

Instructions on the Use of the Celebrant Excel Customer Management Workbook

Written by Phil Timbrell

It is suggested this document be read with the workbook open

Limitations – it is important to note that this workbook has been written based on the user having a basic working knowledge of Microsoft Excel or Libre Calc. The workbook will work successfully using both programs. For those who do not have Excel and do not want to pay for it, Libre Calc is part of the Libre office suite and can be downloaded for free. Workbooks can be saved in xls format.

The package should work day to day without any need to perform many manual functions however at the end of the financial year when it is time to roll over to a new financial year, it is suggested that a fresh work book be started and the database for booked and quoted weddings be carried over into the new book. This will ensure accurate cash flow and expenses for tax purposes.

Please note this package is offered free of charge and the writer takes no responsibility for any problems that might arise from the use of this package. No cells containing formulae have been locked or hidden so the user can see exactly what is going on, however users are warned only to change cells that are identified in this word document.

So let's start by looking at the 4 work sheets.

FrontPage

The first sheet is called "FrontPage" and is effectively a dashboard sheet. On opening the workbook you can immediately see a snapshot of your business.

The 2nd page is called "MainTable" and it is in here that all bookings and quotes will be written.

The 3rd sheet is called "Expenses". It is where you can enter expenses not related to a specific booking.

The final sheet, called "TravelDistance" is a database of distances from your home office to venues you attend regularly and saves you reading mileages on each trip. It also provides evidence of how distances are calculated should distances travelled be queried by the tax office.

Let's take a snapshot of the front page.

On opening the page you might find some cells filled with ##### If this is the case simply widen the column sufficiently for the details to be displayed.

The first details you will see are when the next wedding is to be held, how many days away it is and who the couple are that will be married.

The next detail is when the first NOIM to expire will occur and who that NOIM belongs to. Now because an expired NOIM requires another 1 month to replace, the date of expiring is actually a month and a half prior to the real expiry date. So this gives you 2 weeks to get a new NOIM written so the couple will not be caught out with an expired NOIM and a new NOIM within the 1 month period.

The next detail tells you when the next wedding is due that has not had a NOIM signed. So imagine a couple have booked and paid a deposit but they have not yet signed a NOIM. There is therefore

no expiry date for the NOIM so this field warns you of an impending marriage date for which you have not yet received a NOIM – if you are approaching the 1 month mark then the couple would have to be chased up to get their NOIM to you.

In cells E7 and E8 you can see when the next wedding will take place for which there are still funds owing. If for instance you require all payments one month before the wedding date and a couple have failed to pay by then, it will show up here.

We now get into the financial part of the dashboard showing how the business is going.

Many celebrants charge a deposit or holding fee to book a wedding and hold a date. They will have billed the client for a total amount but only received part payment.

The 1st field in the financial section shows how much money is owed to you, the celebrant as unpaid amount against firm bookings.

Beyond that is the number of records in your database, including lost and completed work. Note the spreadsheet is designed to cater for a maximum of 98 records, which is more than many celebrants will experience in a year. If you exceed 98 records then you must start a new (second) workbook which really diminishes the value of the system. If you exceed 98 records in a year then some results on the front page will be incorrect or meaningless. Exceeding 98 records in one year will cause the number to be highlighted in red.

After that is the number of bookings you have. Now bookings are listed as either Booked or NBooked. Booked means the client has booked your service, you have billed them and you have received a NOIM. NBooked means the couple have been billed, booked you but have not provided a NOIM yet.

In the yellow highlighted cell you can enter the current cost of a BDM certificate as this will be required later in calculating expenses if you order the certificate for your clients and charge a little extra for the service.

The next field shows funds received this year, for tax purposes.

The next field (highlighted in yellow) is where you can enter the amount allowed per kilometre by the tax office for work related travel.

Finally quotes outstanding and their value - these will either become Booked, NBooked or lost.

By now you will have noticed that on this page the ONLY cells into which you should ever enter data are highlighted in yellow. If you accidentally type over any other cell do not save but rather close without saving, reload and then proceed.

I have deliberately not locked any cells.

The MainTable page. – Note Blue Cells Must Not Be Typed on.

This sheet is where you will enter all the information related to each quote and booking.

I will explain column by column.

Column A is called “ID” and here you can place a unique number for each couple. This might be the number you place on invoices and is effectively a customer number. It is optional but suggested you use it as a unique identifier for each job. Call it a job number.

Column B is where you identify your couple by their names. You can use surnames, first names or whatever. It is essential this field be filled in.

Column C is where you can enter a phone number. Remember if the number starts with a zero, such as 04123456789, then preceded the zero with a ' This will force it to become a text field – otherwise the zero will not appear

In Column D enter the date of the wedding. Type 1/5/23 for 1st may 2023 and Excel will understand it is a date and format it as 1/05/2023 automatically. It is essential this field be filled in and if the date changes that this date be changed to the new date.

In Column E you can type the name of the venue. This will assist in calculating your mileage for tax purposes. If it is a venue you have already entered then Excel will assist by filling in the venue name once you have typed the first letter or two.

