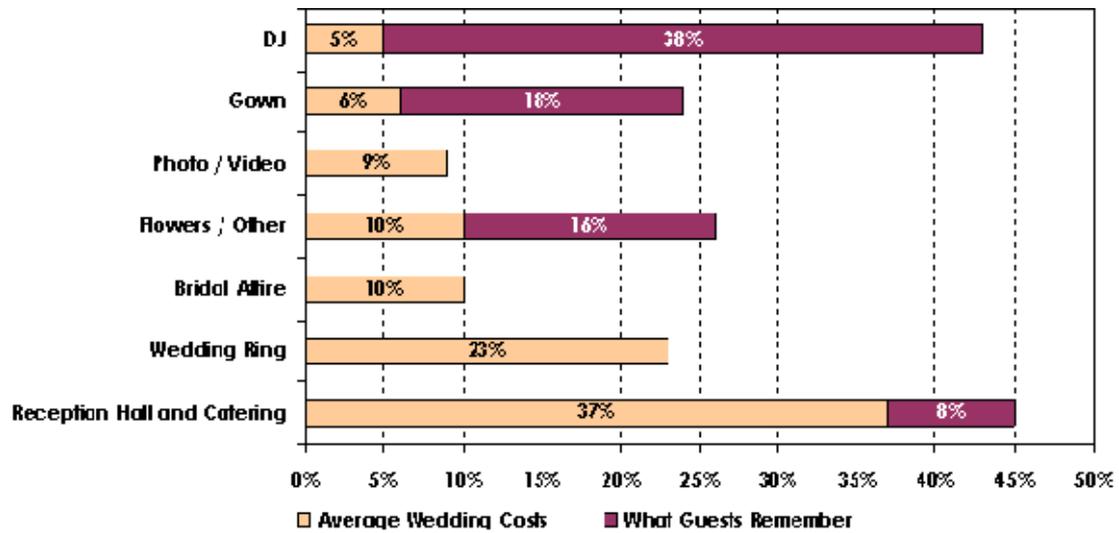


Why Is Choosing The Right DJ VERY Important!!!



Source: Modern Bridal Magazine

Starting off with a statistic found in a bridal magazine, it is clear to see that the service or product that will be costing you the minimum for the wedding will in fact be the most obvious thing that guests will remember about your wedding. It's very interesting, but also very true. Just think about the times that you were a guest at a friend or family's wedding. Can you remember the hall and the food? Can you remember what the bride's dress looked like? What is the thing that you remember the best about it? I can almost guarantee you that it will be the entertainment!

So, from me, congratulations on your engagement. I take it that you have booked the venue, the photographer, the caterer, your dress fits perfectly and all you need is to book a DJ. Planning your wedding, and the success thereof could depend entirely on the DJ. Therefore the choice of DJ should not be taken lightly, yet it is almost always left to the last to arrange. Here are a few tips I would like you to keep in mind when you are planning to book a DJ for your wedding.

You might already know that there are a few different types of DJ's in the market. I am not going to do a layout of all the different types and their specifications; all you need to do, as a bride to be or groom, who is booking the DJ, is to make sure your DJ understands what a wedding entails and what is expected of him on your wedding.

With the "birth" of the MP3, there was a sudden explosion in the market with DJ's, as every Tom, Dick and Harry who has a computer with a few thousands song titles on it sold himself as a DJ. I am not saying that all DJ's working with MP3's are bad. The problem is not as such the MP3, but the way these guys, who have no proper equipment or experience, flooded the market in search of a quick buck at the cost of the client. Similarly, if you buy a stethoscope, can you

call yourself a doctor? So let us look at a few points that will help you to make a calculated choice when it comes to the choice of a DJ for your wedding.

SAMRO (www.samro.org.za)

SAMRO stands for South African Music Right Organization. Who are they, and what do they do? SAMRO is a non profitable organization that generate funds by means of issuing licenses to any DJ, company or building where music is played, whether it is a radio in the back ground, live performance, a shop playing CD's in the background, restaurants, basically anywhere. This money is then distributed to the composers of music, and to the families of such composers if they have passed on, for up to 50 years after the death of such composer. You see the money is not paid to the artist as they generate their income from the sale of their albums and live performances. If you want to broadcast or perform music that is not composed and performed by you, you must have a license to do so.

