

How to start your own Wedding Video Business
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<http://www.topsecretshoppers.com>

<http://www.diabeticgourmet.biz>

<http://www.forumassistant.com>

Table of Contents

1. About the author
2. Introduction
3. The Basics of the Business
 - Starting the Business
 - Buying Equipment
 - Advertising
 - Setting your fees
4. The Wedding Day
 - Relationships with the bride
 - Shooting Rules
 - The Key Shots
5. Post Wedding Day
 - Editing Your Video
 - Editing with your clients
 - Breaking Copyright?
 - Delivery of Product

6. The Final Word

Making a living in the Wedding Videography Business

About The Author

Hello! Thanks for purchasing my book. My name is Noah. You must be thrilled! You have taken the first step to starting your own business. This is an exciting time to be getting into the Wedding Videography Business. As you read this, Apple Computer is preparing to ship the G5 Powermac, which they claim to be the world's fastest computer. This new Mac has the ability to sport whopping 8 gigs of ram.

Imagine this, in 1989 a megabyte of ram cost about \$50.00 dollars per Meg!! That would mean in 1989 to fill the G5 personal computer, you would have had to have an extra \$400,000 dollars lying around. Today, the G5 can be maxed out for a few hundred. I have been editing on the Mac for roughly 5 years now and I don't see myself ever moving back to the PC. Although, PC readers, don't worry everything we will speak about in this book can be accomplished on a PC, it's just that us Mac users.... Well, see...they know what I'm talking about.

Anyways, back to “about the author.” I wanted to write this book since everything being offered these days seems to be outdated so fast just like the 1989 Mac ram costs.

Recently, I have purchased a variety of how-to videography business books from the web and nothing has satisfied my hunger, the books are old an outdated and spend a variety of their times teaching us useless facts. I still own and operate a videography business and love every minute of it.

Introduction

This book plans to do two things. One, I plan to offer a little guidance into the world of Wedding Videography and two, provide some extra’s which will get you up and running in no time.

Let’s assume you already own the basic equipment to start your videography business.

What exactly is the basic equipment needed for a videography business? Well, you need a camera. A DV (digital video) camera is an absolute must. This relatively new format has made it possible

for almost everyone to be able to shoot very high quality digital video. A low-end DV camera can be bought for around \$600, while the high end could go as high as \$6000.

I am not going to get into brands, as I believe this is personal preference and each has their pros and con's. I do not recommend the Sony VX-2000 over the Canon X11-S. That is for your and your budget to decide. Just to clarify, I shot my first wedding on an 800-dollar Panasonic camera.

The Basics of the Business

Starting the Business

By starting the business I am referring to the first step, choosing a name. This decision is not easy although it is very important. You want something which is going to be memorable. Another important think to think about is if you are going to have a website? If so, it might be useful to check before you decide on a name. If you choose Amazon Video and want to have the domain

name www.amazon.com, you are going to be out of luck. Keep it simple and catchy. Sometimes, choosing a name will be the most difficult part.

Buying Equipment

To begin your videography business you need to buy your equipment if you don't already own it. I have a few suggestions. Buy everything new!! Used equipment may save you a few bucks but will probably cost you more in the long run! And, don't be buying high-end equipment off eBay unless the seller has a high feedback rating. This is where a lot of people get scammed. Video Equipment is one of the #1 frauds on eBay as we speak. BE CAREFUL WHEN BUYING BRAND NEW ELECTRONICS FROM eBay.

I will explain my studio to you to give you a rough idea on how I accomplish things here.

I have a G4 Single 1GHZ computer loaded with ram, two monitors a 17" and a 15" I also use an old Commodore 1701 monitor as a

broadcast monitor. I have a set up Yamaha speakers and a Panasonic DV200K Mini DV camcorder which cost \$800 and a Panasonic DVX100 which cost a lot more!!

I suggest buying your system in components. Start your business like I did using a basic DV camera and editing on Apple's iMovie, until I was able to afford Final Cut Pro. I now run Final Cut Pro 3 and burn to DVD on an Apple Super drive.