Column F is for you to type the date you received the NOIM. This data is used to warn of NOIMs due to expire.

In Column G type the number of guests – this is for your info only when preparing for the wedding

Column H is very important – every entry must have a status listed. There are only 5 statuses that can be entered here. “Quoted”, “Booked”, NBooked”, “Complete” and “Lost”. Excel will look for that exact spelling so only type one of those 5 statuses and update them as the status changes. As you type the first letter of the status Excel will recognise and fill in the correct status if it has already been entered in that column. Otherwise spell it exactly as it is spelt in the document. – Note that all statuses start with a different letter. For your convenience a comment has been entered into cell H1. Hover over that cell to see the legitimate spelling for each status.

In Column I you can enter the source of the lead. This is for your reference only and does not affect any other cells. It is handy to look at this column from time to time to see where your leads are coming from.

Column J is where you enter the amount quoted to the couple excluding the cost of a BDM certificate. This allows you to see on the FrontPage the value of quotes outstanding.

Column K and L: once a quote turns into a Booked or NBooked status you enter the amount billed to the client excluding the BDM certificate. Whatever you quoted the client for sourcing the BDM certificate is entered into Column L (this may change from client to client). Sometimes the amount billed is not what was quoted – maybe extra service or travel distance at the last minute.

Column M is where you enter a deposit or holding fee received and in columns N and O you can enter further payments received.

Column P is provided for you to make any comments for follow up. It does not affect any other cells.

Columns Q, R, S and T are for you to enter kilometres travelled for the initial meeting, a rehearsal, the wedding and a follow up or extra mileage. For your convenience the distance to the wedding venue is shown in Column U to save you looking it up – this is ONLY if that distance has been entered onto the TravelDistance sheet and the spelling of the venue in Column E is the same as the spelling on the TravelDistance sheet. This column is for your convenience only.

Finally Column V shows you how much is owing on each record – that is the total amount billed less payments received. Do not type on these blue cells.

So that is all you are to enter on MainTable. The rest of the sheet is calculations coloured in blue.

Expenses sheet: this sheet is fairly self explanatory. Fill in month by month any expenses not directly related to a specific client. The sum will be totalled and appear on the front page.

TravelDistance: this has been populated with the theoretical travel distance from a fictitious location to various fictitious venues.

TravelDistance: this sheet has had the names of a variety of fictitious locations (venues) from a fictitious location where you might be located. You are to fill in Column C with the venue name and the distance to the venue in Column D. The return distance will be simply calculated and filled in Column E. Now here comes the important bit. As you accumulate bookings and enter them on MainTable make sure you use the same spelling for a venue as you have used in the TravelDistance sheet. Excel will only pick up the details for your convenience if the spelling is the same. Do not touch any other columns. An important point is as you add more venue distances make sure you do not leave any blank rows. The venues do not need to be in any order. Just keep adding.

Next Year: at the end of a financial year what happens. Save the workbook as is, the front page will provide details of funds received in cell A18, expenses other than travel in cell J19 and travel expenses due to travel in cell J20 for your tax return. Then copy the workbook and save it under a new name for the next year – maybe call it Accounts_23_24.

Now there is a bit of manual work to be done.

On **FrontPage** update the cell A4 with the last date of the new financial year and change any of the other 2 yellow cells to reflect cost of BDM certificates or cost/kilometre for the car.

Next we have to zero out funds received last financial year for bookings carrying forward to this year. Here is how you do it. Go to MainTable.

The table of enquiries runs from Column A to Column T. You need to highlight any lost or completed weddings from Columns A to T ONLY and delete these. Do not highlight and delete cells beyond Column T or the system will fail. You can just leave blank rows blank and fill these in during the year or you can tidy it up by moving the bottom rows up to fill in blank rows using Ctrl x and Ctrl v. If this is not understood please consult with someone familiar with Excel or Libre Calc to help you.

Now we will enter a zero into cell A8 on FrontPage. You will now see in cell E18 funds received last year for weddings into the future. In the dummy records provided in the spreadsheet this figure came to \$1270 having deleted rows 5 and 7 from MainTable. So now if you were to enter \$1270 into cell A8 you will see that funds received in Cell E18 will now be zero. The \$1270 remains in place for the duration of the year. It is effectively removing that amount from any new funds received to show for tax purposes the funds that have been received this financial year. So as a check, before entering any new data in the new financial year, cell E18 must show a zero amount. This will then accumulate during the year as new funds are recorded as having been received.

Now move to the Expenses sheet and delete all entries from the previous year so expenses will show zero.

Leave the information on the TravelDistance sheet as is as that will be used in the following year. It is ideal to update this for every venue you are likely to visit more than once.

A final word – no cells have been locked – this allows you to add and change the sheet to suit your own needs – however if you accidentally type over a blue cell do not save the sheet – rather close without saving, reopen and then continue. Maybe keep a safe copy of the sheet in case the system is corrupted.

Good luck

Phil T