

Wedding Video Questions

Video Diamonds

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Recently I was asked to answer some questions about wedding videography by "San Diego Weddings" magazine. Here are the questions and replies in their entirety...I hope they answer some questions you may have about wedding videography, and Video Diamonds' philosophy on the subject.

Does it seem as if using video to capture the day is becoming more popular, or about the same? If so, why do you think?

A: Wedding videos are definitely getting more popular - it used to be around 15- 20% of weddings were professionally video'd, currently it's approaching 40%. Improvements in technology (namely digital video, lower cost hard drive space, faster computer processors) has greatly effected the market by allowing a more polished video to be produced in less time for a lower cost than previous years.

Another 30-40% of weddings are also choosing to have non-professionals (usually relatives) video there weddings, thanks to lower cost in consumer equipment. An important note here is the difference in professional vs. consumer equipment will have a significant effect on the results of the video produced. Without getting into technical details: sound quality, light brilliance and saturation, and details are all improved greatly by using professional equipment.

What are tips you give to the bride/bridal party to make the video more successful? A: When in doubt - smile! Take a deep breathe before speaking your vows, and have a good time! Aside from that - making sure you and the video company have a documented and clear understanding of the details of the event will greatly improve the video. If the ceremony is going to include cultural or religious ceremonies that are unique, it is important to map those out ahead of time. For example - "breaking glass" at a Jewish ceremony, or "presenting roses" in a Catholic wedding. These shots are important in a video and only happen once, usually too quickly to set up for the best shot if the videographer doesn't know they are going to happen ahead of time.

Another important aspect towards a satisfying video is discussing the style you'd like to see in the final cut. Wedding videos may range in style from somber to outrageously funny; photojournalistic (where no shots are scripted or pre-arranged), artistic and love-story themed, or an emulation of a favorite show or movie.

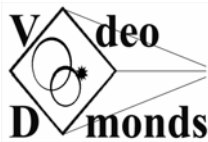
The videographer should be happy to take the time to discuss final production style before they start shooting because it will help achieve a higher level of customer satisfaction.

How long does it take to edit the tape after you've completed your videography?

A: Most videographers' digital equipment forces the following process: 1. Capture to hard drive 2. Edit 3. Render/ Print copies. Each step of the process is very time intensive. For a typical 8 hour wedding, with a couple cameras, it's typical to end up with enough raw footage that the editing process may take well over 20 hours labor.

How much footage do you usually end up with?

A: Depending on the number of cameras used, and length of event, usually between 5 and 8 hours of raw footage.



What are you looking to capture?

A: We look to capture a lot of "standard" scenes - too many to list here! A complete list is on the Video Diamonds website (http://www.videodiamonds.com/images/wedding_videography_shot_list.pdf)

Are you now using DVDs instead of tapes for the final product?

A: At Video Diamonds, DVD or VHS tape production is the choice of the client. The only current check point with DVD usage is testing for compatibility with the client's DVD player ahead of time. The reason behind this is that not all DVD players are as smooth in playing computer "burned" DVDs. So, we send a DVD sample to check compatibility before the big day.

Do you meet with the client ahead of time to get a sense of their personalities? A: Usually, meeting the bride, groom and/or family members is nice precursor to booking the date for service, although not a requirement on our end. Since San Diego also attracts brides from distant locations in-person meetings are not always possible. A lot of personality can be distinguished over the phone, in addition to our booking process and business affiliations, like the San Diego Better Business Bureau. If we meet a party before hand or not, our clients rest assured we will gracefully service their video needs.

How does taping a wedding differ from other celebrations?

A: Every event is going to have unique and standard set of shots to "tell the story" in video. The nice thing about producing a wedding video is many scenes are familiar, and everyone's usually on their best behavior. If you're shooting a live music video, corporate sales event or anniversary party, you never know what special magic might take place! Personally, the toughest part about shooting a wedding is not being distracted from the job by the emotion of the moment. We get to witness a beautiful event in someone's life, and can honor that moment by doing the best job possible to preserve it for them and their loved ones forever. Sales presentations aren't usually as emotional.

Do you ever try to interact with the people being filmed or do you just let them do their own thing?

A: That all depends on what the client would like in terms of our interaction with their guests and what they would like their video to look like. On our video package documentation, we specify and discuss that option with clients. There is a cost associated to the editing in getting the sound levels correct, and some guest may want to participate or not depending on their comfort level in front of a camera.

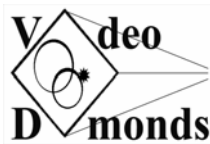
Usually having guest interviews is a lot of fun for everybody involved, and makes for a great bonus on the video.

Any new trends? Special techniques? Special effects?

A: Lots of improvements have been made in DVD menu options, having motion menu buttons and better graphic options. The level of customization possible in a video is endless. Really, there isn't much you see in television shows that isn't possible in wedding video production, but the time involved in the editing process is the crucial factor. Aside from any new effects, there is nothing that beats a steady camera in professional hands, correct shot angles and smooth transitions. I've been playing with a fireball explosion effect lately, but I don't think we're going to see that in any wedding videos.

What's the primary difference between the images captured in still photography vs. video?

A: (I'm going to answer this question in a non-conventional, non-technical manner, despite the fact I think that's what was expected.)
I think of still camera vs. video is this: with a video camera you experience motion and sound on top of the image impression of a scene? The impact of that motion and sound is immensely powerful. Photos are a great way to become absorbed in the details of a piece of time, which can



allow your mind to free associate other details of the memory at its own pace, but Video images can be a much more realistic reliving of an event in its actual form, in near real time. Both serve a purpose unique to their role. I think the important take-away here is that the couples I talk to who didn't get a wedding video, who haven't seen the high quality of a professional wedding video lately, usually regret not getting one. The couples that get a wedding video watch it more frequently than they crack open their photo album.

Anything else you can think of?

A: Sound - you can fool the eye, but you can't fool the ear. It's important to get an idea of the sound quality, equipment, and processing your videographer is bringing to the picture. Music selection- what are your choices? Is live sound going to be used, or overdubbed CD quality recordings. How is the event microphoned?