

TIME & TIMING:

How to Time Your Marketing Campaign to Reach Brides at the Right Time

You've heard the saying: "timing is everything." Just about everyone is hung up with time.

My favorite team lost a big football game because it ran out of time. If only we had just 10 more seconds. That's all we needed to kick a winning field goal!

In the 1980 presidential election, polls indicated the race was a toss-up just two weeks before the election. Reagan ended up beating Carter in a landslide. Carter wishes the election were held two weeks earlier. He might have won. Timing is everything.

If the evacuation of New Orleans had begun one day earlier, perhaps the suffering experienced in the wake of Hurricane Katrina would have been mitigated.

Timing is everything. Or is it?

Timing is important, but so is time. To paraphrase Ben Franklin, "time is the stuff life is made of." It is a precious commodity, especially to brides-to-be. They don't have enough of it. Brides are planning the biggest social event of their life. They have over 1,000 decisions to make in a limited amount of time. And they have limited resources to make it all happen. They are possessive of their time.

As a videographer, you have two challenges: to reach the bride at the right time—and to persuade her to give you some of her time. If you're successful with both, she may very well give you her business as well. Your message determines whether brides give you time. Strategy, frequency, and luck determine whether your timing is correct.

Let's look at ways you can hone your message to "sell" brides on giving you some of their time.

Improve Your Marketing Message

1 Write a strong lead headline. Whether it's your website, an e-mail, or print advertising, headlines are what grab attention. Headlines get five times the readership of the body copy. A good headline usually contains one or more of the following qualities: self-interest; news; curiosity; or a quick, easy way. Your headline must be believable. It must be clear.

2 *Create an identity.* You can do this by creating a slogan, a positioning statement, or catch phrase to use next to your company name in all of your advertising. For example, "Priceless memories to last a lifetime" or "Hollywood Cinematic Videography" or "Videographers who care."

3 *Write concisely.* Short sentences are easier to read than long ones. This is especially important when it comes to e-mail and website text.

4 *Appeal to a bride's emotions.* I know you've got great camcorders, high-quality editing systems, and state-of-the-art software. That's great, just don't lead with them. We know quite a bit about brides thanks to WEVA's comprehensive Nationwide Survey of Brides two years ago. We know she wants a good wedding video to share with future children. We know she wants to remember how she and her new husband looked on their wedding day. And we know she wants to remember friends and family members who won't be with her forever. Those reasons come first. These are emotional appeals. Ignore them at your marketing peril.

For example, instead of advertising that "We offer state-of-the-art technology" try:

"Love begins again with each viewing of your video. Share the happiness with your future children!"

5 *Make it personal.* I had a call today from a wedding professional who is getting plenty of hits on his website. Brides respond via e-mail and ask for his price. He gives it and never hears back from them. So he stopped giving prices in his e-mail responses, and he's still not hearing back. His price is high relative to his competitors. He offers one price—there are no packages. He tries calling the bride, leaves a message, but seldom hears back.

Here's what's happening: To overcome price issues, you need to make a personal, emotional connection with your prospect. It may simply be that your marketing message was so powerful, emotionally speaking, that the bride is willing to spend more because you seem worth it. If you don't give her a price when she asks for it, you come across as being unhelpful and evasive.

With websites, e-mail letters, and print communication, it's also critical to communicate with warmth. Be personal. Start more sentences with "you" than "we." Talk in terms of a bride's needs. Appeal to her heart. Remember, brides buy from people they like and trust. That is the key way to overcome price issues: be a videographer brides like and trust.

How to Reach Brides at the Right Time

Let's talk about timing. When does the average bride book her videographer? Depends, doesn't it? Ever know a bride who booked a professional videographer more than a year before her wedding date? Sure.

Ever heard of a bride who booked a pro-

professional videographer one week before her wedding day? Sure, that happens, too. This variance in timing is one reason many videographers become frustrated with brides.

I hear comments like this: "They wait 'til the last minute, then if they have any money left, they call and want us videotape their wedding for practically nothing." Sound familiar? Let's look at ways to improve timing and begin to persuade brides not to wait.

