



DJ X Productions, LLC – Karaoke & DJ Services

Client Factors to Consider:

How loud do you play the music?

One of the greatest complaints of bands and DJs alike is that they play the music too loud. It doesn't have to be that way. The speakers will be strategically positioned for even sound coverage throughout the banquet room at a comfortable level whether we're playing soft listening music for dinner/cocktails or dance music. This means that on the dance floor the music will be at a comfortable, yet powerful enough level for dancing. Throughout the rest of the room the music will be less predominant and your guests will be able to carry on a normal conversation without screaming.

Dancing:

No one can guarantee your guests will dance. There may be DJs out there who claim they can, but no one can control how someone else feels or acts.

SECRET: There are many ways to set the mood if you think have a tough crowd. The three things you want to achieve are: Having a hard-surfaced dance floor, (not carpet); dimming the lights- darker is better; and having the music at a loud, but not uncomfortable, level. Why so? Number one, people are

reluctant to dance on carpet. The subliminal message is not to dance. "If there is no dance floor, dancing is not appropriate" is what the message says. Number two, having the room as dark as possible makes people less self-conscious. Notice how sometimes folks are reluctant to be first on the dance floor? The same principle applies here. If people feel other guests are not staring or looking at them, they are more apt to "get comfortable" out there. This is why receptions at night already have something going for them in a "party" sense. An afternoon wedding, at a Country Club with beautiful views of the golf course, can be wonderful. But it does not set the mood for dancing. Your DJ will have to work a little harder. Number three, the music should be loud enough so your guests do not hear their footsteps, or dancing steps, on the floor. That's right; it goes back to the old self-conscious thing. The majority of people do not consider themselves to be professional dancers, and if they can feel the beat of the music, they are less timid to "cut loose" Other Secrets to People Dancing what other things help get people on the dance floor? The old hard-and-fast rule applies here as well: an open bar can't hurt. Alcohol simply lets people act sillier. If the bride and groom remain on the floor, at least for a few songs, you'll be amazed at how many of your guests will stay with you. If you go to sit right down, many of your guests will follow.

WAYS TO DECIDE ON A DJ:

Start at the Beginning.

First and foremost. if you have attended a wedding with a DJ you liked, that's it, and you're Done! Believe it or not, that is how most of my personal business happens. Word-of-Mouth is the single most important thing a DJ can have. It translates to: tons of satisfied clients.

Unfortunately, many people have not attended a wedding recently, or maybe they have experienced a DJ that wasn't so great. Now what?

THE INSIDE SECRETS TO HIRING A WEDDING RECEPTION DJ:

The Simple How-To Guide for Hiring the Right DJ for Your Special Day.

DJs have come a long way in the past 20 years, with a lot to choose from. Today there are very capable and exceptional women in the DJ business, also. However, for easier reading, I will refer to "the DJ" as he.

You may have these pre-conceived notions about DJs:

1. Pretty much all DJs are the same, all they do is press buttons and play music.
2. DJs are cheaper than bands.
3. After I get my church, my reception hall, my caterer, my cake, my photographer, my

videographer, then I'll get my DJ.

4. All DJs have goofy routines and blow-up balloon guitars, crazy hats, and nutty props.

5. I can give a list of songs to my DJ and he can play them in order, according to my preference.

6. If my family and friends don't dance, the DJ stinks.

7. I should go watch a live performance or a video of a DJ in action to see if I like him.

8. I know someone in a nightclub who DJs every night. He will be perfect for my wedding!

Hopefully, after you read this, you will be the "super-educated" bride (or groom!) with an expertise in Disc Jockeys. Get ready to be "wowed" with all the secrets you'll need right here!

Watching a Performance:

Many Bridal Magazines, Websites, and well-meaning friends will give this advice: "You better go see the DJ at a wedding reception so you can see him live, in action!"

Believe it or not, I am not going to recommend this, either. Why? Think about it. Would you want potential clients of the DJ that is hosting your wedding hanging around your reception?

Two Main Points about Watching a Performance

Number one, the DJ will not have time to personally speak with you. Number two, the reception you drop in on may be one where the bride has a completely different idea (than you) of what a perfect wedding reception is. For example, you may absolutely hate involvement dances like The Chicken Dance, The Macarena, YMCA, or others similar to that style. What if you drop in, and that is exactly what is happening? What if the dance floor is hopping, the DJ is into it, and people are "YMCAing" away?

