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You Can Transform The Industry

By Jason Jones, Executive Board President, M.A.P.D.J.

When we talk about our industry we frequently speak of it as though it were out there somewhere. DJ companies that we are not aware of specifically, but we know from feedback, doing untold things that invariably make us look bad. We do this when, in reality, we are the DJ industry; your company and mine. When we realize that we are the industry and that we own the whole industry ourselves and we have the power to change it and make it into what we want it to be.

The vision for MAPDJ is simple – to transform the DJ industry into one where DJs are respected, well compensated and admired for their talent.

That means that what we're up to has little to do with MAPDJ itself and everything to do with creating future for our selves and our industry that we can be proud of. MAPDJ is just a structure for us to work together and make/be the change we want to see in the industry.

Using the power of influence we invite all Midwest DJs in the industry to join us in this movement we have created to work in an industry where we are respected, well compensated and admired for our talent.

We begin on a grassroots level with ourselves and our own businesses. By respecting other DJs, vendors, our clients and ourselves we create the respect we get as professionals. Next, when we charge what we think that our talent (and/or the talent of DJs in our employ) is worth rather than a notion we have of the "going rate" of the market, we begin to establish our value to ourselves, families, clients and the industry. And finally by developing our talent so that we know we are always at the top of our game (where ever that is in our personal/talent development) those around us will admire us for our talent.

MAPDJ is designed to support this vision as we collectively stand together and uphold this vision. We do so regardless as to what those "other DJs" are doing to ruin the industry, or what the media might write about us, or what venue managers might say about what we charge for an event. They have no power in shaping our future as an industry. We have the power to shape a future for the DJ industry. And the more DJs we inspire to join our cause, the faster we will close the gap between how we see ourselves and how the rest of the world sees us.

We are not setting out to create an image for our industry, we are setting out to create a reality for our industry.

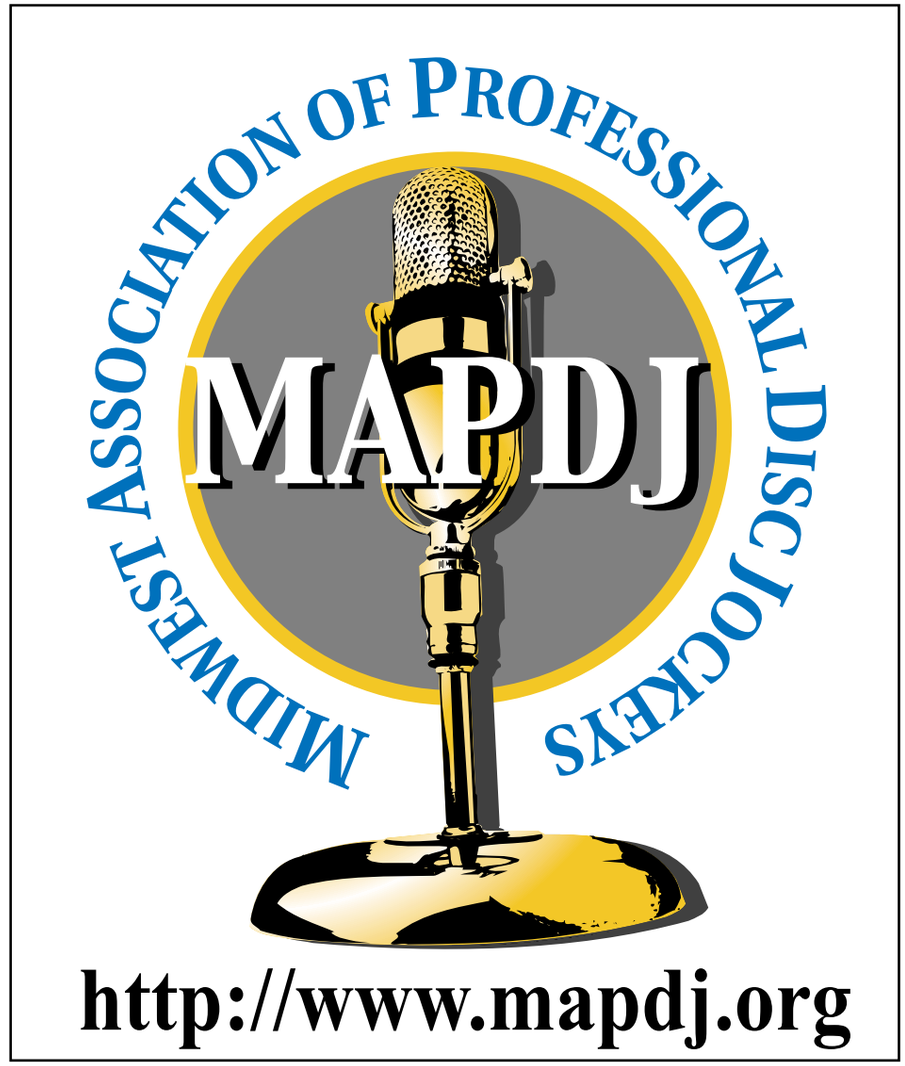
When I joined MAPDJ I attended my first annual meeting and convention in 2003. At that convention I was inspired and realized what was possible for me as a mobile DJ. I experienced the energy, enthusiasm and connectedness that emanated from MAPDJ members who were so proud of their convention and what they had accomplished together. I was inspired by a room packed with members for the MAPDJ annual meeting. I was moved to improve my performance, presentation and marketing and see the value in what I bring to an event by Mark Ferrell. His Getting What You're Worth message and the other talented speakers blew my mind.

