

25 Bridal Shop Questions

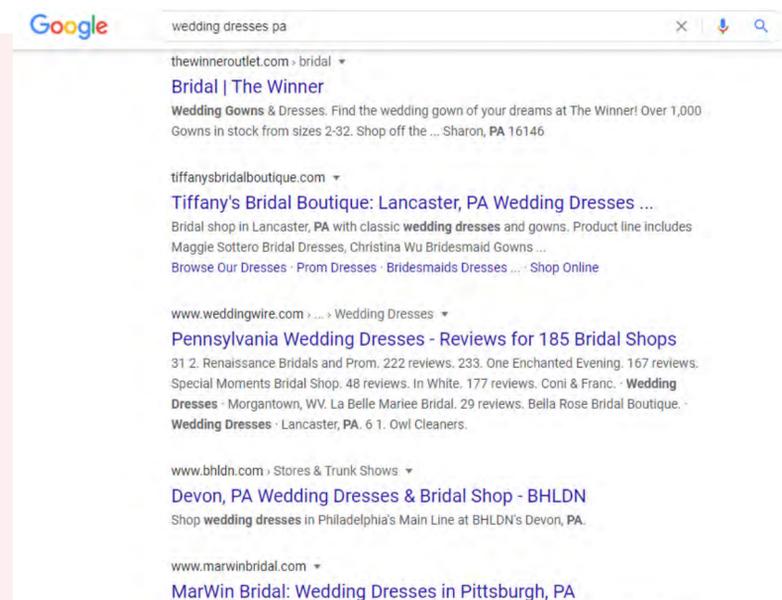
TO MASTER SOCIAL MEDIA
& APPOINTMENTS



1.) CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE MAJOR ONLINE PLATFORMS AND LIST THE BEST WAYS FOR US TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM?

GOOGLE SERP

(Search Engine Results Page): This refers to the listing of search results that is displayed by Google when someone searches on their platform. Google tries to show the most relevant content to the person searching, and uses location data on business related searches. This is very important for Bridal shops because brides go to Google when they want to find shops in their area to go try on wedding dresses. There are three main areas that stores should be concerned with being present on: Google Ads, Google Map, Google Organic Results. There are strategies and optimizations for each section that stores should focus on.



SERP Image

INSTAGRAM

Instagram is the primary social media platform for Generation Z and a store's presence on Instagram can be a significant driver for appointments. The platform allows stores to reach customers in three primary ways:

- 1.) Advertisements/Sponsored Content
- 2.) Instagram Stories
- 3.) Instagram posts

Advertisements/Sponsored content reaches users outside of the store's followers, whereas Stories and Instagram posts are sent to followers/appear on specific hashtags based on engagement. Instagram will test your organic posts on a small subset of followers to determine the amount of impressions (views) a post will receive. The more engagement (likes/comments) the post receives initially, the more impressions it will receive.

We typically recommend that stores use paid advertising on Instagram specifically for events. We have found that many brides do not search (on Google) for trunk shows/sample sales, so Instagram can be very powerful at generating appointments/traffic for these events.

FACEBOOK

As a general Facebook strategy, we recommend posting simultaneously to Instagram and Facebook -- That is to say, to post the same content you are posting on Instagram to Facebook. We also recommend that stores maintain a healthy score of reviews on their Facebook profile, and keep their Facebook business page completely up-to-date with contact information. Like Instagram, we also recommend advertising events (sample sales, trunk shows) on Facebook.

PINTEREST

Pinterest is important as many brides use the platform for inspiration/planning purposes. In the last year or so, we have seen an uptick of referrals from Pinterest to our network of sites which might be indicative of an SEO initiative by Pinterest, or changes in Google's algorithm. Stores should make sure they have their dresses pinned, and they should link back to the website. This is an important step in getting new brides into the remarketing funnels for Bridal shops. At the current time, we do not recommend heavily advertising on Pinterest.

TIK TOK

TikTok is a platform that initially had users in younger age demographics. Since the platform has launched, we are seeing an increased amount of engagement across different age groups. We have seen certain statistics claiming that 40% of the user base of TikTok is within the age range of 16-24. The type of content is similar to 'Vine' (a company that was purchased by Twitter). 'Fun' videos, shorter in length.

