

# HOW TO CHOOSE A Wedding Videographer

by Ray Salisbury

## ♥ Introduction

When you are planning your wedding, booking a good photographer is always considered a high priority. However, little thought is given to getting a good videographer. Video is viewed as a luxury, even though video can actually cost less, and records your big day in a much more three-dimensional way.

Video includes movement, plus the added bonus of sound. Photos are like a past record of the event, but elegantly-crafted, high definition movies, married up with tasteful music, can really evoke the emotions, transporting you back in time to your wedding day. It's like being there.

Here is my advice on how to get great wedding video.

## ♥ Research

Search the Internet. View other videos of weddings past. Find out what moves you. Think about what styles appeal to you, and discuss this with your partner. Movie makers are all story-tellers, but some are more of a technician; others are more of an artist.

On YouTube you will probably only see highlights movies – that is, the best bits of someone else's wedding day, set to music. But you may also want more coverage of your ceremony, with the vows and various readings clearly audible ... and the reception speeches, so you will remember what was said.

## ♥ Critique

Also visit your local videographers' websites to see what packages they offer. Check out their show-reels, but also follow links to their Vimeo or YouTube channels to see more footage. Pay attention to the opening title sequences, particularly the typographic elements – the words and font selections. Are they professionally-designed, or do they look amateur? You are looking out for consistency throughout each movie, and should not be impressed with any tacky special effects that don't enhance the content.

While you are watching a range of wedding movies, remember that you are not judging the actual wedding itself. Rather, you are analysing the elements of the movie, such as creative composition, colour grading, transitions, timing of music, pace, and mood. You might not understand the technical terminology, but you will intuitively know what moves you.

Do you want a standard documentary record of your



ceremony only, with the video guys being unobtrusive, and keeping out-of-sight. Or, do you want total coverage of the entire day in a photo-journalistic style, from the groomsmen eating breakfast ... to your wedding breakfast and first dance? Will you give your photographer total control, or ask them to work together with the videographer, so both operators get good shots of you from the best angles. (Videographers often have to play second fiddle to the photographer, who sometimes gets in the way of the camera.)

## ♥ Output Media

How do you wish to view your wedding videos? Many video operators still publish their final work onto DVDs ... but do you own a DVD player? What about your family and bridal party? How do you wish to share the movies of your wedding with them? You may be able to save money by getting the edited movies – in mp4 format – supplied on a USB Flash Drive. Then you can view the videos on your computer and television screen. Plus you can broadcast the highlights movie on your own private YouTube channel, to your own audience, especially those friends or family overseas.

Another option is to embed the Highlights Video onto your own custom website. Ray from [Moving Moments](#) is a web designer, and offers this cost-effective, but clever alternative. The photographer's best images can also be uploaded into a photo gallery. Other webpages could host a Gift Register, a RSVP sign-up form, and Google Maps to help your guests get to the ceremony and reception venues without having to contact you on the day. [Read more about this here.](#)

## ♥ Local Vendors

Some well-established and experienced operators may offer just 1–2 options, or only shoot ceremonies. Watch out for wannabes with no formal film training, professional equipment, or back-up gear. Also, be careful to realise that if you hire out-of-town film crew, you will have to pay for their travel and accommodation.

*make your marriage memorable*

## ♥ Meeting Face to Face

Choose your favourite videographer, and arrange a face-to-face meeting. If you are living out-of-town, you can do this online via a Skype chat. Prepare a list of questions to ask the vendor, so you can balance your expectations. Questions left unasked may lead to potential disappointment, or unintentional omission of critical details in your finished films. Use the questions listed in the right-hand panel.

## ♥ Sign A Contract

It is imperative that you carefully read the contract your videographer gives you. If you are confused by anything, be brave and ask for clarification.

It is usual for you to pay a small deposit, say \$100, to the videographer to secure their services for your wedding date. Another vital thing: give the video guys all your cell phone numbers and emails. The last thing you want to happen on the big day is to lose contact with them, while driving between venues. This would result in missed video opportunities.

## ♥ Be Realistic

Videographers are human, and cannot work magic. Mistakes happen. Do not hold unrealistic expectations. The videographer will do their best to capture your special day, but cannot be held responsible for things outside his control, such as bad weather, poor interior lighting, or spontaneous changes the celebrant may make, which deviate from the program.

A wedding celebration is an un-staged, real life drama, with unpaid actors. You only get one take ... not like in a Hollywood blockbuster.

Finally, trust the videographer during the editing process. He is the professional and knows how to sync music in time with the movie footage – if you tinker too much; if you decide to play The Director, it may have an adverse effect on the final results, and could certainly cause conflict. However, your videographer will appreciate constructive feedback and do minor alterations.

Unlike wedding photographs, which may take your photographer a few days to select and edit, making movies is a very time-consuming process. This may come as a surprise, but your videos will take between 5–8 days' worth of editing, depending on the package. File sizes are huge, sound tracks must be synced, and music must be selected. DVD artwork must be designed, movie titles created – post production is a big job!

So, value your videographer for their expertise and dedication. Do your prior research and choose the best one you can. You get for what you pay for.

## ♥ Conclusion

Long after the celebrations are over; the food is consumed; the booze is drunk; the flowers are faded ... your wedding videos will bring it all back to life, in high definition. Decades later, your marriage will be immortalised in a movie, giving you much pleasure for years to come.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK

**Arrange a meeting with your videographer.  
Get clarification on the following issues:**

1. What do your video packages cost?
2. What is included in each package?
3. How many video camera operators will you bring to the event?
4. Do you have back-up camera and audio equipment?
5. Can you work alongside my photographer?
6. Do you need exclusive time to film us?
7. Can you produce a particular style of movie?
8. Will your video equipment be obtrusive at our wedding?
9. How much time do you spend editing?
10. What output media do you supply?
11. What is your average turn-around time to supply the movies?
12. Will you need a feed at the reception?



# OUTPUT MEDIA

**How you wish to view your wedding videos?**

- DVD**       QUANTITY: \_\_\_\_
- BLU-RAY**       QUANTITY: \_\_\_\_
- MP4 format files on a USB FLASH DRIVE** – view the videos on your computer & television screen.
- YOUTUBE or VIMEO** channel on-line – highlights movie only – great for absent friends or family overseas. Can be unlisted or even private.
- CUSTOM WEBSITE** – highlights movie only – alongside your photographer's best images, & much more.
- LIVE VIDEO STREAM** over the Internet – use free apps such as Skype or Periscope to broadcast the ceremony and/or reception speeches to your friends' smart phones.