



HOW TO GET STARTED IN WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

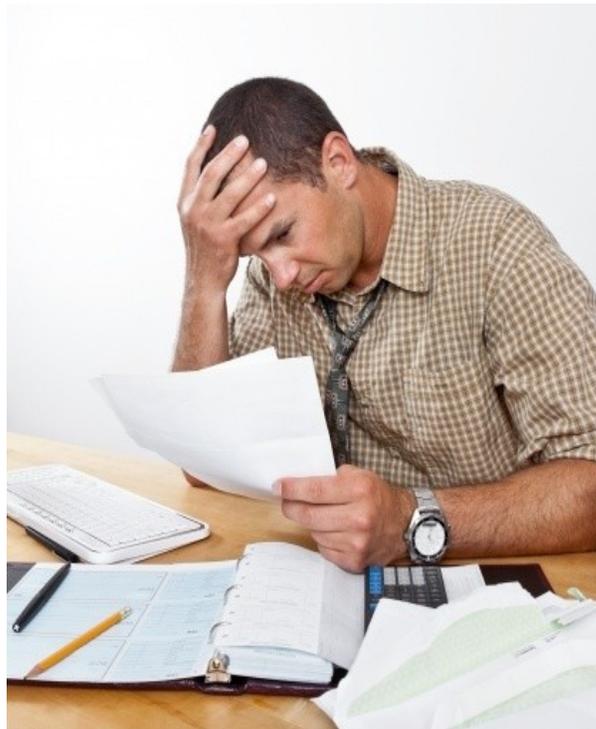
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Introduction

Of all the different types of photography, wedding photography is probably the most lucrative. According to the Indeed job search website, the average annual earnings for a professional wedding photographer was approximately \$200,000, as of 20 June 2012. A good wedding photographer could probably earn \$5,000 per wedding and a well known, popular photographer as much as \$20,000 per wedding. The average is about \$2,500 per wedding. Of course, there are some photographers who will shoot a wedding for considerably less, just to get the job.

Not surprisingly, there are a lot of wedding photographers all touting for business, so if you want to be successful, you will have to do something special to attract customers.

What makes a wedding photographer successful? From a photography point of view, you will have to have the necessary photography skills in being able to capture great images. You will need professional equipment so that you can capture the images in all kinds of lighting. While kit lenses are OK, they are usually inadequate for wedding photography. You will need to be expert in post processing techniques



to produce the quality and effects that couples demand these days. However, that's not all by any means.

Not only do you have to be a good photographer, you have to be a good businessman too. That means you will need to develop skills in marketing and branding. You will definitely need communication skills at the appointment booking stage and good customer service skills throughout the wedding day. Then of course there's accounting and record keeping as part of your every day business operations.

One of the most important aspects of being a successful wedding photographer is your presentation skills. You won't be able to get away with just a DVD full of unprocessed images or a stack of 4 x 6 photo prints. Brides today expect a lot for their wedding today and particularly from their wedding photographer. After all, these will be their official memories of their special day. They will certainly want a wedding album of their choice and maybe a good quality, professionally made wedding video as well. They may also want a DVD with all the processed images from their day. Most photographers will offer this kind of service. You will need to offer more of a service and of a better quality if you want to compete in this very lucrative market.

A great way to look more professional is by the use of slideshow videos which can be copied onto a DVD or shared online for your valued client. One of the most versatile and easy to use programs is [ProShow Web](#). Once you have added your images, chosen a theme, added some text and added appropriate music, ProShow Web does it all for you automatically to produce a professional, dynamic that your clients will love. Just as importantly, they will be thrilled to recommend you as the wedding photographer to hire for their friends and relatives.

Let's have a look in detail at some of the things you will need to do, just to get started in wedding photography.

Your Photography Skills

It probably goes without saying, but it is vital that you are a competent, proficient photographer that can produce high quality shots in all kinds of lighting conditions. You must be able to understand all about exposure, apertures, shutter speeds and ISO settings if you want to produce those knock out images that bridal

couples have come to expect. There is no second chance if you mess up on the wedding day. On this basis, you are better off by shooting in a RAW format, so that if you need to change something such as white balance or exposure after the event, you can do it in your favourite photo imaging software, such as Photoshop. RAW is much more forgiving than JPEG as all the information is stored within the image in RAW.

It is important to know your camera gear inside out, so that if you need to change a setting quickly to suit the ever changing lighting conditions, you can do it quickly without having to refer to the manual on the day!

If you are just starting out as a wedding photographer, try and work as an assistant to an established wedding photographer, if you can. You will gain valuable experience not only as a wedding photographer, but you will gain a valuable insight into running such a business as well. If you are unable to find employment as an assistant wedding photographer, let your friends and relatives know that you are available and that you can offer cheaper packages while you gain experience and build a wedding photography portfolio.

Once you've gained some useful experience, look at defining a unique style to present to a client, in the form of a well rounded portfolio.

