

# 10 reasons not to have a wedding video

You may feel it's a little odd for me, a wedding videographer, to be handing out a document with that headline. It is in fact a collection of the most common reasons people give me when I chat to them at wedding fairs – reasons that they have decided not to have their wedding filmed.

## I hate seeing myself on video

I think we can all relate to this. Similarly 'I hate how I sound on video'.

It's a fact – we've got used to seeing ourselves back-to-front in a mirror and hearing ourselves partly through our bones, and that's slightly different to how everyone else sees and hears us. The video sees and hears us the same as everybody else does, and the difference between how others see us and how we are used to seeing ourselves causes this perception. So the real key point here is that you will enjoy the video because of everyone else that's in it, and they will all look and sound just how you know they do, even though each of them will probably think they don't.



Your wedding day is full of people being themselves, laughing, crying, chatting and having a lovely time as they celebrate your day with you. You will never have this group of people all together in the same place again. In years to come this aspect will mean more and more to you.

And no matter how bad you may think you look on video any other day, on this day you have spent several hours having the most amazing makeover. There's no doubt you will look better today than you ever have, or ever will again. This is surely the one day in your life it would be good to have on film, and in years to come you will realise how fantastic you looked on your special day, and be thankful that you have the DVD to remind you.

## I am having a photographer

Of course you are having a photographer – everyone has a photographer. But photography and videography are two different mediums, resulting in two very different experiences. Really, saying 'I don't need a video because I'm having photographs' is like saying 'I don't need a microwave because I have an oven' – they do different jobs and both are valuable.

A beautiful photograph is something to cherish, to display. A picture speaks 1,000 words. You will have a dozen friends and family members snapping away, but there's a world of difference between what most of them will produce and the work of an excellent wedding photographer.

A beautiful wedding film brings the memories alive – you can hear your grandfather's laugh; smile as the toddler chases the butterfly across the lawn; cry as your father says how proud you have made him. The look of wonder that appears on your partner's face as he sees you on your father's arm for the first time, and your smile as you see that look – these are truly priceless sequences that work so much better in a moving, speaking image.

A final note - It's unlikely that your grandparents had a film of their wedding, but imagine if you were offered the choice of looking through their photo album and seeing how they looked, or watching a film of the occasion and seeing how they actually were, along with so many of your other relatives who are no longer around. You probably don't get that choice, but your grandchildren might.

## **My uncle has a camcorder, he can do it**

Yes, he probably does, and perhaps he could. However most well-meaning enthusiasts will lack the depth of knowledge of how a wedding works, how to make their camera cope with poor and awkward lighting, how to ensure the very quietly spoken vows are recorded loud and clear over the wailing baby and creaking chairs, and most significantly they will lack the editing skills to be able to turn all of that into a polished production.

Your uncle will also have to forego the enjoyment of your day while he stresses about capturing it all, and not running out of battery at a key moment, he will almost certainly film a lot more of his side of the family than people from the 'other side', or friends he doesn't know.

I have had many requests to 'see what you can do with this' – the output from uncle's camera after a wedding, and mostly it is a lengthy job with at best a pretty poor end result – better than nothing, for sure, but not much. In the words of one such 'nephew'...

*"My wife and I married in 2008 and at the time a wedding videographer was an expense too much. Some 5 years later, and with the catalyst of wanting to show my new born baby the day his mum and dad got married, I decided to try and rectify the situation. Fortunately a couple of friends had captured some of the day on video, but unfortunately the footage was of a very poor quality. Via a combination of the shaky video footage, our photos and a beautiful soundtrack, Martin worked his magic and produced an end result of real quality. Naturally it's not as great as having a professional film it, but at least I know I have brought the day to life and will be so pleased to be able to show it to my son when he's a bit older. So to conclude, with the wonderful benefit of hindsight, I can't stress how important it is to have a proper video of your wedding day"*

## **My friend had a wedding video, and the quality was awful**

A video made with older equipment could well produce low quality images, and without proper attention to the sound recording, it can be hard to make out those all-important vows. But really that is not something that would happen today if your wedding was filmed by a competent professional with appropriate equipment. Armed with today's high-definition equipment, high quality microphones and the knowledge to use them well, it is very unlikely that you will end up with something that wasn't stunning in quality.

But this is something that's best judged for yourself – before you choose someone to film your wedding, ask to see their recent work, it will give you good information about filming styles and finished quality. If you can, watch it on your own equipment – if it looks good on your TV, so should your own video.

## **Home videos are shaky and horrible to watch**

Home videos usually are. But a well produced wedding film is a million miles away from a typical home video. The shots are steady, the images sharp, the colours true and the sound is bright and crisp. It will usually be filmed with more than one camera, so just like on TV, it will be edited with various camera angles to make it more interesting to watch, and music will be used where appropriate when the recorded sound is not interesting. It will be absolutely nothing like a 'home video'. I'll be very happy to demonstrate by showing you some examples.

