



## Preparing music for your event, party or occasion.

After being in the entertainment industry for over 22 years and now working closer than ever with venues, clients, other forms of entertainment, DJs of distinction's Glen McBride gives a summary of the do's and don'ts of

preparing music for an upcoming function.

If your function is a Wedding ceremony or Reception there is a separate guide just for this kind of occasion which is free, simply email us at [info@djs of distinction.com.au](mailto:info@djs of distinction.com.au)

A lot of people don't give the entertainment a thought until it's almost too late.

In preparing for an occasion of any sort you should give entertainment equal amount of attention as the other parameters that will contribute towards the success of the function, things like the venue, the theme, the catering, the beverages, the guest lists and VIPs, speakers, presenters etc should all have equal weight. After all if any of these go wrong they are all potential show-stoppers in a sense.

In the 22 years I've been involved in entertaining people, its those who engage each component of their occasion early and keep the communication flowing who ultimately have the most successful occasions.

I've decided to commit a summary to a document so that everyone is on the same page so to speak.

Herein is the benefit of my 22 years experience with the exceptional, the good, the bad and the downright disastrous so that your function has its best chance of being in the good, no make that GREAT category.

I don't claim to have all the answers, therefore if you feel there are errors in this document or more can be added please drop me a line—[info@djs of distinction.com.au](mailto:info@djs of distinction.com.au)

*This document is intended as a guide only as nothing should take the place of a discussion with all stakeholders in your event, including the entertainers.*

*While in intended audience is those organising an event either for themselves or for a corporate group, there should be something in this for almost anyone considering hiring entertainment for their next function or event*



## Preparing music for your event, party or occasion.

### The “Do’s”

- **Do** Talk to your entertainment—early and often

I cannot stress this enough. On too many occasions I've not heard from a client who I'm due to perform for until as little as 24 hours prior to the event, even if the event has been booked for months.

- If you're having a theme—**Do** tell us. And tell us early

You know the saying—*The impossible we do immediately, miracles take a little longer*. Sometimes I think there is that sign on our equipment.

Please, if you're having a theme, don't assume the entertainment can suddenly conjure out of thin air an entire repertoire to suit. Engage the entertainers early and tell them what you're thinking.

- **Do** Include us in the running order / run sheet

Most occasions run to some sort of plan. The more experienced venues insist on it. Make sure the entertainment a) appears on the plan and b) gets copies of it.

Additionally make sure we have the most up to date revision of the plan. Don't assume any other party will automatically make it appear at our office.

- **Do** Be specific about when we start and stop.

Nothing more unprofessional than a speaker trying to get everyone's attention when the music's still playing because no-one told the entertainment that now would be a good time to take a break.

- **Do** Make sure it is clear who is in charge on the night.

There's nothing worse than trying to tie down someone, anyone on the night to have a decision made. If it's clear who has authority that's great for everyone.

- When selecting music, please **Do** choose music for EVERYONE who is attending.

This gets neglected too often. If you're having a corporate function, please realise and acknowledge that there will be a wide age range in attendance, please ask the entertainment to play for that wide age range.

- **Do** Utilise the entertainers expertise.

Often this will be your first visit to the venue and the entertainment you've engaged may well have played there often, therefore they'll know better than anyone what works in terms of timing and atmosphere.

Also assuming you've hired experienced entertainers they will have done this kind of occasion many times before so why not pick their brains and put all that hard earned knowledge to good use?

- **Do** Allow the entertainers to—entertain!

Yes this sounds odd but let them do what they do best—entertain everyone. Even if this flies in the face of an organiser's individual taste. If the majority of the group come away with a great feeling about the night then I contend that the entertainment has done their job well.



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### The “Don’t’s”

- **Don’t** Be a control freak.

This I realise is difficult for some, but unless you’re staging a Royal Gala concert, minute or even second level control of the night is not needed and just sets everyone up for failure.

- **Don’t** Use your DJ as a human jukebox.

Lists as a *guide* are good, it lets us know what you’re thinking. But give us scope to work with the entire group, and where possible allow requests from the group.

Giving your entertainment a fixed set of songs to play without any chance of change is not why we’re there—we have large repertoires for a reason, and 22 years experience in doing what we do.

- **Don’t** Ban everything we’d usually play

This is more common than you may think. Cheesy party favourites are for better or worse called “party favourites” for a reason. Banning them is most likely to set your entertainment at odds with the entire group. Then all anyone can recall about your occasion at a point later after your event is how *their favourite* song didn’t get played because it was banned. Wouldn’t you prefer everyone have a great time instead of being left with negative memories?

- **Don’t** Seat the senior/older people right next to the entertainers

This will cause a night of angst. This group tends to want to talk and “catch up” more so than sit right next to what they perceive as “loud” speakers.

- **Don’t** Cheap-out on the entertainment.

As the saying goes “You only get what you pay for”. If it sounds too cheap or too expensive ask why they set their price at that level. Beware of “bargains” just like any other part of your event.

- **Don’t** Leave it to the last minute to hire the entertainment

Good entertainment can be booked up to a year ahead or even more for popular dates, yet time and again I have people call with very little time left before their occasion and wonder why I cannot help them. Start looking for entertainers as soon as you have signed the contracts with the venue.

- **Don’t** Hire the entertainment on a nod and a wink.

Sign contracts with them—and ask to see their insurance. Ask about backup equipment and what happens if someone gets sick. Ask them if their contracts were made up by them or prepared by a lawyer.

- **Don’t** assume absolutely everyone loves the same music that you do.

As mentioned on the previous page, acknowledge that a wide age range will be in attendance and not everyone listens to what you listen to. Allow the entertainers enough scope to cater for all ages and styles.

- **Don’t** Forget to feed and water the entertainers.

Its becoming more commonplace to find a clause in entertainer’s contracts about ensuring that they get fed and watered, but it’s polite to offer it even if its not in the contract.

- **Don’t** Forget to put the entertainers in contact with the venue.

Even if they say they’ve worked there previously its always good to ask one to call the other and touch base, that way little “On the night” issues can be avoided.

- **Don’t** Hire a Video person who insists on bringing the equivalent of a stadium’s worth of lighting.

Or if you do then please don’t complain that the entertainer’s lighting was inadequate. It was probably fine until the video guy tried to emulate a football stadium at a night match!