



Sometimes Bigger Isn't Always Better...

When it comes to the entertainment portion of your evening, there are many decisions you will have to make. After you choose your venue, one of the most important decisions you will have to make is who will provide the entertainment you would like to have for your guests? Unless you know friends or family that have used a particular disc jockey service and will give that company a solid recommendation, you are left doing a lot of research on your own. One of the factors that will probably enter into your decision is whether to go with a large company or a small company. Though the large company's name may be familiar, there's a lot to be said for going with a small company – as long as it's the right company for you. So how do you decide that? Here are some things that you may not initially think of, but would probably be beneficial for you to keep in mind when looking for a DJ:

It's in the details: One of the advantages of going with a small company is the ***personal service***. Being small allows a company the ability to fully focus their attention on your event. Larger companies sometimes will book 10-30 events in a night. With a couple of staff working in the office, that's a lot of events to manage and the probability of your event details being forgotten or not delivered, is great. All the wishes of 10-30 sets of brides and grooms on one Saturday is a lot! At Serino Sound we pride ourselves on our personal service and ***adherence to the small details***. Because of this, we choose to keep our company small and perform at only a couple events per day.

Know who you're dealing with: With a small company, ***you often deal with the owner***. In the case of Serino Sound, it's always Vito (the owner), you talk to regarding your details. And it's either Vito or his right-hand man playing the music at your event, so none of your important details are lost in the translation. If you think about it, when you choose your photographer, would you choose someone whose work you are familiar with and who you are able to discuss your likes and dislikes with, or would you take your chances and go to a photography studio that boasts its popularity and has 25 photographers working for them? ***As music is normally the sole form of entertainment for your guests, why would you not give the same priority to your DJ?*** Make sure you have spoken with the owner or the person doing the event!

The odds: Being a professional disc jockey takes a ***natural talent*** to be able to read a crowd including such things as the percentage of ages, males vs. females, and ethnicities in a given group. It also requires an extensive knowledge of music; not just the music the DJ personally likes, but all genres and eras of music. You have to know the music, know what songs go together well, know the rhythm of the night's events and how the music you play can influence the mood of the guests. Plus, it is always helpful for the DJ to know how to troubleshoot electrical and audio equipment. In many cases, DJs are also asked on-the-fly to help out with audio for videographers, musicians, and for PowerPoint / DVD presentations. Helping the other professionals involved allows them to do their job better and helps the event go off without a hitch so that the hosts of the event come out looking like stars. With all that a DJ should know, what are the odds that a larger company has 20 such talented and knowledgeable people working for them? What are the odds that you are going to be one of their clients who gets one of their talented and knowledgeable DJs?

Cutting corners on licensing and insurance: A disc jockey plays recorded music. The artists of the music need to be compensated for having their music played at events. ***Make sure the disc jockey company you choose respects the rights of the artists and does things legally by ensuring that they are licensed by the Audio Visual Licensing Company (AVLA)***. Licenses cost a DJ company a fair chunk of money each year but at Serino Sound we feel it is important, and we are proud to tell our clients that we do things legally and do not perform using pirated music. It is also important that your DJ has liability insurance in case – heaven forbid – something unfortunate happens which affects either your event, or a guest. Some companies, including a couple of larger ones here in town, offer lower prices because they cut corners on licensing and insurance – be sure to investigate.

It's just a pay cheque: One thing to consider is how much of a vested interest your disc jockey has in his company. Are they a DJ who picks up a pay cheque every month regardless of whether or not they did a good job at their month's events? Or are they the owner / operator who must do a good job because their livelihood and the success of their business depends on it? The majority of the larger music service companies pay their disc jockeys minimum wage or just above. How motivated will a minimum-wage DJ be to make sure your event goes off without a hitch? The larger companies normally supply the DJ with the event information the night before event. This gives the DJ very little time to ensure that he has all of your requested music, including your first waltz and other very important songs. With a smaller company, one who focuses on only one or two events a weekend, there is significantly more time to give to the preparation of each event. As an owner / operator, ***Serino Sound has a vested interest in doing a good job every time as we rely almost exclusively on word-of-mouth referrals.*** It is important to us to get all the details, show up on time, dress appropriately, read and play music for the crowd, and be pleasant and professional at all times.

Coupon Capital of the World: It is true that Winnipeggers love deals. Who doesn't? But ***considering that music and dancing are normally the only entertainment for your wedding guests over a 7-hour period, do you really want to choose the cheapest company?*** Think about how many of your friends have complained about a social, dance or wedding they went to because they didn't like the music – that's because they remember the music and/or the DJ (even if it's for the wrong reasons)! You probably want people to remember what a good time they had at your event, NOT how loud the music was, how much rap the DJ played or empty the dance floor was. So if spending an extra \$100 or \$150 over the price of the cheapest DJ you find will give your guests a good time, isn't it worth it? You have to wonder why some companies charge \$300 for an event. Are they good? Are they a registered business? Are they licensed? Are you getting someone experienced? Knowledgeable about music? Familiar with your venue? Are they using home-grade audio equipment to play in a large room of 200 people? Are they using illegal downloaded music? Do they have backup equipment? Are their DJ's only being paid minimum wage? Are they going to show up to your wedding wearing jeans? Are they really serious enough about their business to really care about your event – and if so, why are they not charging what their talent and service is worth? If you think about what weddings cost – how much you pay for your dress, the cake, the cost per meal, the flowers, the photographer – is it really the best decision to skimp on the budget for your guests' entertainment?

Service Contracts: At Serino Sound, we don't believe in contracts with reception/social halls. ***We simply believe that as long as we do a good job, we will continue to be recommended by the managers and owners of those businesses.*** Vito has been playing music on his own since 1990, and our other DJ has been working with us since 1995 – so we must have been doing something right over all of these years! Many banquet halls, social halls, and hotels in the city do believe in having service contracts with DJ companies – it's easier for them, plus in many instances there are kickbacks that are paid. If you think about it, ***what incentive is there for a service contract DJ to do a good job at your event?*** He will be there the next weekend regardless if you are happy or not – you truly are just one of a number of weddings at a venue. Is this how you think of your wedding? You hand-pick pretty much all the other elements of your wedding – dress, cake, flowers, videographer, photographer, wedding planner, minister. Considering how important a DJ is to the mood of your event, and to the everyone's entertainment, would you really be happy just leaving the DJ you get to the discretion of the music company? DJ number 42? That's taking a really big chance on what many couples consider to be the most important day of their lives.

Even though some of these comments may seem harsh, they are ***honest questions and factors that you should consider when booking your disc jockey.*** We really urge you to consider a smaller company - we believe that size *does* matter and that these small companies have a lot to offer.

Serino Sound Music Services offers you Professionalism, Experience and Class. For more information:

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