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## WHAT CAN THE iPhone DO FOR YOU?

### The Best Wedding Reception . . . Ever!



THE  
BEST WEDDING RECEPTION...EVER!  
YOUR GUIDE TO CREATING AN UNFORGETTABLE FUN CELEBRATION

PETER MERRY



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Peter Merry is a wedding entertainment director (kind of a combined DJ/on-site event coordinator) from Southern California. He wrote a book for engaged couples called *The Best Wedding Reception...Ever!*, which covers reception entertainment and what couples can do to have a fun and elegant wedding. Even though it targets brides rather than the wedding service industry, *The Best Wedding Reception...Ever!* is a must-read book—not just for brides, grooms, and DJs, but for anyone who aspires to be a top wedding vendor.

We have all been to wedding receptions where the evening flowed smoothly and on schedule and everyone was up and dancing. Likewise, we have all been to wedding receptions where dinner ran late, the DJ called for the father/daughter dance but dad wasn't in the room, or the emcee couldn't pronounce the last name of the newly married couple (that last one happened at my wedding). Great receptions don't happen by accident.

As a wedding entertainment director, Merry doesn't just play music but makes sure all of the wedding team is

coordinated (including the videographer, photographer, consultant, and/or banquet manager). He works from a script to make sure things happen on time and transition smoothly. His book is comprehensive, and he shares examples of real-life couples and their receptions. There are 26 chapters of tips, anecdotes, and planning ideas. Much of the advice is presented in easy-to-read paragraphs with bullet points and highlighted boxes. He covers the details of a reception that a typical bride and groom simply wouldn't think about. To be honest, aside from Merry's leaving out video as one of the "top three aspects of a successful reception"—he chose "location, photographer, and entertainment"—I was very pleased with his book.

Chapter 6, "Screening the Cinematographers," is written to educate the bride and groom on how to evaluate a photographer and videographer. Merry warns couples about photographers who spend too much time posing, just as he does videographers who like to re-enact things. One of the chapter's subheads is "Blinded by the Light." He cautions about video lighting but concludes, "The real pros use the best tools and they know how to use them to capture the footage they need without intruding on or disrupting your celebration." Merry recommends not cutting corners if photos and video are important to you.

Chapter 23, "Special Touches," talks about the Love Story presentation, the video montage, and the Same-Day Edit. Merry is encouragingly well-versed in what videographers are offering today. The book also includes tips on planning the wedding ceremony, the cocktail hour, the grand entrance, the toasts, the meal, the special dances, the cake cutting, the money dance, the bouquet and garter, the big send-off, and more.

Merry concludes by saying the primary reason the entertainment aspects of a wedding reception have remained unreported for so long is that photos sell image over experience. He explains, "What photo could communicate the overwhelming emotions a bride might be feeling the moment she hears a special surprise phone message from her beloved grandmother who was too sick to attend the wedding?" Does this argument sound familiar? It reads as if Merry knows that video should be considered a top three priority—too bad he stops short of saying it.

That said, Merry (who presented a seminar with the same title as his book in August at WEVA Expo 2007) does a great job of explaining wedding vendors' respective roles. The more we understand the role of other wedding professionals at the wedding, the better team players we become, and that's one of the reasons I recommend *The Best Wedding Reception...Ever!*. Besides, great receptions make great videos!

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