

Q&A: 4 wedding trends and a prediction with online registry and retailer Zola

Article

Rachel Jarrett

President and COO of Zola



Weddings are back. Approximately 2.6 million weddings are expected to take place in the US this year, per The **Knot**. Insider Intelligence spoke with Rachel Jarrett, president and COO of Zola, an online wedding registry, planner, and retailer, about how couples are gearing up—and changing up—the way they say, “I do.”

Insider Intelligence: What are the current wedding trends?

Rachel Jarrett: The wedding industry benefited from the pandemic shift to more things being online, including planning. Couples are using Zola to purchase and plan all of their weddings—everything from save the dates to wedding albums. Both couples and guests feel more comfortable than ever before shopping for everything online.

In addition, we're seeing that couples have a longer engagement than before, with the average being 18 months versus the prior 12. This means that couples have been thinking

about their weddings for much longer and figuring out their vision for the day. There's always been meaning in weddings, but the meaning of weddings has been accentuated and people feel very emotional about them right now.

Couples want their weddings to be a reflection of who they are as a couple, and they want to put their own unique spin on it, so we launched our local vendor marketplace to help them do that. Couples can search local vendors, florists, photographers, venues, and caterers to find the perfect fit for their vision. If they can't find it locally, we have our registry business and work directly with major brands like Brooklinen, Cuisinart, or KitchenAid to have them ship specific items to us.

II: From creating an online community, what benefit does that bring users?

RJ: We recently launched our in-app community, which is Zola couples who share ideas and ask questions of each other. This has allowed couples to find support and expand their creativity by getting ideas from others. One of the things that people absolutely love to be creative about is their hashtag for their wedding, and we see a lot of topics about this in the community.

Our platform is incredibly flexible, allowing you to mold your journey and planning to exactly what works for you. For example, instead of ordering your paper from thousands of other designs, you can upload your own. And we've put QR codes on our paper invitations or paper save the dates. The pandemic helped QR codes make a comeback, allowing you to direct people to your website, which is completely personalized to you.

II: What changes are coming to weddings, and how are you meeting consumers' desires as cultural trends shift?

RJ: There's still going to be a huge amount of weddings at the end of this year and 2023. The pandemic has made people feel closer to each other and yearn for more of a connection overall—and yearn for those moments with friends and family, like at a wedding.

Couples will continue to want to put their unique spin on their wedding. More couples will move away from some of the traditions that are rooted in traditional patriarchal norms. We see fewer couples having the father walk the bride down the aisle; instead, it's both parents. We are seeing fewer people throw the bouquet. There has been an increase in sensitivity around some of these traditions.

Zola had a media campaign during International Women's Day featuring women proposing to men. We're only seeing 2% of women propose to men in heterosexual relationships. We would love to see that change.

We want to see the industry embracing more diversity across the board and representing different cultures and types of people in everything, from marketing to wedding vendors accommodating all different kinds of needs.