



2000 Pennington Road, Ewing, NJ 08628 609-771-1855

November 11, 2009

Lisa Castellano
Birds & Bees Weddings and Special Events

Dear Ms. Lisa Castellano:

Thank you for choosing Fusion Public Relations Group as your source of positive communications to further your business. Our mission is to provide you with the tools needed to build your ideas into a successful and in-demand wedding and special events service.

At Fusion Public Relations Group, our commitment is to our clients. Our superior public relations expertise promises to provide your endeavor with positive and reputation-building recognition needed to successfully enhance your business. Through hard work and innovation, Fusion Public Relations Group guarantees these results.

Our research shows that many brides-to-be and recent brides are interested in third-party assistance in planning their wedding but in the current economic climate, their main deterrent is cost. We have tailored our plan to combat these concerns. *Birds & Bees Weddings and Special Events* currently lacks the exposure needed for success. Our goal is to establish "Lisa" as a media personality and her business as a necessary asset to brides and special event holders by way of positive exposure in a multitude of media channels.

As our client, you will receive this free public relations plan which will allow you to gain a better understanding of your audiences' needs and expectations for a wedding/ event planning service. This plan offers specific strategies to help your business gain a positive reputation and the recognition needed to achieve your business goals. Please read your customized public relations plan. We thank you for providing us with this exciting opportunity. Your satisfaction is our only desire and your feedback is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Avitabile

Caitlyn Camacho

Caitlin Davis

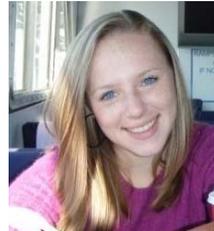
Courtney Payne

Ana Pereira

Meet Fusion P.R. Group



Gabrielle Avitabile



Courtney Payne



Caitlyn Camacho



Ana Pereira



Caitlin Davis

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Goals:

The members of Fusion P.R. Group strive to work with our clients to create strategies of action that are comfortable and achievable as well as compatible with their over-arching company goals. Fusion P.R. Group wants to help Ms. Castellano establish and cultivate a thriving business in the special events industry. After sampling a group of soon-to-be and new brides, Fusion P.R. Group found that 9 out of 10 brides do not desire a wedding coordinator for their event. Therefore, our recommendation is that Ms. Castellano expands her business to include all special events. With this recommendation in mind, we suggest the change in her business' name from *Birds and Bees Weddings and Special Events* to *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events*. The objectives for establishing and cultivating a growing business will be listed below.

OBJECTIVE 1- *Establish Ms. Castellano as a credible and reliable source on weddings and special events by making her a "media maven" within six months.*

OBJECTIVE 2- *Establish Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events as a credible and reputable business within one year.*

OBJECTIVE 3- *Increase awareness of Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events in the local community by ten percent within one year.*

The most important element of launching the business of Ms. Castellano is to establish her as a credible source on event planning. Credibility will come by getting Ms. Castellano's name known in the community as well as in the media. To do this, Fusion P.R. Group recommends Ms. Castellano work with the media, including posting YouTube videos and writing to local newspapers, in order to get her name known. Following her establishment in the media, Ms. Castellano needs to get the name of her

business known. Fusion P.R. Group recommends that Ms. Castellano involve herself in non profit work as well as establish a *Leave it to Lisa* Web site. Finally, Ms. Castellano needs to expand her client base by reaching out to local businesses and community members. She'll do this by offering coupons to local businesses as well as offering a contest for free wedding planning for an outstanding member of the community. Using these tools, Fusion P.R. Group believes that Ms. Castellano will not only reach her business goals but will find herself with a flourishing business that will continue to grow in years to come.

Client History:

Lisa Castellano is currently an Enrollment Specialist at Bergen Community College. Ms. Castellano graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in gerontology from Ramapo College. She got her master's degree in general theoretical psychology from Farleigh Dickinson University.

Lisa Castellano gained event planning experience while working for Ramapo College. Along with a few friends, Lisa started up the student organization now known as RamaShows at Ramapo College. RamaShows plans and books concerts and guest speakers from the music industry. As a graduate student, Ms. Castellano worked in the Women's Center at Ramapo College planning events for the students and managing the staff.

When it came time to plan her own wedding, Ms. Castellano took the reins and handled the details. The experience ultimately inspired her to become a wedding planner. Her plans of starting up her wedding planning business at this time are unclear. However, she plans on naming her business *Birds & Bees Weddings and Special Events*.

Problem and How PR can solve it:

The first major problem facing Lisa Castellano is that her business, *Birds and Bees Weddings and Special Events*, has not yet been established. Lisa Castellano has a vision of being a wedding planner but has yet to make a definitive name for herself in the business. To legitimize Lisa as a commodity for brides-to-be and those in need of special events help, she must establish herself as a credible wedding/event planner.

In her interview, Lisa Castellano expressed her desire to be a wedding consultant, working with the bride anywhere from a month prior to the wedding up to the wedding day. Based on our research, many brides-to-be said that they preferred the services of a full-time wedding planner or none at all, as opposed to a wedding consultant. With the understanding that her focus is on weddings, we suggest that Lisa also include special event planning in her repertoire. These added opportunities would aid in our efforts in expanding clientele base and network growth. In the current economy, those who were more likely to hire a wedding planner are choosing to plan their own weddings. According to our interview with Marsha Stoltman, event planning expert, it would be more ideal for Lisa to establish a niche in weddings, but Fusion Public Relations Group found that the economic situation is not conducive to a one-track business. This drawback urges us to suggest a different path for the success of Ms. Castellano; this change includes an initial modification of the business name to *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* in an attempt to reflect the services offered.

