Disc Jockey News

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The Q Corner, Where Quality Meets Quantity

By Mike Walter

So it's a new year, a shiny new one too: "2010." Has quite a ring to it. Or "Ohten" as I've heard it referred to.

Maybe you've made some business resolutions for the New Year and hopefully if you have, finding some fresh talent is on that list. If you've been a regular reader of mine you know I believe talent is the lifeblood of any Multi-Op. Discovering new DJs should be a regular job for you. Searching for and approaching "hot prospects" should be an on-going department in your business, just like sales and marketing are. You've probably heard my theory: that we are all in contact with at least one great prospect a month. Maybe they are your waiter when you dine out, maybe your kid's English teacher, maybe the guy who sold you your car. People with the talents and personality that we are looking for are rare, but they are out there. So do you have your radar on? And when you spot someone, do you take action?

Stephen Covey, in his classic book "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" writes: "begin with the end in mind." What a simple yet powerful philosophy. Have you done that with recruitment? Do you know exactly what you are looking for in your next DJ?

If not, take some time now and jot down some notes (when I say "jot down" I am obviously dating myself to the generation that actually used notebooks and pens. If these accoutrements are foreign to you then by all means, you young Millennial you, pop open your laptop and take some notes.) What type of personality traits are you looking for? What kind of life experience is important to you? Are physical features essential? (It's okay to admit it, it doesn't make you superficial.) If so list them (height, weight etc.) This is akin to the dating process. You have your "dream partner." And then when you begin dating you compare everyone you meet to that paradigm.

Now you've got your image in your mind. Keep these notes handy and refer to them regularly. Remind yourself that you may cross paths with this person at anytime. At an event or at the movies. In line at the coffee shop. Where ever and whenever. They are out there, completely unaware that there is a great part-time job waiting for them. All it's going to take to connect the dots is you taking action.

So do you do it? Do you take action?

When you spot the bartender who is good looking and witty and who confidently looks everyone in the eye, do you ask him if he's ever considered DJing? Do you have a professional business card on you that directs them to a page on your website where they can fill out an online application and view a video welcoming them to the "Exciting World of DJing." If not, set those things up today so that when you do meet "Mr. or Ms. Perfect DJ Candidate" you'll blow them away with how professional your organization is.

Work on your "introduction" so you don't come across creepy (especially when approaching the opposite sex.) Have answers to all their questions and have a call to action ("let's set up an interview soon because we've got a busy month coming up with lots of work.")

As I survey my own roster of talent at Elite, I can pinpoint the DJs that I approached, out of the blue and offered this job to. Did it always work out? Of course not. That's like asking if you close every sales appointment. But it's worked out often enough to know it's an important part of any recruitment push. Want numbers? Last year alone, DJs on my staff that I found (as opposed to those who answered ads for work or who approached me) performed at almost 300 events for my company for a gross of over $400,000.

If you wanted to, and if you had the work load to keep them busy, I know in my heart that every Multi-Op in this country could add five new and awesome DJs to their roster this year. Don't need five? Great, your job just got easier.

But whether you want one new DJ or a handful, take action. Understand and believe that the perfect candidates are right there in front of you.

One last thing: two DJs that I know had very significant changes towards the end of 2009. One had to close his company down after over ten years of operation. Another actually lost his job, fired from a company that he had started and owned up until last year.

I've spoken to both of these guys and they are excited about the future. Terms like, "reinvent myself" and "starting over" kept coming up in both conversations. So I put myself, and ask you to put yourself, in the shoes of these two DJs. Ask yourself, if you found out tomorrow that you had to start over, what would you do? How would you go about reinventing yourself? What are the things you are currently doing that you would continue doing? And what are the business practices that you would leave behind?

They are intriguing questions to be sure.

So if you want an interesting exercise to kick off 2010, play this game: Say it was time to "start over." Imagine you had to pick up and move and restart your company a thousand miles from where you are now. Take a look at your business and decide what stays and what goes. Go through everything from your sales tools to your lead generation and your staff to your pay structure. Some things might be impossible to change (or just too painful) but some others you might discover and realize it's a simple tweak to your current SOP. Sometimes we do things for the simple reason that we've just always done it that way. And if it's something you'd change when starting over, than ask yourself, why not change it now?

Enjoy the exercise and Happy New Year!

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.

Behind The Mic

By Dave Winsor

"Why Won't You?"

Here's a question for you: "What will you do differently this year than last?" Do you have an idea of what you need to do to be better for your clients? What training will you go through?

I was watching the New England Patriots the other day and running back Laurence Maroney fumbled on the goal line. The other team got the ball. What happened to Laurence? He didn't see any further action for the rest of the game. Amazing huh? Here we have a multi million dollar athlete and he made ONE mistake. Sure, the stakes are huge, but what an amazing thing. Do you think it made an impression? It did on me.

How about you? What do you need to do to be error free? Do you see the parallel here?

The NFL players spend all week being coached. They practice over and over. Sometimes more because they don't get the play right and the coach demands (DEMANDS) perfection. How about you? Do you demand perfection? Who is telling you how you are doing? It better not be your clients. They won't tell you the truth, unless you REALLY mess up. Then they will and most likely it will cost you money and reputation.

I once played the wrong first dance song. I didn't even know I had made the mistake. The groom came to me during the open dancing part of the night as said: "Dave, you're doing an amazing job and we really are glad we chose you to represent us. But there's just one thing, and please don't freak out, but you played the wrong first dance song." Well, I did freak out. I offered to give him all his money back and he looked at me and said "Don't be foolish. You've put so much work into this, that we wouldn't accept anything from you. We just want you to play our song before the night ends." I told them I would. Later, they wrote me a glowing review, and never mentioned the mistake. I could have been tossed out of the game, that's for sure. But, I practiced making sure that everything would be perfect. 99.9 percent of it was. This couple still lets me know when they are coming to Maine and asks how I am. I cherish that.

Wherever I meet with a client, I ask a thousand questions. They may say something to me in one the many answers that I will be able to use it at their reception. It might be a minor point, but it may have a major impact. I always send them a complete rundown of the evening and have them send it back with notes or changes for me. I rehearse, I plan, I practice it all. Why? I don't want to let my clients down for ANY reason. If I mess up, it's my fault and mine only. I accept the blame.