The fastest way to transform our industry and inspire other DJs to join our movement is to invite them to our annual get together at the fall Disc Jockey News Conference. Allow them to experience the collective energy of our whole Association and the possibility of how extraordinary they can be. After that experience, the value of our organization and what we stand for will be clear, attractive and necessary.

MAPDJ supports members with training opportunities at meetings in every aspect of their performance, gear and business. Most importantly though is the support that comes from members when you are ready to make a big leap and start charging what you believe you are worth! And finally the admiration you will get from those around you when you're making a difference in your industry, your community and your family with you talents.

If you are already a member, I invite you to put our industry at stake as though it were your business and get involved in your chapter. I invite you to support your leaders, give them your input, your attention and your listening and then respect their decisions. Say 'yes' to an industry where you are respected, where you are well compensated and where you are admired for your talent and enjoy the rewards of making a difference. If you're not a member I invite you to join the movement by contacting a membership director in a chapter near you and attending a meeting.

Jason Jones is the Executive Board President of the Midwest Association of Professional Disc Jockeys. For more information on MAPDJ, visit http://www.mapdj.org



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The MDJ Gold Rush Over....?

By Dude Walker

The modern American Dream...get rich and make your mark quickly. Thousands jump into the MDJ industry each year. Ironically similar and in many ways to the same demise as those drawn into the California gold rush.

Almost like clockwork as the popularity of wedding bands waned the influx of MDJs began. However humble the beginnings for MDJs may have been, much like the sleepy simple life of the distant California outpost, it wouldn't take long for a media-charged generation to clamor for their piece of the American Dream.

The catch phrase of "entrepreneurial spirit" or "instant wealth" seemed to justify whatever means necessary to pursue the goal.

San Francisco had only a few hundred residents prior to the 1849 gold rush. Similar to the few hundred MDJs that were among the first to pioneer the MDJ industry away from roller rinks and sock hops, into organized social settings like weddings.

All it took was a chance discovery by John Marshall on January 24th, 1948, the whisper of gold, and President James Polk's statement:

"The accounts of the abundance of gold in that territory are of such extraordinary character as would scarcely command belief were they not corroborated by authentic reports of officers in the public service."

The gold rush was born and California would virtually change overnight. San Francisco would soon average 30 new houses and two murders each day. Real estate plot that cost $16 in 1847, sold for $45,000 just 18 months later.

In the mid 1980s, MDJ companies could not build and staff MDJ systems fast enough. The deficit being created by the fall in popularity of local bands created an artificial demand for MDJs to fill the void. If there were ever a time to correlate as the initial MDJ gold rush it would be 1984 to 1992. During this time period there was little to no references made to part-time or full-time MDJ status. Everyone seemed to have MDJ work. I have been asked by many, what it really means to be full-time. Imagine saying goodbye to a "regular paycheck" from a day job in 1991 because you could see a future with seemingly limitless heights. More on that later...

Enter the gear supplier:

Just as the California gold rush needed tools for the trade...so did MDJs. Sam Brannan became one of the richest people of the California gold rush without ever mining for gold via a masterstroke of marketing and a keen understanding of supply and demand. Brannan ran through the streets of San Francisco shouting about Marshall's discovery. As proof, Brannan held up a bottle of gold dust. Brannan recognized opportunity in selling the tools to miners and set out to buy every pick axe, pan and shovel in the region. Metal pans that sold for twenty cents a few days earlier, Brannan was selling for fifteen dollars. In just nine weeks he made thirty-six thousand dollars...in 1849.

MDJ suppliers recognized an opportunity to design gear to address a MDJs specific needs. Prior to the MDJ gold rush, most equipment and lighting was simply carried over from bands. DMX512 was initially created in 1986 by the United States Institute for Theatre Technology and revised again in 1990 to allow for more flexibility. Speakers, mixers and amplifiers were all becoming more MDJ friendly. By this time the MDJ gold rush was well on its way and suppliers already had greater numbers of potential customers. Volumization played a big role in the rapidly expanding MDJ industry. More potential customers equaled more potential sales which equated to greater profit margins. Making the equipment and lighting more "attainable" would simply entice more MDJs to stake their claim.

The epidemic and pivotal point:

Gold fever gripped Americans like a fiery fever fanned by newspapers. Accounts of farmers leaving their fields, merchants closing their shops and soldiers leaving their posts served to further the gold fever to epidemic proportions. Unlike most of the world's gold is embedded in hard rock. However, California gold was largely accessible to anyone with a few simple tools and a willingness to work hard.

California became a part of the United States just a few days after Marshall's discovery. The gold rush came before any governmental legislation could be established. California gold was easy to find, easy to get and free for the taking, making the California gold rush unique and very similar to MDJing.