You may have trouble envisioning this DJ having great success at your reception without these songs. Understand that great DJs are able to adapt to any style, and great DJs do not do "cookie-cutter" weddings. It may be very difficult to gauge how this DJ will fit with your personality if he is performing for a completely opposite personality type than you.

Other Troubles and Such

Sometimes receptions run late. What if you arrive at a wedding reception, and you hear

some great Sinatra tunes as you walk in. To your horror, the dance floor is completely empty! No one is dancing! You promptly turn around and leave, not giving another thought to this DJ. Uh-oh. What you didn't know was that dinner was running late, and Sinatra was the dinner music. The couple had not even danced their first dance of the evening! Because the DJ is not able to interrupt his performance to speak with you, you never knew it was only dinner music. Or on the other hand, what if you do successfully "peek in" at the performance, and what you see is great? The DJ is handling the crowd with finesse. Everything looks perfect- so you go home and immediately pop a deposit/retainer check in the mail. Then- after you book him- you realize when talking to him about your reception plans, that he is an unpleasant egomaniac? Just looking at his performance cannot "seal the deal."

Four Basic Types of Rate Structures:

I want to lay it out for you plain and simple. DJs are very competitive, and sometimes it's difficult to be at this profession full-time. The way I see it, DJs are priced four different ways.

Type 1-The Cheapest DJs:

Many part-time operators are excellent DJs. Many have talent, but may have no business savvy. Unfortunately, some stay this way. It is entirely possible for you to spend \$150-\$250 and be totally happy with your DJ. Again, you have to be comfortable with your decision. If this is the route you are taking, it should be only on the advice of another bride who has used this DJ, or someone you have already seen at a wedding where you have attended as a guest. Beware of "I have a friend of a friend who is a DJ." That DJ may be only a hobbyist and not know much about wedding receptions. Although there are DJs who have talent in this category, the majority are beginners. Be extremely careful and thorough here when making your choice.

Type 2-Cheap to Moderate DJs:

The next group of operators, priced from \$400-\$600, are all over the map. Some are weekend DJs, moving up from the previous category, usually working alone. Multi-Ops, which we have discussed above, can keep a price at this level because of volume, using 5 to 15 DJs per weekend. Again, it doesn't mean that they are not good, they simply rely a quantity of

jobs for their profit margin. You'll find many DJs priced this way. If you select a DJ from this category, choose someone with many years of experience. Don't forget, using a Multi-Op, go with a company who can guarantee which DJ will host your wedding. Remember, you need to feel comfortable with the whole process. They should impress you.

Type 3-Moderate to Expensive DJs:

Priced from \$600-\$1200, this category is a pretty small group, there just aren't very many of them. Anyone you hire in this category, at the very minimum, should offer:

1. References
2. Years of experience
3. Experience in high profile events
4. Reliability guarantee
5. Easy to reach
6. Professional equipment
7. Back-up emergency equipment
8. Thousands of songs
9. Various packages to choose from

You may ask yourself why DJs (or the really good ones, anyway) are priced the way they are (expensive). Think about it this way: You could go out and rent the equipment yourself. You would need at least two speakers, an amplifier, CD player or laptop, and a mixer. To get this setup in a professional grade would be about a \$350 rental. Add a wireless microphone for another \$50. We haven't even talked about the thousands of songs most DJs bring with them; if you could rent that type of collection, I would guess it would rent for at least \$100. (I can tell you my collection of song titles, from CDs to iTunes, have a total of cost \$7500 to \$9000 throughout the years). Add the various expenses of business (license, telephone, insurance, tuxedo, travel expense, etc.) for another \$100.

Have you added it up yet? It is now at \$600 and we still have not added in the actual hours a talented DJ/MC will get paid for his time. At a four-hour reception, we can figure a one hour consultation, and another hour (minimum) prep from the DJ before the wedding day. Don't forget, the DJ will arrive at least one hour before the reception, and leave about 30 minutes

after it ends. That is over 7 hours of work involved in your four-hour event, sometimes more. You can see now why DJs who truly are professional and take their businesses seriously as a career, charge the prices they do. You will pay even more for a more talented or in-demand DJ.

So then, why do some DJs charge so little? There could be a multitude of reasons, but it boils down to this: They are either brand-new to the business, hobbyists, or they cut back somewhere else. Old equipment, old songs, and little or no planning are all parts of cutting back.

