



Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment Wedding Planning Newsletter #11

Photographer Timeline

Keeping track of time is important when planning a wedding...Use the following photography timeline to maximize your schedule...

12 months before: Explore different styles of photography. Ask friends, family, and wedding professionals for photographer recommendations. During the busy wedding season in your area, consider booking a wedding photographer a year or more in advance. If your wedding is during the slower season, you may be able to reserve a photographer one to two months in advance. *But the rule of thumb is the sooner the better to get the best!*

10 months before: If you haven't already booked your photographer, decide on photography style. Determine photography budget. Interview photographers and reserve the best for your budget.

6 months before: Sit for engagement portrait, or consider having them done prior to a holiday to have as gifts for family/friends. This is a terrific opportunity to work with your photographer before the big day.

3 months before: Send engagement portrait to newspaper for wedding announcement.

1 month before: If you haven't already done this, sit for bridal portrait and/or engagement.

3 weeks before: Confirm wedding date, time, and location with the photographer.

Wedding Day: Assign a family member or wedding party member to point out important wedding party guests to the photographer.

2 weeks after: Review proofs. If you have chosen additional locations for your wedding portraits, anytime in the weeks after the ceremony is a great time to capture those stress-free poses.

1 month after: Return Proofs. Order prints for wedding album. Send thank you note to photographer.

6-16 weeks after: Receive Wedding Albums.

3 years after: If possible, purchase negatives from photographer.

Glossary

Understanding the various "languages" of certain wedding vendors can be challenging...We've provided a photography glossary to help familiarize you with some of the words you may hear...

Available Light: Light that is on a photographic subject naturally, such as sunlight in an outdoor setting.

Back Lighting: Lighting that is placed behind a photographic subject.

Bounce Flash: A procedure in which light from an electronic flash is flashed onto a reflective surface lighting a subject.

Contact Sheet: A sheet of exposed, developed photo paper that contains images from all negatives produced from one roll of film. It is also known as a “Proof Sheet”.

Cropping: A procedure where unwanted items are deleted from a picture by zooming in. Cropping can be done before a picture is taken by adjusting the framing of the picture with the lens. It can also be done by enlarging a photo in the darkroom.

Electronic Flash: A portable, artificial light source used to illuminate photographic subjects.

Exposure: The amount of time that film or photographic paper is exposed to light.

Filters: Devices that are placed over lenses on both cameras and enlargers to alter light and images.

Focus: The point where light is converged by a lens.

Grain: A light-sensitive crystal that is normally made of silver bromide. The faster rating a film has, the more grain it has. For the clearest pictures, a slow film speed should be used to reduce the effect of grain in photo enlargements.

Hand-tinted: A customized feature where the negative is hand-painted to enhance the artistic qualities of the photograph.

Infrared Film: A new trend in wedding photography. A specialized film that enables a camera to shoot in the darkest of conditions without an electronic flash. The images are comprised of shades of green.

Medium Format: A camera that shoots on film four times as large as 35 mm. It is the standard for portrait/traditional photography.

Negative: A photographic image that is comprised of reversed tones.

Proof: A developed photographic sample image.

Sepia-toned: A customized feature where the negative is given an “antique” look.

SLR: Single Lens Reflex.

35 mm: Also known as a SLR camera. It is the standard for photojournalistic photography.

Telephoto Lens: A longer lens, like 300 mm, enabling the camera to shoot at greater distances.

Wide-angle Lens: A short lens, like 16 mm, enabling the camera to shoot wider fields of images.

Photography Styles

Understanding and identifying the various styles associated with weddings is important...Here is a look at Photography styles...

There are generally three styles of wedding photography: **Traditional, Photojournalistic, and Contemporary.**

Traditional: Posed settings usually shot on Medium Format cameras. They are also known as “Portrait-style”. Portraits or events which are posed and the subjects are usually looking at the camera.

Photojournalistic: Un-posed shots telling a chronological story of the day usually shot on 35mm. The subject is mostly unaware of the photograph being taken.

Contemporary: Posed images that while they are set up, they look “un-posed” and are shot on either Medium Format or 35 mm cameras. The utilization of wide-angle lenses and infrared film can add very stylish touches to your pictures.

