



Wedding Budget

Learning Outcomes

- ✓ The Importance of Wedding Budgets
- ✓ Describing & Identifying Wedding Budget Categories
- ✓ Exploring Budget Summaries

Wedding Budgets

In the past couple of decades, a sizeable shift has occurred within the wedding budgeting area. The cost of a wedding has increased enormously, and many couples end up spending more on their weddings than they had originally planned.

In the UK, the average cost of a wedding is around £26,000 and generally somewhere between £15,000 to £31,000.

This unit will examine the main budget categories which will come up in most weddings and offer tools to help you present realistic and organised budget information to clients. Your clients must be guided to understand approximately how much they will have to allocate to every budget category. This will allow your clients to make informed decisions about their spending.

Wedding Budget Categories

There are in fact, many ways of organising wedding budgets. If categories are presented to couples in a logical and organised manner, they will be able to make better decisions. Using a spreadsheet will help and it should include these seven areas:

- 1) Category names and specific items in each one
- 2) A way of determining whether or not a given element will be included
- 3) An estimated cost
- 4) A total final cost
- 5) The amount of the down payment
- 6) The due date of the final payment
- 7) Detailed notes regarding each area

The table below (Table 4.1) gives an example of how this information can be compiled. It uses rentals and reception, the most expensive wedding category, as the example.

Once you learn the most common expenditure areas in every category, you will be able to easily apply these seven ideas to any budget item and category. Table 4.1 shows the 13 most common categories of spending, common associated items, and the average percentage of the budget which is allocated to each category.

Budget Summaries

You will need a very detailed budget for the planning process when the wedding is finished, but it can be useful to have a summary budget to make quick comparisons over time. When you are assisting new clients get started, a summary budget is easier for them to use as a guide. This way they won't become overwhelmed with having to work through potential costs for every single item.

Below, in Table 4.3, you will see it utilises a budget of £26,000 to emphasise how much is available per category as an average. There are three things not included, and those are: the engagement ring, the rehearsal dinner, and the honeymoon. They are viewed as being outside the actual wedding day. They do, however, represent sizeable areas of expense and should be taken into consideration. In the U.S. for example, the average cost of an engagement ring is USD3,500, with another \$3,750 spent on honeymoons (McMurray, 2005).

It is important to convey to your clients that, although your consultant fee is 10% of the overall budget, this payment is easily recouped because of the savings you are passing onto them through your negotiating skills and through your relationship with vendors, which often results in discounts that are passed along to them. In this way, your own professional relationships save couples money and you are also saving them a huge amount of stress and time by facilitating the planning, design, and also the implementation of their wedding.

As mentioned earlier, it will be necessary to discuss budget very early on thus giving the clients a feasibility assessment. Many people feel overwhelmed and go through 'sticker shock' when they realise how many things they will actually have to pay for in order to make their wedding day happen. You are the one who must help the couple approach their decision making in a calm and rational manner.

Budgets need good organisational skills. You have to help your clients and encourage them to have all the receipts and contracts in one folder where everything is easy to find when needed. You must also have a folder to keep all the contracts and vendor emails, letters etc. Some consultants hand out personalised folders for this purpose. Keep the folder close at hand on the wedding day in case of any payment issues. One misplaced receipt could cause a lot of havoc on the wedding day.

It is also a good idea to encourage clients to have a slush fund of around 5 – 10% of the estimated costs. This will help with any unforeseen expenses which may arise. An example could be that the best man doesn't live in the same city and unexpectedly loses his job and cannot travel due to his now strained finances. The slush fund can help with his travel costs. In this way the wedding can still take place as planned and the couple won't be left in the lurch. If the money in their slush fund isn't needed, the couple can then use this for other things such as furniture for their new home, or extra spending money for their honeymoon.

Wedding finances could become quite complex so a pragmatic approach is needed and it is the consultant who must bring that to the situation. Encouraging the clients to keep a track of all their expenses will help them remain within their budget parameters. Some couples may have the luxury of being able to spend freely, but most will appreciate having a clear budget set out for them.

