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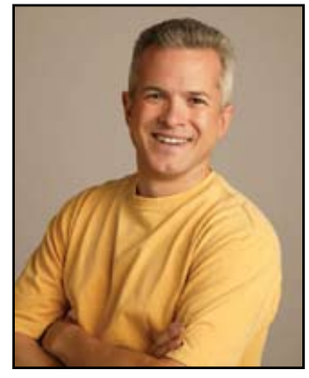

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Disc Jockey News

www.discjockeynews.com
29442 120th St.
Grey Eagle, MN 56336
Phone: 320-285-2323
Fax: 320-285-5264
Published by The Disc Jockey News Corporation

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Press Release Blog:
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The Disc Jockey News is published monthly by The Disc Jockey News Corporation, 29442 120th St., Grey Eagle MN 56336.

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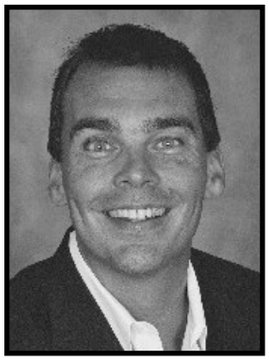
The Q Corner, Where Quality Meets Quantity

By Mike Walter

I recently witnessed a great small business success story and thought I would share it here in these pages. It's not about the DJ industry and it didn't even happen here in the United States but it reminds me that some things in business and in life are universal.



I was on vacation this summer in Sweden. My brother-in-law PG is an accomplished Swedish chef (I'll pause here while you do your best Muppet's impression) so he was our tour guide. We stayed just outside of Stockholm (which is a beautiful city by the way) but one day PG drove us three hours away to a restaurant and inn where we ate and stayed the night. The restaurant is named Forshems Gastgivaregard and the building it is in dates back to 1564. Twenty years ago the building and the business were both in disrepair and so an eager young chef named Stefan Johansson was able to purchase it for a song. He renovated the building and revamped the restaurant business and slowly things began to change.

Word of mouth began to spread that this restaurant was doing wonderful things with local foods. They adhere to the "slow food" method of running a restaurant (check out details at slowfood.com) and so their meats and vegetables and of course their fish are all from local sources. In time, business picked up. It wasn't a great marketing campaign or an early bird special that did it and it certainly wasn't an overnight success. It was the slow and steady drum beat of referrals and recommendations. Locals and the tourists both began making the trek from miles away to see and taste for themselves. As business picked up, Stefan and his wife Mia purchased another building close by and established a Bed and Breakfast. Now they could give their patrons a place to stay for the evening. They also began brewing their own beer. We learned while we were there that the Johansson's are also looking into purchasing farm land so they can start growing some of their own produce.

The day we ate at Forshems Gastgivaregard was a Wednesday afternoon. At 2pm the place was jammed. Not an empty table could be found. We met Mia who proudly told of us of her husband's success and reputation. Business spoke for itself. I can only imagine how tough it would be to get a table on a Friday night.

So what does this have to do with us? I believe it has everything to do with our business. I believe that if you want to be successful over the long term, you need to have a product that is so outstanding, that people will go out of their way to experience it. The drive from Stockholm to Forshems Gastgivaregard was a long one. To say this restaurant is "out of the way" is putting it mildly. And to say that the Johansson's took a huge gamble in establishing a business in such a remote area is also being kind. But they believed in their abilities, specifically Stefan's talent as a chef AND they were willing to be patient and let it build.

Word of mouth doesn't always happen overnight. I mean we all get that Monday morning phone call from time to time from the guest at your Saturday night wedding. But hopefully we all also get those calls that say, "I saw you 6 years ago at my friends wedding." The brutal truth, however, is that not everyone will gain this kind of reputation. Unlike a glossy brochure or a cool website, which anyone with any level of talent can acquire or create, a company's reputation is the most democratic thing in the business world. Like the old saying goes: "you either got it, or you don't."

