



Mistakes Brides Make When Hiring A Photographer – And How To Avoid Them!

MISTAKE #1: THEY DONT REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT THEIR PHOTOS WILL BECOME! (By not realizing this, they make wrong choices to begin with.)

Your Wedding Photographs are The MOST IMPORTANT part of your wedding day (after saying "I do!")

Years from now, you will look back on your wedding day and, hopefully, have lots of photographs to remind you of, not only what happened, but also the feelings you had on that special day. A good photographer will capture the moments, expressions and situations that reveal your thoughts and feelings, feelings that will be triggered for years to come through your photographs.

As the years go by, it is likely that your photos will be the most tangible thing you have to remember the day. (You may have your dress and maybe a trinket or two but, most likely, even your dress will be in a box or covered up somewhere in a closet!) The reception center, the cake, the flowers, the bridesmaids' dresses, all of it will be gone!

Consider this: When faced with an imminent disaster that destroys homes or the possibility of such a disaster, everyone grabs their most prized possessions, which ALWAYS includes their photographs. They don't reach for their wedding dress, or frozen cake, or even copies of their wedding invitations; **they take all of their photographs!**

Fortunately, most of us never have to try to save our photographs from a flood, fire or hurricane, but as time passes we will always treasure them and count them among our most cherished possessions.

In most cases, ALL that will be left will be your wedding album, full of the most precious moments, images of moments, friends, family, and the irreplaceable memories from one of the most important days of your life!

Now you have a feeling of how important your images will be to you and your family. Now you can see why it is so important to make sure you know how to, not only choose the right photographer, but also ensure that you end up with results you will be happy with.

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE #1: MAKE A GOOD DECISION WHEN YOU HIRE YOUR WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER!

MISTAKE #2 – THEY PICK A PHOTOGRAPHER BASED ONLY ON PRICE!

LET'S TALK BUDGET AND MONEY (How much should I pay?): The Internet makes it so easy to shop by price. But REMEMBER, while budget is important, price shopping makes the thing you are shopping for a commodity. And commodities fall into a category that says "all things are the same, find the best price," which makes sense when you are shopping for a car or a certain brand name item, BUT . . .

Not all wedding photographers are the same, not even close! WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY IS NOT A COMMODITY.

If quality is important to you but price alone is your only consideration, you will regret going with the cheapest. Good photography is priceless. Bad photography is an expensive mistake. (SEE #1 ABOVE.)

Don't fall into the trap of using that "saving money" mentality when choosing a wedding photographer! This is a definite example of: YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR! THIS IS NOT AN AREA TO GO CHEAP ON! (Don't believe me? Ask around. Sadly, it is not that uncommon.)

BE AWARE: There are plenty of inexpensive wedding photographers out there . . . and (surprise) most are NOT GOOD and you will NOT BE HAPPY!

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE #2: ESTABLISH A BUDGET RANGE TO START WITH AND COMMUNICATE WITH PROSPECTIVE PHOTOGRAPHERS.

Realize that "insisting on a specific price," at least at first, may limit what you get. Talk to the photographer of your choice and let them know EXACTLY what you want -- even if you don't see the exact thing on their price sheet or website.

Let them know you love their work and what range of budget you are working with. Don't be turned away because your budget doesn't match their published prices. The better photographers will seldom come down on their prices, but they may offer additional items, terms or considerations that will make the difference in it being affordable to you. It never hurts to ask.

REMEMBER: THE PRICE WILL LONG BE FORGOTTEN WHILE YOU CHERISH YOUR WEDDING ALBUM IN THE FUTURE . . . ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU ARE HAPPY WITH IT!

I can't tell you how many brides regret not figuring out a way to pay for the photographer they really want. They usually don't feel this until after they have relied on a "cheaper" photographer and then, when they see what they get, they regret it, big time. Years later (sometimes even days after the wedding) they say, "I wish I would have gone with so and so." But by then, it's too late. Please don't make that mistake! There are no "do-overs" with your precious wedding images and memories!

MAKE SURE YOU TALK WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND FIGURE OUT A WAY TO SAY YES! To avoid buying on price alone, we suggest you choose two or three photographers and rank them in the order that is important to you such as QUALITY first, SERVICE second, and PRICE last. AND ONCE YOU FIND A GOOD ONE . . . STICK WITH THEM! You'll be glad you did, and you will have peace of mind.

TIP MOST OFTEN GIVEN FROM BRIDES: (After the wedding):

"When you think about who is going to do your wedding photography, think 'VALUE' not price. Don't focus on what it 'costs.' Focus on what it's 'worth.' You'll regret it if you don't!"

MISTAKE #3 – THEY THINK ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE THE SAME!

Every photographer is different. No two are really the same. Every photographer has different equipment, different skills, abilities and different employees. These all bring a complete mix of abilities to their product, but they will not guarantee consistency.

Photography is art and craftsmanship combined. Most people who hire photographers don't truly understand that, despite all of the technological advances being made, photographers still use the same quality work habits and techniques as they did 25 years ago.