A good tip is to combine both the Traditional with the Photojournalistic style to get the best of both worlds.

Camera Formats

There are really only three camera formats to consider for wedding photography: Medium Format, 35 mm, or High Resolution Digital.

Medium Format is the standard for portrait photography. The most experienced photographers generally use it. The negative is four times the size of 35 mm film, allowing for impressive clarity when enlarged. The cameras can also handle faster speed films (like 800 and 1600 ASA), enabling the camera to shoot in low light conditions without using a flash. Leading medium format cameras are the Hassleblad, Mamiya, Bronica, and Rollei.

35 mm: is the standard for photojournalism. By the utilization of various telephoto lenses, this camera can capture terrific un-posed photographs. Utilization of certain wide-angle lenses can create “fish-eye” distortion for Contemporary-style photographs. Leading 35 mm cameras are the Nikon and Canon.

High Resolution Digital: is fast becoming the standard due to the ability to manipulate the photos and improvements in processing the medium. A professional photographer will use no less than a 5 mega pixel camera for photos to be printed no larger than an 8 x 10 portrait finish. Higher mega pixel cameras will be used for larger format photos.

Remember, it’s not the equipment, but rather the photographer who can make or break your photographs. Expensive equipment does not necessarily mean those pictures will be any better than those shot on less expensive gear.

What to Look For

It is sometimes difficult to know what makes a quality wedding vendor... We’ve provided a guide to help you identify the key things to look for...

Inspecting the work of a wedding photographer is important. A good rule of thumb is if the subjects in the pictures look happy, comfortable, and relaxed. Here is some other criterion to judge:

Clarity: The images should be in focus.

Color: The skin tones should look normal.

Composition: The images should be framed correctly. Utilization of space, lighting, and Shadows.

Underexposure: If images are underexposed, the color black will lose its detail and the whites will be darker.

Variety: The photographer should have a range of styles that create certain “moods”.

New Trends

Wedding trends change and evolve with each New Year...We've provided a run-down of the newest, hottest trends in wedding photography...

- ✓ An engagement portrait prior to the wedding ceremony is an excellent opportunity for you to experience your photographer's work. The photographer will study what features to emphasize or de-emphasize in the wedding pictures. After you see these portraits, you can express your specific likes and dislikes before the wedding pictures are taken.
- ✓ Engagement portraits are also an excellent gift idea to loved ones if taken around the holidays.
- ✓ Infrared film is the latest trend in wedding photography. It creates a memorable image that is very stylish.
- ✓ Black & White Photos: They create a timeless feel. They are excellent for dramatic portraits. It does cost more to process than color film.
- ✓ Hand-tinted Photos: They create a stylish, soft look. They can enhance the finer details of a black and white photograph. Even more expensive than black and white processing, it can cost two to three times more to process than color film.
- ✓ Antiqued or Sepia-toned: Like Hand-tinted photos, they create a romantic, retro look to your pictures. It is not as expensive as Hand-tinted processing.
- ✓ Wide-angle lenses enable trendy photographs to be taken.
- ✓ Disposable “point-and-shoot” cameras are a terrific way to get candid shots of your reception by your guests. Leave at least one camera per table and make sure to have someone collect them at the end of the party. You can either develop the film yourself or turn them over to your photographer for inclusion into your wedding album. If you have your photographer develop the pictures, there will likely be an extra charge.
- ✓ Check with your photographer to see if he or she can arrange for your wedding photos to be posted to a website. That way, friends and family around the world can share your memories.

Independent vs. Team

Determining whether to use the services of an independent or team photographer is a decision you will need to make...Here is a look at both options...

Independent Photography

With an independent wedding photographer it is possible to build a rapport that results in a “personal touch”. The risk is, if a rare last minute emergency occurs which results in your photographer not being able to make it to your event. Most independent wedding photographers create alliances between themselves in case of such emergencies.

Team Photography

Team wedding photographers will send out photographers based on experience and availability. The most experienced photographers will usually be given the higher-end weddings. The less experienced photographers will be assigned the lower budget, smaller weddings. It is likely that the person you meet with will not be the one photographing your wedding. Make certain that you specify in writing in your contract the name of the person who will be photographing your wedding. In either case, it is imperative to check references and view sample wedding photo albums that represent a single event and the work of the photographer who will cover your wedding.

