

Make Money from Wedding Photography

Compiled by Art Sprague of

[Art's Photography](#)

This ebook will not make you an expert. However, it is written to help you avoid many of the pitfalls that new wedding photographers often run into. You are benefiting from my 25 years of experience as a wedding photographer. If you are starting to take wedding photographs, this book will help you develop more confidence and improve your photography skills.

Please feel free to send comments and make suggestions. You will find a contact form at www.artsbookstore.com

It is our intent to keep updating this book. If you send content, and we use it, you will receive a free updated copy with credits for your contribution and links to your website.

In order to help provide as much information to you as possible we will reference several websites throughout this ebook. Please let us know if you find them useful or think we need to add additional information.

Referenced websites:

- [ForPhotography.com](#) has a How-To section where we post some of our other how to articles. Please check it from time to time for updates. If there are any terms used in this book

which are not defined please check the photography terms section in the how-to section.

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Introduction

You have all your camera equipment and are great at taking portraits in the park. You know that wedding photographers ask a lot of money for their work and you believe that this could be a great income source for you. After all, all you have to do is photograph the processional, take family portraits, some reception photos and some candid photographs.

Don't photograph a wedding with proper preparation. These people have spent months and thousands of dollars planning their wedding and they expect you to preserve their day.

You prepare for this day by gaining the knowledge and experience.

A wedding photographers expertise must cover topics such as:

- Technical expertise
- Lighting artificial and existing
- Posing
- Working with people
- Wedding traditions and scheduling.

A wedding photographer equipment must include backup equipment for every piece of equipment.

Assisting other wedding photographers is a great way to gain this needed experience. Donating your time to other photographers is a great way to learn.

Your purchase of this book makes a great statement of your desire to be educated. Another place to start is with your photography equipment manuals. You will be amazed on the little pearls of wisdom contained in those often un-opened packages.

Once you have done your homework and have some experience you will be able to charge a fair price for your work. As your reputation grows this can turn into a nice money making activity for the weekend.

As a photographer with 25 years experience in wedding photography, I can tell you that there is a lot more to wedding photography than you would first think. It is probably *the* most demanding and stressful style of photography there is. As you plan this new adventure, you only have one thing to remember and that is:

There is no re-shoot!

One final thought on education: If you get to the point that you really love your own work, you are not growing and will become complacent. That complacency will mean that you do not improve you will fall behind the competition.

Be Prepared!

Do your homework. Know the reception area, the schedule, the church layout, and anything else that may impact your ability to photograph their wedding.

If you haven't been to the ceremony location, be sure to arrive with enough time to scout out good locations for your group and individual shots. Allow yourself enough time to meet the wedding coordinator and officiating person before you are set to begin. Can you imagine going to the wrong church while everyone was waiting on you? ***Trust me, you only make that mistake once!***

The couple has put a lot of time and effort into planning their wedding day and you need to be as prepared as possible. There is a check sheet at the end of this document and a link to another one. You can use these sheets to help with your planning.

Remember, the list is just a general tool for your planning. Be aware of what coverage style the couple wants and the notes you took at your wedding interview.

Communication is Vital

The importance of communication cannot be over emphasized! Both from a customer service viewpoint and a legal viewpoint great communication is vital. Here are some common questions to ask and why:

- What do your parents want in the wedding photography?

If the couple tells you they want one style and the families are expecting another you need to know what is expected

- Are there any special family relationship considerations?

Divorces create interesting relationships. Knowing the relationships will help the day move more smoothly

- Are there any special considerations for the wedding location? Rules? Lighting?
- Are you planning a candle light ceremony? *If they are, you will want to talk to them about how the ceremony pictures may look. Even with modern cameras, candle light is tough. Do some experimenting so you know your limits.*
- How did you meet? Will the people who introduced you be there? *This is a great photo opportunity.*
- Are there any people in your lives that should be honored by being in a special photograph? Examples would be God Parents, Special Friends, and other people who have been important in their lives.
- Are you having a limo? What time will it be there? Is there enough time for photographs? The couple does not want their limo time spent in front of the camera.
- Are there any family members with special needs we need to consider? Handicaps? Temperament? (*Psycho*)
- Is there anyone we will want to talk to about surprises in store for you?
- Do either of you have children? If so, will you want a "new family" portrait?
- Ask when they plan to do the tosses. (*This is important because waiting too long will reduce the number of participants.*)
- Will they want a multi-generation family portrait?
- If the parents are divorced and not remarried, will they bring a date? How do you want to handle that in the photographs? *We often take extra photographs to make*

people feel good and involved even though we know that the couple will not buy them.

The important thing to remember is that the couple's wedding day should be an awesome experience. You must know what is happening and when it is happening. That knowledge will help you record the couple's wedding.

While marketing is discussed later in the document, it is worth mentioning that while at the wedding you should always be marketing. Strive to capture images that people will want to purchase. Put your images online for easy access and pass out cards at the wedding so people can learn who you are and see your work.

Wedding Traditions - Planning

Wedding ceremonies are heaped in traditions and superstitions. As you learn about the wedding plans from the couple be sure to ask about any special traditions they intend to follow. Knowing what traditions they are planning to use will mean better wedding photography coverage from you.

When you first arrive at the wedding venue it is often a good idea to meet the coordinator or wedding official to see if they have any requests. Hopefully, they will not say anything which conflicts with what the couple wants. If they do, you will need to try to work it out without stressing the couple. There is no easy answer for this scenario.

Examples:

- The Catholics often present flowers to the Virgin Mary. This is a great time to be at a good place to capture the image.
- Catholic Priests do not always allow the couple to kiss. When they do it is often after the sign of peace during the ceremony. Ask when they will be exchanging their first kiss.

- For eastern religions the mother plays a more prominent role in the wedding. For the Hindus the mother will dance around a table loaded with candles. The Hindus also decorate the couple's hands as part of the wedding day.
- Will there be any special presentations such as flowers to mothers/grandmothers?
- If there are deceased family members will there be any floral presentations?
- Weddings with an Asian theme seem to be more involved with their guests and parents. Be sure to ask about any unique portions of their ceremony such as a blessing of the couple.
- For Jewish processions both the bride and the groom walk down the aisle accompanied by both parents. Traditionally, the rabbi walks out first, followed by the groom and his parents, the grandparents, the groomsmen, the bridesmaids, the flower girl and ring bearer, and the bride and her parents.
- The Jewish wedding ceremony takes place under the *chuppah*, which is a canopy on four poles. Since most venues are lit from above you will need to be prepared for the fact that there will be very little light under the tent. If you can't use flash, you will need to zoom in closer and allow for the lack of light. Even if the light from above shines through the tent you will need to be concerned with color shifts.
- At the conclusion of a Jewish ceremony, the groom, and possible the bride, smashes a glass with his/her foot. The timing of this may vary.
- One of the most discussed and often cussed is the superstition that the couple should not see each other before the weddings. You should try to talk them out of this for two reasons. First of all, they will spend more time with their guests. Secondly, they will

have better photography because there will not be as much of a rush to finish and move on to the reception.

Over the years many traditions have crossed over and new ones have been created. Ask questions.

Wedding Photography Styles

Just like clothes, photographic styles change. Currently there are three general styles of wedding photography. As you visit with the couple you will want to find out their expectations, including what style they prefer for a final album.

We hope this preview helps you decide to purchase this ebook. If you have additional questions please use our contact form.

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