Types of bridal TikTok:

There are tons of #bridalchallenges that bridal brands and boutiques can utilize to their advantage in order to create brand awareness! Right now, there's a trend to put together a random bridal look by closing your eyes and going through a boutique until the person holding the camera tells you to stop. This is a great challenge for boutiques because it allows you to show off your store while also participating in a fun and popular challenge. Trends like this will keep your followers engaged with your content because it shows that you're up to date on what's relevant on the app. For bridal brands, TikTok is a great app to showcase every inch of a new collection, from intimate

details to behind the scenes footage. And if you plan it out ahead of time, you can ask your models to participate in a challenge after the shoot! The key to TikTok is engaging with what's popular and trending while also balancing it out with content that's more specific to your brand/ boutique.



screenshot from Tik Tok, account: *Brideandgroomms*

2.) HOW IMPORTANT IS TIKTOK FOR BUSINESS?

You should begin venturing into TikTok ASAP because it's a fairly new app that's not nearly as saturated as Facebook or Instagram which gives you more room to experiment with new creative ideas. The app is also a

great gateway marketing tool to the Gen Z generation which will come in handy as they grow older and their footholds in the economy grow stronger.



screenshot from Tik Tok, account: *Gowneyedgirl*

3.) DO REAL BRIDES GET MORE LIKES THAN STOCK PHOTOS OR VICE VERSA?

Due to the availability, and uniqueness, of real bride imagery, we strongly recommend using this type of imagery over stock photos. We have seen a significant difference in engagement (likes/ comments) on Real bride imagery versus stock photos.



photography by Johnathan Borba

4.) WHAT ARE SOME OF THE APPS THAT YOU CAN SCHEDULE OUT POSTS ON FACEBOOK/ INSTAGRAM WITH?

Later (later.com) is a popular choice amongst our bridal shops. For \$24 per month, you have access to unlimited posts each month. The free plan allows you to post 30 times per month (once per day) which would still allow the store to schedule a good amount of content while manually posting the remainder. We believe these tools are worth the minimal investment from a simple time investment standpoint. It is going to cost stores more than \$24 per month in manual hours spent monitoring/posting on these platforms each month.

5.) WHAT ARE SOME “RED FLAGS” WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF WHEN TALKING ABOUT THE ONLINE SIDE OF THE BUSINESS?

1. Site not being mobile friendly (Huge red flag)
2. Site not being secure
3. Store posting less than 1 time per day on Instagram

These issues should be addressed immediately as they are hurting your store’s revenue potential.

6.) HOW CAN WE GET MORE FOLLOWERS ON FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM?

Followers should be a secondary outcome of a successful campaign. That is to say, you would not want to gauge a campaign’s performance by the number of followers that were generated. Followers do not directly tie into revenue. Engagement, and goal completions (like appointment request form-fills) are a much better indicator of success for campaigns.

You can run a campaign (paid campaign) on Instagram directly from the app with the goal of 'View Instagram Profile' to generate more followers.

7.) DO HASHTAGS OR CONTENT HELP US GET MORE FOLLOWERS?

Hashtags are useful in getting your content discovered by people who are not currently following you. **The content** is what will generate the followers though -- You can have the most optimal hashtags possible, but get 0 followers if your content is not engaging. Stores should focus on generating followers as a secondary goal to their campaigns -- The primary goal should be to generate brand awareness, and appointments.

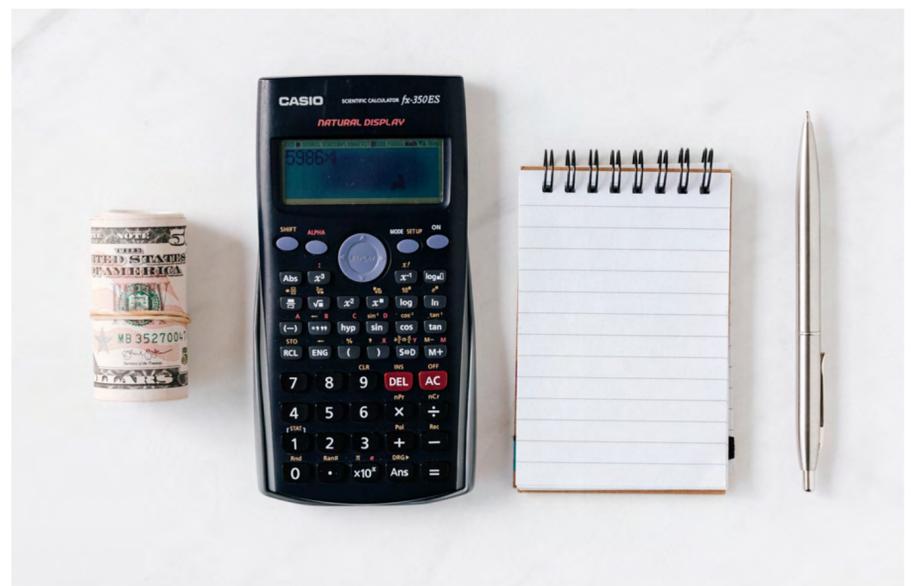
8.) WHAT IS THE BEST USE OF AD BUDGET FOR STORES TO GAIN MORE FOLLOWERS?

