



MAKING THE MOST OF ENGAGEMENT SEASON



A NOTE FROM OUR INSIGHTS TEAM:

Engagement season is here, which means that rings are being purchased, proposal plans are well underway and wedding planning has already begun. Yes, you read that right!

In this report, we'll provide you with everything you need to know about engagement season and most importantly how to stand out and attract new clients. Find insights into questions such as:

- 1 When are most proposals taking place?
- 2 How long are couples typically engaged?
- 3 What wedding discussions are happening pre-engagement?
- 4 What actions are couples first taking after getting engaged?
- 5 How can wedding professionals attract new clients?

After reading this report, we hope you'll walk away with a better understanding of the newly-engaged mindset and what features you can highlight to attract new business.



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METHODOLOGY

In order to provide the most relevant and up-to-date data, WeddingWire conducts a variety of research throughout the year with more than 50,000 wedding professionals, engaged and newlywed couples across the country. The data shown here is primarily based on insights collected from WeddingWire's 2018 Engagement Study, distributed to couples married in 2018 (N=1,600), unless otherwise noted. Respondents represent couples from all over the country with various ethnicities, income levels, race, age, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Gen X: 1961-1981, Millennials: 1982-1996

HOW AND WHEN PEOPLE ARE POPPING THE QUESTION

NEARLY 3 IN 4 MILLENNIALS FEEL PRESSURE TO HAVE A UNIQUE PROPOSAL

- Did you know that **70% of engagements are planned ahead of time?** In fact, when it comes time to figuring out the details/ logistics of the proposal, 50% are planned about a month out from the proposal day.
- Though the majority of proposals are a surprise, nearly 40% of Millennials talk about their proposal preferences with their partner ahead of time (such as wanting it to happen around family or in a certain place).
- Same goes for the engagement ring! Roughly 20% of couples go to the store together to try on and/or pick out the ring, while nearly 1 in 4 Millennials drop hints or show their partner photos of the ring they like.
- On average, nearly 50% of engagement rings are purchased less than 2 months out from the proposal, with roughly **1 in 2 rings purchased from a brick-and-mortar store** (25% are bought online).



WHERE ENGAGEMENT RINGS ARE PURCHASED

SOURCE: NEWLYWEDS, 2018

Mass retailer (i.e. Zales, etc.)	33%
Local jeweler or independent store	31%
Online-only sites (i.e. Blue Nile, Ritani, etc.)	15%
High-end Retailers (i.e., Tiffany's, Cartier, etc.)	12%
Department Stores	9%



"I ended up picking my own [ring] and am so glad I did, since what I fell in love with was a bit different than what I initially had in mind. He bought the ring a week or two after we picked it out and proposed two months later. A total surprise!"

– Mia, Newlywed



MOST POPULAR ENGAGEMENT DATES

SOURCE: COUPLES ENGAGED IN 2017

- 1 Christmas Day
- 2 Valentine's Day
- 3 Christmas Eve
- 4 New Year's Day
- 5 New Year's Eve
- 6 Day before Christmas Eve
- 7 December 16
(2 Saturdays before Christmas Eve)
- 8 Independence Day (7/4)
- 9 Memorial Day Weekend (5/27)
- 10 Saturday before Valentine's Day

FORTY PERCENT OF ENGAGEMENTS HAPPEN BETWEEN THANKSGIVING AND VALENTINE'S DAY

- When it comes to "popping the question", 16% of all engagements happen in December with Christmas Day being the most popular day.
- Roughly 1 in 3 proposals take place at home, though 20% of people make sure to pick a place that has special meaning to them - such as a first date location, where they met, etc.
- What do today's Millennial engagements entail? Over 70% of those proposing get down on one knee. 1 in 4 engagements have friends and/or family witness the proposal and nearly 1 in 10 hire a professional photographer/ videographer to capture that "Instagram-worthy" moment.
- In fact, 80% of Millennials turn to social media to announce their engagement – majority within a few hours of getting engaged. Facebook continues to be the most popular social media outlet for announcing engagements (92%), followed by Instagram (45%), Snapchat (22%) and then Twitter (10%).