The MDJ gold rush was born out of an unlikely set of circumstances that intersected: cultural vanity, music popularity, music format change, waning popularity of local bands, increased complexity of music, ease of entry, combated job market, recession and anarchy due to the lack of any specific laws or regulations to foster industry structure.

The MDJ gold rush offered the opportunity to simply "exist" with a landline as a MDJ and your calendar would fill up.

To be continued...

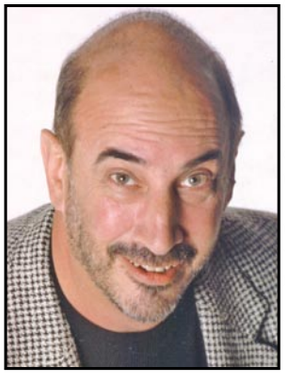
Dude Walker can be reached at dudewalker@discjockeynews.com.

Why Do Businesses Succeed Or Fail? HINT: It's Not Just Sales

By Jeffery Gitomer

Someone from Success Magazine called and asked me for a quote about being a successful entrepreneur and salesman. Here's the quote I gave:

"Everyone has heard the phrase 'The American Dream.' I look at it as 'The American Reality.' When you're in business for yourself you write your own history, you write your own success story, you write your own legacy, and most important you write your own paycheck. When you write your own paycheck, you control your own destiny. Being in business for yourself gives you the opportunity to work your heart out for something you love."



Nice thirty thousand-foot view of entrepreneurial success.

FAST-FORWARD FIVE MINUTES: Today's American reality is that there's a day-to-day ongoing drama in the saga of business, and on this particular day, I was dealing with major drama. I was in an informal staff meeting trying to resolve the ancient issue, "Why can't everyone just get along?"

The meeting was civilized. Apologies started even before I entered the room. By the time I walked in, resolve had begun. Everyone was talking about how to make things better – at least for the moment.

During the discussion with my employees I remarked (among other things) that I was looking for long-term harmony, not just a momentary truce, or a week of peace. I wanted to get to the root of the issue, not just put a band-aid on the surface skirmish.

I decided to talk more about what it takes to have a successful business instead of a petty disagreement. I thought if I got into more detail about how the whole business ran, maybe they would have a better understanding of what they did, and how important it was for each of them to be harmonious with the other.

Below is the essence of what I said. Compare these elements with those in your business. I believe this list to be essential for business success and sales success in any company – including mine – including yours.

These are the elements that have driven my business to success:

1. Great people. People who are excellent at what they do. Self-starters, smart, responsible -- with a passion for excellence, and a successful track record. Not just salespeople – everyone MUST be excellent. Reception, accounting, shipping, and especially anyone who talks to customers.

2. Harmony within. Each person must decide to "get along" with everyone else. This means their attitude must be positive, and they have to understand and be able to get along for the common good, even through personality conflicts, minor disagreements, and major disagreements will occur. They can get over it, and get on with it.

3. A continuous flow of ideas. From everyone – especially me as the leader.

4. Unless you have sales, you have no business. Products and services that are understandable, have perceived value, have gained market acceptance, and are easy to purchase. There are lots of sales on the books because the product is in demand.

5. Money. Don't confuse sales with money. Money comes from making profitable sales. My father once told me "You can have lots of business -- but no money." Learn your profitability, and transfer it to your sales and your salespeople.

6. Creativity and willingness to risk. Trying new things and new ways. Your customers demand it but your competitors hope you'll do "business as usual."

7. Earn loyalty from everyone. Loyalty is stability, growth, and profit all rolled into one. Loyalty has 3.5 parts. You must earn from (1) your customers, (2) your vendors, and (3) your employees. The best way to get loyalty is (3.5) to give loyalty.

8. Wide open communication. Speak your mind and say your peace – truthfully. This may mean drop the PC and get real world, real life. Maybe that way you'll have a real business.

9. Freedom to succeed and fail. No one fails on purpose. I give everyone freedom to learn, freedom of expression (without fear of reprisal), and freedom to take risks.

10. A respected liked (loved) leader. I am the leader. The passionate, lead by example, cheerleader leader. I love what I do, and it's contagious to all.

10.5 A fun atmosphere and a fun environment. We won an award a few years ago "Most fun place to work in Charlotte." Could your company win that award?

NOTE WELL: This list is by no means complete. I am certain that as you read this you had some additional thoughts – please post your ideas for the benefit of all at: www.gitomer.com/salesHelp/SalesForum.html.

One final success element: I have never thought of my employees as a team, because in many ways people work independently of each other. Rather, I think of them as a family. I treat them that way, respect them that way, take care of them that way, teach them that way, and love them that way.

Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of The Little Red Book of Selling and The Little Gold Book of YES! Attitude. President of Charlotte-based Buy Gitomer, he gives seminars, runs annual sales meetings, and conducts Internet training programs on sales and customer service at www.trainone.com. He can be reached at 704/333-1112 or e-mail to salesman@gitomer.com.

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Initiative

By Dr. John C. Maxwell

It's cliche to say that every journey begins with a single step, yet it's true. Leaders don't wait for everything to be perfect before they move forward. They don't wait for all the problems or obstacles to disappear. They don't wait until their fear subsides. Leaders take initiative.

