

A CONCEPTUAL WEDDING THINGS MULTISIDED DIGITAL PLATFORM BUSINESS MODEL: THE WEDDING PLANNER

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ABSTRACT: There are so many details and steps that go into the entire process of planning an event that the planner and the customer need to handle to ensure the event runs smoothly. The Wedding Things is a conceptual multi sided digital platform that includes web-based applications that offering resources online where customers and users can use to plan their perfect wedding day or any big event such as family event, program or corporate event. It also includes organizing and designing the event with the guidance of the planner. Besides, this web-based application will be developed mainly to focus and minimize the customer budget especially for engaged couples. This digital platform business model of the wedding planner not only provides consultation from the planner but also provides many essential services for customers to choose. It is because the website not only has a planner but also connects with other service providers to make it easier for the customer to choose the product and services they want which suit their preference. In this business case paper, the researcher has conducted a survey to get more details about customer's preference, jobs, pains, gains and agreement to align with their need and business services.

KEY WORDS: *Wedding Planner, Wedding Specialist, Event Planner, Multi-sided Platform Business Model, Website*

1. INTRODUCTION

A wedding day is a beautiful day, but it is also a difficult day with a lot of moving events, not to mention the added expectation that the event must be spectacular. In research from IBR Asia Group, the business of weddings has grown exponentially, with the amount spent on wedding-related goods and services accounts for one out of every eight retail dollars (2021). Unsurprisingly, a full profession of specialists known generally as "wedding planners" exists, just as in many businesses of wedding events. Wedding Things is a wedding planner that offers planning and design assistance from the very beginning. For example, the wedding planner will help the engaged couple get their dream wedding which is usually grand and expensive, but still on their budget. This is to prevent any unnecessary things which can cause an over budget to them. As a result, it assists

couples in creating a budget, locating and hiring vendors, planning the ceremony and reception and managing all aspects of the big day.

The tasks associated with the wedding will undoubtedly take up a lot of free time. With Wedding Things, the bride-to-be can entrust those more time-consuming tasks to a professional by hiring a wedding planner. Appointments can be made, vendors can be dealt with, and clients' problems can be resolved by the planners. Most couples must stick to a fixed budget and deadline for their wedding. They will receive a wedding planner from Wedding Things who will be able to assist them optimize their budget, find deals, and get the best prices. Additionally, they will make sure that every task is completed on time, helping couples check everything off their lists. However, hiring a wedding vendor involves a huge amount of paperwork and contracts.

Thankfully, Wedding Things' products and services include this vital information. Clients may manage the papers with ease by staying in touch with the vendors and resolving any potential problems. This business can attract more clients by forming links with existing businesses. Expanding the business network and obtaining referrals can be accomplished by getting in touch with caterers, photographers, florists, bridal salons, event rental firms, and event venues.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of paper are to develop a conceptual business model for Wedding Planner that addresses and provides services including the following:

1. To ease the customers finding a wedding planner for their big day.
2. To provide a trusted platform for users to compare lists of wedding planners to get the best one.
3. To help the brides, especially those in the B40 group to reduce or reach the set of budget.
4. To give more chances to the other business networks to expand.
5. To provide job opportunities to the B40 group.

3. METHODOLOGY

caterer,ting the design thinking approach and using the business modeling tools like Business Model Canvas (BMC) and Value Proposition Design Canvas (VPC), the conceptual business model is produced by addressing the requirements of Wedding Things. Business companies or event managers who have a similar business strategy to ours will be used to address the requirements of Wedding Things. Nikahsatu, Bridalgram, and WeddingDiva are the three businesses that will be used to differentiate through the BMC architecture. Additionally, these websites offer brides the means to locate the services they require. Key Partners, Key Activities, Key Resources, Value Proposition, Customer Relationships, Channels, Customer Segments, Cost Structure, and Revenue Stream are the nine categories that make up the BMC (Athuraliya, 2022). Analyzing value propositions and viable solutions in connection to customer segments wants and requirements is done using the VPC.

In order to find out the key challenges and issues of the Wedding Things' customer segments, a survey was conducted as an approach to design business models. The purpose of this survey is to collect information from various customer segments related to the business model in order to find the pains, gains and challenges faced by them. This can be utilized to improve the business model research and decisions of Wedding Things. The survey was conducted through Google Form, over 30 participants from friends and acquaintances who are either wedding vendors, currently looking for a wedding planner, or have used a wedding planning service. The survey contains four questions with two series of likert scale questions and two multiple choice questions. This enables respondents to pick specific choices from a set of predetermined responses.

Wedding Things' customer segment identified three types namely the brides, normal sellers, and sellers from the B40 community. Brides are the customers of Wedding Things. They are engaged couples who use wedding services from the vendors. The services offered by the vendors should cover all the wedding requirements needed by the brides. This includes a wedding planner, videographer, photographer, venue provider, hair and makeup professionals, florist, caterer, and favor provider. However, the couples can also book services for a different event other than a wedding ceremony, i.e. baby shower or engagement ceremony. Although the activities in each event may differ, they require similar services from the vendors available.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1. Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint 2030 (MyDigital)

Wedding planner is important to ensure the wedding ceremony went smoothly and also made the bride's dream wedding a success to run a perfect ceremony, brides need a wedding planner website that has all types of service providers such as caterers, photographers, florists, bridal salons and event space rental firms. In this modern age, brides and also the traders must use technology for buying and selling between them. According to the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department (2021) the Malaysia Digital Economy Action Plan will enable Malaysia to fully benefit from the digital economy where the digital economy is the use of information technology in creating and adapting technology according to the times, marketing or using goods and services. With MyDigital applied, the people who are engaged couples have their affairs simplified because our website provides wedding planner services to the Rakyat. In addition, all payment matters can be done through digital banking. Furthermore, a business that is a wedding planner or other vendors found in this website can expand their market.

4.2. Benchmark

We also take a look for another business model event managers that adopts a similar business model with us. We will use a multi-sided platform business model for our The Wedding Things. According to Leslie Brokaw (2014), the multi-sided platform business model is a service, technology or product that lets two or more customer or participant groups have direct interactions. For the Wedding Things and the other event managers that adopt a similar business model with us also used the multi-sided platform business model. This platform also provides facilities for brides to find the service they want. These are three companies that have more or less the same Business Model Canvas (BMC) as our company namely **Nikahsatu**, **Bridalgram** and **WeddingDiva**. We will differentiate these three company through the BMC framework:

4.2.1. Value Proposition

The uniqueness of **Nikahsatu** is that they attract their customers by offering "digital kad kahwin". The Nikahsatu platform is also a one-step center for brides to find everything they need for their wedding and brides can also customize their bridal packages with services. For brides who have financial problems, Nikahsatu provides "Go Fund Me ", where couples can put up the list of services they have employed and friends and family can choose which category they would like to sponsor or contribute to financially. Meanwhile the uniqueness of **Bridalgram** is they cater for brides and multiple vendors. For the brides, Bridalgram helps the brides to discover the latest and trendiest wedding vendors available in the market and encourages the brides to enquire with those vendors directly. For vendors, vendors have the freedom to update details and promotions to their profiles whenever they like.

Meanwhile the uniqueness of **WeddingDiva** is they aims to organize as many wedding services professionals in an online platform so that couples can easily search and select according to their individual needs and expectations. Other than that, WeddingDiva also provides new ideas and fresh content on weddings to assist

brides and grooms-to-be in planning their perfect dream wedding including the useful tips on the wedding day.

4.2.2. Customer Segment

For the three companies, their aim in the market is the same which is brides and vendors. Brides will get the services and vendors will provide the services. But for the **Nikahsatu**, they have additional customer segment which is B40 brides where they do their best to provide categories that B40 brides can afford. Not being left behind, **Bridalgram** also has an additional customer segment namely brides outside Malaysia which is Singapore and Indonesia.

4.2.3. Revenue Stream

Nikahsatu allows couples to book their wedding packages online from RM1, so that it will not burden the brides to pay more for booking and the couple would be charged a monthly installment for all the services booked, to be fully paid up before the wedding. This will advantage the vendors where the vendors will get the full payment before the preparation is done and the brides will not run away. The most huge revenue to **Nikahsatu** is that most of the services are done in-house, especially items related to printing.

