



Bill Banks

PHOTOGRAPHY

“ I’M GETTING MARRIED
BUT I DON’T KNOW
WHAT TO LOOK FOR
IN A PHOTOGRAPHER.”

If you feel this way, please don’t think you’re alone as it’s quite a common feeling expressed by so many of those that call us. If you think about it, preparing for a wedding is one of the very few times in most people’s lives when they hire a photographer... and especially for such an intimate event.

The search for the right photographer can be quite intimidating as there are many photographers, websites, pricelists, packages, magazine articles suggesting what to do and what not to do... the list goes on and on.

Well, we feel your anxiety and will tell you it can be much less stressful than you think. There, don’t you feel better already? Now breathe, and please take a moment to read our suggestions on what to look for. If your reading up to this point you may be just the type of person we can help. We hope that it will help you in your search.

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THE STYLE

Determine the style of photography you prefer and know that the two commonly referred to styles are traditional and photojournalistic.

Here's a broad generalization:

The traditional photographer will likely have been in the business for quite some time, may have studio type equipment that they will utilize for the event. They will take the time to provide quality portraits and posed shots and will possibly re-create moments such as placing of the rings. They may be inconspicuous and capture images from afar.

The photojournalist is likely a contemporary photographer or studio that will bring minimal lighting equipment. They will plan to be close to the moments and interaction of you and yours in an attempt to document the intricacies of your day. They will take photos similar to the way a magazine photographer will cover a special event by capturing special or important moments as they occur.

Before we continue, here's some real world info. Many pro photographers take their business seriously and want to continue to stay in business. Therefore when the photography market changes as it has in the last 5-7 years, it forces the pros to stay fresh, attend seminars, hire coaches and consultants and stay in tune with the new techniques. This means that many if not most photographers are migrating to at least a balance of traditional posed shots with capturing moments as they occur.

This means that a particular photographer's portfolio may contain mostly one or the other or may contain a balanced mix. If you love albums which mainly contain the candid moments of an event such as a wedding you may be interested in photojournalistic. If you love albums that mainly contain posed shots then it may be traditional. If you are undecided you may wish a balance.



Wouldn't it be great if you have your wedding photos in your home and you still find yourself stopping to look at them years from now? Yes, you know it would and by sticking to your style that most connects with you, you can help ensure that.

THE PERSONALITY

Depending on the type of wedding you're planning, the photographer may be very close to you and yours during this special time in your lives, capturing even some of the most intimate and behind closed doors moments.

The photographer has a great duty to capture images and must often be assertive enough to entice cooperation from others while remaining courteous and friendly amongst mostly strangers... a tough task as you may imagine.

If you've gotten the name of a photographer from people you know and they've already said the photographer has a great personality and they would recommend them, you may be ahead of the game. If you're getting a photographers name from a caterer or an advertisement, etc... you must do more work to ensure they're right for you.

Be sure to meet with or at least speak with the person or all of the people that will be at your event. Remember that depending on the studio, your photographer may not be the person with whom you initially met. Be sure to know who that is and meet with them. If there is any red flag that pops up about their personality that worries you it should entice you to keep looking.

Have you ever heard of a horror story of a photographer that was very unprofessional or caused problems at a wedding? Yes, you know you have and by hiring a photographer that you are comfortable with you can help ensure you avoid this.



THE BUSINESS STUFF

This is often the most daunting and complex of the three areas you need to get narrowed down. Here are a few sub-topics to assist you.

1. **Start your search early** – It is not uncommon for in demand photographers to be booked at least a year in advance. If your event is coming up in a few months then your choices will be eliminated for you.

2. **Portfolio** – Be sure to look at a collection of the photographers' best work. If the photographer doesn't have a collection they may be very new to the industry and may not be seasoned enough to handle your event. All established photographers have a good portfolio. Be sure you like the work in the portfolio. If you don't care for what the photographer claims is their best work, then it's likely they are not for you.

3. **Proof collection** – Although a photographer may have a nice collection of best photos for all to see, ask to see the proofs from a recent job the photographer handled. By proofs we mean a collection of all the shots taken at the event. Understand that not all the photos will be award winning in this collection but this will help you get an idea of how they covered the event, where they were when they took images and the type of moments they thought important to capture. Remember that even some of the worst photographers in the industry are lucky from time to time and may build a collection of worthy images but seeing a proof collection may give you a better idea of the consistency of their work.

4. **Packages** – This can be an extensive topic as there are many products and services offered in this industry. The general rule is you should be sure to get most or all of what you want and little if nothing that you don't.

It may be very helpful to hire a photographer that gives you greater flexibility. Again packages specifics and policies will vary widely with different photographers and some will likely customize a package to suite you.

5. **Equipment** – It's likely that you will not be familiar with the many types of professional photographic equipment required for your job.



None-the-less, it is important that your photographer has the equipment needed to do the job. Be sure your photographer declares they are using professional equipment and has fully redundant equipment in case of a potential technical problem.

6. **References** – If you are interested in particular photographer you noticed in an add or whose name you got from a caterer, DJ, etc... then you may wish to ask for a reference. If the photographer produces a few for you then great feel free to contact them. However, contrary to many magazine article suggestions, don't put too much weight into references provided to you by a photographer as it is likely they will only provide to you "favorable" references.

7. **Budget** – You must keep in mind that in order to provide the results that you would expect from a professional photographer, they must purchase expensive equipment, spend years refining their skill, hire staff, maintain insurance, attend seminars, the list goes on and on.

It's not unusual for photography packages from in demand photographers to start at \$5,000. Unfortunately for most of us our budget makes many of our decisions. It determines the type of house we purchase, the car we drive and yes the photographers you can hire. If you may not exceed \$1,000 for photography then although possibly a tad depressing this will at least help narrow your option base.

8. **Contract** – If you are dealing with a pro they should understand the importance of a proper contract and provide one for your review. The contract should include at the minimum:

1. All pertinent event information
2. Photographer contact information
3. Complete package details
4. Completion dates
5. Costs, deposit & balance amounts, due dates.
6. All other common expectations

There are many other aspects of hiring a photographer such as are they insured, will they allow you to purchase the negatives, do they do location shooting, the list goes on and on.

We do hope this guide has helped you however, should you require more advice be sure to visit BillBanksPhotography.com or simply call us.