Leaders know the secret of momentum: once you take the first step and start moving forward, everything becomes clearer and easier. If momentum gets strong enough, problems begin to take care of themselves and new opportunities arise. But the benefits of momentum only come into play once a leader takes initiative.

As leaders, why are we sometimes timid or tentative when we should be taking action? In my experience and observation, there are six root causes of our procrastination.

SIX SOURCES OF PROCRASTINATION

1. We hesitate to do chores we don't enjoy.

For me, yard work has always been draining. I don't find pleasure in it, and there's a million other things I'd rather spend my time doing. When I was first married, I would procrastinate mowing the lawn until it grew into a small jungle. I knew mowing would make my home look nice and would please my wife, but I abhorred giving it my time and attention.

2. We hesitate to do activities we aren't good at doing.

I enjoy the arts, and I am fascinated by highly creative persons. However, I'm not particularly gifted in painting, drawing, or designing. That's why I avoid decorating. I enjoy a finely manicured Christmas tree, or an exquisitely decorated room, but I simply have no talent at making things look good. As a consequence, I will put off decorating as long as possible.

3. We hesitate to do what isn't on our agendas.

Human nature tends to be set in its ways. When changing circumstances make our plans obsolete, we resist making adjustments. We stubbornly hold to our old course of action and avoid altering our behavior.

4. We hesitate to solve situations that are likely to be messy.

A prime example is confrontation. It's difficult to tell someone what they don't want to hear and probably won't respond well to being told. Dreading the possible outcomes, we dawdle and delay rather than initiating confrontation.

5. We hesitate to tackle a task that is high-energy and low-return.

As leaders, we are hard wired into getting the most bang for our buck. The same holds true with our time. We want to invest it profitably. As such, I have always been hesitant to put energy into relationships with high-maintenance donors or investors who aren't substantial contributors to the organization.

6. We hesitate to step into things we don't understand.

Hence the saying, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." My generation has had to come to grips with fast-moving technologies, and it hasn't been easy. I don't understand many features of GPS systems, iPods, or PDA's, and, as a result, I procrastinate adopting them into my life - even though I know they could be helpful to me.

VISION AND VALUES - THE ANTIDOTES TO PROCRASTINATION

Author John Kotter, says, "Most people don't lead their lives, they accept their lives. Leaders are the exception. In their mind's eye, they have a vision of exactly where they want to go. By keeping that vision in the forefront of their minds, leaders develop priorities, maintain focus, and, acquire a sense of urgency. The vision becomes the driving force behind everything a leader does.

Leaders with a vision are active rather than passive. Whereas most people follow the path of least resistance, visionary leaders refuse to settle for what's comfortable or easy. They shape their world rather than fitting into its mold.

In addition to following a vision, leaders relentlessly schedule their lives around their core values. Leaders are attuned to what they feel is important in life, and they align their activities to reflect those beliefs. Values dictate what they will do, what they will avoid, and where they will invest their most precious commodity - time.

THE POWER TO QUIT

You may have heard the saying, "Quitters never win, and winners never quit." Nothing could be further from the truth! Leaders are strategic quitters. They ruthlessly avoid activities that don't align with their vision or values. They know the power of "NO" when faced with opportunities that threaten to drift them away from their purpose.

I've quit a lot of things during my leadership journey: counseling, administrating, controlling, people-pleasing, and more. Quitting has been healthy for me because I've always quit for the right reasons.

VALID REASONS TO QUIT

You quit something you don't do well to start something you do well.

You quit something you're not passionate about to do something that fills you with passion.

You quit something that's doesn't make a difference to do something that does.

SUMMARY

To acquire more influence, taking initiative is a prerequisite. Leaders step forward when they clarify their vision and values. Knowing their purpose gives them a starting point, and a reason to act. By clearing out the clutter in their agendas, leaders recognize the power of quitting. Free from the handcuffs of overcommitment, leaders are able to choose the dreams they chase rather then drifting down the current of life's circumstances.

Dr. John C. Maxwell has authored over 30 books, including such New York Times best-sellers as "Developing The Leader Within You" and "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership."

Starting From Scratch

By Jeff Richards

Starting from scratch is a monthly column that will help those new to the Disc Jockey industry. Each article will cover what it takes to be a successful mobile DJ. Today's topic: Having a slow down in bookings? You're not alone.

Over the last few months I have received many calls and e-mails from DJs all across the U.S. asking about the slow down in bookings that they have been feeling over the last year or two. I've found that this slow down is happening everywhere and not just in my own area so I thought I would address this the best I can in this column.

I have been in the entertainment industry for over twenty five years. To say the least I can say that over time I have seen a huge change in the DJ industry. When I first started it wasn't even an industry, it was an enjoyable insignificant hobby people did to have fun and maybe make a little extra cash. Live bands were the first choice for entertainment at weddings because there were so few DJs available for hire. The phone book in my area has gone from less than twenty DJs listed to over two hundred DJs ready to perform every weekend. For every DJ listed in the phone book there are as many as ten more not listed.

