

Music One Event DJs: The Wedding M/C

One of the most important roles you can play at another person's wedding is the Master of Ceremonies (MC). The MC's job is to make sure the evening goes as smoothly as possible, taking the pressure off the happy couple and allowing them to forget about the practical concerns of the event and focus on having a good time. It can be a little intimidating to try and get organized, but you can learn the role and nail the tone to make their wedding a great success. See Step 1 for more information.

Be familiar with the schedule of the event.

While it's not your party, you're the one in charge of making it a success. As the MC, it's your job to keep the event moving forward in a timely manner, keeping to the schedule and helping as best you can. Because of this, you need to be involved in the planning process, not so much to make decisions, but to make sure that you're aware of the order of events and the time frame in which the events need to occur. The night belongs to the bride and groom, but it's your job to help it happen without any problems.

- The bride, groom, and other members of the wedding party will typically have something called a "run sheet" which will be a detailed itinerary of the various events. Get your schedule ahead of time and keep it on you during the day. Be the militant one.

Make announcements.

The MC of the wedding is basically the host and communications person of the event. When is it time for tables to approach the buffet line? In what order should they approach the table? Where should presents be placed? When and where will the garter toss commence? These are things you're going to have to know and announce as the MC of the wedding.

- Distinguish between things you'll need to announce into the microphone and things that might be ok to say to everyone as they come in the door, or by going around table-to-table and talking to everyone. If you label the presents table, for instance, you won't need to make a big to-do of announcing it every five minutes when people come in.

The Wedding M/C

Communicate with the event staff.

To make sure no one from the bridal party or their immediate family has to spend a bunch of time wrangling the catering staff, that's generally going to be the responsibility of the MC. Introduce yourself to the cooks, the servers, the DJ, and anyone else who's going to be directly involved with the evening. Hear them out and accommodate their needs, as well.

Expect the unexpected.

What happens if the catering group is understaffed? What happens if Uncle Phil's keg of wedding beer runs dry? What if the PA goes on the fritz just as everyone's ready to start dancing? Bus tables! Beer run! iPod dock! The party goes on. Come up with a few contingency plans for last-minute fixes and try and keep a positive outlook to make the event as stress-free as possible for the happy couple.

- Be willing to run last-minute errands and do extra housekeeping tasks on the night of the reception. If the groom forgot his groomsmen's presents back at the house, don't make him drive and go get it. Volunteer for the little things and you can make a big difference.
- Don't be afraid to delegate tasks. If there's a mess to be cleaned up, enlist some lazy cousins and challenge them to a can-crushing contest. Don't be pushy, but don't try and take it on all yourself either.

Chill out.

It can be somewhat stressful coordinating everything, making announcements, and making sure everyone gets from place to place. Still, try and remember: It's a party! Have fun, relax, and let people have a good time. Try and let people know what's supposed to happen, but if the groomsmen are boisterously toasting the groom in the corner when it's five minutes past cake-cutting time, try and get into the swing of things and let loose a bit.

- Make things as simple as possible. A wedding MC can make the night smooth sailing, or can tax everyone's fun by being too in-your-face about the little rules. Try and keep an eye on the big picture and focus on making things simpler, rather than more complicated.

The Wedding M/C

Get there early, help out, and stay late.

The reception will be work for you. Save some time for fun, but you need to get there early enough to make any last minute preparations with the staff, get everything ready and in place, and prepare yourself for the job to be done. There'll likely be seventy things that need to happen just before the party starts, so you probably can't get there too early.

- If the ceremony itself takes place elsewhere, try and sit close to the back so you can jet out as soon as its over and head over to the reception hall.

Practice using the microphone before the reception.

Standing in front of everyone and moving your lips so no sound comes out, or jarring everyone with a sudden peal of feedback is kind of a bummer for everyone. Don't make the first time you get up in front of the big crowd the first time you've spoken into the house mic.

- Practice holding it at the correct distance so you'll be loud enough for everyone to hear and you won't have to go through an awkward sound-check with all the family and friends present.

Announce necessary information at the beginning of the reception.

Your biggest job will happen right as the reception starts. Everyone will arrive and need to be directed to their table, place their presents, and any other preliminary things that need to happen. It's customary for the MC to introduce themselves, go over the course of events for the evening, just before the bridal party enters, then introduce the bridal party.

- Typically, the biggest announcement you'll have to make is when the bridal party enters. You'll need to introduce them, "The new Mr. and Mrs. _____!" When the bride is seated, let everyone know they can sit down and visit for a while.

The Wedding M/C

Introduce the speakers.

Typically, everyone will eat dinner and you won't have anything to do for a while but eat with them. Most of the time, speeches will happen after dessert, at which time you'll grab the mic again and introduce anyone who's prepared a speech for the evening.

- Don't give preliminary speeches for each speech. You don't need to tell long-winded jokes about each person (again, you're not the entertainment). Simple is good: "Next up, let's all welcome the maid-of-honor!"
- Try and wait until the dinner phase of the reception has wound down enough to get ready for the speeches. If there's a set time limit, try and stick to it as close as possible, but don't rush people who're still waiting to be served so you can jump to the speeches. Let things move in a calm and orderly fashion.

Organize any other events the couple has planned.

Different weddings will plan different events, like garter tosses, bouquet tosses, and other ceremonies particular to the couple's wishes. In general, it's probably better to draw people's attention to these types of things more informally and let the couple themselves handle the microphone if there's any reason to.

- Again, simple is good. Walk around to the tables and let everyone know briefly and politely: "Hey everybody! Hope you're all having a good time! I think they're about to do the garter toss on the dance floor in about five minutes if you want to make your way over there."

The Wedding M/C

Let sincerity trump humor.

When you're on the mic, try and remember the most important part of being a wedding MC: You're not the entertainment. It's not your job to be funny, it's not your job to tell stories, it's not your job to do anything but make sure everyone knows what's coming up next in the evening, and what they need to do.^[3]

- You'll have an opportunity to talk for a while, usually at the very beginning of the reception, before the bride and groom enter, which is when you can introduce yourself and set the tone of the evening. The room will probably be buzzing and unsettled, anyway, so don't
- Think about launching into that crude story about your spring break trip to Cancun with the groom.

Get organized.

Even though you've got a naturally witty, charming, and hilarious personality--that's why the lucky couple picked you to MC, no doubt--don't try to rely upon your talents and skills, hoping you'll be able to improvise your way through the night. After a busy and stressful day of the wedding, it's likely your mind will come up blank.

- Write down what you're going to say, and keep your script handy on a mobile device or a notepad. Write it like you'll want to read it, word-for-word, so you won't have to fill in the gaps at the last minute.

Don't surprise the bride and groom.

Make sure they know what's coming, both in terms of what will be said, who will say it, and when. The night of the wedding isn't the time to shake things up and decide at the last minute that you're going to launch into the best man's speech while the groom's father is outside talking to grandma. Make sure everyone's ready, everyone's on-point with the plan, and stick to it.

- Even if the speech-givers want to surprise the party with their speeches, try and find out what's in them and let the bride and groom know. It can be somewhat embarrassing to have to listen to a crude attempt at jokes from someone at a wedding, so it's good to do a little screening. It's not your job to tell them not to give the speech as written, just let the couple know so they'll be prepared and won't be (overly) embarrassed on their night.

Get some feedback from a friend. (To get your timing right)