

## The Wedding Budget

The majority of brides regret some of the choices they made concerning their wedding. Proper budgeting could have prevented some of these problems. Bryon Hicks-Lee, a consultant with Duette Wedding and Event Planners offers brides five simple budgeting tips to ensure that their weddings go as smoothly as possible without breaking the bank in the process.

Dividing your budget. Whether you are paying for the wedding yourselves, or your families are helping; setting a realistic budget is essential. Here is the simple way:

1. 40% to 50% for reception location rentals, food, cake and beverages
2. 8% to 10% for flowers and décor
3. 8% for photography and Videography
4. 5% to 10% for the bride's and groom's attire
5. 5% to 10% for fees, invitations, transportation, etc.
6. 10% for honeymoon
7. 2% to 5% for Misc. Items including keepsakes

**Who is responsible for what?** Times have changed and no longer is the bride's family responsible for assuming the entire cost of a wedding. Get help from both sides of the family in creating a wedding budget. One idea: Each family would assume responsibility for one-third of the costs- bride's family, groom's family and the bride and groom. This relieves some of the pressure on the bride's family and also makes the process of planning the wedding a more enjoyable experience.

**Keeping things straight.** To stay on budget, keep track of quotes, deposits and balances due. Consider using wedding planning software available on the market that not only keeps track of your spending, but it could also help with invitations and guest lists. Also get everything quoted to you in writing.

**Keep yourself from overspending.** It is not impossible. Consider serving wine or beer instead of a full bar and save the champagne for the toasts. Instead of a grandiose meal during the reception, consider having a breakfast or afternoon tea. Not only will you save on food, but also scant amounts of alcohol will make a surprising difference. Avoid holidays, as costs are often higher. Check out using a wedding consultant as sometimes they can save you money and lots of stress!