

Let's face it, you probably only hire a DJ once in a lifetime. This page is dedicated to giving you the complete lowdown, the truth about hiring a disc jockey. Whether you hire me, or another service, I want to provide you with as much information as I possibly can.

Brian Adams, Professional Disc jockey is a privately owned mobile disc jockey company servicing South Jersey. I run everything myself, even this website that you are visiting. I do know a few other DJs in town, and if we're booked, we will usually refer them, and vice-versa.

I've been in this business for **over 25** years, and have performed at just about every type of wedding reception you can imagine. From tiny VFW Halls in the country to elegant receptions in Philadelphia, I have seen many. I also do lots of company parties during Christmas, and picnics in the summer. I have never hosted a Bar Mitzvah... not because I don't want to, but usually because no one wants his or her party to be my first. Nevertheless, I am happy being "Wedding Specialists". It makes me sharp at what I do.

#### ADVERTISING

"How much do you charge?" Usually this is the first question I am asked when someone calls shopping for a DJ. I understand, you've probably called all over and gotten quotes from \$150 to \$1000 for a four-hour reception! Unfortunately, we DJs sometimes have the reputation of used-car salesmen. Hey, some guys figure you only get married once, right? I just got to "sell" you one time, right?

Well, no. 80% of our business is from referrals and word-of-mouth. Fortunately, I have never played at the same person's wedding TWICE...ha ha. BUT, someone at the reception is getting married soon...or somebody knows somebody, who knows somebody where we played...you know how it goes. Our past clients support me. It's as simple as that.

Speaking of advertising and such, I stopped advertising in the Real Yellow Pages two years ago. I find now that I don't need such expensive advertisement to keep busy. But, if you're looking through the Yellow Pages, don't just call DJs with big ads. Those bigger ads may be new DJs starting out in the business, or huge DJ companies that rely on volume. Some of them are great companies that do wonderful jobs...but check out the ones who don't use display ads. In fact, some of the best DJs don't even have ads...they're so good; they don't spend money on advertising at all.

All kidding aside, it's just like that old saying..."It's not the size of the ad that matters!"

## PRICES

Okay, so why are we priced this way? Why spend \$850 for us if you can get another DJ for \$500? Or why spend \$1,500 when you can hire us for \$850? Believe it or not, I am not going to give you the hard sell. After all, it's your money, and you should decide how to spend it. If you want to spend \$1,500, \$850, or \$500, and you feel like it's the right decision, by all means, do it. It's your reception. It's no use having sleepless nights or being so worried over your wedding expenses that you second-guess yourself.

## FOUR TYPES OF PRICING

We want to lay it out for you, plain and simple. DJs are very competitive, and sometimes it's difficult to be at this profession full-time. The way we see it, DJs are priced four different ways.

### Type 1 - The Cheapest DJs

Many part-time operators are excellent DJs. Many have talent, but may have no business savvy. Unfortunately, many also have no business license, business telephone line, or insurance. This could be a risky proposition. But I guarantee you, this is how all DJs start and some stay that way. It is entirely possible for you to spend \$100-\$150 and be totally happy with your DJ. Again, you have to be comfortable with your decision.

### Type 2 - Cheap to Moderate DJs

The next group of operators, priced from \$300-\$600, is all over the map. Some are weekend DJs, moving up from the previous category, usually working alone. Some have a business license, phone, and insurance, some do not. Many large DJ companies fall into this category. They employ or contract out up to ten DJs per weekend, and therefore can make a profit to support large ads and office space. I know many good DJs who work for these companies...but sometimes they are so large, you might not know who will be at your wedding until the week before. You'll find many DJs priced in this category. If you choose a DJ from this area, choose someone who uses a business phone, and has experience; choose a company who can guarantee which DJ will host your wedding and someone who makes you feel generally comfortable with the whole process. Remember, they should impress you.

### Type 3 - Moderate to Expensive DJs

Next we have the category we fall under. Priced from \$750-\$1,000, this category is a pretty small group, there just aren't very many of us. For a four hour reception in Cherry or Voorhees, we charge \$750 for our years of experience, MC & hosting abilities, and personalized service. Anyone you hire in this category, at the very minimum, should offer:

Years of experience

Master of ceremonies expertise

Personal meeting and consultation

A valid business license

A business telephone line

Liability insurance

Experience in high profile events

Reliability guarantee

Easy to reach

Professional audio equipment

Back-up emergency equipment

Thousands of songs

This list is not complete, of course, but you get the idea. When you call us, you speak to me. I have purposely kept my operation small and intimate. That way, I control every aspect, and leave nothing to chance by contracting others to work under my name. The DJ you hire will be ME at your reception, and I have never cancelled an event. The only way I would not show up is if we're in the hospital (believe me; I want that no more than you! And even in that case, I'll still make sure another DJ gets there).

I carry full liability insurance for your protection and ours. We try to make it as easy as we can for you to reach us, especially with forms right here on the website. It is our goal to make you feel 200% comfortable with the choice you make by hiring us. I am committed to providing you not only with everything I have mentioned above, but even more. I want you to have fun, and peace of mind. Heck, the Wedding Ceremony is the hard part. Once you arrive at the reception, you can be assured that I will handle the details, and you won't have to worry about a thing.

I know wedding are expensive, and I am not blind to that. So, I try to offer a few packages with different options.

#### Type 4/Very Expensive DJs

The next category is also a pretty small one. These are the folks who charge \$1500+ for a reception. (Wow! I would love to get that!) These are the DJs and larger companies who regularly perform at conventions or huge weddings and Bar Mitzvahs. These guys and gals are great! Their parties come with full professional stage lighting, props, sometimes two (or three) DJs, and even dancers, plus much, much, more. If you've got the money, and this sounds like fun to you, by all means go for it. You'll have a blast!