Our stores typically spend between \$500-\$1,500 in the offseason, and a minimum of \$1,000 per month (in January, February and March).

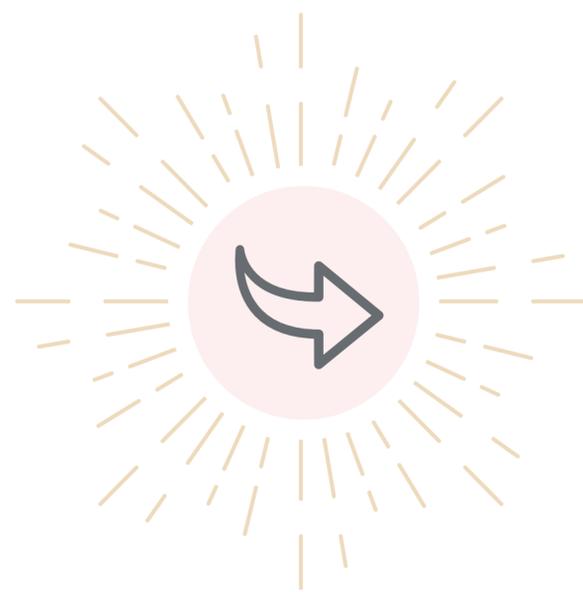
This will vary on a few factors:

1. Size of store (number of fitting rooms/total capacity)
2. Competition (strong # of competition requires higher budget)

Again I will mention, your objective should not be to gain followers with campaigns as this does not mean anything for your bottom line. Your objective should be **appointments**.



photography by Karolina Grabowska



9.) WHAT ARE SOME CREATIVE WAYS WE CAN CELEBRATE OUR FOLLOWER MILESTONES?

There are a lot of different ways that you can celebrate follower milestones: make a donation to a non-profit organization, host a giveaway, throw an Instagram live party, create an exclusive offer for your followers, have a real bride take over your account...the possibilities are endless! Even if you do a simple blog post to show your appreciation because you can't afford to do something extravagant, your followers will definitely take note of your thoughtfulness.

10.) CAN YOU EXPLAIN HASHTAGS OVERALL?

Hashtags are simply a way for your content to show up in the 'discover' section of Instagram when users search for specific hashtags. By 'tagging' your content with specific hashtags, you increase the likelihood of your content being shown when someone searches one of your hashtags. Instagram's algorithm will determine the placement of your content, so you

do not have much control about the placement of your content within a specific hashtag, but by using specific hashtags you are more likely to be discovered by people searching.



photography by Polina Zimmerman

11.) WHAT ARE THE BEST HASHTAGS TO USE?

#bride, #wedding, #weddingdress, #weddingday, #groom, #love, #weddinginspiration, #bridetobe, #bridal, #weddings, #weddinginspo, and #instawedding are all valuable hashtags to use for Instagram posts. There are countless variations of these that will also increase the chances of someone coming across your post, like **#weddingdresses #brides #weddingideas**, etc. It's also helpful to write hashtags that directly relate to your post so the content feels more unique and reaches an audience that's more niche.

For example, if it's an image of a bride on the beach you could use: #beachwedding, #beachbride, #destinationwedding, #beach.

12.) HOW MANY SHOULD BE USED IN 1 POST?