Package/Options

Understanding the typical wedding photography packages and options is important...Here is a look at what is usually available for weddings...

Package

In most cases, 10-20% of the total wedding budget goes to wedding photography costs. Travel time is usually billable. Make sure to consider how far the photographer may have to travel to get to your ceremony and reception.

A standard wedding photographer package is between two and six hours. There will be one photographer with backup equipment.

Larger packages can include: Engagement photos, up to eight hours on-site, additional lighting, additional photographers, additional locations (usually on a separate day), parent photo albums.

During a typical wedding, a photographer may take between 30 and 50 photos an hour. A total of 150 to 250 pictures are normal. As a rule of thumb, a ratio of three proofs to one photo is standard.

Additional lighting by the photographer will add some costs to your package but the result will give your photos additional depth and quality.

An additional photographer increases the package cost but also increases the coverage of your wedding.

Overtime is billable. Make sure your contract addresses an overtime rate per hour.

Options

A bridal portrait is a formal photograph of the bride taken before to the wedding day after the wedding dress is ready. It often takes place either at the bridal salon or the photographer’s studio.

An engagement portrait prior to the wedding ceremony is an excellent opportunity to experience working with the photographer. It is also a chance for the photographer to study what features to

emphasize or de-emphasize in the wedding pictures. Use your experience here to communicate your likes and dislikes with the results so that your wedding pictures will be even better. Think about having this done at least a month before the wedding, possibly even before a holiday as a memorable gift to family and friends.

Additional locations for your wedding portraits are a terrific way to give your wedding a unique feel. Since this would likely happen another day, this will enable you to enjoy your wedding day without the worry of getting each pose on film before the day is over.

Split-framing is another stylistic option that can provide memorable and dramatic images.

Parent photo albums are usually an additional option.

Keys to Success

Here are some expert tips to make sure your wedding photography is the best it possibly can be...

Communication between you and your photographer is critical to the overall success or failure of your photographic images. Good rapport with your wedding photographer can result in better, more relaxed photo settings and allow for smoother handling of any problems that may arise at any point in the process.

A combination of Traditional and Photojournalism styles can result in the best overall coverage of your wedding day. It allows for the typical portrait poses along with the chronological, unposed natural photographs that encapsulate your wedding experience.

Be patient with your photographer. They work very hard to capture the essence of your wedding day. By respecting their skills and needs, they will likely want to give their very best effort to your photographs.

If you're going to send an announcement of your wedding to your newspaper, be sure your photographer knows, and takes a black and white husband and wife portrait of the two of you. Make certain to order an 8 x 10 inch black and white glossy print to send to the paper.

Make certain your photographer knows the names (and hopefully faces) of your important wedding party guests in advance of the wedding day. This will enable the photographer to address each member by name and avoid any uncomfortable groupings for the pictures. If you are unable to provide photos of important guests and family members designate a member of your bridal to introduce or point out the important and honored guests.

Let the photographer know who is videotaping your event. This will allow the photographer to work with and around the videographer during the day with fewer hassles.

Unless you require not being seen before your processional, think about shooting your posed traditional wedding party portraits before the wedding ceremony. This will enable you and your guests to go immediately to the reception after the ceremony without delay.

If your wedding reception has 200 or more guests, it may make sense to have your photographer bring a second cameraperson. The result will be better coverage of the event for your albums.

Make certain your photographer stores your negatives in a fire-proof safe. Be sure to store them in your own fire-proof safe or safety deposit box after purchasing them from the photographer.

Have fun. A genuine smile in a photo can speak a thousand words.

Get a solid contract that details everything.

Photographer Questions

When you meet with your prospective wedding photographer, you'll want to ask all the right questions...We've provided a list of what you should make sure to ask when you first speak with them about your wedding...Their responses, as well as their attitude, will tell you volumes about whether you'll want to include them in your "Dream Team"...

