



The Okanagan's Favourite Entertainer

Professional Wedding Tip#1

“How to Avoid these 13 Major Wedding Mistakes!”

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Having been a part of 65-70 weddings a year for the last 18 years, I have seen my share of awesome weddings. As an interactive MC and DJ, I also put on the hat of a Wedding Entertainment Specialist and planner **to help my couples avoid these wedding mistakes...**

1. Unrealistic / “ambitious” timeline. Yes, your wedding day will go by fast, but you do not have to be stressed for time constantly; we just need to be efficient. **On a wedding day, EVERYTHING takes longer than you think it will or should take.** You timed a six-minute drive from ceremony to reception for your guests? Plan for 15. If you think it will take 5 minutes for guests to find their seats before dinner, plan for 15. With the help of a wedding professional, create a timeline that is sensible, logical, and achievable for a great flowing reception. Copies of your timeline should be then sent to all interested members of your team, so we are all on the same page! (*photographers, MC, venue, caterers etc.*)

2. Losing sight of a wedding really is! Yes, it is a party; a gathering of your closest friends and family, in the same place for one night to celebrate and laugh. **However, don’t skip over the ceremony to get to the booze.** The ceremony is a critical part of the day that needs attention and careful thought. I am not saying it **has** to be long, but it has to be meaningful and impactful and serves to kick start the vibe for the entire day.

3. A lack of personality. Yes, you may want “simple”, but we want people to leave your wedding saying the same thing, **“That was so you guys!”** So, from your key music selections, to your décor, table names, and even the personalities of your wedding vendor dream team, make sure your wedding is a great fit for who you both are. From a music standpoint, I would love it if your guests wanted to somehow buy **“Your Wedding Soundtrack...”** because it was awesome and “all YOU!” (not cookie cutter).

4. “I have no time to EAT!!” Yes, you can run on the excitement and adrenaline for awhile, but on this important day in your life, where you are in high demand, you need maximum energy to be effective.

Let’s do the math — Bride + Starving + Dehydrated + Stressed = Bridezilla.

You want to be a **Bridechilla!** **This is one of the key jobs for your bridal party;** to keep you both full of healthy food and water all afternoon until the reception (*yes, sorry to be a buzz kill, but water is better than alcohol during the day!*)

5. No Plan for the Unexpected. Yes, it is usually sunny and nice where you are getting married, but what if...? We need to control what we can control, and while we can't control the weather, **we can be ready for the worst-case scenario.** Tents on standby? Umbrellas and water ready to combat extreme heat? *PROTIP - Give a trusted person a list of vendors, cell numbers, and expected times of arrival so that you will not be caught 10 minutes before the wedding without the bouquets. Bring a bridal emergency kit for last minute snafus (*safety pins, needle, and thread, Band-Aids, earring backs, aspirin, duct tape etc.*)

6. Choosing a bad MC. Yes, your best buddy might be hilarious, but may not have ever 'run' a wedding before and therefore might not be the best choice for a great MC. **You need someone that can control the flow, speak equally about BOTH families, quarterback the action, engage and energize your crowd (*who arrive as strangers at the ceremony and transforming them into a unified party crowd*), follow the timeline, coordinate with all your vendors, and be sober.** Is Uncle Frank (the Tank) up for the challenge, or should you go with a professional (*who has done this many times before*)? The fate of your wedding might be riding on this decision. Perhaps let your hilarious friends and family be TRUE guests and not have any responsibility except to bring the energy to the party!

7. Bridal show overload. Yes, bridal shows are great for ideas and different options, but be careful not to get sucked into the wedding machine and lose sight of what is important to you both. Wedding reality shows may lead some to believe that weddings **MUST** be stressful, but they do not have to be. **Forget trying to please everyone else!** There are **no rules for your wedding**—no 'proper' wedding protocol anymore, you have freedom to create what you want. You do not **NEED** doves to be released when you kiss at your ceremony (but you can have that...)

