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How to select a wedding videographer

By: Frank Stone

I know some of you are probably saying to yourselves "I can't afford a videographer, I'll just have my uncle Bill do it for free." Well actually Videography is not as expensive as you might think, and your uncle Bill should be a guest at your wedding having a good time, not having to work.

Videography is one of those things where you get what you pay for. On the other hand, you don't have to pay a huge amount to get a great video. Today any good videographer worth his money is using a digital camera and a digital editor. There are a few things to consider when choosing a videographer; Price, equipment, choices, and last but certainly not least, personality.

Price is a big factor in everyone's life, especially when it comes to a big ticket event like a wedding. You have hundreds of expenses, and countless choices as to what stays and what goes. Sometimes people spend way too much on a photographer, and nothing at all on a videographer. That is not a very good choice. Photography is a very important thing to have, but if you do some shopping around you can afford both. The beauty of video is that you don't have to rely on your recollection of the event by looking at motionless soundless still shots.

Tips for getting your wedding guest list ready

Narrowing down the guest list will be one of the most challenging and important wedding tasks, since the size will greatly affect your overall wedding expenses and options. It's a rare bride and groom who don't have to edit their original list, whether dealing with 30 or 300 people.

Most likely, you, your fiancé, and both families will be contributing names to the list, and each party will have their own ideas about who is necessary and who is not. To help, try this list-cutting strategy:

Start by setting a goal for your list size. Base this on your budget, on space limitations or both. Have everyone involved submit a list of the people they'd like to attend. From the top, they should rank the names in order of importance. Then, cross off any duplications.

Add up the names and compare that number with your goal. If your count is over the limit, determine how many need to be eliminated. Then, cut a number of names from each list starting at the bottom, until you reach the desired amount.

Experts with years of experience in wedding planning say approximately one quarter of those invited won't attend, so you can safely invite more people than you actually expect.

Be warned, if more than one person controls the guest list, things can get stressful. Preparing the list and keeping all family members

Pop in your DVD, and instantly you are back at your wedding day.

You can see yourself and your guests laughing and having fun. If any of your relatives are in another country or state and couldn't make it to your wedding, you can send them the entire wedding on DVD instead of picking just a few pictures. If you shop around a little you can find a professional videographer that will create a fantastic video for you at a reasonable price. I will warn you that some videographers think they are Spielberg and will want to charge you \$5000. If your budget can accommodate that then that's wonderful, but most people cannot. Most professional Videographers using 3 chip digital cameras, and using computer non-linear editing software, will charge you anywhere between \$500 to \$1000 for a wedding. Anything above or below that I suggest you give it a second look. If its too cheap then its someone just breaking into the business and if its too high then you will probably be over paying.

The next thing you should look at is equipment. Are they using the latest digital equipment or some dusty old cameras from the disco days? Believe it or not there are still some Videographers out there using the old VHS cameras and selling themselves for top dollar. It's a case of caveat emptor (let the buyer beware). Find out what type of equipment they are using. The standard in the industry today is to use a 3 chip digital DV camera. DV Format is the best and digital is obviously better than analog. The 3 chip refers to the inside of the camera having 3 separate computer chips that split up the visual spectrum and create a sharper and more vibrant image. For editing, non-linear computer editing is the only way to go. Anything else is old and will not give you the most for your money.

Choices comes down to what will this company do for you. Some companies, for example, have packages suited to just about every budget, but since everyone is different they are able to customize each package to suit the needs of the client. With some companies the packages are written in stone and cannot be modified and there are no substitutions.

Personality is an easy one. Talk to the person who is actually going to shoot your wedding. Meet them, ask them questions Do you like them? Can you get along with them? Remember your wedding day is a very stressful day. You want to be surrounded by people whose personalities you can get along with. I believe you need all the professionals at your wedding to be team players. They all need to work together to make your day wonderful, yet get their individual jobs done.

In short, I just want to encourage you all to keep the video in your budget. Hire a professional company that is knowledgeable, and is reasonable priced, and that you feel comfortable with, and you will have a great video that you and your future kids and grandkids will enjoy.

happy, requires diplomacy and tact. Here's another possible idea: any person who wishes to invite more than his or her allotted amount should be willing to pay for those additional guests. However, you still must keep in mind the seating capacity of the ceremony and reception venue.

What about inviting children? Most people agree, kids change the dynamic of a wedding. If unsupervised, groups of children will take over the dance floor at the reception and their antics can be disruptive. On the other hand, children are part of the family and having three or four generations at a wedding can make the event especially memorable.

If you're inviting a number of couples with children, it might be best not to include any kids at all, with the exception of the ring bearer and flower girl. Simply address their invitation to Mr. and Mrs. John Doe. Sending an invitation to Mr. John Doe and Family, indicates you wish to include everyone in the event.

Some couples hire a baby-sitter, a clown or magician to keep the smaller children happy and occupied during the reception. This could be an option for both the church and the reception hall.

Another rule of thumb, if you haven't seen or spoken with a person in two to three years, take them off your guest list. Save the spots for the most important people in your life now, rather than your best friend from summer camp ten years ago.