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Wednesday, May. 20, 2009

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Planning a wedding on a budget

By GRACE GAGLIANO - gagostin@bradenton.com

Planning a wedding in any economy can be an overwhelming task. The cost to say "I do" in this economy is a different story. A Brides.com 2009 American Wedding Survey showed the average cost of a wedding is \$28,082, but it doesn't have to get that pricey. Sarasota wedding planner Nicole Kaney, of NK Productions, gives advice on how brides and grooms can save on their walk down the aisle.

What are some common ways couples can save on their wedding?

Really take a look at your guest count. Your guest count quickly adds up to how many tables and chairs you need, and the amount of food and alcohol. Being creative with food and alcohol, too, can save you money. You can come up with a fun menu that's maybe a tapas style wedding or brunch.



Kaney

The average cost of a bridal gown is \$1,075, according to Brides.com American Wedding Study 2009. So how can brides save on the dress?

I've seen brides get some really amazing dresses from eBay. They might need to be altered but eBay bidding can get you some really good deals. J Crew also has some awesome wedding dresses. Also looking at department stores could be really good, too, for getting a really nice dress.

What are the key things to keep in mind when cutting costs on a wedding?

I would say the key would be to spend less without anyone knowing you're spending less. (Quality) chairs and linens can make a really big difference on your reception decor.

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The Brides.com survey showed 82 percent of couples set a budget prior to the wedding. What's the biggest misconception couples have about wedding budgets?

I think that they are very, very unfamiliar with how much things cost as a whole. Also, many people think there is a average cost of a wedding. Every bride and groom is different and every wedding is different.

How can hiring a wedding planner save couples

money?

We are experts in our field, we know how to stretch the dollar and how to hire the right vendors. We know this, since we do this day to day. Also people need to understand realistically how much they're going to be spending on some things. Some things like a reception room may come with nothing but the rental of the room. Considering that before you sign and what it will cost to bring in outside caterers is important.

What areas are you seeing couples cut back on the most in this economy?

Probably the guest count. Weddings are becoming smaller and more intimate. Getting your count more towards an 80-person wedding can really make a difference in your budget.