Your Photography Gear



Some amateur photographers venture into the realm of wedding photography with the idea that their compact cameras or entry level DSLR camera and kit lenses will suffice. Why not, all their friends say they take great photographs.

However, if you want to be successful as a wedding photographer and earn some of the high income figures previously quoted, you will need professional photography gear. This is particularly important with the type and quality of lenses that you are going to have to use. Low lighting conditions in churches can present problems that usually only a DSLR camera can resolve.



This is where you will need to use wide aperture lenses that are around $f/2.8$, or even wider. Kit lenses often only have apertures as wide as $f/5.6$ and in low light conditions, you will need longer exposure times which can cause problems of camera blur with a moving subject.

You will also need a wide angle zoom lens as a walk around lens and to be able to capture everyone for those large formal group shots, or to capture the outside of wedding venue, without you having to move too far away.



A good wide angle zoom lens is a Nikon 24-70mm f/2.8 which retails for about US \$1,400. This lens produces sharp images and has a good focal range so that it can double up as a portrait lens. For the Canon users, the Canon 24-105mm f4L IS USM Series Lens offers the same kind of sharp image quality that can be used as a walk around lens to suit a lot of circumstances. It retails at a cheaper price of around US \$700.

It is also useful to have a telephoto zoom lens such as the Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 which costs about US \$1,600, or the Canon 70-200mm f2.8L IS II Lens, priced at about US \$2,200. The telephoto zoom lens comes in really handy when you can't get too close to your subject and you need to fill the frame with your subject.

For those times when you really need to get super close to your subject, such as when capturing images of the wedding rings, for example, then a Canon 100mm f2.8L Macro IS USM Lens will give very sharp images with a shallow depth of field. This lens may cost between US \$800 and US \$1,000. For the Nikon camera users, try the Nikon AF-S 105mm f/2.8G Macro VR F2.8 G, at around US \$1,000.



You can see that you need to be versatile and use a wide variety of shots to be a wedding photographer. To prevent yourself from having to change lenses often, with all of the worrying risks to your equipment that might cause, consider having two camera bodies set up for different situations. One camera and lens could be for group shots and the other could be used for close up shots and for portraits of the happy couple.

For those low lighting conditions and for those times when your subject is in shadow, you will need a flash unit or two. They don't have to be expensive but you do need to consider distance and direction. If you are too far away from your subject, a flash unit is often ineffective. If you use flash aimed directly at your subject, you will invariably produce red eye images, which take some time to remove when post processing the images. It is better to bounce the flash off a ceiling or wall if you can. Otherwise, use a diffuser like a portable soft box to reduce the harsh shadows that flash can produce.

Most of the time, you will be capturing images hand held, and as long as your shutter speed is greater than the focal length of your lens, you should be able to avoid camera shake. For instance, if you are using a 105mm focal length, then your shutter speed should be around 1/125 of a second, or faster. There will be occasions where the lighting is low and you can't use a flash, making your shutter speed slower than you

would like. You will need to use a tripod to support your camera gear so that you can produce sharp images.



The Vanguard, Apeo series tripods retail between US \$220 and US \$700. They are solidly manufactured of premium die casted magnesium, have a sleek design and are reliably secure for both stills and video shoots.

You will definitely need a computer or laptop to store and edit your images. You will also need a photo editing program, such as Adobe Photoshop to process your high quality images into a superb presentation package for you clients.

An interesting and often necessary piece of camera equipment is a Hoodman loupe. You will need this to review your shots during the wedding day when it is particularly sunny. In this situation, the sun makes it impossible to review the shots you have taken on the LCD screen. The loupe fits over the LCD screen and allows you to clearly see your shot.



Your Business Skills

Besides being a great photographer, you also need to be a good businessman so that you can market your business and make it succeed. This will involve you having to have other skills in customer service, accounting, design, marketing and advertising, to name but a few.

Your Branding and Advertising

Being a good photographer isn't enough if your prospective clients don't know where you are and what makes you special, compared to every other photographer in your area. You need to have a unique professional identity and that's where branding comes in.



The first thing you require is a logo to readily identify you and your business. You then need a business card with that logo on it and including your essential contact details. Your business email should reflect what your business is about. A snappy one line description of who you are doesn't hurt either.

While advertising in local newspapers and the Yellow Pages is important for a local photographer, it doesn't go anywhere near close enough to describe and portray what you are capable of. You need a website which lets clients know what wedding packages you offer and shows examples of your best work. Your website should be instantly recognized by all as a wedding photography business owned by yourself.

While an online portfolio is important, you will also need to create a physical portfolio album that you can show to clients and suppliers. Another good example of showing off your work is by the use of an

iPad or notebook computer. You can either have your images stored in galleries or links to your website.

