

# Invitation Guidebook

## *Congratulations on your engagement!*

Invitations are your guests' first glimpse at your wedding celebration, and a fun way to creatively express your love story. Whether you know exactly what you're looking for, or stationery feels like a foreign language, we're here to walk you through the process, and this guide is a great place to start.

Open Air Paper is a full service stationery & design company based in Grand Rapids, Michigan but serving couples nationwide. We have ten years of experience in the wedding industry and truly love what we do!

Read on for your crash course in wedding stationery.

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Owner & Designer

6-8 months out

MAIL SAVE THE DATES

4-6 months out

ORDER INVITATIONS

8-10 weeks out

MAIL INVITATIONS  
ORDER "DAY OF" STATIONERY

wedding day!



## Save the Dates

This piece is less formal than your main invitation, but it's going to be proudly displayed on your loved ones' refrigerators for months. Save the Dates do not need to match your invitations, but it's fun to tie in some design elements, fonts, or colors. Also a great place to include one or more of your engagement photos!

### What to include

Definitely: Your names, the date, the location, "invitation to follow"  
Optional: Your wedding website, travel recommendations

### Are they really necessary?

Save the Dates are not essential, but they do give your guests' that extra time to plan. We HIGHLY recommend them if your wedding will require a lot of people to travel, or if it falls near a big holiday or vacation time.

# The Invitation



TOGETHER WITH THEIR FAMILIES

*Paige Louise Baker*

AND

*Trevor Douglas Carter*

JOYFULLY INVITE YOU TO THEIR WEDDING CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, THE FOURTEENTH OF SEPTEMBER

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FOUR

THREE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON

*Journeyman Distillery*

109 GENERATIONS DRIVE

THREE OAKS, MICHIGAN

COCKTAILS, DINNER AND DANCING TO FOLLOW

*Let's break it down:*

## **First, who is doing the inviting?**

Traditionally, this was the bride's parents because they were paying (hosting). An option like "together with their families" acknowledges everyone who may be contributing. For a deeper dive into this topic, check out our [wording guide](#).

## **Your names!**

The bride is named first in opposite-sex couples. For same-sex or non-binary couples, we recommend listing your names alphabetically by last name.

## **What?**

Hint: the wedding

## **When?**

The day of the week, date, year, and ceremony time

## **Where?**

Ceremony venue name & address  
(No zip codes on the invite)

## **Party!**

Keep this line **ONLY** if the reception is at the same location as the ceremony. If the reception is elsewhere, it gets its own enclosure card.

# The Basics of a Suite



One complete invitation set is referred to as a "suite". Choosing which elements to include is determined by how much information you need to convey and then prioritizing any add-ons to fit within your budget.

## 1. Invitation

Priority #1! The most common size is 5 x 7 (called A7 in the US), but it can be larger depending on the amount of text & art.

## 2. Main Envelope

Your return address goes on the back flap (generally without names). Guests' formal names & addresses are on the front.

## 3. Reply Card & Envelope

Your name & address is printed on the front of the envelope. The standard size is 5 x 3.5 (4-bar). Don't forget the stamp!

If you choose to have people RSVP online, we still recommend a separate card with instructions on how to do so. Consider this the "call to action" of your suite.

## 4. Reception Card

If your reception is at a separate location or is much later in the day, it gets its own card.

## 5. Other Enclosure Cards

Do your guests need to know where to park, what to wear, which hotels have been blocked, or not to bring their kids? Maps, accommodations, welcome parties & brunches, wedding websites, and all those important details will go on one or more details cards.

If you need a smaller quantity on certain pieces (e.g. you're hosting a special event for out-of-town guests), just let us know.

# Accessories & Upgrades



*Time to get creative! Put the finishing touches on your suite with a variety of add-ons. Interested in acrylic, vellum, or another special stock type? Reach out! We love fun requests.*

## 6. Inner Envelope

Although not as common these days, an inner envelope is just one size down from the main envelope and is protected from the wear and tear of mailing by the outer. Inners are printed with the guests' names only.

## 7. Envelope Liner

Liners are a great way to pull in color and flair! Incorporate a pattern or your monogram, or stick with a solid color. They also add another layer of protection for your invitation.

## 8. Backer

Add some substance and contrast to your invitation by backing it with a complementary color cardstock that's slightly larger than the invite.

## 9. Belly Band

A belly band is a thin strip of paper or vellum that's used to keep all of your cards nicely together so nothing gets lost in the envelope. It can be printed or plain.

Silk ribbon is a gorgeous alternative to a belly band.

## 10. Wax Seal

Who doesn't love a wax seal? Monograms and florals are among the most popular designs.

Place them on the back of the main envelope, or use as a design element on the front of your belly band, ribbon, or pocket.

## 11. Pocket

Available in a wide selection of colors, formats, and materials (velvet, anyone?), pockets are another way to keep all of your cards organized.

# Print Methods

## Digital

Digital, or flat, printing is the most cost effective print method and also the most versatile when it comes to full color design. Full color printing is generally done on white or lighter colored cardstocks, as the ink is not completely opaque.



## White Ink

White ink is a great option for modern designs, and looks great on dark cardstocks, vellum, and acrylic. This is another flat print method, created with a special kind of toner.



## Thermography

Thermography, or raised ink, is a heat-based process that mimics the look of engraving -- an old fashioned print method that is rarely seen these days. Best for 1 or 2 color designs.



## Foil

Foil printing is a metallic hot stamping process that leaves a slight impression in the card and has a very luxurious feel. Best for 1 color designs, but works well combined with digital (e.g. full color digital flowers with gold foil text). Foil looks great on both light and dark stocks.



## Letterpress

Letterpress printing is our favorite! Gorgeous matte inks are pressed into 100% cotton cardstock, and the result is a sophisticated stunner.

Blind debossing is also a popular look -- letterpress with no ink.

*Tip: Love this look but the full suite puts you over budget? Select letterpress for the main invite and digital for your inserts.*



# Example Pricing #1



**For a quantity of 100**

## DIGITAL PRINTING

Invitations, includes envelope with return address on back flap \$312

Envelope liner \$159

Guest addressing (not pictured) \$150

Reply card with addressed envelope (envelope not pictured) \$165

Small details card \$87

**TOTAL \$873**

*Customize colors to fit your wedding theme!*

# Example Pricing #2



**For a quantity of 100**

## ONE COLOR LETTERPRESS PRINTING

Invitations, includes envelope with return address on back flap \$631

Envelope liner \$159

Guest addressing (not pictured, digital ink) \$150

Reply card with addressed envelope (digital ink on envelope) \$443

Details card \$374

Wax seals (not pictured, but would look amazing!) \$182

**TOTAL \$1,939**



# Next Steps

## *That sums it up!*

Are you feeling ready to dive into the world of wedding stationery?

## *Why choose Open Air Paper?*

Avoid the stresses of guessing on etiquette, trying to cram your wording into pre-formatted templates online, not being able to find the perfect artwork, wondering what the paper is going to look and feel like, and the list goes on. Our goal is to provide you with a relaxed yet professional experience -- and your dream invitations, of course!



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