

How to Hire a DJ for your Wedding

So your getting married soon and you and your future spouse decide it's time to start planning for the big day. Besides the venue, the caterer, photographer, wedding gown, rings, cake, flowers, and more, you have to get a DJ or a band for your musical entertainment. Let's say you decide to choose a DJ over a band. A lot of top-notch professional wedding DJs get booked anywhere from 6 months to 18 months in advance, so start looking early especially if your wedding date is in May or June.

Now that you know when to start looking for a DJ you need to know where to find them. You can find DJs from a variety of sources, friends, family, the internet, print ads, from other vendors, etc. A common mistake by most people is that they tend to believe that all DJs are pretty much the same, which couldn't be further from the truth. Just about every DJ has their own unique style and level of professionalism which they bring to the table. When looking for a DJ, look for one that specializes in weddings. If they do other types of events to, that's fine as long as they have substantial experience performing at weddings (At least 100 weddings). Also, a large variety of music is important, everybody has different tastes, and more than likely so will your guests.

Now that you know where to find a DJ, and the basics of what to look for, it's time to start contacting DJs and start making appointments for interviewing. Keep in mind you want a professional for your wedding, not a hobbyist, this is your wedding day, and you only get one chance to do it right. As soon as you start to contact DJs you'll know very soon which are professionals, and which are just "weekend warriors". If no one answers the phone when you call, or they don't return your inquiry promptly (no later than 24 hours) move on to the next one. Why? If a DJ can't return your phone call or e-mail promptly, that shows a lack of reliability and professionalism. If they're too busy to return your inquiry, more than likely they may be too busy for you when you have questions, plans, or issues which will arise. Now you have to look at your budget, what percentage of your wedding budget should go towards your musical entertainment? On average most brides spend about 5% on a DJ, but numerous articles in bridal magazines and the internet stated that most brides said that if they could do it all over again they would have spent probably 10%-15% of their wedding budget on a better DJ. So the price of a DJ shouldn't be your only factor in choosing a DJ.

Make sure that the DJ has references, is willing to meet with you, see the venue, has quality equipment, and probably most important, has a written contract. I receive about 5 phone calls a year from brides whose DJs never showed up, or cancelled at last minute, and the bride never had a contract with the DJ to begin with. Before signing a contract, discuss any overtime fees, your plans for your wedding, special songs, their back-up plans for personnel, transportation, and equipment, etc. After signing a contract with any DJ, the key to a successful wedding reception (and sometimes the ceremony) is communication. I can't stress this enough, don't wait until the last minute to inform your DJ of exactly what and how you want something done. Most professional wedding DJs do much more than just play music, some are pretty much the wedding coordinators also. They make sure that everything goes smoothly and all your "wedding events" such as the cake cutting, toasts, garter and bouquet toss, special dances, etc get done in a reasonable time frame. So stay in contact with you DJ, keep him/her informed, and this way you'll both be on the same page for your special day.

By DJ Kazmere of [Starr Productions](#)