As with any business, the community must be aware of Ms. Castellano's services. Lisa will create brochures, business cards, and special offer coupons and

proceed to contact local businesses, bridal shops and religious establishments to create business legitimacy. This strategy will expand *Leave it to Lisa's* name recognition, as business owners and those in close contact with brides-to-be will be informed of Lisa's services and are likely to use and/or spread the knowledge of her company.

Lisa must also refine and publicize her skills in a professional setting. The joining of a local chamber of commerce and involvement in regional bridal expos will create an important opportunity for Lisa to personally become acquainted with other businesses related to wedding and event planning. This could include florists, venue owners, caterers, etc. In order to be successful, Ms. Stoltman recommends that Lisa become fully knowledgeable of all aspects involved in the planning of events with specific attention paid to weddings. We suggest that through this involvement, Lisa introduce her services to businesses related to special event planning and other businesses in the local area. This tactic will provide Lisa with an upper hand when faced with service selection for future clients. An important aspect of wedding and special event planning is the knowledge of the best services offered, both financially and operatively. *Leave it to Lisa* will benefit greatly from a well-informed owner.

Our attempt at public recognition mustn't rely solely on these channels for spread of business. Lisa must specifically target a younger generation audience by becoming a media maven, a personality those planning weddings and events recognize and trust. Fusion Public Relations Group recognizes the reliability that individuals place on social media. Therefore, Lisa will record how-to clips that will be streamed to easily accessible sites across the web frequented by brides-to-be and people planning special events. In addition to promoting Ms. Castellano's personality via social media, it will be beneficial

to target a wider age-range audience by sending how-to tips and planning recommendations to local weekly newspapers. This effort will serve as an added media outlet to further expose *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events*.

Formative Research:

To help better identify the needs and challenges in the field of wedding planning and its target audiences, Fusion P.R. Group used intercept studies of engaged and recently married women, Internet research and field interviews. To gain a better sense of understanding, our team conducted a client interview with Ms. Castellano. Appendix A contains a copy of the transcript of the interview.

During the meeting with Ms. Castellano, she made the team aware of the audience she was expecting to target. The do-it-yourself bride from New Jersey was identified as the main audience. Ms. Castellano discussed her education history as well as her job history and described previous special events she has worked on. The company logo, Facebook page and the possibility of a blog were discussed. The big problems concerning Ms. Castellano's business were lack of experience, time and money as well as the issue of establishment.

The intercept study was developed after evaluating the interview transcript. Engaged and recently married women in the New Jersey area were given a three-question survey asking for their opinions on wedding planners, wedding coordinators and the constraints of hiring a third party to help with the wedding planning process. The survey was developed in order to understand the mindset of the New Jersey bride. Appendix B contains the survey responses used in Fusion P.R. Group's research.

To better understand the issues facing an entrepreneurial wedding and special event planner, Fusion P.R. Group met with industry expert Marsha Stoltman.

In meeting with Ms. Stoltman, Fusion P.R. Group found that the most important aspects of starting any business are: detail and organization, contacts, and patience.

Ms. Stoltman informed the team that she was a special events professional and that she found organization and attention to detail to be key when planning any event. She felt that a small mistake can lead to a giant disaster. She also stated to the team that it is absolutely necessary to make the appropriate contacts with site vendors, photographers, florists, pastors and others involved in the wedding process. These contacts are crucial because a wedding planner must be versed in all facets of a wedding. She must also be well-known among these people so that they will be more apt to giving out her information to potential brides. Finally, Ms. Stoltman mentioned that patience is very important when starting a business. It takes a great deal of time to establish any business; it is necessary for the business owner to be patient during the beginning phases. Appendix C contains a copy of the transcript of the interview.

Audience Segmentation:

Internal Audiences:

1. Friends and Professional Contacts

- To propagate business, friends and professional contacts are gatekeepers to their personal networks
 - i. Educate them on benefits of having a special event planner
 - ii. Encourage friends to speak on behalf of Lisa's professionalism as a special event planner

2. Fusion Public Relations Group

- To propagate future business members of age to be married in the upcoming years as well as many people in their personal networks
 - i. Educate them on benefits of having a special event planner
 - ii. Encourage the spread of information and necessity to hire a special event planner

External Audiences:

1. Women who are engaged

- Women who are engaged are most likely to consider hiring a planner for their wedding

- i. Educate women on the benefits of hiring a wedding planner by way of media channels targeting this audience (see M-A-C Triad on page 18)
 - ii. Encourage women to hire planners to assist the preparation of their event

2. Local business owners
 - Business owners hire event planners to coordinate special and professional events
 - i. Educate business owners on the benefits of hiring a special event planner by way of media channels targeting this audience (see M-A-C Triad on page 18)
 - ii. Urge businesses planning events to hire a special event planner

3. People planning a special event
 - People planning special events are inclined to hire a special event planner
 - i. Educate those planning a special event on the benefits of hiring a special event planner by way of media channels targeting this audience (see M-A-C Triad on page 18)
 - ii. Urge people planning events to hire a special event planner

4. Nonprofit organizations

- Nonprofits use events to increase awareness of their cause and can be aided by event planning services
 - i. Have nonprofits recognize the need of having a special event planner to plan events
 - ii. Urge nonprofits to hire a special event planner

- 5. Mothers of women who are engaged
 - Mothers of engaged women can encourage them to hire a wedding planner
 - i. Educate mothers on the benefits of hiring a wedding planner for their daughters' weddings by way of media channels targeting this audience (see M-A-C Triad on page 19)
 - ii. Encourage mothers to suggest the use of a wedding planner

- 6. Customers of local businesses
 - Customers of local businesses may need event planners at any given moment to plan special events
 - i. Educate business owners on the benefits of hiring a special event planner by way of media channels targeting this audience (see M-A-C Triad on page 19)
 - ii. Urge businesses planning events to hire a special event planner