1. What is the primary style of the photographer: Traditional, Photojournalism, or Contemporary?

2. What's the philosophy of the photographer about shooting weddings?

3. Does the photographer utilize color, black and white, special effects, or all?

4. Will the photographer you meet with be the one who actually takes your wedding pictures?

5. How many weddings have the photographer shot? We recommend a minimum of three years wedding experience, with weddings comprising at least 50% of their business.

6. How many other weddings will the photographer shoot on your wedding day? We suggest that depending on logistics, a maximum of two weddings per day for the photographer results in the best service.

7. Is the photographer open to a must-take photo list provided by you?

8. How does the photographer determine price? Are there any additional fees that may come up?

9. How many rolls of film will be shot, and how many proofs and final prints will result?

10. Are travel costs included or separate?

11. Are packages available? Can you get a price list?

12. What types of cameras does the photographer use for weddings?

13. What types of lighting and other equipment (such as tripods) do the photographer use?

14. Does the photographer bring backup equipment in case of emergency?

15. How long does he keep negatives? Can you buy your negatives from the photographer?

16. Can I see a completed album from one wedding, vs. a show album from many different weddings? If you are working with a company or team situation, insist on seeing a completed album done by the photographer you would be getting for your wedding.

17. What is your emergency plan if you are unable to shoot my wedding? We recommend that they have a named back-up person who meets with your approval.

18. How much time do you require after the ceremony to complete all the posed shots?

19. Is the photographer a member of PPA or WPPI? Find out if they are active by asking when they last attended a conference and if they ever compete for awards.

20. Ask yourself: Is this person eager and interested? Do I feel comfortable with this person? Does this seem like someone I would trust and enjoy working with throughout my wedding day?

21. When looking at sample albums, notice whether photos are all from one wedding, if they are framed and centered well, if they are neither over- or underexposed, if the lighting is effective, if the details are visible, if the people look comfortable and relaxed.

22. Call references and ask: Were you satisfied overall? Did the photographer get the shots you wanted? Has the photographer responded promptly to orders?

Things to Avoid

Knowing the pitfalls and traps ahead of time can help save you money, time, and your sanity...Here's a list of things to avoid when planning your wedding photographs...

- ✓ Running behind your planned schedule. Stick to your timing for the day. If you've scheduled your wedding party photograph session for 2:00, don't arrive at 3:15 and expect the photographer to be able to accomplish every setting.

- ✓ Shooting portrait pictures up until the ceremony. Make certain to schedule a 30-minute “downtime” directly before the ceremony where no posed photos are taken. This will allow you to handle any last minute details without interference.
- ✓ The attire of the photographer sometimes can be an issue. By communicating with your photographer before the ceremony, you can express your dress code expectations. It is a good idea to include this provision in your contract with your photographer.
- ✓ Weather is the greatest concern for outdoor weddings and receptions. It is vital to have a contingency plan in place that can serve as a backup for the wedding ceremony and reception. If the weather looks threatening, don’t compromise great photos and guests’ comfort just to stick to the original plan--flexibility is a must!
- ✓ Certain churches, synagogues, temples, and private facilities restrict or do not allow photography. It is imperative to make certain what, if any, restrictions may need to be addressed before arriving on-site.
- ✓ Auto-winders on 35 mm cameras can be rather noisy. Make certain your photographer doesn’t shoot with an auto-winder during your exchange of vows or it may prove distracting to those in attendance.
- ✓ Remember if you want the best, it may be necessary to book your photographer up to a year before your wedding day. Most photographers book wedding assignments between six to twelve months in advance for busy seasons.

References

Checking the reputation, credentials, and service record of a prospective wedding photographer is important before you hire them...

Check with the references given to you by the photographer, such as past clients
There are some terrific online resources at Websites like:

Professional Photographers of America: www.ppa.com

Wedding and Portrait Photographers International: www.wppi-online.com

Better Business Bureau: www.betterbusinessbureau.com

Contract/Payment

Knowing what to include in a contract with a wedding photographer is important... We’ve created a list of important points to consider...

Contract

- Name and contact information for you and the photographer.
- Date, exact times (number of hours), and locations (home, ceremony, reception) where the photographer is expected to shoot, including the exact address.
- Name of the photographer who will shoot your wedding photos, number of assistants, and assistants’ names.
- Number and types of cameras to be used.
- How much backup gear will they bring.
- Minimum number of rolls of film to be shot (black & white and color), as well as type of film.