To round it all off, you need a presence on social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook and Google Plus. The reason you need such a presence is that the more you and your business is discussed and shared on the Internet, the greater chance someone using a search engine such as Google will find you first before other competitors.

To give you a distinctive advantage over your competitors, invest in your branding package through a professional design or marketing agency unless you are expert in design yourself. A self designed logo and website can look amateurish. A professional designer knows what font, and colours match your profession and how to make you stand out from the crowd.

In regards to advertising besides the Internet, don't forget the importance of bridal expos in your area. They are normally annual events and renting a booth will pay dividends to any wedding photographer, as a significant percentage of couples planning to get married in the next few months will attend the expo. Bridal magazines are also a great idea for advertising your wedding photography business. Don't forget to approach local suppliers of wedding services such as florists, limousines, caterers, hotels, make up artists, hairdressers and celebrants. Show them your portfolio and exchange business cards with them. Referrals by word of mouth go a long way to attract new business to you.

Setting Your Price

Getting started in photography, especially wedding photography can be an expensive business. You will need to price your business appropriately to meet your overheads and still provide an attractive income for yourself.

Once you've undertaken a few wedding shoots, you will certainly gain an appreciation of the time commitment it takes to complete a wedding photography event from planning to processing and presentation of the images. As much as 12 hours can be spent at the wedding venue and, because you want to arrive early to get set up, you can add another 2 - 4 hours travelling and preparation time. It doesn't end there, as you have hours to spend processing the images at your computer. Potentially, a wedding photography job could

involve you in as many as 24 – 30 hours or more, depending on how many images you have shot.

When you first start out, you will be unknown and won't have much experience. Your pricing should reflect this inexperience. You would still need to charge a minimum of \$1,000 for the time you will spend altogether on your client's wedding day. As you become more experienced and better known for your professional skills, your pricing will increase accordingly. Perhaps you could check out what your competitors are charging and choose a median price to start off with.

Regardless what your pricing is, discuss and agree with the clients what you are prepared to include in their wedding photography package. So, if your normal price includes 6 hours on the day, your travel expenses, processing of so many images and stored on a DVD, anything extra will cost more than your normal price.

Before the Wedding

Taking a Booking

Some of the time, you will receive telephone inquiries about you as the wedding photographer. This is usually the bride trying to determine the best price for the best job. If you mention your inexperience or the price at that time, you will receive fewer weddings to shoot, as she has a list to go through and you are just one of many photographers on that list. It is more preferable to find out what they want and how much they are willing to spend by arranging a time to come and discuss the arrangements with them. Let them know that you have a variety of packages to offer them and assure that one of them will meet their needs. Don't be discouraged by rejection.

If you receive an inquiry about a booking via email or letter, follow this up immediately with an information package containing your individual style, booking arrangements, and what's included in your wedding package range. You could offer a discount to encourage them to make an early booking.

Booking fee

Accept a booking fee of 10% of the overall cost of the package. Inform your client that this is non refundable. A booking fee is charged for reserving that date for your client's wedding and possibly missing out on booking any other work, if they cancel. Let them know that a booking fee is different from a deposit, which is refundable if the service isn't provided, subject to agreed conditions.

Meet the bride and groom

Try and meet them in the comfort of their own home. They will be more relaxed and the bride will have all her files on hand. If you arrange to meet them at your location, make sure that the reception area is clean and tidy and that refreshments are available as they walk in.

This is your opportunity to sell yourself as a photographer. How you are perceived in your dress, the way you talk and how professional you appear, will determine whether what kind of package they will accept and how much you get paid. Be confident and upbeat about yourself and your photography.

Your first question to them should be something such as "What's your wedding going to be like?" This gives them the opportunity to talk about it and for you to listen attentively. Take extensive notes as they talk about the plans for their wedding day. You will soon get an idea whether this job is for you or not. You can also gauge what kind of package might suit them.

Available Wedding Packages

Start with a video slideshow from a previous wedding day to introduce them to the quality of your work.

Then talk about what packages you can offer them. Package #1 could be something like 6 hours of bridal session coverage with full editing and processing of images presented on a DVD. Package#2 could be all of the items covered in package #1 plus a custom wedding album.

Package #3 could include all of the aforementioned items plus an extra 2 hours coverage and an after bridal day session of their choice. Your high end package could include 12 hours of coverage of the bridal session, an engagement session and a DVD video slideshow with a DVD of all images, professionally edited and additionally a custom wedding album. The bride and groom will love the movie slideshow that you've shown them at the start of the meeting, so much so that it could double the order that they may have originally going to place with you.

Ask for a wedding timetable and who the contact person is at the venue. You will also need to know who the contact person is representing the bride and groom during the wedding day, in case you have questions or concerns. You can hardly approach either of them with your problems.

Key Wedding Shots List

Agree on what shots they require and what you will provide. In case your clients are unsure exactly what they want in relation to key wedding shots, have a list of those shots to hand to prompt them. The wedding day can be divided up into several distinct locations and stages.