The best part about "word of mouth" is that it is free. Most marketing campaigns come with a budget and an ROI. You begin with: What will this cost and will it make me any money? Those are questions I ask every time we do a Bridal Show or take an ad out in a banquet book. But direct referrals are free. You, or one of your DJs, just has to impress people. We just have to inspire them to come up and grab a business card, or go home and rave about the DJ they saw this weekend. And when they call, it shouldn't be to find out how much you charge, it should be to find out if you are available. That should be their first and only question. Just like the business that Stefan and Mia have established. People hear about Forshems Gastgivaregard and they don't calculate the drive time or look at the website for menu pricing. They call to book a table. And then if they are from far enough away they might also book a room at the inn. That's the type of business I aspire to have. A self sustaining referral based business that can withstand the fickle nature of marketing campaigns. A business that is solely based on making people so happy that they rave about us to their friends and family.

I'm not sure when I'll return to Sweden but with family there I'm sure it will be sometime soon. And when I do, I'll be sure to set a day aside to make the trip to Forshems Gastgivaregard. I have no doubt that the Johansson's business will be thriving. They may own most of Southern Sweden by then and if they do, more power to them! That's the result of a having a great reputation.

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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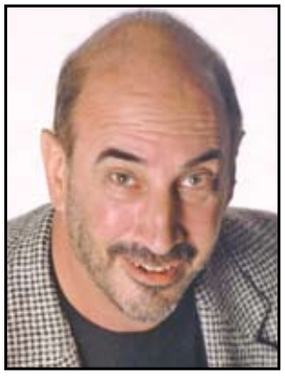
I Need To Get Better At Negotiation!

By Jeffery Gitomer

Eh, no Sparky, you need to get better at everything else so that you NEVER have to negotiate – or at least negotiate 90% less.

Negotiation is for people who are lousy at selling, don't understand buying motives, haven't provided value, are unable to differentiate themselves from the competition, can't build trust, and have utterly failed at building relationships.

Maybe that's why you have to "negotiate."



Negotiation is not a problem. It's a symptom.

And negotiate is only one of three words that make up your reality, and the real definition. The other two words are: your price. Negotiations are all about "concessions" and back and forth bickering about what you provide and how much it will cost. Negotiation "experts" call it give-and-take or win-win. That's a bunch of crap. It's lower your price, and sacrifice your profit.

I'm in the airplane as many as 20 times a month. In every airline magazine, there's a two-page pullout ad for "effective negotiation." It's been in the magazines for years. It must work. I mean… they must be successful in selling the course.

Their latest ad campaign states in bold headlines, "It's like steroids for your career!" Uh, correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't steroids illegal? Hey, you too can gain an unfair advantage! All you have to do is break the law. Sounds great – where do I sign up?

In the case of negotiation, it's a violation of the law of fair play, manipulation, ethics, and relationship.

Reason you have to "negotiate?" You were calling on the wrong person or people in the first place.

REALITY: People in the C-suite don't negotiate. They discuss, discern, and decide. And they do it based on perceived value and trust, not price.

REALITY: Here's why you have to negotiate:

• You failed to prove value beyond your competition.

• You failed to prove you were different from others selling the same product.

• You failed to gain enough trust to get a decision.

• You didn't win on the lowest price, and they called you in to "match the price of the lowest vendor" and potentially win the business.

• You won the business at a low level, and were sent to procurement.

All upside down propositions (and you are at the bottom).

And, once you're "in negotiations to get the business," you're relegated to manipulating and groveling to get the business – at a lower price, and less (or no) profit. Great move. And you call that making the sale. I call it a pyrrhic victory.

The whole concept of negotiation seems like a win-lose proposition. They win. You lose.

And to make matters worse, at the end of a "successful" negotiation, you halfway hate the people you were negotiating with – especially if they were in purchasing or procurement with some big company. People who want to suck your blood, and then call you a partner, or worse, a valued profit partner.

If you want to know if it's likely that you will have to negotiate in order to win the deal or the sale, answer these questions:

How high up in the organization is the person you're dealing are you?

What is your value proposition?

Do you know how the customer profits as a result of buying your product?

