

2018

WEDDINGWIRE
2018 Newlywed Report



Lenaig Delisle-Photo

INTRODUCTION

No two weddings are alike, which is what keeps the wedding industry so fascinating year after year. From celebratory hashtags and social media announcements (86 percent of couples do this), to mixed-gender wedding parties and the inclusion of local food, it's no surprise that personalization is the one constant theme. In this year's Newlywed Report, you'll notice a continued shift in the traditional wedding season (hint: it's moved from summer to fall!) and how couples are relying on technology from the engagement through their wedding day. Planning is also starting earlier than ever before, as you'll see three-in-four Millennials are starting to do so before they even get engaged.

With nearly 18,000 respondents, WeddingWire gives you the truest look into modern day engagements and wedding planning – along with other interesting nuances like financial habits (one-in-four Millennials don't pay a dime for their wedding) and more prominent celebrations for LGBTQ couples (with an increase in guest size and parents' financial contributions) since the Supreme Court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage nationwide. Find out all this and more in WeddingWire's 2018 Newlywed Report!



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METHODOLOGY

The 2018 Newlywed Report is primarily based on WeddingWire's Newlywed Survey – the largest survey of 2017 weddings in the industry (N=17,862). The data is collected from WeddingWire's annual Newlywed Survey distributed to WeddingWire.com couples married between January 1st and December 31st, 2017. Respondents represent couples from all over the country with various ethnicities, income levels, race, age, sexual orientation and gender identity. To provide the most comprehensive view of research collected, WeddingWire has also included findings from ad hoc studies conducted in 2017, as well as behavioral data analyzed by the company's own team of data scientists. In a typical year, WeddingWire conducts research with more than 150,000 US brides, grooms, guests and wedding professionals.

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ENGAGEMENT

PLANNING THE PROPOSAL

Seventy-two percent of Millennials feel pressured to make their proposal highly unique (vs. 45% Gen X). While data shows they are more inclined than Gen X to involve others in their proposal plans, Millennials continue to honor certain timeless proposal traditions:



68%

Plan the proposal ahead of time



72%

Ask for parents' blessing



82%

Get on one knee for the proposal



PROPOSAL PLANS INVOLVING OTHERS (MILLENNIALS VS. GEN X)

TELL FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT PROPOSAL PLANS	MILLENNIALS	56%
	GEN X	38%
INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO WITNESS PROPOSAL	MILLENNIALS	25%
	GEN X	17%
SECRETLY HAD PROPOSAL PHOTOGRAPHED/RECORDED	MILLENNIALS	20%
	GEN X	12%
PLANNED A CELEBRATION IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE PROPOSAL	MILLENNIALS	22%
	GEN X	13%



NO RING,
NO PROBLEM!

75% of Millennials start planning for their wedding *prior* to the proposal.

PURCHASING THE RING

Given the average cost of an engagement ring is \$5,000, it's no surprise that 1 in 3 show their partner the ring/style they like and nearly 50% pick out the ring together. The majority of purchasers look at 2-7 rings in-person before making the final decision.



POPULAR FEMALE RING STYLES:



74% DIAMOND

50% 1-2 CARATS

53% HALO SETTING

23% ROUND BRILLANT

PURCHASED FROM:



63%

BRICK-AND-MORTAR



31%

ONLINE



5%

HEIRLOOM

POPULAR DATES TO POP THE QUESTION

When it comes to proposals, "will you marry me" is becoming a familiar refrain during the holiday season. In fact, Christmas Day is the most popular day of the year to pop the question, with Christmas Eve rounding out the top 3.

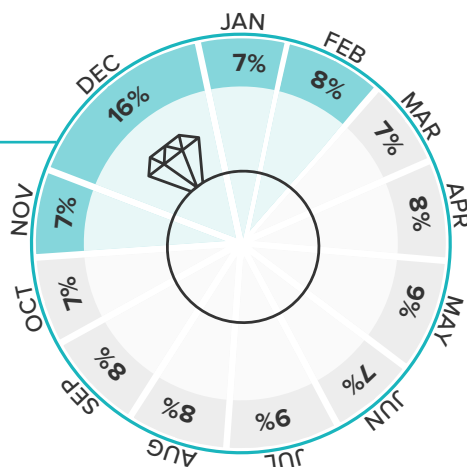
38%

OF ENGAGEMENTS
HAPPEN DURING
"ENGAGEMENT SEASON"



ENGAGEMENT
BY MONTH

ENGAGEMENT
SEASON



TOP 5 ENGAGEMENT DATES OF 2017

- 1 CHRISTMAS DAY
- 2 VALENTINE'S DAY
- 3 CHRISTMAS EVE
- 4 NEW YEAR'S DAY
- 5 NEW YEAR'S EVE





1 IN 4

COUPLES HAVE AN ENGAGEMENT PARTY

SHARING THE NEWS

For years, engagement parties were meant as the stage to announce an engagement to family and friends; nowadays, 86% of couples turn to social media to spread the news – majority within a few hours of getting engaged!

