

Quillfeather Films — Business Plan

Videography business in Raleigh, NC · Startup plan

Executive summary

Quillfeather Films is a new videography business in Raleigh, NC offering wedding films: a highlight, the full ceremony and speeches; real-estate walkthrough videos for listings; brand and promo videos for local businesses; monthly short-form social content retainers; event coverage: conferences, launches, recitals; and drone footage as an add-on. The model is one filmmaker with a professional kit: weddings as the anchor booking, corporate and real-estate shoots on weekdays, a monthly social-content retainer, a second shooter on call and a drone as the add-on.

Startup budget: \$5,978 across 10 items, funded from savings. Target: \$8,000 in monthly sales.

Twelve months from now, success looks like this: About \$8,000 a month by the end of the first year — two weddings a month at \$2,300, two corporate or real-estate shoots at \$1,200 and one social-content retainer at \$1,000 — with a second shooter on call and a drone added once the Part 107 is passed

Products and services

Quillfeather Films' core service is wedding films: a highlight, the full ceremony and speeches. Every job is booked on a written contract with a deposit and a delivery date, shot to two cards at once, cut to licensed music, and delivered through a client gallery — with the second shooter and the drone priced as add-ons.

- Wedding films: a highlight, the full ceremony and speeches
 - Real-estate walkthrough videos for listings
 - Brand and promo videos for local businesses
 - Monthly short-form social content retainers
 - Event coverage: conferences, launches, recitals
 - Drone footage as an add-on
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Market analysis

The customers are engaged couples booking a year out who want the day on film; real-estate agents who need a walkthrough for every listing; local businesses that need a brand video and a month of clips; and the marketing managers with an event or a launch to cover — plus the photographers who refer the video half of the booking.

- Engaged couples booking a year out who want the day on film, not just in photos
 - Real-estate agents who need a walkthrough video for every listing, on repeat
 - Local businesses — a dentist, a gym, a restaurant — that need a brand video and a month of clips
 - Marketing managers at small companies with an event or a launch to cover
 - Photographers who refer the video half of the booking
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Marketing strategy

Most bookings will come by word of mouth — from the photographers, planners and venues who shared Quillfeather Films' last film, and from the agents whose listings sold — and the rest find Quillfeather Films on Google — “wedding videographer” and “video production” plus the city — so the Google Business Profile, the reel and a website with a page per service and an inquiry form decide whether a view becomes a booking.

- Wedding photographers, planners and venues who recommend the videographer whose film they shared last month
 - Instagram, TikTok and YouTube — the reel, the one-minute highlight, the before-and-after of a listing
 - Google Business Profile and Google — “wedding videographer” and “video production” plus your city
 - Real-estate brokerages and the agents' own networks: one agent's listings become the office's
 - The wedding directories and the local business groups where the brand-video inquiries start
 - A website that leads with the reel, a page per service and the inquiry form
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Operations plan

The owner is the shooter, the editor, the booking agent and the archivist in year one: Saturdays for weddings and weekdays for corporate and real-estate work, a contract and a delivery date for every job, two copies of every card before sleep, licensed music only, and a second shooter booked the day the wedding is.

- A contract for every job: deliverables, timeline, raw-footage policy, music, revisions, deposit and cancellation
- Two copies of every card before you sleep; a backup drive off-site; dual-slot recording on the weddings
- Weddings on Saturdays, corporate and real-estate on weekdays, editing in the gaps; a delivery date in writing
- A second shooter booked the day the wedding is, paid per date
- Music from a licensed library only; releases signed for anyone who appears in a commercial piece
- The gear list insured, serialized and checked before every shoot

Startup costs

What it will take to open the doors, funded from savings.

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
A camera body that shoots clean 4K	\$1,398
One versatile lens, with a second lens at the top of the range	\$959
A motorized gimbal	\$414
A wireless lav system, and a shotgun mic at the top of the range	\$324
Memory cards, a 2 TB SSD and a backup drive	\$500
Editing software	\$148
Liability insurance (first year), with \$20,000 of gear cover at the top	\$238
Business registration: a sole proprietorship, or an LLC	\$150
Website with the reel, a page per service, a form and Google Business Profile	\$0
Working capital: two months of running costs	\$1,847
Total	\$5,978

Typical range to start a videography business in the US: \$3,174–\$10,781. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Website with the reel, a page per service, a form and Google Business Profile: Your Zarla plan includes the website — the reel on the first screen, a page for weddings, real estate

and corporate work, the inquiry form — and walks you through your Google Business Profile. Having one built typically costs \$1,000 to \$2,000 from a freelancer.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a one-person videography business in the US. Startup is the camera, the lens, the gimbal and the audio; the monthly lines are software and the music license, insurance, driving and the second shooter; and the calendar — how many weddings and weekday shoots fit around the editing — decides what is left after the hours.

Typical monthly operating costs for a videography business: \$340–\$1,853 a month, before the owner's own pay.

At \$8,000 in monthly sales, Quillfeather Films would clear \$6,147–\$7,660 a month before owner pay and tax, and recover the \$5,978 startup budget in roughly 1 month.