While **Bridalgram** does the FB Live Bridal Promo, where vendors give couples the chance to save money with deals and discounts and Passion to Profit live series, where wedding vendors can learn more about the current trends and insights from the top vendor. These two can increase the number of customers and also revenue.

Meanwhile the brides of **WeddingDiva** can enjoy 50% off their purchase of a wedding dress from a selected vendor.

4.2.4. Key Resource

There are three key resources for **Nikahsatu** namely digital invitation, they are headquartered in Kuantan, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Johor and the last is their top tier technology and services.

While **Bridalgram** has two key resources which are they host over 300 vendors and encourage the couples to enquire with those vendors directly, where this makes the brides feel confident to seek the services of the vendors.

WeddingDiva also has three key resources which are vendor directory, where it will help brides find all kinds of wedding services providers and professionals. Second is inspirations & ideas, where **WeddingDiva's** articles and blog gives fresh and new wedding ideas and inspiration for couples on latest wedding styles and trends to make wedding planning fun and enjoyable. The last one is promotions. It will provide brides with information on discounts or value for money wedding deals offered by vendors.

4.2.5. Key Activities

Nikahsatu has rapidly expanded its tech and services to become a holistic wedding system. While facing the Covid-19 pandemic, **Nikahsatu** did a really good job in handling their business where they include RSVP functions for the various Movement Control Orders (MCOs) in digital invitations, which allow guests to see

how many slots are available to attend the wedding, as crowd control is a standard operating procedure for weddings.

While the key activities of **Bridalgram** are more to the vendors. Each vendor will undergo a vetting process in order to be featured in Bridalgram. In order to prove their legitimacy, each vendor would have to go through a sign-up process asking for important details such as their contact details, vendor category, and social media links. Joel, the co-founder of Bridalgram will contact the vendors directly as a final measure of security. Other than that, there are many vendors who are uncomfortable with revealing their prices publicly due to the competition, and therefore will only share their pricing with potential clients who contact them directly.

Meanwhile **WeddingDiva** has both brides and vendors. For the vendors, WeddingDiva will verify and handpicked vendors to give assurance. For brides, they will provide a way for couples to easily connect with wedding professionals and provide insightful information to help couples plan their wedding.

4.2.6. Key Partner

Nikahsatu key partners are card printing, video–graphy and photography, live streaming, photo booth, catering, decorations, goodie bags, make-up artists and even dowry (hantaran) and daisies (pelamin).

While **Bridalgram** key partners are photography, makeup artist, bridal house, wedding dress, videographers, decorations, venues and hotels including the other 300 vendors.

Meanwhile **WeddingDiva** key partners are venue, make-up artist, caterer or photographer and so on.