The other option I provide you is to rent equipment. Some cities and local colleges now have media labs which people can go and use high end Computers for minimal costs. Take a look around and find these, imagine if you didn't have to buy any equipment just pay \$250 to rent a camera for a weekend? You would make a killing.

Advertising

As in any business, advertising is an important aspect. When you are ready to start your advertising, choose your medium wisely. For this past summer I decided to go strait to the

newspaper. I used a clever advertising technique here. I incorporated a new and fresh movie into my ad. Take a look....

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING VIDEO

There is nothing like a professionally produced videotape to capture all the emotions, sights and sounds of your wedding day.
(555) 554-3434

I was able to tie in one of the years hottest films and use it to my advantage. With that one simple ad, the phones rang off the hook. Look for publications which publish all wedding services in your area. Get in this guide as soon as possible! When you start booking weddings, you will most likely be booking for the following year. Furthermore, design your own ads. This is an absolute must, unless you have money to give away, simply design your own ads and flyers.

Another great spot for wedding services is the Yellow Pages.

When a new bride begins her wedding plans, chances are one of the first places she will look is the Yellow Pages. This will be expensive, but will last for a year or more so your clients will always know where to find you.

If you cannot afford advertising in the Yellow Pages, I have another suggestion which paid off for me. I would watch the newspaper each day and record all of the “engagements” located usually in the back of the classifieds. I would then send a letter to each couple by looking up their mailing address. In this letter, I would describe myself and my business and offer a discount for my services.

Advertising is one of the toughest aspects of running a business.

Word of mouth advertising is going to be the strongest and worst part of advertising if you burn any bridges so be careful.

The following is a sample of an introduction letter which you may revise to better suit your business.

Mrs. Phil Parma
1234 Parm Street
Jane, OH, 90210

Dear Phillis

I am excited to tell you about my new wedding videography company, (your company name)

Are you still searching for a professional videographer to digitally videotape your upcoming wedding? If so, look no further. (Your Business Name) will unobtrusively capture the emotions, sights and sounds of your wedding day with the latest in digital technology

Dates are booking fast, so I urge you to call today to make an appointment to view my high-quality wedding video demonstration. You won't be disappointed!

I have enclosed a few business cards. Please keep them for yourself and share the others with your friends and associates.

Thank you for supporting my new wedding video business.

Sincerely,

(your name)

Setting Your Fee

How do you know what to charge? You look around and videographers are charging anywhere from \$800 to \$10,000!

At this point, price is hardly an issue because you have proven that you are worth it. Naturally, you should do some research to find what your competition is charging. If you do a better job or invest more time and money in your productions, you deserve to be paid more than your counterparts. You shouldn't be ashamed of that.

When you set your price, make sure you are not giving away your services. As a beginner in the business, you will probably be guilty of underselling yourself while you try to get things rolling. When

you become the best, you do not have to charge the highest price, but be sure that you are very far from being the lowest in your area. If your quality is the best, people will pay you for it. If you are the best and the client cannot pay your price, then you shouldn't feel bad about refusing the business. You're not selling concrete blocks where they're all alike and price alone determines a good deal. You're selling something very different from your competitors. You are not being arrogant, but understand that excellent videographers are sensitive to the type of wedding video tape they deliver to the client. You are not going to get every wedding. There may be 10,000 weddings every year in your area. You surely cannot do all of them! Never quote prices over the phone. If all your customer cares about is cost, they are not the kind of customer you are looking for. There is an old saying, "Some of your best deals are the ones that are never made."

Perhaps you would charge one fee for just the wedding ceremony in the church, and another for the whole enchilada (the wedding

preparations, the reception, the mini biographies of the bride and groom done as a photo montage).

Relationships with the Bride

The statement above can be enough to scare the wits out of some videographers. Exactly, how do you get along with the person who could potentially rip your head off if everything is not perfect! I'm not trying to scare you but brides can be scary. Just always stay calm. If the Bride is going to make you crazy while shooting, step aside and take a break. Chat with the photographers and florists ect.. They will all be in the same boat.