8. No Time to Recharge. Yes, the day is awesome, but you need to maximize your energy from beginning to end. **Picture your energy like the battery on your Smartphone.** When you wake up, you are at 100% (or close to it). With hair, makeup, photos, ceremony, and family shots, your battery will likely be under 50% before you even get to your rocking reception. **Do not forget to take a break during the day to recharge your own batteries.**

As odd as it sounds, you may never have a day in your life where you are this important and this in demand. Moms, aunts, grandmas, nieces, photographers, caterers, flower girls, (*and yes, even MCs and DJs*), all want some Facetime with you. Build time into your timeline for just the two of you, (usually after pictures) to jump off stage and out of the spotlight. **Get away from everyone, (*even your bridal party*)** to just sit and BE, enjoy the moment, be present and soak it

in! It is *your* wedding day, after all... **This time to recharge can really energize you for the party that follows!**

9. Not staying on budget. Yes, you need a budget, and you need to stick to it. Once couples start exceeding a budget, the tendency might be to say, “*Well, you only do this once!*”, throw costs out the window, and wind up starting a new life together thousands of dollars in debt. Instead, use the budget as a tool to figure out what you can cut and what you can save. You need to **allot funds to different parts of your wedding based on how important you feel that item is** and how much you value that part of your wedding. Food? Venue? Music and entertainment? Photography? Dove release? We want people to leave the wedding **raving about how incredible the wedding experience was, so worth the trip and so “you guys”** – that is what your budget should focus on.

10. Not hiring experts. Yes, you can save a little money by using friends and family but lower your expectations too. Too often couples get ‘friends’ to do jobs that professionals should have done whether it your uncle with his sweet new camera taking all the wedding photos, or your cousin playing the wrong song for your trip down the aisle off his iPhone. Listen and learn from the nightmare stories within your friend group. Trust professionals for your peace of mind. **If you get what you pay for, how much is your peace of mind worth?** Fast forward to the week of your wedding, are you cool, calm and excited? Or frantic, stressed, and worried? Wedding professionals can help you enjoy that week. **Do your research, hire a great team, then trust they will deliver more than you expect!**

11. Getting too drunk the night before. Yes, I know everyone is arriving in town a few days before the wedding, but that does not mean everyone *has* to be drunk for the entire time leading up to your wedding. Save some energy and good times for the wedding night! I have had brides in tears because everyone was so tired and hungover on their big day. Do not plan bachelor/bachelorette parties for the week of your wedding. The last thing you need is to wake up with a headache, puffy skin, fuzzy head, or worse, an upset stomach. Do yourself a favor, skip drinking the night before; **your wedding pictures will thank you.**

12. Failing to consider your guest’s experience. Yes, it is YOUR day but what about your guests? A good host always considers his or her guests. When planning your wedding, always **picture yourselves as a guest at your own wedding.** *What would YOU do between the ceremony and reception? How hungry would you be waiting for dinner? How HOT would you be sitting in the sun for the ceremony? Would you like a 26-minute slideshow? What songs would your GUESTS like to dance to?* Sure, you and your spouse love indie music, bluegrass, and acid jazz, but will that pack your floor and **have guests raving about your wedding party weeks, months, and years later?**

13. Losing touch with the big picture/getting caught up in perfection. Yes, it is your day, but please do not lose sight of the big picture: all your family and friends have taken time out of their busy lives to come celebrate with you. Resist getting so bogged down in the small details that you miss this incredible day, the day you married your best friend, surrounded by the most

important people in the world! If something goes wrong, just smile, and take a deep breath. Remember, no one is walking around with a clipboard evaluating your wedding! Above all, be fully present and keep your sense of humor! You do not want to have regrets after your wedding about stressing about things that no one remembers.

“Man! That veggie platter and those chair covers REALLY made that wedding!” said no one.

**** FINAL THOUGHT**

Here is a simple checklist to keep you on track during your wedding planning...

When I look back on our wedding, I want to most remember: *(choose as many as you like)*

- How exciting and fun everything was
- How romantic it was
- How beautiful it was
- How proper and tasteful everything was
- How smoothly and easily everything went
- How happy my parents and family were
- How relaxed I was

Rate the following in order of importance *(rank by putting a “1” next to the thing that is most important to you, then 2, 3 through to a 10, symbolizing what may be least important to you):*

- Food
- Ceremony
- Liquor
- Apparel (the Dresses etc.)
- Spirituality
- Photography
- Family and Friends
- Convenience *(ease of planning, finding vendors)*
- Aesthetics/Appearance *(flowers, decorations, centerpieces, ambiance)*
- Music and the Party!

All you can really control is the quality of the experience that everyone takes away from your wedding. You both want to look back on your wedding fondly and smile with no regrets.

Ideally, in the eyes of your guests, your wedding will become THE wedding that other weddings are measured against with your guests using their experience with you as their benchmark of what a great wedding really is! If that is what you both want, then simply start with the end in mind (***“Best Wedding Ever!”***) and work backwards to create that experience! Enjoy the entire process from start to the last dance!