So, my question again: "What training, online courses, local community theatre, comedy courses will you be taking?" Why, in this industry do we NOT have a

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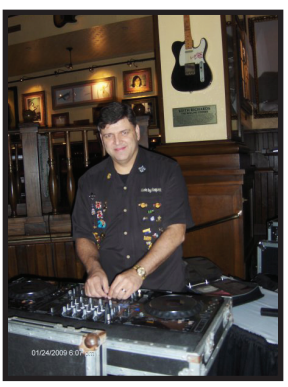
Better By The Dozen

By Rocky Bourg

Not donuts…although I did drool a little, O.K. a lot, while typing the word. Eleven of twelve things to which I refer are yet to be determined, let alone glazed, powered, or filled with jelly. Mmm, donuts.



Anyway, I am inviting everyone, at least the willing, to join in a self-regulated self-improvement challenge to enhance our businesses and, by association, make this industry slightly better through incremental but concerted efforts in the coming year.

Every month, 12 times this year, I vow to address and, hopefully, correct one flaw in my infinite inventory of flaws. I intend to share some funny examples from my own history that demonstrate the issue at hand, the consequences and offer some possible options for corrective measures that, hopefully, relegate them to lessons learned.

By the time you are reading this, 2010 will have already begun but it is not too late to start down the path toward making things substantially better. Given my above average quotient of imperfections and the stone headed nature in which I have managed/ignored them in the past, I expect a greater chance of success and better results if the challenges to be addressed are obvious and identifiable and will benefit from simple corrective measures. That is my charge.

As communications technology advances and the pace of daily living becomes exponentially faster, many otherwise pleasant people have developed a gnat's patience for response tolerance. Due to the speed of email and the omnipresent access to Crackberries, I-Phonys, HemiDroids, etc., any delay in response to inquiries, regardless of intent or desire, can be taken as non-interest or rejection. Neither is likely to be seen in a positive light.

Now, let's move on to the first of my 12 flaws to be addressed.

A very nice lady, referred by an established client and very nice family, contacted me and asked for a contract. Through no sales effort on my part, She knew what I would provide, wanted it for her event, and never even asked about price. Sounds dreamy, huh? It happens.

Her date was available and the chosen venue was familiar to me. I informed her that I would send a contract and ink her event on my calendar. All seemed to be progressing perfectly. Shortly after receiving the initial payment, the party supplier, that I always recommend, emailed confirmation of her "goody" order and it was exactly what I had suggested. Some clients are just so smart.

The initial planning session was enjoyable, very productive and I was truly looking forward to working with this family and their guests.

As the date drew near, she emailed, and I received on my Blackberry, an update indicating that the number of guests had changed and would now include about 50 additional partiers, approximately 30 adults and 20 kids. My sound system and performance abilities are capable of handling that minor addition and the already suggested and purchased party supplies were ample enough for such a modification so I foolishly and lazily discounted the need for a quick response. One week or so later, I replied with a simple acknowledgment of receipt and indicated prep was running smooth. Later I learned/realized that she had a coworker send that message so it was off her email radar and the coworker didn't forward my reply. Regardless, it is not her responsibility to follow-up on my follow-upping.

Our initial meeting/planning session was such a success and their schedules had become so busy that they decided to forgo any additional meetings and she informed me of that in another email, which I, again, received on my mobile device generating, on my part, a dangerous and non-imperative responsive attitude. No meeting meant, again, no additional effort on my part so I merrily went on working and preparing the established plan. Weeks later, I emailed the proposed itinerary and acknowledged their desire to forgo additional planning meetings.

The next call regarding this event came from the referring client.

Huh?

Yeah, she was calling to ask if I had decided to back out of her friend's event.

WHAT?

I was taken aback because that event was on the front boiler, the prep was all but finished, and the process seemed, from my perspective, to be moving along perfectly. The key phrase there is "from my perspective."

Unfortunately, my delayed responses to the last two emails created concern and unnecessary stress for my client and made her feel so ignored that she enlisted the help of her friend and mine to get a "better" response. I was certainly embarrassed and disappointed in myself.

I immediately called her to apologize and assuage her concerns. I assured her that I was still very much looking forward to the celebration and that our plans were on course toward total success. I acknowledged receiving the prior messages and again "ate crow" while promising to more professionally respond to all future messages. Given the stage of development, however, none were necessary.

The evening arrived and Karma decided to really teach me a lesson. Had I been better at responding, I might provided her an opportunity to directly inform me or, through discussions, may have recognized that the change in guest count, while having no effect on my prep and eventual performance, would certainly have an effect on the actual event room.

This client's had contracted a small downstairs ballroom that was originally chosen and sufficient for the initial guest list. The known additional and potential additional guests prompted this astute client to request a room change to the venue's larger, second level room.

Have I mentioned that this classic French Quarter building has no elevators?

What about the fact that the guest stairwell is off limits to vendors and the loading area for the upstairs room was designed and built, apparently by the Marque De Sade, when deliveries were made by horse and carriage and not towed behind SUV utility trailers?

Oddly enough, I knew then and still am aware of this venue's circumstances and policies and whenever I submit a proposal for an event in that particular room, the fee accounts for the additional strike requirements. In this case, my unresponsiveness allowed a change to occur that had a direct effect on a major component of my service, that being, GETTING MY GEAR IN THE ROOM!

As you can surmise, I was at the mercy of my own folly. The expected simple and easy strike had now reached Defcon 2 and I was ill prepared to efficiently manage the strike activity. Nothing to do but git'erdun!

The necessary strike activity was unexpectedly tedious, unnecessarily difficult, totally undermanned, rushed, mega-aggravating, and just plain worse than it would have been had I simply been more responsive. Shame on me.

Thankfully, of all my shortcomings, cutting too close on the clock is not one, at least it has not been for some time. It used to be but I tired of the stress and aggravation and corrected my tendency to delay. Since squashing that tendency, I always arrive with ample time to make such adjustments. So that proves two things; You can each an old dog new trick and this old dog is always learnin'.

With just enough time to set-up and get into performance mode and garb, we began the program and all went well. I do not believe client ever knew of my self inflicted punishment but I did. And I'd bet a dollar to a donut (Mmm, donuts) that the snafu effected my early attitude and my pre event grumbling did not go unheard by the venue staff. Deduct valuable venue referral points for whining. I am also unable to guarantee that my performance was unaffected. Working under that type of unnecessary stress has real potential to involuntarily and unfavorably taint one's performance. All that negative garbage could and would have been avoided had I been better at responding without delay.