7. Friends of women who are engaged

- Friends can encourage engaged friends to consider a wedding planner
 - i. Educate friends on the benefits of hiring a wedding planner by way of media channels targeting this audience (see M-A-C Triad on page 19)
 - ii. Have friends encourage the use of planner's services

8. Friends of persons looking to plan a special event

- Friends of people planning a special event can encourage the hiring of a special event planner
 - i. Educate friends of those planning a special event on the benefits of hiring a special event planner by way of media channels targeting this audience (see M-A-C Triad on page 19)
 - ii. Suggest the use of an event planner to friends planning special events

9. Members of nonprofit organizations

- Members of nonprofits see the success of their nonprofit event and use event planning services for their own special events related and unrelated to the nonprofit
 - i. Make members aware of use of special event planner
 - ii. Encourage future personal use of special event planner

10. Fiancés of women who are engaged

- Fiancés of women who are engaged can encourage their partners to hire a wedding planner
 - i. Educate fiancés on the benefits of hiring a wedding planner by way of media channels targeting this audience (see M-A-C Triad on page 20)
 - ii. Have fiancés introduce the idea of hiring a planner to ease the wedding planning process

Channel and Media Selection:

In order to be able to reach potential patrons of *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events*, Fusion P.R. Group recommends using a variety of channels. Included in these channels are business cards, brochures, exposure in newspapers, her Web site, and word-of-mouth via former clients and friends. An obstacle that the members of Fusion P.R. group found is that because *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* does not yet have a concrete clientele base, it is difficult to specifically identify channels that will definitely reach target audiences. With this in mind, Fusion P.R. Group understands that these channels may change as Ms. Castellano's business grows. However, all channels chosen were done so in order to reach the preferred target audiences based on the needs of that audience.

Fusion P.R. recommends that Ms. Castellano set up LeaveittoLisa.net – the Web site destination for all things about *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events*. This will serve as a primary media channel because so many people look for businesses online in today's technological state. The Web site will include information about Ms. Castellano's services, client testimonials, photographs of prior events, and a forum where brides can discuss bridal matters. She will also frequent social media Web sites, such as Youtube, Twitter, and Facebook.

Ms. Castellano can also create brochures and business cards to inform potential clients of the services that she offers. She can give these out to local business people as well as friends and family to give out to their friends. This would create word-of-mouth advertising in the community, which is very important in this particular industry.

Additionally, Ms. Castellano will use face-to-face contact in meeting people, both through bridal expos and in partnering with non-profits.

Using these channels, Fusion P.R. Group hopes that Ms. Castellano will be able to launch and grow a thriving business. Each audience has a channel and message that is specifically catered to them, and Fusion P.R. Group feels that these approaches are integral to the overall efficiency of this public relations plan.

Audience	Message	Channel
Friends and Professional Contacts	Ms. Castellano is a dependable and reliable event planner that is looking for new clientele.	Word-of-mouth Social media Web sites LeaveittoLisa.net Yellow Pages Ad
Women who are engaged	Ms. Castellano is a reliable event planner and in order to plan a successful wedding, the aid of a wedding planner is imperative.	LeaveittoLisa.net Social media Web sites Fliers Newspapers Yellow Pages Ad Business cards Brochures Word-of-Mouth
Local Business Owners	A professional event planner can orchestrate events that will provide a professional setting for interactions with clients.	LeaveittoLisa.net Brochures Fliers Business Cards Newspapers Yellow Pages Ad Word-of-Mouth
People planning a special event	An event planner will help an event go over more smoothly and be less work for the host or hostess of the event.	LeaveittoLisa.net Social Media Web sites Word-of-Mouth Yellow Pages Ad Brochures Fliers Business cards

Nonprofit Organizations	An event planner will add legitimacy to an event as well as to help the event look more professional.	LeaveitToLisa.net Social Media Web sites Word-of-Mouth Newspapers Fliers Business Cards
Mothers of women who are engaged	Hiring a wedding planner to assist with their daughters' weddings will help make the experience more pleasurable as well as less stressful for both mother and daughter.	Word-of-Mouth Newspapers Fliers Business Cards Yellow Pages Ad Brochures
Customers of local businesses	An event planner that is advertised at a local business place will make an event look more professional.	Business Cards Fliers Brochures
Friends of women who are engaged	Hiring a wedding planner will make the wedding less stressful and more enjoyable for the bride throughout the entire wedding process.	LeaveitToLisa.net Social media Web sites Fliers Newspapers Yellow Pages Ad Business cards Brochures Word-of-Mouth
Friends of people who planning a special events	Hiring an event planner will make an event easier for their friend who is hosting the event.	LeaveitToLisa.net Social Media Web sites Word-of-Mouth Yellow Pages Ad Brochures Fliers Newspapers Business cards
Members of nonprofit organizations	An event planner will add legitimacy to an event being thrown as well as to help the event look more professional for the company they are passionate about.	LeaveitToLisa.net Social Media Web sites Newspapers Word-of-Mouth Yellow Pages Ad Brochures Fliers Business cards

<p>Fiancés of women who are engaged</p>	<p>A wedding planner will make the wedding planning process less stressful and help the bride look and feel her best on their wedding day.</p>	<p>LeaveittoLisa.net Social media Web sites Fliers Newspapers Yellow Pages Ad Business cards Brochures Word-of-Mouth</p>
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Competition Analysis:

Local competitors in the event planning field include:

Irving Street Rep in Newark, NJ

- *Irving Street* prides itself on being a full service company, offering public relations consultation, marketing consultation as well as event planning. McDonalds, Citibank and Dupont are among some of the clients *Irving Street* has worked with on a corporate level.

Wisommm Event Services in Jersey City, NJ

- WISOMMM stands for “Women in Support of the Million Man March”. It represents a collective response of men and women moving toward change in urban areas. *WISOMMM Event Services* is the managing agent through which all rentals of the facility will be controlled.