#### PRICES, part two

"Why is it some DJs charge so little? Are they using music downloaded from the internet?"

Maybe. Always ask any prospective entertainer how they obtain their music. "What difference does it make?" you may ask. There are two real answers:

One, the quality of downloaded music may be perfectly fine for your portable CD player. But in a large hall, it suffers. And two (more importantly), if a DJ has a library of illegally copied music, it probably will not affect you. That is, of course, unless it is confiscated by the authorities the day before your wedding.

Most all DJs use digital CDs or MP3s legally recorded in a computer format. Because almost all of my fellow DJs and I take the time to run our businesses in the most professional, legitimate way possible, this is a big sticking point with me. Any DJ you hire should take the time and effort to provide quality, legal recordings, whether on CD or on a computer.

#### DECISIONS, DECISIONS

So, have you decided? If you're on the fence with two DJs, this is always a good rule of thumb: Go for more experience. If you needed a root canal and there were two dentists: one right out of school and another who has performed hundreds and hundreds of root canals...well, you know where I'm going with this one!

If you are really in a spot and just simply can't afford it, one option may be to ask your family or a friend to host your wedding...you know their heart will be in it, and it will be special to you.

## YOU'RE WEDDING BUDGET

More has probably been written on this subject than anything else. Everybody wants to be an expert with your money! Okay, if it were up to us, everyone would spend \$50,000 on their wedding and pay me \$6000...ha ha. All joking aside, a good rule of thumb is to spend, at the minimum, 6% to 9% of your total budget on your entertainment. For example, spending \$600-\$900 on a DJ for a \$10,000 wedding is about right.

One thing I do not do is "up price". In other words, if I knew your wedding will be at the most exclusive place in town, and you are spending loads of money on your special day, our price does not "creep up" in accordance with your higher budget. Our price is the same for everyone. Conversely, I do not discount my price if your wedding budget is smaller. We can certainly identify with tight budgets, which is why we offer a few discounts. However, you won't usually see our price drop. I have to be confident that you are confident hiring us, even if you end up spending 12% to 16% of your budget on a DJ. Sometimes it does pay to have the peace of mind knowing your day will be perfect. I stand by that, always.

## DANCING, THE REAL STORY

Can I guarantee that your guests will dance? No. Sorry, no one can. What I can guarantee that I will do my very best, using my experience, expertise, and enthusiasm to get your guests moving. What's the story here?

I can play the best music, use interactive dances, and pull out all the stops, but if someone refuses to dance, I can't change that. Thankfully, this rarely happens! MY experience "reading" crowds, and knowing what songs will work, is almost always right on the mark. Most folks come to a wedding reception in the right frame of mind to have fun...I use my skills to push them along to make your reception memorable.

What gets guests in the "right frame of mind" to get out on the dance floor? Some guests are self-conscious about themselves dancing in front of everyone! What helps them feel more comfortable about "letting loose?" There are a few rules of thumb:

Dimming the lights! People are more likely party down when the lighting level is low. Sometimes, in the case of an afternoon wedding at a country club overlooking the golf course, this obviously is not possible. Daylight will definitely be a part of your big day. Fear not, although an afternoon wedding is sometimes a bit more subdued, they can get just as crazy as the rest! Some of my most memorable receptions have been held in the afternoon.

Having a dance floor! Any hard surface will do. Using existing carpet will initially make your guests hesitant to get involved.

Volume! Have you ever wondered why the music at clubs is so loud? People need to hear the beat of the music over the tapping noise of their "dancing feet" against the floor. The same principle applies here: We keep the music at a level so people won't hear their footsteps. This is a great way to encourage people out to the dance floor who feel "they can't dance".

Using those interactive dances. We know, sometimes folks just don't think "YMCA" is a right fit at a wedding reception. But it WILL get your guests dancing. We hear "YMCA" and all those interactive dances every week. They work. But if they don't fit with your reception, don't fret. If we don't play it at your wedding, I'll hear it again soon!

#### WHAT ABOUT MUSIC SELECTIONS?

What music do YOU want to hear? What about your guests? How can I guarantee everybody will have a good time?

As far as your reception goes, you will probably have a wide age range of folks attending. It is our goal to play a wide variety of proven "good time" music those appeals to everyone. We definitely try to tailor the music to what the Bride and Groom prefer to hear also. So what does all this mean? We have had brides that have submitted over 200 "must play" songs (no joke!) for a reception. But consider this: After cocktails, introductions, dinner, cake cutting, and all the other events, there are only about 2 or 2 1/2 hours of "dance" time. A DJ can only play 14-16 songs per hour. Do you see where we're going with this?

What usually works well is for the Bride and Groom to pick about ten songs they really like. That way, we have an excellent idea of what they prefer, and it gives us the latitude of reading the crowd, and

accepting song requests from guests. One other note, I play only "family-friendly" lyrics. Sometimes if a questionable song is a very big hit, we will play the edited version, or the version heard on the radio.

#### THE RECEPTION FACILITY

The ceremony is over and now you are ready to have fun! Most Reception Halls, Country Clubs, and Hotel Banquet Rooms know exactly what they are doing when it comes to Weddings. There are a few tips to make your reception more successful:

**Setup.** You should position your DJ right on the dance floor, in full view of everyone. This insures the DJ will have a general overview of the entire reception, and have full lines of communication to the banquet staff, photographer, etc. Try to avoid placing the DJ behind any guests. We don't want to blast them with a speaker.

**Access.** Ask your hall to make sure a large, sturdy banquet table, and electrical outlets are readily available.

We hope this information gives a much clearer picture about Djs. Chances are you have never hired a DJ. Whether you choose our services or another...an informed consumer benefits everyone. Good luck on your big day!

Brian Adams

President and Disc Jockey