Therefore, as of, no later than January 1, 2010, and sooner if possible, I vow to effort quicker, better, and more reliable email communications with clients. I will, when at all possible, quickly reply with a notice of receipt and include language that addresses the request or, at the very least, ignites the dialogue. I will still ignore the endless emails from my Liberian beneficiary that has yet to deposit the promised fortune in my bank account. Maybe he sent it to Cap Capello's account since that's whose Social Security number I gave him.

Please join in me this monthly exercise and address at least 12 things you could do better. If only 12 of us participate, by 2011, we could get rid of at least one gross…pun intended.

Here's wishing everyone a Very Happy, Prosperous 2010.

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standard of behavior? Why, in this industry is there NOT a national standard of performance? (The only thing I can think of is the very tired "16 questions to ask your DJ?" Really?!) How about a dress code? I've heard so many horror stories from venues and vendors about how the dj showed up late, unprepared and dressed sloppily. WHY?

If you really care about your business and more importantly yourself, consider getting information and expertise from people who have been there and done that! I also find it amusing that people in this industry expect to get information for nothing! No one in their right mind will give away hard fought secrets and ideas that have made them successful in the first place. Why would you expect them to give it to you, when they've had to perfect it in the first place? They really kills me.

So, the first decade is over. Here comes 2010. What will you do this year to get to the next level? What will you do to become exceptional? If you have any stories of failure or success, I'd love to hear them. In the meantime, I hope you have a great year…Behind The Mic!

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The Referral Coach

By Matt Anderson

How do you change your beliefs so you get what you really want?

Based mostly on findings in The Answer by John Assaraf and Murray Smith, science now seems clear that our brains do not serve us the way we assume. The new year is a great time to find out that this can be changed dramatically once we know how!

Based on research in the book, it turns out that our nonconscious brain determines 87% of our thoughts. These ultimately determine almost all of our actions. Since our actions determine our results, we can legitimately conclude that our current thinking is the reason we have what we have.

There are three parts to changing our beliefs:

1. Fulfill the "Five Musts"
2. Consciously choose the thoughts you want as beliefs (so know exactly what you want)
3. Systematically impress them on your nonconscious brain (The 6 Steps of Neural Reconditioning)

You must rewire your brain and train it to think the same thoughts as those people you aspire to be like and the person you intend to become. You can't just do what they do; you need to think as they do too.

Good news! "No matter what your age, your brain is perfectly capable of creating entirely new neural pathways."

"The Five Musts:

a) You must find something that stirs your soul

b) You must become excellent at it

c) You must recondition your mind to believe you can have it and achieve it

d) You must understand how to make money at it

e) You must take daily action"

The 6 Steps of Neural Reconditioning

Step 1: Create a New Vision

You must be crystal clear about what you want from your life. Your nonconscious brain cannot tell the difference between real and imagined events. How strongly you imprint these pictures is the key so repetition and impact matter most. The emotional power you put into your thoughts makes all the difference. It is why you remember where you were on September 11, 2001 and not on September 11, 2005.

Step 2: Create Powerful Affirmations

These state how you want to live in your ideal life. Often they are in stark contrast to what your current beliefs are or they may focus on areas you are some distance from achieving. Examples might include:

I am a brilliant and savvy business professional.

I have absolute certainty in my ability to generate any amount of income I choose.

I live each day with passion and purpose.

(Note: Some people have criticized the value of affirmations as something your brain does not buy into. This is why there are six steps and not one! Please put your cynicism aside. The results are worth any feelings of awkwardness.)

Step 3: Create Emotional Anchors for Neural Linking

Identify a powerfully positive emotional event from your past. Perhaps it was the time you were most confident in your life. Or one where you accomplished something exciting that filled you with tremendous pride. When was it? It's a fun one to think through.

Write down all the feelings that experience evokes. While focusing hard on how supreme you felt at that time, start feeding in one of your affirmations. This process is what helps to bind the neural pathway you need. Because it is a strong emotion, "protein is released along with neurotransmitters as the neurons fire across the synaptic gap." Every time you do it, more proteins are released. This is how you develop new empowering beliefs.

Step 4: Prepare Your Neural Imprinting Material

This means writing out your affirmations, creating a vision board of what you want, recording your voice reading the statements and using subliminal media. These hit the senses in various ways and speed up the time in which you can achieve what you want.

Step 5: Your Neural Reconditioning Routine

Assaraf and Smith recommend doing these at the same times each day – preferably three times each day. Apparently our nonconscious is most easily accessed when we first awake and before we go to sleep.

There are three parts to this:

a) Meditation: doing this first helps your brain to focus on what you want. While it has many widely-researched benefits (I was surprised how many), the authors focus on how meditation trains us to use more productive brain waves. This matters because it means we can reach our goals more easily.

b) Visualization: fill your mind with visual images of what you want. Picture the same images each time and if possible embellish them with the senses. The bottom line is to enhance your pictures with feelings because your feelings determine your actions. Do this for a few minutes after your meditation.

c) Affirmation: Then read through your new beliefs – aloud if you want and in the mirror for greater effect. This will probably feel uncomfortable at first. Persist.

Step 6: Using Neurotechnology

You can now play subliminal audio recordings of your own voice and listen to them any time reading your affirmations. It all helps reinforce your nonconscious brain.

Warning: Be ready for your brain to resist change. Your unhelpful beliefs are not going to be substituted without a fight. Remember your habitual thoughts are 1,000 times stronger at first. Even when your status quo is mediocrity and mild depression, your brain will still fight to keep you in this so-called comfort zone.

ABOVE ALL: DO THESE STEPS DAILY. "It is not a huge task; in fact, it is almost ridiculously easy to do. It's just that most people don't do it. But you will – and that will make all the difference."

Think BIG

Lastly, Assaraf and Smith advise that you do not set easy-to-reach goals. On the contrary, they argue that "all truly successful businesspeople have a certain special ingredient in common" and that is THINKING BIG.

See the BIG picture, be driven by passion, stay focused and take action.

Also, big thinkers reach out for help – the kind they don't know they need!

Read that again. Almost all business owners know they need some help: to delegate, to market effectively, with IT and accounting etc. But the research in Russ Alan Prince's The Middle Class Millionaire shows that only the highest achievers also get other help: they have mentors or work with coaches or are in mastermind groups. WHY?