Shooting

What follows is a list of the key shots which you must absolutely try and get!

Before The Ceremony

- Bride and bridesmaids dressing (keep it G rated!)

A shot of the bouquets and boutonnières prior to being put on. A good alternative is the slow zoom out, or reveal shot.

Groom getting ready, horse playing with groomsmen. You can try some staged shots. A classic is the reservoir dog's intro with all the groomsmen.

Or, the best man checking his watch in response to the groom's question, or the best man proving he's still got the ring in his pocket.

- Groom getting boutonniere placed by his mother
- Detail shots
- Additional detail shot ideas: Bride's shoes, wedding gown on a hanger, bride's earrings, and other jewelry, the details of the gown and bouquets, ring bearer pillow, flower girl basket.
- Exterior church. A nice shot might start at the top of the church steeple, and then pan down to reveal the entire building. Try to take architectural shots at an angle, not standing flat in front of one wall.

- Wedding party arriving at church. If the limo takes them, try to get a shot of the limo departing the bride's house, and another of the limo arriving at the church.

At The Ceremony

- Continuous roll of ceremony, from prior to the bride's entrance to the couple's walk down the aisle at the end. Ideally, use two cameras. Place one in the back third of the church, near the aisle. Start the other handheld, positioned on the bridesmaids' side of the aisle at the altar

Shoot the procession, letting the bridesmaids walk past your position. After the bride arrives on her father's arm, move to a tripod placed behind the officiate and on the groom's side. This gives the best shot of the bride during the vows. This movement **MUST** be coordinated and cleared with the officiant, which is why it's necessary to attend the rehearsal. If the officiant won't allow this, just place the front camera on the tripod from the beginning.

- Another tip on the processional: Don't make every shot a pan, or at least not a full pan.

You really don't need shots of people's backs as they walk past the back camera and on up the aisle. Pan a little to keep them in frame, but as they get to the back camera, stop the pan and let them walk out of frame.

- Any special touches in the ceremony, like a solo song, unity candle lighting, etc.
- Reaction shots of bride and groom's families, especially during the vows.
- Try a depth of field shot - For example, the soloist in focus with the Bride and Groom in the background out of focus, then gently shift focus to Bride and Groom... things like that.
- (At the rehearsal, I tell the Bride and Groom to stop a few feet in front of the back camera as they come down the aisle at the recessional, and kiss. This is a nice touch.)

At The Reception

- Exterior shots of the reception venue, if it is at all photogenic.
- Cutaway shots of flowers, fountains, statues, etc.

- Limo arriving at reception, and wedding party getting out. This one's important. While you are setting up your gear at the reception, you or your assistant should keep a sharp lookout for the arrival of the bridal party!
- Wedding party entering reception. (This, and sometimes the best man's toast, are about the only shots at the reception that I'll use a tripod for.)
- First dance. This is the most important dance to shoot, and here are some of my tips for getting good dance footage:

maybe twice, never thrice.
- Mom's dance with the groom.
- Dad's dance with the bride. This one can be a real tear-jerker, if you take a close-up with one camera, and a full shot with a second camera.
- Best man's toast. This is best shot with two cameras, one on the best man, the other getting a reaction shot from the bride and groom.
- Cake cutting.

- Garter removal and toss.
- Guest book signings.
- Any other special dances and ceremonies at the reception. You'll see stuff like the Chicken Dance, Electric Slide, conga line, Hokey Pokey, etc. at many receptions.
- Interviews with guests.
- Interview with the bride and groom. (This may be easier to do if you can arrange a separate interview shoot, rather than trying to squeeze it into the reception when there are so many other demands on the Bride and Groom's time and attention).
- Cutaways and detail shots - cake, presents, decorations, flower arrangements, the DJ or band, etc. Get a copy of the wedding announcement, and anything like souvenir napkins, etc. for later copy stand work. If the bar has a lot of glasses set up, shoot a detail shot through the glasses. Get a shot of a dinner plate being served. If buffet style, truck or zoom-reveal the buffet. Detail shots of the Bride and

Groom champagne glasses. Centerpieces on the tables, and anything unique.