WHERE COUPLES POST THE NEWS



76%
FACEBOOK



35%
INSTAGRAM



12%
TWITTER



2 IN 3

couples announce their news on social media immediately or within a few hours



10%

of parents find out about their kid's engagement via social media

AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT LENGTH

Forty-one percent of couples are engaged for 10 – 15 months, with the average engagement lasting 13 months.



15 MONTHS

Those who get engaged on Valentine's Day are likely to have a longer than average engagement.



ENGAGEMENT LENGTH



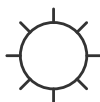
MOST POPULAR WEDDING DATES

Couples are quick to pick a wedding date post engagement, with 72% of weddings occurring between May - October. While historically spring was peak wedding season, data shows a shift towards fall months.

WEDDING SEASONALITY



23% SPRING



30% SUMMER



38% FALL



9% WINTER



WEDDING MONTH DISTRIBUTION

2% JANUARY

3% FEBRUARY

5% MARCH

7% APRIL

11% MAY

12% JUNE

8% JULY

10% AUGUST

15% SEPTEMBER

16% OCTOBER

7% NOVEMBER

4% DECEMBER



TOP 5 WEDDING DATES OF 2017

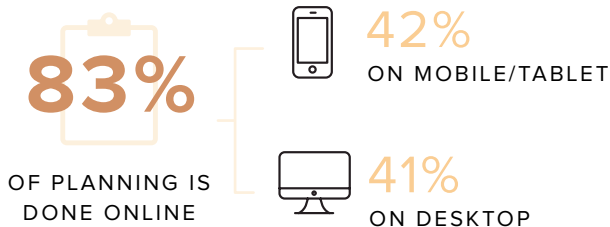
(IN ORDER)



PLANNING

IMPORTANCE OF ONLINE RESOURCES

Setting budgets, finding vendors and knowing you're on the right track are some of the biggest challenges couples face while planning for their wedding day. Fortunately, the majority of today's planning is done online where couples utilize an array of planning tools (think: [checklists](#) and [budget trackers](#)) to help manage the process.

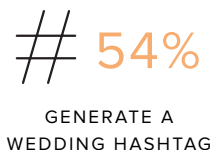
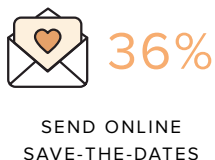


TOP 5 BIGGEST CHALLENGES

- DETERMINING BUDGET AND GUEST SIZE
- MAKING DECISIONS
- KEEPING TRACK OF EXPENSES
- KNOWING YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK WITH PLANNING
- FINDING VENDORS

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

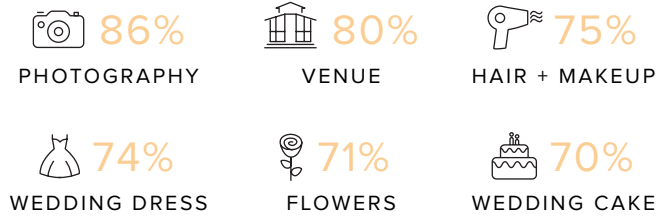
Couples rely on technology throughout the entire wedding journey - from sending invites to communicating with guests and posting photos. However, when it comes to the big day, 1 in 4 couples ask their guests to 'unplug' so not to distract from the nuptials.



FINDING THE VENDOR TEAM

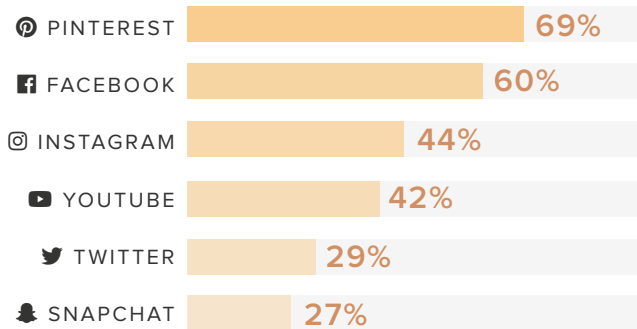
Couples hire 13 vendors on average for their wedding day and depend on [wedding-related websites](#) (65%) and social media for vendor discovery and research. Couples rely predominately on price and availability followed by recommendations and online reviews when deciding who to book.

