



Twelve Questions to ask your Wedding DJ

Note: While the majority of DJs are male, there really are many wonderfully talented female DJs within our industry! For practicality, we refer below to "he", "him", "his", etc., meaning to include the ladies as well.

1) Do you provide a written contract?

All of the wedding DJs you interview may not have the same standards of professionalism. A written contract is generally a good indicator of whether a DJ is professional and reliable. A contract sets forth the DJ's obligations to the client and outlines what is required for the DJ's success, by detailing his setup requirements and other factors related to his performance.

2) Who will be the DJ at my wedding?

Often, the person you speak to is not the person who will DJ your wedding day. This practice is more common than you may realize. Someone is in charge of handling your "details"; later, a DJ is assigned and scheduled to DJ your wedding on the specified day. This doesn't automatically mean you'll have a bad experience; it means you do have to exercise some caution. It's not unheard of for this to happen very close to your wedding day; sometimes the day before! Which brings us to:

3) May we meet with you before we sign a contract?

Again, many agencies require that you sign a contract, and then assign you a DJ. This DJ may or may not be a good fit for you. If you make a request to change to another DJ, you may find there's not be another DJ available on that date. And, some wedding DJs attempt to conduct their interviews exclusively over the telephone and email instead of meeting personally with prospective clients. (Conversely, some wedding couples do this also.) It's almost always a bad idea. Some DJs are very different in person than what their initial telephone and website impression would suggest. Unless it's physically impossible, you should insist on meeting face-to-face so you can judge for yourself whether they are a good match for you and your guests. Your "gut" feeling is *hugely* important in selecting the right DJ, and it's far more difficult to make this evaluation unless you are together in person.

4) When do we need to let you know our decision?

After your face-to-face meeting, a professional DJ should allow you ample time if you need to consider what he has to offer. Be skeptical if pressure sales tactics come into play; this is a dead

giveaway that your signature on their contract is more important to the DJ than making sure your wedding day party is fabulous.

That said, it *does* sometimes happen that the DJ is also talking to another couple about the very same date. Some dates are in high demand; Saturdays and holidays are among the most sought-after dates. If your DJ mentions this fact - and assuming you're comfortable with all other aspects after meeting with him - take it under consideration. Then, please let the DJ know *as soon as you've made your decision*.

If the DJ offers you a discount "for signing today", follow your gut feeling. If it feels like used car salesman tactics, you may want to politely decline. But again, if you're comfortable with all other aspects and feel confident you've found a professional who's a good fit and has your best interests in mind, maybe you take that offer, and feel good about your commitment.

At Party Connection DJs, we make this decision easy. Instead of the usual three days you have to change your mind when you sign a contract, we'll give you a full week. No need to feel any "buyer's remorse" pressure. We want you to be completely confident in your choice.

5) What types of other events do you do?

Use this question to help you judge the DJ's overall talent. Look for lengthy experience with events that require close personal interaction with the audience (a *definite* must for your successful wedding!). For instance: A DJ who does company team building events, Master of Ceremonies duties at various events, fund raisers, teaches, or other activities engaging the public directly is more apt to have the versatility to bring to life your vision of the perfect wedding day party. Someone who works in nightclubs, does music for fashion shows, grand openings, cocktail receptions and other events where personal interaction is not required is likely to be less versatile, less engaging and less capable of managing the flow of events. They are more likely to have poor microphone skills - or none at all.

6) What sets you apart from your competitors?

A true professional wedding DJ will be more talented, more versatile, and more experienced than any other type of DJ you will encounter. He will be well known and well respected within the professional DJ community. He takes pride in his work, and will be able to answer this question easily and honestly. Unfortunately, some DJ's will take this opportunity to bash their competitors. They may make negative comments about specific people or companies. We believe this conduct to be unprofessional, and to reflect poorly on the person making the comments.

7) Are you insured?

Now that you've read it, it seems like a perfectly common sense question to ask, right? Amazingly, less than one out of 10 people think to ask this question. Why is it important? It provides protection for you, the venue, and the DJ. It demonstrates that your DJ takes his business seriously.