This needs to be one of the first questions you ask any DJ. Is he licensed? Should your DJ not be licensed, he might be arrested at your wedding, and this could mean the end of your wedding as you always dreamed it to be. There are literally hundreds of DJ's who feel that this license is only a "moneymaking scheme" and refuse to pay and rather take the chance, but there are also a few of us who are serious about our work and do not want to jeopardize our client's reputation, nor ours.

THE DJ

A DJ does not just change CD's or do a few clicks with the mouse. There is a lot more to a wedding DJ than meets the eye. To be a wedding DJ is not the most difficult job in the world, although it can be very stressful. It takes a few years to build up experience, a good name and a good reliable sound rig. It takes time and patience, and you must learn the flow of different weddings, how the wedding industry works, how the different service providers work, how the different venues work etc. The DJ must take in consideration the preferences and requirements of his clients and must act accordingly.

Even if you plan to have a club DJ for the evening, you stand the risk that your beautifully planned wedding will not work out. Being a wedding DJ is different from being a DJ who plays in a club. You, as the client, must keep in mind that a DJ, who is a "killer" in the club, is not necessarily going to be a "killer" at your wedding. When we go to a club, we go there because we like the type of music that is played, whether it is House, Trans, Kwaito or even Langarm.

The people who you would invite to your wedding are close family, relatives, friends and business colleagues. The age of this group of people varies from 5 to 85 years of age, and your DJ must make sure that every one is having a fantastic party. To use a DJ who will only cater for a selected few can be concerning. He will either frustrate or infuriate the rest of the guests and make their evening one to forget rather than one to remember. And what is the point in inviting your

guests if you do not want them to enjoy the evening?

Ask yourself the question: Will you stay until, say midnight, if you do not like the music being played? So why not get a DJ that can play all the genres, and so keep everybody at your wedding for as long as possible. Now you will say that there is always going to be someone who will not like what is played. Yes, you are right, but at some stage in the evening the music is going to appeal to that person in some way or other and this is where a good wedding DJ comes in. He must know when to play which kind of music. He will see when your guests arrive what type of music they like and dislike. He must look at the reaction of the people when he plays certain genres of music. Basically must be able to read the guests even before the dancing starts. This sounds like a tall order, and even I sometimes do not get it right the first time, but as the evening progress, so the tastes of music changes due to a few factors, such as the fact that some guests have left the function, and suddenly there is a burst of energy in the remaining crowd as people are prone to be more reserved in the beginning of a party as well as the presence of other important guests like the grandparents, the minister, work colleagues, etc. This sound ridiculous, but it is a fact that we as wedding DJ's are confronted with, and have to adjust to.

CONDUCT

The DJ is a working service provider on your wedding, so he must also be neatly dressed. Not saying that you need to expect him to wear a tuxedo, but ask him about his dress code. The majority of DJ's will wear black trousers with a black shirt. Some will have golf shirts with their logo on, some will wear shirts together with a tie. His dress code must be neat yet practical for the work he is doing. Remember that he will be carrying equipment around before and after the wedding, and some DJ's will arrive in a short and T-shirt, just for this, and will change into their "working" clothes. Find out from the DJ what his dress code is. You might want him to wear a tie with his shirt as you are having a black tie wedding. Most DJ's are very accommodating to your requests.

When you are in doubt about the DJ you are planning to book, ask for references. Contact these references as well as the venue, as someone might give his family and friends up as references. I do not drink any alcohol, and make sure about your DJ's choice. Some clients do not mind the DJ having a beer or two, but my question to you is, do you drink at your work? I hope not. So why can he drink while he is working? He might also have to travel a great distance after the function, and he might be involved in an accident. Keep your conscious clear by, not allowing him to consume any alcohol.

Ask your DJ to liaise with the master of ceremonies and the coordinator of the venue during the evening to ensure an even flow of events, such as speeches, throwing of the garter and bouquet, cutting of the cake. You do not want to stand on the dance floor and wait for the DJ while he is still looking to find your song.

