

15 YEARS IN 60 SECONDS





HEY GUYS, QUICK ONE:

If you attended Jai Long's Wedding Photography Summit 2021, you know exactly what this PDF is and how, while explaining it in my talk, it definitely went on for longer than 60 seconds (heh heh, gulp).

If you don't know how you got here and you're still receiving this in your inbox somehow - congrats? I guess?

It's basically a quick summary of 15 years worth of trial and error in this business that's gotten me to the place that I'm in today. There's always room for movement, places to learn, and areas where opinions differ for us all --- but for me, at least, these things have been helpful.

So I hope they can be somehow helpful to you, too. :)

xo Dan

REAL LIFE BIO

Dan O'Day is an Australian Photographer, who's interests primarily revolve around listening to True Crime podcasts, starting and rarely finishing house projects, and buying an excessive amount of photography books and magazines from various news agents.

In the not too distant past, Dan was diagnosed with ADHD and the diagnosis has proven to be an incredible eye-opener in the way of analysing how he can best work on running his own business in the day to day. He uses his hyperactivity and inspired brain to run into a room, splay out clever material, and then run away quickly, hoping everyone in his wake will use their individual strengths to make the ideas happen.

Dan is a father of two sons, Vincent and Sullivan, and he lives in Canberra, Australia with wife Andi and their geriatric, flatulent staffy, Jessica Margaret.

IMPRESSIVE ACCOLADES / LESS RELATEABLE PROFESSIONAL BIO

Dan O'Day is an Australian Photographer, specializing in Wedding and Fine Art Photography. Influenced by his former life as a contemporary artist, Dan's wedding images reflect the commitment to his art practice, techniques and constant development and refinement of his practice. His Fine Art Photography has been exhibited extensively Australia-wide and also held in collections in London, Paris, and Germany.

Dan has been awarded the title of Australian Wedding Photographer of the Year from the Australian Institute of Professional Photography both in 2016 and 2018. He was also recently awarded the title of International Wedding Photographer of the Year in 2018/19. Dan has also been nominated as one of "the top 10 contemporary wedding photographers in the world" by Bill Hurter (Author, Former Editor in Chief at Rangefinder and After Capture Magazines).

A keynote speaker at Photo Field Trip - USA, WPPI - Las Vegas, BODAF - Barcelona Spain, Way Up North - Stockholm Sweden, GRAIN - Zagreb Croatia, SNAP Festival - UK, WRKSHP - New York, plus many more throughout Australia, Asia and New Zealand. His work has been published in VOGUE, Harpers Bazaar, Rangefinder, Frankie Magazine, CAPTURE Mag and Better Photography, to name a few.

Dan is also the founder of the Moments over Mountains movement @momentsovermountains and co-founder of the Art and The Heart Workshops, alongside Samm Blake.

INFO ON MENTORING

For the month of June only I'm offering my mentoring (or my time? my assistance?) to anyone keen from the Wedding Photography Summit 2021.

Usually I would offer one-on-one ZOOM Sessions for 60 minutes for \$400 USD and within those sessions we'd hash through absolutely anything you want; anything from portfolio and website critique, strategy, pro tips for getting in with the parents on wedding days - anything!

For the bloody legends who were Summit attendees, through the month of June I'm booking these sessions at a supes spesh price of \$290 USD. There's a second option of booking one hour on Zoom for you and a friend to share the space, for \$400 USD.

If you're keen on chatting more about mentoring hours of power, get in touch.

OR YOU CAN BOOK THROUGH MY WEBSITE, YA BLOODY LEGEND.



DON'T DISCOUNT; ADD VALUE

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It's a personal choice, but I feel as though the word 'discount' has a way of cheapening the quality of the work I put out there. Instead of chipping quality off the side, offer to add value on top.

When someone comes back with an enquiry about whether you offer any discounts or not, back your work and your prices. You can lightly say you don't offer any discounts, BUT you're happy to add an extra hour on top of the existing packages you discussed, as an extra special bonus for these legends. If you're extra despo, you could throw in a couples session or whatever.

They feel seen, they just got free stuff, and they're stoked.

It's a good way to put into perspective for the client how much your work is worth, sticking to your guns about it, while also showing them how willing you are to go above-and-beyond for them and their wedding.



FLAT RATE YOUR TRAVEL



An aerial photograph of a wedding scene. A bride in a long, flowing white gown stands on a lush green lawn, facing away from the camera. A groom in a dark suit stands further down the lawn, holding a bouquet. To the left, a body of water is bordered by a line of orange floating barriers. The scene is captured in the golden hour of late afternoon, with long shadows cast across the grass.

FLAT RATE YOUR TRAVEL

I find that it gets messy and confusing for people when you try to itemise and invoice for individual bits of your travel. Make it easier for your clients to pay you by creating individual pricing guides to accommodate for travel to those areas.

