

The Secrets to Hiring the Right DJ Service

It is true what they say about the entertainment at a wedding, it is the most important component. It is no secret that the market is saturated with DJs, so how do you hire the right DJ for your budget?

The process of narrowing it down:

DO NOT make price the deciding factor. Compile a list of DJs you have seen in the past, ask friends for referrals, and ask for "preferred DJs" and opinions from your other event vendors. Then narrow your selection down to 3 professional DJ services. Look for a DJ Service that stands out from the rest.

Make contact:

Book your DJ at least 6 months in advance. Although email inquiries are increasing in popularity, nothing beats talking with your DJ service over the phone. How they conduct themselves over the phone is a great indication of how professional they are and how they perform in public. Things to listen for... Are they confident? Can they offer you a professional and easy to read website to refer to? Did they answer their phone when you contacted them? Was there a quick turn around time when responding to your inquires? Or do you have to wait days for a reply back? All of these are indications of whether you are considering a full time professional DJ service. Do not be fooled into thinking that all-inclusive packages are the only options for your entertainment. A professional DJ service will spend the time getting to know you first and talk about pricing last.

The consultation:

Whenever possible, ask to meet with the DJ or DJ Service at their office/residence. A professional DJ service will be proud of their environment, and will welcome the opportunity to display their equipment. This consultation is a great opportunity for you to meet with them in person, and start to build a relationship. This consultation will give you an idea of how they will treat your wedding and making your day a memorable one.

The full package:

For your special day you need the full package. This includes a professional DJ, high quality equipment and lighting, and the right songs for your party. Some DJ companies emphasize the need to have a music library in the tens of thousands. Ironically, only 60-70 songs will be played, but if they are not the right songs then your celebration will not be memorable. An experienced DJ can help with this. Determine a general play list in advance and provide your DJ with a "do and don't" play list. Get their input on your evening. Will they be interactive? Can they help with the cake cutting ceremony and the first dance? What are their suggestions?

Get it in writing:

A professional DJ service will send you a contract. Make sure you discuss payment options and cancellation policies prior to signing. This is the time to determine additional items like: whether dinner for the DJ needs to be provided, music request list policies, exterior arrival times, lighting packages, and determining your assigned DJ. And let's not forget pricing and extra charges.

Don't just take their word for it:

Ask to see the DJ service's references and then qualify them by calling. Make sure to contact a previous client that has used the DJ that is assigned to your wedding function. A professional DJ service will be honored and proud to provide you with at least 3 recent contacts.

Pricing:

Price is one thing - quality is another. All DJs are not created equally. A DJ's rates can vary from a low \$500 to a high \$1500 in most Canadian cities. Anyone below \$500 should be scrutinized to ensure quality of service, equipment, and track record." Chances are, they are not a professional DJ, and they may lack experience, and most likely don't have a license or carry liability insurance. Most good DJs should be priced around in the \$700-1000 range, depending on experience. Book the DJ you can afford and NEVER EVER book the cheapest (unless you are receiving a discount or there is a valid reason that they are the lowest price). Trust your gut feeling for the DJ you like and go with them. Remember, with hiring a professional, comes peace of mind.

Key questions to ask:

What type of sound system do they use? A professional disc jockey will use a professional sound system, not just a home stereo system. You are not only paying for the DJ to keep your guests entertained, but you need the professional equipment for good sound quality. Interested in lighting? Ask your DJ to explain the various options. Make sure that you ask about your DJ's equipment backup policy because equipment failure, though rare, can occur.

Do they have a business license? Ask to see it; don't just take their word for it. Would you feel comfortable giving someone \$500-\$1200 cash 6-12 months in advance if they do not operate as a full time business?

Do they carry liability insurance? This is crucial! If someone gets injured at your wedding by accidentally tripping on the equipment, or if the DJ causes damage to the venue, then you as the signing client would be protected by the DJ's insurance coverage. If they are not insured, simply put, you are liable.

Do they use AVLA licensed music? (Audio Video Licensing Act) Some DJs download MP3 files which are condensed, compromise sound quality, and are illegal. Licensed CDs are the only form of music your DJ should be using. If they are using an iPod or a laptop, you should keep on looking for the right DJ.

Are they members of the Better Business Bureau (BBB)? Consumers can rest assured that when they find a BBB member they are dealing with a company that is proud to make a public statement about high ethical standards.

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