

Wedding Proposals Made Easy: Our Sources Weigh In By Mary Westbrook

In Floral Management this month, we talked to florists who have made tweaks and changes to their wedding business, with an eye to improving efficiency and profits.

While florists in the story approached their wedding work differently, almost everyone agreed that new wedding software is helping them work faster and smarter, while providing even better customer service.

Here are some of our sources' top picks for software — and some perspective on why they love them. We've also included some of the sites' standout feature, courtesy of an outstanding collection put together by SAF members Mayesh Wholesale. (Check out the entire Mayesh chart at mayesh.com/tag/florist-software):

Fast Turnaround. For Zoe Prosser Gallina of Botanica International in Tampa, Florida, strengthening her wedding business was about winnowing out brides who weren't a perfect fit. About a year ago, Gallina started experimenting with a new approach to pricing, particularly for potential clients whose budgets are likely to fall short. Instead of waiting until after the consultation to work up an estimate, Gallina and her team will do a rough outline ahead of time. Thanks to **Details Flowers** (detailsflowers.com), that process usually takes just 15 to 20 minutes. "We've found it more valuable to send them this estimate to give them a realistic starting budget than having them come in," Gallina explained. **Pricing:** Seven- to 14-day free trial; subscriptions start at \$99 a month. **Standout Features:** the ability to enter customizable contract terms, payment and pricing; access recipes for bouquets and arrangements; find out the cost of a particular bouquet or arrangement by simply uploading an image of the arrangement.

Super Visuals. Tracy Park of Park Place Designs in Battle Creek, Michigan, said **Lobiloo** (lobiloo.com) has been a "game changer" for her business. "It also has a full floral gallery I use to make a proposal, along with many features like stem count for [better] ordering," she said. "It also has also a pdf I can down load and give to my designers so they have the recipe for my designs." The program, she said, makes it easy to track costs, add labor and delivery fees and get an estimate out to brides fast. "Brides hate to wait," she said. "This program is amazing." Jodi Duncan, AIFD, of Jodi Duncan in Norris City, Illinois, is another Lobiloo fan. "I like that it has so many ways to integrate photos and comes with a good photo library," she said. "Brides don't want to read their proposals anymore. They just want pictures. Paragraphs of descriptions are out. Photos are in." **Pricing:** 30-day free trial; \$19 monthly subscription. **Standout Features:** the ability to create custom floral designs with a simple drag & drop interface; upload rental items and hard goods; estimate cost and creates wholesale order forms and design recipe forms from your custom designs; save client images and Pinterest pages, and easily communicate with imagery to client.

Efficient Planning. In Bellbrook, Ohio, Cady Vance of Floral V Designs uses a hybrid approach, relying on **HoneyBook** (honeybook.com) and **StemCounter** (stemcounter.com). She uses Honeybook for proposals, invoices, contracts and payments. “I use StemCounter for our ordering [and] recipes, and it helps us keep our markup in line where it should be.” (StemCounter, as Vance notes, could be used for proposals, etc., but Vance likes the familiarity of HoneyBook, which she’s used for a longer period, for those functions.) In St. Louis, Ryan and Rachael O’Neil obviously use StemCounter at Twisted Willow Designs — they quite literally built the program in an effort to make their own business more profitable and efficient, and Ryan credits the program with the shop’s continued success. **Pricing (HoneyBook):** 14-day free trial; \$500 one-time payment or \$24 a month subscription. **Standout Features (HoneyBook):** the ability to automate custom proposals, contracts and invoices to save time and improve client experience; track clients, conversations (and changes) all in one place; use e-signature and online payments to close deals quickly and easily. **Pricing (StemCounter):** **Nine-day free trial; \$97 a month subscription** **Standout Features (StemCounter):** the ability to craft pdf proposals and also mobile-friendly proposals where brides can view the proposal, sign the contract, and pay the retainer from the same screen Users can add multiple photos to every line item and users can view them full-screen on any device; edit recipes directly on the proposal — professional floral tools, including recipes and markup settings, disappear when creating a version for your client; allow users to up-sell brides without having an enormous final price, thanks to a “possibilities” column; integrate with QuickBooks.

Check out the [Mayesh blog](#), for a full comparison of programs listed above, along with others not cited by our sources. Have a good/bad experience with a wedding software program? We want to hear about it. Email mwestbrook@safnow.org.