



35 tips to make your wedding reception even more fun!

1. **Stay together during the reception.** Your guests want to see the two of you celebrating together. If you are separated from each other it detracts from the celebration and the reason your guests are there. Sometimes I like to tell guests about an old wedding tradition of having the guests make some noise by tapping on glasses or banging on the tables if they notice that the bride and groom start to stray from one another for too long.
2. Bar placement: If you have a bar and have the option, keep it as close to the dance floor as possible. Having the bar in the same room where guests are seated is preferable to placing the bar in the hall or foyer or another room. If the facilities bar is permanently placed in another room, make sure that there are no televisions turned on or other attractions. Guys will tend to hang out near the bar, "The more the merrier" is especially important for creating a celebration and a busy dance floor.
3. Have your emcee or the person giving the welcome speech recognize the people who came from out of town and the States or Countries from where they came. It makes those people feel special – Because they are!
4. Seat the older guests away from the DJ or bands speakers and the younger guests closer to the speakers. Older guests are much more sensitive to music than your friends.
5. Family Photos: Be sure these are done before the dancing occurs. Here is a quote from a recent bride on The Knot. *"We had the photographer shoot a photo of all of our guests in the foyer outside the reception room. I'm sure the photo will be great, but it spoiled the dynamic of the evening. Once the guests were out of the main room, some of them just went ahead and left afterwards."*
6. Room Lighting & Videographers: Your guests will dance earlier and more often if the dance floor area is dimly lit (compared to brightly lit). *Touchy subjects for a DJ:* Some banquet facilities do not like to lower the rooms lighting very much. If YOU ask them to, they will comply. During your consultation with them ask them to make a note to have the lights lowered (not too dark of course) after the Ceremonial dances have taken place and open dancing begins. Some videographers have bright lights mounted on their cameras to capture the action on the dance floor. They may ask for the room lighting to be raised while they are filming. The problem: bright room lighting or bright camera lights discourage dancing...leaving not much to video. If you are having a videographer, everything you want to capture on your wedding reception video should be done EARLY in the reception.
7. Smoking and gathering outside: A smaller gathering weakens the party. Try to keep your guests from separating. Smokers must have a place to smoke, but try to keep everyone else inside. Persuade your bridal party to stay with you and enjoy the party all night. Make it a part of their "job" to make this the best party possible.
8. Choosing a first dance song can be a real challenge for many couples. If you are having difficulty deciding on a first dance, here's a fun idea to add a little bit of mystique to your reception and involve your guests in one of the major elements. Sit down as a couple and come up with around 5 possible first dance songs. On the night, have your Master of Ceremonies/DJ put out a card on each table with the songs and have each table vote secretly for the song they'd like as your first dance. Have the cards gathered up and the results collated by the MC and have the winning song announced as you are on the floor ready to start dancing. This will add an element of surprise for you, and it will be extra special as the song was chosen specially for you by your guests. For extra credit, learn a good dance for each song choice so you can really impress the guests!

9. Reverse couple kiss - *This is a fun twist on the tradition of the bride and groom exchanging a kiss when the guests clink their glasses. Give your DJ a list of couples in attendance who will be "spot lighted" and instructed that they must first demonstrate a proper kiss before the bride and groom take their turn.*

10. Incorporate family traditions, regional customs (and music), hobbies etc. Are you a fan of Star Wars, Nascar, White Castle burgers or anything else? Find a way to work it into your party or ask your DJ for ideas.

11. Place song request cards on the table or have them passed out by your DJ. This will get the guests to start talking about what music they enjoy and what songs they anticipate dancing to. It's also a great "around the table" conversation starter.

12. A late night snack as simple as hot dogs, pizza or breadsticks will be greatly appreciated by the guests who have been dancing (and maybe drinking) up a storm.

13. If you feel uncomfortable dancing to an entire song for your first dance or parent dance, have the DJ invite all the married couples to join ½ through your first dance or invite all the Father's and Daughter's to join in ½ through the Father Daughter dance.