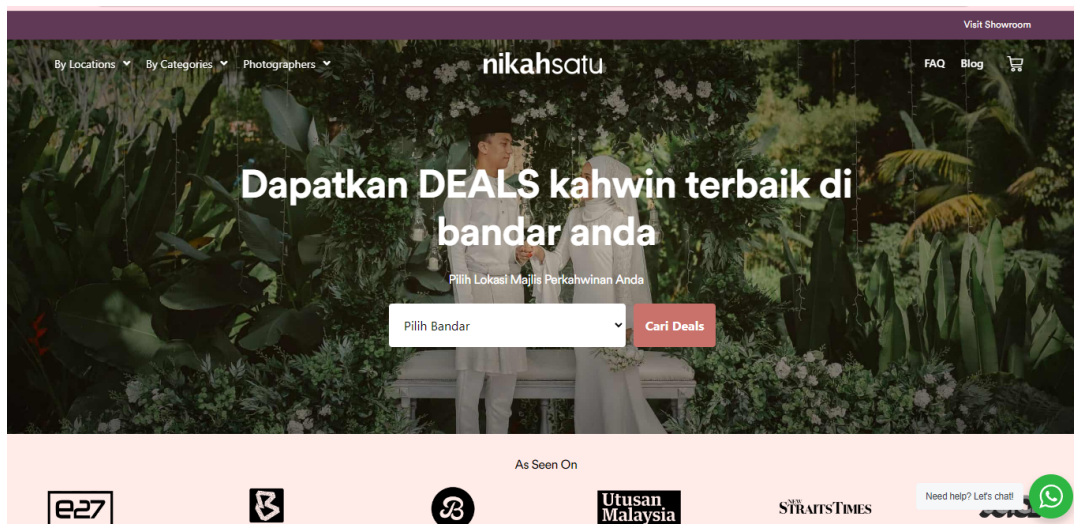


Fig. 1. Nikahsatu front page

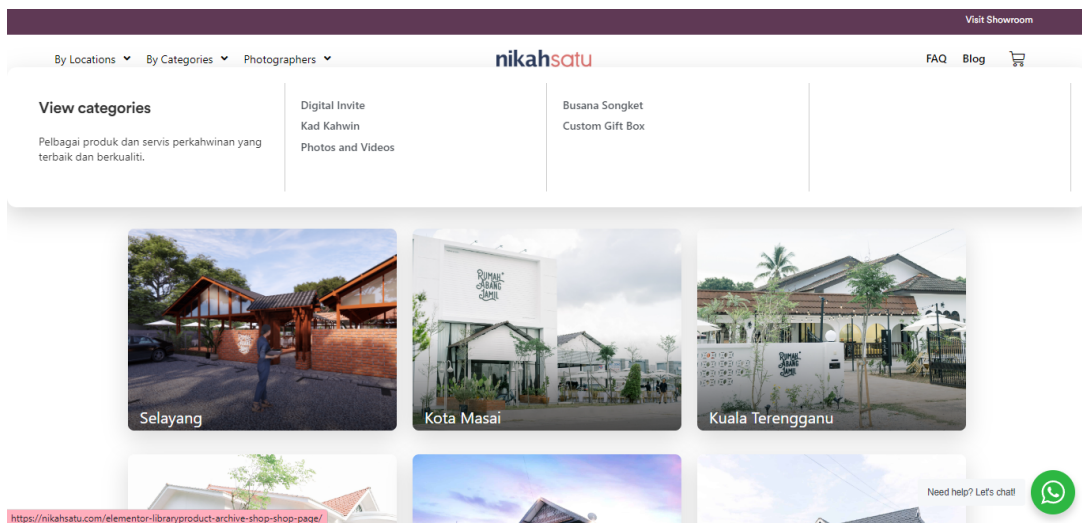


Fig. 2. Nikahsatu vendors

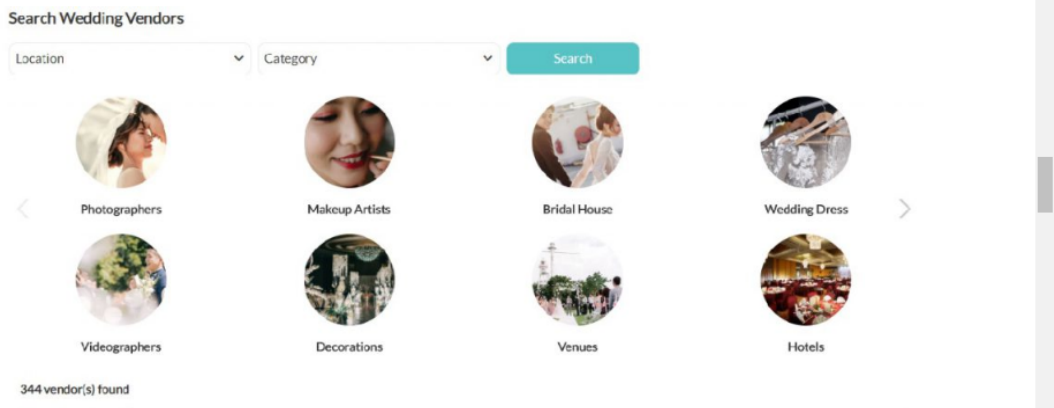


Fig. 3. Bridalgram vendors

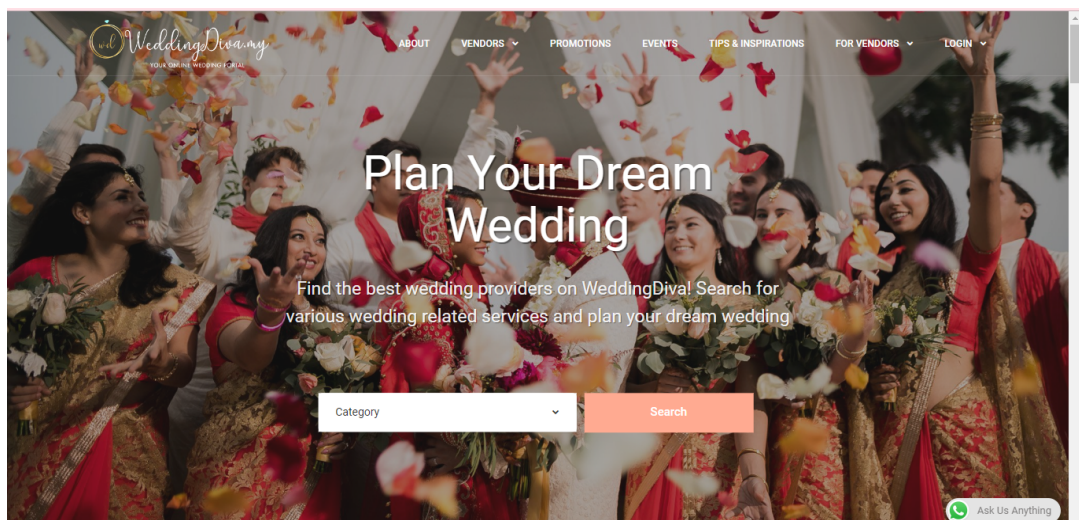


Fig. 4. WeddingDiva front page

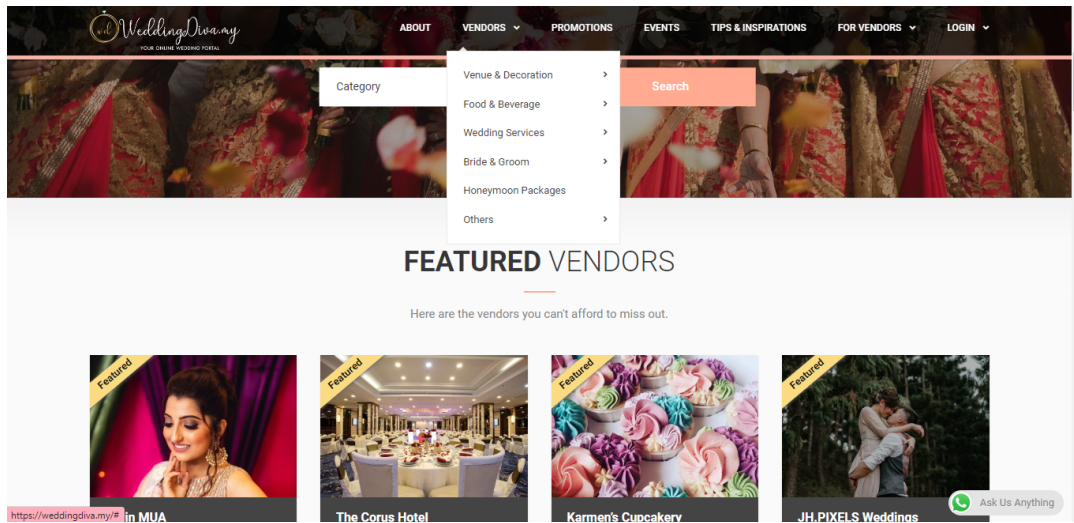


Fig. 5. WeddingDiva vendors

4.3. Reskilling and Upskilling Incentives Provided by the Government

Apart from being able to provide benefits to consumers, vendors also benefit and are also given exposure by the government on how to manage business. This has compelled industries to produce highly skilled workforce (Yizit and Yezim Denis, 2018) to promote knowledge-based skills in various sectors in Malaysia. Besides, in this business, passion alone is not enough to compete in the outside world. But they need strong skills to compete. According to the Juani Munir Abu Bakar (2022) The government has provided reskilling and upskilling incentives such as E-Training which is implemented to encourage Malaysians to apply learning and knowledge acquisition as part of their daily routine. In the meantime, the Placement and Training program was also created to help those looking for work by providing skills training aimed at increasing marketability and guaranteeing job placement. It can be seen here that the B40 sellers also can take this advantage to expand their skills and business.

4.4. Time Constraint

Furthermore, managing a marriage is not an easy thing. Brides have to do a lot more than just the reception. With a wedding planner, the bride and groom can save their time and also be able to complete other things at the same time. According to Khaleen Johnson (2020), with a wedding planner, the bride does not need to go through the vendor stage, because the planner will find and deal with vendors who match the bride's style and wishes. This shows that the bride can save a lot of time with a wedding planner.

4.5. Financial Constraint

Finally, financial constraints are a huge dilemma for the brides. According to Parker K. et. al. (2020), 46% of adults facing difficulties to make their bills payment. So, the brides will set the budgets and find the wedding planner service within the budget. A wedding planner is also needed so that the bride and groom do not overspend on unnecessary things. In fact, more than half (56%) of bridal party members admit they've felt obligated to spend above what they could afford. For 39%, the overspending involved pre-wedding activities (Dawn Papandrea, 2022)

5. INITIAL BIZ MODEL (BM) – USING BMC & VPC

5.1. Develop Initial BMC

Key Partners	Key Activities	Value Propositions	Customer Relationships	Customer Segments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wedding planner - Event planner - Photographer - Videographer - Venue provider - Hair and makeup professionals - Florist - Caterer - Favor provider - Henna artist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product development and management - Vendors and brides acquisition - Digital marketing - Customer support - Software development 	Bride <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bride can search, compare, and book a service from a vendor - Bride can contact vendor - Offering a collection of fancy door gifts that were handmade and also can be customized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer service - Social media - Promotional offers - Reviews and recommendations - Personalized to-do-list - Easy to use wedding planning tools 	Bride <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People who want to maximize their budget - People who do not have enough time to plan their wedding - People who need a wedding consultation
	Key Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Software features - Directory of vendors - Strategic wedding hall 	B40 Sellers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vendors can keep track of their customer - Vendors can manage their customers wedding budget - Cheap and customize - Helping B40 people get jobs and also improve skills 	Channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media - Website - Mobile app for Android - Mobile app for iOS 	B40 Sellers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People who have bride to be as their customer - People who want to expand their business Sellers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service providers
Cost Structure		Revenue Streams		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technological set up and running costs - Salaries to employees 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B40 vendors free training for digital entrepreneurship to nature them in The Wedding Things. - Free cake for brides who have purchased packages above RM 2,000. - Discount on henna when the brides purchased the full package 		

Fig. 6. Business Model Canvas (BMC)

The initial BMC, as shown in Fig. 6, was developed based on the above literature review. The initial BMC was developed by focusing and adopting the customer perspective to know in the context of which channels can customer link with, customer relationships, revenue streams and value propositions. As we can see, we have three customers which are a bride or engaged couple, the sellers who provide the services and the B40 sellers. Besides, it gives a different value proposition for each customer segment because each of them have different benefits and challenges.

