

## Have you thought about having your wedding filmed...?

Your big day has been planned and a date set, and now you have the daunting task of finding out what you might actually need to do to prepare for this day with essentially a blank canvas in front of you. This is soon followed by the task of contacting an endless list of suppliers browsing through their services, finding prices and having discussions. It can feel like an uphill task, especially as there are so many differing opinions on what you should be doing, or how you should be doing it... and everyone has their opinion and insists that their way of doing it was “the best way to do it”! Take this kind of advice like recommendations on what to eat from a restaurant menu, and always remember that what works for one may not work for you, its your wedding and your decision. If you get stuck, you can always hire a planner to help you, its their job to help you work out exactly what you want and the best way to get it.

When it comes to videography, you are most likely to be in one of three camps, either a) its totally for you, and you're not getting married without someone being there to film it, b) you've thought about it, but its not for you, either too expensive or you don't want a camera in your face filming you all day, or c) you hadn't even given it a seconds thought until you read this.

Unless you are in camp A there is a good chance that your wedding probably isn't going to get filmed, and that may be fine for a few couples. In truth though, its not fine for most couples, even the ones who thought that it would cost too much, or they just simply didn't have much interest in wanting it filmed, but often this is realised too late, either a couple tries to book it at the last minute with almost no money left, or they have so much fun on their big day and then regret not having it filmed so they could look back on it all and remember it properly.

Videography has seen a massive resurgence over the last decade, and in numerous surveys the single biggest regret of brides above all others is *not* having their big day filmed. Sure, the photos were amazing, but they don't tell you what was being said in the speeches, or show the groom taking a deep breath waiting at the end of the aisle for you to arrive. There is so much more emotion and story in a film, as well as all the audio.

So, what happens when you book a videographer to film your big day? Well, you have made a great decision, a positive step towards preserving the memory of all the details you spent months planning. As opposed to those who regret not having their day filmed, I don't know a single couple who regrets spending the money on a wedding film, even if they had to dig deep to find it.

When a couple books me to film their big day, I always arrange to chat with them, either over a coffee where possible, or through a video call if the distance or restrictions don't make this possible. I want to get to know the couple and find out about them, and what is important to them. This helps me to create a better story of their day and look out for particular moments. These chats help both sides, as I get the information I need to know how to work on the day and know what to look for, and for the couple they get a better idea

of who I am, and get to feel like there is a friendly face helping and supporting them, rather than just being “followed round by a stranger with a camera”.

It means that you can relax more, and trust that everything will be taken care of, knowing that someone is invested in you and has your story and memories at the core of their focus for the day.

I always like to start my weddings by turning up early, and for several reasons. Firstly, when the bride sees me arrive for the hair and make up, she can relax a bit more, its one less thing to be worrying about. Secondly, she may be surrounded by bridesmaids who don't know me at all, and may take a little time to relax and warm to the idea of me being there with a camera so they can carry on the morning and forget that I am even there. Thirdly, it means that I can relax, knowing I am not going to be late, and I have plenty of time to capture things like details, or shots of the venue.

Some couples worry that I may literally be filming all day long and they may have to watch what they say. This simply isn't the case. There are two times when I film continuously, which is the ceremony and the speeches, otherwise I spend the day filming short clips which I will compile to create your film, and these will most likely have music over, or audio from the speeches or ceremony anyway.

So, what are you actually getting for your money? After all, these things aren't cheap, they will certainly be significant part of your budget... but they ARE an investment! The answer to this question, the specifics of what you might expect to get, can vary from one videographer to another. Things to look out for when trying to find a videographer are:

*How long they will film for*  
*How many people will be filming on the day*  
*How many films you will get*  
*How long the films are likely to be*  
*Will you get digital downloads or physical copies, such as a USB flash drive*  
*Are the speeches and ceremony included*  
*Drone/aerial footage*

There may be other things that you want to look out for, this list is by no means an exhaustive one, but lets have a look at some of the points I have mentioned on it. Firstly, and possibly “how long will they film for”. Personally I don't really set time limits when I am filming a wedding day, I want the couple to relax and not be checking their watches. I make sure I arrive early enough to cover the preparations, and stay until at least the first dance has finished and there are people on the dance floor. If someone is counting the hours they are working, they are simply can't guarantee that they will be able to capture everything. I remember one wedding that I was photographing where the videographer had gone home and the brides son pulled out a guitar and started singing a duet of Elton John's 'Your Song' with one of the bridesmaids in the middle of the dance floor!