EQUIPMENT

You might now argue: but what has his equipment got to do with me, I know nothing about sound equipment. There is nothing more unsightly than a beautifully decorated hall with flowers, drapes and candles, and here in the corner is a table with the most ugly sound equipment you have laid your eyes on. A DJ who looks after his equipment and keeps it neat is serious about his work and is worth considering. You as the client can also ask him if he would object if his speakers were covered to make it less visible in the hall.

Always try to choose a DJ with decent equipment. Not saying that it needs to be the top of the range, but it can't be Hi-Fi speakers. Proper equipment will give good sound quality that will not be disturbing for your guests. There is nothing worse than to be seated close to a disco speaker that is producing poor sound. But also the sound quality will be as good as the DJ. This means that a guy can have the top of the range, but doesn't know anything about the way to use it, and then the quality can be bad.

Ask your DJ if he has any backup equipment, should something go wrong. A CD player could stop working, amplifier can blow, microphone can break, motherboard of his PC can burn out etc. Make sure there is a plan B should this happen. Not all DJ's have backup equipment, as it is costly to have extra equipment just to be on standby, but it is worthwhile considering. Some have back up, but it is at the office, which might be an hour's drive away. This means that even if he has a driver to bring the back up equipment, that you might have a break in entertainment from 30mins upwards. I normally prefer to take it with me, and then leave it in the trailer. Depending on the equipment failure, I can be up and running again within 10mins.

Ask your DJ about public liability and insurance. You do not want to get an invoice for equipment that broke on your wedding. Not hoping that it will ever happen to anybody, but what if the light stand falls over on top of one of your guests? Some DJ's put it in their terms and conditions, that they are not responsible for any injuries. Does this mean that he can then let the wiring lay loose on the floor in the way of you and your guests?

Should you think about having any other entertainers at your wedding, you might want to think about mentioning it to the DJ. Some do not want or can not supply equipment for the entertainer, but most of the time, the entertainer, can make use of the same equipment that the DJ's using. He might ask you something extra for making use of the equipment, and the entertainer might give you a discount for not supplying his own equipment. So take it up with both parties.

THE MUSIC

The music is an imperative part of this article that you should take notice of. You and your fiancé have a certain music taste. Please, please, please, under no circumstance try to enforce this on your DJ. Believe me it is a foolproof recipe for

a disaster. The point I want to make will come clear in the following. A few years ago I was booked for a wedding and when the couple came to see me about the music, I was told to play only a certain selection of music and the same selection for the dancing. I was not allowed to play any of my own CD's. Even a request for the bridal couple from the bride's mother was rudely stopped by the bride, because she did not want it to be played. In spite of my warnings to the couple that this is not the way to do it, they just said it is their wedding and their decision and if the guests did not like it, then tough. Needless to say by half past ten I was on my way home as the party was a total failure. Do you want your wedding to end like this?

Ask your DJ if he has a list of his music collection and if he would object if you highlight a few tracks you would like him to play during the evening. Ask him if he accept requests from your guests. Some DJs do and others do not like to do requests; it all depends on their personal style. Some can supply a list of the collection and others can't.

Tell your DJ what kinds of music you like and dislike. This will give him an indication of what is required, but give him the freedom to experiment as well. I am quite often told that "our friends are party animals and they will dance till sunrise if you play this type of music" believe me it does not work this way. Remember your guests are involved in your wedding from the early afternoon and it is very seldom that a party goes on that long. Some of my weddings have finished at 23:00, as everyone was tired, although they have had an awesome time. Some have gone on till 04:00 in the morning.

Every wedding is different from the previous one and no DJ will treat it the same. You have guests from all over the world and it is a challenge to keep everyone happy and dancing for the time that they are attending your wedding. Having an experienced DJ is a key factor in ensuring a free flowing, enjoyable, successful wedding.

I hope these few points I mentioned will help you when you need to book your DJ. If you have any questions or if you just want to discuss a few issues, please feel free to contact me.

Enjoy your wedding...after all it is YOUR DAY!!!