One Stop Event Planning in Lyndhurst, NJ

- *One Stop Event Planning* aids individuals with hassle free service. With three locations in New Jersey, *One Stop Event Planning* connects the client with reliable vendors. Using one of the planning centers can allow for the client to relax and leave all the details to the center.

Timely Celebrations, LLC in Jersey City, NJ

- *Timely Celebrations* is an event planning and design company enabling Eco-friendly initiatives to help save the planet. The services include corporate events, social events, event planning

and design services and invitations. Adrienne Cordero, founder of *Timely Celebrations*, works to give each client individual attention and world-class service.

Julia & Friends Event Management in Hoboken, NJ

- Julia Erlichman of *Julia & Friends* has worked on events for clients such as Food for Survival, the New York City Foodbank, College of St. Elizabeth, Mental Health Association in New Jersey, and the City of Summit. *Julia & Friends* provides planning for nonprofits, corporations, social occasions and weddings.

Plan Outline:

Objective 1- Establish *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* as a credible and reputable business within six months

- Strategy 1.1- Increase Lisa Castellano's knowledge of the wedding and special events industry
 - Tactic 1.1.1- Get connected with vendors in the area
 - Florists, caterers, venues
 - Know the industry and the industry members
 - Tactic 1.1.2- Educate and research the different types of weddings and special events
- Strategy 1.2- Increase the experience of Lisa Castellano, *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* as a special events coordinator
 - Tactic 1.2.1- Volunteer at a bridal expo
 - Mercer County Chamber of Commerce
 - Tactic 1.2.2- Partner with *Community Access Unlimited* to put on a pro-bono special event
 - Contact Sidney Blanchard at *Community Access Unlimited*
 - Contact Katherine Santiago of *The Star Ledger* to promote their special event as a follow-up to her first article on *Community Access Unlimited*
 - Tactic 1.2.3- Plan a benefit concert in cooperation with *Ramashows*
 - Special invitation to alumni members

- Tactic 1.2.4- Solicit deeply discounted wedding planning services among friends or mutual friends
- Tactic 1.2.5 Set-up a contest on the leaveittolisa.net Web site
 - Offers Lisa's planning services free of charge to the couple who has done outstanding community service within the past year
- Strategy 1.3 – Generate legitimacy for *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* by setting up accounts in professional organizations
 - Tactic 1.3.1 - Create a Web site to legitimize *Leave it to Lisa* and help inform the community
 - Hire a web designer to create the Web site
 - Leaveittolisa.net
 - Hire a web designer to maintain the Web site
 - Include pictures of events that *Leave it to Lisa* coordinated
 - Include testimonials from initial clients
 - Solicit businesses that would benefit by advertising on leaveittolisa.net
 - Florists, caterers, venues, bridal shops
 - Tactic 1.3.2 Join the *Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce*
 - This will allow Lisa to network and to get her business name known by other business owners and become more respectable in the Union County area

- Tactic 1.3.3 Put *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* in the Yellow Pages

Objective 2- Establish Lisa as a credible and reliable source on weddings and special events by making her a “media maven” within one year.

- Strategy 2.1- Increase media coverage of Lisa as a wedding and special event coordinator
 - Tactic 2.1.1- Create weekly Youtube videos demonstrating different how-to situations involving wedding and special event planning
 - Post video links on the North N.J. Knot message board
 - Tactic 2.1.2- Include a forum on leaveittolisa.net where DIY event planners can share ideas as well as converse with Ms. Castellano
 - Tactic 2.1.3- Send articles to newspapers for publication as a weekly advice column
 - *Westfield Leader Newspaper*
 - *The Star Ledger*
 - *The Cranford Chronicle*
 - *The Gazette Leader*

Objective 3- Increase awareness of *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* in the local community by 10 percent within one year

- Strategy 3.1- Increase the effective dissemination of information about *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events*
 - Tactic 3.1.1 Create print media on *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events*
 - Create a brochure to be taken to various churches and synagogues in the area
 - Create business cards for distribution
 - Tactic 3.1.2- Write letters to local businesses (non-profits, corporate, etc) informing them of *Leave it to Lisa's* services
 - Offer coupons for her services
 - Send with business cards-for customers
 - Tactic 3.1.3- Create a newsletter to be sent out quarterly to all *Leave it to Lisa* clients, professional contacts and Union County businesses
 - Detail different benefits of using a wedding coordinator
 - Ten tips for Special Events held during the upcoming season
- Strategy 3.2- Educate Union County residents and business markets on the services offered by *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events*
 - Tactic 3.2.1- Send news releases to the media before *Leave it to Lisa* events
 - Tactic 3.2.2- Attend a local Bridal expo as a vendor

- *Morris County Engagement Show*
- *The BIG Meadowlands Bridal Fair*
- *Mercer County Chamber of Commerce*

Evaluative Research Outline:

Objective 1- Establish *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* as a credible and reputable business within six months.

- Survey past clients regarding their perception of the business.
- Assess client satisfaction with the quality of service *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* provided via a survey.
- Track visitors to booth at bridal expo to measure against future years by using a sign-in sheet.

Objective 2- Establish Lisa as a credible and reliable source on weddings and special events by making her a “media maven” within one year.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Event’s* media exposure by surveying local community members.
- Measure hits on *Leave it to Lisa’s* Youtube videos.
- Measure the amount of responses to *Leave it to Lisa’s* newspaper column.

Objective 3- Increase awareness of *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* in the local community by 10 percent within one year.

- Measure the number of hits to the *Leave it to Lisa* Web site.
- Question local community members to gauge their familiarity with *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* using intercept studies.