Twenty five years ago the industry was dominated by mostly young white males, today every race, religion, age and sex are DJ business owners.

Why the sudden surge in the number of Disc Jockeys working events? Mostly it has to do with the ease to create a music library, the discount equipment available and the lack of quality control over the industry. Back in the day we had to individually buy records, tapes, and eventually CDs to create a library of music, one of the most important tools of a DJ. Today those without ethics and standards can go online and illegally download, share music files with friends and/or illegally make (burn) multiple copies of a disc for each of their DJs to create their play lists saving thousands of dollars in music purchases.

My first single drawer CD player cost more than $800. Today the easy accessibility to lower priced, compact size equipment like lap tops, and intelligent lighting make it cheaper to start a business. The compact size makes it so easy to haul and quickly set up/tear down a DJ system.

Of course there's the way the core group of us who have been doing this for many years make the job look so easy it gives the unknowing the idea that being a DJ is all fun and games with no "real work" and easy money to be made. Subsequently there are also those who are not the best at being an entertainer that lead party goers to say "I could do better than that" and they start up their own business.

At the same time the number of disc jockeys has continued to increase, statistics show that the number of events in need of entertainment has significantly decreased over the last ten years. More couples are choosing to just live together without marriage or to wait until they are older and then have a small and simple wedding without entertainment. Destination weddings are the hottest fad in the industry with couples moving their receptions out of the continental U.S. to warm weather ideal locations. The economy is getting tighter (recession) causing couples to rethink their reception budget and spend less on entertainment. Worst of all there are the Wedding Planners, Bridal Magazines, Television Programs, Bridal Web Sites and "Do it Yourself" companies encouraging couples to save their money on entertainment by using things such as an ipod or an inexperienced friend as the entertainment.

After 9/11, corporate events almost completely disappeared and have never really bounced back to the levels they were before that dreadful day. With several years of little or no holiday events put on by huge corporate businesses they found that the holiday party isn't necessary for the success of the business and also saves the company big year end cash.

Schools have been cutting back on the number of dances they hold each year as well as the budget for those events. The schools complain that fewer students are attending the dances. The students protest that the DJs aren't very good so they don't attend the dance. The faculty decides to spend less and less money for the entertainment and at these low rates the experience and quality of the DJs willing to work these events gets less and less. It's a catch-22 for those DJs like me who get price shopping phone calls from school faculty and try and explain that the loss of their school dance attendance is a direct relation to the quality of the DJ and then try to book those events at an appropriate rate. Thinking that we DJs are all the exact same, the school naturally compares the last DJ to you and answer with "that DJ wasn't worth his money, why would I pay you more" and there is almost no way to convince them otherwise.

Bars, restaurants and even some hotels have installed "in house" music systems and hired their own "button pushers" for minimum wage. Why would an establishment hire a seasoned entertainer for hundreds of dollars a night when they can get some kid to "push play" for less for a weeks worth of DJ work. One night the employee is clearing tables the next they are pretending to be a DJ.

In short, the number of working DJs out number the quantity of events held each year by anywhere from 20:1 to 200:1 or more depending on your particular location. This means if there is a bridal couple looking for a DJ for their reception, you may have anywhere up to a one in two hundred (or more) chance of booking that event. With some DJs willing to travel great distances without charging any travel fee, the number of beginner DJs willing to work for pennies on the dollar and the surplus of unethical business owners, you may not even be aware of the number of DJs enthusiastic to perform for so little right in your own backyard. If you check Craigslist on the net you can easily find DJs willing to perform a wedding for under $500 and I found one for as little as $75.

I see established DJs charging a lower rate today then I charged in 1998. It wasn't profitable in '98 it sure won't be in 2008.

Every couple weeks I read about a DJ service going out of business or filing for bankruptcy. As I was writing this article I came across an ad on craigslist for a DJ business in my area for sale. I took the time to call and speak with the owner to ask him why in this multi-billion dollar wedding industry he was selling his business. His answer was basically because he thought he could "make big money" in an easy way as a DJ. He didn't know the true costs and hard work involved in running his business and those costs were greater than his earnings. His only choice was to sell the business before it was too late. It was strange speaking with him because he kept telling me how he was so booked up he was getting burnt out, but yet he couldn't afford to stay in business? When we spoke about his rates, his highest priced package was less than half that of my lowest package price. As we talked I suggested to him that all he would have to do is raise his rates by one to two hundred dollars and he would see the difference in his bottom line. He decided it would be easier to just let it go and give up the business. Unfortunately for every DJ company closing shop several more are just starting their DJ endeavor.

It is becoming harder and harder for a person to make any kind of a decent living as a DJ. The supply of DJs is continually increasing while the demand of events in need of a DJ is continually decreasing. The "price wars" have maintained or even lowered the average DJ rate to a figure less than it was five to even ten years ago. I challenge you to name one quality professional service that costs less today then it did five years ago.

What can a quality professional entertainer do during this slow down in bookings to stay afloat? Tighten your spending budget as much as possible. Continue to promote yourself and why you are different then other DJs. Educate potential clients of the importance of hiring a "quality DJ" over the "lowest priced DJ" available. There will always be lower priced DJs who are willing to cut their own throats to book an event. Know that you are better than that and convince your clients and all of their guests at every event that you are worth your rates. Go above and beyond what is expected from a DJ as the norm, and stand out in your region as the DJ everyone needs to hire.

