

## **QUESTIONS TO ASK A PROFESSIONAL VIDEOGRAPHER**

by Kris Malandrucolo, President, Illinois Videographers Association

**Q. How long have you been in business?**

**A. A more experienced videographer should do a better job for you. Using an established business means that they are in business for the long-term and probably won't shut down next week.**

**Q. Are you the one who will be videotaping my wedding?**

**A. Make sure you speak to the person who will actually videotape your wedding. Many larger studios use free-lancers, and it is important to speak with the actual videographer ahead of time to make sure you get everything you want and to make sure you are comfortable with the videographer.**

**Q. How many cameras do you use? Does that mean a second videographer?**

**A. If you are having "two cameras", then find out if that means a second videographer or just a camera on a tripod. Having a second videographer is more expensive than just a camera on a tripod (usually kept on wide angle). A second videographer can be well worth the extra cost due to the extra coverage you will get. Be sure to discuss camera placement and any videotaping restrictions ahead of time with your videographer.**

**Q. What type of cameras do you use?**

**A. "3-Chip Digital" is the most recent and highest resolution camera. Digital cameras have 530 lines of resolution. Super VHS & Hi-8 cameras (which use analog tape) have 400 lines of resolution and VHS cameras have 230 lines of resolution. The higher the lines of resolution, the better quality picture you will get, but expect to pay more for a videographer who uses 3-Chip Digital cameras.**

**Q. What kind of lighting do you use?**

**A. Some videographers use lights on their cameras, others do not. Some videographers will use a stand-alone soft-box light that gives off soft, even lighting. Ambient lighting at the reception hall will also help the photographer's pictures turn out better and the flash or video light won't seem quite so harsh.**

**Q. How many and what kind of microphones do you use?**

**A. Audio quality is just as important as video quality. At the ceremony, have the groom wear a wireless microphone and have another one on the podium for any readers or singers. At the reception, make sure everyone who is giving a toast or blessing is using a microphone; this includes the person who is introducing the bridal party. Be sure to discuss audio placement ahead of time with your videographer.**

**Q. How do you edit the wedding video?**

**A. The latest and newest technology is non-linear editing (on a computer). Ask how many hours your videographer spends on editing since it will make a difference in the final price. It is not**

**unusual for videographers to spend between 30-40 plus hours on the computer editing a wedding. Expect a price difference (and quality difference) between those who edit non-linear and those who don't.**

**Q. Can I have my wedding on DVD?**

**A. DVD is the latest trend in videography. DVD is a much better quality picture than VHS tape because there is no loss of quality when going from a digital master tape to DVD. Some videographers can customize their DVDs with multiple chapter stops/scene selection and a customized case with your wedding picture on it. Your wedding video can last for generations without any deterioration when archived to DVD. I believe providing the finished production on DVD is a must-have!**

**Q. How do you stay up-to-date in the video business?**

**A. Video technology is an ever-changing field (like the computer field) and professionals need to stay current. A videographer should be a member in local and national associations. Ask the videographer if he/she has ever been to any seminars or conventions. Any videographer belonging to WEVA (Wedding & Event Videography Association) is a big plus. The Association of Bridal Consultants is another good association for videographers to belong to.**

**Q. How can I see samples of your work?**

**A. Be sure you are seeing samples of the actual videographer who will be videotaping your wedding. This is especially important when dealing with larger studios that may have several crews that they send out on the weekend. Some videographers will send out demo tapes and others will ask you to schedule an appointment to visit them. Some videographers have video clips (called streaming video) on their website where you can view their work while you are on the internet. If possible, try to meet with the videographer before you sign the contract.**

**Q. What other services or special effects do you offer?**

**A. This allows the videographer to talk about what else they offer and how they may differ from other videographers. Some examples are childhood/dating photo montage, wedding/honeymoon photo montage, bridal preparations, love story video (the two of you describing how you met, etc.), short-form video, highlight video, recap video, concept video, rehearsal coverage, big screen presentation, etc. This is also a good time to ask the videographer if they use special effects such as black & white, sepia-toned, slow-motion, animation, etc. There are many options to choose from!**

**Q. What about the contract?**

**A. When you decide to hire the videographer, ask to see a copy of the contract. Ask how much of a deposit is required and when the remaining balance is due. Make sure everything you want in your wedding video is spelled out. As it gets closer to your wedding day, the videographer should request a "planning meeting" either over the phone or in person. Most videographers are hired six months to one year in advance, so you need to make sure nothing has changed. Ask your videographer if they will attend your rehearsal – some videographers attend, some do not. It should also state when you will get your finished video.**

**Q. What will you charge to videotape my wedding based on the coverage I am looking for?**

**A. If you are on a certain budget, let the videographer know that upfront. If your budget is flexible, wait to ask about pricing until you have explained to the videographer what you are looking for and after the videographer has talked about skill, equipment and service.. A professional videographer with up-to-date digital cameras and non-linear editing can start around \$2000. Videographers with S-VHS cameras and less editing will probably charge less. A more seasoned professional offering many extras can charge upwards of \$5000 and more. These prices are only a guideline as pricing can vary region to region. It is hard to put a price on talent unless you view their work. Remember, your videographer is creating a family heirloom. Great video is not expensive, it's priceless!**