Detailed Budget

Objective 1:

Tactic 1.1.1 Get connected with vendors in the area

- Cost of gas per 50 miles traveled \$4.06

Tactic 1.1.2 Research different types of weddings and events

- Average cost of 5 wedding books \$150.00

Tactic 1.2.1 Reserve booth at a bridal expo

- Cost for one booth at a single expo \$600.00

Tactic 1.3.1 Create a Web site

- Cost to register a domain name/year \$35.00
- Cost to hire a web designer at \$75/hour \$1,800.00

Tactic 1.3.2 Join Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce

- Yearly membership (tax deductible) \$275.00

Objective 2:

Tactic 2.1.1 Youtube videos

- Cost of camcorder to record \$200.00

Tactic 2.1.3 Send articles to newspapers

- Postage: 100 stamps \$44.00
- Envelopes (500) \$9.00
- Paper: pack of 500 sheets \$15.00

Objective 3:

Tactic 3.1.1 Create print media

- Magnetic business cards (box of 20) \$30.00

- Two color raised business cards (box of 250) \$25.00
- Brochure (500) \$217.49

Tactic 3.1.2 Send letters to local businesses

- Postage: 100 stamps \$44.00
- Envelopes (500) \$9.00
- Paper: pack of 500 sheets \$15.00

Tactic 3.2.1 Send news releases

- Postage: 100 stamps \$44.00
- Envelopes (500) \$9.00
- Paper: pack of 500 sheets \$15.00

Tactic 3.2.2 Attend bridal expo \$600.00

Total Budget Used: \$4,140.55

*All quantities are approximations and may be over the actual quantities

Budget Resources:

Staples.com

Borders.com

Bestbuy.com

www.usps.com/prices

www.vistaprint.com/brochures.aspx

www.bridaltradeshows.com/

Gantt Charts

Objective One: Establish *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* as a credible and reputable business within six months.

Tactics	Jan 2010	Feb 2010	Mar 2010	Apr 2010	May 2010	Jun 2010	Jul 2010	Aug 2010	Sep 2010	Oct 2010	Nov 2010	Dec 2010
1.1.1 Connect with local vendors												
1.1.2 Research types of special events												
1.2.1 Volunteer at bridal expo												
1.2.2 Put on pro-bono event												
1.2.3 Plan Ramashows benefit concert												
1.2.4 Solicit discounted services												
1.2.5 Set up contest on Web site												
1.3.1 Create Web site												
1.3.2 Join Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce												
1.3.3 Add company to the Yellow												

Objective Two: Establish Lisa as a credible and reliable source on weddings and special events by making her a “media maven” within one year.

Tactics	Jan 2010	Feb 2010	Mar 2010	Apr 2010	May 2010	Jun 2010	Jul 2010	Aug 2010	Sep 2010	Oct 2010	Nov 2010	Dec 2010
2.1.1 Create weekly Youtube videos												
2.1.2 Put forum on leaveittolisa.net												
2.1.3 Send weekly newspaper column												

Objective Three: Increase awareness of *Leave it to Lisa: Weddings and Special Events* in the local community by 10 percent within one year.

Tactics	Jan 2010	Feb 2010	Mar 2010	Apr 2010	May 2010	Jun 2010	Jul 2010	Aug 2010	Sep 2010	Oct 2010	Nov 2010	Dec 2010
3.1.1 Create print media												
3.1.2 Write letters to local businesses												
3.1.3 Create quarterly newsletter												
3.2.1 Send in news releases												
3.2.2 Attend bridal expo as a vendor												

Appendix A:

Client Questions

1. What can you tell us about your audiences or who you want to be your audience?
2. Who do you think you will target?
3. Have you thought about messages that you'd like to use?
4. What image do you want to achieve?
5. What do you want your identity to be?
6. Who do you view as your competition?
7. What marketing niche do you hope to dominate?
8. Do you want a logo? Does anything stand out to you as a possible idea for a logo?
9. What are your goals?
10. What can we do for you?
11. What is your budget for communication?
12. Who are you trying to reach?
13. What is your time frame?
14. What are you doing now this working/not working? Do you have any ideas or thoughts about what might work or not work?
15. How much newspaper coverage do you wish to receive?
16. Have you done any research on companies you'd like to model yourself after?
17. Could we have some background about how you got started?

18. Do you wish use peer to peer communication such as

Facebook/Myspace/Twitter? Would you like to set up a company account?

19. How many people are you thinking of having on staff?

20. In what percentage do you want each ideal target market to make up your overall clientele?

Appendix B:

Interview Transcript with Lisa Castellano

Strategies of Public Relations

Professor Farbman

September 19, 2009

Fusion Public Relations

On September 13, 2009 at 12pm, Fusion Public Relations Group met with our client, Lisa Castellano. We asked her a series of questions about her business and talked about our plans for this upcoming project. Below is a transcription of our interview.

L = Lisa

F = Fusion P.R. Group

L: "Small Talk"...

...I myself was a DIY bride so I'd like to be the advocate for the DIY bride, so what I'm thinking in terms of my business is more along the lines of, you know, maybe giving suggestions for different people, different places the brides can meet with. But I don't really work with the bride until about a month before the wedding. And then I help the bride work on all the final details and I'm there the day of to make sure everything goes off without a hitch so that's really what I envision and um, and then, what my teacher taught me the course that I took for wedding planning is that you can't rely on weddings

alone so I'm moving into weddings and special events, so whether it be: birthday parties, anniversary parties, bar mitzvahs, bat mitzvahs.

F: Have you given thought about what area you want to target? Bergen County, this area, home?

L: Well, I feel fortunate to have a good range. I really am nervous about venturing into New York City because that's not really the clientele I'm shooting for. They're not so much the DIY brides... I can do the span of North to lower Jersey. It's all area I'm familiar with but essentially what I'm thinking is...(tape cuts)...wherever you go whether its north south east west, what price ranges you're looking at and most vendors that work in the state of New Jersey will travel throughout the state of New Jersey. What's really good I recently joined the American Bridal Consultants and they've given me discounts on Sandals packages so I can do any Sandals weddings and then also I have a cousin living in Key West and I've been down their several times and I know what's available in that area. So it's either, New Jersey, Sandals or Key West.

