

Case study: Indian Wedding Guest List

Overview:

Indian weddings are all about celebrating a marriage between families with family and friends through series of events spread over few days. With the Indian wedding industry estimated to be Rs. 100,000 crore (approximately \$14.7 Billion dollar) industry, the estimated cost of a wedding could be (assuming no expenses spared) anywhere between Rs.500,000 to Rs.50 million. Thus, with rising inflation, organizing a “big fat Indian wedding” for about 300 to 1000 guests under a budget can be a daunting task and budget weddings typically do not involve a wedding coordinator. Thus, it becomes essential to have a good organizing system that can facilitate all the interactions that guests, relatives and bride and groom themselves have in the events and with each other to make the wedding a special day for the bride and groom and their respective families.

What is being organized?

Scope: One of main resources that plays an integral role in all the events is the people who attend these events. Who we invite to the wedding governs major decisions like venue, food cost, travel arrangements, accommodation plan, number of gifts, who receive what gift etc. Thus, for this organizing system I have decided to design an organizing system with people or guests as the primary resource.

Thus, an organizing system designed with guests as resources will mainly include documentation (in the form of excel sheet or on paper) of details of every guest, like, name, are they coming with a family, number of people in the family, where they are coming from, their relation to the bride/groom or their families, their closeness to the bride and groom or their families, how well do they know other guests who are coming etc., thus making each resource unique. These properties will also serve as resource properties and will help to decide the categories and the hierarchy of the organizing system.

The physical implementation of the system can be seen through interactions like gift tracker, accommodation chart etc., which is nothing but an organization mechanism itself.

Figure 1: Interaction diagram: Some of the interactions that are supported by the organizing system



Why is it being organized?

Most Indian weddings (as was the case with my own wedding too) are planned and organized by the bride and groom and their families. Thus, having a wedding guest organizing system is aimed at aiding the process of planning interactions with these guests, for instance, arranging accommodations, gift distribution and tracking delegating wedding tasks among few relatives etc.

As closeness or the relationship of a guest or their families to the bride/groom is captured in the organizing system, some of the interactions mentioned above like creating an accommodation plan uses these tier-1, tier-2, tier- 3 categories of relationships to decide how to allocate rooms to different guests, which guest gets which type of return gift (as sometimes return gifts may differ based on the importance/closeness of the person/family to the bride/groom and their families.). The categorization of relationships can also be used to allocate certain tasks to family members willing to help with the wedding preparations.

How much is it being organized?

As seen from the below figure 4, the degree of organization in the organization system of guest list is different based on the category. The level of granularity for family is definitely more than the level of granularity seen in friends. From the figure, we can see that, the Tier-1 relatives are relatives that are closest to the bride/groom or their families than relatives Tier-2 who are closer than relatives in Tier-3. (refer fig 2, fig 3, fig 5)

Fig 2: Tier definition for family(as defined for guest organization system designed for my wedding)

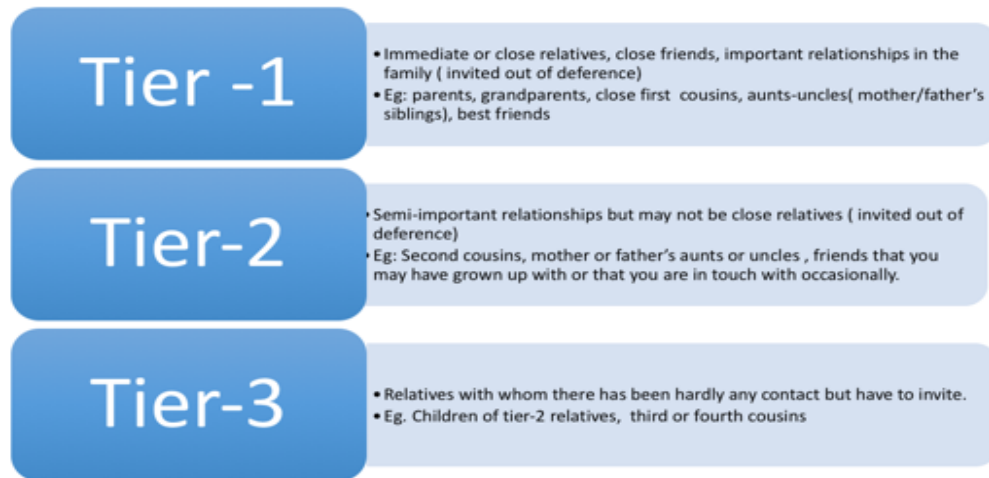
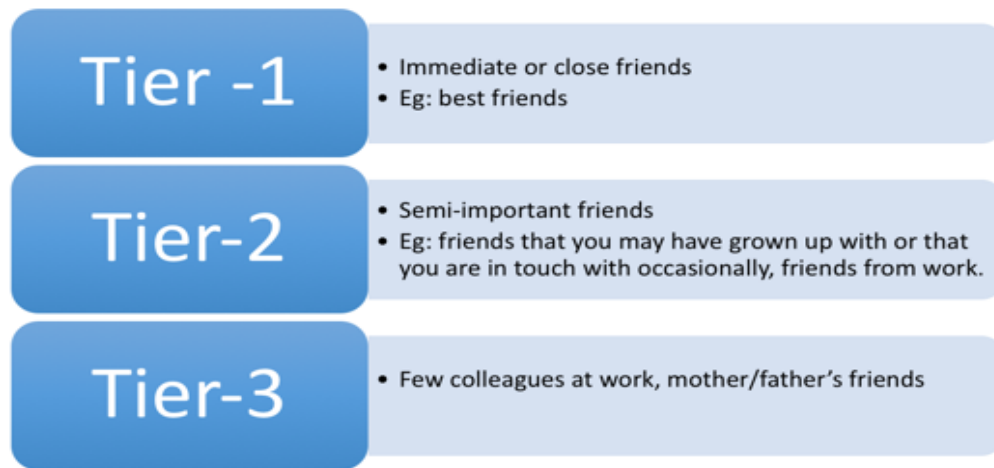