Venue

Take internal and external shots of the venue if it's within a hotel or other building. Try and take some shots of the venue lit up at night as well.

Close Ups

These are the objects associated with the wedding. They can be photographed in isolation while you are waiting to get in to shoot the bride's preparation.

- Flowers
- Cake
- Perfume bottle
- Jewellery
- Wedding rings
- Menu

- Table Settings
- Announcement Board
- Garter and veil
- Hanging dress
- Shoes

Preparation Time

This usually refers only to the bride's preparation and not the groom's.

- Makeup applied
- Hair being done
- Relaxing
- Buttoning up the rear of the dress
- Putting on jewellery
- Applying perfume
- Putting in earrings
- Bride's portraits
- Reaction of the bride's father to the finished look
- Photos with her parents
- Photos with both parents
- Popping champagne bottle
- Formal portrait of bride and bridesmaids

Groom's Waiting Time

This where you capture images of the groom and groomsmen, while they are waiting for the bride to complete her preparation. The time taken to capture these images will allow you some flexibility later in the day.

- Groom inspecting the rings
- Close ups of cufflinks
- Candid shots of the groom and groomsmen
- Groom with all groomsmen
- Groom with each groomsman
- Mother of groom pinning flower on the groom
- Formal shots of groom with mother, father and then both parents

Arrival of Wedding Cars

- Bride and father in limo, taken from the front seat area
- Bride in limo taken from outside the limo

- Bride exiting with bridesmaids
- Groom in limo

Wedding Ceremony

- Bride and bridesmaids waiting to go in
- The bride's entrance
- Photos of the guests looking at the bride as she walks down the aisle
- Photos of each bridesmaid walking down the aisle
- Groom and groomsmen at the altar
- Photo of the bride and father walking down the aisle.
- Bride and groom at the altar
- Exchange of rings
- Exchange of vows
- Bride and groom kiss

After the Ceremony

- The Bride and Groom exiting the church or celebrant area
- The guest line and the bride and groom
- Formal group shots of bride's family
- Formal group shots of groom's family
- Shots of any children
- Bride and groom leaving in the limo

At the Reception

- Candid photos of all the guests and principals at their tables
- The first dance
- General dance shots
- Shots of guests enjoying the food and drink
- Garter belt tossing
- Cutting the cake
- Bride and groom laughing
- Individual speeches and toasts
- Throwing the bouquet
- Guest book signatures

As you can see, the list is quite comprehensive and you should just about cover every nuance of their wedding day if you capture all of these images. Remember to add other shots to the list as they occur to you or when a particular experimental shot works well from subsequent weddings.

Deposit

Ask for a deposit of 50% of the total package as an instalment. The deposit is refundable if the agreed service isn't provided. Let them know that the balance of the fee is payable at the end of the wedding session. Ask who their representative who will be so that they can pay you before you leave.

Prepare a wedding agreement

You should draw up a wedding agreement for both parties to sign. This will help protect you in the event of a claim made against you after the event in case of disputes about services not provided.

The wedding agreement sets out who the principals to this agreement are, the location, date and time, what's included in the service, and the cost of the service. It should also specify what is not included and what penalties are payable in the event of either party not adhering to the agreement. Templates of such agreements can be found by searching on the Internet.

Give them a copy of the agreement to sign there and then, or for them to take away to discuss it later.

Follow Up

Always follow up your initial meeting with the bride and groom with a thank you email.

One Week before the wedding

Contact the bride and groom one week before the wedding to see if everything is still going according to plan and that there are no changes you should be aware of as the photographer.

Planning

It can't be emphasized enough that detailed planning is needed to make sure the whole day goes well for you and your clients. If you plan for the worst scenario, you will have most things covered.

The night before the wedding is the time to check all of your camera gear is working and the settings on your cameras are set to standard settings. This is where you make sure that the ISO is set to 100 and the white balance is on auto or set to suit the weather forecast for the next day. Check that you have chosen the RAW format. Pay attention to your lenses and ensure that the glass is clean. Make sure the battery in each camera and spares are fully charged. Also check that your flash gun works and that the batteries and spare batteries are fully charged. Check that you have spare SD cards.

Look over your timetable and key photo list. Check that you have all the lenses necessary for the whole shoot. Check your file for the wedding to make sure that you understand what the bride and groom want from you.

Make sure you have the correct directions to the wedding venue and print a copy of the map.

Have a good breakfast and pack away energy bars and drinking water for the coming day. You may have been promised food at the wedding but experience will dictate that you very rarely get the chance to eat properly, if at all.

Arrive early and unpack your gear to shoot your venue and object shots before you go and meet the bride and groom for their preparation shots. Introduce yourself to the events manager of the hotel, or the person nominated by the bride, to make sure everything goes to the schedule.

