



**PROGRAMME: Master Of Business Administration (MBA)**

**Rooted in Story, Designed with Purpose:**  
**Scaling Oliva Willow's Boutique Planning Model in Spain**  
*An Entrepreneurial Thesis on International Brand Expansion*



**OLIVA WILLOW**  
WEDDING PLANNER

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What if a wedding could be more than a day? What if it could be a story, an experience, a cultural exchange? This is the vision behind Oliva Willow, a boutique destination wedding planning company ready to bring a new standard of intentionality, sustainability, and design to weddings in Spain, especially for international and American couples seeking meaning beyond tradition.

This thesis explores the feasibility and strategic roadmap to scale Oliva Willow from a side business into a premier international brand based in Spain. More than just logistics, Oliva Willow curates weddings that feel intentional, immersive, value-driven, and reflect both the couple's style and worldview.

The project uses a mixed-methods research design, blending:

- 12 in-depth interviews with Spanish vendors, venues, and planners.
- A 107-respondent survey of international couples aged 25–40.
- Market data, government tourism reports, and academic insight into destination weddings, sustainability, and experiential entrepreneurship.
- Strategic planning tools include SWOT, PESTEL, and the Business Model Canvas.
- A financial feasibility model, a breakeven forecast, and sensitivity testing.

Key insights include:

- Spain is one of the fastest-growing wedding destinations, with over 15,000 international weddings annually and a 30% increase since 2020.
- Today's couples seek more than beauty. They want sustainability, story, and trust. Over 80% of surveyed clients prioritized ethical sourcing, bilingual service, and a planning style that feels bespoke.
- Oliva Willow's core strategy is to serve no more than 10 weddings per year.
- The brand is designed to coordinate weddings and craft cultural experiences that integrate local artisans, minimize waste, and support regional economies.
- Financial modeling confirms strong profitability and brand resilience, even under conservative projections.

This project concludes that Oliva Willow has a unique and timely opportunity to lead a new chapter in the destination wedding space. With its focus on storytelling experiences, ethical luxury, and cross-cultural fluency, Oliva Willow offers more than a business plan. It provides a blueprint for how modern weddings can feel meaningful again.

**Key Words:** Destination weddings, experiential planning, sustainable luxury, Spain, cross-cultural events, creative entrepreneurship

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Figure 1 – Positioning Map

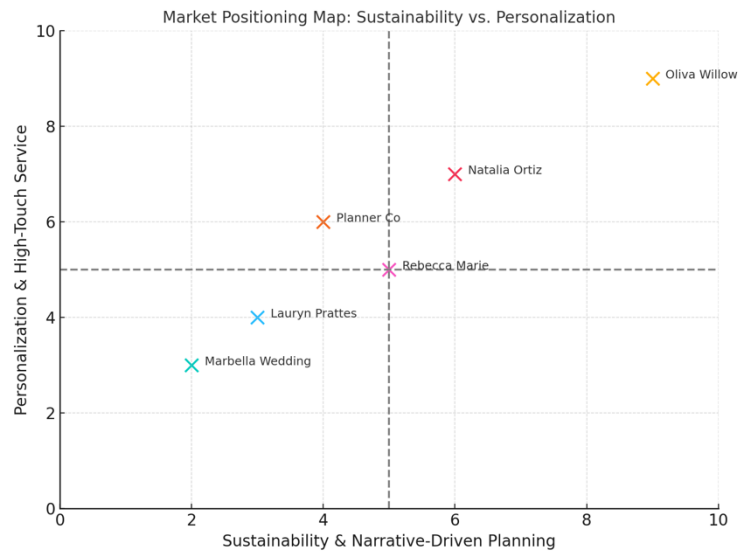
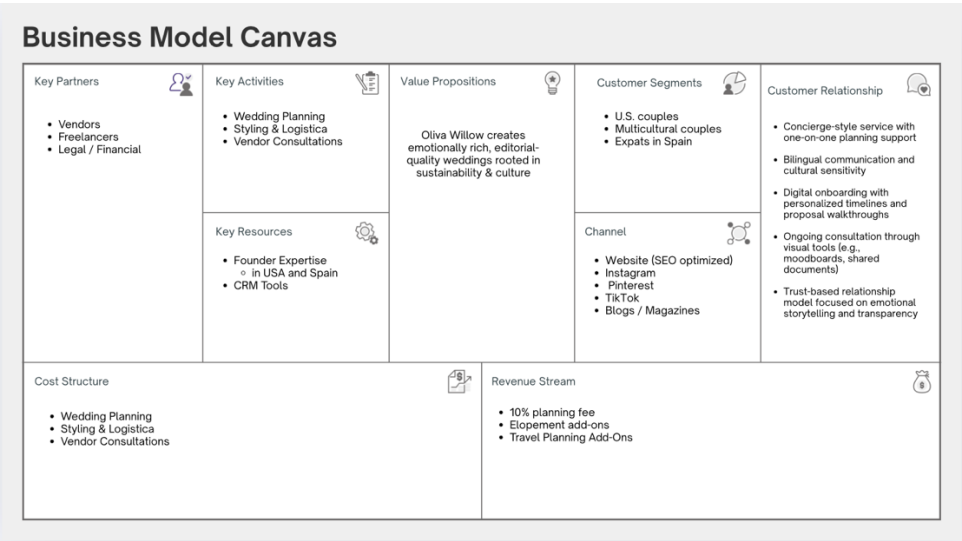


Figure 2 – Value Proposition

Criteria	Oliva Willow	Most Competitors
Bilingual Service	Yes – English & Spanish, founder-led	Often no – rely on third parties or English-only staff
Cultural Fluency	Yes – culturally immersive and regionally sensitive	Partial – limited understanding of American expectations
Sustainability Integration	Yes – structured offsetting, floral reuse, waste protocols	Rare – often mention local sourcing but no formal system
Planning Technology	Yes – CRM, moodboards, client dashboards	Manual – WhatsApp, PDFs, or email threads
Local Vendor Network	Yes – actively curated and regionally vetted	Informal or based on convenience
Founder Presence in Spain	Yes – full-time presence in Madrid	No – travel in from UK or U.S. for events
Emotional/Storytelling Approach	Core value – storytelling embedded in planning	Limited – logistics-led focus
Luxury Positioning	Boutique premium: 10 weddings/year, €70K+ budget	Mixed – from mass-market to high-end

Figure 3 – Business Model Canvas



## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Destination Wedding Industry

The destination wedding industry has experienced significant growth over the past decade, evolving from an incredibly niche segment into a must-have pillar within the global wedding economy. In 2024, the international destination wedding market was valued at approximately USD 36.5 billion, and it is projected to reach USD 371.1 billion by 2034, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 26.1%. This expansion is driven by couples seeking unique, personalized experiences that blend matrimonial ceremonies with travel, culture, and experiential tourism.

Several factors contribute to this upward trend. First, modern couples increasingly seek meaningful and non-traditional celebrations that reflect their identities and values. It is no longer the case that couples only get married in churches; they are expanding those limits. Destination weddings offer personalized experiences, often featuring picturesque settings and culturally unique elements. Secondly, the role of social media, particularly platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok, has begun to normalize and glamorize 'unimaginable' wedding locations, inspiring everyday couples to consider destinations beyond their home city and country. Economically, destination weddings can also provide cost advantages, particularly when hosted in countries with favorable exchange rates or lower operational costs compared to markets like the United States.

Additionally, developments shaping the industry include a rise in eco-conscious wedding practices, the growing preference for intimate gatherings, and the widespread adoption of digital tools for virtual planning. Spain has emerged as a preferred location for these celebrations due to its rich culture, diverse venues, desirable climate, and accessibility. With regions such as Andalusia, Catalonia, and the Balearic Islands (the most popular at the moment) offering a variety of landscapes and venue types, Spain presents an ideal environment for clients and wedding service providers.

### Personal Motivation and the Founding of Oliva Willow

The inspiration behind Oliva Willow is deeply rooted in my early exposure to the world of weddings. Raised in a household where my mother was a wedding cake designer, I witnessed the intricacies of wedding planning and the power of creative direction. Watching couples co-create beautiful celebrations instilled in me a lasting appreciation for the interplay of logistics and artistry.

The name Oliva Willow pays tribute to my maternal grandmother, Olive Victoria—an Australian-born model, swimmer, entrepreneur, and bold spirit who has inspired my approach to business and life, although I never met her. When I moved to Spain at the age of 16, I developed a strong cultural tie to this country that would eventually influence the ethos of my brand. Combining "Olive" with the Spanish translation "Oliva" and pairing it with "Willow," a symbol of grace and resilience, I created a name that reflects both legacy and vision, in which I hope Oliva Willow to hold.

During university, I gravitated away from traditional business paths and instead sought to integrate creative storytelling with a strategic mindset. With the encouragement of my business school director, I pursued internships with destination wedding firms, the

first being in Oahu, Hawaii, and later in Málaga, Spain. These experiences affirmed my desire to plan weddings and design immersive, cross-cultural celebrations that reflect modern global love stories.