Wedding Budget Details and Categories:Rentals and Reception Sample

Table 4.1

Category Name/ Specific Item	Included?	Estimated cost	Final Cost	Down Payment Amount	Final Payment Due Date	Notes
Reception and Rentals (40%)	Y/N					
Site rental fee	Y/N					
Tent rental fee	Y/N					
Food	Y/N					
Beverages	Y/N					
Tables	Y/N					
Chairs	Y/N					
Dance floor	Y/N					
Lighting	Y/N					
China	Y/N					
Linens	Y/N					
Flatware	Y/N					
Glassware	Y/N					
Other decorations (e.g. ice sculptures)	Y/N					
Tips (e.g. wait staff, coat check)	Y/N					
Other						

Fig. 1.1

Budget Categories and Other Related Areas of Expenditure

Reception and Rentals (40%)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Reception venue rental fee	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tent rental fees	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Food	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other beverages	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tables	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dance Floor	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Linen	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	China	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Glassware	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Flatware	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Specialty decorations (e.g. ice sculpture)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tips (e.g. banquet manager, wait staff, valet, coat check)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table. 1.2

Photography and/or Videography (10%)

- Engagement photos
- Photographer for ceremony&wedding: time and album package
- Additional photos for family and friends
- Videographer for ceremony and reception: time and package

Wedding Consultant (10%)



Wedding Attire (8%)



Floral Décor (7%)

- 🔍 Bridal bouquet
- Bridesmaids' bouquets
- Groom's boutonniere
- Groomsmen's boutonnieres
- 🔍 Parents (corsages/boutonnieres)
- 🔍 Grandparents (corsages/boutonnieres)
- 🔍 Other immediate family members
- 🔍 Flower girl(s) (flowers and baskets)
- 🔍 Ring bearer (boutonniere and pillow)
- 🔍 Readers, soloist, & others
- 🔍 Ceremony flowers, bows and wreaths, (altar, pews/chairs, doors)

- Ceremony special elements (e.g. chuppah décor)
- 📄 Reception (cake table, cake, serving table, centrepieces, other)
- 📄 Packing and delivery

Music and Entertainment (7%)



Wedding Rings (excluding engagement ring) (4%)

- Bride's wedding ring
- Groom's wedding ring

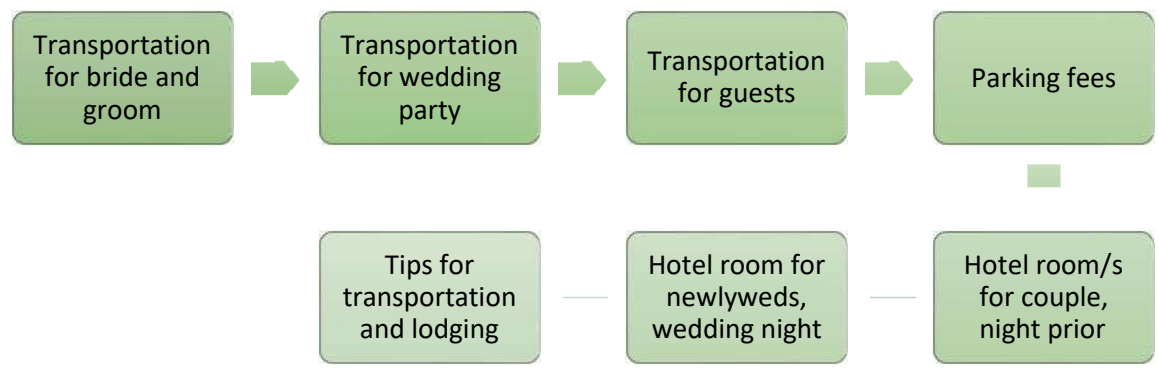
Stationery Elements (3%)

- Save-the-date notifications
- Invitations (invitation cards, reply cards)
- Calligrapher
- Ceremony programs
- Specialised ceremony elements (e.g., ketubah, pew cards)
- Seating chart
- Guest book
- Escort, table, and place cards
- Table card holders, frames or stands
- Menus
- Personalised cake or table napkins
- Personalised boxes, bags or matches to accompany favours
- Wedding announcements
- Thank-you cards

Gifts (3%)

- Bride's attendants
- Groom's attendants
- Parents of bride
- Parents of groom
- Other bridal party members (e.g. readers)
- Wedding favours