TOP VENDORS HIRED



While Pinterest and Facebook are the social media sites most frequently used for wedding planning, couples utilize Pinterest 2X more than any other social channel for inspiration.

SOCIAL MEDIA USED DURING PLANNING



 **64%**

use **Pinterest** to find inspiration

 **54%**

use **Facebook** to learn about vendors

 **23%**

use **Instagram** to follow vendors' work



SEQUENCE OF VENDOR RESEARCH (MONTHS TO WED)

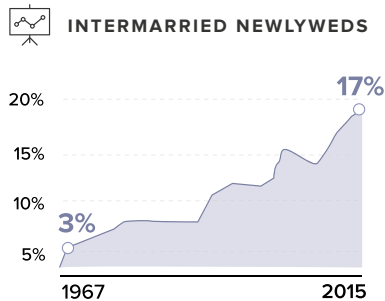
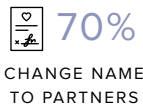
VENUE	11.1
WEDDING PLANNING	10.0
CATERING	9.1
PHOTOGRAPHY	9.1
DRESS	8.6
DJ	8.4
BAND	8.3
VIDEOGRAPHY	8.3
FLOWERS	7.6
OFFICIANT	6.5
CEREMONY MUSIC	6.2
WEDDING CAKE	5.1
EVENT RENTALS + PHOTOBOOTHES	3.8
INVITATIONS	3.4
REHEARSAL DINNER LOCATION	3.3
BEAUTY + HEALTH	3.2
TRANSPORTATION	1.9
FAVORS + GIFTS	1.9



COUPLES

WHO THEY ARE

The average age of today's marrying couple is 32. With a new generation redefining cultural and societal norms, we're seeing dynamics, such as interracial marriage, grow in acceptance. According to PEW Research Center, there has been a 5X increase since the legalization of interracial marriage 50 years ago.¹ Today, 19% of all WeddingWire couples identify as having an interracial marriage.



WHO'S INCLUDED IN THE WEDDING PARTY

While the majority of marrying couples continue to have an evenly split number of wedding party members, there has been a decrease in separating the wedding party by gender. Today, 60% of couples divide their wedding party by gender as compared to 74% in 2015 (a 14% decrease).



WEDDING PARTY DIVIDED BY GENDER

MILLENNIALS	64%
GENX	40%
HISPANIC	49%
NON-HISPANIC	63%
1 ST MARRIAGE	64%
2 ND MARRIAGE	44%

DIFFERENCES AMONG COUPLES

Although no two couples are alike, there are unique nuances to be found amid newlyweds of similar backgrounds. For instance, when compared to all couples, Asian couples tend to invite more guests to their weddings, LGBTQ couples are more likely to live with their partner prior to getting married and Gen X are less likely to spend the night before their wedding apart.



TODAY'S COUPLES (BY THE NUMBERS)


	AVERAGE AGE	AVERAGE # OF GUESTS	# OF WEDDING PARTY MEMBERS	LIVED WITH PARTNER PRIOR TO MARRIAGE	ASKED FOR PARENTS BLESSING	SPENT NIGHT APART BEFORE WEDDING
ALL COUPLES	32	127	9	79%	67%	71%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	35	132	10	68%	53%	71%
ASIAN	32	177	9	70%	67%	64%
CAUCASIAN	32	127	9	78%	66%	67%
HISPANIC	31	131	8	69%	61%	62%
LGBTQ	34	107	7	85%	42%	41%
MILLENNIALS	29	134	10	73%	72%	74%
GEN X	44	99	7	80%	39%	52%

WEDDING TIMELINE


Regardless of the exact details couples decide on incorporating into their wedding day, couples are focused on finding ways to make their big day a direct reflection of their personal style. Follow the timeline below to see when couples hire their vendor team and the role each one plays in bringing the couple's personalized wedding day details to life.