Read Jeff's blog at www.discjockeynews.com click on the Blog/News button then click on "Starting from Scratch"

To respond to Jeff's column send an e-mail to jeffrichards@discjockeynews.com Jeff Richards has over 25 years of experience as a DJ/Entertainer and has served two terms as the Executive Vice President of the Midwest Association of Professional Disc Jockeys. He speaks at National DJ Conventions and for local DJ Associations and offers private consultations to DJ services. Jeff can be found on the net at http://www.PartyTimeProductions.biz

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Requests And Play Lists

By Michael Edwards

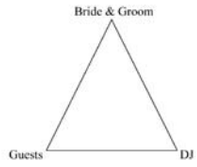
No matter how many wedding receptions you've performed at over the years, there is always something new to be learned in order to improve your level of service. That's probably why you're reading this article, (unless it just caught your eye while neatly lining the hamster cage with it). Either way, each month I will attempt to cover one aspect of a professional DJs wedding services and offer insight and advice to help you take it to the next level. The articles will encompass everything from handling the bride or groom's initial contact to the follow-up client survey and thank-you letter you should be sending out after the event. I should also add that these viewpoints and tips are not meant to be the only correct path, but merely the one that works best for my company after literally thousands of successful weddings. If you have a different or better way of accomplishing the same results, feel free to share your ideas with us as well.

Let's start with a question that more and more wedding clients seem to be asking lately:

"Can we give you a play list?" I always answer "yes", then nudge them toward reality.

Inside, I'm thinking, "Letting the client select all of their reception music is like telling the executive chef how much salt he should put into the soup for 150 guests." You are the musical "chef" here and although it is the client's wedding day, nobody will blame the bride or the groom for an empty dance floor if you are forced to alternate between John Denver and Jim Croce all night. Mental note: planes always crash for a reason.

To start off, I suggest eloquently agreeing with the clients that their requests are a very personal musical contribution to their reception. A valuable part, but not the only part. We train our 21 DJs to use a musical "Request Triangle" analogy (pictured below). It works very well because it's easily explained and readily agreed to by most wedding couples at their very DJ first consultation. It makes the most sense when you carefully explain to them that there are 3 corners to every triangle… and each is equally important:



Always put the bride and groom at the top of the triangle, (unless you don't want the gig).

Next, explain that at least some of their relatives and guests may have very different musical tastes and if they want everyone to stay until the very end and have a good time, then some of those audience requests must be accepted and played, just to make the guests feel that they are a part of the celebration and that they are important too.

The guests are the second corner of the request triangle. Explain that not every guest's request will be played, especially if it is a song on the bride & groom's "don't play list". You'll also avoid playing X-Rated or inappropriate requests or any song or style of music that is likely to completely clear the dance floor. They'll know… you've got their back.

Let the clients know you evaluate each request as it comes in, compliment the guest on a great song choice and then decide whether or not it "fits' and should be played. If a guest comes back later to see why it still hasn't been played, I find they usually understand (even after a few drinks) when I politely explain, "I still have to play all of the songs on the Bride & Groom's request list first, then I can get to the other requests." This way, you haven't had to directly say "no" to them but now you don't have to play Peter, Paul & Mary's "Puff, the Magic Dragon", even though they've now requested it twice!

As the final corner of the triangle, the DJ that the bride & groom eventually entrust with their special day should be no less than a music and entertainment expert. Only someone who has done wedding receptions successfully hundreds of times before can truly be considered the most qualified person in the room to actually determine a balance between the 3 corners of our musical request triangle. This powerful "visual" tool never fails to subtly convey to the clients what we DJs can never actually say to them, "I don't really want a long list from you, just leave it to me… your reception will turn out much better!"

Interestingly, there are some DJs who actually refuse bookings if the client wishes to select all of the music for the entire event in advance. I know because I am one of them. The reason is simple and admittedly selfish… every performance is a showcase of your professional DJ services that speaks volumes to future potential clients about how well you do what you do. If no one is dancing and guests are leaving early in droves because a client has chosen all the music, the audience thinks, "Boy, that DJ sucks!"! Should you simply don a pair of Groucho Marx nose/eye-glasses and hide all your business cards? A better solution exists way back at the initial consultation: politely apologize and tell the "We're picking all the music" clients you are not the right person for their reception and then recommend another DJ who is, as they stare blankly with their eyes bugging out and their mouths wide open. I've only done this once in 29 years as a full-time DJ (to an all "techno music wedding"… er, no thanks), but it felt great to let them walk out the door.

You can imagine where the triangle ended up.

Michael Edwards is the owner of AllStar Entertainment, a licensed & bonded musical entertainment agency located in Andover, MA. Full-time since 1979, Mike is one of 21 AllStar DJs at his agency. A member of the American Disc Jockey Association, Mike can be contacted at 978-470-4700 or emailed at BostonsBestDJs@aol.com The agency's

You Can Be High Tech Without Being Highly Offensive

By Harvey Mackay

All I wanted to do was to see a film in a quiet movie theatre. The lights dimmed, the movie started, and suddenly I saw the light. And that's when the problem of modern technology and old-fashioned courtesy and respect for other people clashed.