5.2. Develop Initial VPC

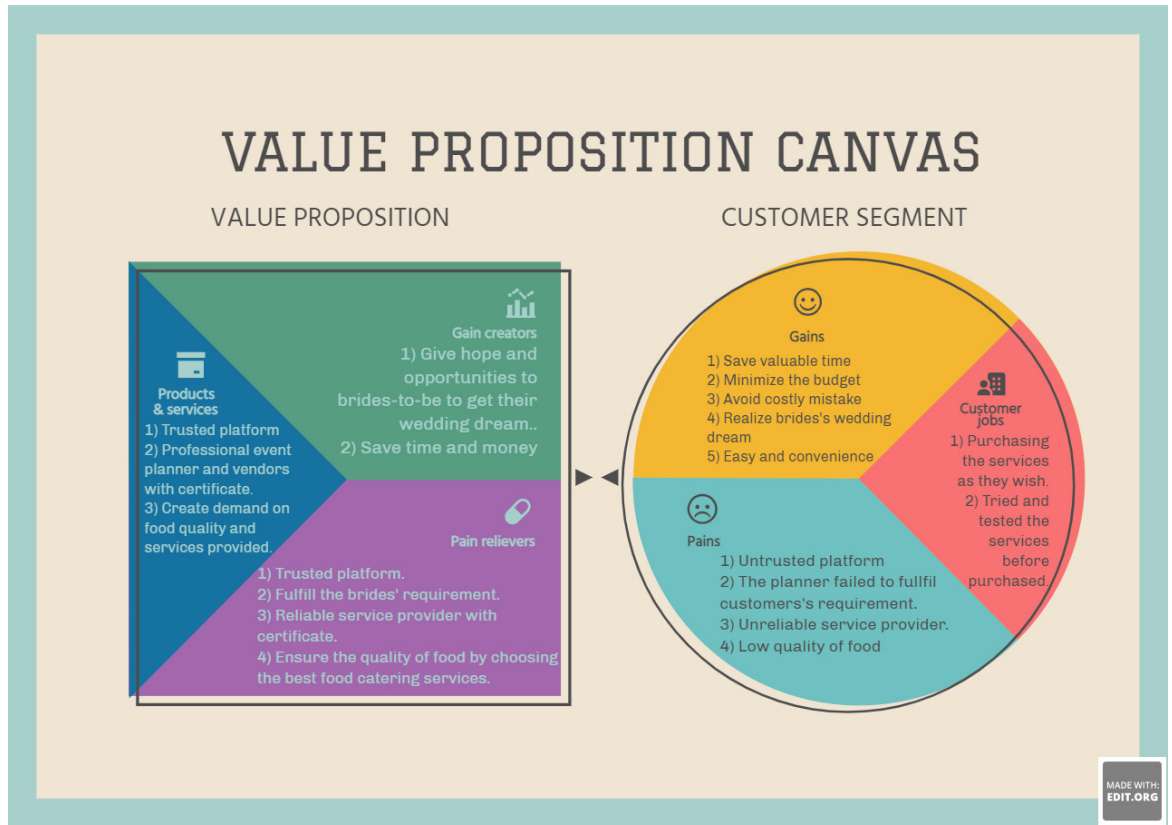


Fig. 7. Value Proposition Canvas (VPC) for brides

Fig.7 shows the value proposition canvas for brides. The Wedding Things give hope and opportunities to bride-to-be to get their wedding dream. The most important part is that brides can save time and money. This platform also acts as a solution for the brides' pain which is this platform is a trusted platform. Indirectly, all the sellers and reliable services in this platform have their certificate. This platform also will fulfill the brides' requirement the best as we can and ensure the quality of food by choosing the best food catering services. The services and products of the platform can give to the brides a trusted platform, professional event planner and vendors with certificates and create demand on food quality and services provided.

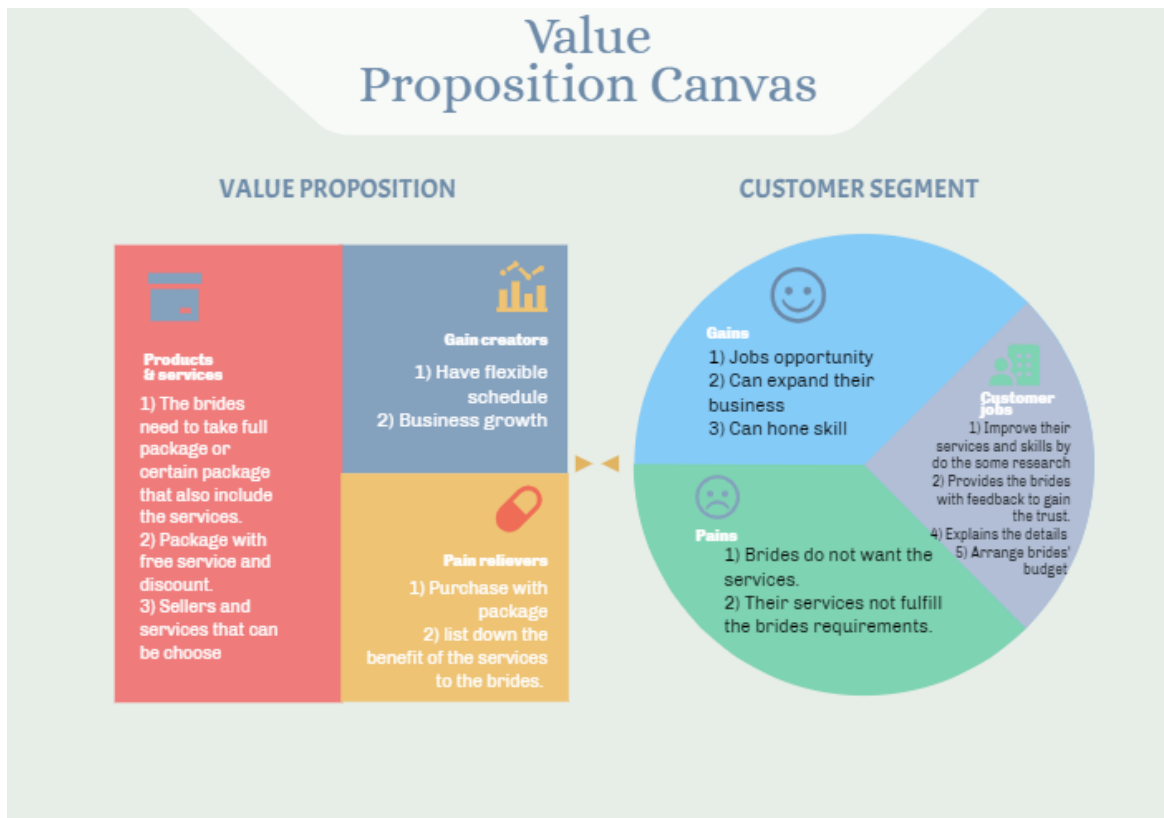


Fig. 8. Value Proposition Canvas (VPC) for B40 sellers

Fig.8 shows the value proposition canvas for B40 sellers. The Wedding Things give many benefits and advantages to the B40 sellers where they can have jobs, can expand their business and skills. The most important part is that B40 sellers can grow their business. This platform also acts as a solution for the B40 sellers' pain, which is this platform requires brides to purchase a package, so that every seller can get their chance to give their service. Moreover, this platform will advertise and list down the benefits of every service that B40 sellers can give to the brides. The services and products of the platform can be given to the B40 sellers where the brides need to take a full package or certain package that also include the services, package with free service and discount and vendors and services that can be chosen.

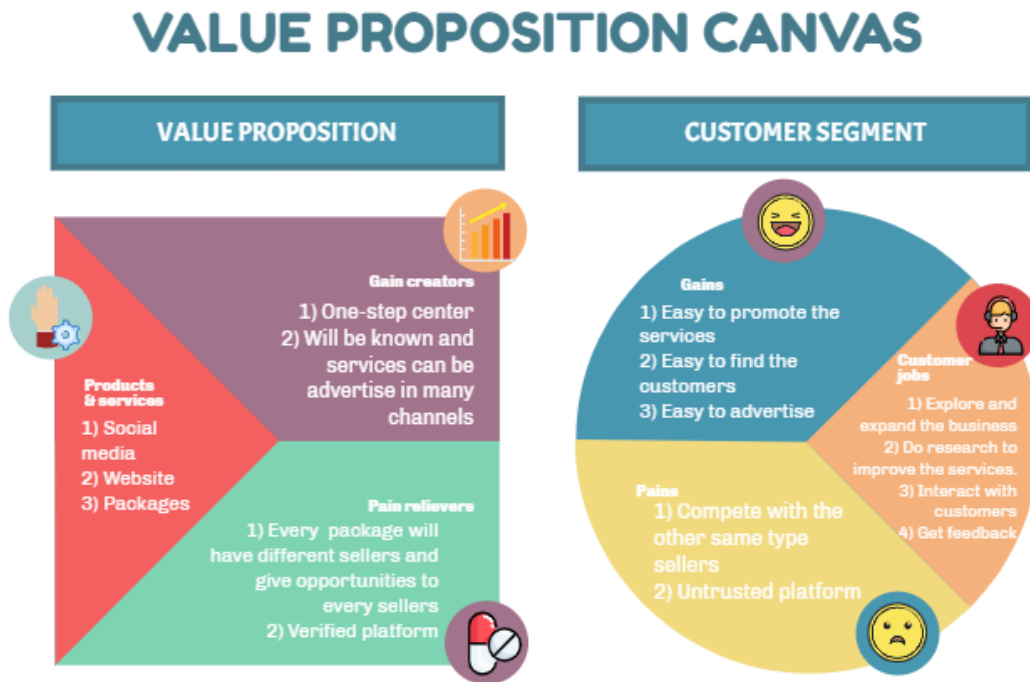


Fig. 9. Value Proposition Canvas (VPC) for sellers

Fig.9 shows the value proposition canvas for sellers. The Wedding Things provides a platform for the sellers to promote their services for various types of services. It will make it easy for the sellers to find customers and advertise their services. This platform also acts as a solution for the sellers' pain which is every package in this platform will have different sellers and give opportunities to every seller to give their services. Other than that, this platform and sellers are all verified. The service of the platform can give to the vendors are social media, website and the package that the sellers will participate in.

