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Problem Identification Report

Problem/Opportunity Statement

When planning a wedding, couples often face the overwhelming challenge of organizing numerous details, such as coordinating with multiple vendors and suppliers, planning an itinerary, and managing a guest list; all while staying within their budget. Usually, traditional methods in wedding planning involve spreadsheets and scattered communications that often lead to misunderstandings, confusion, delays, and added stress. On average, a wedding involves more than 15 vendors and lasts around 13 to 18 months from engagement to the event.[1] The growing trend of unique themes and personalized experiences increase the number of decisions and details that need managing. This fragmented nature of available tools and services while planning a wedding, lacks a cohesive, streamlined solution.

Wealthier couples may choose to hire a professional wedding planner to handle all these complex tasks. This option is expensive, with fees ranging from \$1,500 to over \$10,000 depending on the scale of the wedding. According to MoneySense, an average wedding in 2022 was around \$30,000, which itself leaves couples struggling to stay within budget. Additionally, hiring a professional planner can remove the personal touch from planning your wedding, which is a deeply significant and emotional event for many couples. [2] Hiring a planner is financially out of reach for most couples, leaving them to do this process on their own. The wedding industry complexity and cost present a substantial barrier to realizing their dream wedding.

Since 80% of couples don't hire a wedding planner,[1] there is an opportunity to create an all-in-one virtual platform that simplifies and personalizes the wedding planning experience. Integrating features like customizable checklists, real-time collaboration with vendors, guest management and more. It would guide couples through the process, offering personalized recommendations based on their preferences and budget. This platform could reduce the stress and time involved, while allowing couples to retain control and personalization over their wedding; a professional planner experience without all the high costs of hiring one.

Stakeholder Analysis

After a brief analysis for the stakeholders that will be involved, the most important and relevant were selected alongside with their potential interests and concerns regarding the project, which are listed:

1. Engaged Couples - Users

- **Interests:**
 - Simplifying process of wedding planning.
 - Receiving personalized recommendations for venues, vendors, and services that fit their preferences, style, and also the budget necessary.
 - Having a user-friendly experience to interact with.
 - Access to real-time collaboration with vendors.
 - A customizable checklist to ensure an efficient management of all tasks.
- **Concerns:**
 - Affordability: The platform should help them stay within budget.
 - Accuracy and relevance of vendor recommendations (high trust in recommendations).
 - Privacy and data security, especially when sharing personal details and guest information.
 - Easy access across devices, whether on desktop or mobile.
 - Effective communication with vendors to avoid mismanagement or delays.

2. Vendors

- **Interests:**
 - Having a platform to showcase their services to couples interested in wedding planning.
 - Real-time collaboration with the principal users.
 - Easy access to tools involving payment management.
- **Concerns:**
 - Competition to other vendors.
 - User reviews regarding the service quality.
 - How complex will the platform be for them to use?
 - Questions about the pricing fee to get listed.

3. Users Guests

- **Interests:**
 - Assisting the couple in the planning process by offering opinions or recommendations when invited.

- Receiving clear communication regarding event details (invitations, RSVPs, etc.).
- Participating in decision-making in areas where they may be contributing financially or providing support.
- **Concerns:**
 - Ensuring that their opinions or contributions are considered by the couple.
 - Timely and transparent information regarding logistics (transportation, accommodation, etc.).
 - Privacy: Safeguarding personal details when dealing with RSVPs, meal preferences, or other shared information.

4. Professional Consultants

- **Interests:**
 - Leveraging the platform to manage multiple clients and track the progress of each wedding plan efficiently.
 - A tool to help streamline their workflow (managing vendor contracts, timelines, checklists, etc.).
 - Access to vendor databases, guest management tools, and customizable templates.
 - Opportunity to promote their own services on the platform.
- **Concerns:**
 - Competition with automated planning features that could threaten their role in the process.
 - Adaptability of the system to support their specific planning methods and workflows.
 - Integration with existing tools they may already use.