## Wedding videos are so cheesy

Wedding videos do have that reputation, and it's well deserved. Certainly in the 80's and 90's when editing at home began to be a reality, every editing package had a multitude of horrible effects and transitions. People loved to play with them all and ended up making pretty bad footage ten times worse.

Thankfully, today professional wedding film-makers have learnt from those horror stories and a wedding film today can be a wonderful, cinematic work of art, with beautiful images, great story-telling, a fantastic soundtrack and crisp editing. It would be hard to tell a decent wedding film today from a BBC documentary.

## It's expensive and not in my budget

It's clear from the many discussions I have had with couples at wedding fairs that they have done their budgeting, added up all the expected costings and come up with a total that is unfortunately very high.

It's also unfortunate that a vast proportion of this money will be spent on things that will be gone forever the day after the wedding – someone else will be in their venue, some other couple will be driven in their cars, the rented suits will be on their way back to the outfitters, the cake will be eaten, the flowers wilting...

In fact there are just a few things that will remain – the rings, the dress, the photos and the memories. But even the memories will fade after even a short time (what was that joke the best man told??)

So a video becomes the one real memory that will last and last, and will not only provide a happy reminder of all the parts of the day that may be forgotten, but will fill in a lot of the day that you didn't even see at all! Who sees all the guests as they arrive? Who sees the bride arrive at the Church?

So as an expense, a wedding film might be 5% of your total spend, but a month after your wedding it becomes the thing you are most happy about spending money on.

Most couples who DIDN'T have their wedding filmed would recommend to their friends that they should. Most couples who DID have it filmed would say it should be right at the top of the 'must have' list. Don't ask me, ask your friends.

Here are a couple of quotes from real couples who didn't have it in their budget:

*"I regret not having one. I thought that I'd never watch it and I'd have my pictures, but there's a lot of your wedding that, as the bride, you don't get to see. For example, I wish I could see what was going on inside my wedding venue before I got there. I wish I could see my bridesmaids walk in. The whole thing went by so fast -- I'd kill to have more memories of it."*

*"We barely even considered hiring a videographer and were confident in the decision not to have one. But after the wedding, I really wished we'd had one. We really underestimated how much we would want to relive the day and see things we missed. Our photos are wonderful but video still captures something photos don't."*

## **I don't want my guests to have cameras in their faces all day**

It's unfortunately true that some over-enthusiastic videographers have spoiled it for the rest of us by forgetting that the day is yours, and being a real pain by getting in the way, sticking cameras in people's faces and generally being a real pain.

In fact I see it with photographers at weddings I am filming too – only occasionally, but photographers walking behind and in front of the couple as they are trying to say their vows, snapping away with loud motor-drives like paparazzi and generally taking people's attention away from the ceremony – aside from the fact that they don't care about getting in my way, I feel it must be so upsetting for the couple and their families; it is extremely disrespectful.

When you are selecting your videographer, look for feedback from past clients about whether the guests were aware of their presence. Most good videographers will be able to blend into the background and film discretely so that what you see is your guests being completely natural, not anxiously smiling and then moving away from the camera.

When you watch a sample of their work, look for how rarely (or often) the people seem to notice the camera.

## **It'll be boring**

I have had feedback from the most sceptical grooms, that, far from being boring, their wedding video is something they want to watch again and again. They are genuinely surprised by this as often they really didn't want one, but are so pleased they were overruled. Some couples have watched their wedding more than 100 times. The main reason it isn't boring, apparently, is that there's always something new happening in the background or off to the side that they hadn't spotted before. Moving, touching, happy, sad, funny, but not boring.

## **I'd never watch it**

If you had a video that was just 'the marriage ceremony' – just the three people participating in a wedding ceremony – you probably wouldn't watch it. Neither would anyone else.

But watch one or two good examples and you will see that it is so much more than that. What you'll appreciate after you have watched it once or twice is that it's much more about everyone that's there, sharing a really great day with people they don't see very often, and with you.

Some of my past clients tell me they have watched their wedding DVD dozens and dozens of times, and each time they watch it, they see something they hadn't noticed before. When I ask them which bits of the DVD they watch the most, it's not the ceremony, or the cake cutting, or the first dance, or the speeches, it's the bits in between – the bits where they are chatting and laughing with their guests, or where they are chatting about other times they have shared while the bride and groom are off having pictures taken. These are the happy, funny, touching scenes that would otherwise be lost forever – unless you decide to have the most important day of your life filmed.

And in the future, when some of these people have sadly passed on, you will have these priceless memories to share with your children. Perhaps it is only then you will really realise how valuable your wedding film is.

**So, that's 10 reasons people give to not have their wedding filmed. And probably most of them will regret that decision after the event, when it's too late. My advice to you is don't be one of those.**