

WEDINSIGHTS

Navigating Engagement Season

Learn what newly-engaged couples are looking for and what you can do to stand out.

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Redfield Photography





Kathryn Krueger
Photography

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 couples. 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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Find answers to questions like:

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 couples?

METHODOLOGY

In order to provide the most relevant and up-to-date data, The Knot Worldwide conducts a variety of research throughout the year with more than 100,000 wedding professionals, engaged and newlywed couples across the country. The data shown here is primarily based on insights collected from two key studies distributed among engaged and newlywed couples registered on The Knot Worldwide network. The 2019 Jewelry & Engagement Study and the Newlywed Survey each collected responses from more than 18,000+ respondents who got engaged or married in 2018/2019. Respondents represent couples from all over the country with various ethnicities, income levels, race, age, sexual orientation and gender identity.

How and When People Are Popping the Question

Nearly three in four couples feel pressure to have a unique proposal

- Did you know that **87%** of engagements are planned ahead of time? In fact, when it comes to figuring out the details/logistics of the proposal, 72% planned less than three months out from the proposal day (41% planned one to three months before).
- Though the majority of proposals are a surprise (**86%**), roughly one in three couples talk about their proposal preferences with their partner ahead of time (i.e., in front of family, in private, etc.).
- Same goes for the engagement ring! Roughly one in four report having shopped or looked at rings together with their partner, while over **75%** say their fiancé(e) dropped hints about their ring preferences.
- On average, nearly **70%** of engagement rings are purchased less than two months out from the proposal, with diamonds being the most popular center stone (83%). However, non-diamond stones are gaining momentum (10%) with the most popular being moissanite (19%, up from 10% in 2017).

WHERE ENGAGEMENT RINGS ARE PURCHASED

- **40%** Local jeweler or independent store
- **30%** Mass retailer (i.e., Zales)
- **11%** Online-only sites (i.e., Blue Nile, Ritani)
- **4%** Local wholesalers
- **2%** High-end Retailers (i.e., Tiffany's, Cartier)



Nearly 40% of engagements happen between Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day

- When it comes to “popping the question,” **19%** of all engagements happen in December with Christmas Day being the most popular day.
- Roughly one in three proposals take place at home, though **18%** 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 engagements entail? Over **84%** of those proposing get down on one knee. One in four engagements have friends and/or family witness the proposal and nearly one in ten hire a professional photographer/videographer to capture that “Instagram-worthy” moment.
- In fact, over **90%** of couples turn to social media to announce their engagement—40% within a few hours of getting engaged. Facebook continues to be the most popular social media outlet for announcing engagements (83%) followed by Instagram (70%) and Snapchat (20%).

2019 MOST POPULAR ENGAGEMENT DATES



*Based on projection from 2018 data | Source: Couples Engaged in 2018





Carolyn Scott Photography

“Our engagement will be about 18 months long. I have too many ideas and couldn’t make decisions in a 6-month engagement period for the date I wanted so we’re waiting until the following July of 2020.”

— BECCA, CURRENTLY ENGAGED

PRO TIP

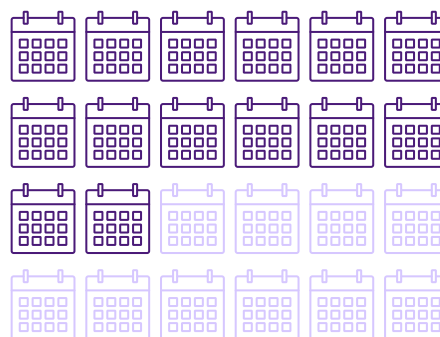
Keep in mind that each couple is unique and the timeframe in which they have to plan the wedding will impact both wants and expectations.

Why Certain Wedding Dates Are More Popular Than Others

Engagement length can impact the planning process

- Half of all couples are engaged for 10-18 months, with the average engagement lasting 14 months.
- Interestingly, those who get engaged in the spring are likely to have a longer than average engagement of 18 months to plan for a peak fall wedding.
- Those who are planning a wedding in a different country than where they currently live have an average engagement length of 17 months.

