

How can you help make my event perfect? In preparing for your event, you are talking to wedding professionals who do events week after week. You don't need to remind a professional caterer to bring his serving spoons to your reception, and you won't have to tell the photographer to bring the right cameras and equipment. Your music is at least as important as those items...Why trust your important event to inexperienced, part-time, unprofessional, or undependable providers? We are full time entertainers and consultants...we live this business. We talk with you to determine your needs, location, preferences and resources, before we ever recommend an act. We don't have any exclusive bands or acts that we are required to keep booked-so we are free to suggest the most appropriate one for you and your situation. Once scheduled, you won't have to tell us that you want your band set up and ready to play when the first guests come into the room. We'll make sure all details are handled, the band will arrive early to set up, be dressed appropriately and play as you specified. Grand Entertainment has been involved in over 3,000 weddings and another 7,000 special events. We don't know of another agency on the Gulf Coast that can claim a track record similar. Our level of experience and expertise can be very advantageous to you.

How much do I budget for entertainment? Of all the items you will spend money on for your event: The location, flowers, food, drinks, photography services, videography services, etc...not one of them can make or break your event if it fails to meet expectations. In actuality, some of those vendors could fail to show and the party wouldn't suffer dramatically. You may want to fire your photographer if the pictures don't come out well, but you won't know about it until after the event. The food could be cold, but hungry people will eat what is there. However, your Entertainment is what you and your guests experience the entire time they are at your event and the memory of that entertainment act will linger long after the rum wears off, the the food is digested and your friends are back home. Think back to the last 3 events you attended-you probably cannot remember what you ate or drank, what the flower arrangements looked like, or what color carpet was in the event hall-But you probably remember if the Entertainment was great, unimpressive or awful. Party planners and wedding coordinators we've worked with for many years tell us people should allocate at least 10-15% of total budget for their entertainment. They have all seen disasters when the entertainment act was the last consideration. Really good DJs know they are good, they are in great demand and receive fees in the \$800 to \$1200 range, and the exceptionally interactive ones can be much more than that. Show bands that are dependable, co-operative, competent and really entertaining start at about \$2,000, with a midpoint around \$3,000. The difference between mediocre and fabulous is smaller than you thought.

Why do act prices vary so much? All entertainment acts schedule by date and location. Saturdays always cost more than "off dates", holiday and December weekend dates are premium. Routing is very important, since the further an act travels from home base, travel fees apply; so we try to suggest the geographically closest act to your event location, keeping in mind your needs and requests. It's better to invest in a good performance group than to simply pay a lot for travel expenses. Some acts are more entertaining than others, some are more adept at getting the crowd up and on the floor. These are what we term "highly interactive" act and are in most demand. Not too many people ask for a mediocre band or a DJ that will just stand there and bore your audience playing their music and doing little else. Unfortunately, those acts exist, those mediocre acts are cheaper too, but is that really the best for your event? Do you want to spend all your time planning to have fun at your event, all that money to have a FUN time with your family and friends, then book your most important single item-your Entertainment-based on what is cheapest? We want your guests to come up to you and tell you what a Great time they had at YOUR party. That just won't happen with the bargain priced acts. Grand Entertainment is an upscale booking company. Our agency only recommends acts that have a track record of successful events, are totally dependable, co-operative, and that have strong "leaders" who will take care of every detail and run their acts in a businesslike manner. Most cheap acts are "throw together" one time bands, with "on call" musicians hired by a contractor/leader. Do you really want a "put together" act that has never performed together, everyone dressed differently, no-one on the bandstand knowing what will happen next? These are typically the acts that will take 20-30 minute breaks trying to figure out what to play next, or go outside and take a nip, a snort or a toke on breaks, eat your guests' food and drink too much alcohol. They have nothing to lose, not only will they never see you again, chances are that combination of musicians won't ever see each other after your party. The acts we recommend are professionals, regularly playing together, a reputation to uphold, and they know how to act at private parties.