Typical monthly operating costs

COST	TYPICAL RANGE
Editing software and a music license	\$17–\$62
Client delivery: cloud storage and a video host (included with Zarla)	\$10–\$40
Liability insurance, by the month	\$11–\$29
Driving to shoots: 200 to 600 miles a month	\$152–\$456
Ads, directory listings and the reel's promotion	\$50–\$300
Cards, batteries, drive replacements and repairs	\$20–\$100
A second shooter on the weddings	\$0–\$600
Card fees (on about \$8,000 across eight payments)	\$80–\$266

US ranges for a small operation; replace with your own figures as you learn them. Lines marked (included with Zarla) are what those tools cost separately — with Zarla they are part of one monthly plan.

Risks and honest downsides

Every videography business plan should say out loud what can go wrong. For Quillfeather Films, the real risks are:

- Wedding season is April to October: half the year's bookings land in six months, and January is editing only
- A failed card with no second copy is a wedding that cannot be reshot and a refund with a complaint attached
- Editing hours are the hidden cost — a \$2,300 wedding is a day of shooting and three to five days at the desk
- Gear ages fast and the next camera is always a year away; buy for the work you have, not the work you want
- A music takedown or a copyright claim on a client's film is your problem the moment it posts
- Hours don't scale: two weddings a month plus weekday work is a full calendar, and growth means an editor or a second shooter you train

Licenses, permits and insurance

What Quillfeather Films needs before it can legally trade in the US. Rules vary by state and city — confirm each item with your local licensing office and an accountant.

- Business registration and sales tax on the finished video — In the US no license is needed to film for money; most videographers trade under their own name or form an LLC (\$40 in Kentucky, \$300 in Texas, and California adds an \$800 yearly LLC tax on top of its filing fee) and take a free EIN. Whether the video is taxed depends on the state: most states don't tax the service itself, but Texas taxes photography and videography labor and the digital files delivered as tangible personal property (the Comptroller's taxable-services list and its photographers' publication), and several states tax digital goods — register for a sales tax permit where yours does, and confirm it with your accountant.
- Who owns the footage — In the US the copyright in a film vests in the person who made it (17 U.S.C. §201(a)) — the videographer, not the couple or the company — unless the contract says otherwise. A work commissioned “as a part of a motion picture or other audiovisual work” is one of the categories that a signed written agreement can make a work made for hire (17 U.S.C. §101), so read what you sign: the usual deal licenses the client every use they need and keeps the copyright, the raw footage and the right to show the work in your portfolio with you. Put the raw-footage policy in writing too — delivered, kept for a year, or deleted — and have a lawyer read the ownership clause once.
- Music in the films — In the US (and on every platform the film is posted to) the song needs a synchronization license from its publisher and a master license from its label; a licensed library (Epidemic Sound's Pro plan, Artlist) covers client work for its subscription, while the couple's favorite chart song is rarely available at any price a wedding can carry, and an unlicensed one is muted or taken down. Price the licensed library into every package.
- Drones — In the US flying a drone for pay needs an FAA Part 107 remote pilot certificate (the knowledge test is \$175 at PSI testing centers; the certificate itself is free), every drone registered (\$5 for three years) and broadcasting Remote ID, an airspace authorization (LAANC) near airports, and the daylight, 400-foot and line-of-sight rules; some states and cities add their own limits on where you can launch. A venue's permission is separate from the FAA's.
- Contracts, releases and permits — In the US a job is a contract — deliverables, delivery date, revisions, deposit (half at booking is usual), travel, the raw-footage policy and cancellation terms — in writing every time; commercial work needs a signed release from anyone who appears on camera and from private locations; and some cities require a film permit to shoot in parks and on streets even with a small crew. Weddings run on the venue's rules, not a permit.
- Insurance — In the US a videographer's liability policy (Full Frame's is \$129 a year for \$1 million per occurrence) covers the guest who trips on your slider and the venue's floor your light stand scratches; venues and corporate clients require a certificate naming them before you load in, and the gear cover (\$20,000 for \$347 a year all in) is what pays for the camera that leaves the car without you.

Milestones: the next 30 days

The first month's to-do list for Quillfeather Films, in order:

- Decide the lanes — weddings, real estate, brand video, a retainer — and price each from the figures above
- Register the business, take the free EIN, open a business bank account and check your state's sales tax rule on video
- Buy the body, the lens, the gimbal and the audio kit, and set up the two-copy storage routine
- Subscribe to the music library and choose the editing software
- Bind the liability policy and save the certificate template
- Shoot two or three discounted projects in your strongest lane and cut a 60-to-90-second reel
- Put the website live with the reel first, a page per service and the inquiry form; claim your Google Business Profile
- Write the contract, the release and the raw-footage policy
- Send the reel to five photographers, three planners and two brokerages, and book the first retainer client
- Study for the Part 107 if the drone is in the plan

Appendix: what a lender will ask for

This plan tells the story and shows the numbers. If you take it to a bank, expect to be asked for these documents as well:

- Two years of personal tax returns and a personal financial statement
- The booking calendar with signed contracts and deposits received
- An equipment list with receipts and the gear policy
- Proof of liability insurance and a sample certificate
- Your credit report and the reel
- The retainer agreements and the real-estate brokerage's letter of intent, if you have them

Sample plan for a fictional business, written by Zarla's free business plan generator. Every figure is a typical US range or calculated from the sample's own numbers — nothing is a market projection. Make it yours in five questions:

zarla.com/business-plan-generator?industry=videographer