The moment I realized that destination wedding planning was my ‘purpose’ happened during my first day of internship with Pilar Martienz Eventos in Malaga, Spain. Within two hours of deboarding the plane from the United States, I was in a taxi heading to a finca, 20 minutes north of the city center of Malaga, to assist with an international wedding their firm was executing. Due to their limited English level, I was put on the front line, with little to no information, and worked to ensure that the British couple’s desires were met despite a language barrier. From that moment onward, I knew I could not only focus on designing weddings domestically in the United States.

Oliva Willow was launched as a boutique planning firm for globally minded, style-conscious couples in the United States in 2021. Elegance, intentionality, and hospitality define its aesthetic and operational DNA. Today, the brand curates multi-day celebrations rooted in international sophistication, aiming to position itself as a distinctive voice in the global wedding market.

#### **Problem Statement: The Opportunity to Scale Oliva Willow to the Spanish Market**

While Mediterranean countries such as Italy, France, and Greece are traditionally favored for destination weddings, Spain stands apart for its unique convergence of cultural depth, cost competitiveness, and logistical accessibility. Its pricing advantages in less saturated regions allow couples to host multi-day celebrations with an increased value. At the same time, its tourism infrastructure and international airports simplify travel and coordination for all parties involved.

Spain offers a dynamic mix of venue options, from castles to beachfront fincas, and adheres to bilingual service environments, which is a highly desirable asset when working with international clients. Despite this information, many planning services in Spain remains local in scope and lacks the aesthetic innovation and cultural fluency expected by high-end global clientele. This is not a fault of the local vendors, but if the need is not present, why would there be a desire to push those boundaries? This presents an opportunity for Oliva Willow to scale its operations and deliver a differentiated service offering that combines design, logistics, and multicultural experience. The objective is not only to expand geographically, but to set a new standard for personalized, elegant destination weddings within the Spanish market.

### **Objectives: General and Specific Goals of the Thesis**

#### **General Objective**

This thesis aims to develop a strategic and scalable business plan to expand Oliva Willow, a boutique destination wedding planning company, into the Spanish market. This plan aims to position the brand as a premier provider of high-end wedding experiences tailored to American and international clients who want to host their wedding celebration in Spain. The research will assess the viability of such an expansion by examining market conditions, operational feasibility, competitive positioning, and sustainability practices, providing a roadmap for the successful internationalization of the company.

### Specific Objectives

- Analyze the annual volume and profile of international couples, particularly from the United States, who choose Spain as their wedding destination to assess market potential and client demand.
- Examine consumer behavior, spending patterns, and expectations within the high-end destination wedding market.
- Identify Spain's competitive advantages compared to other Mediterranean markets, including cost competitiveness, venue diversity, and cultural richness.
- Evaluate logistical, legal, and communication-related challenges associated with cross-border weddings.
- Develop a scalable, client-centered planning framework adaptable to remote coordination and multi-day event formats.
- Propose tools and partnerships that streamline workflows and ensure quality service delivery.
- Define a pricing and revenue strategy that aligns with the luxury segment while maintaining operational sustainability.
- Create financial projections including startup costs, breakeven analysis, and long-term profitability.
- Design targeted marketing strategies that leverage Spain's unique value proposition to attract international clientele.
- Recommend sustainable practices and local partnerships that enhance authenticity and support regional economies.

### Justification: Practical and Academic Significance of the Project

This thesis holds value both practically and academically. Practically, it responds to a market demand for elevated, culturally immersive wedding experiences in Spain, particularly from American and global couples seeking more than the standard destination offering. The business plan emerging from this research will serve as a viable guide for expanding Oliva Willow in an operationally efficient, creatively distinct and regionally adaptive manner.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview of Global and Spanish Destination Wedding Markets

Spain is strategically positioned in this expanding market, among the top five global wedding destinations (Sunshine Weddings Spain, 2023). As of 2022, more than 15,000 foreign couples held weddings in Spain, which continues to rise due to the country's relatively affordable service costs, scenic diversity, and robust hospitality infrastructure (Elite Traveler, 2023). Unlike Italy or France, where high tourist density and limited venue availability often inflate costs, Spain offers a broader selection of rural fincas, coastal estates, and historic urban sites at competitive prices.

Spain's tourism ecosystem, supported by international airports in cities like Madrid, Barcelona, Málaga, and Valencia facilitate easy travel for destination clients. Its multilingual service culture, particularly in tourist-centric regions, enhances accessibility and service customization for non-Spanish-speaking clients (INE, 2023).

### Key Trends in Wedding Tourism and Luxury Events

Four dominant trends are shaping the destination wedding industry. First, personalization and narrative-driven planning have become central. According to a



report by Wedinspire (2023), modern couples seek events that reflect their heritage, story, and design sensibilities, prompting a rise in curated wedding weekends that extend beyond the ceremony into full guest experiences.

Second, social media's influence, especially platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok, continues to elevate demand for visually captivating weddings. Couples often draw inspiration from styled shoots and influencer weddings, which set high aesthetic benchmarks (The Business Research Company, 2023).

Third, there is a sustained preference for smaller, more intimate events, a pandemic legacy. The "micro-wedding" trend, as mentioned by IMARC Group (2022), indicates a shift toward quality over quantity, with greater investment in design, food, entertainment, and photography for a smaller guest list.

Finally, technological integration is streamlining international planning. Digital tools such as CRM platforms, virtual venue tours, and collaborative design platforms like Milanote have allowed couples to plan remotely with professional oversight, enhancing convenience and confidence in planning overseas (Axios, 2023).

### Insights into Entrepreneurship in Niche Service Markets

Entrepreneurship in niche service industries, particularly those defined by aesthetic expertise and emotional client engagement require more than operational efficiency. According to Morris, Kuratko, and Covin (2020), entrepreneurs in these sectors succeed by creating emotionally resonant value propositions and sustaining differentiation through brand identity.

Oliva Willow's model aligns with this offering, planning, art direction, cultural integration, and storytelling. As discussed by Fillis (2016), creative entrepreneurs must balance artistic vision with business systems, an approach often seen in sectors like luxury hospitality and design consultancy. The internationalization of niche service brands also demands cultural intelligence and localized adaptation. Research by Evers, Andersson, and Hannibal (2012) highlights that international growth among small creative firms is often driven by the founder's cultural capital, personal networks, and ability to localize while maintaining global consistency. This is relevant to destination planning, where legal systems, vendor cultures, and client expectations vary significantly by region and where Oliva Willow can capitalize on.

### Sustainability in the Wedding Industry

Sustainability is an increasingly relevant lens for evaluating the wedding industry's practices. According to Laing and Frost (2021), destination weddings often have a heightened ecological footprint due to travel, disposable materials, and resource-intensive operations. Clients are becoming more aware of this and seeking vendors who can provide elegance and ethical responsibility.

Green wedding practices include using seasonal and locally sourced florals, eliminating single-use plastics, and selecting venues with sustainability certifications. Planners also promote carbon offset programs for guest travel and support local economies through partnerships with artisans and small-scale producers (Event Planner Spain, 2022). A 2023 survey by Wed Society found that 54% of couples now consider sustainability a decision-making factor when selecting vendors for destination weddings. Therefore,

environmentally responsible planning has evolved from a trend into a business imperative, offering a compelling brand differentiator in the competitive luxury market. These combined insights underscore the critical themes and market conditions underpinning the business model proposed in this thesis. The literature reveals that Oliva Willow's expansion into Spain aligns with current industry demands and is well-positioned to set new benchmarks in sustainability, personalization, and cross-cultural service excellence.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to assess the viability of expanding Oliva Willow into the Spanish destination wedding market. The quantitative dimension is anchored in a structured online survey targeting potential international clients, while the qualitative component is derived from semi-structured interviews with experienced vendors and planners operating in Spain. This dual approach allows for triangulation of findings, enriching the strategic analysis with both demand-side and supply-side insights.

### Data Collection

**Surveys:** A 15-question online survey was distributed via social media and professional wedding planning forums, yielding 107 complete responses from individuals aged 25–40, primarily based in the U.S. but open to destination weddings in Europe. The survey aimed to capture key purchasing behaviors, budget expectations, planner preferences, and emotional drivers. Questions ranged from demographic filters to scenario-based decision-making, including Likert-scale rankings and open-text responses. The data served to quantify the market potential, validate pricing tiers, and identify core differentiators for Oliva Willow's offering.

**Vendor Interviews:** To contextualize client-side insights, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of Spanish-based professionals, including planners, florists, photographers, and venue managers. Interviews focused on vendor workflows, cultural gaps with international clients, pricing transparency, and sustainability practices. Six of these interviews were with wedding planners.

### Validation Methods

The validity of findings was enhanced through data triangulation such as cross-referencing themes from surveys, interviews, and secondary industry reports. Survey data was cleaned to eliminate duplicates and incomplete responses, and interview themes were validated by recurrence across vendor types. Additionally, benchmarking against competitor pricing, service models, and client testimonials was used to verify assumptions embedded in the financial modeling and positioning strategy. This multi-layered validation enhances the reliability of the proposed expansion plan and substantiates its recommendations with real-world market feedback.