The person sitting next to me took out his BlackBerry to check messages. Instead of being engrossed by the film, I became distracted by the bright light emanating from my neighbor's technology. Every 15 minutes or so, he'd take out his BlackBerry to check messages, ruining my concentration on the movie. I wasn't sure whether to ask him to stop being rude, which would have caused another distraction, or just let it go. I decided to let it go, but I ended up seeing three-quarters of the film.

There is no question that computers, cell phones, BlackBerrys, global positioning systems and personal digital assistants make our lives easier. These high-tech gadgets enable us to access information, search the web, be available 24/7, find the easiest route to an unknown destination, and stay in touch with friends and colleagues. In short, many of us think we couldn't live without them.

But I wonder what price we pay in civility for this technology. As Walt Kelly's Pogo once said in a classic comic strip, "We have met the enemy and he is us." The problem isn't the technology, but the people who use the gadgets without considering the rights of others. Some users forget that people have the right not to be interrupted by another's phone conversations or distracted by their tech toys.

Often I find that these high-tech wizardries promote rudeness. People yell when using their cell phones on most urban streets, on public buses and airplanes, in doctor's offices and elevators, disrespecting other people.

James Katz, the director of the Center for Mobile Communication Studies at Rutgers University, noted, "If anything characterizes the 21st century, it's our inability to restrain ourselves for the benefit of other people." Cell phones are all about me, me, me, and forget about you, you, you.

Recently, at a restaurant a close friend of mine received a call from her 21-year-old son, asking her where the hot chocolate mix was located in the kitchen. A table of six sat paralyzed while she directed him through various cabinets to locate the hot chocolate. Was there another way for my friend to handle this but take the call at dinner? Was this an emergency?

Cell phones, of course, can be helpful during an emergency but can also cause problems. Some states now have rules against driving while talking on cell phones. Most experts say that this is distracting and causes accidents, but most people think these rules don't apply to them. And most law enforcement personnel have placed little emphasis on enforcing these laws. Since driving while on a cell phone can trigger traffic accidents, these laws should be stringently enforced.

I've written about rudeness before and remember fondly that one of my columns on "A cure for the rudeness epidemic" triggered many responses from people frustrated by their co-workers' or friends' incivility. That problem has only intensified, and the latest technology exacerbates the issue.

The noted 20th century social historian Eric Hoffer once wrote, "Rudeness is the weak man's imitation of strength." I think people who shout when using their cell phones, holler in elevators, sit in movie theatres accessing messages, are trying to appear more important than the rest of us. Their rudeness really says, "Look at how important I am." It's time that the other person's rights for silence in a movie theatre and other public places are respected.

Here are my suggestions:

The next time you're about to get on your cell phone or use your BlackBerry, look around and see if anyone is going to be disturbed. Don't touch that dial, make that call or shout into your phone unless you know you're in private and aren't disturbing anyone.

If you're in a busy restaurant or an elevator, call the person back or step outside so you don't disturb your fellow diners or other people.

If you must use the gadget, do so in a quiet, unobtrusive way because the world doesn't revolve around your needs. How you treat and respect other people says volumes about your character.

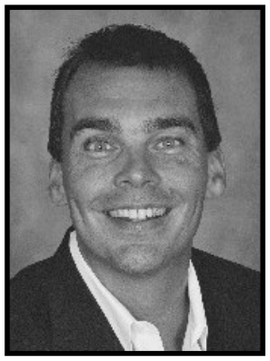
Mackay's Moral: Technology is no excuse for rudeness.

Reprinted with permission from nationally syndicated columnist Harvey Mackay, author of the New York Times #1 bestseller "Swim With The Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive," and the new book "We Got Fired!...And It's the Best Thing That Ever Happened to Us."

The Q Corner, Where Quality Meets Quantity

By Mike Walter

I went to a new restaurant recently with my girlfriend Kelly. It's actually a place on the water that's been there for years but it's recently been sold, renovated and re-opened as "Ross's Dockside Café." We were greeted and shown our table by a very nice guy.



Half way through dinner this same man approached our table to find out how dinner was. We introduced ourselves and it turns out he is a "Mike" as well. Mike Ross in fact. He had purchased the place a few months before and as he talked up the menu and his upcoming entertainment nights, I could just feel the enthusiasm of being a young and new entrepreneur.

Over dinner Kelly and I couldn't help but notice that Mike was all over the place, doing everything. He greeted people at the entrance, worked the room by going table to table and even showed people the restroom. We had actually come to this place to see a specific band play and while we were wrapping up our dinner the band showed up and began setting up right behind us. Sure enough, Mike was helping them in with their gear. Later we saw him on his hands and knees scraping up wax that had dripped onto the floor from a tipped-over candle.

At one point I said to Kelly, "This guy is working hard" and Kelly said, "Yes, he's hustling."

What a great word: Hustling. I love words like that; with a myriad of definitions. As a verb I could find eight for "hustle." Everything from "sell something aggressively" to "hurry" to "engage in small time illegal deals" to, of course, "disco dancing."