5.3. Develop Low Fidelity Prototype

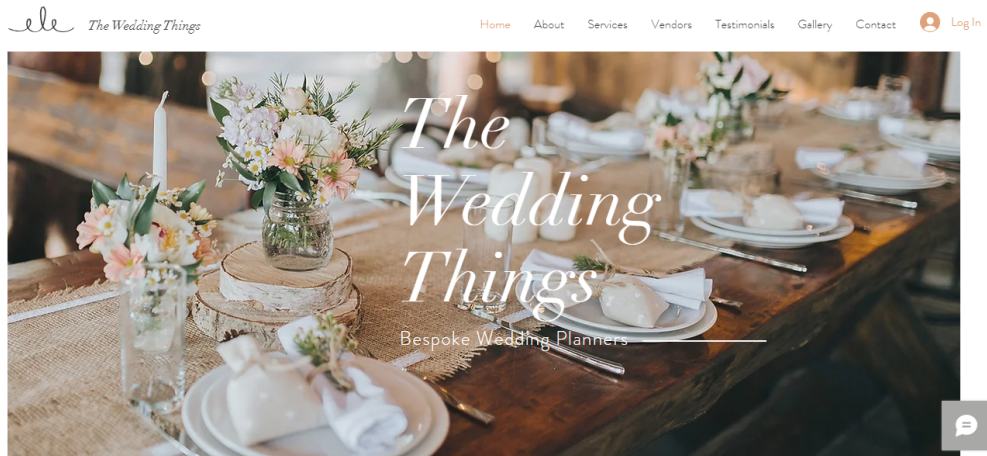


Fig. 10. The Wedding Things front page

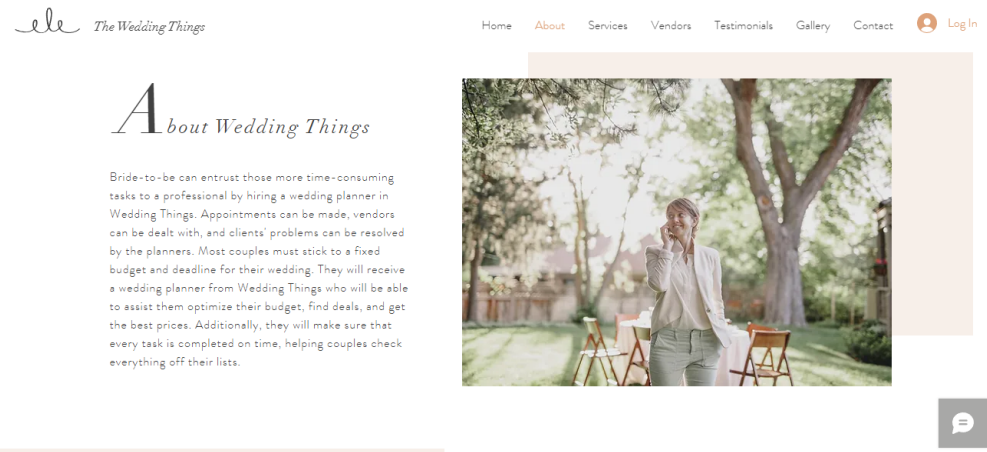


Fig. 11. About page

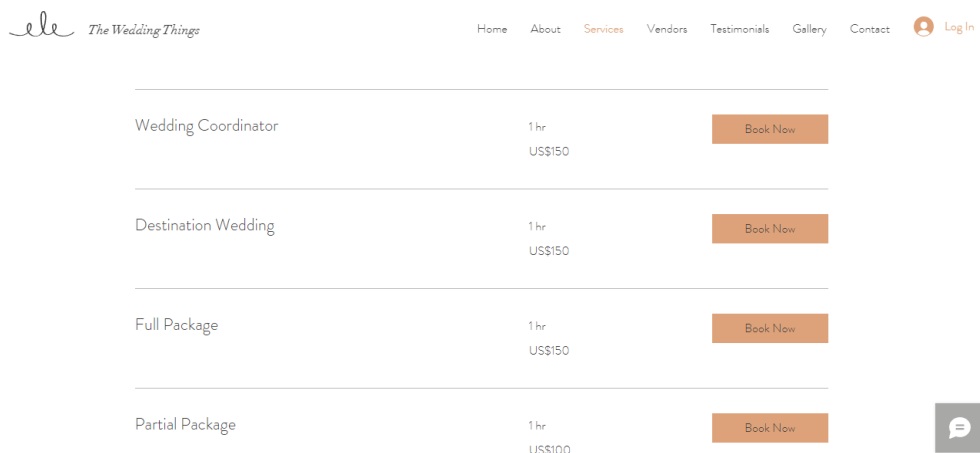


Fig. 12. Services page

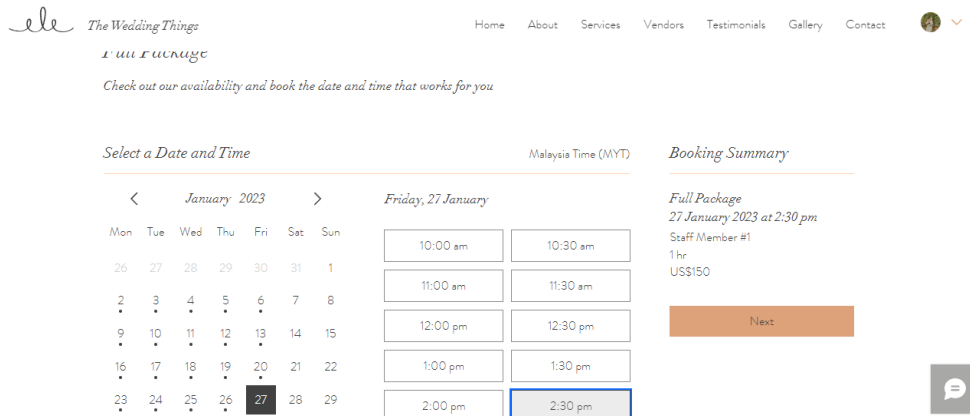


Fig. 13. Booking calendar page

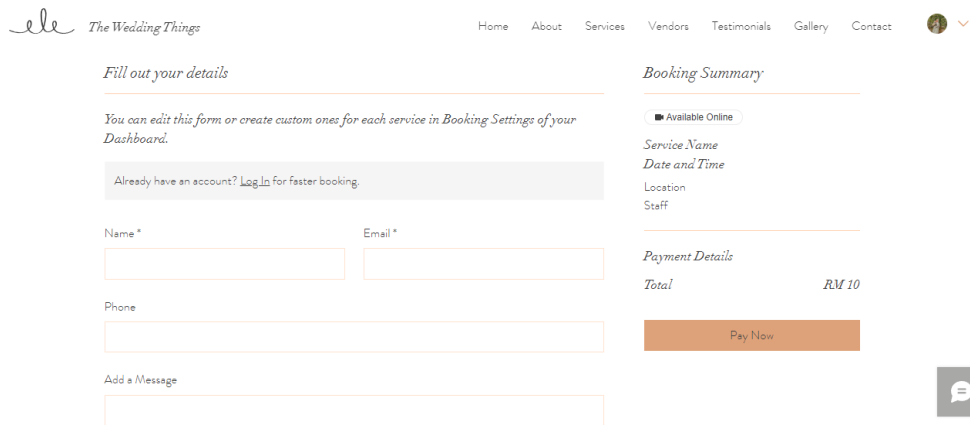


Fig. 14. Payment page

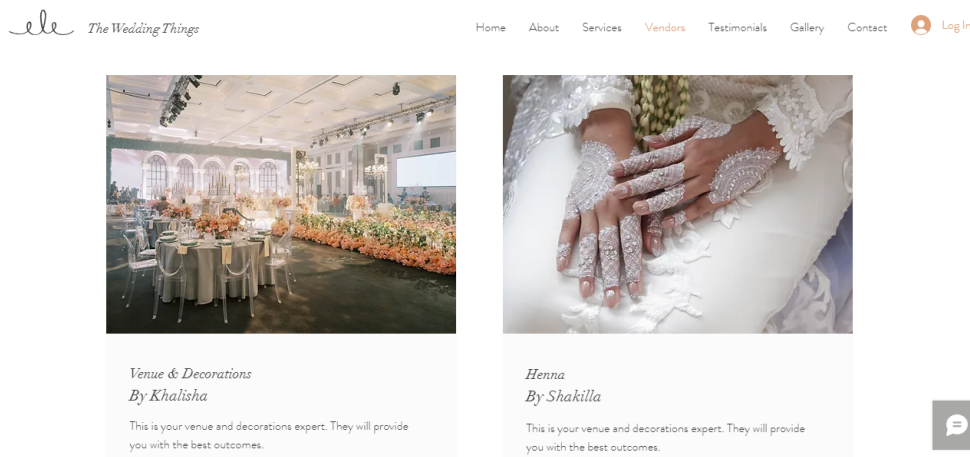


Fig.15. Vendors page

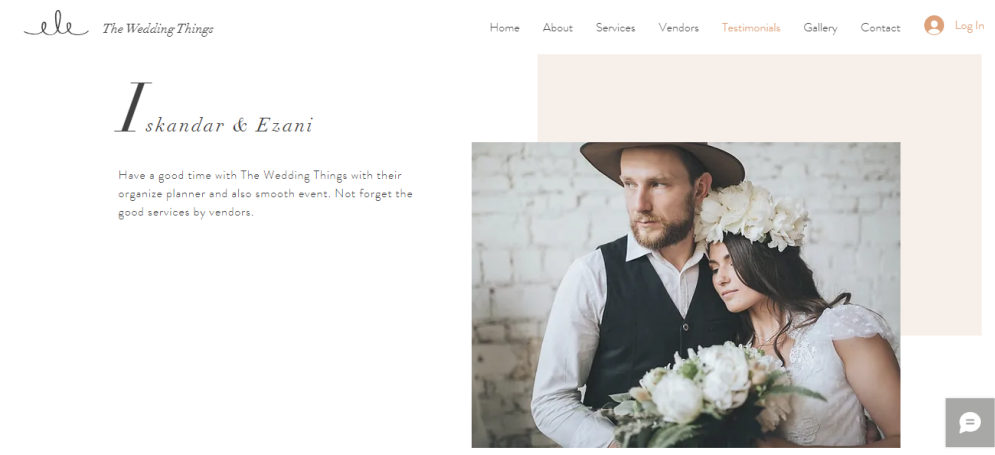


Fig. 16. Testimonials page

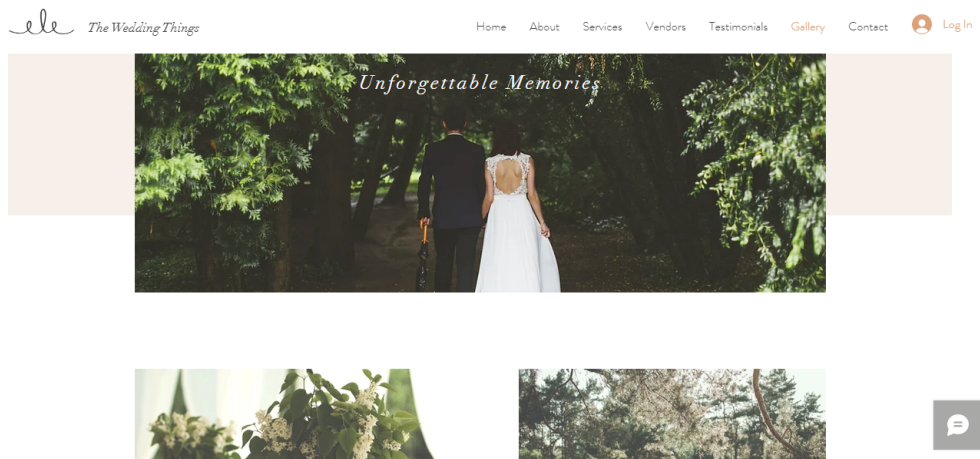


Fig. 17. Gallery page

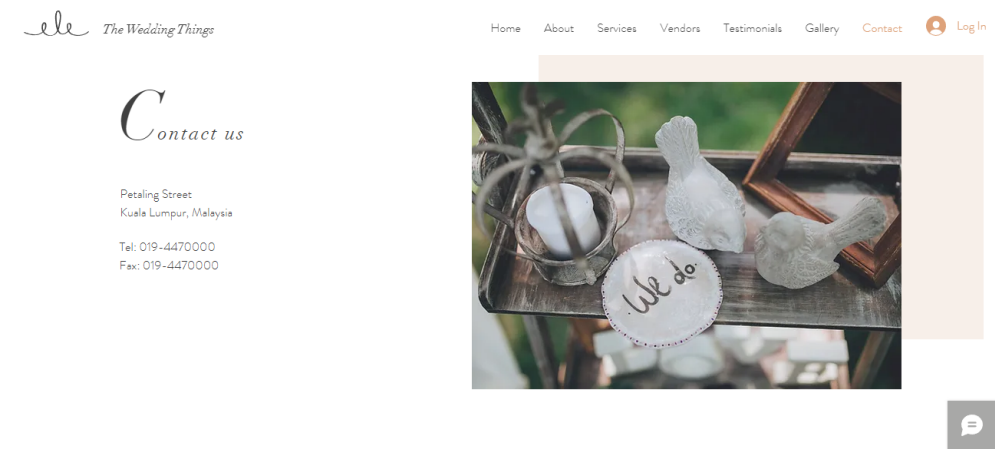


Fig. 18. Contact page

6. CONDUCT VALIDATION OF INITIAL BM & KEY FINDINGS

This section describes the methodology of the project, where it discusses the challenges faced by the customers of Wedding Things. A survey via Google Form was conducted among 30 participants