F: How did you get into that [American Bridal Consultants], is it something you need to be certified for or is it a membership?

L: Well you really don't have to be certified to do it. If you're doing it officially the thing that makes me most nervous is that people can turn around and sue you. So I really don't want to do anything official until I have a legit business. You're not selling a

product you're selling a service...So right now I'm planning my high school class' 10 year reunion...I figure if I do this I can definitely coach people through that sort of thing too...the cool thing about event planning is that a lot of the elements are the same so across the board a lot of what you're doing is very similar so the only thing is that certain details are different...the biggest stretch for me is honestly going to be bar and bat mitzvahs and jewish weddings because I'm just not familiar, I grew up Roman Catholic...it's a fun field, I'm very lucky to go during the course of taking the class that I took I got to go to a meeting of the American Bridal Consultants and among people that I spoke with the common theme was that they loved...and eventually this is the kind of thing that what I really want to do, is start small because I can't give up my job. Maybe I only do one or two weddings a year until I gain a reputation and...its something that's very easy for me to do on the side so I can do something that I really enjoy doing and do something on the side that I really enjoy. The fortunate part of a business like this is that the only thing I'm really going to invest in is emergency wedding kits. That's really all I need to buy and then it's more developing contacts.

F: Now are you going to open up a store or a shop?

L: Nope.

F: How do you envision people seeing you, like connecting with people through facebook, online, do print, word-of-mouth

L: I feel that I'm really good with the social networking Web sites, I'm on Facebook, I'm on Twitter, I've got all the accounts and I'm one of those people that like to explore every aspect of it and I've found really good Web sites out there that help explain managing your social networking and everything. The one thing I don't do is blog. Which is something I'll want to do, blog about I'm doing and post pictures. Sort of akin to what a lot of photographers do nowadays. A lot of wedding photographers blog and post pictures of their weddings...yeah that's a really good place, especially now, a lot of brides now coming up in the millennial general use social networking...magazines are good but some are better than others and one I've found that I really like and think is a good one is actually Martha Stewart's...

F: How about a logo, and what you want to name your company?

L: Not yet, I want to toy around with something bird and bees but not like the cartoony form but more like a flora/fauna. Actually one of my best friends is a graphic designer and she's going to come up with essentially everything but we haven't honestly had the time to sit down and figure everything out...

F: Do you think that you want to do anything with the newspapers at all?

L: Newspapers, no. From what I've been taught print ads don't really get looked at. It's going to be more online. My goal isn't to throw myself out there on a bunch of places and have like 300 brides calling me, at least not at first. I want to build it slowly and I

want to build it (can't hear end of sentence). I want to have a look and good appearance. I want the company to have a good look and reputation but I want it to be more like, oh this client of yours referred to me and building that way.

F: How do you foresee yourself starting out? Do you have a client?

L: Well fortunately, I'm currently at the age where everyone and their mother is getting ready so it's more or less convincing them to let me help.

F: Do you think there's a competition base for what you want to do?

L: Yes and No, Yes because you know, recently a lot more people are getting more into this with all the television shows out there, and the economy being that people can't hire but no in the fact that the nice part about doing this is that it's a matter of personality. So, my personality might match with some clients but not other clients and personally, I feel that the client wouldn't hire me unless they liked my personality. A big part of it is knowing your client and knowing what they want. So although yeah there's different people out there doing the same thing but I think the way I run things will make a difference.

F: When will you be meeting with your graphic designer for your logo?

L: Soon, While you guys are doing all this I want to make sure I have something. Ideally, I want to make this a legit business by 2010. I want to start fresh with the new tax season...I also have an accountant as well.

...small talk...

F: Would you want to set up a facebook for your business?

L: I have my own facebook account and I've actually already set up an account for Birds & Bees, so it's a fan page. You know what I'll do, when I go home I'll send you guys a links to my pictures so you can see what I did and the link to my facebook so you can get in touch with me, as well as the link to Birds & Bees.

F: What message do you want to get across?

L: ...Ok here's what I had come up with, this is my elevator speech...So, its: my name is Lisa Castellano and I'm a wedding coordinator for the discerning DIY brides. I help a bride to maximize her time in eliminating her stress on her wedding day by taking care of the details she has chosen

...small talk...

L: As you can see here, I have just got tons and tons of stuff, and I really, haven't had a moment to do it but really just need to sit down and iron everything out and really organize it in such a way that I can use it, that's not just in a...(lifts up folder)

...small talk...

F: And your budget for right now is just really small? Just buying the stuff for the wedding, like the needle, and the thread and the tide pen?

L: Yes, one of the things you should also have is a clear shower curtain, so if you're taking pictures in the grass you lay down the shower curtain and the bride is just standing on the shower curtain...but really in terms of startup it's really just buying that stuff. My friend is doing this accounting thing for me, and she's probably not going to charge me much if anything at all to do it. And, my girlfriend that's doing the logo for me, she's not charging me at all. And it's basically going to be all of the money I really need to physically start the business, money to get the insurance, the money to actually establish and LLC which is actually what I've decided I'm going with...so it's the most protective of any. Before, you guys were asking me physically where and the reason why I don't want a storefront is you spend so much money in the rent. When you're selling yourself and not a product, and you're not selling something outright to get money back in for it, there's no guarantee I'm going to be making money at all. You know if I have a couple weddings a year, you know the money comes in within that time...there's no real, you know steady flow, what'll be better for me is to use my connections and say oh well if I make up some little business post cards about what I

can do, I can go door to door. So, if someone comes by and is looking lost they'll say, oh I know this really great wedding planner, contact her and she'll help you out. I'm thinking more like that. And then the reason why I want to start an LLC is because I want to do the business from my home. And well, I have not yet purchased a house...ideally I want to buy a house where I can have a home office where I can keep all of this stuff but I don't really want to tie the business into my house I want to make sure everything is as separate as possible in case somebody does decide to go crazy on me and sue me or something that my personal assets are separate from my business assets...So, yeah, that's what the teacher taught us. It won't be a home office where someone meets with me, it'll be we meet at a mutual place but you don't come to my house, so that it keeps that work separate. It's where my paperwork will be stored, my business computer will be...ideally, I'd like to go to the bride, so, depending on her mileage radius. I don't want to go nuts and drive a hundred miles and have the bride not hire me, so depending on how far the bride is you know, we can meet somewhere midway.