Indeed Mike was a hustler. Not in the bad, shady way but in the "aggressive" and "hurried" way. I could certainly be wrong about this assumption, but I imagined him knee deep in debt from purchasing this business. He's a young guy, probably in his mid-thirties, so again I'm going to assume this is the first restaurant he's ever owned. Probably the first step towards the realization of a lifelong dream. And so here he is, doing everything a young entrepreneur can and has to do to be successful.

And on my run the next morning I started thinking about how long it's been since I hustled. I thought about how, just a few days earlier, I had noticed a bulb was out in our lobby. I had left a note for my operational guy to change it. Years ago I just would have gotten on a ladder and changed the bulb it myself. I didn't have an operational guy then to leave notes for.

And that's just one instance. I've delegated schmoozing with banquet people and meeting with clients and loading in gear for our Bridal Shows and designing our marketing pieces. I mean, I over see everything and the delegation of these projects leaves me with more time to train our staff and maintain our level of excellence. It also leaves me more time to speak at DJ conventions and write articles like this one. And personally it's enabled me to maintain a schedule where I can train and travel to so many Marathons throughout the country.

But I had to ask myself: Have I gotten lazy from all this delegation? I hope not. But I have to say I admire Mike Ross and the aggressive way he is pursuing his dream. Kelly said something in the restaurant that night about how hard it is to make it in the restaurant business and I said "if this guy fails it won't be from lack of effort."

I think the same should be said about each of us. We should aspire to be the type of entrepreneurs who can and will do anything for our businesses. And if we get successful enough to have a staff doing certain things for us, maybe every once in a while we should still get down on our hands and knees and scrape up the wax. Or get the ladder out and change the bulbs ourselves.

Mike Walter is the owner of Elite Entertainment of New Jersey and a nationally recognized expert in the area of multisystem company development and staff training. You can contact Mike at mikewalter@discjockeynews.com.

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Pop

1	Chris Brown	With You
2	Sara Bareilles	Love Song
3	Flo Rida	Low
4	Rihanna	Don't Stop The Music
5	Jordin Sparks	No Air
6	Miley Cyrus	See You Again
7	Buckcherry	Sorry
8	Mariah Carey	Touch My Body
9	Usher	Love In This Club
10	OneRepublic	Stop & Stare

Rock

1	Puddle Of Mudd	Psycho
2	Sixx A.M.	Life Is Beautiful
3	Seether	Fake It
4	3 Doors Down	It's Not My Time
5	Foo Fighters	Long Road To Ruin
6	Theory Of A Deadman	So Happy
7	Finger Eleven	Paralyzer
8	Three Days Grace	Never Too Late
9	Black Crowes	Goodbye Daughters Of The…
10	Foo Fighters	The Pretender

Urban

1	Usher	Love In This Club
2	Dream	Falsetto
3	Shawty Lo	They Know
4	Chris Brown	With You
5	Ray J	Sexy Can I
6	Fat Joe	I Won't Tell
7	Mariah Carey	Touch My Body
8	Keyshia Cole	I Remember
9	Rocko	Umma Do Me
10	Mario	Crying Out For Me

Country

1	Alan Jackson	Small Town Southern Man
2	Trace Adkins	You're Gonna Miss This
3	Chris Cagle	What Kinda Gone
4	Carrie Underwood	All-American Girl
5	George Strait	I Saw God Today
6	James Otto	Just Got Started Lovin' You
7	Jason Aldean	Laughed Until We Cried
8	Taylor Swift	Picture To Burn
9	Kenny Chesney	Shiftwork
10	Chuck Wicks	Stealing Cinderella

The DJ Swap Shop

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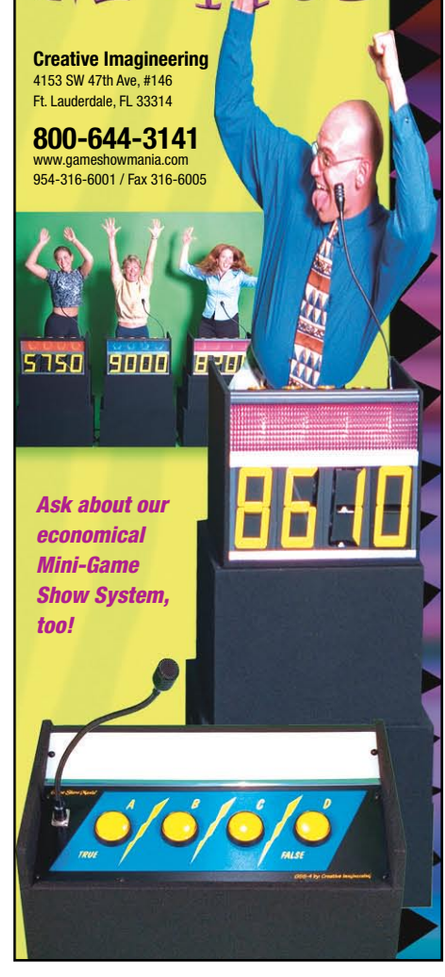

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