

## Choosing a Wedding Videographer

Where do I start?

I receive numerous inquiries requesting information. First, I understand that the average person is gathering information to try and make an educated decision that is right for them. I'm sure many people only know what they've read in numerous wedding magazine articles about wedding videography and photography. I've read most of these articles and they range from generic to sheer nonsense- especially those articles with the checklist of important questions to ask a videographer. What one has to understand is that the person writing the article is not an expert on wedding videography. Until they were hired to write an article about wedding videography or photography to fill the spaces between advertisers looking for business, they probably knew little more than anyone else on the subject. So, in short, take what you read as a starting point and go from there.

The first question many people ask - What is the cost for a wedding video?

The short answer is, most good videographers will start at around \$2,000.00. Unfortunately the wedding industry is full of people with the "get rich quick" attitude that brides are a captive audience. This ranges from the person who went out and bought some video equipment along with some videos and books on how to make money shooting wedding videos to those "wedding companies" who make a lot of money booking scores of budget conscious brides with great prices, "one stop shopping" with photos, video, and a DJ! A significant portion of the wedding industry is marketing to a predictable consumer mentality. They realize a significant number of people will shop only by price, regardless of value, esthetic quality, and long term enjoyment they would have gotten by choosing someone who's life depends on the quality of their work.

For those who tend to be more discriminate and place a little more value on quality, you will have some decisions to make and you'll be glad you did. The reality is, if you've looked carefully at finding the right photographer, you probably won't be impressed with the plethora of people offering the cheap wedding videos.

Cost and Value:

Unfortunately, objectivity and art are not as easy as choosing between Wal-Mart and Kmart to buy a DVD player or some other exact same item. In many cases, your investment to hire a really good videographer is almost intangible when comparing the talent, expertise, and investment in time required to produce a video that's worth watching and in some cases, the costs will be very comparable. One can't begin to compare the end result of the stereotypical wedding video and photo companies cashing in on the "Wedding Industry" and those truly talented videographers and photographers who love their work and work hard to provide couples with something beyond the ordinary.

A full time videographer, who's life depends on the quality of their work will be able to provide much more value in the finished video. The budget videographers who book scores of brides at "great prices" absolutely can't afford to invest anywhere near the required amount of editing time and detail to create a video that compares with what I, and other talented videographers will provide.

Doing anything above the all-too-common, mediocre wedding and event videography requires a real skill, a creative eye, excellent editing capabilities, and talent. You don't study and watch videos to be a talented videographer or photographer. It's like the musician playing a concert in front of a couple hundred people - either you have it or you don't!

Shooting the video is only the beginning of the process

Creating a finished product that is cinemagraphic, emotional, romantic, and yet relaxed is an art and consideration should be placed on its long term value. You wouldn't hire a band that can't play.

Style - the most important question

As you investigate the more talented videographers it will become evident the the individual personality of the videographer, the quality of their work, and their editing style will be a major part in your decision process. The more talented videographers will have a wider range of style.

When I create a video for a client, I consider the person, the venue, and their event as a whole as part of my editing style. Each person is different. By working with a more limited number of weddings per year, I can afford to be objective in setting the mode for the video

Generally, my work is more of a detailed cinematic documentary. Most of the events are "in real time".

To produce a video that tells a story in real life requires a full time job just in editing. The video must have life and it must provide a full overview of the event. I like to shoot in a relaxed photojournalistic style.

This allows me ample footage to create a dramatic video with precise detail, and still keep the storyline moving. I also offer "short form" contemporary style videos, that are focused on a more romantic style. Many clients like to have both the documentary style along with the 15 minute romantic highlight video to share with friends. Unfortunately, I see just about everyone now uses "documentary" and "photojournalism" buzz words in their advertising. Hopefully, they aren't just throwing out words people want to hear and really understand the concept!

#### Spectacular audio quality

Audio quality is the most overlooked and often the most noticeable shortcoming in wedding video. Your videographer should be able to provide at least four wireless microphones for any event. Concentrate on listening for more than the vows. Demand to hear examples of readers, instrumentalists, vocalists, and string quartets. Your wedding will be a beautiful experience. Don't allow on-camera microphones to record your event. Make sure your videographer understands the principles of acquiring good audio for your video.

#### Natural, Comfortable, Relaxed

I like to refer to myself as a photojournalist with a video camera. When you think about it, this is the key to how I get great footage. When we think of the "Life Magazine Photos", we think of drama, good composition, and telling the story as seen through the lens.

#### Molesting the Guests

This also means that I do not "molest guests" at weddings... Frankly, my clients certainly don't want me sticking a bright light and a microphone in their guests' faces and asking them to "say something to the bride and groom", having them to do interviews, or having the bride and groom pretend they are doing "this or that" for the video. Too many people including myself and my wife have "been there, done that" with this type of videographer at a wedding. Frankly there are much better things to do with a video camera and my talent would be wasted chasing people around doing interviews.