F: It's going to work.

L: I think you guys will be able to do this, I think it will be good.

F: I just don't want to forget Professor Farbman's question, we've already talked about this a bit, but have you done any event planning and would anyone be able to give testimonials for your business?

L: Well, I mean, I have people that can speak to my character and what I do and how I do it. That's a definite. Not people who have hired me. But like I said, I don't want to do anything officially until I'm legit. So it's kind of more like, I'm helping this one girlfriend of mine and I can probably ask her to do something for me but it's really been kind of casual...And like I said, I have a couple friends who have known me over the years saw me do all the event planning I do for my own current job and saw me plan my wedding that can speak to that. But not people who have actually hired me.

F: Ok, and those would be pretty easy for you to get for us? In case we need that.

L: So just, you know if you want to put together some questions for me that I can give to them, or if you want just contact names and information, so whatever just let me know.

F: Ok, yeah, definitely. Is that it?

L: Do you have everything you need?

F: Yep, I think it's all done.

L: Awesome!

F: It's a good start.

Appendix C:

Questions for Marsha Stoltman

What is a realistic time frame for getting yourself established?

How do you establish yourself?

How do you get clients?

How do you promote yourself?

How do you market your business? Any marketing tips?

What are the start-up costs?

What are the biggest set backs in starting your own event planning business?

How did you get started in event planning?

When does it get to the point where doing event planning “on the side” no longer becomes feasible? When should you quit your day job?

What forms of advertisement do you feel work best? Do you believe social networking Web sites such as Facebook and blogs are advantageous for the advancement of an event planning business?

What sort of experience, skills, or training do you recommend having when starting an event planning business?

Appendix D:

Interview Transcript with Marsha Stoltman

Strategies of Public Relations

Professor Farbman

November 5, 2009

Fusion Public Relations

On November 5, 2009 at 10:30 a.m., Fusion Public Relations Group met with an industry expert, Marsha Stoltman. We asked her a series of questions about her business and talked about our plans for this upcoming project. Below is a transcription of our interview.

M = Marsha Stoltman

F = Fusion P.R. Group

F: We are doing a PR plan for a young woman who wants to start an event planning business on the side for now. She currently works for a community college. She works with the NJ STARS program, which is how Professor Farbman knows her. Specifically, she wants to start a wedding planning business but she doesn't have any sort of establishment as an event planner at all. We're creating a general PR plan for her so she can get started in the industry. The only experience that she has is planning her own wedding start to finish. She loved it so much she wants to do it for other people.

M: Is the plan for her to introduce herself as a person or is it for her to introduce her company that hasn't really been created?

F: She wants to do it as a person and she actually wants to do something somewhat informal. For example, she wants to advertize her business mostly through to only do word-of-mouth and she wants to be a wedding consultant instead of a planner. We actually did some survey research of a bunch of brides-to-be and recently married women and found that if these women did not want to pay for a wedding planner, they wouldn't

want to pay for a wedding consultant either. That's what we're going to introduce to our client in our plan. We found that there's really no need for a wedding consultant in the current market. However, we are still creating a PR plan for a relatively small business, which is what she wants. So she does want to be a person rather than a company.

What is a realistic time frame for getting yourself established when you have no credentials?

M: I would say probably 3-6 months, More like 6 months. If she's specifically interested in wedding planning, she should be going to some bridal shops. For example, I'm involved with the Mercer County Chamber of Commerce and every year the chamber does a bridal expo and they're always looking for volunteers to work on something like that. That's the type of thing she should be doing to get herself established as a person with some credentials in the field even if she's not getting paid for it. She should be

getting connected with some of the vendors, the caterers, the florists and the venue people. They're all important people for her to know. If you're a bride, you're going to expect that your wedding planner will get all the best prices and know all the best people. She should be making those connections now. I would recommend her to do work as a volunteer in the area and if she has friends or cousins or daughters of friends, to volunteer her services in planning somebody else's wedding. Not that planning your own wedding isn't a lot, but she's only dealing with herself, she's not trying to please several people at once like the bride, the groom, the bride's family. It's huge planning your own wedding but it's not much to offer other people.

F: Is it totally out of the question for her to just start as a wedding planner? Does she necessarily have to start as general event planner or is it feasible for her to start specifically as just a wedding planner?

M: I actually teach a class at Mercer County College and one of the first things I teach is about the different types of events and how you should really start from the beginning, pick a niche. I do a lot of corporate events and trade shows because that's very different than planning a party. Sure, you're still dealing with caterers but the whole focus is different. So I would recommend her to niche in right away on wedding planning if that's what she wants to do. Again, I'm not really sure someone's going to hire her and pay a lot of money for someone who doesn't have any experience but if she has a friend or a friend of a friend and she's willing to work for practically nothing to get that person on her resumé, she could probably start out right away. Anyone can print out bus cards,

the immediate question you would ask if u were the bride to be is “Do you have any experience?” She ought to be doing a lot of research too into destination weddings for example. There are so many different types of weddings. They’re not all the same. A traditional church wedding with the reception at the country club is very different than flying 100 people out to Hawaii to be on the beach. She needs to be looking at and educating her self on the different types of weddings. Friday night weddings are going to be cheaper than Saturday night weddings because the venue is cheaper. There are so many issues with which to familiarize herself.