1 *Reach the bride frequently.* Overall, videography isn't as high up in the pecking order yet as gowns, wedding ceremony/reception location, and the wedding ring. The more often you reach brides, the more like-

ly you can get their attention early in the planning process, while brides still have ample budgetary discretion.

It's interesting what frequent exposure can do for you. I read an interesting study a few years ago that found the more someone sees a marketing message, the more they trust that company. You've heard the saying, "familiarity breeds contempt?" Not when it comes to marketing. Familiarity breeds trust.

The more often your message reaches the bride, the more likely it's reaching her at the right time, while enhancing your credibility.

2 *Balance your media.* There are two types of media: the ones where you can control the timing... and the ones you can't. The media you can't control when it comes to timing include:

- Ads in bridal magazines. You can't control when the magazine comes out nor can you control when a bride picks it up to read it.
- Websites. You can't control when brides will go to your site.

From: julie@acmevideography.com
Subject: I just mailed you our color brochure
Date: November 1, 2005
To: A Bride

Hi Sandy,

If you're like other brides we work with, you're looking for a Videographer you can count on. Quality, dependability, and excellence matter.

If this matters to you, take a close look at our brochure. I mailed you a copy today. You should receive it in a day or two.

Here's what to look for: Our professionalism. Our passion. Our love of working with brides. It's all in our brochure.

This brochure reflects our personality ... our style. If this style fits you, too, call us at XXX-XXXX. We'd love to hear more about you and your wedding dreams.

Thanks!

Julie

ACME VIDEOGRAPHY

"The Videographers Who Care!"

P.S. In the meantime, just click here to be immediately linked to our website!

www.acmevideography.com



- Bridal Shows. You can't control the dates and times of these shows.

Media you can control when it comes to timing include:

- E-mail. Send a message whenever you want, or as often as you want.
- Direct mail. Same as above.
- Telemarketing. Same as above.

Wedding videographers need to tap the power of both forms of media. Too many have out-of-balance marketing campaigns comprised only of a website. Marketing requires balance.

3 *Link your media.* This is when things can really start to happen for your wedding business. Your ads not only need your phone number, of course, but your website, too. And I'm sure you're already doing that. But to increase success, you need to go farther.

Here are ideas to link, or integrate, your marketing efforts:

- Use direct mail and e-mail to drive prospects to your phone or your website or both. E-mail, in particular, is an af-

fordable way to increase the frequency of your marketing contact with prospects.

- E-mail prospects to tell them that you have US mailed them a copy of your brochure. Watch your direct mail response go up. You might say something like this:

E-Mail Subject Line: I just mailed you our color brochure

Hi Sandy,

If you're like other brides we work with, you're looking for a Videographer you can count on. Quality, dependability, and excellence matter.

If this matters to you, take a close look at our brochure. I mailed you a copy today. You should receive it in a day or two.

Here's what to look for: Our professionalism. Our passion. Our love of working with brides. It's all in our brochure.

This brochure reflects our personality ... our style. If this style fits you, too, call us at 555-5555. We'd love to hear more about you and your wedding dreams.

Thanks!

Julie, ACME VIDEOGRAPHY

P.S. In the meantime, just click here to be immediately linked to our website!

Increasing Advertising Success

If you're running an ad in a wedding publication, refer to it in the rest of your marketing messages. For example: "As seen in Perfect Wedding Guide." Ads can give you credibility in the marketplace.

Increase the credibility of your website, your brochure, and your e-mails by referring to the publication(s) in which you advertise. ©

"Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life trying to save."

—Will Rogers

Tom Quiner is president of Breakthrough Marketing, Inc., a firm which specializes in developing marketing materials for professional wedding videographers. They have produced a portfolio of e-mail and sales letters called "Videographer's Master Marketing Kit," available on CD-ROM for \$50. You can preview their entire line of brochures at their website:

www.breakthroughbrochures.com. Or call for a sample at 1-800-810-4152.