What is the customer's urgency to buy?

How are you perceived?

Do you have their trust?

How strong is your relationship?

What is your reputation in the marketplace?

MAJOR CLUE: CEOs tell procurement departments what to do. With one phone call, they can eliminate all negotiations and create a purchase order, from a now friendly, or even accommodating, purchasing agent.

In my opinion, negotiation is nothing more than someone else trying to get in your wallet and lower your price.

In my opinion, if you're negotiating, it's because you started too low on the sales food chain (because it was easier entry), and you're now faced with a price war.

Departments like plant maintenance, IT, HR, office admin, and other low level (yes low level) branches of a business have budgets that they spend. Maybe you should be talking to the people that MAKE the budgets for greater success.

And just so we're clear, I'm not saying, "don't take the negotiation course." Any knowledge on how to win, and how to deal with customers could prove to be valuable. I AM saying if you have to use negotiation to win a sale, it's likely you have given up your profit along the way. Not good.

If you want more ideas about negotiation strategies, and why there's a better way, go to www.gitomer.com, register if you're a first-time visitor, and enter the word NEGOTIATE in the GitBit box.

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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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: MONEY BACK GUARANTEE! (MBG)

I'm talking about standing behind your service, showing potential clients you mean real business and that you're not just some "Button Pushing" monkey out to rip them off. How do you do this? By offering MONEY BACK GUARANTEE! (MBG)

Did these words scare you? Now you know how potential clients feel when they are trying to locate a DJ without the possibility of that DJ turning out to be one of those guys in the numerous horror stories that they have heard.

The general public is a little frightened of hiring a DJ because of all the horror stories on bridal web sites depicting all of us as nothing more than "bad used car salesmen." Some DJs take the money and never show up, some sub-contract out the work without the client knowing and some will not be trained well enough and cause many unhappy moments during the event. With the influx of so many new uneducated, untrained and unskilled DJs to the industry over the last few years, our reputation continues to worsen in the public's view. Despite all the educational materials like this paper, DJ magazines and DJ Conventions; many of the newcomers buy some cheap equipment, download illegal music libraries and then advertise themselves as "professional" and at the same time VERY CHEAP and unfortunately do a lousy job and make all of us look bad. Some clients have even opted to use an ipod as the entertainment because they felt an ipod could do just as well without the possible embarrassment or the possible theft of their money by the DJ. Do you like being compared to an ipod?

For several years I along with many other DJs have offered the MBG right in the contract so that the client feels more comfortable signing the agreement. I have also heard rumbles by DJs who believe if they offer a MBG that they will get "ripped off" by clients looking for free entertainment. I've heard the "story" of a DJ who offered a 100% satisfaction guarantee and because he didn't play one of the many songs that was on the brides play list he had to give all the money back to that client. If this "story" is true then this was just a bad business management decision on that DJs behalf. How ridiculous it would be to return all the monies to the client because you didn't play one song! No court in the world would make a DJ give a full refund for such a minor infraction. A proper screening by the DJ via a face to face pre-agreement signing interview with the client might have helped the DJ see signs of a possible swindle plan by the client and then decide not to work for this particular person.

The way to protect yourself is to have an MBG that is properly written to protect yourself and your client without any confusion or misinterpretation of the clause. Here is an example that you can use as an example to write your own. I am not a lawyer so please seek legal counsel before adding this or any clause to your contract.

Money Back Guarantee: If something should go wrong; equipment failure, performance level, or other items that (insert your name here) has a complete control over, (insert your name here) will offer a portion of the cost back to you the client in accordance to the situation. A written letter must be received within seven business days of the event explaining in detail any situation you believe would call for a cash refund. A face to face meeting will be scheduled to discuss the reason for the complaint and a solution should be reached. If either side of the complaint isn't fully satisfied it then can be moved to arbitration or small claims court by either party.