## MARKET ANALYSIS

### Strategic Market Analysis for International Expansion

To evaluate Oliva Willow's potential to scale internationally, this section conducts a structured comparative analysis, integrating client insights, market characteristics, and competitive dynamics across the U.S. and Spain. The goal is to develop a clear understanding of the business opportunity and define a sustained competitive advantage for Oliva Willow's entry into the Spanish destination wedding market.

#### 1. Customer Insights from the U.S. Market

Over the past three years, Oliva Willow has refined and tested its business model in the United States, targeting a niche group of globally-minded, design-conscious couples. These clients, mainly aged 28 to 40 and upper-middle class, value storytelling, sustainability, and immersive experiences when choosing their wedding services. However, this behavior also mirrors broader trends: the U.S. destination wedding market has steadily expanded, fueled by a desire for meaningful, travel-integrated celebrations. In 2024, the average wedding cost surpassed \$45,000, with high-end celebrations exceeding \$100,000 (The Knot, 2024). Much of this spending goes toward venue fees, permits, and vendor markups, leaving less budget for aesthetic improvements or cultural elements. Clients also face fragmented vendor ecosystems and experience planning fatigue due to decision overload.

To validate these trends, an online survey was conducted with 107 respondents aged 25 to 40, mostly living in the United States (87%) and a minority in Spain (13%). All respondents had recently planned, attended, or considered planning a destination wedding. The survey aimed to explore preferences around planner selection, cultural expectations, and willingness to invest in international events. Results reinforce the appeal of a more ethical and culturally sensitive approach to planning.

- 87% would prefer a planner with a sustainability focus
- 83% prioritize bilingual or internationally competent services
- 78% are willing to allocate 5–15% of their wedding budget to planning

These insights reveal an unmet need for wedding services that integrate cultural fluency, digital efficiency, and emotional resonance needs which Oliva Willow is well-positioned to meet through its boutique, founder-led model.

#### Survey Questions and Key Findings

1. What is your age group?
  - The majority (49%) were aged 25–30, followed by 31–35 and 36–40, matching the prime planning age for destination weddings.
2. Have you ever attended a destination wedding?
  - 56% said yes, indicating exposure to the format and a baseline familiarity with its expectations.
3. Have you ever planned (or are you planning) your destination wedding?
  - 41% had already planned or considered one, while 15% were actively planning, signifying a solid market base.

4. If you were attending a destination wedding, what would be your budget for the weekend (including transport, food, and lodging)?
  - Most (88%) indicated a spend between \$2,000 and \$4,000, which is useful for pricing guest packages or framing expectations.
  - All guests would be playing for their own transportation to and from the wedding destination.
5. What are the most critical factors when selecting a destination wedding location?
  - Affordability, cultural richness, aesthetic beauty, and ease of guest travel topped the list.
6. How likely would you be to consider Spain for a destination wedding?
  - Over 75% were “somewhat” to “very” likely to consider Spain, validating the market appeal.
7. What appeals to you most about a wedding in Spain?
  - Architecture, cuisine, climate, coastal settings, and cultural ambiance were recurring themes.
8. What concerns or barriers would you have?
  - The main deterrents were language barriers, guest travel costs, and remote vendor coordination.
9. What would your total estimated wedding budget be?
  - Most responses fell within the \$70,000–\$100,000 range, appropriate for high-end services.
10. What proportion of your budget would you allocate to a planner?
  - Most indicated 5–15%, validating Oliva Willow’s proposed premium service tiers.
11. Would you prefer a planner based in the U.S. or Spain?
  - 46% preferred Spain-based planners, and 54% were open to planners as long as they spoke English, highlighting bilingual fluency as a key differentiator.
12. Where do you get most of your wedding inspiration?
  - Pinterest and Instagram were the dominant platforms, suggesting that visual-driven marketing is essential.
13. What feelings come to mind when you think of a wedding in Spain?
  - Words like “elegant,” “relaxed,” “romantic,” and “sun-soaked” suggest Spain is tied to emotional resonance and beauty.
14. Would you like a planner incorporating sustainability?
  - 83% were interested or open to sustainability, with over half saying “yes.”
15. If considering a wedding in Spain, which regions interest you most?
  - Popular mentions included Barcelona, Costa del Sol, Granada, Mallorca, and San Sebastián.

Complementing the survey, on-site visits were conducted at various venues (and coffee shops) in Andalusia, mainly in the Malaga and Marbella areas. Each site was assessed based on key factors such as visual appeal, accommodation capacity, logistical infrastructure, vendor flexibility, and accessibility for international guests. Field notes and photos from these visits helped shape the client experience flows and the development of sample wedding packages. These evaluations ensured that the proposed service model is rooted in Spain's destination wedding industry's actual capabilities and regional differences.

## **2. Characteristics of the Spanish Market for International Weddings**

Spain has emerged as one of the leading global destinations for weddings, especially among international couples seeking cultural depth, scenic beauty, and affordability compared to traditional markets such as Italy or France. In 2022, approximately 15,000 foreign couples were married in Spain. This is a figure that has increased by more than 30% in the past two years, driven by increasing interest from clients in the UK, Sweden, and the United States. Spain offers a broad spectrum of venues from historic haciendas in Andalusia to beachfront fincas in the Balearic Islands and a favorable legal framework for symbolic weddings, making it accessible to couples outside the EU. Its developed tourism infrastructure and unique regional diversity position Spain as a flexible and desirable destination for cross-cultural celebrations.

With a budget of €70,000–€100,000, couples can access historic venues, top-tier catering, and multi-day experiences that would cost significantly more in the U.S. Additionally, the favorable euro-to-dollar exchange rate further boosts the purchasing power for U.S.-based clients. According to the Knot Real Weddings Study (2023), the average wedding cost in the United States now exceeds \$45,000, with mid-tier weddings in major urban markets often reaching \$60,000 to \$80,000, depending on guest count and service levels. These figures make Spain especially appealing for American couples who can enjoy comparable or even higher quality and experiences at a lower cost while including travel and culture into their celebration.

Survey data indicates that 72% of respondents are likely or very likely to choose Spain as a wedding destination. This preference is influenced not only by cost but also by emotional factors: Spain's cultural richness, architecture, natural landscapes, and romantic atmosphere create a compelling story for couples wanting memorable experiences. Spain becomes more than just a backdrop—it becomes a vital part of the love story.

Legal frameworks in Spain are also more adaptable for international couples. Most choose symbolic ceremonies to avoid bureaucratic hurdles and enjoy a wider range of venue options. However, despite these benefits, Spain's planning infrastructure is often regional, lacking bilingual or cross-cultural services. Interviews with Spanish vendors show challenges in communication, coordination, and the lack of structured digital tools. These gaps create opportunities for Oliva Willow to add value.

By attracting high-budget American couples to host their weddings in Spain, Oliva Willow helps boost the local economy through tourism, venue bookings, vendor employment, and regional exposure. Each destination wedding can support dozens of local vendors, from florists to caterers to transportation services, thereby connecting luxury event planning with economic growth in both developed and underdeveloped regions.

### **3. Competitor Analysis: Demand and Supply Side Perspectives**

In the U.S., the luxury wedding planning industry is crowded. Many boutique firms compete in a market heavily shaped by social media and influencer culture. This environment pushes many planners to stand out through online presence rather than service quality, often leading to pricing pressures and fewer chances for genuine brand storytelling.

Spain, by contrast, is in an early stage of developing its international wedding market. Although the number of foreign weddings increased by over 30% from 2020 to 2022 (INE, 2023), most planning companies are regional, small, and focused on Spanish-speaking clients. Few have the infrastructure or expertise to serve international clients at a high level.

Vendor interviews reveal:

- A desire for bilingual planners to bridge communication gaps
- Operational inefficiencies due to the lack of project management systems
- Seasonal bottlenecks in May–June and September–October
- Limited marketing of sustainability practices despite openness to them

Oliva Willow can fill this gap by offering editorial-level design, remote-friendly planning tools, bilingual service, and a cross-cultural mindset. These capabilities align with vendor needs and client expectations, reinforcing the firm's market opportunity.

### SWOT Analysis: Business Opportunity for Oliva Willow in Spain

To assess the strategic fit for expanding into Spain, a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) was performed. This tool provides a structured comparison of internal capabilities against external market forces. While earlier sections examined market conditions, this SWOT also considers insights about Oliva Willow's organizational structure and operational maturity, offering a more comprehensive view of its potential in Spain.

Oliva Willow was founded in the U.S. in 2021 and currently operates as a boutique planning studio based in Kansas, with a lean structure led by the founder and supported by a network of freelancers. It specializes in full-service planning for luxury destination weddings, with typical budgets ranging from \$70,000 to \$300,000. The company has operated profitably for the past two years, handling a maximum of 8 weddings per year, by design to maintain quality and exclusivity. This level of maturity positions Oliva Willow to strategically expand into Spain while preserving its identity and operational control.