5. Platform Developers

- **Interests:**
 - Delivering a high-quality, user-centric product that serves the needs of all stakeholders.
 - Developing features that are intuitive and meet the pain points of users effectively.
 - Ensuring platform scalability, security, and performance for a seamless user experience.
 - Gathering user feedback and iterating to improve the platform's functionality.
- **Concerns:**
 - Staying on top of technological challenges, such as data security and system uptime.
 - Competition with other wedding planning platforms or services.
 - Monetization strategies (ads, commissions from vendors, subscription models, etc.).

6. Marketing Team

- **Interests:**
 - Promoting the platform to attract engaged couples, vendors, and partners.
 - Generating leads and revenue through subscriptions or partnerships.
 - Building a trusted brand within the wedding industry.
- **Concerns:**
 - Effectively positioning the platform in a competitive market.
 - Meeting user acquisition targets and achieving high customer retention.
 - Ensuring customer satisfaction and addressing feedback promptly to avoid negative reviews or publicity.

7. Partnerships

- **Interests:**
 - Integrating their services (e.g., payment processing, event management tools) into the platform to reach a wider audience.
 - Providing value-added services to couples and vendors that enhance the planning experience.
- **Concerns:**
 - Seamless integration with the platform to ensure transactions and data exchange happen smoothly.
 - A clear and transparent revenue-sharing or partnership model.

8. Investors

- **Interests:**
 - The profitability and scalability of the platform.
 - Ensuring that the platform can gain market share and demonstrate sustainable growth.
 - Building a competitive advantage to ensure long-term success in the wedding industry.
- **Concerns:**
 - Risk management and return on investment (ROI).
 - Ensuring that platform features are driving user engagement and business opportunities.
 - Avoiding operational risks (e.g., platform downtime, security breaches).

9. Regulatory Agencies

- **Interests:**
 - Ensuring the platform complies with relevant laws, particularly regarding data protection (e.g., GDPR) and consumer protection.
- **Concerns:**

- Proper handling of user data, especially sensitive information such as personal details, payment info, and vendor contracts.
- Clear communication of terms and conditions, refund policies, and other legal aspects to users.

Relevance to Software Solution

The problem of wedding planning complexity, coordinating with vendors and guest management, can be tackled through a software solution. Developing an all-in-one virtual wedding planning platform, we can provide couples with a streamlined tool that centralizes all aspects of wedding planning.

The software would eliminate the need for notes or spreadsheets and scattered communication channels, offering a unified platform that integrates key features such as customizable checklists, real-time vendor collaboration, budget management, and guest management. It would allow couples to track and manage every aspect of their wedding in one place. This would reduce the risk of confusion, delays and missed details. The platform can also implement algorithms for recommendations of venues, vendors and services, based on user preferences, location and budget.

The scope should be strictly defined to ensure it addresses the core needs of couples planning a wedding without over complicating it. The primary focus should be to build a user-friendly interface, to make it accessible to regular people. Five key features should be defined into the scope of the platform:

1. *Customizable Checklists:* As soon as a couple logs into the platform, and based on the proposed wedding date, they are provided with a detailed checklist, including key milestones such as booking the venue, confirming the caterer, arranging a florist, hiring a photographer, and sending out invitations. As they progress, they can check off tasks, receive reminders for pending deadlines, and adjust the checklist as needed.
2. *Real-time vendor collaboration:* A couple uses the vendor search tool to find one in their area, they select one, and the system automatically sends a request for a quote. They can then communicate with the vendor within the platform, approve the contract, and pay the deposit.
3. *Budget Management:* When a couple logs into the platform, they establish an overall budget and can set limits for each category, such as catering, photography and venue. This tool helps couples track its expenses, providing real-time updates as each cost is logged for all the services. It could integrate online payment, making vendor payments seamless.
4. *Guest Management:* The couple can import contacts from their phone or manually, it then automatically sends digital invitations, and tracks RSVPs in real-time. The platform

also generates a suggested seating chart based on the guest list that could be tailored to the couple's needs.

