

You're Engaged, Now What Do You Do?

Are you one of the thousands of couples who got engaged over the holidays? This is the time for you and your soon-to-be to get everything you ever wanted — the time to start from scratch; to upgrade, expand and replace.

To turn a whole bunch of mismatched mine and yours into a lifetime of ours.

A lot of couples become overwhelmed, feeling they have to get it all done at once. According to the experts at Bed Bath & Beyond, this is totally normal.

When it comes to registering, Bed Bath & Beyond suggests you relax, take your time and have fun. Go back to the store as many times as needed, or update your registry online.

Here are some additional tips to make wedding planning a breeze:

Plan ahead: Start a bridal registry as soon as you say "yes."

This way you will be prepared for your engagement party and bridal shower, as well as your wedding.

Periodically update your registry by adding more products if you need to, even after the wedding. Be kind to procrastinators.

Don't be shy: Register for gifts in a range of prices and categories.

This will give guests and group givers lots of options to choose from.

Do the math: Here's an easy rule of thumb: Add up all the gift-givers for both your wedding and bridal shower.

Register for at least two times as many gifts as givers. Your guests will appreciate having lots of choices when they shop for you. Be sure to refresh your list regularly as gifts get purchased.

Register now, because you won't buy it later: You may think you will... but you won't.

Now is the time to let others get you the stuff you'd never buy yourself. Your friends and family might even get together to purchase a higher priced "group gift."

Remember the rule of three: When it comes to setting your table, if you choose bold patterns for your china and flatware, pick a more simple style of glassware.

Prefer intricate stemware? Pair it with simpler patterns of china and flatware. So, it's bold/bold/simple or simple/simple/bold.

Three sheets is a win: Register for at least three sets of sheets — one for the bed, one for the linen closet and one for the hamper. This way you won't be forced to do laundry.

Once you've set up your bridal registry, take advantage of Bed Bath & Beyond's Bridal Toolkit(R), the complimentary wedding planning tools available at bedbathandbeyond.com, includ-

ing your own personal wedding Web site, budgeter, task manager, guest list manager, gift tracker and even a seating arranger. This way, all of

your information can be stored in one convenient place.

Congratulations and best wishes on your engagement. Now get registering and let the gift-giving begin.

Debating Live Music Vs. DJ

Every couple wants their wedding to be perfect. From choosing the right wedding dress to making the guests comfortable to picking the right menu at the reception, choices have to be made at seemingly every turn.

And music for your wedding is no exception. This decision essentially comes down to choosing a DJ or a band for the wedding reception.

Both a DJ and a band come with their advantages and disadvantages. To help you make a more informed decision, here are some things to consider:

- Price: If you're worried about how to afford the music, you might want to go with a DJ. DJ's are almost always less expensive than a live band. The asking price for a DJ might start out around \$1,000 for a

typical four-hour reception.

If the DJ has a stronger reputation and is known to involve audiences more, this price can double.

Meanwhile, most bands can command between \$2,500 to \$5,000 for the same four-hour period. Plus, with a DJ, you'll only need to provide a courtesy meal for one or two people. A band can have five or more players. That adds up to more out-of-pocket expenses.

- Length of the wedding: Most receptions last in the neighborhood of four hours, which can be a long time for a band to keep up a full head of steam. They may supplement with pre-recorded music during breaks. If you know your reception might run longer than that, perhaps a DJ is the way to go.

- Size of the reception hall: Many times the size of the reception hall can help make the decision of a band versus DJ easier for you.

Some reception halls aren't quite big enough to hold a band and a dance floor. Such halls may also restrict the type of music that can be played as well.

- Atmosphere: The degree of formality of a wedding can also dictate which way to go. If you're getting married a little later in life and your guest list is older, then a band is likely the way to go.

But if you're getting married in your 20s and your guest list is made up mostly of people of a similar age, then a DJ can be a more fun and

suitable option for you and your guests.

- Talk to the DJ/Bandleader: A good DJ or bandleader can be the emcee of a reception. On the other end of the spectrum, a less-than-personable DJ or bandleader can bring down the mood of what is supposed to be a fun night.

Interview a DJ about his music selection and his overall attitude during a performance. To see what a bandleader might be like, ask him about his schedule and try to catch his band's performance at another wedding.

You can also ask married friends about bands or DJs they might have used.

There are also many types of bands you can choose from. A band known as a "General Business" band, for instance, is typically very versatile, capable of playing several different styles of music.

If your wedding will have a particularly ethnic flavor, there are also numerous bands catering to every ethnicity imaginable.

- Decide early on: The type of music will likely have to be one of the first decisions you make with regards to your wedding. This is thanks to talented bands or DJs being in high demand come wedding season.

Oftentimes, a DJ or a band will have their schedule booked at least a year in advance, meaning you need to know far ahead of time which route you want to take.

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