#### **Strengths:**

- Proven U.S. business model with high client satisfaction and profitability
- Founder-led, bilingual operation with direct experience in both U.S. and Spanish markets
- Established brand identity centered on sustainability, personalization, and cultural fluency

#### **Weaknesses:**

- No current legal entity, team, or exclusive vendor partnerships in Spain.
- High dependency on the founder; limited scalability without recruitment
- Lack of prior experience navigating the Spanish regulatory and tax systems

#### **Opportunities:**

- Strong growth in the number of international weddings in Spain post-COVID
- Unmet demand in the U.S. for bilingual, sustainability-focused planners with digital-first strategies.
- An open attitude among Spanish vendors to collaborate with international partners

#### Threats:

- Market seasonality may constrain revenue windows (spring/fall bottlenecks)
- Exposure to macroeconomic shocks (e.g., currency swings, inflation, travel restrictions)
- Entry of new planners mimicking Oliva Willow's aesthetic or positioning

This SWOT analysis offers a bridge between Oliva Willow's current operational reality and its proposed growth in Spain. It reinforces the firm's readiness while flagging areas where investment, hiring, and local adaptation will be required.

#### PESTEL Analysis: Strategic Relevance of Macro Forces

The PESTEL analysis was revisited with a focus on its practical implications for Oliva Willow. Each factor was assessed not just as an isolated description but for how it influences strategic priorities like pricing, communication style, and operational feasibility.

- **Political:** Spain's political stability and status as a Schengen zone member lower perceived risk for U.S. couples. The country's tourism-focused visa policies, especially for short visits, provide a smooth entry process for international wedding guests, while also reducing the legal complexity for planners managing cross-border events.
- **Economic:** The EUR/USD exchange rate boosts U.S. clients' purchasing power, enabling Oliva Willow to offer premium experiences at relatively lower costs for clients. However, this benefit depends on exchange rate stability. Fluctuations could impact vendor payouts or planner margins, emphasizing the need for flexible pricing and a local euro-based expense forecast to manage risk.
- **Sociocultural:** Increasing demand for custom, ethical experiences fits with the brand's identity. However, the sociocultural aspect also brings **tensions:** Spanish vendors often work with informal agreements and flexible schedules, while American clients expect punctuality, quick responses, and strong service standards. Closing this gap in expectations is a strategic skill—something Oliva Willow can do through bilingual communication, client education, and vendor onboarding.
- **Technological:** The spread of CRM software, collaborative design tools (e.g., Milanote, Notion), and virtual venue walkthroughs allows Oliva Willow to develop remote-first workflows. These tools are integral to the firm's ability to operate across continents, scale sustainably, and provide visual planning—a key differentiator in a highly aesthetic-driven industry.
- **Environmental:** Although sustainability is a core value of the brand, the unavoidable contradiction of flying guests internationally poses reputational and ethical risks. This tension is openly recognized and addressed through offsetting



initiatives and localized sustainability efforts. It is also viewed as an opportunity to communicate with transparency and authenticity.

- **Legal:** Spanish marriage laws permit symbolic ceremonies, avoiding the need for extensive legal paperwork or residency. This increases venue flexibility, enhances client experience, and reduces legal liability for planners.

This interconnected PESTEL analysis acts as a diagnostic tool to identify risks, support decision-making, and highlight areas that need strategic adjustments, such as bilingual onboarding, dynamic pricing, and service localization.

### Business Model Canvas

To support the upcoming financial projections, this section provides a complete Business Model Canvas (BMC) for Oliva Willow's expansion into Spain. The BMC details the company's operational structure, value delivery system, and income model. It is based on survey data, vendor interviews, and internal operational planning.

#### Key Partners

- Local vendors: florists, caterers, musicians, and venues with strong service and sustainability standards
- Legal and accounting advisors (bilingual)
- SEO and brand consultants (for digital acquisition)
- Freelance planners in Spain to support on-site coordination

#### Key Activities

- Creative direction and full-service planning
- Design, styling, and logistics
- Bilingual communication with vendors and clients
- Client onboarding and experience management via CRM
- Coordination of multi-day events with tailored workflows

#### Key Resources

- Founder's expertise, cultural fluency, and brand IP
- CRM and planning systems (Dubsado, Milanote)
- Vetted vendor network across regions
- Moodboards, templates, client checklists

#### Value Proposition

Oliva Willow creates emotionally rich, editorial-quality weddings centered on sustainability, cultural fluency, and personalized design. Its boutique model ensures exclusivity (max 10 weddings per year) and founder-led care, setting it apart from volume-based firms.

#### Customer Relationships

- Personalized onboarding via digital portal
- Moodboard co-creation sessions and transparent timeline tracking
- Concierge-level event support, from first call to post-event follow-up



## **Channels**

- Website (bilingual, SEO-optimized)
- Instagram and Pinterest for visual storytelling and traffic
- Wedding directories (e.g., The Lane, Over the Moon)
- Strategic collaborations with U.S. planners and travel agents

## **Customer Segments**

- U.S.-based couples with heritage or emotional ties to Europe
- Multicultural or bilingual couples planning symbolic ceremonies
- Expats in Spain seeking high-end wedding planning

## **Cost Structure**

- Fixed: branding, legal registration, CRM tools, styled shoots
- Variable: travel, freelance staff, platform subscriptions, taxes
- Low overhead due to lean team; scale limited intentionally for quality

## **Revenue Streams**

- 10% planning fee based on event budget (€7,000–€10,000 per wedding)
- Optional add-ons: elopement packages, pre-wedding travel coordination, event styling services
- Potential B2B revenue in Year 3 (venue partnerships, retreat design)

With this operational framework established, the following financial analysis measures Oliva Willow's expansion feasibility and profitability using realistic assumptions from this business model.

## **5. Targeting and Strategic Positioning**

Oliva Willow's primary target market for expansion includes globally minded couples, especially Americans aged 28 to 40, who want a deeply personal and emotionally meaningful wedding experience. These couples see their celebration as more than just a one-day event; it's a carefully curated journey that reflects their values, style, and cultural interests. Many have heritage or emotional ties to Europe and are attracted to the beauty, symbolism, and romance of hosting a destination wedding in Spain.

They prioritize:

- Memorable experiences rooted in storytelling and cultural immersion
- Cost-effectiveness when compared to high-cost U.S. weddings
- The ability to host multi-day events that feel personal, not packaged
- Seamless planning support, often from abroad

Survey data shows that most are willing to spend between \$70,000 and \$100,000 on their celebration, with up to 15% allocated for planning fees. These clients are also digitally savvy and expect a high level of personalization, transparency, and aesthetic quality in both planning and execution.

## Competitor Analysis

Spain's wedding planning scene features a diverse mix of boutique planners, venue-based coordinators, and international luxury event agencies. These firms mainly serve European or regional clients, with only a few expanding to attract U.S. or international couples with high-end expectations. To improve competitive benchmarking and understand strategic differences, five semi-structured interviews were conducted with experienced destination wedding planners currently working in Spain or specializing in international weddings. These conversations, held both in person and virtually from February to April 2025, examined service offerings, planning challenges, cultural dynamics, and client expectations. Although detailed pricing information was not shared, all planners provided honest insights about their workflows, clientele, and market positioning.

- **Marbella Wedding (Costa del Sol)**  
A boutique firm mainly serving British clients, Marbella Wedding operates exclusively in English and adheres to traditional planning methods. Their expertise lies in venue familiarity and long-standing vendor connections, though their cultural focus remains primarily UK-centric.
- **The Planner Co (Madrid & UK)**  
A bilingual team with operations in both Spain and the UK, this firm offers full design, venue sourcing, and planning packages. Their recent growth has been driven by U.S.-based clients seeking transparency, aesthetic cohesion, and elevated service in Spain. The team acknowledged the difficulty of managing differing cultural norms between Spanish vendors and Anglo-American clients.
- **Natalia Ortiz (Madrid-based)** with over 15 years of experience across Spain and Europe, works fluently in both Spanish and English. She emphasizes the importance of "cultural translation" between local vendor expectations and international client desires. Natalia often manages marriage proposals and full-scale weddings, frequently for expats or culturally mixed couples.
- **Lauryn Prattes (U.S.-based, works in Europe)** While Lauryn specializes in destination weddings across Europe, she does not speak Spanish and relies on local partnerships. She caters to high-net-worth U.S. clients and focuses on the aesthetic and editorial elements of wedding design. However, she admitted that her team depends heavily on intermediaries for communication and logistics in regions where English is not spoken.
- **Rebecca Marie Weddings (U.S. & UK offices)**  
With a strong online presence and a reputation for large-scale events across Southern Spain, the Balearics, and Italy, Rebecca's firm operates remotely and does not speak the local languages. Her model depends on local collaborators and coordinators. Her clientele is primarily American or British, with minimal adaptation for local planning customs.

## Competitive Landscape Observations

- **Service Orientation:** Most firms are either volume-driven or hyper-local, limiting their ability to deliver fully personalized, multicultural experiences. While they may craft beautiful weddings, they often lack structured digital planning tools, immersive storytelling, and sustainability frameworks.
- **Client Communication:** Few companies offer bilingual services as a built-in feature. Many rely on informal English communication, which limits transparency and can create confusion for U.S.-based or international clients.

- **Sustainability Efforts:** Although “local sourcing” is casually mentioned by some, it is often used as a logistical choice rather than an ethical position. None of the top competitors currently offer offset programs, donation guides, or vendor-level eco-audits.
- **Marketing and Visual Identity:** Competitors vary widely in branding quality. Several use templated websites and generic planning language, while only a few invest in visual storytelling or editorial-style aesthetics.