You can use up to 30 hashtags on Instagram. Some say posting all 30 hashtags can look "spammy" but if you utilize them in a unique way, they can work to your benefit. The sweet spot is somewhere between 11-30. Use the major bridal hashtags that we mentioned above but again, make sure to be specific once those are covered. You have a higher chance of performing well when you add a hashtag that's truly relevant to your post instead of trying to compete with other brands using the same popular hashtags.

13.) SHOULD THE HASHTAGS BE BASIC, WITTY ETC.?

Remember, you are tagging your posts with hashtags so that people who are browsing those hashtags are more likely to find your content. Here's how you can look at it:

- **Using a popular hashtag:** More potential searches, More content to compete against. If you're using a hashtag like #weddingdresses then the chances of someone searching for that is high, but there is also a lot of content from other posts that you are competing against.
- **Using a creative/less popular hashtag:** Less potential searches. Less content to compete against. Not as many people will be looking at posts with these types of hashtag, but you will also be competing against fewer posts.

I think it's best to use a variety of relevant hashtags so that your content can be discovered across a wide set of **relevant** searches.

14.) WHAT IS THE BEST TIME TO POST?

This will vary, so we recommend using Instagram's analytics feature to understand what times generate the most engagement for the store's specific audience.

15.) HOW MANY TIMES PER DAY DO WE POST FOR MOST ENGAGEMENT?

It's recommended that stores should post between 3-4 posts per day. However, this may vary depending on the time of year. During peak season, you definitely want to maintain a high level of consistency, and in the off season you can pull it back a little.

16.) HOW MANY TIMES A WEEK SHOULD A STORE POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

As mentioned above, if the store is able to post quality content 3-4 times per day, then they should! This will keep a steady pace of engagement and show their followers that they're both active in the store and on social media. If posting that often isn't an option, shoot for posting once a day or every other day. The key is to be consistent because followers will notice if you stop posting as often as you initially did!

17.) WHAT WORDS AND SEO TRICKS AND TIPS SHOULD THEY BE USING? EX. A DESIGNER TOLD A STORE SAY "WEDDING DRESS" VS "WEDDING GOWN"

The days of using tricks for SEO are pretty much over. You are not going to jump to the top of Google SERP by changing your navigation to 'Wedding Dress' instead of 'Wedding Gown.' There are a few factors that Google determines search rank from.

Content+ Mobile-friendliness are two factors of SEO that you need to focus on.

18.) BEST WAYS TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT?

- As we mentioned above, be consistent with how often you're posting and what you're posting. This will help build a relationship with your audience and show them that you're continually active on social media.
- Utilize your stories! Get creative with them - ask a question, create a poll, start a hashtag - anything you can do to get users to engage with

your products and your social media account. This is a great way to hone in on the voice of your brand and show your followers why they should be interested in your product.



screenshot from Betches Brides Instagram

- Be smart with your hashtags. Use both popular and specific hashtags on each post so that you have a greater chance of ranking higher on a hashtag page.

#WEDDINGDRESSES

- Be transparent! Now more than ever, your followers want to know the ins and outs of your brand/business (especially the Gen Z generation with their focus on politics and sustainability practices).

Let them see how the brand is built, whether that means a behind the scenes video of a photoshoot or an interview with the designer about the new collection.



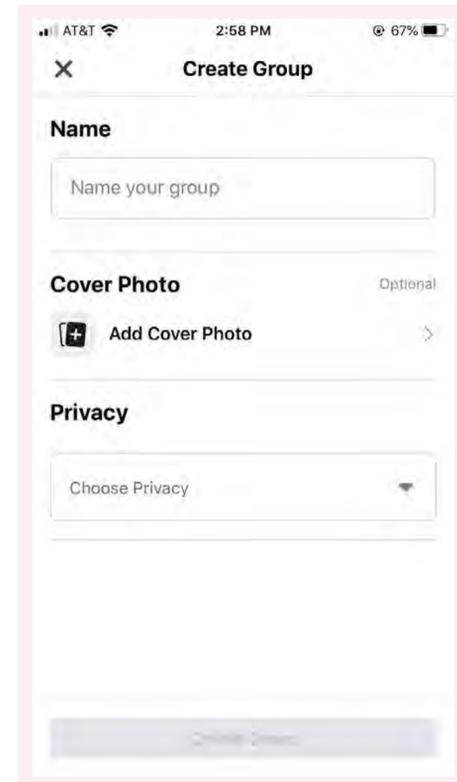
screenshot from Signature by JA Instagram

19.) HOW TO EASILY POST VIDEOS TO INSTAGRAM AND INSTAGRAM STORIES?

