

## Victory Video's Guide on How to get a Great Wedding Video

First of all think about what style you are looking for in your film – after all you'll live with it long after the flowers are faded! *Wikipedia* ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedding\\_videography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedding_videography)) outlines a number of basic styles:

- Documentary *"This style of editing will produce a polished documentation of the day as it unfolds."*
- Cinematic *"captured and edited for the dramatic effect and mood". This is "Gosford Park" rather than "Secrets and Lies"!*
- Storytelling *"relies on sound bites recorded pre, during or in post, usually from the bride and groom. These sound bites are then added to the audio track for dramatic effect and to push the story of the day forward." This obviously involves careful planning with the couple and perhaps others close to them.*
- Short Form – *typically tightly edited to 50 minutes or less, maintaining pace and entertainment and avoiding being an ordeal to watch!*
- Traditional *"tends to look more like a family shot video, it can be edited, but usually lightly. Everything is edited in a linear progression and usually in its entirety. These videos tend to be 2 to 3 hours and even longer, in length." Before you ask, yes some people do want this! More often couples prefer a shorter and more artistic treatment but request a longer version for themselves.*

There are overlaps amongst these differing styles and not all videographers can accomplish all of them. It is certainly worth your thinking about it and discussing the options – most couples find it quite exciting to be involved. What you won't want is a mismatch between what the videographer does and what you want. A colleague of mine recently spent more than a week re-editing a wedding video, because the couple hated the style – it was sumptuous and cinematic to the extent that all signs of individuality had been washed over, in their opinion! Beautiful, but vacuous!

The most overused word for how a wedding video ought to be is "unobtrusive". Don't believe it! That was back in the days when the English were shy and reserved! Now they know about having a blast. Not that there shouldn't be respect for the occasion, nor does this mean that the unsuspecting guest has a camera thrust at him or her throughout the day. Accepting that you have booked to have your very own, very special film made is half the battle. Get used to the camera and learn to love it!

If you're camera-shy see yourself on camera before the big day, as part of the preparation. If you want a story (see above) to help it all "hang together" book some pre-wedding filming about yourselves and your day-to-day lives.

People love watching other people, so don't hold back – a bit of playing to camera won't harm and will probably look great in the final cut. In the edit we will be looking for a whole range of shots that reflect the events and atmosphere of the day. Exactly how you play it is up to you, and the main thing for you is to enjoy your day! So think of the camera, not as an intrusion, but as a special guest there to make lasting memories and to help you have fun. These days the camera often lifts the atmosphere, especially in the evening.

A wedding that is well-planned, with lots happening, and good announcing so that people – including the cameraman - know what's happening next, and where, tends to keep its energy and be one that everyone looks back on with pleasure.

When checking out venues and discussing your plans in detail think about what it will be like on the day – will people be able to see and hear the speeches, for example? Take a couple of digital photos to get an idea of how things will look. And if things need to be repositioned don't be afraid to ask – you're paying the bill, after all. We have all been to weddings that, well, needed a bit more thought. Here are some common, and avoidable hazards – not just for the video, but for your guests too:

- The huge beautiful flower display that looks gorgeous while the church is empty – but once the main people are up at the altar, the bride is now invisible from most points, and the best Man is suffering from hay fever!
- The Best Man, 6 foot 4 or more, who steps forward with the rings – and stays there right between the camera and the exchange of rings! Now no one but the Minister can see – is this the way he/she wants it?
- The portable CD player that sounded OK on your visit, but now that there are two hundred people in the room, no-one can hear it at all, including the bride and her father as they walk down the aisle.
- The balloon display that looks OK until the Groom stands up to speak – now his head nestles between two balloons in a comical, not to say suggestive, manner.
- Acres of plate glass behind the top table on the brightest days of summer, meaning that without lighting, your speakers will be in silhouette!

- A blank or marked wall behind the top table, which will look unattractive on video.
- Tables laid out so that once people try to stand everyone has to shuffle around.
- A layout that splits the party into two halves across a vast room – and no microphone is supplied – or if it is no one has tested it!

Having someone to “look after” the videoguy is practical and helpful. Toastmasters are usually very good at this, ensuring the programme keeps to time (more or less) and that everyone is informed. A quick tip – “They’ll be coming in this door, not that one, in a couple of minutes” is most reassuring. We have worked at many events where things happened all of a sudden and without warning – including the speeches.

The “guide” can also help us to identify key people whom you would like featured in your video, including those who may be important to you but may not be up strutting their stuff on the dance-floor!

#### A few words about pricing

Couples are often baffled about the wide discrepancies in pricing for producing wedding videos. Apparently similar packages offered by different companies might vary by several hundred pounds. So if you pay more, what ought you to be paying for? Basically it comes down to EXPERTISE and TIME. Expertise is a combination of experience and artistry, and matters even more than the equipment deployed. Time refers to the attention to your project as a unique piece – people charging low prices will generally shoot and edit to a formula and will be unable to justify the time to discuss alternatives with you or to make any substantial changes to the edit. As with most things in life you pay more for quality, but it lasts longer and gives greater pleasure!

I do hope you find these notes helpful. There’s very little written on the subject and often people are not sure how to play things. Our intention is to achieve a balance between the respectful discretion required of a formal occasion and the involvement necessary to produce a watchable and engaging film.

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