14. Enjoy your party: Your guests want to see you having a great time! You will be surprised how quickly time will pass, so relax and have fun! Take time out with your new partner and pretend that you are at someone else's party. Ask your bridal party to take some of the workload off you. Assign them certain duties beforehand. If there are any problems during the party, have your friends fix them. You should focus on enjoying your fabulous party.

15. Have the bar switch from glass to plastic ware after dinner: Almost every week we see the dance floor being cleared to clean up a broken glasses on the dance floor. Besides the mess and danger (a lot of shoes come off during dancing) the clean up tends to be a real party buzz killer. Beer bottles are not usually a problem, but dropped cocktail and wine glasses spell disaster on the dance floor.

16. Keep the kids occupied: If young children are on the guest list, be aware that wedding receptions are not very entertaining for them, so they will create their own "fun". That usually means running wildly and sliding across the dance floor. Coloring books will last 10 minutes (max). I suggest a tv/dvd combo set up in the corner somewhere with a variety of videos. For a recent reception, a table was set up just for the kids with washable markers and 3" x 5" blank note cards (back of index cards work too). The kids were asked to draw pictures of the wedding and reception then all the drawings were placed in a clear plastic family frame that could hold multiple 3" x 5" pictures. Very fun!

17. Dining Area: Many of the most beautiful receptions occur where the dining area is in a different room than where the dancing and socializing will occur. It is important that the guests don't get to comfy in the dining area and miss the fun and festivities that are occurring in another area where the *party* is taking place. After dinner I suggest having the cake cutting and toasts in the same room as where the dancing will be. Make the dining room an unpopular place to congregate. Have the banquet staff raise the lights in the dining room. Make sure that there is no music playing in the dining room. Have all food removed, etc.

IMPORTANT: Your guests won't be dancing the entire night and will need a place to sit and place their drinks. Where the dancing is taking place, try to provide plenty of cocktail rounds or small tables with seats where your guests can take a breather after dancing and to socialize.

18. Traditionally, guests don't begin dancing until after the bride and groom have had their first dance. Think about having your first dance before dinner so that guests can dance (and if the mood is right they will) during dinner or immediately after.

19. Your DJs setup should be as close the dance floor as possible (inches is preferable to feet)

This will enable the speakers and dance lighting to be properly positioned. Also make sure there are no tables between the DJs set up and the dance floor. If the inches rule is followed this wont even be possible :) Bring a room diagram and table configuration when you meet with the DJ to discuss all the reception plans.

20. Musical Table Release If you are having a buffet style of meal, a banquet server will usually release tables through to the buffet. Another option is to assign songs to each table. When the table of guests hear "their" song played they will know it is their time to go through the buffet!

Make sure you discuss this with your DJ and the banquet manager before hand

21. Bride and groom cell phone trivia - We can create a trivia game about the bride and groom that allows your guests can play using their smart phones! This is a great way to have some fun around the table while guests are waiting for

dessert to arrive or while you are having pictures taken. A card with a QR code is passed out that takes the guests directly to the web based trivia game! Try it out. The game may take a few seconds to load. **BGTrivia.com**

22. Sure, you want your friends to have a good time, but don't ignore Grandma and Grandpa. Older guests will tend to be among the first to leave, so tailor your music selections accordingly. Towards the beginning of your reception, play more 40's, 50's and 60's hits, mixed with current selections. In the last hour, you can stick to current music.

23. Pearls of wisdom

Before you arrive, have your guests write words of advice to the two of you.

Example: "As you are waiting for the bride and groom to arrive, please take a moment and think about what advice you would give them as newlyweds. What will help them keep their love alive and strong and have a happy life together.

Write your pearls of wisdom on the lines below and place them on the DJs table. Throughout the evening he will stop the music and take a moment to read a couple at a time. Your name is optional though it would be nice to know who it comes from. Humorous or sentimental it's your choice!"

Place several sheets on your guest's tables with pens. Have your DJ read a few of these throughout the night.