Plan for the remote chance you will fall ill just before the wedding day. Have an arrangement with another photographer who can fill in for you at short notice. It's also a good idea to plan for an assistant if the day looks to be very busy. At the very least, they can take care of the static venue and object shots. They can also add another perspective of some of the same poses.

Attend the Wedding Rehearsal

This should be considered as part of your planning and preparation for the wedding day. If the bride and groom haven't asked you to attend, request them to add you in their rehearsal day. The advantages to them and to you are quite clear.

It gives you the opportunity to chat with the celebrant who will appreciate you being there because they can let you know when not to take photos during the ceremony and let her know where you plan to stand for each shot, in relation to the celebrant and bride and groom.

You can scout the venue and have a better idea of how you will compose each shot for the whole day. Bring your camera and test out your camera settings for each location and note when you will need flash.

You'll get a chance to meet all the key guests so that you make sure they don't get missed in the group shots. They can meet you and it's a great opportunity to be friendly and chat with potential future customers.

Some times, it becomes obvious that you are the one with the most experience at the rehearsal. You can offer advice about poses, the types of shot that will go well in different locations and where the lighting isn't flattering. It could help them to rethink and possibly relocate certain aspects of the wedding day. Remind everyone to walk slowly during the entrance to the ceremony.

Being there at the rehearsal lets the bride and groom know that you care about their day and that you will do everything to help them make it a great day. Remind them to hold their first kiss for the camera.

Dress smartly as this will be the first time many people will have seen you and first impressions do count.

During the Wedding Day



Your Appearance and Demeanour

You might be the best photographer in your area but probably the one thing you will only be remembered for, will be your appearance and demeanour. If you dress scruffily or inappropriately, everyone will notice and that will bias their views of you as a photographer. Similarly, if you don't smile, or you are impatient or surly, your reputation as a photographer will suffer because of it. Remember, that word of mouth recommendations are important to your business. There are a lot of potential future customers at a wedding.

Try and dress like you are a guest at the wedding and don't forget to smile and look as though you are enjoying it. Above all, look confident, be friendly and try to appear as if you are not under stress. There will be many occasions where you will be frustrated because things are not going your way or people are not where they are supposed to be at a certain time. Don't be a tyrant and remember whose day this is really about.



While you may be dressed like a guest, many of the people there will know who you are because of the two cameras slung around your neck, and because you are always in the thick of things, suggesting poses and trying to keep everyone to your schedule. Remember though, that you and your business are on display all of the time. On that basis, don't smoke or drink while at the wedding. If a meal has been ordered for you, eat it out of sight of the guests - that is if you get chance to take a break! Keep a clear head when everyone else is losing theirs and everything will be OK.

One of the most difficult aspects of a wedding is when the guests want to take their own photographs and get in the way of your own shot. Treat them with respect and smile and let them know that the bride and groom are paying a lot of money for their bridal photos. Tell them that once you've got your shot, you'll move out of the way and let them take their own shots of the moment. They will appreciate it much more than if you were to get angry or impatient with them.

Wedding Shots

You and the bride and groom have previously agreed on the number and type of shots that need to be taken during the wedding. You will have the key photo list and the timetable of critical events in your pocket. During the day, refer to both the list and timetable frequently so that you never miss a critical shot. Prepare yourself and your camera gear for each upcoming shot. Lighting conditions will change throughout the day and you will need to make sure you get the right exposure each time. Above all, check your camera settings regularly, if not before every shot. You will only get once chance to take that perfect photo. There's no going back to the bride and groom to ask them to pose after the wedding day, just because you had the camera settings wrong.

Shots that make your work stand out from among the crowd will be your attention to detail towards great composition, stunning exposures, different poses and angles, and making sure that every shot is in focus, when it's supposed to be. Here are some examples of the type of shot that could make your reputation.

Examples of Key Wedding Shots

Bride's Hair



The shot of bride's hair in close up shows the care that's gone into the final result. This is probably the last time that the bride will be completely happy with her hair during this stressful day

Bride's Dress



This is the kind of shot that you can take when everyone is too busy to pose for you. You will get ample opportunity to take other shots of the bride wearing her bridal gown during the day.

Bride's Make Up



The bride wants to remember every aspect of her day. The make up artist will feature quite strongly in how the bride appears to her groom, family and guests. Years later, she can look at this shot and remember all the preparations of the day and who helped her on her special day.



Bride Arriving in the Limo

The Kiss

The kiss image could be the one taken immediately after the vows.



It could also be the kiss in the limo just before they leave.



The Rings

A great shot of the rings can either be the rings in isolation on a cushion before the ceremony, or a shot of the happy couple wearing them after their vows.



The First Dance



Cutting the Cake



Throwing the Bouquet



Formal Group Shots

Every formal group shot should feature the bride and/or groom, depending on what was agreed with them.



Toasting the Happy Couple



Candid Shots

While there is a definite need to take formal shots, look out for those candid or funny poses that round out a great wedding album.