This clause offers the refund but makes it clear that money will not be refunded for any unreasonable request. It also puts a time limit on a refund request so that a few months later if the client sees a better DJ, or the wedding bill was beyond their budget, they can't come back and try to get a refund. A face to face meeting is important because this will virtually stop those out to rip you off if they need to face you with their complaint. It also states that if the client or the DJ isn't happy with the decision of the complaint at the meeting, either can move to a court of law and have it settled there. This gives the client a feeling of power and at the same time saves you from a totally unreasonable refund request from the client. (The full refund for not playing one song)

In all my years I have never had a client ask for one penny back. I attribute this to my MBG always reminding me of who I am, what my clients expect from me and what will take place if I do not conform to my obligations. I would legally be required to return all or a portion of my income to the client. It keeps me on my toes to always be the best that I can be. You have to be honest with yourself and your clients; if there is a problem with your performance, the equipment, if you do not show up at the event or if you really do a less than a good quality job for your client then you must do the right thing and give back money in accordance to the situation. It may not completely correct the original problem but it will help to calm that client and possibly stop doing more harm to your reputation.

To get down to the basics, a money back guarantee is a way to make sure you and all your employees do the absolute best that can be done and assure your clients that they will get what was promised to them. It is time to step up, be professional and stand behind your business. Offer a MBG and put your money where your mouth Is!

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. Jeff also offers private consultations to DJ services.

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In The Beginning...

By Dude Walker

There are several schools of thought that exist regarding MDJ contracts. Due in part by the variety of ways MDJs enter the business, the sheer lack of business acumen, the unwillingness to have an attorney draft a legal contract and quite possibly the most damaging is the apprehensive nature of enforcing a contract when the terms are breached by the client.

Over the past two and a half decades I've known easily in excess of a 500 MDJs that have gone through anguish over their contracts. More specifically, the terms and conditions regarding cancellations.

The most common position from clients that breach a contract is a feeling that they shouldn't have to pay, since they're not using the service...why should they pay?

A common debate amongst MDJs is determining when contract services begin. Compound that debate with legitimate MDJ companies being undermined by anyone willing to earn a few bucks of cash with an ipod, computer or cd player and the general consensus gravitates towards MDJing being a make-believe venture at best.

What I find so curious in the whole debate is that a client will hold a MDJ to their word until they decide the MDJ is no longer needed. Express contract terms can help address most of these conflicts. However, the terms are only as good as the person willing to enforce them.

So when does the contract begin? Day of the event? 30, 60...90 days prior? During the music consultation? Upon receipt of deposit? When the contract is signed by the clients? When the contract is signed by the MDJ? When the contract is drafted?

Reverse the time-line of events from the event date to the time you become obligated to the clients and it begins to clarify some of the confusions. In the beginning, when you become obligated to a client, a contract exists.

"When you give your word to do something and you cause people to rely on it to their detriment, then you may be held accountable for any damages that you cause."

-Attorney Lydia Sartain

Or...you could consider what a Hall County, Georgia Superior Court jury handed down as a verdict after 5-6 hrs deliberation on Wednesday July 23rd, 2008 in the Schell vs Gibbs case presided over by Honorable Kathlene F. Gosselin, wherein $150,000 was awarded to the plaintiff (Schell) as a result of the defendant (Gibbs) breaking off their engagement. Engagement being the ultimate example of a verbal contract.

In speaking directly with the Hall County, GA Superior Court, this case is unique and has piqued the interest of many. According to the court, this case was initially referred to mediation arbitration. However, neither side was able to reach an agreement and was filed in Hall County Superior Court where Lydia Sartain, Shell's attorney, was initially concerned about the "conservative" nature of area residents who might make up the jury.

However, Sartain was pleased with the verdict and hopes that the case sets a precedent that an engagement can be a binding contract: "When you give your word to do something and you cause people to rely on it to their detriment, then you may be held accountable for any damages that you cause."

While this case may set a new precedent, it opens up a whole new can of worms that could affect MDJs. Could a MDJ be held liable for an implied promise not expressly spelled out by written contract. Think of all the stories of MDJs being long on promise...short on delivery. In the beginning imagine what is implied by: We Sell Fun! We Get People Dancing! High Energy Fun! Interactive Entertainment! Impressive Sound & Light Show! Superior Quality Sound! We Play Your Requests! Professional DJs...