Let's go back a step or two. You're looking for a bona fide wedding professional for your wedding (if you're not, you should be!). If your DJ is not licensed, insured, and incorporated as a business entity of some sort, this is a red flag indicative of the level of professionalism your DJ is comfortable with. This may not be the level of professionalism *you're* comfortable with.

8) What if something happens and you cannot make it?

Despite meticulous planning and preparation, emergencies can happen. If the DJ is injured or otherwise unable to perform on your wedding day, what is the backup plan? Responsible professionals have a backup strategy. Often, DJs will be members of a DJ association, and/or network with other professionals who could provide capable backup services for them in the event of an emergency. You want to feel comfortable that you will still have a qualified, prepared DJ on your wedding day; make sure the DJ you're considering has a satisfactory answer for this question.

9). Can we choose our music?

Your input in the details and planning of your wedding day celebration is crucial to making it the overwhelming success you want it to be. At the initial meeting, your DJ should encourage you to consider your music requests and styles you like carefully, and to communicate them in the later planning stages. Pay careful attention here; you want to have a sense of confidence that your DJ is capable and familiar with the music and styles you think are important to your party, as well as any cultural differences that may exist. If your DJ is simply "making a list" of songs you dictate to him, this does not guarantee that he is comfortable or familiar with your music and the people who like it - or that *your* favorite music will be *everyone's* favorite music at the reception.

10) Do you have backup equipment?

Much like question # 7, almost no one thinks to ask this question. Even the very best and most well-maintained equipment can malfunction. Equipment malfunctions are rare, but you can be sure of two things:

a) Equipment malfunctions only happen *when the equipment is in use*.

b) The less expensive, less experienced, less professional, and less connected within the DJ community the DJ is, the less likely he will have backup equipment at your wedding. At Party Connection DJs, we have backup equipment ready to go at every event...*guaranteed in writing*.

11) Do you belong to any professional associations or trade groups?

If a DJ is serious about his craft and interested in becoming a better performer, they will often join a local DJ association or trade group. These are opportunities for DJs to interact and network with one another, share ideas, and build relationships with other qualified professionals who, among other things, might be able to help them should they ever have an emergency. While membership in one of these organizations is not a guarantee of that DJ's talent, it usually indicates an initiative to grow, improve, and become a better DJ.

12) The Biggie: How much does it cost?

When looking for a DJ, you'll want to understand their experience with events similar to yours. For example, a DJ experienced in weddings will be familiar with ceremony and reception activities, understand common traditions, strive to understand and incorporate less common ones, and offer emcee skills to keep the reception flowing and the guests happy. An expert will make it his business to know what's going with other aspects of the event. Should a mishap occur, such as a delay in food service, there is no one who can save your event better than an experienced DJ. You'll never even know there was an issue in the first place.



Keeping the reception flowing smoothly, playing just the right music at just the right time, and having an engaging personality and MC skills that match your chosen style - now *that's* the value a professional wedding expert brings to your celebration.

Think of it this way; no one has more responsibility for making your wedding reception wildly successful than your DJ. Nearly everyone has to manage a budget - but is this really the place you want to cut corners?

Year after year, surveys consistently show that, if they had it all to do over:

- More than 85% of brides would place a greater emphasis on choosing their reception entertainment.
- Nearly 100% would have spent more of their budget on entertainment.
- On average, only 5% of your overall budget will be spent on entertainment. However...
- Over 80% of your guests will remember the entertainment more than anything else. Think back to the last affair you attended. *Certainly* the details are important - but can you remember the napkin holders, the cake topper, or what was on the menu? We'll bet you can remember very well whether you had a good time.

Sources include: Simmons; USA Today, National Bridal Service, The Knot, Brides Magazine, Modern Brides Magazine.

So, when thinking about how much it costs, how much of your budget you're willing to allocate to entertainment, please consider how important it is to you to have a proven expert guiding the festivities for your important event. Luckily, you've already found the best resource for that proven expert ...right here at Party Connection DJs!