When not to take photos

There are however, occasions when you shouldn't take photos at a wedding. There are those times during the ceremony when you are not allowed to take photographs. However, the ones you should avoid like the plague are the embarrassing ones such as a bridal dress malfunction or when Aunt May is intoxicated at the reception. If there are heated moments between guests or bridal party, the bride wouldn't thank you for capturing this ugly side of her family during her wedding day.

How many shots should I take?

By all means take lots of photos. With digital photography, it's not going to cost you any more. You can always cull the ones you don't think are good enough for the album. Remember though, that you have to process them so try and keep the number you take to a manageable limit. A ball park figure is about 900 as opposed to thousands of photos.

After the Wedding Day

When everything is finished from your point of view, contact the bride's representative and collect the balance of your fee before you leave.

Mentally review the day and note when things went right and those times when it went wrong. This will be useful to improve your service for the next weddings.

Seek some feedback as how others thought the day went. They may suggest a shot or two that you might not have considered.

When you arrive back home, upload the images to your computer but leave the images on the SD card until you are able to fully process them and make back up copies later. Reformat the SD card when you are finished.

Unpack your gear and reset the settings ready for another day. Open a beer or a bottle of wine, relax and say "Ahhh! Another job well

done". Don't get too relaxed though, as you still have all of those images to process soon.

Processing of Images

As soon as you are able to do, and that is usually the next day after the wedding, prepare the images for processing with your favourite photo editing software, such as Adobe Photoshop.

Culling

The first step is to review all of the images and cull the duds. The obvious ones will be those not in focus, or where someone has managed to get in the way of your shot. Keep culling until you have enough photos that you think will be suitable for the bride and groom's album or DVD. Don't delete any of these culled shots but rather store them in a separate folder until you are sure you won't need them anymore. You may be able to use part of a shot in some way later.

Review the set of photos again to make sure that you have every part of the wedding day covered. If not, go back through the culled ones to choose a shot that you can use and process for the missing section.

Processing

This is an important part of your skills that will set you apart from the average photographer. It's your chance to produce stunning images, so be proficient in your processing techniques. Develop a methodology so that you have logical work sequence to make life easier processing hundreds of images. You can batch process images that have similar exposures, but the sad fact is you will often have to edit the individual images. Be prepared for hours of work. It could take you several days to over a week to complete the whole collection. Make sure your clients are aware of this before you take on the job. Don't be tempted to let them have proofs before you've finished all of the processing, because they won't look as good. Once you've finished each image, store them in a separate folder on your computer.

You will need to edit your RAW images first in RAW editing software, such as Canon Digital Photo Professional, View NX, or Adobe Camera

RAW. Import an image and make the following adjustments to white balance, exposure, tone curves, saturation and sharpening

Once you've completed that part of the process, load each image into Photoshop. Where necessary, make further adjustments to brightness and contrast levels, hue and saturation. Crop the image to get the best composition. Straighten the image if needed and remove spots, blemishes and any unwanted objects in the image, such as any stray hairs on the bride's head. Sharpening can be done last but don't overdo it with portraits, as the softer look is more appealing in many instances. When you are happy with each individual image, save it as a JPEG image and store it into a separate folder on your computer.

Keep the RAW images in their own folder, as these are your "negatives" if you want to go back and make further adjustments at a later date, or the bride and groom need copies later.

Presentation

There are several methods of presenting your completed images. You will have already discussed with your clients what they require. They may have wanted a standard wedding album with maybe a DVD full of their wedding images as a back up. They will probably want sets of smaller albums with 4 x 6 prints for family members. You may want to consider giving them a , which looks stunning if you use the right software.

Wedding Albums

Have a catalogue of wedding albums available to show the bride and groom to help them make their choice. They come in a variety of styles, sizes and prices, so make you make sure you can supply what the couple needs.

Wedding albums are also produced as coffee table photo books and offering these as an additional option can increase your earnings.

The couple will often require extra prints, so ensure that you have a full list of sizes and prices that you can offer.

Larger prints are ideal for framing so have a selection of frames that you can offer.

DVD of Processed Images

Sometimes, the couple wants to have a DVD of processed images as a back up. While this is a good idea, refrain from allowing them to take just the DVD. Offer it as a back up only. You don't want them processing the images poorly and then printing them off themselves. Your reputation as a photographer is at stake.

Online Viewing

You may want to upload the wedding images onto your online website for the clients to view and order from you. You could also set up a personal website for your clients. It's a great way for all of the family to see which prints they would like. It is recommended that you watermark each image and reduce all images in size with a low resolution, so that people can't just download them and print them without paying you. Have a password set so that only approved persons can access the images.