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

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Getting To The Heart Of The Matter

By Harvey Mackay

What makes a championship athlete? Is it attitude, confidence, courage, desire, determination, discipline, endurance, fitness, mental toughness, perseverance, physical ability, self-discipline or visualization?

It's probably a little bit of all these characteristics. It's also a lot of heart. There's no denying the heart of a champion.

I'm headed to China for the Summer Olympic Games for 17 days, and I'm all fired up to experience the heart of the gold-medal winners. Watching the men's Wimbledon final was a great prelude. Having been a tennis tournament player, I've long been a tennis junkie, but that was the best match I've ever seen. Two greats—Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal—slugged it out with each other for nearly five hours. They gave it everything they had. They played with all their heart.

Muhammad Ali, whom many people consider the greatest boxer of all time, said: "Champions aren't made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them—a desire, a dream, a vision. They have to have last-minute stamina, they have to be a little faster, they have to have the skill and the will. But the will must be stronger than the skill."

One of my favorite Olympic moments was from the 1968 Summer Olympic Games in Mexico. If you are a track and field fan, you probably know all about the "Fosbury Flop."

Dick Fosbury was a good high jumper and he seemed to have reached the maximum height his body could clear. His head told him that he had likely met his potential. His heart told him otherwise. He began to experiment with every different way a body could be propelled over the bar. The style he finally developed was different than anyone else had ever seen. His jump is done head first, with the flat of the back clearing the bar and then the knees are drawn up, jackknife fashion. When people first saw him do it, they went away shaking their heads.

But in the 1968 Olympics, Dick Fosbury set a new Olympic high-jump record and won a gold medal for the United States. It was a triumph born of fresh thinking, dogged experimentation and heart. Today, many of the world's best high jumpers base their jumping style on the "Fosbury Flop."

Heart matters in every human pursuit. In fact, I think it's safe to say that heart trumps just about all the other senses when it comes to accomplishing the new and the unknown. Your goal may sound crazy, feel all wrong, look questionable, smell like failure and leave a funny taste in your mouth. But let your heart rule, and prepare to be amazed at the results.

One of the greatest violinists of all time was Nicolo Paganini. Born in 1782, he had a long illustrious career before his death in 1840. One day as Paganini was about to perform before a packed opera house, he suddenly realized that he had walked out on the stage with a strange violin in his hands—not his own treasured instrument.

Panic-stricken, but realizing that he had no other choice, he began to play with all the skill he possessed. Everyone agreed afterward that he gave the performance of his life. When he was finished, the audience gave him a standing ovation.

In his dressing room after the concert, when he was praised for his superlative performance, Paganini replied, "Today, I learned the most important lesson of my entire career. Before today I thought the music was in the violin; today I learned that the music is in me."

It also takes a strong heart to be a successful businessperson. Use your head, to be sure, but don't ignore what your heart is telling you. As legendary football coach Vince Lombardi said, "The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will."

The Lakota, a tribe of Native Americans, tell a story of the great spirit of creation, "Wakan Tanka." The story goes that after Wakan Tanka arranged the other six directions—east, south, west, north, above (the sky) and below (the earth)—the Seventh Direction remained to be placed. Because it was the most powerful, containing the greatest wisdom and strength, Wakan Tanka wished to place it somewhere it could not easily be found. And so it was hidden in the last place humans usually look—in each person's heart.

Mackay's Moral: Don't let your heart be the last place you look for direction.

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."

