

CHICAGO BRIDE

Top Tips for Chicago's Engaged Couples to get Crowdfunded BY Dennis Hu, CEO of Fundly

Whether you are just starting to think about your dream wedding or you're already in the thick of planning it, one factor that rules above all is cost. How can you make the wedding of your dreams come true despite budget limitations? More and more couples are turning to crowdfunding, a type of online fundraising. We here at crowdfunding site Fundly have seen all sorts of unique fundraising ideas to help offset basic costs (from the dress to the DJ), fund the honeymoon, and even raise donations for a favorite cause in lieu of a traditional registry. Here are our top tips for engaged couples to start fundraising today.

1. Create Your Story

You might be surprised to think of fundraising as an option for your wedding, but we're constantly seeing friends and family rally to help make someone's wedding dreams come true. Everyone loves a great love story and the start to getting people on board with support is to share yours. Start with your dating history, share the big proposal moment – make people feel a part of your love story. Talk about what your dream wedding means to you both and be clear about how you're using the money you'll raise – give people tangible goals to be a part of.

2. Leverage Social Media

Make the most of your 1,000+ friends on Facebook (not to mention Twitter, Instagram, etc.). Use social networks to broadcast your campaign to everyone you're connected to through social networks. Many crowdfunding sites have built-in tools that make this really easy by automating social updates – in fact, we've seen that campaigns linking to social are generally 50 percent more likely to raise money than those without.

3. Make it Unique

Everyone wants their wedding to be memorable and what better way to do that than to throw something unique into the mix when crowdfunding? Put a new twist on a traditional wedding registry by enabling guests to contribute to your favorite local nonprofit through a crowdfunding page (we're seeing couples do this in lieu of a registry and also alongside traditional in-store registries). Let friends and family vote (through your wedding site or crowdfunding page) on where you should head for your honeymoon, so they're even more invested in your journey. Take an unexpected element for your wedding and empower guests to make it a part of the experience by helping fund it.

4. Keep Them Updated

Your friends and family are investing in making your wedding day special, so make them feel included by providing updates along the road to the big day. Let them know when you've picked colors, flowers, food, a venue, etc. Post pictures of the flower girl and ring bearer. Through

many crowdfunding sites you can blog right on your campaign page and share your updates via your social networks. This serves the dual purpose of rewarding contributors and enticing potential donors to contribute to your cause.

5. Make it Easy for People to Donate and Support

The more places you can broadcast your campaign, the more likely you are to succeed. If you have a wedding website, include links directly to your campaign page so people can find it easily. Think about embedding a donation form into either your wedding Facebook page (if you have one) or your personal Facebook account – it's a handy feature some crowdfunding sites offer. If your friends and family, like mine, are constantly on phones and tablets, choose a crowdfunding site that will let them donate from mobile devices.

Weddings are a special time where literally everyone in the room is there for a single purpose: to support you and your spouse! Take the time to soak it all in when the big day comes, but for now enjoy the process of bringing your wedding vision to life. Consider crowdfunding to help that vision become a reality and if you need some more inspiration to get your campaign going, check out these [wedding and fundraising ideas](#).

About Dennis

Dennis is the CEO of [Fundly](#), a fundraising platform that helps people make a difference. Fundly helps individuals and organizations of all sizes with their fundraising efforts and has built tools to help guide the everyday person to become a great fundraiser. Prior to Fundly, he spent nearly six years at Yahoo! and was also a professional wedding and travel photographer. You can also see more of his work at dhuphotography.com and dhublog.com

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