Professional Video Slideshows

A great way to add value to their wedding images is to present them in a video slideshow. One of the most versatile and easiest software programs to use is ProShow Web, which can be tried free from the website, <http://web.photodex.com/eid9397/>. The makers, Photodex, have even produced a video on how to use ProShow Web, which can be readily accessed for viewing via this You Tube url, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwjnEUd2IYA>

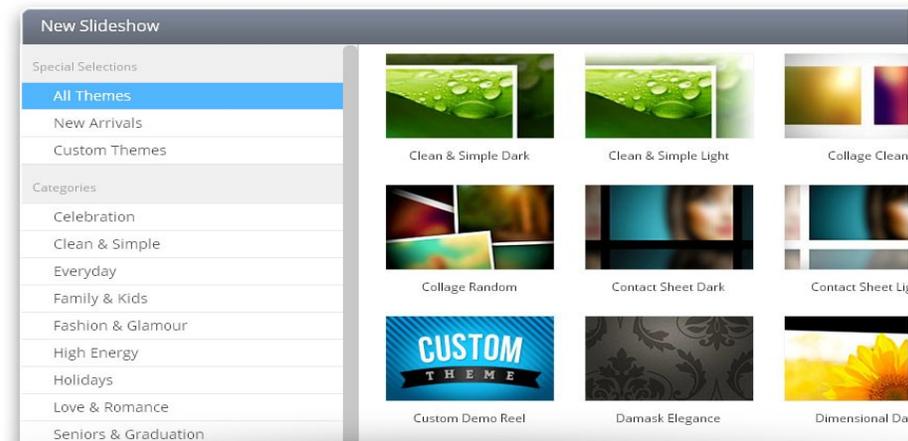
Here are a few photographers' testimonials to give you an idea of what you can hope to achieve, using ProShow Web:

- "ProShow Web is an efficient, effective way to create dynamic slideshows that allow my clients to relive their moments as often as they like. I absolutely love the simplicity of the process and the amount of work that ProShow Web actually does on my behalf." - Dawn McCarthy, Photographer.
- "ProShow Web is a great way to add a ton of value for very little effort. The preset themes are remarkable!" - Kerry Corcoran, Photographer.

- "Using ProShow Web will allow you to show your work quickly, affordably and with little experience." - Mark Ridout, Photographer.

ProShow Web is easy to use and fast in producing a final product that looks professional and will make you stand out from the crowd. It's easy because you can pick a theme from a variety of preset categories, add your wedding image content, and add music from either the royalty-free music library or music of your client's choice. ProShow Web automatically produces the video slideshow for you. You can also edit the finished product by adding captions and special effects.

Choosing a theme is simple, as you have lots of different categories to choose from.



Upload your own music or insert as many tracks as you wish from ProShow Web's library of hundreds of royalty free music.

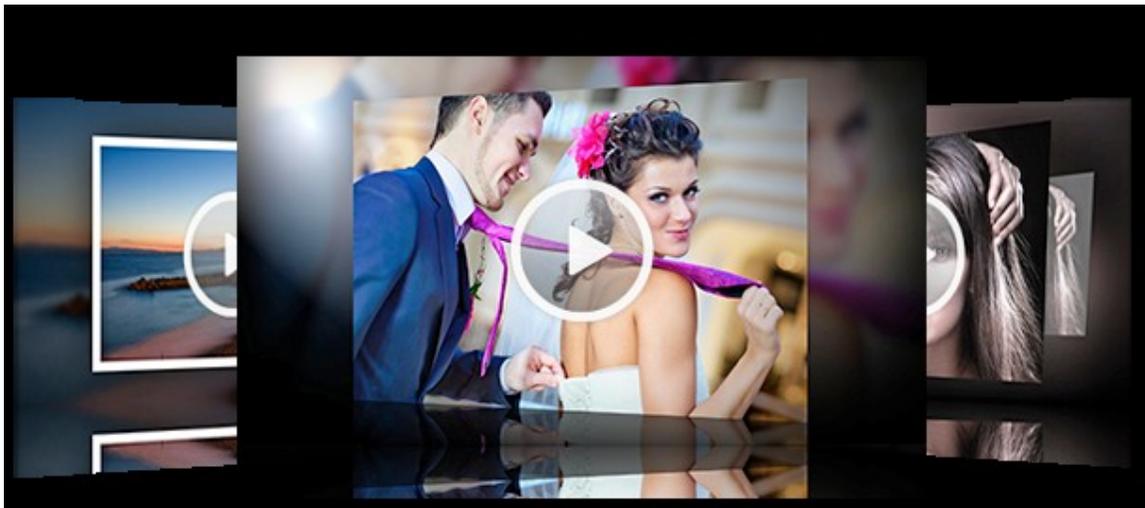


ProShow Web allows you to make a video lasting 20 minutes and automatically syncs your finished video to the length of your music.

Adding captions make movie slideshows personal and meaningful to clients.