from brides, sellers, and B40 sellers. The survey contains four questions with two series of likert scale questions and two multiple choice questions. This enables respondents to pick specific choices from a set of predetermined responses. Based on the survey, an initial business model will be developed. Fig. 19 shows the first question of the survey.

Do you or disagree with the following statements? (1 = Strongly disagree 5 = Strongly agree)

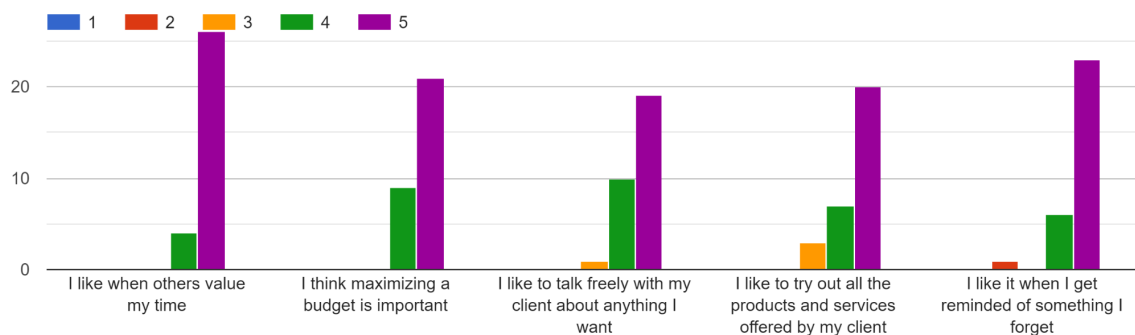


Fig. 19. First question of the survey

The first question allows brides, sellers and B40 sellers to answer a set of likert scale questions. It contains five sub-questions which help the analysis to identify the customers expectations and desires. This can be used as the customer gains of the project. Based on the results shown, the majority of the customers strongly agree to all of the questions.