F: How would she go about establishing herself?

M: I would suggest that she would start with a Web site. Get herself some business cards start doing her networking whether it’s to bridal shops and introducing herself because brides go to bridal shops and ask if they know anyone who can help them do their wedding. She needs to be making those types of connections. Florists. She should probably get herself familiar with and she if she can meet with some of the major wedding venues. This way not only can she talk intelligently to the bride- and groom-to-be about these venues but she’s also made a contact over there. Those are the things she could be doing right now without ever having had client. At least she’ll have something to talk about with a future client.

F: What are the best ways she can promote herself after she’s done her research? Do you recommend social networking?

M: Yes. I tell my clients all the time that everyone should be involved in social networking. She should definitely be promoting herself in that area.

F: When we interviewed her, she let us know that she wants to promote herself mostly through word-of-mouth. Is that feasible?

M: Well, she probably doesn't have a very large budget and advertising is expensive. That may be what she's thinking. She may not have the resources available for advertising. For my business, I only do word-of-mouth. If I were a florist, that would be different. I don't get \$100 orders. My clients are five, ten, fifteen twenty thousand dollar clients. In my case, business is mostly through referrals. I would almost say the same thing to her. I can understand why she doesn't want to use traditional media. She probably wants to use social media. She should be getting to know the churches and synagogues in her area because I know that when people are planning a wedding, they go to their rabbi or pastor and then at some point say, "Do you know anyone who does weddings?" She should probably do a very simple marketing piece. It doesn't have to be anything elaborate but just a simple brochure so that she can leave something behind. We all think we're so electronic, but people still like having something that they can look at and feel.

F: How did you get started in event planning? Did you start in events?

M: I didn't. I actually worked for Dow Jones for a number of years in marketing. I didn't do any events for them, I only attended them. I was kind of lured away from Dow Jones from a colleague of mine who had started a conference planning business. We strictly did large conferences and trade shows. The timing for me right, I was ready to leave Dow Jones. I knew marketing and I knew the industry. I really didn't know event planning and I remember him telling me, "I can teach you that." It's really a profession that requires you to be really well organized and to be a detail oriented person. Its certainly not rocket science. When I started my own business 8 years ago, I had done really large national and international business conferences. I was not a small business owner at all. I lived in Mercer County, my kids were raised in Mercer County and I was on a couple of boards but I would not be considered a local businessperson at all because all my clients were national and international. It was a challenge for me because I really wanted to run a local business. I didn't want to do anymore national and international stuff so when I started my local business I did a lot of the things that I'm suggesting to her except I focused on the business community because I do corporate events, I don't do weddings. I networked and joined the Chamber of Commerce and set up my web page and tried to meet some of the more prominent business leaders in the area and that's what she should be doing in the wedding field.

F: What were your biggest setbacks in starting from scratch?

M: Expectations are higher than the actual results. I don't care what your business is or how old you are; it takes time to build the visibility and the credibility. And she's facing a

very tough economy. Everyone is cutting back. Three or four years ago, people who would be having a wedding would be more apt to hiring a wedding planner whereas now people are more likely to do it themselves. I think she needs to have very realistic expectations. It's going to take her time to build a business. She should really capitalize on her first clients for testimonials on her Web site and her brochure. She needs to build up that credibility. Now, when people hire me and they don't know me, they hire me because I did an event for another group who told them I was terrific. They know that there's been good quality work done.

F: What are the start-up costs?

M: She's not going to have a lot if she's doing this out of her home. Really she's got her Web site, her business cards and whatever other collateral material she develops. And she's got to put a certain amount of money aside for networking purposes. Whether it going out and visiting somebody or the cost of taking the local hotel owner out to lunch, really not a lot of costs. It's a service business. There's not a product involved. I've run my business very successfully out of my home. I never intended to have an office because nine times out of ten the client wants you to come to them or you're going to meet at the venue where the event will eventually be held. In her case too, she might eventually hire staff but initially she will hire contractors or volunteers. Like myself I use students at a lot of my events because they're event planning students who want the experience and they're thrilled to have the chance to be on site at an actual event so there's really no cost to me and they're getting some experience.

F: That's interesting about using students because she actually works at a county college so she works with students every day. She could definitely use them.

M: Yeah, I mean she might have to pay them some nominal amount but it's really not a lot. They're happy to work for free because they can say, "I've worked this kind of event and that kind of event."

She needs to get to know photographers too.

F: What sort of experience, skills, or training does she need? Are there any particular set of skills that she should go out and look to get more informed about?

M: Well the two most important skills are being very well organized and paying a lot of attention to detail. She really needs to hone those skills. You can have the best program in the world or the best wedding plan but one little thing can really ruin an event. People skills are obviously important. She really needs to do her research and get a pretty good sense of cost. If she were talking about florists with a potential client for example, she would need to know ballpark figures for different types of arrangements. She can't just take a note and say, "Oh, I'll get back to you." She's going to have to ballpark those types of things.

F: Do you have any general advice for her?

M: It's a field that I think she'd have a great time with, especially if she enjoys the process. The best thing about any event is the involvement from the very beginning when its conceptual to actually being on site and seeing the whole thing come together. If she's able to conceptualize and if she knows that she wants to be a part of all that goes on that's really important. If she's going to do it, she needs to have some faith. I've seen so many businesses in my eight years of being a business owners make mistakes and even give up on running their own business is that they're just not patient enough. It just takes time to gain that credibility and to get people's awareness of you known. If you tell me, "I'm a wedding planner," and then I don't hear from you for six months, unless you had made some contact with me, if someone asks me if I know any wedding planners I might not think of you. She needs to make sure people know that she's there.