It reduces your learning curve.

They provide resources you don't know about.

They see things about you that you can't see yourself.

They provide unbiased and unconditional support.

They can push you harder than you might push yourself.

The best thing you can do first is buy this book so you can fully understand the impact of making these changes and instill a daily habit of rewiring your brain. The power of changing your beliefs has been written about for decades. Now the scientific proof is overwhelming. Now it is your turn. What are you waiting for? As the authors conclude in the book: "How will you spend your life?"

Matt Anderson can be reached at: Matt@TheReferralAuthority.com or www.LoyaltyEzine.com. Matt coaches sales professionals how to build referral-based businesses with non-threatening language that works today. He speaks all over the US and the UK on referrals and spoken at the Disc Jockey News Conference and the 2009 International DJ Expo in Atlantic City. He is the author of the upcoming book Fearless Referrals. He can be reached at (608) 843-3827.

From The Other Side...

By Jake Palmer

Who's Runnin' This Show?

How many times have you heard DJs talking about a wedding dance where things didn't go perfectly because the bride had such a restrictive list of music? I think it is fair to say that we have all had that dance where the client is not happy because we didn't play all 148 songs on the list they provided.

How does this happen??? I mean is this a "bride-zilla" or a break down in communication. When I ask how does this happen, think about it this way. When you take your car to the shop, do you tell the mechanic which tools you want him to use on your car??? Sounds pretty odd, doesn't it? If you did tell the mechanic that, what kind of response would you expect to get? Yet, I hear stories all the time from DJs complaining about how they couldn't do the kind of show they wanted to do because the client tied their hands with odd, bizarre, or just absurd, requests and directives. When this happens, the DJ can't do their job, or worse yet… becomes a jukebox, not an entertainer. This leads us back to the original question...who's runnin' this show?

Now don't get me wrong, I am not suggesting you DO NOT listen to your client's needs and wants, or ignore their requests. I am all in favor of great customer service, and getting the client involved with their event. The age-old problem is, how involved do you get them? It's important to remember, YOU are in charge, YOU are running the show, and YOU are responsible for the fun everyone will have. People don't leave a wedding early because the bride and groom picked out bad music. People leave early because they don't like the music the DJ is playing. See the difference? People relate the music and pretty much every thing coming out of YOUR speakers as YOUR choice. As strange as it may sound, when I train new DJs, one of the first things I tell them is that THEY are in charge of the event, not the bride, groom, parents, or the caterer. I know you're thinking, "Holy cow Jake are you nuts? The person paying the bill is in charge," but hear me out on this. Just because you rent the hall, doesn't mean you get to re-paint it for the night, just because you rented the limo doesn't mean you get to drive it. You certainly have the right to temporally decorate the hall, and you certainly have the right to give the limo driver directions to the church. Remember if you as the client tell the limo driver to run a stop sign… he gets the ticket, not you, because he is in charge of his limo. I once had a bride tell me not to play any country music at her wedding. While I thought this was strange, I did realize who was paying my bill and honored her request. Imagine my surprise when I found out half of the grooms family was from South Dakota, can you guess what kind of music they wanted to dance to? Uncomfortable situation for everyone involved. I realized immediately this was MY fault.

Successful wedding receptions are about details and preparation; by not covering the details with the bride and groom, I was not prepared. Cover the details, go over all the music with the client, explain how you select the songs you play; let them know you are a professional who they can have confidence in.

Car salesmen talk about repeat customers, because the more times a customer buys from the same sales person the more they TRUST the sales person and haggle less. Instill the same trust in your clients by listening to their want and needs and being receptive to their ideas.

When a client sends you a request list that is 3 pages and 200 songs long, explain that you can only play so many songs. Make sure the clients understand, you will do you best to please everyone at the event and want to be able to play requests from the guests as well. Take the time to find out what the clients expectations for the event are, maybe they don't want people to dance, or maybe you are simply misunderstanding what they want. If you take the time to cover these details, you can avoid the "in-your-face" demands of brides, grooms, parents, and caterers, because everyone is on the same page, and knows YOU are runnin' this show.

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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: Looking ahead to 2010.

A new year is upon us and I'm sure like me you're hoping that 2010 will be better than 2009 when it comes to our business. From reading the chat boards and talking with other DJs I have heard the same stories from not just across America but also from some other countries that the DJ - wedding economy was hit hard in the pocket book in 2008 and 2009. I'm no expert economist or a "DJ Guru" but I was lucky enough to see this tough economy starting and begun to take actions in December of 2007 and January of 2008 which helped me get through the last two years without to many problems.

With that in mind (tongue in cheek) I am now going to peer into my magic crystal mirror ball and predict the future for the DJ industry…. The winter of 2009/2010 looks to be the toughest for DJs in all my years of experience. This slow down will continue into the spring. The 2010 Summer bookings will be about the same or slightly less than the 2009 summer but hopefully by the fall things for the nation will begin to perk up in a positive way. This of course really depends on so many variables that are way out of our hands. First and foremost is the economy and the value of the dollar as well as the unemployment situation of the nation. If people still can't find work or their present job is still being threatened by the uncertainty of the economy then all bets are off.

The worst for our great nation would be if some horrible, tragic crisis would happen again within our boarders. If there was another attack by foreign or domestic terrorists on our soil or if someone was to attempt to or achieve to do some unspeakable action against our President then we could expect an even worse fate than after that tragic day of 9/11.

As for our industry I believe that 2010 will bring even bigger innovations in lighting and music playback. Better quality and more efficient intelligent lighting, speakers and computer driven programming will help to revolutionize our business.

Something that has been a hot subject in the industry over the last year is "facades" that DJs are purchasing or creating for themselves to help with the clean and professional look of their set ups. These new "lit up facades"- DJ booths and background sets are really becoming popular and very innovative. Many are very stylish and add a certain flair to the set up look for the DJ.

The DJ industry has been and is still heading towards a more "professional" look, quality and service for their customers. The clients today are looking for more overall from their entertainment as well as a more reasonable rate for that service. This tough economy is definitely having an effect on the pocket books of potential clients and thus having a huge effect on our bottom line. Until this economy turns around and people are back to work the rates we can demand for our talents will suffer.