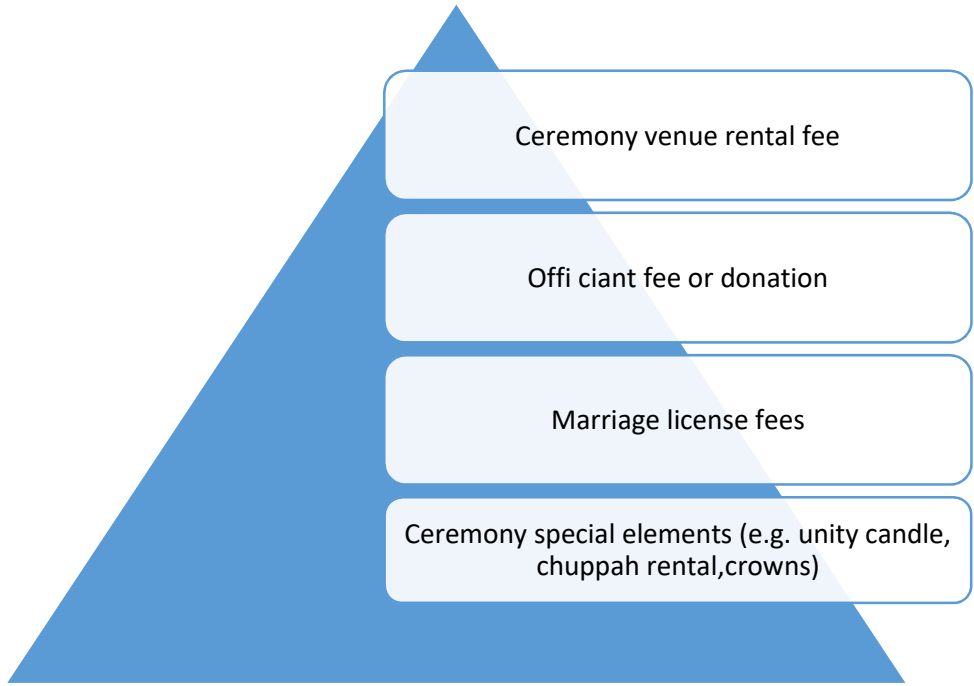
Transportation and Accommodation (3%)



Wedding Cake and Other Pastries (2%)

- Wedding cake (includes delivery)
- Groom's cake (includes delivery)
- Cake cutting fee
- Other pastries (e.g. cookies or biscotti)

Ceremony and Legal Issues (2%)



Wedding Day Preparation (1%)

- Bridal hair trial run
- Bridal hair day-of
- Bridal makeup trial run
- Bridal makeup day-of
- Bridal manicure/pedicure
- Groom's hair
- Groom's manicure/pedicure

TABLE 4.3 Sample Summary Budget

Category	Budget %	Amount (£) Allocated
Reception and Rentals	40	10,400
Photography and Videography	10	2,600
Wedding Consultant	10	2,600
Wedding Attire	8	2,080
Floral Décor	7	1,820
Music and Other Entertainment	7	1,820
Wedding Rings (excluding engagement ring)	4	1,040
Stationery Elements	3	780
Gifts	3	780
Transportation and Accommodation	3	780
Wedding Cake and Other Pastries	2	520
Ceremony and Legal Issues	2	520
Wedding Day Preparation	1	260
Total	100%	£26,000

£20,000 Sample Wedding Budget

Item	% of	Suggestion	Estimated	Final
Wedding Gown And Alterations	6%		£1,200.00	
Bride's Accessories (shoes, veil, etc.)	2%		£300.00	

Groom's Outfit And Accessories	1%		£150.00	
Makeup Artist	1%		£125.00	
Hairdresser	1%		£125.00	
Manicure/Pedicure/Facial	1%		£150.00	
The Look				
Rabbi/Priest/Officiant Fees	1%		£250.00	

£20,000 Sample Wedding Budget

Item	% of Budget	Our Suggestion	Estimated Cost	Final Cost
Ceremony Location Fees	N/A	Churches and synagogues might ask for small donations or may charge a fee as high as £1,000 for the use of their sanctuary for the wedding ceremony. Certain factors will influence the fee you pay: if you are a member or not and what you can afford.	0	
Rings (for both)	2%		£400.00	

Ceremony Accessories (Ketubah, yarmulkes, kiddush cups, kneeling bench, unity candle, ring pillow)	1%		£200.00	
The Ceremony				

£20,000 Sample Wedding Budget

Item	% of	Our Suggestion	Estimated	Final
Wedding Cake	3%		£500-£600	
Cookies Or Special Chocolates	N/A		0	