Fig 3: Tier definition for friends(as defined for guest organization system designed for my wedding)



However, it is important to note that guests may be classified as tier-1 solely based on their relationship or may be based on their closeness to the bride/groom or their families or both. The organizing rule of how to define tier-1, tier-2 and tier-3 may differ from couple to couple or family to family based on what they perceive as important to them and based on which interaction they intend to use this organizing system for.

The level of granularity within families may also change based on the relationships bride/groom may have with their mother's or father's side of the family. For eg: Mother's

side may have guests classified in all three tiers but father's side has only 2 tiers.

The classification of relatives into different categories and the level of granularity seen in the organization system is used in interactions mentioned before like accommodation, gift tracking etc. For example, when planning for allocation of rooms, deciding who shares a room with whom (may be done to minimize the number of rooms required to book in a hotel) may be based on their relationship with the person they are sharing room with (eg: mother's side of relatives may not be paired with father's side). Additionally, rooms belonging to Tier-1 relatives may be allocated closer to bride/groom's or their families' room as these relatives may participate more in the managing the wedding events than other relatives. Similarly, relatives and friends in Tier-1 typically may get more expensive gift as compared to Tier-2 relatives and so on for tier-3 relatives/friends. (Check artifacts in the end of the case.)

Fig 4: Organization system

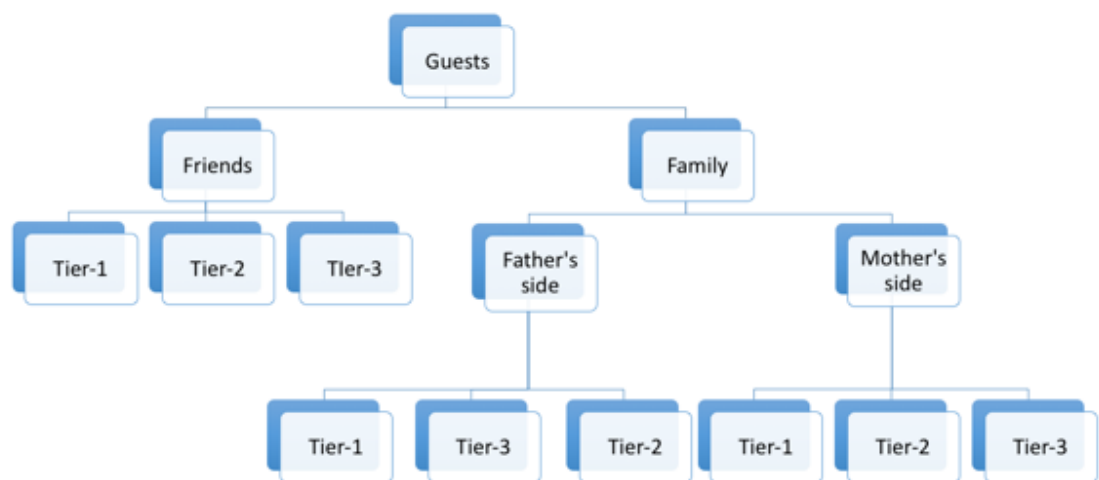
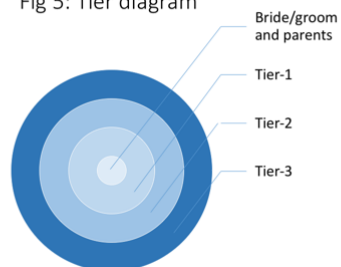


Fig 5: Tier diagram



When is it being organized?