Everyone wants to get into the DJ industry. The numbers of new DJs seems to quadruple each year while at the same time the numbers of events hiring entertainment seems to still be steadily decreasing causing less demand and a over abundance of supply. With this huge supply those in the industry are dropping rates in an attempt to locate some of that elusive business available. Bridal magazines and the other polls are showing another slight drop in the overall money spent on events such as weddings. This is the third year in a row that the finances for events has dropped. With smaller budgets clients are looking to save money anywhere they can which may include hiring a less experienced or under-qualified DJ who offers them a lower rate. I know this trend will continue for all of 2010 and possibly into 2011.

Major corporations are also getting into the DJ business. At one time DJs had to purchase gear at the local store that sold home stereo equipment or the mall electronics store but now national chains like Guitar Center, Best Buy and hundreds of internet companies have all dipped their toes into the water. This is a good for DJs in one way because with this competition comes lower rates on the tools of our trade.

Every DJ should be looking at new or different ways to attract clients and to keep those that you have worked with in the past. What can you do better or differently in 2010 that will help to ensure your continuation in the industry? Can you improve on your training? Can you increase your up/add on sales? Can you join in networking groups in your area to get your name out to potential clients? Can you decrease your expenditures? Can you adjust your rates to attract more clients? Have you reviewed your business plan to adjust for the change in the market and economy?

The next year or so will continue to be tough on us. Lets go out there and try to make it a better year for ourselves

To respond to Jeff's column send an e-mail to jeffrichards@discjockeynews.com

My Networking Top 5

By Kelly Suit

Happy New Year and a belated Merry Christmas! For those of you who read my article last month, I hope you have made your New Year's resolution for your business to begin blogging. I truly believe that if you are consistent with it, this year will be much more profitable than 2009.

My focus for this year (which I mentioned in my November article) for my DJ business is strengthening my brand. Don't get me wrong, I want to see increased profits, content employees, and thrilled clients, but I believe that all of those things can be helped with a more recognizable brand.

All of my efforts, which I will share with you over this series of articles, is aimed at making us the top of mind selection for my clients, prospects, and for other vendors.

Blogging works to touch all of three catagories, but, especially well for vendors if you worked with them recently. Instead of sending them a thank you card (which is a nice idea as well), you can send them photos and or videos reminding them how great it was working with you. You can link from your blog to their blog or website which does two positive things for you; one it sends your prospects to their sites which every vendor appreciates, and two it increases your link popularity which is something that search engines use in deciding how high to rank your listing. Don't under estimate the power of doing for others! Zig Zigler said, "You can have everything in life you want, if you will just help other people get what they want."

I'll touch on websites in a future article, but this article I want to spend talking about networking. Unlike blogging which can be used for increasing your brand with both vendors, prospects, and clients, networking is only aimed at one thing … building relationships with other vendors. I have been to many networking events and I see people make the same mistakes repeatedly. So I'm going to list my top 5 things of what not to do at networking events:

1. Don't come with your hand out! Too many people go to networking events expecting to get qualified leads or expecting that a 5 minute conversation will get other vendors to send their clients and prospects your way. This never works! The reason it doesn't work is that people do business with those that they like and trust. You might be very charming, but no one is going to trust you with something as valuable as their clients after a 5 minute conversation. It takes time to build trust which requires building a relationship. Be willing to offer help or do something for others. Photographers and videographers are excellent at this! I see them all the time willing to take photos or create promo pieces (free of charge) for other vendors. If someone does something for you, there is an unspoken understanding that the favor will be returned at some point. As a DJ, don't you have something that you could do for other wedding vendors that would work towards building a relationship?

2. Don't forget that you are netWORKING, not just having a night out! I've seen other vendors do things like getting drunk and hanging out with their friends, not the least bit concerned about trying to build new relationships. Make your self a goal before going into a networking situation. My goal is to have a real conversation with at least 3 people I don't know, and of course to get their business cards, as well as to reconnect with at least 5 people that I already know. If you are going to take time away from your family and personal pursuits for these events, shouldn't their be a reward for your actions? These rewards can be down the road, but if all you get is a couple of drinks and hang out with people that you already know, what are you accomplishing?

3. Dress well! You don't have to come dressed in a suit (although that is how I go to these events), but look at these events as a business meeting, not a fun evening out (unless that is the focus of the networking meeting, but I usually don't go to those events). You want to portray your business as competent, professional, and successful. Your appearance has impact! People will judge you based on how you present yourself. Since your goal is to make the best impression possible, maybe wearing a suit isn't such a bad idea.

4. Don't forget your business cards! Imagine you've just had this great conversation with a new venue sales manager. At the end of the conversation they ask you for your card and you don't have one, what does this say to that person? I can tell you that to me it says that you are unprepared and someone that doesn't focus on details. Is this someone that you'd want to do business with?

5. Be positive and always smile! Nobody wants to hear about how terrible things are for you and how your business is suffering from the current economy. Nobody wants to hear that your car broke down and you had to borrow money from your family to get it fixed. And no one wants to hear that you are having a crappy day. The reason for this is because they have their own problems and don't need to hear about yours! Be the person in the room that people look forward to seeing. Be the encourager and the ray of light in someone else's day.

Here is a bonus #6 … Never (and I mean never) say anything negative about another vendor. You don't know who has alliances with other vendors and besides, if you are willing to talk bad about someone, what would stop you from talking bad about them? If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything. It's better to be indifferent then to be negative.

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Ahead To 2010

By Mitch Taylor

2010. The start of a new year. A new decade. Did you make a five year plan back in '05? What about a ten year plan at the start of the new millenium…excuse me "Willenium". That quote is from the song "Will2K" from Will Smith…one of the "so-called" anthems for the new millenium. Of course a song like that has an EXTREMELY short life expectancy. What about the life expectancy of your business? Where do you want to be next year…five years… or at the turn of the NEXT decade?

Failing to plan is planning to fail. Do you have a business plan? Maybe that's part of your New Year's Resolution? A successful business plan tells you where you want to go and how to get there. It is never written "once", and then tucked away in a file never to be seen again. Business plans should be visited at least two to four times a year to see where you are going and if you are on the right road to get there. If you're like some DJs, you decided after seeing someone perform poorly that you could do a better job than that person so you bought (or downloaded) some music, purchased some gear, even created a beautiful website and decided to hang your shingle as a mobile DJ. But, alas, no one called. Why? You needed to do your homework first…and that is part of a business plan. Here's an example of a standard business plan that could be used for your entertainment company.