12 MONTHS

 CEREMONY/RECEPTION VENUE **77%** of wedding receptions are indoors


 CATERER **54%** have food served buffet-style
68% of weddings have an open-bar


 PHOTOGRAPHER **42%** of couples do a "first-look"

 SELECT DRESS/ATTIRE **80%** of brides wear white
63% of grooms dress in something more casual than a tuxedo

 BAND/DJ **52%** of couples say they've seen their band/DJ perform in person prior to booking them

6 MONTHS


 FLORIST **50%** of couples do a bouquet toss

 CAKE **82%** have a cake-cutting ceremony
37% weddings include a dessert bar/table




 CREATE REGISTRY **2 in 3** millennials create a traditional registry
(WeddingWire feature!)

 CREATE WEDDING WEBSITE **62%** of couples create a wedding website
(WeddingWire feature!)




1 in 2 add accommodations into their website

 ROOM BLOCKS **63%** of couples book at least one hotel room block for their guests
(WeddingWire feature!)

3 MONTHS


-  **BEAUTY AND HEALTH** **31%** started a new exercise routine or diet to prepare for the wedding
- 1 in 2** bridesmaids pay to have their hair done by a professional for the wedding
-  **DISCUSS REHEARSAL DINNER** **43%** of the groom's parents pay for the rehearsal dinner
-  **OFFICIANT** **39%** of couples create their own vows

WEDDING DAY


-  **MOST POPULAR** **87%** perform a first dance
-  **GAINING MOMENTUM** **63%** groom(s) dressing more casual than tuxedo (+7%)
(% vs. 2 years ago)
 - 61%** walking down the aisle to non-classical music (+7%)
 - 59%** wedding party: females wearing different dresses (+14%)
 - 54%** creating a wedding hashtag (+10%)
 - 40%** wedding party: including mixed genders (+14%)
-  **COOLING DOWN** **75%** order of day: ceremony, cocktail hour, reception (-10%)
(% vs. 2 years ago)
 - 74%** father-daughter and/or mother-son dances (-9%)
 - 70%** changing to partner's last name (-12%)
 - 45%** begin honeymoon 1-2 days after reception (-12%)


ADDING A PERSONAL TOUCH

Now more than ever, couples are steering clear of the cookie cutter wedding and adding unique elements that highlight their relationship and impress guests.

 **40%**
had unique musical choices during ceremony (ex. bagpipes)

 **21%**
added local elements based on city where couple met or grew up (ex. food or decor)

 **18%**
included ceremonial customs related to race/religion (ex. jumping the broom)

 **17%**
hired special entertainment for guests (ex. fortune teller, caricature)



COST

AVERAGE WEDDING COST

On average, couples budget nearly \$16K for their wedding ceremony/reception but spend approximately 40% more once they begin to understand the true cost of each element. Once all is said and done, couples spend roughly \$216 per guest based on the total ceremony/reception cost.

ALL-IN AVERAGE WEDDING COST



42%

the amount couples underestimate their budget



1/3




part of the total budget that goes towards venue & catering

VARIATIONS IN AVERAGE WEDDING COST

The average amount couples spend on their wedding ceremony/reception can greatly vary when comparing attributes like age, region and marriage number. For instance, while the entire New York metro area has the highest price tag in the country, those who marry specifically in Manhattan spend upwards of \$60K on their ceremony/reception. Furthermore, those who are getting married for the first time spend on average 2X more than those on their 2nd+ marriage (\$30K vs. \$15K).



TOP 5 MOST EXPENSIVE CITIES TO GET MARRIED

- 
1 NEW YORK
- 
2 BOSTON
- 
3 SAN FRANCISCO
- 
4 WASHINGTON, DC
- 
5 CHICAGO

WHO'S PAYING FOR THE WEDDING

On average, Millennials (who account for approximately 80% of today's marrying couples) are paying for roughly 40% of their wedding, while parents and other family members are contributing the remaining 60%. Parents are often pulling funds from their savings account and nearly 1 in 10 are dipping into their retirement.



WHERE PARENTS FIND THE MONEY

Took out money from savings account	56%
Took out money from a specific account created for their child and/or their wedding	22%
Credit cards	20%
Dipped into retirement	9%
Cashed in stocks and/or liquidated assets	7%
Took out a loan	7%
Refinanced/home equity	3%



PERCENT OF TOTAL WEDDING COST PAID FOR

	ALL	MILLENNIALS	GEN X	LGBTQ
COUPLES	45%	39%	66%	59%
PARENTS	46%	51%	29%	36%
OTHER	9%	10%	5%	5%



20% of millennials have their wedding fully paid for by parents (or other contributors)

EVOLUTION OF LGBTQ WEDDINGS

LGBTQ couples are spending nearly \$25 more per guest than the average couple based on a total ceremony/reception spend of \$26K. Interestingly, the total wedding spend and guest size of LGBTQ couples are gradually increasing from previous years (+7 guest count YoY), plus same-sex couples are receiving much more financial support from their parents than five-years ago² – suggesting an evolution towards mainstream weddings.

