

## **This wedding sponsored by American Values.**

One couple found the perfect way to turn the most important day of their lives into a money-making opportunity. God Bless 'em. That is, of course, if he can get a ticket.

### **1-800-Flowers, Other Marketers Buy Into Baseball-Stadium Ceremony**

*By Willow Duttge*

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NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- Diamond ring? Check. Honeymoon? Planned. Advertisers for the wedding day? Got 'em.

To have a large wedding on the field of a professional baseball team, some individuals might take out a second mortgage. But a marketing-savvy couple is rallying up a stable of local and international companies to sponsor their special day.

Radio station sales manager Caroline Fisher and marketing consultant Dave Kerpen have negotiated sponsorship deals for their marriage ceremony in the Brooklyn Cyclones stadium. | ALSO: Comment on this story in the 'Your Opinion' box below.

#### **Romance and business**

"It was an idea that both met our needs romantically in terms of getting married on the field and at a baseball stadium, which we love, and simultaneously doing what we love, which is putting together promotions and selling them," said Caroline Fisher, the bride-to-be.

On July 8, Ms. Fisher, a 29-year-old sales manager for a Long Island radio station, and Dave Kerpen, 29, of Dave Kerpen Strategic Consulting, a marketing consulting company, will be wed behind home plate at the conclusion of a Brooklyn Cyclones home game in front of about 500 guests and up to 8,000 other baseball fans. The Cyclones are a class A minor-league affiliate of the New York Mets.

#### **1-800-Flowers**

While the cost of the wedding is approximately \$100,000, the bride and groom only had to pony up \$20,000, Mr. Kerpen said. The difference was handled by companies like 1-800 Flowers, the Broadway Mall in Hicksville, N.Y., bakery Grandma's Secrets, jewelry wholesaler Avroc International and event-planning company the Red Carpet.

Sponsors will benefit from between-inning promotions (like a bouquet toss from 1-800-FLOWERS.com), signage around the stadium and ads on the stadium's Jumbotron. The companies will also be included in the 8,000 wedding programs distributed to the crowd.

"It's all about a good buzz, viral event," said Steven Jarmon, VP-brand communications,

1-800-FLOWERS.com, which is providing several thousand dollars worth of floral arrangements.

Spirits, wine and beer giant Diageo created a signature drink for the bride and groom's big day. The couple matches the Smirnoff brand image of being "clearly original," said Christian McMahan, brand director for Smirnoff. "There's no couple more clearly original than Dave and Carrie."

For others, it's better than a business card.

### **Baseball field-shaped cake**

Regina McRae, owner of Harlem's Grandma's Secrets, said she normally leaves her card next to her cakes, and that's the extent of her usual advertising. For the wedding, she is providing a cake that looks like a baseball field and about 8,000 people will hear about her on that Saturday night.

Christy Bareijsza, owner of the Red Carpet, is providing \$10,000 worth of her event-planning services. "People tend to use you more when they can hear a story, or they can envision what you've done rather than have my name in a directory listing," she said. The event is part wedding and part business event, so it shows both sides of her company's abilities.

For the Wedding Plaza of Floral Park, N.Y., providing about \$5,000 in dresses for the bride and bridal party was worth the risk. It could go flat, owner Ron Artura said, but it could catch on and become a big deal.

### **Planning for publicity**

The bride and groom planned for publicity. They are staging a press conference and told marketers it would be a buzz-worthy event, but didn't promise them anything beyond what they knew they could deliver.

Though the wedding day is still weeks away, the buzz is building: The Wedding section of The New York Times has already done a story on the event.

But on top of the bands and flowers and dresses, the couple needed to secure the ballpark. The Brooklyn Cyclones organization tries to promote a fun time at the park for every attendee (even those who aren't baseball fans) and is always looking for fresh ideas, said Steve Cohen, the team's general manager. His goal is not to get more people at the park on July 8, but to expose new people to the ballpark.