5. *AI assistance and recommendations*: The platform can feature an AI assistant that helps the couple in each of the previous features, tailoring each step in the process to the couple's needs.

This initial scope focuses on the essential needs of couples planning a wedding, addressing the most common pain points they face during this process. This approach ensures the platform is scalable and adaptable to additional features.

Market Analysis

Target Audience Identification

Engaged Couples / Couples

This target audience is the primary users of the Virtual Wedding Planning Concierge. The term “Engaged Couples” refers to those who are together and have entered into a formal agreement to marry, while “Couples” can mean any two people in a relationship. This audience may be long-distance couples, where the couple live in different countries and may have diverse cultural, linguistic, religious, and busy lives and hectic schedules. They are looking for a well-organized and blended traditional and modern wedding planner.

Examples:

- A long-distance couple where one partner is living in Canada and the other one is living in the UK, requiring an online software work as a middleman.
- A couple both are busy professionals like healthcare worker and attorney with huge workload and long working hours per day.
- A couple who grew up and raised in different cultural backgrounds, such as Europe, Asia and Middle East, etc.

Demographic:

- **Age**: 25-35 years old
- **Gender**: Cisgender and transgender male, Cisgender and transgender female, no binary person, etc.
- **Household Income**: Most likely from middle to upper-middle class, household incomes may be above \$66,800 [3]
- **Location**: Suburb, urban areas, private islands and different countries
- **Education**: College graduates or higher, often professionals in their fields

- **Occupation:** Professionals, entrepreneurs, or students
- **Religion:** Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.

Psychographic:

- **Values:** Customization, creativity, and traditional and modern cultural traditions
- **Lifestyle:** Busy lives and hectic schedules or living in different countries.
- **Concerns:** Well-organized wedding schedule, balancing the needs of both families and friends to ensure their wedding runs smoothly.
- **Behavior:** The planning approach of the wedding depends on their preferences and communication style (app, call, message)

Connection to Software Solution:

The Virtual Wedding Planning Concierge meets the needs of the Engaged Couples or Couples through real-time vendor collaboration which allows long-distance couples, busy professionals to plan the wedding in their free time. Customizable Checklists allow couples and vendors to reconcile traditional and modern elements, guaranteeing that cultural or religious requirements are upheld while maintaining organization.

Wedding Planners

This target audience is the vital organizer of the Virtual Wedding Planning Concierge. The term “Wedding Planners” refers to a profession that is the planning and organization of weddings. They address logistics along the wedding-planning journey and assist couples plan their wedding and any wedding-related activities via planning the event logistics, negotiating with vendors, developing the chosen theme, and then being on-site to manage the wedding and ensure that everything runs smoothly.

Examples:

- Full-Service Wedding Planner who helps couples plan everything from scratch to finish for the wedding day or for a weekend of events. [4]
- Bilingual Wedding Planner who speaks two or more languages and can be helpful in a variety of situations. [4]
- à la carte wedding planner who gives vendor recommendations and coordinates the most important aspects of the wedding. [4]
- Event Designer who curates the aesthetic and ambiance of your wedding, leaving the logistical aspects in the capable hands of the couple. [5]
- Venue Coordinator who oversees bookings and arrangements specific to the wedding venue, such as venue tours, ceremony and reception room layouts, and menu tastings. [5]

Demographic: (no demographics and statistics in Canada)

- **Age:** 20-40+ years old [6]

- **Gender:** 89.5% Female and 10.5% Male [6]
- **Income:** USD \$44,949 Male, USD \$45,556 Female [6]
- **Race:** [6]

White	62.1%
Hispanic or Latino	16.5%
Black or African American	10.5%
Asian	5.9%
Unknown	4.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%

- **Education:** [6]

Bachelor's	71%
Associate	13%
High School Diploma	5%
Master's	5%
Other Degrees	6%

- **Company size:** [6]

< 50 employees	14%
50 - 100 employees	27%
100 - 500 employees	19%
500 - 1,000 employees	7%
1,000 - 10,000 employees	18%
> 10,000 employees	15%

- **Foreign languages spoken by wedding planners** [6]

Spanish	44.4%
Russian	8.3%
Japanese	6.9%
Chinese	4.2%
Ukrainian	4.2%
Other	32.0%

Psychographic:

- **Values:** Professionalism, Ethical, Adaptability, Ambitious, Good communication skills, Creativity
- **Lifestyle:** Unstable working hours and workdays, depending on the clients preferences and vendors official hours.