WHY CERTAIN WEDDING DATES ARE MORE POPULAR THAN OTHERS

ENGAGEMENT LENGTH CAN IMPACT THE PLANNING PROCESS

- **Forty-one percent of couples are engaged for 10-15 months**, with the average engagement lasting 13 months.
- Interestingly, those who get engaged on Valentine’s Day (the 2nd most popular day to get engaged) are likely to have a longer than average engagement (15 months) to plan for a Spring wedding.
- What about destination weddings? Those who are planning a wedding in a different country other than where they currently live, have an average engagement length of 17 months.

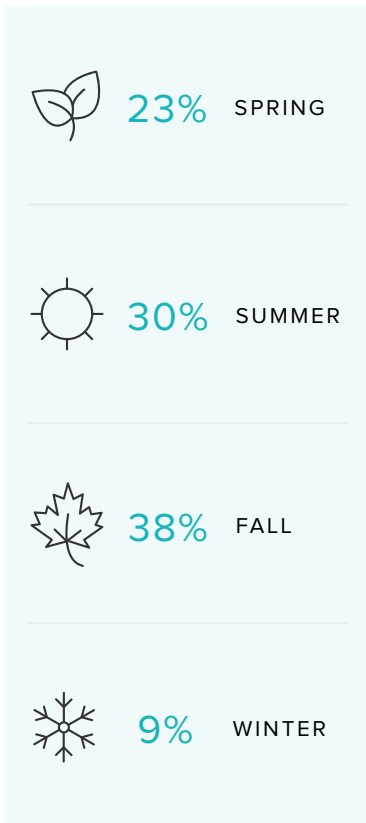
 **ENGAGEMENT LENGTH**
SOURCE: NEWLYWEDS, 2017



“We got engaged the day after Christmas and we’re planning our wedding for June. I totally understand that it can be difficult to book vendors with only six months to plan... but the resort we’re using also has its own in-house florist, caterer, baker, planner, etc. so most of the vendors are sorted.”

– Kristen, Married

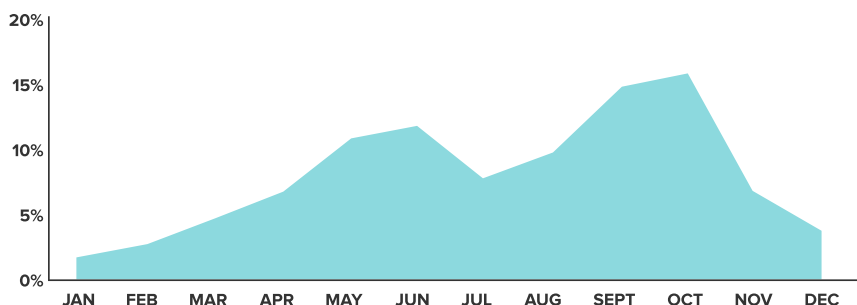
 **WEDDING SEASONALITY**
SOURCE: NEWLYWEDS, 2017



FALL CONTINUES TO BE THE MOST POPULAR SEASON TO WED

- Seventy-two percent of weddings occur between May – October. While Spring used to be peak wedding season, data shows a shift towards fall months.
- In fact, 1 in 3 wedding ceremonies take place outside, so it’s no surprise that Fall ranks in popularity due to the beautiful weather nationwide.
- Specifically, **16% of all weddings occur in October making it the most popular month to get married.** Last year, three out of the top five most popular dates to get married took place in October.

 **WEDDING MONTH DISTRIBUTION**



HOW COUPLES NAVIGATE THE PLANNING PROCESS

MAJORITY OF COUPLES THINK ABOUT THEIR WEDDING PRIOR TO GETTING ENGAGED

- Over **80% of couples start to discuss their wedding preferences prior to getting engaged.** Key topics include: style of wedding, size, time of year, and type of reception location (i.e., vineyard, hotel, etc.)
- In addition to discussing preferences with their partner, **two-thirds Millennials are taking at least one wedding planning action pre-proposal** (think: capturing inspiration, researching vendors, etc.)
- Data shows that nearly 1 in 3 Millennials utilize Pinterest pre-wedding – with over 60% of boards including topics such as décor, wedding styles, dresses and floral inspiration.



WEDDING PLANNING ACTION PRIOR TO ENGAGEMENT

SOURCE: NEWLYWEDS, 2018

33%	look at wedding dresses/attire online
25%	create inspiration/Pinterest board with wedding ideas
24%	researched venues to get married
23%	check availability/cost of wedding venues
20%	researched wedding vendors (i.e., planner, photographer, etc.)