The second question is a less important point, but still something to think about “how many people will be filming on the day”. I always film on my own and many videographers do, very few do it with an assistant or second shooter. Its always easier with two, but a skilled

videographer will be able to capture the entire day on their own. The only time you would need a second person filming would be if the bride and groom were getting ready at separate locations and the couple REALLY wanted the groom prep to get covered as much as the bride prep, and also if you have a particularly large wedding and don't want to miss any action while the photographs are being taken. Its worth having this chat with your videographer well ahead of the wedding if its of any concern to you.

The next two questions are about the films, how many do you get and how long will they be. These two are kind of related, and again, this is down to the individual videographers, so you will have to check what their packages contain. One thing that has become popular is the introduction of the highlights film, a much shorter film, usually between 5-8 minutes with all the best bits of your day. This is easier to watch when you don't want to commit to 2.5 hours and a bag of popcorn each time you want to see your wedding day again, you can watch a film this long on the bus, or in the queue for a starbucks coffee. Most videographers will probably include the ceremony and speeches on top of this. There will be some videographers that offer 60-90 minute films, which sounds like you are getting more for your money, but in all likeliness they are just including the ceremony and speeches into the highlights film. Its up to you which way you decide to go, but all I can say is that the shorter highlights film is popular for a reason. Some videographers, like myself, may even offer a longer extended film on top of the highlights film, one you are less likely to bore friends and family with by sharing it and making them watch all of it awkwardly, but that features more details from the day, so you can get a better experience of what was going on while you were swept up in the days excitement.

An important question to be considered is "what will you receive". Physical media is becoming far more uncommon now. DVDs barely get mentioned, Blu-Rays don't get much of a look in these days either, as the digital files seem to reign as king! These can either be sent to you as a physical copy on a USB, or even more modern than that, simply delivered to you instantly, the moment they are ready, as a digital download. The digital copy is easy to share with friends and family, put on social media, burn onto your own disks and makes your films a little more future proof. Anyone who has a wedding video on a VHS tape will know what I am talking about!! It is important to ask what you can expect to receive though, as this can be a source of disappointment when you are expecting a nice shiny USB in a glitzy box with a bottle of bubbly on the side... and all you get is a download link in an email.

One final question to consider is "will there be any drone footage". These little toys have become hugely popular in recent years, and for good reason, they can take your wedding film to a new level. If you have forked out a fortune for some exclusive stately home in the middle of the countryside, and you only get to see it from the inside, you aren't going to get the full benefit of where your money went. An aerial shot of your venue can bring the days memories flooding back with a sense of pride as to how beautiful the day was because of the stunning venue you had booked. However, drone footage is not the be all and end all. Sometimes it just won't happen, and for several reasons. The videographer does not have a drone, and to hire a drone pilot for your film would increase your costs. There is also the possibility that they do have a drone but cannot fly it. Things that could stop a drone taking off are things like weather (they seem to do exceptionally badly in the rain!), or local restrictions (your stately home venue simply may not allow it), or your proximity to a no-fly

zone, such as being close to an airport, or even being on the landing path of an airport where the no-fly zone can extend out for several miles. You could simply be unlucky and have a temporary no-fly zone in effect in the area on that day for some reason, such as a hot air balloon show, or an aerial display. Basically, there is no guarantee that a drone will launch, but quite often if this is the case you will be so wrapped up in the beauty of your brand new wedding film, and be wiping away so many tears that you won't even notice that the entire thing was filmed from the ground!

Ultimately your wedding film needs to sing to you, it needs to be showing the story of your day and capturing the moments you missed as well as the moments that you didn't miss and didn't want to forget. It needs to show people, and show their interactions, to remind you of how much they enjoyed your day, and the reactions when they all saw you for the first time. Any Uncle Bob can point a video camera at you on your wedding day, but they will never create a film you will fall in love with (or necessarily be able to hear anything on!), which is why you are paying for someone with the experience, the ability to think on their feet and work around problems without you even knowing there was one, and be able to guarantee they will capture everything they said they would.

However your wedding day goes, I hope you enjoy every single moment of it and have the day you have dreamed of. I do hope you get the day filmed and those memories preserved forever. Your photos will be beautiful, but there are some moments that only a film can bring back!