Wedding costs are a major concern for most, as well they should be. How much to spend for food, gown and tux's, location, photographer and, of course, entertainment.

All of these **expenses can be reduced**, but which ones should be and why?

If you get your food from McDonalds, you'll never hear the end of it, but if you provide steak and lobster, how many will remember?

Quite a few, for no other reason than it's **out of the ordinary**. But if you're having chicken, roast beef or fish (standard dinners) how many people will remember what they ate 6 months later?

If you buy the **fanciest dress** and the best Tuxedo's, you will look FABULOUS in all your pictures, but many people now rent not only the Tuxedo's, but also the gowns! It saves them money and, let's face it, it's unlikely that you will ever wear that gown again.

When it comes to photographers, you will want to spend a large portion of your budget on getting one of the best! After all, those **pictures will last a lifetime**. If you don't have a great photographer, you're not going to get great pictures. So you don't really want to skimp too much there. That wedding album is something you will keep out on your coffee table for a long time and guests from your wedding will want to see those pictures of you and them.

As far as videographers go, most couples watch their **wedding video** an average of 5-10 times with family and friends, so this can be an expensive cost for 5-10 viewings. But for some folks, a video will be a great thing to break out on their 5th, 10th, 25th or 50th Anniversary (if we still use video that is).

Locations can have a wide variety of costs, ranging from free into the thousands. You need to balance this out also because **saving money** by having it outdoors at a park could also mean losing guests early on because of the weather and temperature. You don't want them to leave early do you?

Finally, we come to entertainment. It's almost always the last thing thought about and to many it's the place where couples try to find a bargain. There is just one problem with that theory: **Up to 80% of the success of your event will depend on the entertainment!**

That's right. **Think about it!** If you don't have any entertainment, then most of your guests will leave right after they eat. Conversely, if you didn't have any food, but still had entertainment, most would probably stay for a while. You need both, but what kind of balance? Can your guests be happy with hors d'oeuvres and/or veggie platters? Actually most can! They will also be happy with just about any decent meal, which is why so much **chicken is served at weddings**. They won't care that much what the meal is as long as it tastes good and is filling.

You and your guests are there to **CELEBRATE your marriage**, to participate in it, to share that special day for you. This is where entertainment plays a MAJOR role in providing you and your guests a happy, festive and fun time!

I have been to (and performed at) many weddings, and believe me, some have had some awful food, but **with good entertainment** they turned what could have been a bad meal into a fun time!

So why do so many couples want to spend such a small amount on **entertainment**? After all, that is what **will ultimately make or break your event**, right? We think nothing of spending $35-50 per person for food, but then we want to 'shop around' for the cheapest entertainment we can find, often spending less than 8% of the events costs.

Don't you think **it's worth spending 10-20% on Entertainment** if it makes up 80% of the time

and, more importantly, the SUCCESS of your event? Of course it is.

Entertainment usually comes in two forms: Live bands or **Disc Jockeys**

Which should you choose? Well, that depends on you, some people like the 'live' sound, others **prefer the sound of original artists**
(DJ music). There are advantages and disadvantages to both, and although I am a DJ/MC myself, I won't address those issues here.

In either case, it's important to keep in mind that there are good bands and bad bands, and there are good DJ's and bad DJ's. We have all heard the horror stories of having a bad DJ/Band and **nobody wants bad entertainment**. But like food, **the quality often depends on the price** ! You can spend lots of money (10-20%) to hire
DJ 'Mercedes'
, or skimp (1-5%) and get
DJ 'Yugo'
. But remember, this is a
once-in-a-lifetime event
for most, and so you only get once chance. Which one would YOU want? Besides, you don't want your guests leaving 2 hours early do you? You paid good money for that room.

So when trying to decide **how much you can afford** for entertainment, think about **how much you can LOSE**
if your entertainment is poor or mediocre. Look for professionals and pay them what they are worth. After all, if you want the best, it will (and should) cost more, in the long run, they will provide more than a mediocre entertainer would.

Remember: "Quality isn't expensive... It's priceless!!"
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