Your client already has enough to think about. And they certainly don't want to have to consider paying thousands for you AND thousands for travel on top of that, but I guarantee they will think a lot less about paying one flat rate for you to be at their wedding.

(And it saves you the headache of writing that awks email that says, "here's my invoice for travel; I tried to sleep on the cheap but Elton John was in town that weekend, sooooo....")

When you say, "all travel and costs included" on a pricing guide, your client feels like that's the value of your time to be there and they love the word "included" and feel like there are no hidden, extra costs.

It's one less bloody thing for them to think about.

And if you decide to stay at Ovolo instead of a Motel, that's up to you.

**BACK UP BACK UP BACK UP
STORAGE IS CHEAP**



A man in a tuxedo and bow tie stands by a window, looking out. In the foreground, the dark silhouette of another person's head and shoulders is visible, looking towards the window. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window.

BACK UP BACK UP BACK UP STORAGE IS CHEAP

*I can't stress enough how
paranoia in this area is actually
a good thing.*

Buy the extra hard drives, store things in different locations, use back up cards in your cameras, take your cards into the store with you (even if it's just for 'one quick item'), never pack your cards or hard drives into checked luggage.

I say all these things, because, at some terrible stage along the way, I've learned the hard way.

It's the cheapest kind of insurance policy.
Just do it.

A close-up, high-angle shot of a woman with vibrant red hair styled in a short, straight fringe. She has a small, silver nose ring in her left nostril and is looking down with a soft, contemplative expression. She is wearing a white, textured garment that appears to be made of a fine mesh or gauze material. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. The overall mood is serene and minimalist.

GEAR: LESS IS MORE



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This is a big time preference thing, but, for me, I find my shooting stronger if I stick to what works for me, and not stress about the rest.

On a wedding day I'm usually only rocking two camera bodies with two prime lenses (24mm / 50mm). While I have a 35mm and 85mm in my bag just in case, 9-times-out-of-10 I don't even take them out.

Saves me the hassle of changing lenses all day, keeps the look of my images consistent, and challenges me to look through those focal points in any situation.

If 70-200mm or sport lenses down a wedding aisle are your thing, then you do you. But, for me, the simplicity in the two primes seem to get the job good and done.



CLOSING TIME IS 7 PM

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Again, variable for whatever works for you, but in self-run businesses, it's this impossible super power to master work/life balance. I find this boundary makes a big difference.

Myself and my wife Andi implemented this rule (that, to be honest, we aren't great at always upholding) a few years ago when it felt like our "clocked on" hours were always variable and averaging around 18 hours a day.

This was the non-negotiable time of day that we shut the computers down, made dinner and had a wine together, and decompressed from whatever it was we were doing that day.

If we were stressed about the amount of work we had to get done, we could always get up at 5 am and crack into it, but the clock off time remained the same.

It was the first semblance of actual rhythm I'd ever found in self employed business with my life.

10/10 Would Recommend



SAY GOODBYE TO THE PARENTS



SAY GOODBYE TO THE PARENTS

The often-overlooked legends of a wedding day. I find it's a referral-fueling pro-tip to not only impress parents on the wedding day, but to solidify your impressive friendship at the end of the day with a chummy goodbye.

It's so easy to tuck into our clients and focus on purely just the two of them on the wedding day. But I find that these rockstars behind the curtain --who are support systems emotionally and sometimes financially-- are ready and very willing to accept a little love on the big day.

Often I find referrals that are coming my way after a wedding come from the grooms-mums-best-friends-daughter, after I've spent a particularly, purposefully warm day with Mummy dearest.

Don't forget them!





**IT'S OKAY
TO MAKE A SLIDESHOW
AN HOUR LONG**

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Something I didn't think much about until we had our own wedding and all I wanted to do was look at our photos over and over again.

I used to cram 400 curated images into a 22 minute slideshow, and stress any time it started creeping up toward the 30 minute mark. But once we got married and spent 3 hours sinking 2 bottles of red and looking at our photos over and over again, I realised that our clients aren't going to get BORED looking at their wedding photos -- especially at the first sighting.

So go long. Send them a bottle to enjoy it with. Take your time and allow them to take their time, because I promise they'll thank you for the curated experience.





INTERMISSION SLIDE

Just wanted to help you guys out and throw you a break in case you're busting for the loo. Also, I wanted to use this photo somewhere. You good? Good. Let's go.

**DON'T DRIVE HOME
MORE THAN 1 HR
AFTER 9:30 PM**



DON'T DRIVE HOME MORE THAN 1 HR AFTER 9:30 PM

We only made this rule after too many close calls on the highway, but I'm so glad we enact it now - because it's important!