- **Behavior:** Follow well-organized SOP to process the wedding planning. May have communication protocol to communicate with the clients and vendors via various social media platforms, such as email and SMS. Provide the optimal solution based on their experience and the balance between the needs of the clients and service of the vendors.

Connection to Software Solution:

The Virtual Wedding Planning Concierge provides all the essential tools and features to streamline their workflow and enhance efficiency. Customizable Checklists allow wedding planners to plan the wedding based on the checklists. Real-time vendor collaboration helps wedding planners to update the latest progress with vendors. AI assistance and recommendations feature to share the heavy workload of the wedding planner.

Wedding Vendors

This target audience is the service provider of the Virtual Wedding Planning Concierge. The term “Wedding Vendors” refers to an individual or business entity that provides goods or services to the wedding. They provide food and beverage options, floral arrangements, wedding photos, footage and live stream, entertainment, performance, etc. throughout the wedding process.

Examples: [7]

- Catering Services who provide food and beverage during the wedding ceremony.
- Florists who provide floral arrangements, bouquets and gifts service
- Photographers who record the day of the wedding and photo editing, post-production and retouching.
- Videographers who provide live streaming service.
- Entertainment that provides music and performance, such as dancers, singers and DJs, etc.
- Hair and makeup professionals who help groom, bride, groomsmen, bridesmaids and family relatives to look their best by using makeup to enhance their natural feature
- Transportation company who provides transportation service.
- Catering and cake who made the wedding cake.
- Wedding Dress.

Demographic:

- **Age:** 20-60 years old
- **Gender:** Diversity present, but certain fields may be female-dominated (like florists, catering and cake)
- **Income:** Depends on the client’s budget and number of wedding jobs received.
- **Business Size:** Medium or large-sized vendors tend to have their own online platform for selling goods and services. However, Freelancers or small businesses may not have enough resources to build their platform.

Psychographic:

- **Values:** Professionalism, Personalization, Ethical, Adaptability, Ambitious, Good communication skills, reputation, client satisfaction and creative expression.
- **Lifestyle:** Work flexible hours and workdays, depends on the client's preferences and wedding planners official hours.
- **Behavior:** Every platform and interaction is an opportunity to build and maintain their brand image. Most of the clients are busy, therefore they prefer to adapt technology like social media, management and collaboration tools to manage the timeline and enhance efficiency.

Connection to Software Solution:

The Virtual Wedding Planning Concierge meets the needs of the vendors, helps the coordination with clients and updates the latest progress of the event. Customizable Checklists help communicate with the clients to understand their needs. Real-Time Vendor Collaboration streamlines communication with couples and shares the latest updates. Budget Management helps vendors and clients to find out what services could match the client's budget.

Competitor Analysis

Zola

Zola is one of the most popular online wedding planning solutions. It provides an all-in-one solution for vendor selection, registry, guest list, and invite list management. It is known for its flexibility in wedding registries which allows users to manage physical products, cash as well as group gifting for more expensive products[9].

Target Audience

Tech-savvy couples who are looking for a modern all-in-one solution for wedding planning. Especially for those who are looking for flexibility and convenience solutions.

Business Model

Zola is free to use for most features including wedding website creation, planning and managing guest lists. Zola charges a 2.5% transaction fee on cash gifts. Besides, Zola also has partnerships with vendors and provides advertising for vendors which earns commissions when guests buy gifts from the website as well. In Addition, Zola has a premium plan offering a custom domain name, wedding planner and removing Ads.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- *Flexible registry*: Zola provides flexible gifting options for physical products, cash and group gifts.
- *Customizable websites*: Zola provides a free personalized public wedding website for providing information and updates on the wedding.

