



## How to Choose the Right DJ For Your Event

as featured in the How-To Guide 2005 of the *South Bend Tribune*

Whether you're planning an elegant reception, a corporate event, or simply a party for you and your friends; the atmosphere created by the entertainment you hire can make or break your event. Hiring someone who truly understands what you envision your event to be, is one of the most critical decisions you will face while in the initial planning stages. You will want to make sure the company you hire has the experience to facilitate your event; while incorporating all of the elements musically that fit your preferences. Making your function unforgettable means doing some pre-planning research to guarantee your guests have a great time at your event.

Any DJ service can show up with the best equipment on the market, they can have all the special effects and lighting the industry has to offer; however, if they do not have professional DJ's employed by their service; you may be in for more than what you bargained for. A flawless event consists of a DJ that knows all genres of music, facilitates to ensure a seamless flow, coordinates with all necessary vendors to keep communication lines open, and most importantly knows exactly what your expectations are, not only musically, but in the events you want incorporated into your function.

Before contacting any services contact the Better Business Bureau, ask friends or relatives if they've used any services for events they've held and contact other vendors you've already hired for references. This will help you rule out companies that don't warrant a phone call and find those that do. From there be certain you know what your expectations are; do you want a disc jockey that brings along blow up guitars, performs skits & pulls guests from their seats, or are you looking for more of a professional service that encourages guest participation through communication, knowledge of how to read a crowd and making the proper song selection choices, with an experienced MC who will control the tempo of the event? Once you have a solid idea of the type service you want to hire, you are ready to move forward into the pre-interviewing stage. Contact the services on your list and get a good feel for the person you speak with on the phone. You want that initial phone call to make you feel confident in the service. If you feel rushed or uncomfortable with that initial conversation, you may want to mark that company off your list.

Jessica Saros, Office Manager of ProShow Professional DJ Service in Mishawaka, says, there are many important questions to have answered when seeking out the right service. Find out how long the company has been in business and ask for referrals. You want to make sure the service has a solid reputation with it's past clientele and area vendors. Photographers & Reception Facilities are great references; as these are the people that spend the entire evening working with your DJ. Be sure to ask about how experienced the DJs are and what kind of experience they have. Many companies have several different DJs working for their services; you want to be certain all of the DJ's are of the same caliber. Ask to meet and preview one or several of the DJs so you can determine if your personalities are in sync with one another. You will spend

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a lot of time communicating in pre-consultation with your DJ and this is the person who will be interacting with your guests; you want them to be personable and someone you trust. Another important factor, according to Saros, is making sure the company you hire is fully insured and has emergency procedures in place for equipment failures and personnel. If your DJ has an emergency and cannot perform for your event, what will happen to you and your guests?

By choosing a single person company or an independent do-it yourself DJ, you may be taking a huge risk. At ProShow, along with a 24-hour emergency number and back up equipment, one of their DJs is on-call to cover any emergency situation.

Finally, secure a company that's standard for customer service is above and beyond what you expect. You will want a service focused on understanding what your tastes for music are, how much of the music you'd like to select, if you'd like to honor guest requests and whether you want to provide a do not play list. Ask about their music library and if they guarantee any prerequested selections you choose; what they do if they don't have a selection you want and if you can provide it if you do. Look for a company that is willing to work with you. If you have a restricted budget; don't hire a company that undercuts their competition, however, look for a company that is willing to give you options on cutting the cost; possibly by adjusting DJ play times or adding pre-recorded music for a portion of the event. "The DJ Service you hire is the most important selection you will make for your event; while on a per person basis, one of the least expensive services you'll hire. Remember, the DJ is the sole person responsible for making sure your guests have an unforgettable evening; 10 years down the road, that's what you want them to remember about your event," Saros commented.

Going above and beyond, ProShow has recently enhanced the services it offers, due to a high volume of clientele wanting to step their event up a notch, adds Saros. Most DJs include standard lighting in their packages, however; there are many new trends in lighting now available to create a total event experience. From pin spot lighting to highlight centerpieces, cake tables and foliage, to complete wall washes that transform the room into a sea of color; to illuminated cocktail and guest tables; the possibilities are endless. There are options for every budget and several items are available for purchase; for example, LED Ice Cubes are an awesome way to add color to your room, and are a creative take on your standard guest favors; drop them in the water glasses prior to the event, set your choice of color and let your guests take one home at the end of the night. Wanting to put a spin on the traditional centerpiece? Alcolytes are an inexpensive, submersible LED light that can be used to illuminate the water in your centerpiece or simply add glow to those iced hor d'oeuvre trays.

The key in hiring a service is to choose a company whose knowledge, reputation and customer service puts your mind at ease and makes you feel relaxed. Planning an event is a stressful time for anyone, so remember to reserve your date as soon as possible. Once you've hired the right service, you will feel confident that you and your guests will enjoy a flawless event that is, simply stated, Unforgettable!