Contrary to what a lot of people think, photography is not just picking up a camera and clicking the shutter. It takes craftsmanship to turn out quality work. Photographers have to know how to capture the right moment, how to compose properly, how to expose properly and how to use light, shape and form in order to get the most flattering and artistic results and/or poses.

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE #3: COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO HIRING THE BEST PHOTOGRAPHER FOR YOU!

- Ask what style of work they do -- ask to see some samples.
- Ask to see the wedding contract. Some will make big promises and do something else because their contract backs them up.
- Ask to see samples from recent weddings.
- Ask them who will be photographing your wedding.
- Ask them how long it will take to see the images after the wedding.
- Ask them if they retouch or enhance the final images.
- Ask them what it will cost and exactly what you get -- how many images are included.
- Ask them how many weddings they've photographed.
- Ask them what their philosophy is on wedding photography. (This is a good one.)

Wedding photography is not a generic product. Ask these and other relevant questions and it will become obvious who the right choice will be for you. You will notice a marked difference in **attitude**, **quality**, **creativity** and **experience**. Remember: This is your special day. Do you want to hire an amateur to take experimental photos? Or do you want to hire a pro who will create a masterpiece?

MISTAKE #4: THEY ARE "SOLD" THE WRONG "PACKAGE"!

Were you "sold" a certain package, or did you "buy" a certain package?

In some cases you are "sold" a package you don't really want. Remember: You are the client and you are the one trying to find the right and perfect match in a photographer. Don't let anyone "sell" you a package you're not happy with.

Find out if the photographer offers packages (most offer packages as a starting place) and how they might fit in with your budget ideas. Also find out if you can "add" or "customize" your package. Often there are images you may want that aren't "in the budget" and you want the choice to have them if you can. Don't forget that parents, grandparents, kids and often siblings will want images. Even guests do sometimes -- especially if the photographer took their picture.

Some options may include figuring out the final price based on the images you choose AFTER you see what they are. You are in control with this option; you can choose as many or as few as you want. Then you can spend as much (or as little) as you want and it's okay because you are getting what you want and it's entirely your choice.

Some photographers charge a flat fee to shoot and then charge depending on what albums and the number of images you choose, which makes it easier for most brides, and you don't feel like you were sold a predetermined package or number of images before they were even taken (something which

has never made sense to me). This way you are the one who determines what you end up with. Some also include only the images you choose, regardless of number.

Remember: You may choose to have an album or two made up for parents, grandparents or friends. You may want to consider these options after you see the final products. Don't be afraid to ask at any time.

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE #4: EXPLORE OPTIONS WITH YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER. THE GOOD ONES WILL BEND OVER BACKWARDS TO PLEASE YOU.

This is their craft, their profession. They take great pride in happy results. They are artists and want their clients to LOVE the images AND the experience.

Remember: Whoever you choose, they are choosing you too. The better photographers will turn down a request to photograph a wedding if they can see that their style is not in synch with yours.

MISTAKE #5 – THEY THINK IT IS BEST TO HAVE SEVERAL PHOTOGRAPHERS COMPETE FOR THEIR WORK!

You may think this is a good way to do business. And it is to some extent. But here is why it usually isn't a good way to deal with photographers:

A good photographer has enough loyal clients that they don't have to deal with price shoppers. Once you find a good photographer, it is important to stay loyal to them. If you flip-flop, most photographers won't be motivated to keep YOU as a client.

This is what some people like to do. They try to get everyone fighting for the same piece of pie. This might be okay as a short-term strategy, because you save a few bucks, but when you need a favor or super-fast service, not one of these photographers will bend over backwards to help you. (And if you have been a price shopper in the past, they probably will charge you more!)

Every good photographer expects to bend over backwards for their clients every now and again. Provided the client is loyal, the photographer will do all they can to help.

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE #5: ALL GOOD PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE LOYAL TO YOU IF YOU ARE LOYAL TO THEM.

MISTAKE #6 - THEY THINK HAVING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT IS ALL A PHOTOGRAPHER NEEDS TO DO THE JOB RIGHT!

Many photographers own wonderful equipment. That does not mean they know how to use it properly. You can have all the "latest greatest wiz-bang lenses and digital wonder cameras," but if you don't know how to use it properly, you are no better off than anyone picking up a camera and pointing and shooting.

Compare this to your cell phone. Studies show that half the people who own cell phones don't even know how to program speed dial, let alone the more advanced features. The same thing happens in the photography industry.

Many photographers have tools that have a lot of bells and whistles. But if the photographer has little or no technical and creative know-how, he may as well be from 50 years ago.

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE #6: MAKE SURE THE PHOTOGRAPHER KNOWS HOW TO USE THEIR TOOLS TO THE VERY BEST OF THEIR ABILITIES. YOU RISK NOT ONLY PICTURES THAT COULD HAVE BEEN OUTSTANDING BUT, WORSE YET, UTTER LETDOWN BECAUSE OF LACK OF TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW.

MISTAKE #7 - THEY DON'T GIVE THE PHOTOGRAPHER ENOUGH TIME TO GET THE JOB DONE PROPERLY!