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Monthly Music Charts

By JonesTM.com

Pop

1	Jesse McCartney	Leavin'
2	Katy Perry	I Kissed A Girl
3	Rihanna	Take A Bow
4	Natasha Bedingfield	Pocketful Of Sunshine
5	Chris Brown	Forever
6	Metro Station	Shake It
7	Leona Lewis	Bleeding Love
8	Colby O'Donis	What You Got
9	Lil Wayne	Lollipop
10	3 Doors Down	It's Not My Time

Rock

1	Disturbed	Inside The Fire
2	Seether	Rise Above This
3	Saving Abel	Addicted
4	Motley Crue	Saints Of Los Angeles
5	3 Doors Down	It's Not My Time
6	Shinedown	Devour
7	Sixx A.M.	Life Is Beautiful
8	Puddle Of Mudd	Psycho
9	Kid Rock	All Summer Long
10	Staind	Believe

Urban

1	The-Dream	I Luv Your Girl
2	Young Jeezy F/Kanye West	Put On
3	Keyshia Cole	Heaven Sent
4	Rihanna	Take A Bow
5	Chris Brown	Take You Down
6	Plies	Bust It Baby
7	Lloyd	Girls Around The World
8	Lil Wayne	Lollipop
9	Hot Stylz	Lookin' Boy
10	David Banner	Get Like Me

Country

1	Alan Jackson	Good Time
2	Blake Shelton	Home
3	Sugarland	All I Want To Do
4	Brooks & Dunn	Put A Girl In It
5	Taylor Swift	Should've Said No
6	Keith Urban	You Look Good In My Shirt
7	Miranda Lambert	Gunpowder & Lead
8	Keith Anderson	I Still Miss You
9	Josh Gracin	We Weren't Crazy
10	Jimmy Wayne	Do You Believe Me Now

The DJ Swap Shop

For Sale: Download a Free BPM List of the Top 250 DJ Songs at www.bpmlist.com. The BPM List 2007, with over 10,000 songs, is also available in printed and downloadable formats for just $25 per index (by BPM, Style, Artist, and Title).

For Sale: Two Pioneer CDJ 500 II Limited top-loading CD players. $100 each. Also, I have an Odyssey Carpeted Case built for a 19 inch mixer and two top loading CD players or two turntables. $100. I'll Email pictures if requested. Case measures 52" L x 18" W x 5" D, is in EXCELLENT condition and very heavy duty. Pick up in Kansas City MO area. I will consider shipping the CD players. 816-519-5555.

For Sale: 2 floor staanding with pole mounted Top speakers-Sonic DJX 1812 Series 1 Crown CE 2000 Amp speaker cords, Price-$900.00. Contact-Greta 515-249-2623

For Sale: PCDJ Digital Audio Controller 2, 2 years old, used once. Will trade for led lights or $175 + Shipping (firm) Medium Size Fog Machine w/ controller used once $75+Shipping , 2 Numark Mix 2's need some repair and or just put back together ($50 + Shipping). 248-541-0250

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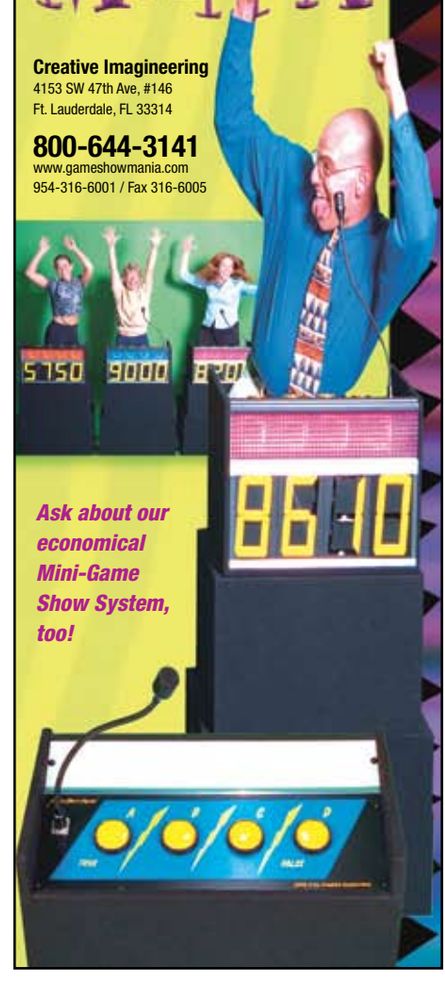