Meanwhile several themes emerged:

- **Market Price Point:** While no planner disclosed formal rate structures, all except Lauryn Prattes and Rebecca Marie noted that their weddings typically fall within the €65,000–€95,000 range. Lauryn and Rebecca often serve clients with significantly higher budgets and multi-day itineraries.
- **Cultural Gaps: Country vs. Client Expectations**  
Every planner noted a critical challenge: bridging the gap between **the culture of the host country (Spain)** and **the expectations of international clients**. Spanish vendors often operate informally, with relaxed timelines and flexible contracts—contrasting sharply with the detailed, time-sensitive, and service-heavy expectations of American couples. While many planners attempt to manage this tension, only a few succeed in translating it into seamless client experiences.
- **Language as a Barrier to Trust:**  
While several planners worked with American or British clients, only half were fluent in both English and Spanish. Others relied on staff, venue coordinators, or third parties for communication. This often delayed responses and introduced misunderstanding or mistrust in high-stakes moments. Clients increasingly seek **direct, fluent communication with the planner**, not intermediaries.
- **Lack of Sustainability Infrastructure:**  
None of the planners interviewed incorporated structured sustainability initiatives into their core services. Some sourced locally or avoided plastic, but none offered carbon offsetting, food donation, floral reuse, or vendor evaluation through an eco-lens. There was a consensus that sustainability was “nice to have,” but not requested enough by clients to warrant formal systems.
- **Planning Technology Is Lagging:**  
Many planners still work through WhatsApp, email, and manual documents. Though several expressed interest in moving toward more integrated platforms, none currently offer **collaborative planning dashboards**, design visualization portals, or real-time budget tracking.
- **Vendor Education Burden:**  
Most planners serve as cultural and operational intermediaries. Spanish vendors are often unfamiliar with U.S. service norms—formal proposals, detailed run-of-shows, or Pinterest-level design boards—leaving planners to either lower client expectations or manage the gap through added labor.

#### Added Insight: The Dual-Cultural Advantage of Oliva Willow

Across all interviews, a key insight emerged that destination wedding planning is no longer just about knowing the destination—it’s about navigating and translating between two cultures: that of the host country and that of the international client. Oliva

Willow is uniquely positioned to bridge this divide. The business will be headquartered **in Madrid, Spain**, where the founder is based year-round. This local presence enables efficient vendor coordination, regular site visits, and relationship-building with top-tier venues and suppliers. At the same time, Oliva Willow maintains **digital infrastructure for U.S.-based clients**, including a website, automated onboarding, and remote consultations via CRM and video platforms.

This hybrid model provides clients with the trust and accessibility of a U.S.-based brand combined with the logistical precision and cultural fluency of an embedded Spanish operation. Unlike competitors who depend on intermediaries or remote partnerships, Oliva Willow offers **founder-led, bilingual execution** that ensures clear communication, emotional connection, and smooth vendor coordination across borders.

While these firms have built strong reputations in their respective regions, their offerings tend to fall into one of two categories: (1) local cultural immersion for American clientele or (2) luxury execution with limited focus on cross-cultural nuance and modern client expectations. Most competitors operate independently within regional ecosystems, with limited emphasis on national scalability, bilingual execution, or digital-forward client communication.

How Oliva Willow Stands Out:

### **1. Narrative-Led Planning vs. Logistics-Led Coordination**

While competitors focus on logistics and vendor matching, Oliva Willow treats planning as an emotional and cultural story. Each wedding is driven by storytelling, starting with an immersive onboarding process that details the couple's background, values, and vision. This helps the planner turn those elements into every decision, visual, logistical, and experiential aspect. None of the compared competitors offer this level of story curation or strategic brand positioning around it.

### **2. Sustainability as Core DNA vs. Add-On Concept**

Oliva Willow emphasizes sustainability as a fundamental value, not just a marketing tool. From including carbon offset programs in client emails to providing floral reuse guides and composting protocols, the brand integrates its eco-conscious principles into every touchpoint. However, this approach to sustainability must be viewed within a clear context of trade-offs: destination weddings naturally involve international travel, which increases carbon emissions.

Rather than ignoring this contradiction, Oliva Willow acknowledges it directly and integrates mitigation strategies that address what is within the planner's control. These include:

- **Transparent carbon offset programs**, calculated per guest and included in welcome materials
- **Vendor selection based on location**, to reduce additional freight and transport
- **Seasonal and local florals**, composting policies, and reuse initiatives
- **Digital planning platforms** that minimize print and travel-based coordination
- **Client education materials** that encourage slow travel and lower-impact itineraries

In contrast, most competitors use vague phrases like “working with local vendors” without specific commitments. Oliva Willow’s survey confirms that 83% of ideal clients are either actively seeking or open to sustainability-focused planning, even within the destination wedding format. This shows a new generation of clients who want both celebration and responsibility and are willing to navigate the details of doing both.

### **3. Digital-First Planning Model**

Most Spanish firms still operate through PDFs, email threads, and WhatsApp messages. Oliva Willow deploys integrated planning platforms, CRM, Milanote, Airtable to offer clients a collaborative dashboard to manage design, budgets, and checklists in real-time. This system creates greater clarity and replicability, especially when managing clients across time zones.

### **4. Cap on Annual Weddings for Exclusivity**

While other firms handle 20–50 weddings annually, Oliva Willow limits it to 10 weddings per year. This cap is not just for lifestyle; it's a business strategy that ensures top-quality creative effort, attention to detail, and strategic vendor matchmaking. Competitors often overextend their service capacity during busy months, which harms quality and communication.

### **5. Founder-Led Bilingual, Cross-Cultural Expertise**

Unlike larger agencies or vendor-attached planners, Oliva Willow operates under a founder-led model rooted in cross-cultural fluency, dual-market experience, and local presence. Based full-time in Madrid, the founder is strategically located to access top Spanish destinations (e.g., Andalusia, Balearics, and Catalonia) with ease, while also maintaining ties to the U.S. market where most clients originate.

This binational structure enables Oliva Willow to act as a cultural and logistical bridge, providing U.S. clients with familiar service standards and design sensibilities, while effectively managing Spanish vendor relationships with local responsiveness. The result is a unique blend of proximity, fluency, and strategic alignment.

Survey data confirmed that 83% of respondents prioritized English communication, while vendor interviews consistently emphasized the need for planners who can serve as cultural translators and in-country coordinators. By maintaining an active operational structure in both Spain and the U.S. (remotely for lead generation and onboarding), Oliva Willow offers a meaningful, scalable advantage not commonly found in the market.

### **6. Full Weekend Experience vs. One-Day Event Focus**

While competitors often deliver a beautifully coordinated wedding day, Oliva Willow treats the celebration as a complete wedding journey, with welcome dinners, cultural excursions, and post-wedding brunches planned with equal care. These elements are essential for international guests investing €70,000–€100,000+ in a multi-day celebration.

### **6. Editorial-Level Brand and Content Strategy**

Focusing on brand storytelling, mood board development, visual narratives, and content

marketing, Oliva Willow aligns closely with aspirational platforms like Over The Moon, Brides, and The Lane. In contrast, most competitors rely on traditional or outdated web templates and copy. This difference is significant, especially in a market where visual presentation greatly impacts trust and conversions.

Oliva Willow is not trying to copy or slightly improve the current planning model; it is redefining what luxury destination wedding planning in Spain can be. Its brand stands out not only through service differentiation but also through *philosophical differences*: sustainability, storytelling, emotional design, and exclusivity as core values, not just features.

## 7. From Insight to Action: Strategic Implementation Plan

### Strategic Business Objectives

Based on this validated demand, the following SMART goals will guide Oliva Willow's expansion over the next two years:

- Secure and execute 5–7 weddings in Year 1; scale to 10 in Year 2
- Generate €75,000–€100,000 annually through premium planning fees
- Establish a vendor directory of 25 vetted Spanish suppliers by Month 10
- Convert at least 20 monthly inbound leads through web and social channels

These targets are designed to ensure profitability while maintaining exclusivity and service quality.

**Strategic Positioning Statement:** Oliva Willow is a boutique destination wedding planning company that serves globally-minded couples seeking to create emotionally rich, culturally immersive weddings in Spain. Positioned within the luxury experiential market, it competes with traditional planners by offering a unique mix of editorial design, bilingual service, and values-based planning. Unlike volume-driven firms, Oliva Willow provides highly personalized, multi-day celebrations that honor each couple's story while reducing costs through local partnerships and thoughtful logistics. Led by its founder, the brand combines emotional intelligence, operational precision, and aesthetic mastery to turn weddings into unforgettable experiences.

A positioning map would place Oliva Willow in the upper-right quadrant of a competitive chart. It is high-touch, highly sustainable, and narrative-led, while competitors remain clustered along more traditional axes such as cost-efficiency or logistical strength. (Figure 1: Positioning Map)

## Operational Structure and Service Delivery Model

### Legal Form & Taxation

Oliva Willow will initially register under Spain's autonomous freelancer structure (*autónomo*) to ensure administrative flexibility, quick market entry, and low overhead. This status is suitable for Year 1 activities, including scouting, contracting initial clients, and building a vendor network. As operations scale and recurring bookings increase, the company will transition to a **Sociedad Limitada (S.L.)**, offering greater legal

protections, VAT optimization, and long-term financial structure. A bilingual accountant will oversee tax filings, labor compliance, and international payment flows.