- Romantic Moments.
- Children: Want to get a response from a child?
- Guests saying goodbye.
- Bride and Groom exiting the building and getting showered with confetti.
- Bride and Groom getting into the limo; limo driving away.

Editing your Video

As noted earlier, eventually you will have to edit your video. My ultimate recommendation is Apple's Final Cut Pro. Using FCP of course requires an Apple computer. If you cannot afford this then I suppose Adobe Premier will suffice. Editing with FCP is very simplistic although contains enough features to cut a full length feature film.

I plan now to provide a brief overview and quick lesson of cutting with FCP. You will quickly be on your way to creating astonishing wedding videography.

The first step is capturing clips from all the great wedding video you have shot. For a great tutorial on capturing, check out

www.lib.unc.edu/house/mrc/tutorials/FCP_tutorial.pdf

Once you have captured the clips that you want to edit together, you are ready to close the "Log and Capture" window, and start to edit the clips.

Double-click on each of the clips to view them inside of FCP. You can use your space bar to start and stop playback of each clip.

Marking IN and OUT points of your shots before you place them on the timeline.

You're now ready to edit your clips together into a movie. It is easiest if you trim the IN/OUT points of your clips before you place them on the timeline. You can also trim them once they are on the timeline. If you are happy with the actual IN or OUT points of your clip, then you don't need to mark them.

MARK IN: Once you feel familiar with your footage and ready to edit, open the first clip that you want to appear in your sequence, by double-clicking on it in the Browser. As it appears in the viewer, move the play head to the point in the clip that you want to appear first. Hit "I" on your keyboard. You'll notice that a new in point appears on the clip, marked by a blue arrow.

MARK OUT: Now move your clip to the point that you want your clip to stop playing on your Timeline. Hit "O" on your keyboard. You should see a similar blue arrow marking the new OUT point.

Moving your clips to the timeline by dragging, in order to create a sequence.

The Timeline (Sequence) is the area that you use to string your separate clips together into one seamless movie. The Timeline moves from the left to the right, forward in time. You can use the timeline to create hard-cuts between clips, effect-oriented transitions, and audio layering.

In your Browser window, click on the "Sequence" icon to open your Timeline.

Select the first clip that you want to appear in your timeline, and drag it onto the timeline. It should appear on the timeline, all the way to the left.

Select the clip in the browser that you want to come next in your movie. Mark new IN or OUT points on this clip if desired, and drag it onto your timeline, just to the right of the first clip.

With the Timeline or "Canvas" window selected, hit the HOME key on your keyboard or drag the play head all the way to the left of the Timeline. Hit the spacebar on your keyboard. Your

presentation will automatically play in your Canvas Window, including the hard-cut between your first and second clip.

Continue placing shots on the timeline in this same fashion, rearranging clips as you like by dragging them to the left, right or in-between other clips on the timeline.

Trimming your Clips in the Timeline

Adjusting the IN or OUT points of one or more clips in the timeline is called trimming. This includes tweaking a clip's IN or OUT points, changing the IN or OUT points between 2 clips, or moving a clip to a new location in the timeline. The Tool Palette contains special tools just for these trimming operations.

Before you perform a trim edit, you want to make sure that the "snap to edges" and "link" controls are set-up properly in the Timeline. These are the small buttons located at the top, right

corner of the Timeline. If they are ON they are green, if they're OFF they are grey.

Linked Clips: Video and audio are automatically linked when they are imported as one clip. This means that no matter how you trim video, the audio will be trimmed accordingly and vice-versa.

Sometimes, you will want to edit the video and audio independently of one another. In order to do this, you can just switch the Link control to its OFF mode.

