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Choosing A Wedding DJ/Emcee: Important Information You Should Know

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A recent survey in a national bridal publication asked thousands of brides (after the wedding was over) what the most important factor was that contributed to the success of their wedding. An amazing 61% indicated that the *music was the most important factor*. This statistic suggests that you evaluate your priorities and determine how important the entertainment is to your wedding. Do you envision you and your guests dancing the night away, having the time of your lives? If so, you need to take some time and educate yourself as a consumer before you begin the selection process for entertainment.

There are a variety of people and companies that provide mobile disc jockey services in this area. It can be very tempting to select the DJ who has the cheapest price. However, you should know that all disc jockeys are not created equal. Listed below are a few things you should consider prior to hiring your disc jockey.

1. Reliability - This is one of the most important things to verify. There are a lot of new DJ companies surfacing in the area, and you want to be certain that they are a reputable company with a proven track record for reliability. As a consumer, you should NEVER compromise this once-in-a-lifetime event with a DJ company who has yet to prove themselves to be both reliable and professional.

The importance of getting a written contract from your disc jockey cannot be overemphasized. In at least 90% of the cases that we have seen another DJ company cancel their services (or simply not show up), one or both of the following factors were involved:

- **The DJ was a "friend" of the family.**
- **There was no written contract.**

The above statistics provides you with a lot of "food for thought". You may have a very capable friend or newer DJ company who has offered to provide you disc jockey services at a discounted rate. The questions you should ask are, do you want to take a chance on the DJ not showing up for your event, or canceling at the last minute? Is your friend qualified to perform as a wedding DJ/Emcee? We think that it is imperative that you have a written contract with your entertainment.

Speaking of reliability – you should know that the DJ Connection has been performing for weddings and other events for twenty years. We have NEVER canceled our services, or arrived late to a wedding reception - NEVER. Simply put, you can relax and have peace-of-mind when you choose the DJ Connection for your reception entertainment.

2. Experience - The next thing to consider is experience. More specifically, experience in the type of event you are planning. For instance, if you are planning a wedding you would not want to select a DJ who mainly plays music for school dances or night clubs. Many younger/newer DJs start out doing clubs and school dances, and then venture into the wedding arena totally unprepared. In this example, the DJ will most likely not have the variety of music that is necessary to perform at weddings, offer comprehensive pre-reception planning, nor will this DJ have the experience at professionally Emceeing and coordinating a wedding reception. This example serves to point out that a professional wedding DJ/Emcee is much more than someone who "plays music" at a wedding. Choosing a DJ/Emcee who has a lot of experience in planning and performing at wedding receptions is extremely important to the success of your reception.

3. Personality/Interaction - It is important for you to select a DJ who will provide the style and personality that you prefer. Do you want an energetic and fun DJ, or do you prefer that the disc jockey provide a more low key approach? These are questions you should ask yourself, and the disc jockey, and make sure that you can match your needs and tastes to the ability and style of the disc jockey. At the DJ Connection, we customize the amount of personality and interactivity for each wedding, based on the preferences of each bride and groom. For this reason, you could see the same Emcee within our company two weeks in a row, and see two different types of performances. Why, you ask? We recognize that couples getting married have different personalities, tastes and needs, and there isn't a "one size fits all" style of performance. Our wedding clients appreciate our willingness to work with them to customize the amount of personality and interactivity.

Fun & Interactive Approach – If you have ever been to an event where the DJ "just played music", and did nothing to get people involved, you probably understand the importance of choosing a wedding DJ/Emcee who has the skills and experience to interact with your guests. Our ability to interact with your guests and motivate them on the dance floor is one of our strengths, if that is what you desire for your reception. We have seen numerous occasions where our willingness to incorporate fun, interactive performances can literally "make or break" an event, and can mean the difference between your guests leaving the reception early, or dancing the night away. Keep in mind that a wedding emcee can be fun and interactive without crossing the line of being obnoxious or a "show-off".

Low Key Approach - If you are looking for a more "low key" approach, we are happy to accommodate your needs. If you are planning an elegant wedding and do not want the DJ/Emcee to incorporate the use of party props and some of the popular audience participation activities that are common at weddings, we are happy to adjust our style of performance. The important thing is, your entertainer should be flexible in adjusting the level of personality and interactivity to suit your needs.