### Staffing Structure and Location

The company will be **based full-time in Madrid, Spain**, where the founder resides and oversees daily operations, vendor relations, and event execution. This local presence ensures proximity to high-demand regions like Andalusia and the Balearics while maintaining digital accessibility for international clients. Staffing will remain lean to preserve margin and flexibility:

- **Founder (Madrid)** – creative director and lead planner
- **Assistant Planner (Freelance, Andalusia)** – supporting event logistics and site coordination
- **Legal & Accounting Advisors** – outsourced as-needed for compliance and risk mitigation.

There will be no physical presence or employees in the United States; U.S. clients will be managed digitally through automated onboarding and concierge communication tools.

### Planning Tools & Technology Stack

An integrated digital backend will support service delivery:

- **CRM and Proposal Builder:** Dubsado – for contracts, invoicing, and workflow automation
- **Client Portal and Budgeting:** Notion or Airtable – for planning transparency and collaboration
- **Visual Planning Tools:** Milanote and Canva – for design mockups and storyboarding

This digital infrastructure enhances client trust, streamlines project management, and reduces manual work, while supporting asynchronous planning across time zones.

### Vendor Partnership Strategy

Reliable vendor partnerships are essential to executing high-quality, culturally resonant weddings. The strategy includes:

- **Tier 1 Partners:** Curated local florists, caterers, musicians, and venues that meet criteria for professionalism, sustainability, and bilingual capability
  - **Vetting Criteria:** Responsiveness, pricing transparency, aesthetic alignment, and prior experience with international clientele
  - **Ongoing Management:** Quarterly feedback reviews, promotional collaborations, and post-event debriefs
- Initial relationships established through field visits in Andalusia will serve as the foundation of this partner ecosystem.

### Peak Season Capacity Strategy

While most destination weddings in Spain occur between May and October, Oliva Willow's model intentionally limits total annual weddings to 10. This cap is not meant

to avoid peak season, but to optimize quality, exclusivity, and creative bandwidth during this high-demand period. By focusing on fewer, high-budget weddings, the brand secures priority vendor slots, delivers superior client attention, and avoids the resource strain typically associated with volume-driven models. This approach also allows for buffer time between events to manage unforeseen changes, reinforce vendor relationships, and sustain the high-touch service standard.

## Financial Analysis

The financial analysis assessed the economic viability and scalability of Oliva Willow's proposed expansion. It involved developing cost and revenue models grounded in 'real-world' assumptions and informed by survey data and competitor benchmarking.

- **Startup Cost Modeling:** Initial investment estimates covered legal registration fees in Spain, brand design and website development, targeted digital marketing campaigns, initial travel and accommodation for site visits, and technology subscriptions (e.g., CRM software, planning tools). These startup costs were estimated to range from €15,000 to €25,000, depending on the level of branding, web integration, and regional coverage.
- **Revenue Forecasting:** Revenue projections were based on a tiered service offering that ranged from complete planning packages costing \$8,000 to \$10,000 per client. Survey data showed that most clients would allocate between 5% and 15% of their wedding budgets to planning services, with total budgets estimated to be between \$80,000 and \$100,000. Oliva Willow will set their fees at 10% of the wedding budget. These figures were then used to model expected revenue, starting with an initial goal of 4–5 weddings in Year 1 and scaling up to an achievable goal of 10 weddings in Year 2.
- **Breakeven and Sensitivity Testing:** A breakeven analysis showed that the business would start covering fixed costs annually after 4–6 full-service bookings. Sensitivity testing was performed across scenarios that accounted for macroeconomic variables such as inflation, travel disruptions, or seasonal drops in demand. This testing confirmed that the business could remain financially solvent under conservative projections, especially when supported by diversified service tiers (e.g., elopements or corporate planning add-ons).

This financial groundwork confirmed Oliva Willow's commercial potential in Spain. It highlighted key areas where cost optimization, targeted marketing, and client education would be essential for early-stage success and long-term sustainability. In the context of the mixed-methods research design, the financial analysis is a must in validating the feasibility of scaling Oliva Willow into the Spanish market. While interviews, surveys, and secondary data help understand market demand, consumer behavior, and strategic fit, the financial analysis ensures that the business model is desirable and economically sustainable.

## FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

This section evaluates the financial feasibility of expanding Oliva Willow into the Spanish destination wedding market through cost analysis, revenue forecasting, breakeven modeling and sensitivity testing. These projections are based on primary research (survey results), industry benchmarks, and competitor pricing in comparable



Mediterranean wedding markets.

### Cost Analysis of Operations in Spain

Launching Oliva Willow in Spain involves both startup and operational expenditures. Key cost categories include:

#### Startup Costs (one-time):

- Legal registration and advisory: €3,000
- Brand development (website, identity, digital materials): €5,000–€8,000
- Initial marketing and styled shoots: €5,000
- CRM and planning tools: €1,000
- Travel and accommodation for venue scouting and vendor meetings: €3,000–€5,000

**Estimated total startup investment: €17,000–€22,000**

#### Annual Operational Costs:

- Digital tools and software subscriptions: €1,200
- Advertising and SEO budget: €3,000–€5,000
- Assistant/planner fees for event days: €7,500–€10,000
- Travel and lodging for events: €3,000–€6,000

**Estimated annual operational budget: €15,000–€20,000**

### Revenue Projections Based on Market Data

Revenue forecasts were built from market demand estimates, client budgets, and competitor pricing models. Oliva Willow's pricing model is based on a percentage-based fee structure, whereby the planning service charges a minimum of 10% of the client's total wedding budget. This percentage-based model is standard in luxury and full-service event planning, as it aligns the planner's compensation with the scale and complexity of the event. For example, for a wedding with a €70,000 budget, the planner's fee would be €7,000. For clients with larger budgets (e.g., €100,000), this translates to €10,000. This model provides flexibility and scalability, ensuring the planner is compensated proportionally as event expectations and complexity grow.

**Minimum Accepted Budget Policy:** To maintain brand positioning and service quality, Oliva Willow will accept only weddings with a minimum total budget of \$70,000, with a fixed planner fee starting at €7,000 (10%).

**Maximum Wedding Volume Policy:** Oliva Willow will intentionally limit bookings to a maximum of 10 weddings per year. This exclusivity ensures that each client receives the highest level of personalized attention, editorial design excellence, and logistical support. It also reflects both a strategic and lifestyle decision: to preserve the creative integrity of each event, maintain a luxury experience for clients, and avoid planner burnout, often seen in volume-driven models.

Although the company is led solely by the founder, it is not an isolated operation. Oliva Willow operates on a partnership-based model that prioritizes flexibility, creative control, and consistent service. The founder personally manages creative direction,

planning, and client relationships while leveraging an expanding network of freelance collaborators in Spain, including bilingual event coordinators, stylists, and production assistants. These professionals are hired on a per-event basis to support on-the-ground execution.

To further enhance the delivery of high-quality events, Oliva Willow will establish a Tier 1 vendor network: a carefully selected list of trusted partners, including florists, caterers, venues, and musicians who meet strict standards of service, communication, sustainability, and alignment with the brand's aesthetic. These Tier 1 vendors will be prioritized across all projects and serve as the core of Oliva Willow's event infrastructure in Spain.

This lean, founder-led model amplified by high-trust partnerships and a flexible freelance structure allows Oliva Willow to maintain a premium brand standard while scaling sustainably in a foreign market.

#### **Annual Revenue Forecast (Fixed at 10 Weddings):**

- Weddings: 10 per year
- Minimum average revenue per wedding: €7,000 (10% of €70,000 budget)
- Total projected revenue: €70,000
- With high-tier clients: Revenue may rise to €100,000 (10 weddings at €10,000)

#### **Break-even and Profitability Assessment**

Oliva Willow's business management structure is intentionally designed for flexibility, high service quality, and low overhead. As a solo founder, they will serve as the creative director, lead planner, and client liaison, but are supported by a network of freelance collaborators and streamlined digital systems that minimize administrative complexity. All inquiries, bookings, and proposals are managed through a CRM system (Dubsado) that automates lead capture, contract generation, and payment reminders. Planning timelines, vendor coordination, and client approvals are managed via Notion or Asana, enabling transparent collaboration and effective deadline tracking.

During peak planning times (such as spring and fall), freelance bilingual assistants will be hired per wedding to support logistics, site visits, and vendor management. This adaptable setup ensures that client service remains unaffected, even during multiple active events.

From a financial standpoint, the company uses a **cash-based accounting system** with basic P&L tracking in Excel, supported by a part-time accountant for tax and VAT compliance. Expenses are reviewed quarterly to evaluate cost-efficiency and adjust marketing or operational investments as needed.

This business management system ensures that the founder can maintain creative and client control, while also scaling operations responsibly through partnerships, automation, and financial discipline.

