

Guests Play It Safe With Wedding Gifts

When invited to a wedding just fewer than half the 1,200 voters in a survey carried out by WeddingChaos.co.uk would play it safe and buy from the bride and groom's wedding list.

This is good news for companies who offer a wedding list service such as Debenhams, John Lewis, M&S and the White company to name but a few. They will be very happy to know that 45% of guests would prefer to use their service. When we approached our forum members to find out why, Jayne from Cramlington, told us that she would choose something from the gift list as she is "*not very imaginative when it comes to gift buying, at least I would be sure to buy something they wanted*".

However, it is not all roses for these companies as there has been a continued decline in the number of couples taking out the wedding list service despite their best efforts to make their service more accessible and easy to use, with innovations such as the option to build your list by walking around the department store with a hand held scanner, the ability to track which gifts have been purchased via the internet and the ease in which the guests can purchase online, often including gift wrapping and tag writing. Many also offer a voucher equivalent to 5-10% of the total value of the presents bought.

Interestingly 26% of voters said they would much rather give money. Guests preferring this option do so probably for one of two reasons; firstly they genuinely believe the bride and groom would appreciate the money, more than a present or secondly, they simply can't be bothered to choose something from the gift list or go shopping for something else. Leeanne from Wales says, with a smile, "*.... I would rather give a gift of money as they can then get themselves something they need and want... rather than 8 toasters and 9 kettles!*"

A surprising 14% of guests were bold enough to choose their own wedding present for the bride and groom. These types of guests normally go down this route as they perhaps think that they know the bride and groom better than they know themselves, or perhaps they simply want to inflict their own personal tastes on the couple or even to earn bragging rights to the 'best' present. Of course, it may simply be that there is nothing left on the gift list, or they ran out of time or don't have the gift list details. Whatever the reason, for these guests I would say be very careful as your wedding present could find its final resting place in the back of the draw or in the loft never to be seen again....

Defending this option, Jennifer from Devon argues "*... I would give something that I had chosen because I always want to give something personal [..] such as something traditional like a quilted photo album embroidered with flowers so that she can keep it as a wedding album.*"

Almost 12% voted to play it safe by giving vouchers as a gift. This is a great alternative to giving money, which some people find 'rude', as it still gives the bride and groom the option of buying what they want. It saves having to choose from a wedding list, especially handy when the only thing within your budget is 3 teaspoons – which whilst costing a lot, may seem a paltry present.

The final option was chosen by 3% of our voters, they felt they didn't need to give the wedding couple any gift at all. One of the reasons for this could be due to the cost associated with being a guest at a wedding, there may be nothing left in the pot to spend on the bride and groom – a reasonable excuse, but then some token gift would perhaps be better than nothing?

It will be interesting to see the results of the same poll next year, where we expect to see a continued rise in the number of couples preferring 'money', rather than a wedding present, as more couples live together long before getting married and as a result they simply don't need enough items to create a wedding list – what they really want is money to decorate their house, replace the windows and a whole host of other domestic niceties – the question is though, is this simply missing the point of a wedding gift?