

DIGITAL  
WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER'S  
P·L·A·N·N·E·R



KENNY KIM





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**WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER'S**

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KENNY KIM



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

## Digital Wedding Photographer's Planner

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kenny Kim has always been fascinated by the visual arts, especially the connection between art and photography. This passion led him to study graphic design at the University of Illinois where he also became a skilled Web designer. In 2003, Kenny opened his own design studio, and it was during this time he realized that the greatest outlet for his artistic expression and technical skills would be through his passion for photography.

Incorporating his own vision into the technical elements of photography, Kenny's goal with each photo is to present each moment he captures with a subtle artistry that enhances the feel of the moment. With the launch of Kenny Kim Photography in 2006, his vision instantly resonated with his audience, and Kenny Kim Photography very quickly grew into a nationally recognized studio. Kenny has shot over 100 weddings in locations throughout the

United States, Mexico, the Caribbean and in Italy. His clients include various local and national celebrities such as Yul Kwon (winner of *Survivor*, a popular CBS TV Series) and Salma Hayek (commissioned as the second shooter for international celebrity photographer, Bob Davis). He has also been contracted to photograph the University of Illinois sporting team events and various celebrity events featuring David Foster, Andrea Bocelli, John Legend, Three Doors Down, Chris Tomlin and Michael W. Smith.

Kenny's work has been featured in numerous publications including *Destination Weddings & Honeymoon*, *The Knot*, *The KoreAm Journal*, *WIND Magazine* and more. He is a platinum list member in highly acclaimed *Grace Ormonde Wedding Style Magazine*. He is also an active member of WPPI (Wedding & Portrait Photographers International) and has recently received special honors in the WPPI 2010 Awards of Excellence 16x20 International Print Competition. He was voted by *The Knot Magazine* in 2010 as the Best of Weddings: Photography.

Kenny currently resides in Chicago but loves to travel and explore new culture. He is thankful everyday for the privilege to call his passion in life his profession as well.





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And finally, I must give all thanks to God – the original author and perfecter of my faith.



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*To my family for giving me the freedom  
and patience to pursue my dream.*



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## INTRODUCTION

If you had asked me five years ago what I would be doing now, I doubt being a wedding photographer or writing a book would have been my answer. The truth is, I really had no clue what I was going to do. I probably would have guessed working in sports management or managing a coffee shop or possibly working for a top design agency, or even better: a sports photographer. But my life took a different path to wedding photography, and for the first time in my life, I have found something I am really passionate about.

Wedding photography allows me to creatively express myself in ways I have never been able to do before. It also gives me the opportunity to do what I enjoy the most: meet people, travel, photograph and serve people. There are days when I honestly cannot believe I call this my job and get to do it everyday.

I remember a wedding I photographed in late 2006 when I was first considering this as a full time profession. The mother of the bride, at the end of the day, walked up to me, gave me a big hug and a kiss and thanked me for being an amazing photographer. She said I was the best photographer she had ever seen. At first, I was flattered; then it dawned on me that she made this statement without seeing one single image I photographed that day! It was at that moment I figured out half the formula to becoming a successful wedding photographer—make clients and their families feel special. Being technically sound is the other half, and I am always working to improve and learn new techniques.

By picking up this book, you are either considering becoming a full-time photographer or perhaps you already started and need a little direction. While there are many planning guides available for couples, this is one for designed you, the wedding photographer. The more prepared you are the more you can concentrate on taking the photographs and getting the images that will delight your clients. In this planner you will find

numerous tips and checklists from the more than 100 weddings I have photographed in the past four years, as well as some lessons I learned from other photographers. It covers everything you need to think about and plan for when it comes to photographing a wedding—from the initial meeting with the prospective clients and how to make a good first impression, through the various stages of the wedding and how you can deliver the final product to the newlyweds. Just remember that nothing here is really set in stone. The beauty of this industry is that you can study books like this and make it your own.

Welcome to wedding photography. You are in a community of people who will help and encourage to you become a better photographer. Think of this book as just a starting point—the tip of the iceberg. Use it to develop your own style and explore new ways to doing things. I hope you find this profession as rewarding and fulfilling as I have. ❁





## *Meeting the clients*

Wedding photography involves two key parties: the couple getting married and the wedding photographer(s). Many photographers approach their relationships with clients as strictly a business relationship, but part of what has made my business so successful is my ability to personalize the relationships I have with the couples with whom I work. This is important because a strong relationship establishes trust and allows the bride and groom to be themselves in front of me, but more importantly, in front of my camera. This is key to capturing the couple in their natural moments during their special occasion.





