

PICTURE PERFECT RECEPTIONS

© Grant Hemond & Associates, Inc.

It's often been said that the Disc Jockey can "make or break" a Wedding Reception. Here are some thoughts from a leading local DJ service, Grant Hemond and Associates, Inc., who would first like to dispel a few popular myths...

1. **DJ's just play music**—Actually, the duties of a professional, trained, experienced Disc Jockey will go *FAR* beyond just playing music. A pro DJ will act as your Master of Ceremonies, coordinating and handling all the announcements and introductions that need to be made. This requires working closely with everyone from the other professional vendors you have hired to your guests and family members.
2. **Meeting the DJ in person is a deciding factor**—Nothing could be further from the truth. You may meet someone who looks and acts the part that you have in mind, who might not even be in business by the time your reception is held! In our 20 years of experience in this industry, we have heard this happen many times. Just because you like a person doesn't mean that he has the experience to provide you with superior service.
3. **Personal references from Brides and Grooms will help me find the right DJ**—Most Brides and Grooms have used a Wedding Disc Jockey service only once. Since every wedding is unique, their expectations and requirements could vary widely from your vision.
4. **The DJ's "Style" is paramount...I have to see him in action in order to know what to expect**—While seeing a DJ in action may tell you the style of *that* event, it will not let you know what's important...which is what the capabilities of the DJ are. This is *your* day, and the various elements of the reception, from musical tastes, level of interaction with your guests, and the overall feel of the reception should reflect your personal desires.

So, how **DO** you go about getting the right Disc Jockey talent and service for your reception?

The best sources of references are other professionals in the Wedding industry. These folks work at hundreds of weddings each year. They have not only seen the DJ you are asking about, but also all the other DJ companies out there, in many varied situations. Also, if they are working for you or want to work for you, they have a vested interest in being certain that you get a fantastic DJ service.

Here are some helpful questions to ask when researching a DJ company:

1. How long has the company been in business *in the Tampa Bay area*? (This can often differ widely from claimed years in business in other states.)
2. How many years in the industry do the individual DJ's have? (This is different than combined "years of experience" which can be misleading.)
3. How often does the DJ actually work? (If a DJ has been in the business for 5 years, but only does 12 events per year, then they have less true experience than a DJ who has been working two years, but does 150 events per year.)
4. Does the DJ consider this his full-time profession? (This is a good assurance that the service a DJ provides is his top priority.)
5. Does the DJ carry liability insurance? (Even though we have never had a problem, we carry liability insurance. It's a requirement at some venues.)
6. Does the DJ service specialize in Weddings? (Remember that a strong Emcee is important. You need someone who can be sure that even the hardest of names are pronounced accurately and confidently.)
7. Will the DJ take breaks, eat, drink, smoke, or "party" with your guests? (The last thing you need to worry about is a DJ with unprofessional behavior!)
8. What will your DJ wear? (Even the definition of tuxedo attire varies these days—will the DJ dress according to your standards?)
9. Are you dealing with a corporate atmosphere? (Should you have a difference of opinion of services performed, it's nice to know that there is a "supervisor" to hear your grievances. A one man operation often offers little recourse.)
10. When is the balance due? (Beware of anyone who wants to get paid in full prior to the wedding. Whereas this is common for people providing a product, or expending money on products prior to performing a combined product/service—a DJ is mostly service. You will know if you are pleased at the end of the night.)

Ask **every professional** you encounter for their thoughts on other vendors and their services. A "Picture Perfect" Wedding is the result of a team of professionals working in harmony. If you have that harmony, you will be relaxed, confident and able to focus on the enjoyment of your day. It will definitely show in your smile!

Grant Hemond & Associates, are a small group of dedicated, experienced, Mobile DJ professionals who have been pleasing Tampa Bay area customers for over 18 years. You can visit their website at www.GrantHemond.com. For further information and more articles on how to have a "Picture Perfect Wedding," please visit our website at www.TampaPhotoWeddings.com



Image ©2004 Kevin Wilson/Tampa Photo