- Cost per additional roll, if applicable.
- Number of proofs you'll receive, and other package options, if applicable.
- Date your proofs will be ready and how long you may keep them.
- Date your proofs and/or albums will be ready once you place your order.
- Length of time the photographer will keep your negatives on file.
- Provision for fire-proof storage of your negatives.
- Total cost, itemized if possible.
- Overtime fees.
- Re-order price, for ordering additional photographs later.
- Deposit amount due.
- Balance and balance due date.
- Cancellation and refund policy.
- Name of acceptable substitute in case of emergency.
- Photographer's signature
- Your signatures.

Payment

Most wedding photographers require full payment before your wedding day. Some will ask for a 50% deposit upon booking and the remaining 50% due before your wedding day.

Confirm the cancellation policy with the photographer before signing the contract and putting down a deposit.

Backup Plans

Having a "Plan B" is always a good idea when it comes to planning your wedding...Here's a look at some ways to cover your bases...

It is important to have contingency plans in place for backup equipment, photographers, and location.

Backup Equipment: Each photographer, whether they are independent or part of a team, needs to have additional cameras in case of equipment failure.

Backup Photographer: Each photographer, whether they are independent or a team, needs to have an emergency plan in case they are unable to work your wedding.

Backup Location: Have a secondary location standing by for your photos in case of weather or disaster. Be sure to address the contingency plan in your written contract.

Photography Shot List

Most qualified wedding photographers have their own individual style and won't need a "shot list" per se...This is to give you ideas to share with your photographer so that they don't miss your shot of a lifetime...

Pre-Ceremony

- Bride's clothes hanging over a chair
- Bridesmaids doing bride's hair and makeup

- Bride and bridesmaids getting dressed
- Mom helping bride with one last detail
- Full-length shot of bride in gown checking herself out in mirror
- Detail of clothing, shoes, garter
- Touching shot of bride with parent(s) and/or stepparent(s)
- Touching shot of bride with sibling(s)
- Bride hugging honor attendant
- Bride with bridesmaids
- Bride with all the women
- Groom getting ready with Dad and pals (tying the tie is a classic)
- Touching shot of groom with parent(s) and/or stepparent(s)
- Touching shot of groom with sibling(s)
- Groom with his arm affectionately around best man
- Groom with all the groomsmen
- Groomsmen putting on boutonnieres or bowties
- Intimate shots of bride and groom chatting with/crying with/hugging parents and siblings pre-ceremony
- Dad whispering last-minute advice to groom
- Groom ready to go
- Bride ready to go
- Bride and groom separately making their way to the ceremony

Ceremony

- Guests streaming into the site
- Ushers escorting guests to their seats
- Ushers escorting moms to their seats
- Close-up of groom's adorably nervous mug waiting for his other half
- Bridesmaids and groomsmen walking down the aisle
- Flower girl and/or ring bearer entering
- Honor attendant walking down the aisle
- Grandparents walking down the aisle
- Wedding party waiting at the altar
- Groom walking down the aisle
- Bride and Dad/escort/parents walking down the aisle
- Close-up of bride just before she makes her entrance
- Bride and groom at the altar
- Altar or canopy from the back during ceremony
- Wide shot of audience during ceremony, from bride and groom's point of view
- Faces of bride and groom as they exchange vows
- Close-up of bride's and groom's hands as they exchange rings
- The kiss
- Bride and groom proceeding up the aisle
- Bride and groom outside ceremony site
- Congrats shots: bride and groom hugging, laughing, and crying with good friends and family
- Bride and groom leaving ceremony site
- Bride and groom in limo backseat

Pre-Reception

- Bride and groom together
- Bride with her happy, proud parents and/or stepparents
- Bride with her entire immediate family
- Groom with his happy, proud parents and/or stepparents
- Groom with his entire immediate family
- Bride and groom with all parents
- Bride and groom with immediate family members from both sides
- Bride and groom with groomsmen
- Bride and groom with bridesmaids
- Bride and groom with whole wedding party