Weaknesses

- *Transaction fees*: For cash gifts, guests have to pay a 2.5% fee.
- *Budget Management*: The budget management tool is relevantly new and needs to be more detailed.
- *Lack of virtual events*: Zola does not have much support for a virtual wedding setup such as a wedding during the previous pandemic.

Opportunities

- Zola can polish its budget management tool to provide a more easy-to-use and move advanced management.
- Zola can provide setup for virtual weddings for remote access for more guests.

Threats

- More other apps are providing similar flexible registries which is losing the uniqueness of Zola.
- The budget management tool is not as good as other platforms.

The Knot

The Knot is another well-known wedding-planning platform with a large number of vendor partners making it a good option for holding large weddings. It also provides an all-in-one solution for vendors, wedding websites, budget tracking and RSVP management[10].

Target Audience

Couples that are planning large weddings. The wide range of vendors and comprehensive planning tools make it proper for planning large weddings.

Business Model

The Knot is mostly free to use including different tools and holding wedding websites. However, the user might need to pay for some upgraded services such as a customized domain name for the wedding website. Besides, Knot also earns revenue from its vendor partnerships when users purchase products or services from vendor partners. Besides, similar 2.5% fees also apply to cash gifts.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- *Vendor partners:* The Knot has one of the largest vendor partners inventory which offers users more choices
- *Brand reputation:* The Knot is one of the most well-known wedding apps with a strong reputation built over the years, especially for large weddings.

Weaknesses

- *Not suitable for small weddings:* The majority of features and design of the Knot make it overwhelming for smaller weddings
- *Unstable websites:* Some users reported that the Knot website stopped responding during busy times and made RSVP unusable[13].

Opportunities

- *Improve Stability:* The knot can improve its server for better stability.
- *Improve the experience of small weddings.* The knot can add a view or feature for smaller weddings.

Threats

- Other platforms are also offering more vendors, making the Knot less competitive and harder to stand out.
- With the recession, more young couples prefer choosing smaller weddings which is kind of overkill to choose the knot.

WeddingWire

WeddingWire is also a popular all-in-one wedding planning platform. It is known for having a community form for questions and thoughts. Besides, WeddingWire also has features like guest management, registry, invitations and wedding websites[11].

Target Audience

Couples who need help planning and making decisions. The marketplace and forms make it easier for users to get help from the community.

Business Model

The Wedding Wire is free to use from a couple's and guest's perspective. They do have paid accounts to have customized websites and Ad-free experiences. They do not charge a transaction fee for cash gifts like some other platforms. They primarily earn their revenue through their vendors' advertising fees to get promotion to get promoted to the top of the search results.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Community Engagement: WeddingWire is known for the community and forums, which help couples share experiences, ask questions and get advice, which is a unique feature compared to other tools.
- User-friendly budget tool: WeddingWire has an easy-to-use budget tracking tool and different checklists[12].

Weaknesses

- Free features are basic: Some of the advanced tools and customizations of website and planning are only available to paid versions which makes free versions too basic compared to other platforms.

Opportunities

- Expanding AI tools: WeddingWire can offer more AI tools for users who do not like community engagement.

Threats

- Competition: Competitors offer similar plan tools which make it less competitive than other platforms.
- With AI tools, the QA need from the community can be reduced and make it less competitive.