Snap to Edges: The snap to edges mode is on by default to assist you in finding the edge of edits easily. When the snap to edges control is on, you will find that the clip will magnetically snap to the closest edit point. Sometimes you will want to fine tune your edits not in accordance with adjacent edits. Especially in this case or when editing down to the frame level, you will want to turn "Snap to Edges" off.

Trimming with the Selection Tool: The simplest way to trim a clip on the timeline is by using the default arrow "selection tool." By select the edge of a clip on the timeline, you can roll the IN or OUT point of the clip as long as now other clip is blocking the rolling and unrolling. If other clips are in the way, you may find you're trimming to be easier if you scoot your clips down the timeline with your "track selection" tools, or by editing with the roll tool or the slip edit tool. (See below)

Scooting Clips along the Timeline with the Track Selection Tool:

The Track or Tracks selection tool is a handy way to grab all clips from "here" toward a direction, which is especially useful when trimming on the timeline without loosing all of your previous editing. Click at the point that you want to grab a collection of clips with the tool pointing the direction that you want to select.

From there, move that whole group of clips over. Note* This track selection tool will often come in handy for removing gaps that you create in your timeline during trimming.

Deleting gaps in the timeline caused during trimming: You can delete a gap in a timeline by selecting it, then hitting the delete key on your keyboard.

Adding Cross-Dissolves Using FCP:

Final Cut makes it very easy to add cross dissolves and cross-fades between video and audio transitions. To be able to add a transition between two adjacent clips on a track, these two clips must have extra frames that overlap in each direction, past the edit.

To add a transition between two video clips on a track:

Select the edit between the 2 clips with your selection tool.

On your keyboard hit Apple+T. The transition will appear as an overlay in your timeline.

To add a cross-fade between two audio clips on a track:

Select the edit between the audio clips on the timeline.

On your Keyboard hit Option+Apple+T.

To add a cross-dissolve and cross-fade simultaneously:

Select the edit between the clips.

Control click on the edit, and choose the default transition.

Adjusting the length of your transitions:

By default, all transitions are 1 second in duration. If you want your transition to be longer, control-click on the transition and select the "Duration" choice. In the Duration dialogue box, type in your desired duration.

*Note: Your transition can only be as long as there is overlapping material. You can adjust your in and out points in the timeline so that there's more material between the clips, then adjust the duration accordingly.

Rendering Your Transitions:

All effects in Final Cut Pro must be rendered, and this includes dissolves of the most basic kind.

To render as you go:

Select the transition that you want to render.

Hit apple+R on your keyboard.

To render all effects at once:

Hit Option+R.

I understand my basic Final Cut Pro tutorial is somewhat hard to understand. The web contains such a vast amount of info on editing with FCP, you will be a master in no time.

Editing with your clients

This is where you actually sit down with your clients and edit the video to their liking. This can be both a pleasurable experience and a nightmare at the same time. I suggest you offer this service once.

The best time is to offer the service when you have all the clips logged and captured and you are ready. Before your clients arrive, put together a small montage to some music. This will get them excited to give you some input!

Breaking Copyright?

Is it OK to use music in wedding video's you create? Technically, no. It is completely illegal although most customers are going to have music already selected for you. I suggest purchasing some royalty free music. If your customers must absolutely use their choice of music than remember "the customer is always right." Always please the customer. Forewarn them that it is illegal.

Delivery of Product

Your masterpiece is finished and you are ready to deliver. First, you must decide with your client how they would like their video presented. Today, the norm is slowly becoming DVD although not everyone owns a DVD player yet, VHS will still be required.

Invest in packaging. Your product must look professional. Buy black DVD cases and create a stunning insert and cover

personalized for each wedding. This is simple to do if you create one template, Just change the name's as weddings go on.

The Final Word

In conclusion, I hope you have enjoyed my guide. Please seek out the attached forms and samples and use them to your advantage. You may be asking yourself if it is possible to make a career in this business.

You bet it is, although wedding videography is not for everyone. You must first know the basics and ins and out of shooting video and audio. Then, you must be able to edit. And finally, you must be able to work on a professional level with all members of the wedding. Good luck and enjoy the ride.

