



Love, camera... **ACTION!**

Vows, speeches and your first dance; a video captures the energy and sounds that photos can't, says Sarah Haywood

For reliving your wedding day time and time again, or sharing it with those who couldn't be there, having a video is a must. But to get the most from it, it's essential to hire a professional. After all, no one wants to sit through five hours of wobbly, out-of-focus images. So, head on to get the quality you want.

KNOW THE BASICS

Filming a wedding isn't a budget option. In addition to labour costs, the equipment used to shoot and edit is pricey. Expect to pay around £1,500 for a well-edited story of your day, drawn from 10 hours of footage taken with a single camera.

Some companies will suggest you have two camera operators. This offers more flexibility so it's really worth paying the additional fee if you can afford to. A third person may be employed to sort, select and edit the material and turn it into your fabulous wedding-day film. All of which will take several days. Remember, it's not just what's filmed that counts. How it's put together is important, too.

If you can't secure the services of a good local professional, cast your net further afield, as many will be prepared to travel to a wedding. As always, a recommendation from someone you trust is the best place to start your search. The Association of Professional Videomakers (apv.org.uk) can also assist you.

WATCH AND LEARN

Before hiring a videographer, ask to see at least three complete wedding DVDs – not highlights, compilations or montages from several weddings. View them from start to finish. If you're bored, take it as a sign that the company's not for you – you don't want people to find *your* film tedious.

Check that the key moments of the day were captured on film – the guests arriving, the groom waiting, the procession down the aisle, a selection of shots from the service, the cake-cutting, the first dance and so on. And look out for bad camerawork – you'll know it when you see it! The film should be slick and smooth, and everything should be in focus, with no fast zooming in and out. Watch, too, for colour balance and clarity, good lighting and an absence of sudden cuts or distorted sound.

It shouldn't just capture the bride and groom, but also

the atmosphere of the entire day.

However, it needn't be lengthy. 'A wedding DVD shouldn't run longer than an hour,' says Michael Metcalf, a senior director at GMTV who runs videography company Bride and Zoom (brideandzoom.com). 'Remember, it's a record and celebration of the day, not a documentary. Some of the best films I've made are those where the marriage service is accompanied by beautiful music chosen by the couple.'

QUESTION TIME

Before you book, make sure you ask these questions...

- What do they charge and what is included?
- How long will they stay?
- How long will the film be?
- Will soundbites of guests' comments be included?
- How many copies will you get and how much for extras?
- Are they insured?
- Can you choose the music?
- Can you add a message or thank you in the credits?
- Can you give input regarding the packaging design?
- Will you be able to view the film before the final edit and make changes?
- Can you get references from previous clients?

THE LOWDOWN

To make a watchable film, your videographer needs lots of information about you and your families. It's best to assign someone to liaise with them and point out significant people so they definitely capture them on film. Make sure they have a schedule of the day's events.

'If the wedding includes a religious service, check what is and isn't allowed,' says Michael. Inform them of any customs, practices and the dress code and, if possible, introduce your videographer to your photographer beforehand.

Finally, be yourself in front of the camera – it's their job to make you look your best! **B**

For more advice, read *Wedding Bible Planner* by Sarah Haywood, £30 (or £25 from weddingbible.co.uk)