ENGAGEMENT LENGTH



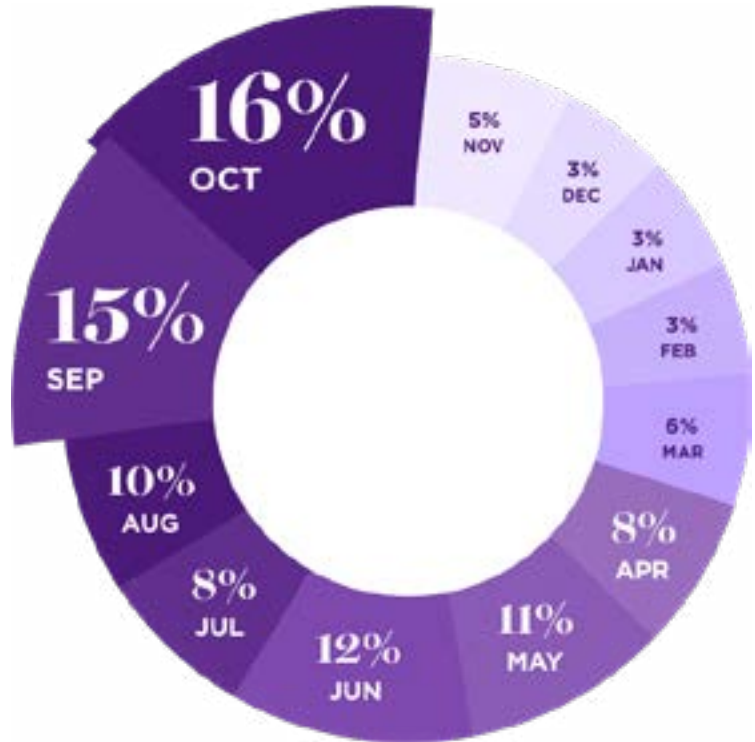
**Average:
14 Months**

- 28% 1-9 months
- 50% 10-18 months
- 22% 19+ months

Fall continues to be the most popular season to wed

- **73%** of weddings occur between May and October. While spring used to be peak wedding season, data shows a shift towards fall months.
- In fact, **one in three** wedding ceremonies take place outside, so it's no surprise that fall ranks high 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 of the top five most popular dates to get married were in October.

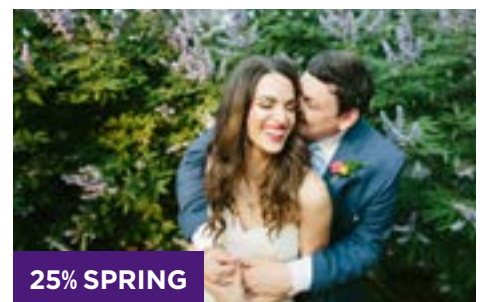
WEDDING MONTH DISTRIBUTION CHART



WEDDING SEASONALITY



Clockwise from left: Rebecca Yale Photography; Rachel Havel Photography; Nbarrett Photography; Carrie Patterson Photography



How Couples Navigate the Planning Process

The majority of couples think about their wedding prior to getting engaged

- Over **85%** 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)
- In addition to discussing preferences with their partner, **two-thirds** of couples are taking at least one wedding planning action pre-proposal (think: capturing inspiration, researching vendors, etc.)
- Data shows that nearly **50%** of brides-to-be utilize Pinterest pre-engagement, with top pins including topics such as décor, wedding styles, dresses and floral inspiration.

“We started planning our wedding before he actually got down on one knee with a ring. We didn’t put deposits on anything, but we talked about budget, guest list, venues we both liked, etc.

— CJ, MARRIED

WEDDING PLANNING ACTION PRIOR TO ENGAGEMENT

- **50%** Created inspiration/Pinterest board with wedding ideas
- **50%** Looked at wedding dresses/attire online
- **33%** Researched wedding costs
- **29%** Researched venues to get married
- **23%** Began creating a guest list
- **20%** Checked availability/cost of wedding venues





Newly-engaged couples waste no time picking a date and securing a venue

- Over **60%** of newly-engaged couples start planning their wedding within two 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 **14 vendors** for their wedding day with photographers being the most popular vendor hired. Couples predominantly rely on price and reviews followed by photos and availability when determining who to book.
- Based on the average 14-month engagement, most couples search for the majority of their vendors **six to nine months** prior to their wedding, with the exception of venue which often happens immediately after getting engaged.

TOP VENDORS HIRED



PHOTOGRAPHY
90%



VENUE
86%



HAIR & MAKE UP
80%



WEDDING DRESS
78%



FLOWERS
74%



DJ
72%

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 the competition!

1 Collect reviews from this past wedding season

You spent the last year working hard to make your couples' wedding dreams a reality, and now's the time to showcase your success. 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 couples to write a review. Plus, each review you collect will count towards The Knot Best of Weddings and WeddingWire Couples' Choice Awards® eligibility.

2 Add or update pricing on your Storefronts 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.

PRO TIP

If you're hesitant to include pricing as it varies per couple, 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 on your Storefront or website, the main image is the first thing potential couples will see, so be sure to draw them in with a high-quality professional photo that highlights your space, product or service. In addition, showcase examples of your work by uploading photo albums that include a variety of photos that are diverse, specific to your business and highlight your strengths.

Josh & Rachel



4 Stand out on social media

Now's the best time to ramp up your social media presence, especially if it's taken a backseat during the busy wedding season. Newly engaged couples (and those dreaming of engagement) are quick to check out potential vendors on Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest. Make sure to showcase your best photos and the things that make your business unique. Couples love to get a feel for your personality, so give them a behind-the-scenes sneak peek and 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 messages 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 they are still thinking about your business. While you're at it, don't forget to make the couple feel important with personalized messaging.

PRO TIP

Ask a "low-commitment" question in every 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?" creates the conversational back-and-forth needed to get to a sale.

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