Mistakes happen when you rush and when there are not enough instructions! You concentrate so much on getting all the other details organized, but you forget to tell the photographer!

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE #7: BE ORGANIZED! BE ORGANIZED! BE ORGANIZED! AND COMMUNICATE ALL THE DETAILS TO YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER, AND ALSO LET THEM KNOW ANY SPECIAL NEEDS, SHOTS OR RELEVANT DETAILS, SO YOU WILL NOT BE LET DOWN.

Before the wedding get the photographer involved. Let them know what your hopes and plans are. Who knows? They may have some really cool ideas that might just thrill you, or some useful tips on making sure your plans go smoothly. You can save time, money and headaches from the very beginning by communicating with your photographer. You should think of your photographer as one of your wedding planners. Consult with your photographer.

The time you start looking for your photographer is also an important consideration. You can't expect very many good ones to be available if you start shopping only a few months before your big day. Many of the better ones are booked way ahead of that, often a year or more in advance.

MISTAKE #8 - THEY HIRE AN AMATEUR, FRIEND OR RELATIVE, OR AN UNQUALIFIED PHOTOGRAPHER BUT EXPECT TOP-NOTCH WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHS!

You may have seen a top-notch wedding photographer in action at the wedding of a friend or relative. A really good wedding photographer makes it look so easy, almost effortless.

There is a very simple reason for this: Experience.

The biggest mistake any bride can make is asking a friend or relative to capture their day. When good results are not there, the responsibility and ill feelings can be crushing. Most, if not all, untrained wedding photographers simply cannot handle the stress and responsibility that goes along with capturing a wedding. The pace, the stress and the speed are way too much for them, let alone being creative.

There is nothing wrong with hiring an amateur as long as you have realistic expectations and know you are going to be getting amateurish photographs. Even a professional photographer in a different field, such as commercial photography, will have a rough go of it when photographing weddings.

Bottom line: Weddings are tough. And the only thing that makes it flow and seem almost effortless is experience.

Do you want to give your photographer the opportunity to "practice" on your wedding? Or do you want someone who is so qualified they can handle anything that is thrown at them and who come through at the end with dynamic pictures?

Of course a photographer can't guarantee wedding pictures because of the very nature of weddings. A wedding is an event. Once your wedding is over, it's over. You have your photographs as your memories, so ruined photos won't matter much even if you get all your money back.

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE #8: IF YOU WANT TOP-NOTCH WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHS, HIRE A TOP-NOTCH PHOTOGRAPHER.

**This is the easiest way you can hire the best photographer for YOU!
And here's a bonus section for you:**

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

There are some things you should watch for when you shop around for your wedding photographer:

- **Hire a photographer with a distinctive style but expect different results** - You choose a photographer because they will deliver a certain product, a "look." If you like what they offer, then you can be certain you will like the results that they will deliver of your wedding day. It sounds simple, doesn't it? But many brides cut corners and expect "better than expected" results from their photographer. Most photographers offer a free engagement session with every wedding package. You could ask to have one done before you actually commit to a full wedding package. That way you get to experience the photographer at work and see the actual results they will produce for you.
- **Obvious signs: Smells, clutter, dirty, booze, bad manners** - Trust your intuitive side, your instinct. If something is wrong, you can bet it is only the tip of the iceberg. Some obvious signs are dirty studios, cluttered and disorganized. If they are slobs, what will they be like on your wedding day and with your photos after the wedding day? If you smell cigarettes or booze, or the photographer looks to be on drugs, these are all obvious warning signs. Even bad breath can put a damper on things. Bad manners when you come to the studio shopping for a photographer are probably an indication of more to come on your wedding day and after. This is all basic and is really nothing more than using common sense.
- **Look for a photographer that obviously loves doing what they do** – Sadly, for too many photographers, your wedding is "just another job." They fail to bring passion and love of the craft into each and every wedding they photograph. Look for someone who radiates passion and love of the craft of photography. If photographing your wedding is drudgery for them, your photos may be fine, but will they really shine for you the way an artist who is truly passionate about their craft can make them shine?
- **Experience: Nothing beats it --** If your photographer has photographed many weddings and has a strong, vibrant reputation in your community, you can rest assured they got there with experience. Outstanding wedding photographers are not taught in school or by acquiring some degree or by winning awards. They get there through experience, just like an airline pilot.

Some final thoughts

With the advent of digital photography you see many, many more cameras at weddings these days. It seems like everyone is a photographer. However, owning a good camera does not give anyone the ability to compose, to see light and use light effectively, to predict when certain events will unfold and be at the right place at the right time anymore than picking up a pair of scissors makes you a barber! (Would you let Uncle Bob cut your hair?)

I hope this report helps you make the right decisions about who you are going to hire as your wedding photographer! Have a great wedding experience and cherish it forever with great images captured by the professional wedding photographer you choose! Chances are, you will form a friendship with your photographer that will last a lifetime!

Remember: Bad photography is an expensive mistake! Good photography is priceless!

Best wishes and congratulations!

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