What are the problems you face as a bride? (you can choose more than one)
30 responses

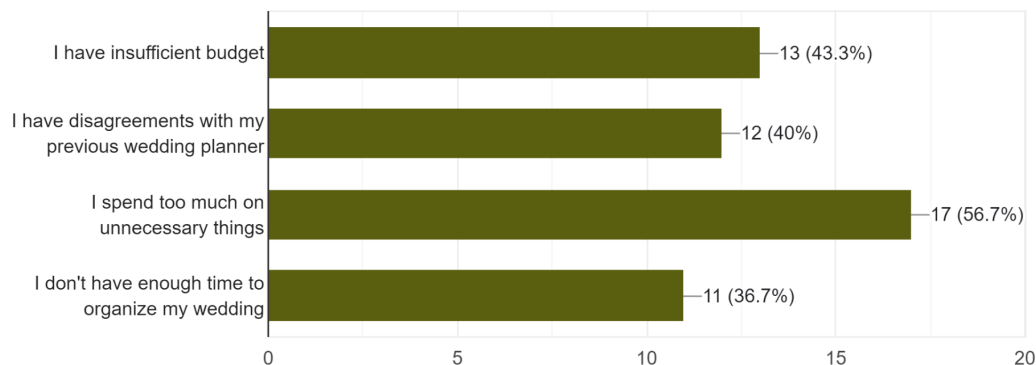


Fig. 20. Second question of the survey

The second question discusses the challenges faced by the brides. The bar chart on Fig. 20 shows that the majority of respondents with 56.7% of responses have problems spending money on unnecessary things, while 43.3% of them have insufficient budget and 40% of them have had disagreements with their previous wedding planner. Although the outvoted responders do not have enough time to organize their wedding, it still records 36.7% of the votes with a total of 11 responses.

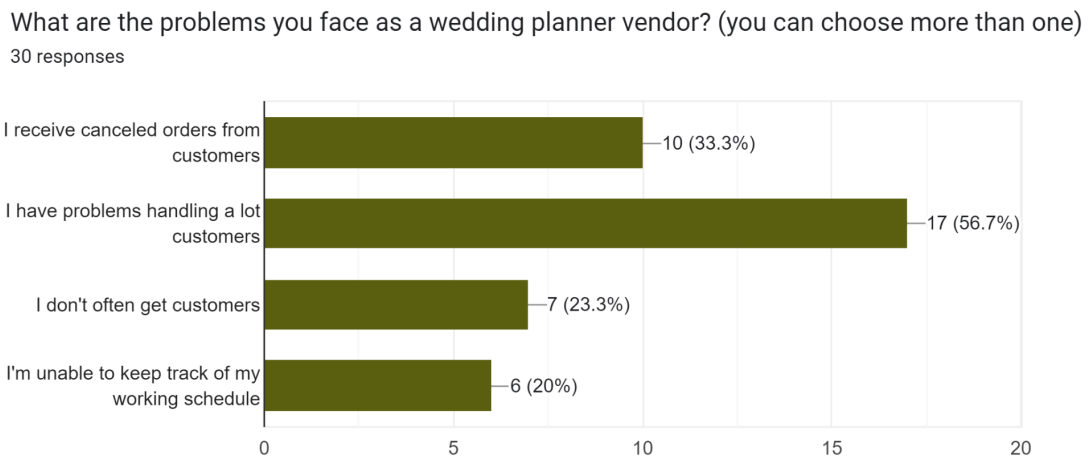


Fig. 21. Third question of the survey

Similarly, Fig. 21 above displays the results according to the questions for sellers and B40 sellers regarding their business challenges. It shows that 56.7% of them have problems handling a lot of customers, taking the first place with the most chosen answers. 33.3% of them also receive canceled orders from their customers and 23.3% of them do not get enough customers. The least voted answer with 20% responses shows that they are unable to keep track of their working schedule.

Based on the service list below, do you think they are important/relevant for the brides? (1 = Strongly disagree 5 = Strongly agree)

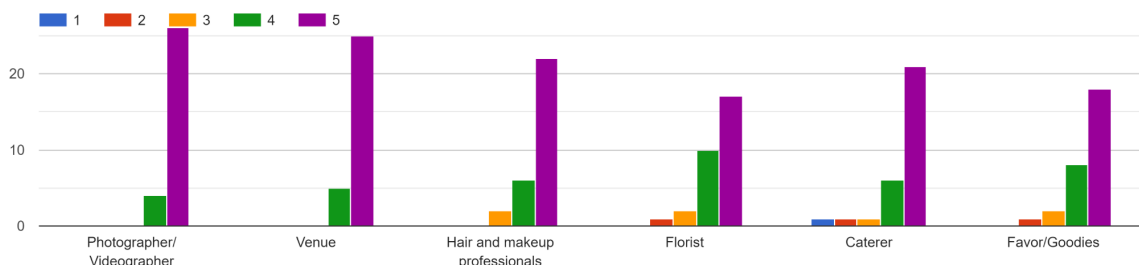


Fig. 22. Fourth question of the survey

The fourth question finds out the most relevant wedding and event services provided from a vendor. Based on the list of services, brides and both types of

sellers can choose which of the services are relevant to their needs. According to the chart in Fig. 22, the majority of brides strongly agree to the importance of all listed services in their wedding ceremony. The most voted services can be used as the wedding vendor's product and services to help brides choose a variety of options from each seller.

7. VALIDATED BM – BMC FRAMEWORK

7.1. Validated BM

In the business model canvas there are 9 blocks of fundamental elements or blocks such as value propositions, customer segments, customer relationships, channels, revenue streams, key resources, key activities, key partners and cost structure that define the idea and concept for our business model:

Key Partners	Key Activities	Value Propositions	Customer Relationships	Customer Segments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wedding planner - Event planner - Photographer - Videographer - Venue provider - Hair and makeup professionals - Florist - Caterer - Favor provider - Henna artist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product development and management - Vendors and brides acquisition - Digital marketing - Customer support - Software development 	<p>Bride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bride can search, compare, and book a service from a vendor - Bride can contact vendor - Offering a collection of fancy door gifts that were handmade and also can be customized. <p>B40 Sellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vendors can keep track of their customer - Vendors can manage their customers wedding budget - Cheap and customize - Helping B40 people get jobs and also improve skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer service - Social media - Promotional offers - Reviews and recommendations - Personalized to-do-list - Easy to use wedding planning tools 	<p>Bride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People who want to maximize their budget - People who do not have enough time to plan their wedding - People who need a wedding consultation <p>B40 Sellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People who have bride to be as their customer - People who want to expand their business <p>Sellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service providers
	<p>Key Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Software features - Directory of vendors - Strategic wedding hall 		<p>Channels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media - Website - Mobile app for Android - Mobile app for iOS 	
Cost Structure		Revenue Streams		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technological set up and running costs - Salaries to employees 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B40 vendors free training for digital entrepreneurship to nature them in The Wedding Things. - Free cake for brides who have purchased packages above RM 2,000. - Discount on henna when the brides purchased the full package 		

Fig. 23. Initial BMC

7.1.1. Value Proposition

Value propositions is an exchange of the value between the customers and our business. For the Wedding Things, since we have three customer segments which are the bride, normal sellers and B40 sellers, each of them will have the same and different value or benefits from this business.

The value that the bride will have includes that they can find the service that they want for the event, especially wedding reception and compare it with every vendor available on the website. The business website also provides B40 sellers to keep track of their customers. To make it more unique, this business will help B40 people to get a job by joining the sellers and nurturing them as entrepreneurs while it can improve their skills.

7.1.2. Customer Segment

The customer segments for the Wedding Things are the brides, normal sellers and B40 sellers. The brides are people who want to have their dream wedding but want to minimize their budgets. For normal and B40 sellers, they are people whose customers are the bride and want to expand their business on a digital platform.