1. Executive Summary – I would strongly suggest writing this last even though it is listed first in your plan. An executive summary is just that….a summary of your company as a whole.

2. Company History – Legal establishment history (incorporation, LLC, sole proprietorship, etc.), company history, your start-up plan all goes in this portion of your business plan.

3. Product or Service – In most entertainment companies or DJ services you are selling exactly that…a service. The key component here to focus on is your client benefits…what's in it for them? Nothing else matters…not your gear, not your music, not your price…Client Benefits should be listed here or put in layman's terms….Why should they hire YOU?

4. Market Analysis – What niche in your current market wasn't being filled and how can you fill that niche? That is the secret to success of ANY business. Find a need and fill it. Market analysis allows you to determine whether or not there is a market for the services that you plan on offering. If your market is weddings, how many weddings take place in your area? What is the median income of people in your area? If you want to cater to high end events, where do the wealthier people live? Eat? Hang out? Analyzing your market in advance and continuing throughout your business life cycle will help you avoid costly mistakes and keep you in business.

5. Strategy and Implementation – Now you've done your homework with market analysis…let's put it to the test. The key here is to be specific. Include goals and outline specific dates as to WHEN those goals are to be accomplished. Include your budgets for purchases, advertising, marketing (yes… they are TWO SEPARATE components), initial expenses, monthly recurring expenses, retirement, 401k, etc.

6. Web Plan Summary – In today's internet age, we are a WEB FOCUSED world. Even as a service business, this is a KEY component of your business plan. For a dj service, include development costs, marketing and advertising strategies, how your website will operate and also how it is expected to factor in the development of sales for your company.

7. Management Team – This area of your business plan is dedicated to describing your team members (employees) and what their roles are to the overall success of your company. What is their demographic, background, education level, experience and what qualities are you looking for or do they possess?

8. Financial Analysis – This is the often overlooked areas by most mobile DJs. This portion should AT THE VERY LEAST include your projected Profit and Loss statements and cash flow statements. Other areas to consider for Financial Analysis is projections of retainers per month that you are receiving, upsells that you are offering and what time of year those are most occurring in (ways to capitalize on that market in the future), and when clients are booking you in comparison to previous years. All of this information collected ties back to the financial future of your company and is VALUABLE. This information typically falls under Sales Forecasts, projected Balance Sheets and Market Analysis tables should also be considered.

If you'd like the full list of items to include in your business plan, feel free to email me with the words BUSINESS PLAN in the subject line at mitchtaylor@discjockeynews.com. Your wallet and company's future will thank you.

Mitch Taylor is an 18 year veteran of the mobile disc jockey industry, starting out on the cruise ships of Carnival Cruise Lines. He is a member of the American Disc Jockey Association and WED Guild™. Mitch owns and operates Taylored Entertainment in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and can be reached at 906.786.6967 or via email at mitchtaylor@discjockeynews.com

Looking Ahead Into 2010

By Dude Walker

The Mobile DJ industry touches several areas. Without question, the backbone "hands down" money producer has been the wedding sector. However, in a deepening recession riddled with changing family values, will many be able to survive a continued slump?

This isn't just about whether a DJ company can spans the gaps between dates with odd jobs or outside employment. This is about how customers value you what we do and their ability to pay for it.

In the mobile DJ industry, the interactions of mobile DJs and potential clients determine the value of mobile DJ services. Mobile DJs are the ones who actually set prices, but they do so based on the behavior of potential clients. If nobody buys a product at a particular price, the mobile DJ assumes the price is too high. If some potential clients buy it, but not enough to buy most premium available dates, mobile DJs must either decrease their price or decrease their supply. The willingness of potential clients to pay for mobile DJ services is known as demand. Even if there is constant high demand for a the services we provide, individual mobile DJs feel compelled to keep the price down or potential clients will just buy it from a competitor.

Failure to understand supply and demand within the mobile DJ industry and the fundamental reasons why people purchase the service of mobile DJs is the downfall of many.

During tough economic times, generally speaking, people attempt to reduce spending. However, that's not to say that luxury entertainment purchases are non-existent. It's about determining at what price point you should market your services to potential clients in order to maintain your business.

Financial issues is one of the most common reasons for divorce. Sooner or later, every couple has to deal with economic strain. When there's not enough to go around, priorities, attitudes and temperaments can conflict with each other. Most pre-marital courses attempt to touch on the various hot topics that bridal couple may face as challenges to help them understand the important step they are taking. Ironically, most bridal couples are dealing with pre-marital counseling issues while they are trying to plan their wedding.

Under normal circumstances, a bridal couple would face challenges if one person had clean credit and the other had credit problems. In today's financial crisis, taking on the debt and credit issues of another may not be a wise choice. Could this be one reason why people have been hitting the brakes on the way to the alter?

"The marriage ratio is at it's lowest point since 1867." Once again closing out the year with fewer weddings than in 1946 despite having more than doubled the USA population This downturn began in the 1970's. however, it has steadily dropped since 1987. Based on the 10 year trend from 1999-2009 the wedding market for 2010 may lose an additional 90,000 marriages. 821,619 marriages below the 142 year average.

Disposable income is a key factor. What group of potential bridal couples has the most disposable income in secure jobs with parents that are financially sound in today's economy. Although, there are more couple today waiting to tie the knot when they have their feet on the ground, you still have family influences and prejudices to contend with. Parents that realize a tightening economy may put a limit on how much they can help. If that financial limit falls short of your ability to sell your services, you need to move on to more qualified prospects.

This is where potential clients, families and mobile DJs find themselves in battle for bucks. Earning a living is one thing, covering costs is another. Selling yourself short on both accounts is a recipe for disaster.

Millions of Americans have felt the financial pinch. With the bulk of that pinch being attributed to tightening credit and job security. Things may look good now...but in 180 days things may be completely different. This caution is playing out in purchases both inside and outside the mobile DJ industry.

In speaking with several wedding vendors with physical storefronts, the common consensus has been good foot traffic but slow sales. Ironic that the day that is planned entirely for the proclamation of a marriage "commitment" is beleaguered by the lack of commitment in the planning process.

It really comes down really comes down to consumer confidence, which is shaky at best. This is why the "wait and see" until closer to the date is hampering pre-bookings on many calendars. Not entirely different from other types of events. Holiday parties, school events, bars, anniversaries...all waiting until closer to the date to make a commitment because making a promise TODAY could be hard to keep tomorrow.

