

Selecting a Photographer

1. The first item is obvious: **be sure you see samples of the photographer's work.** The following items are just as important and many times are overlooked by people hiring a wedding photographer for the first time.
2. Some companies have more than one photographer. **Be sure that the sample photographs you are shown were taken by the photographer who would be doing your wedding.**
3. **Make sure you meet and talk with the photographer and assistant who would be doing your wedding.** Some will try to tell you what you want, and others will be more cooperative by making suggestions and asking you what you want. Some photographers will try to run your wedding. Keep in mind that a professional photographer is not necessarily a good wedding organizer, although some will insist on imposing "their rules" on you. Ask a lot of questions to be sure you know what kind of person you are hiring. You want to have a wonderful day the day you get married and the last thing you need is an uncooperative photographer who insists on doing things his/her way and causes you grief on that special day.
4. Some photographers make a large percentage of their income by charging you overtime. **Make sure you know exactly how much of their time you are paying for on your wedding day,** and be sure it is enough time to suit your needs.
5. With some companies it is difficult to figure out exactly how much you will be paying until it's all over. Other companies offer packages that are much easier to understand. **After talking with the company about pricing, if you don't feel comfortable with knowing what you will get and how much it will cost, you will probably not be happy with the final bill.** Be sure you compare the prices of reprints and enlargements.
6. **Make sure there will be a signed contract,** ask for a blank copy, read it carefully, and compare it with the contracts of other companies before signing.
7. **Some companies deliver the finished product quicker than others. Be sure to ask about this.**
8. Some authors who know little about the technicalities of photography advise to ask what type of equipment is used. Does it really matter? You either like the look of the samples, or you don't. **There is no better "quality" test than just looking at completed work.** A professional photographer is an artist and they will choose the tools that best work for them.
9. **Consider having your wedding professionally videotaped before deciding upon a photographer.** You have probably seen wedding videotapes produced by an "Uncle Joe" and weren't very impressed. It is not a well known fact that there are video companies in the local area that produce professional wedding videos that look and sound like movies, and yet the cost is often less than what you would pay for a photographer. You might want to adjust your photography budget to allow for this once you have seen some demos.

It is becoming more common for couples to spend less on a wedding photographer and more for a video company since the quality of video has become so professional. Especially if you have your video made on DVD, you can have extremely good picture quality, music, sound, and motion. These are characteristics that simply don't exist with a set of photographs. With this in mind, many couples are hiring a photographer for an hour or two to take some professional photographs and relying on their professional video to remind them of the happy tears, funny bloopers, vows, toasts and speeches, and all the other emotions shared with their friends and loved ones on that special day.

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