People look their best when they are acting naturally. By staying in the background, yet always there, I tend to go relatively unnoticed, but still get great footage. I am a minimalist when it comes to lighting and attracting attention. Most of my work relies only on ambient room lighting. Many photographers I work with have even commented on my ability to get great candid shots. These are the shots that really make a great video, people in real life, being who they really are. Most people are not actors, everyone looks best when you let them be themselves.

#### Good Camera Skills

This is the key to being a good videographer. To have a good video, you really have to display excellent camera skills and composition. This is the primary key to having a video that is dynamic, exciting, and realistic. My professional background consists of music, photojournalism, industrial photography, and television production. Now well into my second decade specializing in wedding, event, and corporate videography, you can be assured that I come with both the necessary experience and the appropriate background.

The internet and Bridal Magazines are literally full of new faces doing wedding video every year. However, their ads would make it look like they've been doing wedding videography for years. In case you're wondering, there are numerous images taken directly from tape on this site that are over ten years old!

Anyone who buys a camera and takes out an ad in a wedding magazine instantly considers themselves a wedding videographer. The same holds true for some photographers and other companies in the wedding industry that buy video equipment and hire weekend people to shoot video. Anyone can pick up a camera and point it and take a video. Unfortunately, the end results often look like it too!. Don't be fooled by dazzling special effects and computer animation. Many people tout these capabilities in their advertising, but all of the effects usually seen in wedding video are usually just a substitute for good editing and the ability to build a story line.

#### State of the art equipment

I come to a job prepared for just about anything. This includes multiple cameras, an extra broadcast lens and 8 professional wireless microphone

systems for capturing audio from all sources at both the ceremony and reception. I have the availability to record at least 6 channels of independent audio simultaneously.

I use the Sony DSR-390L, a completely digital camera shooting on the larger DVCAM digital format. It features three newly designed 1/2 in., 410,000-element Power HAD CCD imaging devices that provide an unbelievable picture quality with an unprecedented lowlight sensitivity of 0.4 lux minimum illumination - in other words, the camera will see in the dark. The major advantages I offer with this latest camera is that in many situations, absolutely no additional lighting other than normal room light is required. The camera sees what we see! This is a significant advantage when trying to maintain a low sense of visibility around guests.

By processing video signal data at three levels — brightness, hue, and saturation — the TruEye process assists in the reproduction of natural skin tones and basically sees what the human eye sees at any given light level.

Several fellow videographers in the area are using the Sony DSR-300, a fantastic camera also. It has the larger imaging devices, same audio capabilities and uses the larger DVCAM tape. Basically the only differences are minor and the new cameras will have a slight edge in low light performance.

Some videographers will use the Sony DSR 250 which is one in a class of stripped down cameras offered by most of the manufacturers geared specifically for the "wedding event market". This camera still offers a significant improvement over the older SVHS video cameras, but it only has small 1/3" imaging devices resulting in much less resolution and poor low light performance when compared to cameras with larger imaging devices.

The highest majority of typical wedding videographers use the smaller, much less expensive "handycam" style of video cameras. While these cameras do a nice job for their size and relatively low cost, they have very small 1/4" CCD imaging devices, offering relatively poor low light performance and less image quality. Other serious limitations are the lack of a professional lens, the ability to adjust exposures, and limited audio functions. These cameras do have their place. For situations where there is plenty of light, like a garden wedding or daylight situations, the picture is pretty good and their smaller size makes them easier to use over longer periods of time. I keep one in my collection to use when ever I feel that the lighting conditions and shooting situation is just right.

All editing is done on professional Media-100 systems and over 500 gigabytes of disk storage. This system allows editing at very high data rates for optimum picture quality. Don't let computer editing be confused with the idea of special effects and animations. I do not do the stereotypical wedding video with pictures popping out of hearts and tacky special effects. My work is clean and dramatic.

Video is mastered to DVD and backups are kept for a limited time on full sized DVCAM digital tape. We can still provide VHS to those clients who require it, but the cost of DVD players today can be well under \$100.00 so it makes no sense to use tape.

Unless you choose wisely, your wedding video could be a haunting disappointment.

Remember, your videographer will be with you throughout your wedding day! Choose someone you feel confident will interact well with both you and your guests. You will find that your photo album and video will compliment each other. You should arrange to reserve your photographer and videographer as soon as you secure your reception site. Some dates can be in reservation over a year in advance. Seek out the highest quality and hire the best photographer and videographer that you can afford.

## About the Author

Find more articles at [www.media43.com](http://www.media43.com)

Source: <http://www.articletrader.com>