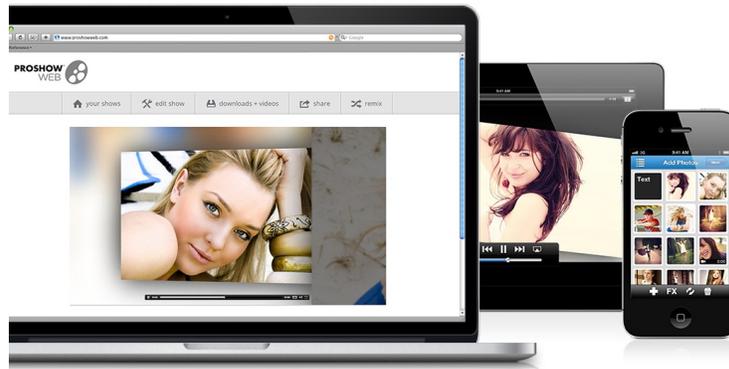


ProShow Web is fast because in minutes you will have a final professional product that your clients will be thrilled to receive from you and keep forever. You won't need any complicated instructions either, as the software does it all for you.



These crystal clear, high resolution videos can be displayed on high definition display devices such as your television. You can view them

anywhere, such as sharing them online on You Tube for instance, or play it on your computer. You can also view them on your Smartphone.



Marketing your Wedding Photography with Video Slideshows

If you include high quality video slideshows into your wedding packages, they will have a huge impact on your business and earning potential. Here is an example of a professional wedding photographer's different packages that he offers. Note the price of the high end package containing a DVD slideshow.

| 2013 SESSION RATES | |
|--|---|
| <p>PACKAGE 1: \$2500</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 HOURS COVERAGE BRIDAL SESSION ENGAGEMENT SESSION PROFESSIONAL EDITING DISC OF ALL IMAGES ONLINE HOSTING | <p>PACKAGE 2: \$3500</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 HOURS COVERAGE BRIDAL SESSION ENGAGEMENT SESSION PROFESSIONAL EDITING DISC OF ALL IMAGES CUSTOM ALBUM |
| <p>PACKAGE 3: \$4000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 HOURS COVERAGE BRIDAL SESSION ENGAGEMENT SESSION AFTER SESSION SESSION OF CHOICE PROFESSIONAL EDITING CUSTOM ALBUM | <p>PACKAGE 4: \$5500</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 HOURS COVERAGE BRIDAL SESSION ENGAGEMENT SESSION PROFESSIONAL EDITING DVD SLIDESHOW DISC OF ALL IMAGES CUSTOM ALBUM |



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RED RIVER PHOTOGRAPHY

www.redriverphotography.com

You can include video slideshows in your higher end packages to entice your clients to purchase a larger order. In fact, it would be great to produce an example of a previous wedding day video slideshow when you are meeting the bride and groom for the first time.

Video slideshows produced by ProShow Web can make you lots more income, obtain more referrals and let you share and display your work in a variety of ways, such as in the form of a Blu-ray disc, DVD, digital download from an online website, or by providing a copy of the video on a custom USB drive.

Video slideshows also give you the opportunity to show your clients a polished product of their wedding day in the company of their family. Set to music of their choice, with appropriate captions and stunning images against a professional looking theme, and your audience will be spellbound.

Once your clients receive their copy of their video slideshow, they will want to show all their friends and relatives. Think of all the referrals you will receive when your happy clients have posted their video on social media pages. The free advertising potential is huge!

Finally, you can promote your video slideshows on your web site by adding your logo or branding. You can also add a watermark or include a clickable call-to action link at the end of the video.



Customer Service

As a final customer service, deliver your client's wedding package, in whatever form, to them personally. They will always remember you for providing that personal touch.

Follow Up

There are a few things you can do after wedding which will do you no harm in the eyes of the bride and groom. From a courtesy point of view, consider these follow up ideas.

Send a thank you card, congratulating them on their wedding. Give them a call after their honeymoon to ask them how it went and if they were happy with the service you provided. Send them an anniversary card.

Your Post Wedding Review

After each wedding, take the time to consider how you did as a wedding photographer. Did you achieve all of the shots you wanted to? Were there shots that you could have taken better? Did anything go wrong at any point and what you could have done to resolve it easier? What went really well? If so, take note of all of these aspects and incorporate them into your plans for next time.

Were you stressed at any point trying to capture all of your shots? Consider planning to take more shots before the ceremony so as to leave yourself more time elsewhere. It's far better to take as many shots as you can while you have the time, rather than when you are on a tight schedule. If you are stretched achieving what you agreed to, then perhaps you took on too much or you might want to consider taking on an assistant or two.

How did you feel during the day? Were you friendly and did you remember to smile and to look as if you knew what you were doing?

Review the time you spent overall on the wedding, including processing, and determine whether your pricing needs to be reconsidered.

Consider your camera equipment and whether it did was suitable for the wedding. This could be time to look at buying different lenses, perhaps.