You know that feeling of combined joy, adrenaline, and exhaustion as you crash into your car at the end of the night after a reception where you tore up the dance floor and absolutely killed the bouquet toss? You usually only get it until about 30 minutes into the drive home when the adrenaline wears off and the exhaustion is the one that rises to the top.

I've learned this the hard way after too many agreements with myself that, "no really, I'm feeling fine!" turned into some near misses of some poor little beebie wallabees. So we just make it a rule now that if there's more than an hour between us and home after 9:30 pm when we've been shooting all day, we fork out for a hotel.

It's just not worth the risk.



WHAT IS YOUR CEILING PRICE?



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In 2009, when I realised that someone who had \$6,000 to spend couldn't spend it with me if they tried, with my \$3,500-all-included-maximum-package-with-extras-goodies-albums-and-lap-dances: I upped my prices.

When I was first starting out, I included infinity everything in a super affordable package price (as we all did), without the variability of anyone wanting to add on extra hours of coverage, albums, prints, etc. So when a mate of mine asked what someone with \$6K to spend would spend on me, we realised that the maximum you could pay for Dan O's Photography at the time was \$3,500.

After this, I changed my packages to 2 different hourly rates (7 and 10 hours), with ala carte hours after that. This opened up the opportunity for couples who wanted me for 8 or 16 hours to have the same flexibility in paying whatever they were able to for my time.

(Pssst - it also put into perspective for them what my hourly rate was and helped a mutual respect of time come free flowing in after that.)





CULL IN, NOT OUT



CULL IN, NOT OUT.

*Ahhh, how good is culling?
Said no one, ever.
This makes it easier.*

I find it's a lot faster and more joy-bringing to select the favourite images into a catalogue rather than select the baddies/rejects out.

Don't know why. Human brain science. But joy gets it done quicker for me - so I'm purposefully enjoying the images that make me happy instead of focusing on the ones that make me want to put myself in a panda suit, grab my laptop, throw it out the window, and question everything.

LET THE CAMERA HANG





LET THE CAMERA HAAAANG.

It's tempting sometimes to run around and spray and pray as many images as we can on a wedding day - to "guarantee" the shot - but myself and my buddy Samm Blake have found that sometimes putting the camera down for a bit can be super productive, too.

Especially if you feel rushed on the day, it's something that I can be guilty of doing too: pointing my camera at anything and anyone that will have me, and shooting the shit out of it.

BUT

Also in those times of overwhelm, it comes as a benefit to everyone, if I let the camera hang at my side and just take a few minutes to think or chat to the people around me for a bit.

I'm not talking about not taking a single photo during prep or anything, but I have connected with my couples a lot more when I read the room and put the intrusive lens to my side for a little bit, for a chat.

Makes them more comfortable,
Makes me take a breath,
Makes the vibe more relaxed and
(often) rewarding.

NEVER LEAVE ON TIME



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When it's time for me to go, I often sneak up to my couples for a little cuddle and I say something like: "technically I'm gone, but I'm going to circle the dance floor one more time in case Uncle Awesome is busting a move to Biggie, again."

This is a good move to make your couples think of you as the nicest person in the world who's sticking around for that Biggie d-floor move -- staying over time, what a legend -- and it also doesn't solidify you in their memory as the dude who couldn't have leave faster at 8:59 pm.





**NOTHING IS EVER A HASSLE,
IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE**

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So much good comes your way from keeping yourself in the minds of everyone you meet, especially when it's of you being a bloody legend, considering the circumstances.

It's late. Nearly 1 am. You have listened to my PDF advice and you didn't leave on time. You've packed up. You finally got your cold vendor meal, and your aching back is getting ready to load your 15KGs worth of gear into the car. Suddenly, a mum or an aunty runs up to you and says,

"OHHHH NOOOO, DAAAN! ARE YOU LEAVING? WHAT A SHAME! I WANTED TO GET ONE MORE PHOTO OF ME AND ALL OF MY COUSINS, BECAUSE IT'S THE FIRST TIME WE'VE ALL SEEN EACH OTHER IN 23.5 YEARS AND UNCLE IRWIN'S HAIR FINALLY GREW BACK. WOULD YOU MIND TAKING ONE MORE FAMILY PHOTO?"

Would I? Of COURSE I wouldn't mind. In fact: One more family photo is my middle name. IN FACT! I was HOPING you'd come up to me and ask me that, which is why I packed up my super heavy bag and started slowly walking out.

Trust me: do your damn best to make that seem like the pleasure of your lifetime, and it will come back to you in spades, love, and referrals.



THANKS, GUYS.

Somehow you got this far, and I can't tell you how much that means to me. Truly. A lot.

I hope any of these tips have brought some helpful insight into your life & work. And I look forward to hearing from you legends again, soon.