4. Pre-Event Planning Services - Will the DJ/Emcee provide you with the personalized attention and planning services BEFORE the wedding day? Weddings in particular are more involved, with numerous details that have to be planned and organized, in order to have the event run smoothly. If you want to fully appreciate the value of pre-planning a wedding, just speak with a bride or groom whose DJ waited until they arrived at the reception to determine the sequence of the reception formalities. Rather than dealing with the hassles and headaches of making last-minute decisions at your reception, don't you think it would be a good idea to have a comprehensive itinerary of your event in advance? We certainly think so, and in fact, our planning services prior to the event are a VERY important part of the service we provide each of our clients. For weddings, make sure your DJ has a comprehensive wedding reception planner that allows you to plan and organize your reception. If they don't have one, this is a "red-flag" indicator that they may not have a lot of experience at performing for weddings, and typically do not provide comprehensive pre-wedding planning services that allow you to relax and enjoy your day.

5. Training - What kind of training has the disc jockey received? Did the DJ just start their own business and learn by trial and error, or have they completed a nationally recognized formal training program that provides the information and skills necessary to provide outstanding performances. The owners of the DJ Connection attend at least three national "DJ" conferences annually, and teach new performance techniques to our staff of professional DJ/Emcees in formal classroom training sessions. This allows our entire staff to stay on the cutting edge of equipment and performance. This is an investment we gladly make to set the standard of excellence in disc jockey entertainment in this area.

6. Music Library - This category is a distinguishing factor that drastically varies with people who provide this service. Quite simply, anyone can claim that they have a variety of music that includes oldies, country, Big Band, Top 40, R & B, alternative, Latin, etc. The question is, are they really equipped to play the music that you want, and can they play most of the requests that they receive from your guests? How many selections does the DJ have?? This may seem to be a surprise to you, the layman, but if your DJ says they have 300 to 400 CD's, they are under-equipped, and will most likely not be able to play a substantial number of requests they receive from you and your guests. This driving factor is a major reason why some DJ's in the area charge \$250 or \$300 for their services. The "budget DJ" simply has not invested the amount of money necessary to provide you with a first class selection of music. If you are planning a wedding or other event where you expect a variety of ages and music tastes, it is important for you to select a DJ who has invested in a music library that allows him or her to play most of the requests received from your guests. At The DJ Connection, we carry a music library that is second to none. As a matter of fact, we play an average of 95% of the requests we receive, without any special preparation.

7. Equipment - Providing professional disc jockey services takes a toll on consumer grade equipment purchased at retail stores like Radio Shack or Circuit City. This is why your disc jockey should have high quality, industrial equipment, that is designed for over the road use. Each of our sound systems has been designed to provide clear, distortion-free sound. While it is highly unlikely that your disc jockey will experience any equipment problems, you will have the peace of mind knowing that back-up equipment is readily available.

8. References - If you have never seen the disc jockey you are considering for your event, you should ask for references from both previous clients and from area banquet facilities. We think that the references from the banquet facilities are your best bet, since the banquet manager has probably seen the DJ in question on numerous occasions, and can give you a better idea on the ability of a DJ.

9. Appearance/Dress - Unfortunately, this is an issue that must be examined prior to hiring your disc jockey. It is still the norm to hear of a disc jockey who wore jeans and a T-shirt to a wedding or other similar event. We think that it is important to provide a professional approach in everything we do. This is why our DJ's wear a tuxedo to each formal event we perform.

10. Full Time or Part Time? – We are not suggesting that a DJ who provides their service as a sideline to another career can't do a good job for your event. However, for weddings in particular, there are numerous details to plan and organize. This requires a lot of contact with the DJ to develop a comprehensive wedding plan that ensures the success of your event. Our full-time event planners are there to serve your needs during normal business hours, and often times after business hours. This means that you will usually get a live voice on the other end of the phone line when you call in with questions or updates to your wedding plan. This is an important part of the outstanding customer service we provide each of our clients!

As you can see, there are many factors that go into choosing your disc jockey. Don't let price alone determine which entertainer you select. Because the entertainment makes or breaks most events, spending more for a quality entertainment service is a worth while investment to ensure the success of your event. We welcome any questions or concerns you may have about your entertainment needs.