24. Soul Train Dance. Thanks to the movie "Hitch" starring Will Smith the soul train is back!

Guys line up on one side of the dance floor, ladies on the opposite side. Couples at the head of the line dance down the middle. This is a great ice breaker because you don't know who you might be paired up with. Now that we found love by Heavy D and the boys was the song used in the movie and works well.

25. Party Props – These went out of style several years ago but we are starting to see a return.

Passing out glow ropes, throwing out some beach balls, a limbo competition or funny hats could reenergize a dance floor after a couple of hours have gone by.

26. If both sets of parents have been married and never divorced, recognize it!

Even if the parents aren't being introduced it's nice to have the DJ introduce them at their tables and include the number of years they have been married before the formal introductions.

27. If for some reason the dance floor is just not as busy as you had hoped, have the DJ invite all the guests to the dance floor so the photographer can take a group photo.

Then have the DJ play a fun song that will appeal to the majority of your guests.

Shout, Ice Ice Baby, Love Shack, Yeah by Usher though overplayed at receptions, usually will do the trick.

28. Garter Toss Football – Guys might not be so enthused about catching the garter but you put it around a Nerf football and there might be some bumps and scrapes to be the one to catch it!

Using a football related or favorite team song can help enhance this routine.

29. Bouquet toss with a twist – Have all the single women form a circle around the bride who is blindfolded. The bride is spun in one direction (slowly) and the women walk (holding hands) in the opposite direction. When the music stops, everyone stops and the bride hands the bouquet to the person who is facing her.

30. Reverse "dollar" dance – Instead of guests giving you a dollar to dance with you, invite guests to dance with you and they will receive a gift (which will be passed out by the Maid/Matron of honor and Best Man) Items could include a small bag of candy, mix cd, party favor, shot or signature drink. You might possibly announce that you would like all your guests to get lucky tonight and pass out lottery tickets!

31. Get to know you dance – Your DJ will ask all the guests to form a circle on the dance floor while playing a fun high energy song. He will then invite different categories of guests to the middle of the circle for a spotlight dance of 10 seconds or so. Categories may include: Out of state guests, Under 21, family of the bride, friends of the groom, co-workers, Colts fans, those who are better drivers than their spouses...it can get pretty silly.

32. Reverse dollar dance/ Group hug. Like the get to know you dance above, the DJ will call in different groups to the center of the circle to give the bride and groom a group hug and drop off a "buck".

33. RSVP Thanks – Make note of the first 5 people (or couples) to return their RSVP. Either you or your DJ can call out their names after dinner and invite them to the dance floor. The guests are all asked what these people have in common. The people who returned their RSVPs first are allowed to receive their dessert first.

34. Do you have any V.I.Ps who are unable to attend? Have them leave a recorded message or toast to be played during the reception using our Google phone number 260-547-2732. Call Mark for details 317-852-3353

33. End with a Bang!....rather than a fizzle. Sometimes you wish the night would never end and many guests are dedicated to being with you to the finish. The final memory of a party should make a lasting impression. "Leave them wanting more" is a good adage to follow.

36. The big send off – For the last dance, arrange beforehand for all the remaining guests to make a circle around the two of you. Ask your bridal party to ask all the guests to create this circle for the last dance. This should be arranged well ahead of time so that the process happens quickly so they can join the circle as well. See if your DJ has a bubble machine to shower the crowd during the last minute of the last song.

35. The Wedding Reception After Party!

The idea is take the last 45 minutes (I have tried an hour and 45 minutes works better) of your reception and transform the atmosphere into a totally different party with the emphasis on crazy fun!

The two main ideas for this are is to use unique lighting totally different from the rest of the reception (perhaps blacklighting) and have a theme to the music ie" hip/hop, 80's, Beach music or ?

Other options may include a fun snack(s) being brought out, a signature non alcohol drink, fun photos with party props.

I hope you enjoy incorporating one or two of these ideas into your celebration and that they spark an idea of your own!

All the Best, Mark Beecher Grapevine Productions 317 852 3353 www.GrapevineDJ.com

Stay together!