The differences between normal sellers and B40 sellers is free training for digital entrepreneurship. This training will be provided for free only if B40 sellers join the as long as they join the Wedding Things. For B40 sellers, they will need this training to improve their skills and nature with the digital platform since they might not be exposed to it.

7.1.3. Customer Relationships

It is the relationships between the business itself and the customer. Basically it defines how the business interacts with the customer. So, for this business we interacts with our customer through:

- Customer services
- Social media
- Review and Recommendation (customer feedback) etc. (refer Fig. 23 Initial BMC)

7.1.4. Channels

Channels are the avenues that the customer can contact with our business.

- Social media
- Website
- Mobile app for Android and IOS

7.1.5. Revenue Stream

Revenue streams are the way our business converts Value Propositions to the customers' pains into financial gain. For the business itself, the revenue will come from the fee for services. As for B40 sellers, they will get free training for digital entrepreneurship as long as they join this business to help them with e-business since we will use the website or digital platform. For normal sellers, they will get to use any channels to promote their services. Also, for the bride, free cake and discount on henna as they purchased the package provided on the website.

7.1.6. Key Resources

The Wedding Things will use a digital platform like a website and applications, so the resources that our business requires to have are software features, hosting, internet connection and computer. For physical resources, strategic wedding halls and good food from sellers or restaurants are needed.

7.1.7. Key Activities

Key activities are the actions that our business takes to achieve our value proposition for our customers. For example, in Wedding Things we use product and service development to enhance the skill of the employee or B40 sellers. Besides,

we also have software development to develop our website and keep updating to fulfill user needs.

7.1.8. Key Partners

In Wedding Things, our key partners are the list of external parties to provide the services, value to the customer and to achieve our key activities. The key partner as we can see in the initial BMC in Fig. 6, all the list is the service providers such as wedding planner, food catering, venue provider, photographer, make-up artist, etc.

7.1.9. Cost Structure

This business has to pay salary to the employee and also technological set-up and running costs. It also includes the website development cost.

7.2. Environment Map with Explanation

7.2.1. Key Trends

After the post pandemic, there are more uncertainties as the pandemic might rise without our concern as we thought the virus might disappear through the years. According Gabriel Marin (2021), “Getting “back to normal” is the talk of the town among event professionals. Yet, the future is unlikely to look anything like our pre-pandemic normal, as virtual event technology and changing attendee’s behaviors have utterly transformed the landscape of event planning.” Therefore, there are differences in many future event plans to be conducted as we are still adapting with the ‘new normal’. One of key trends for event planning is digital platforms. Digital platforms such as websites and mobile applications have been used widely around the world including Malaysia. With 89.6% of its 32.98 million people online, Malaysia has one of the highest percentages of internet users in Southeast Asia. 91.7% of the population, or 30.25 million people, are active social media users (Malaysia Digital Marketing, 2022). This statistic shows that digital platforms can be a main reason for the entrepreneur to use it for marketing strategy and also provide services online.

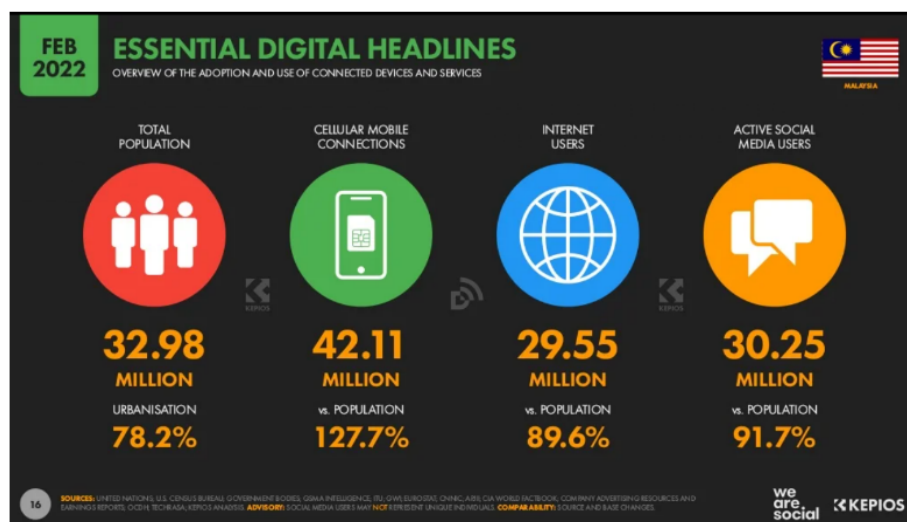


Fig. 24. Malaysia digital marketing landscape

7.2.2. Market Forces

According to Malaysia Digital Marketing (2022), every year, internet users in Malaysia conduct trillions of searches, frequently with the goal of finding commercial information about goods and services. Simply keep in mind that a website's likelihood of being found by searchers increases with its search engine visibility. Therefore, e-commerce has been one of the most preferable methods to advertise and sell as it is convenient to the users or customers to search and view their desired products and services.

7.2.3. Macroeconomic Forces

"The global ecommerce market is expected to total \$5.7 trillion in 2022. That figure is estimated to grow over the next few years, showing that borderless ecommerce is becoming a profitable option for online retailers. Two years ago, only 17.8% of sales were made from online purchases" stated by Keenan (2022) in his article 'Global Ecommerce Explained: Stats and Trends to Watch in 2023.' This statistic shows that online shopping sites have grown more and more through the years as technology as well. As evidenced by its projected revenue of US\$10.12 billion, ecommerce has a place in the Malaysian market.

7.2.4. Industry Forces

A few years back when the whole world was attacked by Covid19, event management has faced many challenges including disruption of the business where the business cannot be run anymore as the business needs to be conducted face to face. Now, after the pandemics, the business event industry has become more popular since people can get together already. Not only that, there are also entrepreneurs who use digital platforms as their marketing place to promote and conduct their business. As for event planners, these become hybrid events when the services can be conducted online and offline to suit customer's preferences. Although there are many competitors in this industry, some of them did not provide any specialties for the B40 group of people as their customer segments and also did not choose a digital platform to have any services online such as consultation, meeting with customers and so on. With that, Wedding Things has come out with a different concept which is while providing service to customers, also providing jobs to the B40 group to become the vendors itself.

7.3. Strategy Canvas (Basic Key Differentiators)

7.3.1. B40 Sellers

Basically, sellers are individuals or businesses who provide event services or products such as makeup artists, photographers, videographers, food caterers, florists, wedding planners, door gifts, and so on. Most event planners only have normal sellers as their customer segments, but Wedding Things have 2 different sellers which are normal sellers and B40 sellers. This is to make it unique from others. B40 sellers are B40 groups of people either from city or rural places. As we know, many talented people come from rural places and if they only sell their products and services within their place, their business will not be recognizable.

7.3.2 Free Training in Digital Entrepreneurships

Furthermore, in Wedding Things, B40 groups consists customers, but also service providers. This is to provide them with a job opportunity as one of our sellers. As long as they join with Wedding Things, they will be provided with full training in digital entrepreneurship free of charge. So, as Wedding Things use digital platforms as marketing strategies, B40 sellers might have great opportunities to become successful entrepreneurs.

8. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORKS

In conclusion, each customer segment has their own pains, gains and job-to-do. As for the first customer segment which is the bride, the problem that they always face is the scammer or untrusted platform. As we know, nowadays there are many cases where people got scammed by someone over a digital platform. For example, people buy something on an online shopping platform but when the parcel arrives, there is nothing inside it. So, cases like this have undermined people's trust to use digital platforms. To cope with the problem, Wedding Things has provided a website which is convenient for people to use and see all the services provided and it is a trustworthy platform with most of the sellers and event planners in the website having professional certificates in the field.

The sellers also have the problem that not all brides will purchase their products or services. This is due to different people having their own liking and preference. To give a solution for this, the Wedding Things provide free training for them to improve their skill to expand their business as well as learn how to attract customers to use their services or products.

Last but not least, for the future plan, by developing a detailed business plan Wedding Things will expand their business not only through the website but will have their own application which will be more convenient to the users. This business also will create more opportunities for the B40 community as it provides the platform for B40 to explore various wedding options at affordable pricing going forward as long as it can give benefits toward other people and toward the business itself.

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