Reception

- Shot from outside reception site
- Reception details
- Bride and groom arriving
- Receiving-line moments
- Bride and groom at head table
- Parents' table
- Guests' tables
- Close-up of friends and family toasts
- Bride and groom sipping champagne
- Bride's and groom's parents whispering
- Bride and groom chatting up the guests
- Bride and groom's first dance
- Parents dancing
- Bride and Dad dancing
- Groom and Mom dancing
- Wedding party dancing
- Grandparents dancing
- Kids playing or dancing
- Musicians or DJ doing their thing
- Guests dancing
- Bride laughing with bridesmaids
- Cake table
- Bride and groom cutting the cake
- Bride and groom feeding each other cake
- Dessert table
- Bouquet toss
- Tossing and catching of the garter
- Bride and groom leaving

Checklists

Timeline

- Select Wedding Date
- Select Wedding Location

- Book Photographer
- Engagement Portrait
- Bridal Portrait
- Confirm with Photographer
- Assign Family Member
- Receive Proofs
- Review Proofs
- Select Photographs
- Return Proofs
- Receive Wedding Albums
- Purchase Negatives

Camera Formats

- Medium Format
- 35 mm Format
- Digital Cameras
- Combination
- Confirm Equipment
- Traditional Style
- Photojournalistic Style
- Contemporary Style
- Combination of Styles
- Color Film
- Black & White Film
- Infrared Film

What to Look For

- Clarity
- Color
- Composition
- Overexposure
- Underexposure
- Variety
- Engagement Photos
- Infrared Film
- Wide-angle Lenses
- Black & White Film
- Hand-tinted Photos
- Sepia-toned Photos
- Disposable Point-and-Shoot Cameras
- Online Photo Album

Styles

- Traditional Style
- Photojournalistic Style
- Contemporary Style
- Combination of Styles

Package/Options

- 2-Hour Package
- 3-Hour Package

- 4-Hour Package
- 5-Hour Package
- 6-Hour Package
- Add Engagement Photos
- Additional Lighting
- Additional Cameraperson
- Additional Locations
- Additional Photo Albums
- Bridal Portrait
- Engagement Portrait
- Additional Locations
- Multiple Exposures

Keys to Success

- Good On-going Communication
- Solid Contract
- Combination of Styles
- Be Patient
- Have Fun
- Husband & Wife Portrait
- Notify Newspaper
- Wedding Party Names
- Name of Videographer
- Wedding Portraits Before the Ceremony
- Hire 2nd Photographer
- Fire-proof Negative Storage

Things to be prepared for

- Set Attire Expectations
- Secure Backup Locations
- Check Weather Report
- Check for Photo Restrictions
- Avoid Primary Digital Camera
- Plan Timing of Day
- Schedule 30-minute buffer
- No Auto-Winder at Ceremony
- Book Photographer in Advance

References

- Family References
- Friend References
- Research PPA/Visit PPA.com
- Research WPPI/Visit WPPI online
- Check BBB/Visit BBB online
- Check with Resorts and Country
- Clubs
- Check with Other Vendors
- Check with Past Clients

Contract/Payment

- Review Contract

- Revise Contract
- Sign Contract
- Pay Deposit
- Pay Remaining Balance

Backup Plans

- Contingency Plan
- Backup Equipment
- Backup Photographer

Worksheet

Deciding on the themes and styles of your wedding is a complex task...Here's a worksheet to help you plan out your ideal wedding photography experience...

Style

- Traditional
- Photojournalistic
- Contemporary
- Combination

Events

- Pre-wedding Preparations
- Ceremony
- Reception

Film

- Black & White
- Color
- Combination (____% color you would like/____% b/w you would like)
- Special effects (____% Sepia you would like/____% Hand-tinted you would like)

Posing

- Formal/group Portraits
- Bride/groom Portraits

Style of Album

- Insert-style
- Bound
- Loose Prints
- Presentation Box

Number of Albums = _____

Wedding Photography Budget = _____

This guide is provided by Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment to assist new couples as they navigate their way through the year leading up to their wedding day. Included are only suggestions and ultimate decisions need to be made by the couple. Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment is not responsible for negative outcomes as a result of following guidelines.