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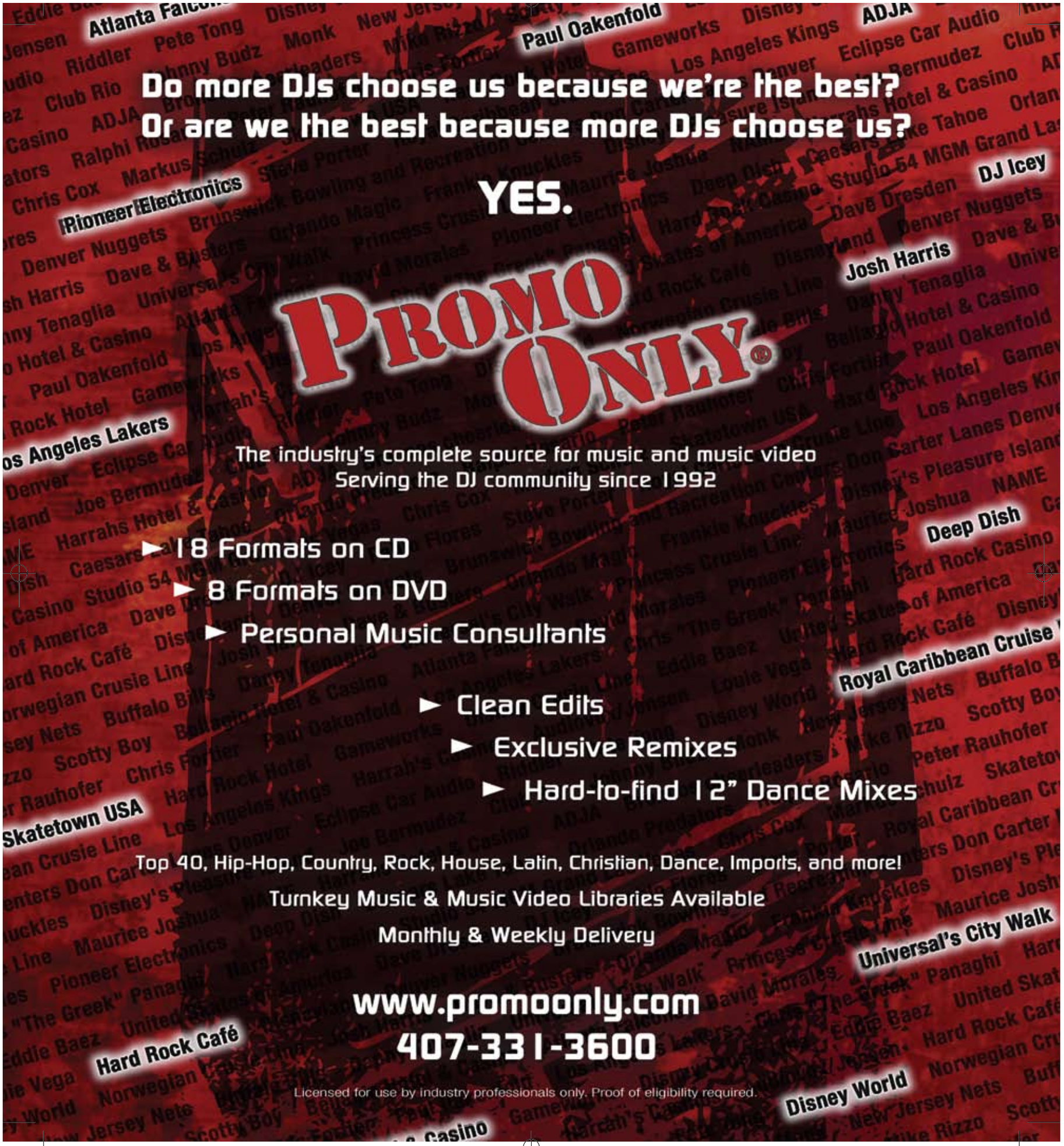
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