Caterer	40%		£8,000.00	
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£20,000 Sample Wedding Budget

Item	% of	Our Suggestion	Estimated	Final
Beverages/Bartenders	11%	People tend to consume less alcohol in the day rather than at night. A brunch or luncheon will help keep your bar expenses lower.	£2,100.00	
Reception Location	N/A	These fees have already been figured into the catering budget.	0	
Food, Beverage And Location Fees Sub-Total				

Save-The-Date Cards	.25%		£50.00	
Wedding Invitations	2%		£350.00	

£20,000 Sample Wedding Budget Based

Item	% of	Our Suggestion	Estimated	Final
Personal Stationery	1%		£125.00	
Calligraphy Charges	.10%		£25.00	
Postage Costs	1%		£127.50	
Ceremony Reserved Seating Cards	N/A		0	

Wedding Programs	.10%		£25.00	
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£20,000 Sample Wedding Budget

Item	% of Budget	Suggestion	Estimated Cost	Final Cost
Table Number Cards	N/A		0	
Seating Cards Or	1%		£200.00	
Stationery Paper	5%		£902.50	
Wedding Favours	.25%		£50.00	

Wedding Party Gifts	1%		£240.00	
Guest Book And Pen	.3%		£65.00	

Sample Wedding Budget

Item	% of	Suggestion	Estimated	Final
Cake Knife And Lifter	.2%		£36.00	
Toasting Glasses	N/A		0	
Gifts & Accessories	2%		£391.00	

Ceremony Flowers	2%		£420.00	
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£20,000 Sample Wedding Budget

Item	% of	Our Suggestion	Estimated	Final
Reception Flowers	5%		£1,000.00	
Flowers	7%		£1,420.00	
Napkin Treatments	.5%		£100.00	

£20,000 Sample Wedding Budget Based

Item	% of	Our Suggestion	Estimated	Final
Company Specialty Lighting	N/A		0	
Linens	N/A		0	
Décor	.5%		£100.00	
Rental Equipment (includes chairs, tables and plates)	N/A		0	
Rentals	N/A		0	
Music – Ceremony	2%		£400.00	
Cocktail Music	1%		£100.00	
Reception Band	7%		£1,300.00	
Music	10%		£1,800.00	

£20,000 Sample Wedding Budget















Item	% of	Our Suggestion	Estimated	Final
Photographer	8%		£1,675.00	
Videographer	N/A		0	
Photography/Video	8%		£1,500.00	
Limousines	1%		£200.00	
Out-of-Town Guest Transportation	N/A		0	

£20,000 Sample Wedding Budget Based On A 175 Guest Count

Item	% of	Our Suggestion	Estimated	Final
Valet Parking	N/A		0	
Transportation	1%		£200.00	
Grand Total			£19,913.50	

Additional costs to be considered:

An additional 8-10% of the wedding budget should be set aside for gratuities, sales tax (when applicable) and any unanticipated expenses. Below the line items:

 Marriage License	 Wedding Co-ordinator	 Bridesmaids' Luncheon
 Hostess Gifts	 Out-of-Town Hotel Gifts And Schedules	 Rehearsal Dinner
 Rehearsal Dinner Invitations	 Rehearsal Dinner Place Cards	 Rehearsal Dinner Music
 Staff Meals And Parking Charges	 Babysitter For Child Attendants	 Post-Wedding Brunch
 Wedding Night Suite		 Honeymoon

Points to Remember

- ❓ Discuss anticipated budget early in the planning process.
- ❓ Encourage couples to clearly define who will be contributing what to the budget.
- ❓ Discuss tipping etiquette as some couples might not realise they must factor this into the budget.
- ❓ Make sure the couple (or the person responsible for the particular budget item) make all the down payments.
- ❓ Remind clients of final payment dates so as to avoid any late fees and to ensure they are not denied service on the wedding day.
- ❓ Give clients a folder to keep all their contracts and receipts.
- ❓ As the consultant, ensure you receive your final payment at least two weeks prior to the wedding day.
- ❓ Remind the couple to have cash on the wedding day for tips, which you can distribute on their behalf as applicable.

Further Reading:

- ✓ *The Everything Weddings on a Budget Book: Plan the wedding of your dreams – without going bankrupt (2007) Barbara Cameron*
- ✓ *Wedding Budget Development: Planning Guide – 2 (2013), By Lady Bella Productions*