So what is the panic point for mobile DJs in filling their calendar? 12 months, 6 months...2 weeks? At what point will they buckle in price because their phone finally rang?

Novice DJs without any business knowledge with a penchant for pandering towards "cheap" hits at the core of nearly every issue within this industry. Competing with that message takes a substantial marketing investment. Dollars are hard for many to part with in the current economic climate. But really, what are your clients worth? Are today's potential clients really worth risking your families financial future? It's time to face the ultimate question. Contact a local marketing firm and have them create a proposal for your company. Look at the total dollars of investment vs the amount of return that you'll receive and how much future revenue it can generate. If you can't afford to advertise, you can't afford to be in business. That's a pretty blatant sign and perhaps it's time to cut your losses.

The mobile DJ industry may lose 15,000 mobile DJs in the course of 2010 and gain 20,000 more DJs. This is not to say that these DJs don't have talent. It will simply further congest an overcrowded industry that has long since past it ability to sustain its workforce. We are at a point in the economy that if you are considering lowering your rates to boost business...your company is already dead. The brain behind your company has simply lost its ability to monitor vital subtleties that allow one to adapt to and overcome the day to day roadblocks that all businesses are faced with. It's not about going through the motions in business...it's about the creativity contained in the motion and the value that the client perceives and attributes to what you can uniquely do for them.

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Lessons From Disney: Creating Unexpected Magic

By Ron Ruth

Last month I invited you to imagine what steps Walt Disney, if he were a Wedding DJ today, would take to be known as the standard bearer of excellence in the wedding entertainment industry. I suggested that Walt would dedicate a tremendous amount of time in getting to know everything he could about the couples he served. Then he would create at least one original moment of unexpected magic that would, not only become a cherished, lifelong memory, but would exceed his newlywed's every expectation.

Although Disney always had creative control over his movies and, eventually, the design of Disneyland, he was smart enough to realize that he needed the collaborative input of other talented individuals to help him bring his visions to life. And, he was a stickler for perfection. No detail was too small, no dream too big to achieve.

Without exception, he would pull together his creative team, better known as Disney Imagineers, to storyboard hundreds, if not thousands of ideas, that eventually became the minute intricacies of every motion picture he produced and the rides, attractions, costumes and structures of his beloved Disneyland. It was only after that creative process had been exhausted that production would begin. "I am in no sense of the word a great artist, not even a great animator," Disney once explained. " I have always had men working for me whose skills were greater than my own. I am an idea man."

In my imaginative world where Walt Disney is the Wedding DJ for a couple's once in a lifetime celebration, I see him turning to the often overlooked talent, creativity and experience of the other wedding professionals he would be working with as his team of Imagineers. Picture him pulling together the photographer, videographer, venue manager, caterer and wedding planner, well in advance of a couple's reception to storyboard a multitude of creative ideas and to address every detail of their event.

If you listen very carefully, you can hear each of them sharing very valuable information regarding everything they know about the lead characters, the Bride and Groom. Picture them learning something about their client that they could only find out in this important, creative process. Envision them helping each other to find ways to take what they've learned and work cooperatively as a team towards creating unexpected magic and exceeding expectations.

I recently worked with a couple that were both graduating athletes at their college. Through our conversations, I learned that the groom had been a track star while the bride was known for lighting up the court on the girls basketball team. Her jersey number was "4" for most of her basketball career That number was very important to her and they found a great way of including it in their wedding day by beginning their wedding ceremony at 6:04 p.m. and their reception at 7:04 p.m.

Had it not been for a storyboarding session attended by the "reception team" in advance of this couple's special day, the photographer would not have known the relevance of a detail so small that it could have easily been overlooked. Because she had the information well ahead of their wedding date, the photographer was able to explore a number of Kansas City landmarks and pre-schedule photo-ops between the church and the reception venue where the couple happily posed in front of billboards, street signs, building graffiti and even some strange looking modern sculptures that all dominantly displayed or resembled the number "4," creating an array of fun and imaginative shots. She even took along a basketball for the bride and groom to interact with to add an even greater, personal impact to those photos.

Obviously, the photographer saw no immediate reward for investing a little extra time in scouting locations. There wasn't much to show for her efforts at the reception, other than the slide show she proudly thumbed through on her camera's small, LCD screen. But days later, when the couple was able to view those memories the way they were meant to be seen, the photographer knew by their laughter and enjoyment that she had created a moment of unexpected magic that would live on every time the newlyweds opened their photo album and showed it to others.

In and of itself, this story may not seem like a very big deal to you. But it was a huge deal to the bride and groom. What the photographer was able to do with the information I shared was never intended to produce accolades for either of us. The purpose was to exceed the expectations of those that put their trust in our experience and expertise at creating a little unexpected magic, just for them.

In the end, the bonus for our combined efforts to exceed expectations will have something of a snowball effect. I will enthusiastically refer the photographer for her creative eye. The bride and groom will refer her for the unique memories she captured and in turn, the photographer will refer me for, among other things, my willingness to work together and to help those around me succeed in a big way.

As we step into 2010, I invite you to join me in making this the decade of imagination and creative innovation in the wedding entertainment industry. I encourage you to take advantage of what can be learned from others in the wedding profession and to make a concerted effort to set aside your own interests in an effort to cooperatively exceed the expectations of each couple you serve. Just like Disney and regardless of what role we play in a couple's event, we are in the business of creating happiness. Be an innovator by bringing together your team of wedding Imagineers to explore and discover ideas that will present every couple with the opportunity to experience unexpected magic.

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We Want Meat!

By Dean Carlson

It's a common phrase in the DJ world. Everybody wants it. And for today's DJ it's everywhere. Jump online and you can find meat. Go to a convention, and you will find more meat. Jump on a chat board, and there is no end to the amount of meat that people will want to share with you. Read this publication and there it is again. Not to mention all the books, DVDs and Youtube videos.

The problem isn't getting the meat. The problem is that most DJs think that new "meat" will cure what's ailing their shows. It will somehow make them a better DJ. That it will take the stale and make it fresh again. And to be honest, few DJs will get those desired results this way.