Do I get a written contract? We only work with contracts-so you know what you are buying, and the act knows what is expected. Each agreement has the essentials, "who, what, why, when, and how much" in addition to the industry standard exceptions and limitations, and includes anything specific to your event. Keep in mind that we have been in business longer than any other entertainment company within 150 miles. We have a long time reputation to uphold with all our buyers and vendors who recommend us. We will do it right.

How Do I Pay and When? We will email, mail or fax a contract to you or your representative at the time you say, "Yes, let's book the XYZ act". We don't mail contracts without your request, and we don't pressure you to "hurry up and book" before an act gets booked elsewhere. You will be told the truth, that actually, the act is NOT booked until you sign a contract and send a deposit in, and the act accepts your offer. When you decide which act you want, at that point, move quickly to lock it in for your event, just your statement that you want a certain act is not a binding contract. Retainers are 30%-50% of the total price of the act, rounded off for easy math. We will tell the act to hold the date for about 10 days to allow for mailing time, but once you tell us to hold the act, then the clock starts ticking, don't delay here. Personal or business checks, money orders, major credit cards and cash are all acceptable. We want you to look at the contract, confirm all information is correct, then sign and return a copy with your retainer. You can either send a check, write a credit card number in, call it in, or email it. You will get an immediate receipt and the act leader signs the contract and you get a completed copy for your files. If a relative with a different name sends a check, make sure there is some way we can connect it with your date. Warning: We have heard horror stories of buyers sending money to entertainers without getting a contract first. Our contract sample is on the website, and our goal is to help make your event planning experience as trouble free as possible. Even if you decide to book with someone else, but aren't sure your contract is legitimate, call us for a no obligation consultation.

Can I pick songs I want? Of course-it's your event, and the act is playing for you. Part of our process is to furnish you with music planning forms for your date. On it, you can specify what you want played, types, styles or genres of music. Also, your announcements, dedications or special items can be listed here. However, if you want to write "do not play" on 70% of the band's songs, or insist that your Motown band play polkas, perhaps we should re-visit why you chose that act. Bands entertain best when allowed to format their music as they feel it flows best, not necessarily when following a script someone else thought might work. Non-standard or weird songs can always be played by CD on the band breaks. You'll discuss these items when you talk to the act leader. DJs are more flexible in that there are no songs that can't be played... they just need adequate time to download or buy them.

Why should I use an agent? You don't have to...there are thousands of bands on the internet...but without some inside knowledge, there's just TOO much hype and glitzy information to make a good decision. I've only been in the entertainment business for 46+ years...there's still a lot I don't know. But a lot of the things I do know are facts you won't learn until too late. For example, which popular regional band, with the fabulous DVD demo, has a habit of taking the job that pays the most, and just not showing up for the other-even with you holding the contract they sent? Our agency represents you, the buyer, in determining the right act for your event, given your criteria. We have no exclusive acts, we are not contractually bound to furnish work to any certain bands or djs...we make the same amount of commission on any acts of the same pricing. The big difference is that when we do a great job of recommending and scheduling the perfect act for you, we get referrals and re-bookings from you and your friends for the next 5 to 10 years. That is how and why we are busier than ever after 30 years: by putting the customer first and sending the right acts for the events.

Another example: suppose you want to hire a band, and you call 10 that are listed in a phone book, and ask the bandleaders about their acts. You will have 10 people tell you that "his" band is the best for you. These guys want their bands to work....they'll tell you anything to get your booking money. The problem is, they all can't be the "best"...one has to be a better fit for your event than the others....but it's very hard for the inexperienced buyer to discern the fact from the fiction.

We are very similar to real estate agents-you tell them what size house, what area, price range, what amenities and they do all the searching through the mls and their contacts first, then take you to see the two or three homes that fit your requirements best. Likewise, you tell us what type and style act you want, where, how many guests, what budget, etc, and we do the preliminary work and present a workable solution to you. Your complete satisfaction is my motivation-we are a service oriented company. I would rather have you as a satisfied customer for many years, than have your money for one night's party.