Competitor Comparison matrix

Feature	Zola	The Knot	WeddingWire
Vendor Inventories	Medium	Largest	Large
Website	Fully customizable	Customizable	Limited templates
Budget Management	Basic tool	Comprehensive focus on large wedding	Comprehensive
Registry	Support physical gifts, cash, group gifting, with 2.5%fee	Support physical gifts and cash funds with 2.5% fee	Physical gifts only
Real-person Help	Free Planner	Customer support only	Community engagement

Business values

1. **Affordability and Accessibility** : The platform offers professional wedding planning tools at a fraction of the cost of hiring a traditional wedding planner. Couples of all budgets can access a suite of tools that are typically only available through costly planning services. This makes it an affordable solution for the majority who don't hire a professional.
2. **Personalization and Control** : Couples retain full control over the planning process, enabling them to make each detail personal to their tastes and needs. Unlike professional planners, who may take over, the platform empowers users to create a truly customized wedding that reflects their vision.
3. **Stress Reduction and Efficiency** : By centralizing all wedding planning activities—guest management, vendor coordination, budgeting, etc.—into one platform, it reduces the complexity and stress that come with managing multiple tools and communications. The streamlined experience improves organization and efficiency.
4. **Inclusivity and Flexibility** : The platform is designed to cater to a diverse range of users, including long-distance couples, those with different cultural backgrounds, and busy professionals. With AI-powered recommendations and customizable checklists, the platform can adapt to various wedding types, cultures, and preferences.
5. **Collaboration and Real-time Communication** : Built-in communication tools allow real-time collaboration with vendors, planners, and other stakeholders. This ensures updates and decisions are made smoothly and transparently, reducing miscommunication and delays.

Unique Selling Points (USPs)

1. **All-in-One, Seamless Platform**: Unlike competitors that focus on a few features (like registries or vendor connections), this platform offers a **comprehensive solution** that brings together **checklists, budgeting, vendor management, AI recommendations**, and **guest management** in a single interface. It eliminates the need for using multiple apps or services, simplifying the process from engagement to the wedding day.
2. **AI-Powered Personalization and Assistance**: A key differentiator is the inclusion of **AI-driven assistance**, which guides couples through the wedding planning process by offering personalized suggestions based on their budget, location, and preferences. This level of **smart automation** makes the platform intuitive and tailored, providing recommendations for vendors, venues, and services, making decision-making easier and faster.
3. **Real-Time Vendor Collaboration**: The platform's unique **real-time collaboration** feature allows couples and vendors to work together directly within the system, streamlining communication and ensuring everything from contracts to payments is managed efficiently. This eliminates the need for disjointed email

threads or phone calls, creating a **professional planning experience** without the associated cost.

4. **Budget Tracking with Payment Integration** : The **budget management tool** is designed not only to track expenses but to **integrate with payment gateways**, allowing couples to make payments to vendors directly through the platform. This unique feature provides an end-to-end solution, from planning to payment, which is not commonly found in other wedding planning platforms.
5. **Customizable Checklists and Timelines** : The platform provides **dynamic, customizable checklists** that adapt based on the wedding date, user preferences, and specific wedding tasks. This feature ensures couples are on track with deadlines, providing reminders and updates, offering a **more detailed and flexible planning approach** than other platforms that offer static or generic checklists.
6. **Guest Management with Real-Time RSVP and Seating Chart Generator**: The **guest management** feature is enhanced with tools that automatically track RSVPs in real-time, send reminders, and even suggest **seating arrangements** based on the guest list and relationships. This takes the guesswork out of organizing guests, adding an extra layer of convenience that differentiates it from more basic guest tracking tools.
7. **Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity**: The platform accommodates users from diverse **cultural and religious backgrounds**, offering personalized support for traditional and modern wedding elements. With its **multicultural flexibility**, it appeals to a broader audience, including long-distance couples and those with specific cultural needs. This inclusivity makes the platform stand out in a market that often focuses on more generic wedding planning.

The Virtual Wedding Planning Concierge sets itself apart by combining **affordability, personalization, and technology-driven efficiency** into one easy-to-use platform. Its **AI-powered recommendations, real-time vendor collaboration, and complete budgeting tools** provide a comprehensive and **inclusive solution** for couples looking to plan their dream wedding with ease and control. These USPs make it the ideal choice for modern, tech-savvy couples seeking both flexibility and guidance without the high cost of hiring a planner.

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