

Budgeting and Planning Tips

As you may have noticed while searching for the perfect entertainment for your special occasion, DJ's will charge anywhere from a few hundred dollars to a few thousand dollars.

Many of you may be asking yourself why is there such a difference in the prices of the DJ's. Don't they just play music?

The answer is a simple **no**.

The DJ industry has made some great strides and improvements since 1999 in the quality and services they provide. Associations, Magazines, DJ Newspapers, Seminars & Conventions have formed to better educate DJ's of the importance of what they do and to elevate their quality and service.

Unfortunately some DJ's for whatever reason refuse to try harder and be better. They may call themselves a Professional, but do not fit the qualifications of a true Professional.

Here is a quick break down of how a Professional Disc Jockey Entertainer will/should base the rates at which they charge. (In no particular order)

- 1) Talent
- 2) Experience
- 3) Quality of Service provided to clients
- 4) DJ Training & Education
- 5) Emcee Ability
- 6) Professionalism
- 7) Coordinating & Planning Time and Ability.
- 8) Music Knowledge & Ability to mix music.
- 9) Equipment Used (Lights & Sound)
- 10) Business Operating Expenses
- 11) Salary (40+ HR Week)
- 12) Advertising Budget
- 13) Insurance Costs
- 14) Purchasing a **Legal** Music Library
- 15) Business Vehicle Fuel & Maintenance

As you can see there is a great deal of logistics involved in operating a successful Disc Jockey Business. When it comes to rates you have to ask yourself:

How can those DJ's charging so little stay in business?

What items on this list must they **cut back** on or **not even offer**?

Do they operate with the business plan of **quantity** over **quality**?

Do you really want to leave one of the most important days of your life in the hands of someone who is not equipped to provide you with a high quality professional service? It won't matter how much you saved on the cost of the entertainment if your Disc Jockey performs poorly and possibly ruins your special day. Unfortunately in the DJ Industry, sometimes you get what you pay for.

The **average wedding** in Minnesota will cost a total of \$20,000 - \$30,000 when all is accounted for.

When polled by various Bridal Magazines this is how brides rated the importance when making the budget of individual items to the success of their wedding day before and then after their reception was over.

Before Reception

- 1) **Wedding Gown & Tuxedo**
- 2) Location Site
- 3) Catering (food)
- 4) Wedding Cake
- 5) Flowers
- 6) Decorations & Favors
- 7) Entertainment

After Reception

- 1) **Entertainment**
- 2) Catering (food)
- 3) Location Site
- 4) Wedding Gown & Tuxedo
- 5) Wedding Cake
- 6) Flowers
- 7) Decorations & Favors

The Wedding Gown was the most important item (Budget) to the Bride before the event took place. Every Bride wants to look her absolute best on her special day. She will search for a Gown until she locates the most perfect, beautiful dress for her. Dresses much like entertainment can run from a few hundred dollars to a few thousand dollars. When selecting a Gown keep in mind that you will look beautiful in any Gown but if you opt for a \$1000 dress instead of a \$1500 dress you can use the money saved somewhere else in the budget.

The Location Site & the Catering (food) were the second & third most important on the list (Budget) Brides found after the event they could have saved on the total cost by doing some very simple cost cutting things. For example: eliminating one food item (Save \$1.00 to \$3.00 per person) A food item that no one would have missed. (Veggie Tray, a second Meat or Vegetable - Buffet vs. Plated) Money saved that could be used elsewhere in the budget.

Flowers were the Fifth most important item on the list (Budget) As beautiful as the flowers were they did not contribute to the success of the event but just the expense. The flowers typically get left behind to be thrown away. Some may get taken home only to die a few days later. Most Brides after the Wedding day was over realized that they could have trimmed the Flower budget by half. Money saved that could be allocated somewhere else in the budget.

Decorations & Favors made the sixth place before the event, only to fall to last place on the list after the event was over. Those little extra decorations and favors were just an additional expense for the couple and had absolutely no effect on the guests for the event. Most of the Decorations or Favors could have been completely eliminated without any acknowledgment by the guests. Money saved that could be used for more important items in your budget.

Wedding Cake: Here is a simple way to save a little money on your Wedding Cake. Many bakeries will offer a special facade cake. The top layer is the real cake; the rest is made of a plastic or other material but looks like a real cake. It will give the grand look and feel of a multi tiered exquisite cake while back in the kitchen you have them cut and serve a sheet cake which will be relatively inexpensive but just as delicious when compared to the standard Traditional Wedding Cake.

Entertainment always falls last on the list (budget) before the reception but will always rise to number one after the event. Why? For most bridal couples this will be the first time with the need to hire entertainment for a gathering like this.

Most people believe that DJ's are all alike and do nothing more than play music for a few hours. A true professional Entertainer will spend ten to twenty hours and possibly more working directly on your entertainment needs. Be a little leery of those who just have you answer a few questions on a form without meeting with you to personalize and customized every aspect of your big day.

Bridal Couples who just don't know the importance of hiring a great DJ, tend to look at the budget and find a very limited amount of funds available for the entertainment. Unfortunately they will then hire the cheapest DJ they can afford with the money left in the budget. This discount DJ will typically be sub standard in quality and can lead to many unhappy guests who will leave the party early bringing the reception to a quick end.

It is unfortunate that they didn't learn of this until it is too late. Most Bridal magazines don't have an expert to write columns about the importance of a professional DJ or they publish articles based on old data or misinformation from uninformed sources. Many will print articles from angry Brides & Grooms about their bad experience with a DJ so this becomes the perception of what all Disc Jockeys are like.

After the reception Brides & Grooms realize the importance of great entertainment and then move it to the number one slot. They definitely would consider spending more of their budget on entertainment and less on other items in order to ensure a successful Wedding Day.

When wedding reception guests are asked what they remembered the most about the reception one year later, this is how they responded.

- 1) The Entertainment (Good or Bad)
- 2) Something unusual that happened at the reception (Good or Bad)

No one really remembered or even cared about the Food, Flowers or Favors. It was the Entertainment that stuck most in their minds. A Party is by definition an Entertainment Function. Your guests expect to enjoy a fun, exciting time dancing and laughing.

If you hire an inexperienced or sub standard (average) Disc Jockey, it can have a profound effect on the success of your event. You've rented the hall until one O'clock but your guests leave at ten O'clock, not only did you pay too much for your Entertainment but also paid for a ballroom, bar service & wait staff that won't be used: **money wasted**.

Have you ever heard this? "I could hire my friend to DJ and save some money."

Yes, you can. Unless your friend is a professional DJ, it will be a disaster the same as if you did your own dental work. A DJ is a professional that knows through experience which songs to play when, and how to professionally interact with the crowd to keep the music and dance floor full with all guests having a great time. This only comes from training and experience with being in front of people and an extensive knowledge of music and equipment to make a successful event. There are thousands of people who thought they could just hire a friend to play CD's at their wedding or special event, later they wish they could go back in time and do it right.

If you can trim a little off each of the budgeted items as described here in this article, you won't be spending MORE MONEY for your entertainment; you will just be spending MORE of the original BUDGET for your entertainment.

The best advice anyone can give you to have a wonderful Wedding Reception is to really look over your proposed budget and allocate the funds in a way that represents the type of event you wish to have.

If you want a FOOD function: budget more for the Catering.

If you want a PRETTY function: budget more to decorating & flowers & Favors.

If you want a FUN, EXCITING, UNIQUE, ELEGANT, and MEMORIBLE function: budget more to your entertainment.

I wish you all good luck, good love & a good life!

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