

Where the Brides Are

THE NEW NUMBER ONE WEBSITE FOR FINDING THEM

By Stephanie Padovani

If you wanted to find brides online in 2003, where would you go? Brides flocked to wedding websites and directories like The Knot for planning information, making their advertising a smart way to reach them.

Fast-forward to 2013 and we find that traffic to these big wedding websites is declining. Brides prefer their own searches on Google and niche wedding sites when finding and hiring their wedding vendors (according to surveys by the Wedding Report.) The big wedding websites aren't dead, but they aren't the #1 places where you can connect with brides anymore. So what is?

Facebook. There are currently 1.8 million females in the US with an "engaged" relationship status. With almost 2.1 million marriages occurring in the US annually, that means approximately 85% of brides can be found on Facebook.

While most brides don't actively search for a DJ on Facebook, they're likely to ask for referrals in a status update. And brides certainly are planning, chatting and gathering ideas for the wedding in groups and on pages.

Facebook is the perfect place to introduce yourself to a targeted market of engaged females. However, proceed with caution, or your marketing efforts will backfire.

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Brides are on Facebook to connect with people, not to buy.

You aren't going to book the wedding on Facebook, so blatant promotion and sales strategies do not work. Instead, use Facebook to introduce engaged couples to your business, with a goal of getting them to your website that is (hopefully) designed to book the wedding.

The Kellogg University Lead Response Management Study revealed this statistic: A potential customer typically requires 5-12 "touch points" with your business before buying. A touch point may be a referral, visiting your business directory listing, reading your ad in a magazine or coming across your Facebook business page.

The bride or groom may not even consciously register the encounter with your DJ business, but if you've created a good impression with each contact, they'll turn to you when it's time to buy. Having a strong presence on Facebook is a powerful way to get in front of those engaged brides and start building that relationship of trust.

Remember these essentials to attract brides and turn them into real leads on Facebook:

- Create a Facebook page for your business and post interesting topics for brides each week.
- A Facebook page with zero interaction and no one "talking about" it doesn't create the impression of a thriving, successful DJ business or win bride fans. A wall

full of "Hire me for your wedding!" posts doesn't attract them, either. You need to post what brides love: inspiring photos, tips and resources, not your new sub-woofer.

- Engage with other popular local wedding business pages to connect with brides.
- Make sure you "like" the business pages of other wedding pros in your area. Comment, like and share their posts as your business. Each time a bride sees your business avatar next to a helpful comment, it's a touch point that encourages her to do business with you. If she really likes what you have to say, she'll click through to your page and even your website.
- When you comment and share the posts of other wedding pros, it exposes you to their bride fans and builds your networking relationships at the same time. Remember: do not directly promote your business on other people's pages or it will blow up in your face! Offer helpful suggestions and ideas to form relationships with brides and vendors.
- Add an email lead capture form to a custom tab on your Facebook page to turn those visitors into real leads.
- You need a way to get those bride fans off Facebook in order to book the wedding.
- The easiest way to do this is by making a free giveaway offer on a custom tab of your Facebook page.
- Let's say a bride enters her name and email to get a free copy of, "10 Songs You Should Never Play at a Wedding." She gets the free report and you get permission to follow up with her. Use a service like Pagemodo to add a stylish form to your page at no cost.
- Run a targeted Facebook ad campaign to increase visibility and recognition for your DJ business.

Facebook allows you to target engaged females right down to the zip code. Combine this with the fact that you can now display your ad right in the bride's news feed, and you can get front row exposure to a targeted audience for just pennies.

Each positive interaction with the bride is another "touch point" that gets you closer to booking the wedding. Facebook is a booking resource that shouldn't be ignored. **MB**



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