

ANDY'S ABSOLUTES

PRESENT YOUR CONCEPT

Do not assume you know what your client's vision and tastes are for entertainment. Instead, truly listen and incorporate their interests into your presentation.

Consider unique ways of presenting standard ideas. For example, if they want a string section, have the musicians perform classical versions of your client's favorite songs (regardless of genre), or combine instruments not usually considered as a typical group. For example, think about putting a cello together with a flugelhorn. Be unique!

PROCESS TO MAKE PERFECT

To avoid potential misunderstandings, thoroughly go through every line item of the timeline with the bandleader or DJ prior to opening the doors for the dinner/dancing reception. Remind them not to make any announcements or end any sets until you give the go-ahead—what if there are even slight timing changes? The entertainment will need to adjust.

Make sure the MC knows how to pronounce names for both introductions and/or any guests who will offer toasts, etc.

RAISE THE BAR

For weddings, the cocktail hour is a transition between the ceremony and dinner/dancing portion of the evening. Therefore, make sure the entertainment for the cocktail hour musically represents a build from the ceremony. For example, if you have strings for the ceremony, have something more lively, like a jazz combo for the cocktail hour and instruct them to play more upbeat arrangements.

ENTERTAIN AT DINNER

For the Dinner/Dancing portion of the evening, instruct your musicians or DJ to build gradually during dinner, so that people begin to get in the mood for dancing.

Regarding "Dinnertainment"—be sure the act maintains a low enough volume that every table can still easily carry on conversation without straining to hear each other.

CHANGE, YOU MUST

For any situation where the entertainment has to have a quick set-up, notify the entertainment at least a few days ahead of the event date. Some acts will need to make logistical plans in order to be ready on time. Arrange for a nearby room where the act can pre-set as much equipment as possible. If not an eyesore, have the power box pre-set where the act will be setting up. Is there a riser for the entertainment? Instruct your crew ahead of time to prioritize the set-up.

LISTEN TO SPIN

Personalities and abilities of DJ's vary tremendously! Nobody likes a "cheesy" performance, a DJ who takes pauses between songs, or a lack of skill in the art of building an evening. Thoroughly check out the reputation and consistent (or not?!) record of any DJ you are considering suggesting or hiring.

PARTY LIKE A ROCK STAR

After-parties are a growing trend. Plan to have it in another room—gear the space and décor towards a younger demographic. A club-style DJ is the best choice for this...someone who really understands current music and will play mostly the top hits of the past few years.