The importance of wedding photography is emphasized by the fact that most weddings seem to pass by very quickly for brides and grooms. If you ask most married couples to describe their special day, they will tell you it went by in a blink of an eye. This is the main reason wedding photography is so immensely important; it captures in sharp focus the moments of a day that requires months of planning and then so often passes by as blur for the bride and groom. ❁



## FIRST IMPRESSION

The Internet has changed the way people shop for everything, including wedding photographers. Most often the first impression someone receives of my work is what he or she sees on my Web site/ blog. But personally, I think there is a more important impression to consider: the impression I leave with my past clients. If the newlyweds are happy with the images I captured of their special day, then they are much more likely to recommend my work to friends and family who are now looking for a photographer. When I am working at a wedding, every person who is in attendance should leave with the feeling that I did a great job and wasn't intrusive. Yet, they should recognize that I always appeared to capture each of the key moments. And most importantly, the bride and groom need to be blown away by the images when they see them.

As with most wedding photographers, the majority of my clients find me through referrals of former clients, friends or they were guests at a wedding I shot previously. This is why it is so important to always put your best foot forward and to network at every opportunity.







That is not to say that you should ignore the Internet and only rely on word of mouth. I don't. I make sure my Web site, [www.kennykim.com](http://www.kennykim.com), shows images I am proud of, are representative of my style, and I regularly update my blog and Facebook pages with images from my current projects. When prospective clients go to my Web site, I want them to be able to imagine themselves in my images. I'll cover the importance of a Web site and brand marketing further in *Appendix 3* of this book.

I have also created a promotional video available on my Web site that describes my workflow and my photographic philosophy to give prospective clients a glimpse of what they can expect before they ever meet with me. ❁





## BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

The most important part of wedding photography is the relationship you build with your clients. That relationship begins with the first meeting and continues to grow with each step of the wedding planning through the presentation of final photographs. In fact, great wedding photographers continue the relationship with past clients long after the couple has received their final product. I'm proud to say that many of my past clients have continued to follow my work on the blog and Facebook and often leave comments on my current postings.

You might be the best photographer and technically brilliant, but to be a great wedding photographer also requires the right kind of personality. You need to sincerely want to be friends with your clients and fully gain their trust.



As a wedding photographer, a bride and groom will be sharing one of the most intimate days in their lives with you. You will be there as they are getting ready, when they see each other for the first time that day, when the bride walks down the aisle toward her future husband and when, as a couple, they walk back down the aisle after the ceremony. You'll be there when the couple is introduced as a married couple for the first time, when they have their first dance, and all the other noteworthy moments during the wedding day.

To best capture all of these intimate moments, you must develop a strong and trusting relationship with both the bride and groom. When I meet new clients, I begin to build this relationship from the very first time I speak with them, by focusing the meeting on their needs, not mine. ❁



## INITIAL MEETING

Many of my initial meetings take place on the phone since about half of my clients are from out of state and I don't actually meet them until the engagement shoot (more on this in chapter 2). When meeting by phone or email, it is really important to clearly convey your thoughts and information. Unfortunately, it's entirely too easy to have miscommunications and misunderstandings when only communicating by phone and email. To counteract this, I always try to be really specific and when in doubt, I make sure to ask questions and get clarifications.

When I do get to meet potential clients for the first time in person, I usually let them pick the location. Many people want to meet at a coffee shop and that can be a good choice, but I try to suggest one that isn't very busy so that we can talk with little interruption. Other great locations are nice hotel lobbies or even a quiet restaurant.

There are times I am invited to the client's house, which is great because it lets me get a strong sense of who they are and assess their personal style. Meeting at a



**Since first impressions are so important,** how you dress conveys a big message to the clients as to what kind of person you are. I usually wear a nice casual dress shirt, a good watch (if you are a guy) and jewelry, and am well groomed and presentable.



client's home also allows me to meet them where they are most comfortable and often helps me understand what direction they may be leaning in regards to their budget and style of photography. I can also learn more about their personalities and interests.