

How To Choose A Disc Jockey

by Phil Crowson

1. WHY IS THE MUSIC / DJ SO IMPORTANT?:

- A. Music = feeling. Beethoven said: "Music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life."
- B. Afterwards, most people will talk more about the music / dancing / activities than the flowers or food.

2. WHAT KIND OF MUSICAL ENTERTAINER DO YOU WANT?:

- DJ:** can provide a wide variety and huge selection of music, adjusting the tone and style as necessary.
- Band:** can provide a limited repertoire of songs and number of styles, take breaks, and usually cost much more.
- Background Music:** can provide a "musak" type experience... volume is very low, and very few people dance.

3. DECIDE GENERALLY WHAT YOU WANT:

Have a discussion with your fiance about the general layout of the Reception, and how you want the DJ in it. Choose the time range you need them carefully - usually 1-As guests arrive 2-during dinner 3-dancing, etc.
- 4 hours may seem like a long time for a DJ, but after you subtract common items, it's < 2 hours dancing
If Mom or Dad are paying, you probably want to get their input as well (common sense, but often not done).
You probably want to see what the "going rates" are for DJs in this area before you set a strict budget limit.

4. UNDERSTAND THE DJ BUSINESS:

Most DJs are NOT full-time career professionals. (you will find this by getting many voicemails / ans. machines)
for example - in the Raleigh Yellow Pages, there are 42 DJ listings, but only about 4 are full-time businesses
Being a weekend hobbyist or part-time business does not mean they aren't good (most DJs start that way)
The typical advantages of a full-time business: more experience, more music, and more concern over reputation.
There are three main types of full-time DJ businesses: (and you may have a preference among them)
1. local dj company 2. booking agency (mainly subcontractors) 3. franchise (big networks)

5. RESEARCH DJ'S FOR SERVICES AND PRICES:

Yellow Pages (Disc Jockey section):

- It is recommended that you call during business hours M-F, so you know if they are full-time or not.
- Get them to give you a quote and send you a packet (it should contain info, a contract, and references)
- Ask them if they are full-time DJs, which of the 3 types (above) they are, and how many DJ's they have
Note: bigger is not always better, especially with as personal and creative a choice as a DJ
Big companies always have big web sites, flashy packets, fancy offices, maybe even videos...
BUT... Will you get more personal service with a company doing 30 events on your big day?... or 3?
- Ask if you can choose to book a specific DJ on the contract, and if there is an additional fee for that.
- Beware of high-pressure tactics (eg - I only have one opening left on that date, so you better sign up now)
- Beware of negativism towards other DJs (especially if they specifically name other businesses)
- Beware of DJs who ask what other DJ price quotes you have, then they undercut or adjust their price.
(DJs who provide a professional service do not run a used car lot, but some act like it... so look out)
- You will begin to sense some people you do (and do NOT) "connect" with on the phone.
Trust your instincts... a DJ is a very personal choice, and not just a "role player" at your wedding.
Unlike your Caterer, Photographer, and Florist... your DJ's methods and personality are visible to all

Internet (Use your search engine to find Wedding Planning sites or DJ sites... limited selection):

- Remember that listings on bridal sites are paid advertising (not endorsements), just like the Yellow Pages.

6. NARROW THE LIST:

- Now that you know what typical professional (and unprofessional) DJ's cost, you can budget that.
(Often the parents set a tight limit on the DJ because it is a low priority to them,
so if the DJ is a higher priority to you, you may want to pay for the balance of their fee)
- Check with the Better Business Bureau of Eastern NC: 872-9240 - they will mail or fax you info for free
- Review the packets they send: who offers the range of services that most suits you?
Reminder: Large, fancy packets / videos / offices do not necessarily indicate better service for you.
- Discuss your choices with your fiance / parents (again... common sense, but often not done)

7. FINALIZE YOUR DECISION:

- If you are left with more than one DJ business with comparable services, professionalism, and price...
You are lucky! Pick the one you felt the best about in your phone conversation.
- If you have any questions... Phil can be reached at (919) 870-9119 or aplusdjservice@mindspring.com