Type 4-Very Expensive DJs:

This category is also a pretty small one. These are the folks who charge \$1500-\$2000 for a reception. These are the DJs and larger companies who regularly perform at conventions or huge weddings and Bar Mitzvahs. These guys and gals are great! Their parties come with full professional stage lighting, props, sometimes two (or three) DJs, and even dancers, plus much, much, more. If you've got the money, and this sounds like fun to you, by all means go for it. You'll have a blast!

Summing Up The Pricing Game

It all comes down to the old saying- you really do get what you pay for. I hoped I have shed light on why DJs are like airline tickets (all over the map!) This way, you know what to look for, and you can make your way through truths and not-so-truths in the sales pitch.

Music Selection:

No doubt you will want to have some input with your DJ about your music choices for your Day. The featured dances (First Dance, Bride/Father Dance, etc. are covered under my Wedding Reception Planning Worksheet. I like to understand what type of music the couple really likes. This way, I will know what tastes they have, but it also leaves options open for The DJ to "read" the crowd takes requests, and generally keep the party moving along. I

have had brides that have submitted over 100 songs to be played at a reception. This is not Feasible- the math doesn't work. For example: A four-hour reception: Arrival and dinner will last approximately 90 minutes. With time out for toasts, featured dances, etc., your typical 4-hour reception will have about two good hours of dancing (maybe two and a half). The average song length is 3.5 minutes, working out to about 17 songs per hour. This equals about 35-45 songs per reception.

The Human Jukebox;

Do not make the mistake of insisting certain songs being played at certain times, or to give the DJ a list of 40 songs to be played "in that order." The problem arises if: the DJ is sticking to your list and no one is dancing or responding. You really would not want the DJ continue with the list- he needs to have the flexibility to do his job. There are also problems with a 40-50 song list where the DJ can play selections "in any order," but cannot deviate from the list. It again restrains the DJ too much for him to successfully do his job. Micromanaging the DJ is the same as being in the kitchen with the caterer telling them how to prepare the food. Relax- this is what you are paying for... the DJ is paid to know his stuff! If you absolutely insist on having total control on what music is played (and in what order), you may be

happier hooking up an iPod and letting it play. But I Want MY Music! You and your friends and family may have definite tastes in certain music. Odds are, though, not everyone attending your reception likes the exact same thing. Your wedding is all about you. Your reception is, too, but it's more about your guests celebrating your day. Don't make the mistake of letting your ego get in the way and thinking "It's my day and I don't care what anyone thinks! I'm going to do it my way!" If this is the case, and you just can't get past it, you would probably be better off eloping in Las Vegas. To a certain extent, it is about your guests. For example, once in a while the groom does not want to do that "special dance" with their mom (or dads, for the brides). The excuse usually is something like "I don't dance that well" or "I don't feel comfortable". Those dances aren't really for the bride or groom, anyway. It's about honoring your parents for being part of your special day. Emotions run high during this very special day of your life. If you really want your guests to attend a wedding they will remember forever, remember them, too.

Interactive Stuff Most of the interactive activities such as blow-up guitars, funny glasses, and balloons have been used to death. So much so that I never get requests for them now. Especially at weddings, the interactive DJ nowadays is more subtle and focused.

Food and the DJ:

There is a constant debate among professional DJs about getting fed on the job. Honestly, there is no right answer, but I can give you an informed opinion of my own. It is expected for you to provide a meal to your photographer and videographer. They are spending the majority of their day with you, and they need to eat like everyone else. With the DJ, it's a little different. The DJ is not with you the entire day, so the case can be made not to provide a meal, and that is perfectly fine. However, it is a nice gesture and

every DJ I know would certainly appreciate the thought. Sometimes, the caterer, without asking you, will simply give a meal to the DJ. If you are inclined to provide a meal to your DJ, keep in mind the he will probably not want to eat away from his equipment. Just let your caterer know to provide the utensils and food at their DJ table. Remember, the DJ is still working and playing music during dinner.

Do you need a contract? It also helps to seal the deal when people know they are dealing with a professional.

BUSINESS STUFF:

Here's the Legal Stuff:

Ah yes, here is the boring stuff. Well, not really, but it is important you consider these issues when hiring a DJ.

Written Contracts:

You definitely want one. It does not have to be fifty pages long, but it should contain:

1. Your reception date, time, and rate.
2. Any deposits/retainer fees paid.
3. What the DJ needs for the performance (i.e. - a table, electrical outlets, access to Facility, etc.)
4. What the cancellation policy is.
5. Your signature and his signature, agreeing to everything stated on the contract.