Based on the above projections:

- Estimated annual operating cost: €17,500
- Revenue needed to break even: 3 weddings at €8,000 (minimum)
- Profit at 10 weddings: €80,000 revenue – €17,500 costs = €62,500 profit

This model confirms that Oliva Willow can remain highly profitable while maintaining exclusivity and exceptional service standards.

**Fixed Costs (Year 1):**

- Branding & web: €6,500
- CRM and planning tools: €1,000
- Initial styled shoot & marketing: €5,000
- Assistant/staff coordination: €5,000
- Travel for scouting and events: €3,000
- Total: €20,500

**Variable Cost/Event** €2,000 (includes logistics, temporary staff, transport)

**Contribution Margin/Event:**

- Revenue/Event: €8,500
- Variable Costs: €2,000
- Margin: €6,500

**Breakeven Formula:**

$$€20,500 \div €6,500 = \sim 3.15 \text{ weddings}$$

This means profitability begins after three confirmed bookings, well within the 10-event cap, leaving substantial margin for reinvestment or scaling.

[Sensitivity Analysis](#)

To understand financial resilience, three scenarios were modeled. These scenarios examine volatility in demand, inflation, and client preferences. Instead of showing optimistic forecasts, the model emphasizes resilience.

**1. Conservative (Low Budget Bookings)**

- 10 weddings at €8,000 each
- Revenue: €80,000
- Net profit: €62,500

**2. Expected (Mid-Tier Bookings)**

- 10 weddings at €8,500 average
- Revenue: €85,000
- Net profit: €67,500

**3. Optimistic (High-Tier Bookings)**

- 10 weddings at €10,000 each
- Revenue: €100,000
- Net profit: €82,500

These projections confirm that even with a fixed booking cap, Oliva Willow's exclusive, high-service model is both financially viable and scalable over time through

brand reputation, strategic pricing, and thoughtful client selection. The model considers event caps, seasonal risks, and travel disruptions. For instance, in a year with 20% fewer bookings due to macro shocks, Oliva Willow can pivot to elopement packages or workshops to maintain cash flow.

### **SWOT Analysis: Anchored in Data and Market Realities**

Unlike standard SWOT tables that isolate internal and external factors, the updated version draws from qualitative vendor interviews and quantitative survey responses to support each quadrant:

- **Strengths** are now substantiated with primary data. For instance, 83% of surveyed clients indicated a preference for bilingual or internationally competent planners. Combined with the founder's Spanish fluency and operational experience in Andalusia, these factors support differentiation.
- **Weaknesses** include an initial absence of exclusive vendor agreements or a physical team in Spain. However, this is countered with a phased vendor relationship strategy and localized hiring. This shows a deliberate build-vs-buy approach, rather than an assumed replication of the U.S. model.
- **Opportunities** stem from clear market gaps. Vendor interviews revealed a willingness to collaborate cross-culturally but noted inefficiencies in project management. Oliva Willow's use of CRM-based communication and narrative-based design directly addresses this need.
- **Threats**, such as seasonal saturation or geopolitical shocks, are evaluated through the financial model's sensitivity testing. This illustrates alignment between strategic perception and financial realism.

Thus, the SWOT analysis serves as both a self-assessment and a market lens, informing marketing, operations, and pricing strategies with a grounded rationale.

### **Business Model Canvas: Validated and Quantified**

The Business Model Canvas now includes quantitative inputs derived from the financial section and survey results, solidifying the assumptions behind each block:

- **Customer Segments:** High-income American couples aged 25–40, confirmed by survey (49% between 25–30, 83% interested in sustainability, €80K–€100K budgets). This supports exclusivity and pricing models.
- **Value Proposition:** Aesthetic storytelling, bilingual planning, and sustainability, not aspirationally, but operationalized through curated vendor lists, carbon offset integrations, and moodboard-driven design.
- **Key Resources and Activities:** CRM systems, moodboarding tools, vendor directories, and bilingual planners, all of which are accounted for in cost projections and software allocations.
- **Revenue Streams:** Validated through willingness-to-pay metrics (78% of clients willing to allocate 5–15% of their budget to planning), supporting a 10% fee baseline. Fixed-price models for elopements or corporate events are proposed as diversification options.

Insights from the SWOT and PESTEL analyses directly informed the construction of the Canvas: the identified opportunity for cross-cultural planners led to the prioritization of bilingual service as a key resource and client value proposition. Similarly, external threats related to seasonal bottlenecks were addressed by capping bookings at 10 weddings per year, thereby reinforcing both quality control and operational sustainability.

By making the Canvas reflect actual resource use, client behavior, and financial structures, it moves from concept to executable strategy.

### Sustainability Integration

Sustainability was analyzed both as an operational principle and as a brand differentiator. Survey data indicated that a significant majority of prospective clients valued eco-conscious practices. The business model integrates sustainability by:

- Prioritizing partnerships with local, seasonal, and small-scale vendors.
- Minimizing waste through reusable materials, digital planning tools, and carbon-conscious logistics.
- Communicating these practices clearly in marketing materials to attract value-aligned clients.

This comprehensive methodological approach ensures that Oliva Willow's proposed expansion into the Spanish market is viable with the market realities, consumer behavior, and a sustainable, scalable business framework.

## SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Sustainability is not just a trend for Oliva Willow, it will be a guiding principle in the company's ethos. As a brand that works intimately with nature, culture, and celebration, we see it as both a privilege and a responsibility to use resources mindfully. We recognize the contradiction of promoting sustainable practices while facilitating events often involving long-distance travel. Destination weddings require carbon-intensive flights and accommodations. Rather than ignoring this reality, Oliva Willow acknowledges it transparently and will realize its effects wherever possible, from recommending carbon offset programs to favoring local sourcing and minimizing waste onsite.

While Oliva Willow promotes eco-consciousness, the thesis now acknowledges the contradiction of sustainability in the context of international events. Rather than greenwashing, the brand adopts a transparency-forward stance:

*"We are not fully sustainable. Flying 100 guests across the Atlantic cannot be offset by bamboo straws. But we can act intentionally in every aspect we control."*

This reframing provides credibility and anticipates scrutiny.

### Operational Integration of Sustainability

- **Venue Selection:** Prioritizing solar-powered, LEED-certified, or regenerative agriculture estates. Not for trend appeal but to materially reduce energy usage and partner with values-aligned owners.

- **Vendor Curation:** Using only local florists, decor rentals, and caterers to eliminate imports and reduce event carbon load.
- **Offset Integration:** Each guest will be presented with a carbon calculator link based on origin airport, paired with offset contributions as part of welcome communications.
- **Client Education:** Sustainability pledge documents, waste management policies, and ethical vendor practices will be shared at onboarding to invite collaboration not compliance from clients.

### **Long-Term Impact:**

As the brand grows, Oliva Willow may propose bundling low-carbon venues, offering offset-inclusive pricing, or partnering with hospitality brands that invest in reforestation. These strategies are not immediate but signal long-term strategic alignment with both brand ethics and client evolution.

The following section outlines the conscious approach to partnering with like-minded vendors, reducing event-related waste, and strengthening the local economies where the weddings are located. The commitment is not one of perfection, but of effort, transparency, and continual learning.

### **Opportunities for Eco-Friendly Vendor and Venue Partnerships**

Spain offers a rich network of regional talent and venues aligned with eco-conscious values.

- Venues with sustainability credentials, including solar-powered estates, restored heritage buildings, or properties that engage in regenerative agriculture.
- Florists who work with seasonal, local flowers and natural foraging techniques instead of chemically preserved imports.
- Catering teams that reduce food waste and support local farmers and producers, while also offering inclusive, plant-forward menu options.
- Decor partners who use reusable, repurposed, or biodegradable materials instead of single-use or plastic-based imported elements.

These collaborations support a lower-impact footprint and enhance authenticity and storytelling, which couples increasingly value.

### **Strategies to Reduce Wedding Waste**

The Oliva Willow team will be committed to building each wedding with intentionality while minimizing waste. This includes:

- Digital-first client communication, utilizing e-signatures, cloud planning portals.
- Promoting floral reuse and donation, such as reusing arrangements throughout the weekend or working with charities to donate centerpieces after events.
- Thoughtful guest gifts, avoiding generic wedding favors in favor of local, practical, or edible options with minimal packaging.
- Engaging with venues that recycle and compost, and inquiring about how waste is sorted and removed.
- Offering carbon offset options for guest travel and incorporating environmental considerations into itinerary planning. Examples include:
- Recommending clients to purchase carbon offsets through platforms like MyClimate, Sustainable Travel International, or Atmosfair.

- Including bundling offset suggestions in guest welcome communications with a link and estimated CO<sub>2</sub> per guest per flight.
- Supporting certified reforestation and renewable energy projects as a gesture of appreciation or an alternative to traditional wedding favors.

### Economic Impact of Supporting Local Businesses and Artisans

Rooting each wedding in its place and with its people is foundational to our mission. Every decision from the olive oil used in a welcome dinner to the live guitarist playing traditional Spanish music, presents an opportunity to support local talent. Our goals include:

- Building strong regional vendor relationships, prioritizing small, family-run businesses over corporate providers when possible.
- Hiring local assistants and creatives for logistical support and sharing local insight and presence during planning.
- Commissioning custom artisan work, such as hand-lettered signage, embroidered favors, or locally made ceramics, to give each celebration a personal and rooted quality.

