor chandelier you can string on the oak tree for their ceremony. Helping couples realize that their vision can be achieved at your venue will build that all-important emotional attachment to your event space.
  - **Pro Tip:** Review any correspondence and specs on their prospective wedding just before the tour, so you'll be ready to drop those personalized notes: *"Since you two met at a coffee shop, maybe we could bring that special element in with a specialty coffee cart (even boozy coffees)! This spot right here is a great location for that, and I totally love Jitter-Bug Coffee Carts! I'll jot their contact info for you."*
- **Describe how other couples have used each event space** in fun and creative ways.
- **Describe venue assets that aren't apparent at the time of the tour:** *"The magnolia trees should be in bloom just in time for your May ceremony, and they have such a sweet fragrance."*

## Mind the View

- **Yes your arm may be feeling mighty heavy at this point,** but don't forget to hold that smartphone up high so the couple can get a panoramic eye-level view of each event space!
- **Try to keep the jostling around to a minimum.** You don't want your couple feeling dizzy or nauseous because you're bouncing the phone around as you power-walk through the property.
  - **Pro Tip:** Something like a [PopSocket](#) or [Phone Loop](#) will help you keep a more solid grip on your device. The last thing you want to do is drop your phone during a tour!

## Shout Out Your Superpowers

- **Have you identified your venue's superpowers yet?** If not, do that now.
- **Once you've pinpointed at least 3 of your venue's superpowers, find ways to really shout them out during the tour.** If you're a zero-waste venue, educate the couple on your sustainable practices. If you have a to-die-for garden, talk about the different types



of flowers and foliage that will be in bloom come spring (hint: refer them to the photos). And definitely talk up those truly all-inclusive packages with interesting goodies that competitor packages don't have!

- **Pro Tip:** This is another example of where doing your homework ahead of time and sending folders to your couples with photos or diagrams is going to make the virtual tour that much more enthralling for them.

## End on a Good Note

- **Here's a Pro Tip from Here Comes The Guide gal Chelsea**, a former venue coordinator who's planned, coordinated, or attended more than 350 weddings!
  - *"I always love to wrap tours up with a little chat about Food & Beverage, because people love it. If you handle F&B in-house, fabulous -- talk through some fun menu items and get them drooling. If you handle bars-only in-house, ask them about their vision for the bar (what's important, favorite cocktails) and chat through how their vision for the bar can be a reality at your space. If you do neither in-house, talk about some favorite caterers (bonus points if you have favorite menu items of theirs that you've tasted and love!) and talk about the benefits of BYO bars and how you can help them navigate order counts, mixers, garnishes, etc. It's a great way to paint that full picture AND get them literally drooling over your space AND their menu!!!"*

## After the Tour

**On an in-person site tour, you may end with taking the couple to your office or a table to talk numbers.** We're big fans of giving couples a few minutes to talk while you go work on a special little something extra for them—whether it's a glass of champagne, a small custom gift, or local treat, this is a great time to help set your venue apart and conclude the tour with something they'll remember.

**Plus, that extra bit of alone time for the couple to chat takes the pressure off**—which means they *may* be more comfortable making a decision on-the-spot than they would be if you didn't give them that time.

**So... how to translate that to a virtual tour?**



## Give Them Time to Debrief

- **Virtual Tour Sales Tactic #1: “Feel Free To Put Me On Mute”**
  - Invite the couple to take a few minutes to chat right there on the call – while they put you on mute for some privacy. You’ll be there working away, ready to hop back in when they’re ready.
  - During this time, send them a Starbucks e-gift card, a gift card to a local (to them) restaurant so they can have a date night, or email them the photo of a box full of local goodies you’ll be shipping to them today. When they come back on, you can let them know that typically you’d have a special gift for them in person, but given the distance, they can check their email for a fun surprise for taking the time to tour with you.
- **Virtual Tour Sales Tactic #2: The 10-Minute Call Back**
  - You can hang up the Facetime call to give them a few minutes to chat, stretch, use the restroom, etc., letting them know you’ll call them back in 10 minutes to regroup and answer any remaining questions they have.
  - Send them an e-gift during this break, as mentioned above!

## Making the Sale

- **Be ready to talk budget, and have 1 or 2 perks** (complimentary champagne toast, upgraded linens, etc.) that you can easily throw in “just for them” to show that you really want to host their wedding.
  - **The direct approach:** “How are you guys feeling about this space? Do you feel like it’s YOUR venue? Do you want to secure your date today?”
  - **The low-pressure approach:** “It’s absolutely up to you two, but while we know the date is still open, I’ve GOT to ask...”
- **Different strategies work for different venues**, but leaving them with a solid idea of total cost *plus* an added value can really help seal the deal.





## Putting Together an Initial Proposal

- **Couples need to know how your venue will affect their bottom line**, and having an Excel spreadsheet or quick input system prepped and at-the-ready will give you a chance to give them a ballpark number right then and there. Who doesn't love instant gratification?
  - **Pro Tip:** Use something like this [Proposal Worksheet](#) to show them in writing that not only do they *want* to get married at your venue, but they can afford to!
- **Note: This initial quote does NOT have to be perfect**, but you'll want to itemize all the things that you know this couple wants so they can get a ballpark idea of total cost.
  - If you have all-inclusive packages that are priced per person, [a spreadsheet like ours](#) where you can input a package price times the number of guests will save you a *ton* of time and allow you to hand them a general quote right away—before they even leave your venue or hang up the phone!

## Putting Together the Final Proposal

- **Put together an official quote for them once they're off the call, and send it over ASAP.** Be sure to include any fun promotions you may be running, and as mentioned earlier, throw in an extra special freebie or discount to help close the sale.
  - **More examples of an added-value perk:** to-go meals for the newlyweds after the reception, on-site booking discounts, complimentary Chiavari chairs upgrade, wedding night accommodations for the newlyweds, free basic lighting package, complimentary lemonade for the outdoor ceremony...the list goes on and on!
- **As a bonus to the proposal, create a rough sample layout for their guest count/vision if it's easy to do so.** Or, send the couple a drag-and-drop template so they can play with layout options themselves!
  - **Pro Tip:** [AllSeated](#) is an excellent tool for this, and super easy to use. Just make sure your layout is uploaded into the website for couples to access.



## The Follow-Up

### Stay on Their Radar

- **Within 24 hours**, send a thank-you note via email.
  - Feel free to include a lessened-but-still-fabulous booking incentive which would expire in 1 week if you feel like that's authentic to you and the space!
- **5 days after the tour**, give them a quick call.
  - *"Was just thinking about you guys and wanted to see if any new questions came about!"*
- **One week after the call**, send a quick note via email.
  - *"We had another busy week of tours and I just wanted to make sure y'all had first dibs on your date—in case you're still interested!"*
- **Two weeks after that email**, send a final note to check in.
  - **Pro-Tip:** Work from a "two-no's-then-go mentality"... If they ignore your two email follow ups entirely, move along! They'll reach back out if they are still interested, but keep your main focus on those new leads and (virtual!) tours.



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