SAME-SEX COUPLES WHO PAY FOR ALL/MAJORITY OF WEDDING



79%
2013



61%
2017



AVERAGE WEDDING COST BY CATEGORY

CEREMONY/RECEPTION	2017	2016	2015
VENUE	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$8,800
CATERING	\$6,600	\$6,700	\$6,900
BAND	\$3,800	\$3,700	\$3,800
PHOTOGRAPHY	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400
REHEARSAL DINNER AND ADDITIONAL MEALS	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,900
VIDEOGRAPHY	\$1,800	\$1,700	\$1,700
WEDDING RINGS	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$1,800
EVENT RENTALS AND PHOTOBOOTHS	\$1,700	\$1,700	\$1,700
WEDDING PLANNER	\$1,700	\$1,700	\$1,600
DRESS	\$1,700	\$1,600	\$1,700
FLOWERS	\$1,700	\$1,800	\$1,800
LIGHTING AND DÉCOR	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$1,300
DJ	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,100
TRANSPORTATION	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$900
GUEST ACCOMODATIONS	\$800	\$700	\$650
WEDDING PARTY ATTIRE	\$750	\$700	\$700
CEREMONY MUSIC/MUSICIAN	\$600	\$600	\$500
WEDDING PARTY GIFTS	\$600	\$600	\$600
INVITATIONS/STATIONERY	\$560	\$606	\$608
CAKE/DESSERTS	\$550	\$500	\$500
HAIR AND MAKEUP	\$550	\$500	\$500
BEAUTY AND HEALTH	\$500	\$500	\$400
FAVORS AND GIFTS	\$450	\$450	\$450
GROOM'S ATTIRE	\$350	\$300	\$300
JEWELRY	\$350	\$350	\$350
OFFICIANT	\$300	\$300	\$300
ENGAGEMENT	2017	2016	2015
ENGAGEMENT RINGS	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
HONEYMOON	2017	2016	2015
HONEYMOON	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000



AVERAGE WEDDING COST IN 25 LARGEST METRO AREA MARKETS

CITY	2017	2016	2015
NEW YORK + SURROUNDING METRO AREA, NY	\$45,000	\$48,000	\$47,000
BOSTON, MA	\$37,000	\$36,000	\$37,000
SAN FRANCISCO - OAKLAND, CA	\$36,000	\$40,000	\$43,000
WASHINGTON, DC	\$34,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
CHICAGO, IL	\$34,000	\$35,000	\$37,000
HARTFORD - NEW HAVEN, CT	\$34,000	\$27,000	\$29,000
LOS ANGELES, CA	\$33,000	\$33,000	\$34,000
BALTIMORE, MD	\$33,000	\$31,000	\$33,000
PHILADELPHIA, PA	\$32,000	\$34,000	\$35,000
MIAMI - FT. LAUDERDALE, FL	\$31,000	\$31,000	\$28,000
SAN DIEGO, CA	\$29,000	\$29,000	\$29,000
HOUSTON, TX	\$28,000	\$29,000	\$33,000
DETROIT, MI	\$26,000	\$26,000	\$28,000
PITTSBURGH, PA	\$26,000	\$23,000	\$21,000
ATLANTA, GA	\$26,000	\$24,000	\$28,000
RALEIGH-DURHAM, NC	\$26,000	\$25,000	\$23,000
SACRAMENTO - STOCKTON, CA	\$25,000	\$23,000	\$27,000
ORLANDO - DAYTONA BEACH, FL	\$25,000	\$22,000	\$19,000
TAMPA - ST. PETERSBURG, FL	\$25,000	\$24,000	\$26,000
DALLAS - FT. WORTH, TX	\$25,000	\$24,000	\$25,000
CHARLOTTE, NC	\$24,000	\$22,000	\$22,000
DENVER, CO	\$23,000	\$24,000	\$24,000
CLEVELAND, OH	\$23,000	\$23,000	\$24,000
MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL, MN	\$22,000	\$23,000	\$23,000
ST. LOUIS, MO	\$21,000	\$23,000	\$24,000





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