If you're wanting to directly post videos to Instagram and Instagram stories, we recommend saving the videos you're wanting to post to a phone and then uploading them directly to the feed or story through the app. This ensures you'll know exactly how the video will look before you post it.

20.) HOW CAN YOU POST FROM A DESKTOP TO INSTAGRAM?

There's no official way to post from a desktop to Instagram. The best way to accomplish this is by using a scheduler website such as Later, Buffer, SkedSocial, etc. which allows you to add images or videos from your phone or desktop to the website and then choosing to share that content directly to Instagram.



21.) HOW CAN YOU CREATE A GROUP ON FACEBOOK/IG AND WATCH A LIVE STREAM EVENT?

On Instagram, you can create a “close friends” group which allows you to choose exactly who you want to see a live stream event. Once you're on the “live” option in the story page of Instagram, then you can opt to either share your live stream event with that specific group or with all of your followers. On Facebook, you go to the group that you would like to live stream to (or create the group and then go to the group page), create a new post, select the Facebook Live Video for groups icon, and then opt to go live within the group.

22.) WHERE SHOULD WE SPEND OUR ADVERTISING MONEY?

We recommend spending 75%-80% of your advertising budget on Google ads, and the remaining on Facebook/Instagram. Brides go to Google, when they are actively searching for an appointment. It is very important that you maintain a consistent, high ranking presence on Google and the best way to accomplish this is with their ads. Google now shows up to 4 sponsored posts before the organic listings, so even if your store has a strong organic presence (strong SEO), you could show up beneath 4 or more posts by competition running Google ads.

23.) DO YOU HAVE A CHECKLIST OF WHAT A GOOD WEBSITE IS?

- Mobile Friendly
- Secure
- Engaging (Image driven)
- Fast
- Up-to-date

24.) WHAT ARE SOME 'QUICK-HITS' FOR INSTAGRAM - ANY QUICK PIECES OF ADVICE?

Content Hierarchy:

1. Real Bride Imagery
2. Styled-Shoot / In-store Imagery
3. Designer Imagery

Post **frequently** to stories (3+ times per day)

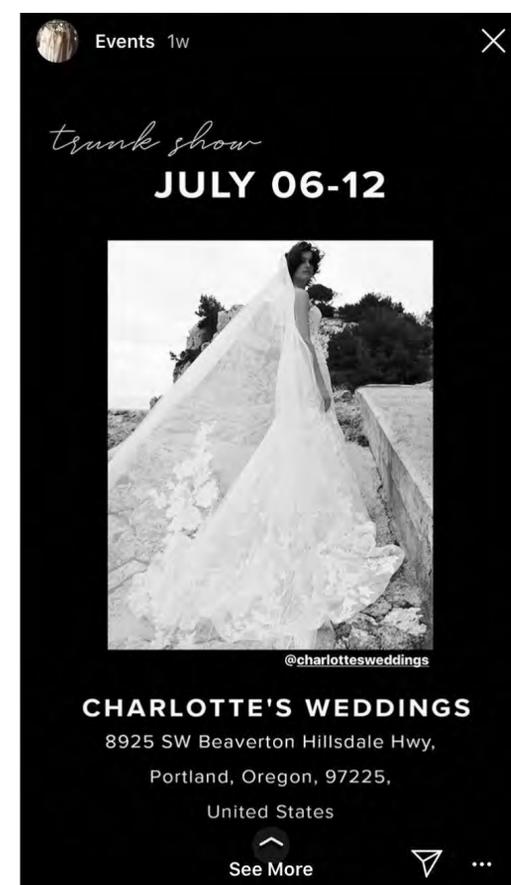
Schedule posts in advance (Helpful for consistency, and to maintain a specific aesthetic for your grid)

Ask designers for content.

Re-post older, high performing content (You do not **always** have to reinvent the wheel)

25.) WHERE SHOULD WE SPEND THEIR AD MONEY FOR DESIGNER SPOTLIGHTS AND TRUNK SHOWS AND HOW TO DO SO?

Facebook/Instagram are the most effective platforms to promote your events.



screenshot from Justin Alexander Instagram

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