The guest list organization system is usually created during initial planning stage of the wedding preparations and since the guest names and details are entered in the system before any kind of interactions take place we can say that the organization happens “on the way in”.

On another note, this organization system has also been designed keeping in mind the traditions, practices and organizational methodologies implemented while attending close family and friends’ weddings and thus the organizing system design has been shaped by my experience over the years of attending and participating in Indian weddings.

How, or by whom, is it being organized?

The organization may be performed either by bride/groom or their parents or their immediate family members or friends involved in planning. However, even if the actual task of organization may have been delegated to a friend or another close relative, the resource properties for each person attending and definition of each tier in the organization system is given by the bride/groom or their immediate families. Typically, thus the organizer in this case, which is most likely the bride/groom or their immediate family members, are also most likely its users as they are the ones who mainly plan other interactions like accommodation, gift tracking, wedding task delegation etc.

Where is it being organized?

The organization of resources i.e guests usually happens in the system wherever the guest list is created. However, the implementation of the organizing system can be seen through its various interactions which are organizing mechanisms themselves. Hence, for example, when creating an accommodation plan, the organization of people/guests takes place in the hotel or guest house selected to house the guests.

Other considerations:

Since this organizing system has been designed with some of interactions in mind, the organization system may be biased towards these interactions. Furthermore, there also may be some amount of classification bias that may creep in as the classification of guests among these categories in the system is completely dependent on how the bride/groom defines importance of relationship. Thus, these categories are cultural as well individual at

the same time. The vocabulary in this organization system would also need to be controlled and uniform so that this same organization system can be used in all other smaller organization systems that can be encountered while planning a wedding and that a person working on one task like gift planning can easily help out a person working on invitations or any other task.

Additional Artifacts: Incomplete guest list made in excel using above organization system:

a) Master guest list: (yellow color depicts that they belong to the same family)

Family Name /Guest name	Adress	Adults	Children	Family/ Friends		Wedding & Reception Invitation	Reception Invitation	Accomodation needed ?	Gift Received or not	Gift type
				Family	Friends					
Mom's side										
Naik (Rashmi, Ranjan, Risha, Rudra)	Pune	2	2	Tier 1		Sent	NA	Yes		Silver idol
Naiks Sr. (ED naik and Nalini Naik)	Pune	2	0	Tier-2		Sent	NA	No		4 piece silverware
Joshi (Shrikant, Jyotsna, Aaji)	Pune	3	0	Tier 1		Sent	NA	Yes		Silver idol
Kalkar (Nanaji and Aaji)	Mumbai	2	0	Tier 1		Sent		Yes		Silver idol
Haridas (Mama , Mami)	Delhi	2	0	Tier-3		NA	Not yet	No		2-piece silver
Nachiket Kalkar	Delhi	1	0	Tier-2		Sent		yes		4-piece silver
D B Kalakr (Divakar and Netra)	Delhi	2	0	Tier-2		Sent		yes		4-piece silver
Dad's side										
Sapre	Pune			Tier 1		Sent	NA	Yes		
Patki	Pune			Tier 1		Sent	NA	Yes		
JD Kulkarni	Mumbai	2		Tier-1		Sent	NA	Yes		
Pradeep Deshpande	Pune	1	0	Tier2		Sent		No		
Parimal Deshpande	Pune	2		Tier-3			Not yet	No		
Friends										
Aparna	Mumbai	2	0		Tier-2	Sent		yes		
Anu	Mumbai	1	0		Tier1	Sent		yes		
Bapat	Mumbai	2	0		Tier -1	Sent		No		
Swati	Mumbai	1	0		Tier-3		Sent	No		
Rajni	Mumbai	1	0		Tier-3		Sent	No		
Archana	Pune	2	1		Tier -1	Sent		No		
General Accomodation Wedding duties +										

b) Interaction with the organization system to make an Accommodation list:

References:

<http://www.businessinsider.in/The-Big-Fat-Wedding-Industry-in-India-Recap-of-2015-and-outlook-for-2016/articleshow/51008952.cms>