

Elements for Blog Education: Choosing a Modern Filmmaker for your Wedding Day Memories

### **What is the Difference between a Traditional Videographer and a Filmmaker or Cinematographer?**

The difference is mainly conceptual, because these labels are just words. Videography is the term we apply to real-time, documentary-style wedding videos that are typically an hour or more in length. This is the product that the industry has been producing since the 80's. They remind of us of security footage, and you'll end up fast-forwarding through the boring parts to get to the good stuff. The camera or cameras are set up on a tripod and not much more effort is spent into capturing a story or emotions.

Cinematographers, on the other hand, are the up and coming new trend and eventually will be a mainstay at EVERY wedding, and I predict will become more popular than still photography as technology progresses and the secret gets out how amazing they are. Cinematographers are basically the motion-imagery equivalent to fine-art photographers, assessing lighting, angles, and scenery in order to create beautiful imagery.

Modern Filmmakers differ from traditional videographers in that they spend time getting to know their subject. During the shoot itself they make many technical decisions such as composition, lighting, lens selection, cinematic tool selection, and audio acquisition. In the editing studio, they will make careful sound score selections, and choose clips, pacing and color-grading (special effects) for an overall mood that fits the couple and event style. The final film is a time capsule of your day, taking you back to experience the event all over again, one moment after another.

### **Why Should I Hire a Photographer AND a Cinematographer?**

These two art forms have some similarities, but are very different. Photographs are still moments, frozen in time. They are beautiful to look at, especially with the many special effects that can be applied using professional Photoshop plug-ins. They are the best option for enlargements to hang on your wall, and a quick and cheap option for passing out amongst family and friends.

Cinematography is the superior choice for preserving the actual EXPERIENCE of your day. The sounds, the sights, the movement, the emotions. Cinematography tells stories about the images it creates. You can see what's happening, whether you caught it at the actual wedding or not.

Both art forms are important to remember your day by. But your film is the superior form of memory preservation because it can preserve movement, voices and sound. This is not only priceless for YOU, but it's priceless for any family who couldn't make it to the wedding, and it will also be priceless to your children and grand-children.

Keep in mind also that you can take still images from your HD film and print them as 4x6 or 5x7 images, or share them in online photo albums such as Facebook, SmugMug, or Flickr. Have your film studio help you with this, if you can only afford to invest in one thing! An HD film still is not as high-res as an original still image, due to camera limitations currently, so they aren't useful as enlargements. However for regular-sized prints they are fabulous!

## **Why is a Wedding Film investment typically as much or more than Photography? I thought it was supposed to be cheaper!**

This may be true for “security footage” videography as described above, but filmmaking requires significantly more effort, time and skill!

Having done both cinematography and still photography, we can say unanimously that moving imagery is much harder to capture than photography. Using DSLR cameras for motion imagery (the same cameras that photographers use) is really the only option when it comes to Hollywood-quality imagery. Standard camcorders just look flat and “YouTube video” like. However this equipment requires skilled professionals to operate. Due to how the cameras are made, we must manually focus while subjects are moving (photographers get the benefit of autofocus). We must deal with stabilization at all times, since we are capturing motion. We have to capture audio and ensure it is crystal-clear, even outdoors on windy days (this can be quite a challenge). And because during the ceremony we are generally “locked down”, we can’t move around like a photographer can. For all these reasons, filmmakers have much more gear than photographers. On top of this, the best studios will take special care to ensure that all this gear stays tidy and out of the way, and doesn’t ruin any guest experiences or the décor and feel of your event.

In the studio, photographers generally spend anywhere from 4 to 10 hours editing a wedding and a few more if they are designing an album. Filmmakers on the other hand spend 20-50 hours crafting a film and burning a custom DVD with menu options.

Finally, much of what a photographer does during your wedding day is the portrait session. There is time for multiple takes, they can pose you, and everything looks great. Filmmakers don’t generally get this option, meaning all the footage we are capturing is in real-time, while events are happening, and we have ONE opportunity to collect ALL the footage we need to not only provide complete coverage of your event, but to provide a Hollywood-quality film of your day. Try giving any Hollywood cinematographer this challenge, and they’re likely to tell you to forget it!

The top filmmakers in the industry generally charge 1.5-2x their photography counterparts, so if you are comparing prices between a photography studio and a top filmmaking studio and their prices are about the same, know you are getting a KILLER deal on your filmmaker!

## **What Makes Black Label Films Different?**

The fact that we are filmmakers and not traditional videographers sets us apart from 80% of the studios in Portland and nationwide. Of the remaining 20%, there are three things that make us the top studio to work with in Portland and one of the top studios nationwide. The summary is that we focus on your EXPERIENCE with us from start to finish.

Before the Wedding Service – we have not only an initial consultation with you, but a separate consultation a few months before your wedding to discuss in-depth your décor plans, your concerns and questions, and to have a camera placement and lighting strategy discussion. We coordinate with your venue, planner and vendor team for flawless execution and NO STRESS for you or your bridal party! Another thing that brides have mentioned not many other studios do is flexible payment options. We have a monthly payment plan option for weddings 3 or more months out at no extra charge.

Day-Of Wedding Service – We focus on your wedding film as a fun adventure and inject laughter and fun everywhere we can. We always arrive 30-60 minutes before your paid coverage starts, and any footage we get after set-up is simply complementary. We only book ONE wedding each weekend which allows us to be creatively fresh. Also when you book Black Label, you will always be getting exclusive cinematographer Karyn Reohr who has trained under world-renowned studios such as Stillmotion and Ray Roman Films. We (of course) film only in High Definition using cutting-edge equipment, and we are fun and easy to be around, blending in and very discreet.

After-Wedding Service – Because we only accept a very limited number of events each year, we have an industry-leading turnaround time of 1-2 months. This is unheard of from any other studio nationwide. Most studios film like crazy in the summer and then edit in the fall, winter and even into next year's spring. We do our best to have ZERO backlog, which keeps our clients thrilled! We also are the most diverse studio in Portland. Glance at other studio's portfolios and you will see similar look and feel across their different samples. Black Label has consistency in superior imagery and editing. However, we can create a film that fits your style, from sentimental to vintage to country chic to punk rock. We LOVE the diversity of our clients and feel your film should reflect who you are, not a cookie cutter template.

Finally, I like to point out the rather obvious fact that I, the studio owner and primarily cinematographer and editor, am female. Why does this matter? While there are about 50/50 male vs female photographers out there, the video/film world is very heavily dominated by men. I believe this is the case because video is more technically challenging and technology is a traditionally male career. On the other hand, I have a Computer Science degree and spent 10 years at Intel so I love new technology. And my eye for fresh, modern aesthetics both in shooting and in the edit studio is one of the key strengths of hiring Black Label that you just can't get anywhere else!

### **What All is Included in Your Packages?**

We really have a wide range of options to fit every different wedding and couple. I have created three "complete" packages with the most popular options, and then we have ala carte options as well as custom package options for you.

Our studio is known for innovation and we are always cooking up new products, such as our new DIY Video Kit, and Video Booth and Streaming Ceremony options.

Check out our website for the latest info, or call or email the studio for the most current packaging and pricing. We may be planning to launch something new and exciting that just hasn't made its way to our site yet!