### Sustainability Action Plan: Year One Priorities

To bring these principles to life, Oliva Willow will implement the following sustainability-focused actions in its first year of operations in Spain:

1. Curated Green Vendor List
  - Establish a vetted directory of eco-conscious vendors and venues, categorized by region, with information on their environmental practices. This will be shared with clients as part of their planning portal.
2. Sustainability Pledge & Welcome Packet
  - Develop a formal sustainability pledge to be shared with all clients during the onboarding process. This includes information on carbon offset options, recommended gifting practices, and waste-conscious planning suggestions.
3. Composting & Donation Protocols
  - Create a checklist and a preferred vendor guide for composting floral waste and donating excess food or floral arrangements to local shelters, nonprofits, or hospitals.
4. Offset Program Integration
  - Partner with a carbon offset platform (e.g., MyClimate) and create a plug-in or hyperlink for client communications. Offset recommendations will be calculated per guest based on flight distance and included in the final itinerary brief.
5. Artisanal Spotlight Series
  - Feature a local artisan or sustainable partner each month on Instagram and the Oliva Willow blog to boost community engagement and highlight ethical production practices.

It is understood that sustainability is a journey, not a checklist. Oliva Willow will remain committed to learning, growing, and adapting practices to meet yearly standards. Oliva Willow will aim to redefine what an elevated, ethical, and luxury wedding experience can look like.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following section outlines a practical roadmap for successfully launching and scaling Oliva Willow in Spain. These recommendations are based on the market research, financial projections, and strategic insights gathered throughout this thesis. The implementation plan balances brand positioning, operational scalability, and client experience with sustainability and cultural fluency.

### Key Actions for Successfully Scaling Oliva Willow

Oliva Willow is not just designing weddings but crafting experiences. To become Spain's most sought-after destination wedding planner, the brand must offer more than logistical coordination. It must create an emotional and sensory journey celebrating the couple's values while honoring the local environment and traditions. The following actions outline how Oliva Willow can evolve into a top-tier service rooted in luxury, purpose, and narrative.

#### 1. Emotional Brand Association through Storytelling Content

Oliva Willow will use Instagram, Pinterest, and its blog to share content based on real stories, not just styled shoots or promotional posts. The aim is to evoke the *feelings* related to a wedding in Spain: elegance, heritage, intimacy, and sensory beauty.

- Instagram Reels and TikTok will feature storytelling mini-series like “Three Days in Andalusia with Oliva Willow.”
- Blog and Pinterest calendars will follow real client questions and planning dilemmas.
- Every visual and caption will reinforce cultural texture and intentionality.

#### 2. Consistency Across All Brand Touchpoints

Consumers trust brands that deliver a unified, polished experience.

- Visual identity and voice will be consistent across website, social media, proposals, and emails.
- All backend tools (CRM, contracts, questionnaires) will be personalized and branded.
- Founder-led voice will be maintained to reinforce trust and accessibility.

#### 3. Positioning Through Authority and Association

To elevate perceived value and gain credibility:

- Pitch weddings and styled shoots to top-tier editorial platforms (*The Lane, Brides, Over the Moon*).



- Collaborate with boutique hotels, local artisans, and eco-luxury vendors to cross-promote the brand.

#### 4. Exclusivity as a Signal of Quality

Rather than maximizing volume, Oliva Willow will position exclusivity as an asset.

- Capping bookings at 10 weddings per year ensures attention and creativity.
- This will be communicated transparently to enhance perceived demand and personalization.
- High-touch onboarding experiences will reinforce boutique service standards.

Oliva Willow's decision to limit service to no more than 10 weddings annually is a strategic choice, not a logistical constraint. This cap reinforces the brand's boutique positioning, ensuring each event receives the full creative, logistical, and emotional attention that high-end clients expect.

While most destination weddings tend to cluster during Spain's peak season (May through October), Oliva Willow is built to operate within this reality, not avoid it. By focusing on a select few highly curated events, the brand can establish premium vendor relationships, prioritize quality over quantity, and provide clients with a sense of exclusivity that mass-market planners cannot offer. This approach also helps prevent creative burnout and enhances the brand's ability to deliver genuinely unique, story-driven weddings, each with a minimum budget of €70,000.

#### 5. Translating Values into Differentiators

Oliva Willow must translate its values into visible actions:

- Sustainability is expressed via carbon offset links, reusable floral plans, and local sourcing.
- Cultural fluency is demonstrated through bilingual service, vendor education, and region-specific itineraries.
- Every event becomes an expression of the couple's values, guided by intentional design and narrative integration.

These strategies collectively position Oliva Willow not just as a service provider, but as a luxury brand that **aligns with identity, ethics, and aspiration**—anchoring it strongly in the minds of its ideal clients.

#### Brand Execution Plan and Operational Rollout

To turn that positioning into market presence, the business will follow a phased brand-building and operational rollout strategy.

##### Phase 1: Brand Positioning & Foundational Visibility (Months 1–3)

Launch a bilingual website with tiered service offerings

- Establish editorial brand language and SEO structure
- Launch Instagram and Pinterest with past content, behind-the-scenes reels, and sustainability storytelling

- Create a lead magnet (e.g., “Planning a Wedding in Spain: 10 Essential Tips”)

#### Phase 2: Lead Generation & Authority Building (Months 4–6)

- Run Google Ads and Pinterest campaigns targeting Americans aged 25–40
- Pitch weddings and shoots to wedding blogs and magazines
- Launch a newsletter sequence with value-rich planning content
- Host webinars like “Is Spain Right for Your Destination Wedding?”
- Build LinkedIn visibility and B2B planner/travel agent partnerships

#### Phase 3: Trust & Community Engagement (Months 7–12)

- Develop client testimonial video reels and wedding recaps
- Host in-person and virtual meet-the-planner sessions
- Feature local vendors and artisans in cross-promotional press stories
- Maintain a Pinterest and blog calendar driven by real client questions and search behavior

### Operational Infrastructure to Deliver Positioning

To maintain high-touch service and consistent brand experience, internal operations will be scaled with precision.

1. **Legal and Administrative Setup**
  - Register as an autónomo in Spain (or SL in Year 2)
  - Work with a bilingual accountant and lawyer
2. **Hire and Train Associate Planners**
  - Build a team of bilingual freelance coordinators across regions
  - Provide onboarding and shared service templates
3. **Launch in Phases**
  - Start in Andalusia (high vendor familiarity), expand to the Balearics in Year 2
4. **Refine Package Structures**
  - Build clear service tiers: Elopement, Essentials, Full Coordination, Multi-Day Experience
  - Include transparent pricing and optional add-ons
5. **Create Scalable Systems**
  - Implement tools for onboarding (Dubsado), collaboration (Milanote), and workflow (Notion or Asana)
  - Use automated templates for timelines, questionnaires, and vendor briefs

## CONCLUSIONS

### Summary of Findings and Insights

This thesis began with a mission to scale Oliva Willow into the Spanish market, not just another service provider but also a cultural curator and experiential designer. With entrepreneurial research supported by real-world data and industry insight, the project has created a clear pathway forward.

Spain is one of the world’s most desirable wedding destinations, offering a compelling combination of scenic diversity, cost efficiency, and immersive culture. The market is

evolving rapidly, driven by a new generation of globally minded couples who value intentional celebrations. These couples are no longer interested full traditional weddings but they seek experiences that reflect who they are, where they've been, and what they value. Through interviews with local Spanish vendors, competitive benchmarking, and client focused survey research, we have confirmed that Oliva Willow's proposed brand, centered on design-forward, multi-day events with bilingual fluency and sustainability woven throughout, is uniquely aligned with this modern demand.

There is a clear gap in the Spanish market for luxury planners who combine American service culture with Spanish heritage and regional nuance. Financial projections based on a 10% fee from weddings with a minimum budget of €70,000 show that Oliva Willow can operate profitably with just 10 weddings annually. This exclusivity allows the brand to remain highly personalized, deeply creative, and intentionally human.

### Reflection on the Feasibility and Future Potential of Oliva Willow

The feasibility of scaling Oliva Willow is validated and emboldened by the market's trajectory and unmet client expectations. The destination wedding industry is entering a new era. It is no longer about packages and logistics but about story, culture, ethics, and connection. Oliva Willow is designed to meet this moment.

This brand does not aim to compete on volume. It will lead with voice. It will be a planner in Spain to position weddings as narrative-led, design-conscious, and values-aligned experiences that resonate far beyond the wedding day. Every decision from the olive grove welcome dinner to the linen-bound ceremony programs will carry intention. Every partner, from a ceramicist in Seville to a florist in Girona, will be chosen not for convenience but for their commitment to beauty, ethics, and authenticity.

Oliva Willow sees its role not only as a coordinator but also as a translator between cultures, a stage-setter for experiences, and an advocate of local economies. As the global wedding landscape shifts, Spain will become a focal point for couples seeking more. Oliva Willow will be there, bridging beauty with substance. In doing so, it will redefine not only what it means to plan a destination wedding but also what it means to experience one. The future is not mass. It is bespoke, considered, and conscious. It is Oliva Willow.

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