“I had 3 wedding boards going [on Pinterest]. A pre-pre-engagement board, one when I had a feeling it was going to happen, and then when it actually happened. The first things on it were bridesmaid dress ideas.”

– Sarah, Engaged



TOP VENDORS HIRED

SOURCE: NEWLYWEDS, 2017



86%

PHOTOGRAPHY



80%

VENUE



75%

HAIR + MAKEUP



74%

WEDDING DRESS



71%

FLOWERS



70%

WEDDING CAKE

NEWLY ENGAGED COUPLES WASTE NO TIME PICKING A DATE AND SECURING A VENUE

- Over 60% of newly engaged couples start planning their wedding within 2 months of getting engaged (40% within one month).
- Couples typically kick-off the wedding planning journey by setting a date, researching ceremony and/or reception venues and setting their budget. Other tasks high on the priority list are creating a guest list, checking venue cost/availability and determining the overall wedding style/theme/color.
- On average, couples will hire 13 vendors for their big day with photographers being the most popular vendor hired. Couples predominantly rely on price and availability, followed by recommendations and online reviews when determining who to book.
- Based on the average 13-month engagement, most couples search for the majority of their vendors 6-9 months prior to their wedding – with the exception of venue which often happens immediately after getting engaged (closer to the one-year mark).

HOW TO ATTRACT NEWLY-ENGAGED COUPLES

With engagement season right around the corner, now is the perfect time to freshen up your online presence with the information couples are really looking for. Use the tips below to ‘engage’ with your ideal clients and stand out among competition!

1 Collect reviews from this past wedding season

You spent the last year working hard to make your clients’ wedding dreams a reality, and now’s the time to showcase your success to future clients – and what better way than having recent clients sing your praises! Reviews are one of the top things couples look at when deciding not only who to contact, but ultimately who to book, so don’t be shy about asking past clients to write a review. Plus, each review you collect will count towards your Couples’ Choice Awards® eligibility and will earn you WeddingWire Rated™ badges.

2 Add (or update) pricing on your WeddingWire Storefront and beyond

Since pricing is often the first thing couples look at before considering to contact a vendor, those who don’t display pricing are often overlooked. Adding your pricing will not only help couples know if you’re within their budget, but it will also save you time and ensure you’re receiving more qualified leads! Learn more about displaying pricing in our latest [Pricing WedInsights Report](#).



TIP

If you’re hesitant to include pricing as it varies per client, give a price range instead of a specific number. This will allow couples to get a sense of your pricing and still provide you with flexibility.

3 Upload high-quality images

Whether it’s your WeddingWire Storefront or website, the main image is the first thing a potential client will see, so be sure to draw them in with a professional photo that highlights your space, product or service. In addition, showcase examples of your work that include a variety of photos that are diverse, specific to your business and highlight your strengths.



TIP

Looking for new ways to showcase your work? Request Real Wedding galleries from past clients or photographers and videographers you’ve worked with. Photos will be added to your WeddingWire Storefront – plus, get the chance to be featured in the WeddingWire Real Wedding Ideas section. Submit and learn more at [RealWeds.com](#).

4

Standout on social media

Now's the best time to ramp up your social media presence, especially if it's taken a back-seat during the busy wedding season. Newly engaged couples (and those dreaming of engagement) are quick to check out potential vendors on Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram. Make sure to showcase your best photos but also the things that make your business unique. Couples love to get a feel for your personality – so let it shine!

5

Make sure your brand is consistent and up-to-date across all platforms

Take the time to review your online presence on all platforms and make sure you're providing the key details couples are looking for when evaluating your business. Be sure to read through your business description, review your FAQs and update your images so that they accurately portray your brand and services. Most importantly, be sure that your contact information is prominently displayed (including social handles) so there is no question on how to contact you for more information.

6

Respond to leads in a timely manner

When inquiries start to come in, one of the most important things you can do is to respond promptly. Most couples expect a response within 24 hours, so the faster you respond, the more likely your prospective client is still thinking about your business. While you're at it, don't forget to make the couple feel important with personalized messaging and answer the question at hand.

**TIP**

WeddingWire Education Guru Alan Berg, suggests that you should ask a “low commitment” question in every single correspondence to guarantee a reply back. Unlike “high commitment” questions such as “When would you like to come in to meet?”, low commitment questions like “How many guests are you expecting?” or “Do you have a venue secured yet?” begins the conversational back-and-forth needed to make a sale.

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