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**The Financial Power of Gay Weddings - Q & A**

**By Marianne Puechl**

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The Financial Power of Gay Weddings - Q & A

Q. Why should people consider gay unions financially profitable?

A. Gay weddings may not be legal just yet, but commitment ceremonies occur regularly throughout the United States. According to statistics from Girlfriends magazine 31% of couples do intend to settle down into a committed relationship. Lesbians and gays who choose to formalize their relationship spend an average of \$15,000 on a wedding.

Q. What sorts of goods and services will gay couples purchase for their weddings?

A. Gay and lesbian partners who register with Rainbow Wedding Network, the first wedding gift registry specifically for the gay and lesbian community, purchase the same goods and services as heterosexual couples. Overall their commitment ceremonies very closely resemble heterosexual weddings and include, for example: invitations, jewelry (often custom), florists, wedding coordinators and planners, photographers, limousine services, reception halls, and wedding cakes. When it comes to entertainment, couples may opt for musicians, disc jockeys or something a little more unique; yet it is true that gay and lesbian couples want all of the same amenities and services. They spend a comparable amount of money to straight people and, like any proud couple, want their union to be a remembered `event.'

Q. What attracts gay couples to a business when they look for goods and services for their weddings?

A. Most gay and lesbian couples want to work with businesses that will truly participate with them in the joy of the moment respectfully. This includes the process as well as the ceremony; for instance assisting with picking out just the right engagement ring with the professionalism and enthusiasm that such an occasion warrants. Gays and lesbians often look for businesses advertised in gay publications

## The Financial Power of Gay Weddings – Q A

or that openly support the gay community. If a business owner wishes to work in gay weddings, it is important to establish an advertising presence in local gay publications, to participate in gay-oriented events or to provide services at charities affiliated with the gay community. At the very least, displaying a rainbow flag on a website, marketing materials, or the actual place of business is an easy indication of a gay-friendly attitude and mentality.

Q. Are there other special needs or concerns for gay and lesbians who are being married?

A. Gay couples look for a comfort zone when utilizing the services of a vendor. They also may want to employ some creativity in their approach. For example, a lesbian woman may want to purchase a wedding gown or she may prefer a tuxedo. At RainbowWeddingNetwork, advertisers are screened, and conversed with personally before signing on. Advertising contracts stipulate that discrimination based on sexual orientation will not be tolerated. If a representative of a company does discriminate against a gay couple, the Network immediately has the right to discontinue advertising.

Q. How lucrative is the gay honeymooning market?

A. Many people in the gay community like to pamper themselves, show off, and enjoy life. The spending trend which began with the ceremony continues with the honeymoon. Travel statistics show the American gay and lesbian community represents \$47.3 million, or about 10% of the travel industry. Eighty-nine percent hold a valid passport, and 54% budget \$3,000 + on a vacation. Not only does the community travel, it travels well and purchases a variety of services while vacationing, to broaden their holiday experience.

Q. What considerations do gay honeymooners have when they select travel services and destinations?

A. Often gay and lesbian honeymooners will do business with a travel agent or travel services that work with openly gay couples, simply to insure that they can travel comfortably; not only enjoy themselves but moreover feel recognized as a couple having the full honeymoon experience.

Q. Is there other special advice to businesses that want to work with gay and lesbian couples?

A. It is most important to remember that gay weddings are not much different from heterosexual unions. These are two people in love who want to pay for respectful service. Treat gay unions as any other, and make certain there is good communication. Dialogue with your gay clients, as you would with any others. This leads to common ground, and the ability to provide the most ideal services for the particular couple with whom you are doing business!

Marianne Puechl is co-owner of [www.RainbowWeddingNetwork.com](http://www.RainbowWeddingNetwork.com), the first exclusive gay and lesbian wedding registry on-line. The site includes a directory of over 4,000 screened, gay-friendly businesses nationwide and in Canada. RWN was launched in 2000, and the first GLBT Wedding Expo will occur in Boston, Massachusetts on May 2, 2004.

## **GIVING BLOOD**

**By Wayne Lowe**

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This is about giving blood. Think of all the men and women who are gay out there!!! There are lots. Think of the population without gay men and women? There is fewer... BUT!

If a straight women gives blood, and a straight man gives blood, its fine. But what happens if one of them have a sexually transmitted infection or aids?

As I am aware gay men are cannot give blood if they have had sexual contact? Do they screen all blood when its given???? A gay man could have had sex, but not picked up anything! Is it cause they think the genetic information in the blood is GAY???

If the health service want blood so MUCH, then there are perfectly willing gay men and others who want to give blood who are not allowed to. Why stop them from giving blood, which is a very LARGE community, and then complain alot about not receiving enough blood.

Your there lying on the table nearly dying and the last blood that will keep you alive is a gay man whos is willing to give his clean blood to him, even though he has had sex! Would you let him die, or even worse, would you reject the offer to stay alive?

WHoever has other points of view about this explain them and get them voiced!!!!

MMMMMM Angry or what!!!

Give Blood – certainly – Oh wait you cant!!!

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