

Wedding Market Minute 07/08/2026: Pricing Transparency + The Value-for-Price Signal + Filtering Better Leads

The number: 26%

We pulled 1,569 verified venues with review and website data. Only 409 show a price a couple can find without emailing first. Three out of four make you ask. The quarter that posts a number scored higher on the one thing couples are actually rating: did we get our money's worth.

TLDR

- Five-minute move: open your own site on your phone and see if a couple can reach a starting price without emailing you. If they can't, you're in the 74%.
 - Publishing pricing tracks with higher value-for-price sentiment: 0.646 versus 0.597, on a 0-to-1 read of how couples talk about value in their reviews. The widest gap of anything we measured.
 - The effect is real and small. Overall sentiment moved 0.02, Google rating 0.06. The lift concentrates on value perception, where you'd expect a posted price to help.
 - Price-posting venues have fewer reviews than the ones who hide pricing (92 vs 109 at the median). Posting a number changes who inquires, and the couples who do already fit the budget.
 - Start with a starting price or a range, plus what it includes. The value score moves on couples feeling the price was fair, and fair needs a number to sit next to.
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Posting a price tracks with how couples rate value

Before the data, two things, five minutes. Pull up your own site the way a couple would, on a phone, and time how long it takes to reach a real number. Then open your last 10 reviews and count how many use "worth," "value," or "fair." Hold both next to what follows.

What the numbers say

1,569 verified venues, all with review and website data. 409 of them (26%) show pricing somewhere a couple can find it. The rest make couples inquire first.

The price-posting group scored higher on every measure we checked, and by the most on one. Value-for-price sentiment runs 0.646 versus 0.597. That's a 0-to-1 score of how positively couples talk about value relative to what they paid, read from review text. A 0.65 means reviews that mostly call the price fair or worth it; a 0.55 means more grumbling about cost. Overall sentiment (0.813 vs 0.793), communication (0.719 vs 0.682), and Google rating (4.68 vs 4.62) all lean the same way, by less.

One number cuts against the story. Venues that post a price have fewer reviews than the ones who hide it, 92 versus 109 at the median. Publishing a price isn't bringing in more couples. The biggest, most-booked venues are often the ones who don't bother posting at all.

Here's the objection I had to clear. Price-posting venues also have much better websites, 7.6 versus 5.5 on a 10-point quality score. So maybe good venues just build good sites and the price rides along. I split the venues by

website quality to test it. The value gap held in every band:

- Weak sites (5 or under): 0.760 vs 0.582
- Middle (6-7): 0.658 vs 0.634
- Strong (8-10): 0.631 vs 0.531

At every tier, the venues showing a price scored higher on value. What this can't do is prove cause. It's correlational. Part of the effect is probably confident, well-run venues being the ones willing to put a number in public. My read is the mechanism holds anyway, and the gap surviving at all three website tiers is the best evidence for it.

Why it matters

Value-for-price is the score a couple keeps in their head long before they write a review. Picture a couple with a \$12,000 budget opening six venue sites on a Saturday morning. Four make them fill out a form to hear a price. Two show a Saturday starting at \$9,500. They book tours with the two that told them. Nobody tours the \$18,000 venue expecting \$12,000 and feels good on the drive home. The sticker shock already happened on the other sites, quietly, before anyone picked up the phone.

Now the fewer-reviews finding, because it's the part worth sitting with. Take 200 inquiries a year, a third of them from couples with half your budget. That's about 65 tours, emails, and quotes spent on people who were never going to book at your number. Post a starting price and most of those couples screen themselves out before they reach you. The ones who inquire already clear the budget.

How to use it this week

Pick the smallest honest number and put it where couples look:

- A starting price or a range: "Saturdays start at \$8,500, most couples spend \$10,000 to \$14,000." A range gives couples something to measure against and screens out the budget mismatch.
- What the price includes, in plain terms. The value score moves on couples feeling they got a fair deal, and fair needs the line items next to it.
- One line on what moves the number (guest count, season, day of week), so the range reads as honest.

You don't need a better website first. In this data the value lift was largest on the weakest sites, so a plain page with a real number did more than a polished page that hid one.