Another problem is that you may not know the difference between a good cut of Sirloin or some crappy scraps. At a glance, have you been trained to know a good cut? They could look close to the same, yet one will rock your world while the other may be a chewy piece of gristle. You may not know if the meat is still good. Maybe it's become a bit rancid? And finally even if you get the best hunk of meat available, do you know how to cook it properly?

There is an old saying, give a man a fish and it will cure his hunger right now, teach a man to fish and he will feed his whole family forever. So the question becomes, do you want a temporary patch, or do you want to learn how to use that fishing pole better? For those of you who want a temporary patch you can stop reading now. As for the rest of you, read on. Let's learn how to barbeque.

I have 25 DJs every year that work for me and they say the same thing. "We need something new!" And to that I say "no, you don't." Mark Ferrell has a saying "Want to know the difference between a $500 Chicken Dance and a $2500 Chicken Dance? It's not what you do, it's how you do it."

> ***"Want to know the difference between a $500 Chicken Dance and a $2500 Chicken Dance? It's not what you do, it's how you do it." -Mark Ferrell***

Realistically we all do very similar things as DJs for wedding. We do Grand Entrances, Cake Cutting Ceremonies, First Dances, Father Daughter, Mother Son, and Wedding Party Dances. We do Money Dances and Garter and Bouquet Tosses. Then we can throw in what I like to call minor and major interactions. A major interaction is one that changes the flow of the show, where a minor one fits in almost without notice, like teaching the Cupid Shuffle.

Remember the question becomes do you need more meat or do you already have enough meat and you just haven't pulled the full flavor out of it yet. 6 years ago I did 4 times the amount of "interaction" that I do now. 2009 has been my best year in reviews ever. Less done better is far better than more done average. In fact more activity done poorly gives people more poor things to remember about you. And what we really want from every show we do is more referrals for future shows. Why not shine at each and every moment.

The first thing you need to do is a massive investigation of your current shows. And this is where you need to be honest with yourself. If you can't be objective, maybe you need to find a mentor. Invite him or her to shadow your show and review everything you do. From personal experience this may be the toughest, but most rewarding, thing you can ever do for yourself, your show, and especially for your future clients.

Bill Hermann of Prior Lake, Minnesota, says it can be tough to get an honest review of your show. Mostly because when you ask someone to ride along, even with the best intentions you know they are there. So you tend to try to put on your best face. He went on to tell me he thought your best bet in getting an honest review of your work is to video tape every show you do, and then randomly pick one out and give it to the person of your choice. This is a trick he picked up in his work on radio. This way you will get a real sample of your work.

If you choose to have someone ride along with you, trust and respect seems to be a common concern among the people I talked to about this. Mitch Taylor out of Escanaba, Michigan tells me that it is easier for him to receive feedback from someone he knows, and he really tries to get someone whom he considers better than himself. Any way you slice it this has to be a person with whom you feel comfortable. Because when the time comes after they have seen your show, then you have to listen to what they say without it putting you on the defensive.

While attending your show, you should really have this person in the background. They are there to observe, and they can't do that unless that is all they are doing. After your show is when you should go over the night with them, you may even want to wait a day so that your mind is fresh and ready to receive what they have to say.

There are some things you should keep in mind while receiving this feedback. Remember you invited them, and they are not there to trash you, but to help you. And let's face it, after so many years what you think of your show might not be as realistic as it used to be. Our first reaction is defensive. At the first sign of justification you need to understand that they have their view of your show. Jim Cerone from Indianapolis tells me that even he had feelings of apprehensiveness before and after a ride along. He also suggests that you don't make any knee jerk changes from the information you receive. You still have to see how that fits your personal style.

All of the DJs I interviewed for this told me a similar thing; it is hard for people to be fully honest with them. There was far more praise than suggestion and/or observations that would help. It boils down to, the better you are at this craft we call DJing and the more you want to become better, the harder that is. If you get asked to be that ride along person, don't get blinded by thinking just because they are this big DJ or that, that those DJs asking you for help can't handle the truth. We crave it more than the other DJs, so give it to us. Hearing about what went well at a show, although nice, doesn't help.

On a final note, don't limit a ride along to just your performances. Brian Harris from Dayton Ohio had someone observe his sales consultation, which he received a ton a great help from. Good Luck and Great Shows!

Dean Carlson can be reached at deancarlson@discjockeynews.com.

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Quotes To Help You Toast The New Year

By Harvey Mackay

One of the most innovative holiday greetings I received last year came from friends who sent a holiday card labeled "Quips and Quotes to help you toast the New Year." Since I am an aphorism junkie and always on the lookout for creative and interesting ways to stay in touch with my friends and readers, I especially welcomed their effort.

In fact, I liked it so much I decided to create my own version. Here is some of my best advice to guide you through 2010 and beyond.

• They don't pay off on effort ... they pay off on results.

•No one ever choked swallowing his or her pride.

•Don't just mark time; use time to make your mark.

•People don't plan to fail, they fail to plan.

•Technology should improve your life, not become your life.

•The best way to be somebody is just to be yourself.

•The best vitamin for making friends is B1.

•It is not a question as to who is right but what is right.

•The difference between failure and success is doing a thing nearly right and doing it exactly right.

•Many people hear ... but few people listen.

•There is no free tuition in the school of experience.

•The person who has no goal does not fear failure.

•The best way to get even is to forget.

•It is better to forgive and forget than to resent and remember.

•Make decisions with your heart and you'll wind up with heart disease.

•People have a way of becoming what you encourage them to be—not what you nag them to be.

•You can win more friends with your ears than with your mouth.

•When you kill a little time, you may be murdering opportunity.

•Education is an investment and never an expense.

•Ideas won't work unless I do.

•It's never right to do wrong, and it's never wrong to do right.

•Your smile is more important than anything else you wear.

•Gratitude shouldn't be an occasional incident but a continuous attitude.

•Helping someone up won't pull you down.

•Those that have the most to say usually say it with fewest words.

•If you don't learn from your mistakes, there's no sense in making them.

•People wrapped up in themselves make pretty small packages.

•When is the last time you did something for the first time?

I also wanted to share these gems from unknown authors whose wisdom is timeless.

•Smart is believing half of what you hear; brilliant is knowing which half to believe.

•One thing I can give and still keep is my word.

•Those who beef too much often land in the stew.

•Compromise is always wrong when it means sacrificing principle.

•Most people say they are willing to meet each other halfway; trouble is most people are pretty poor judges of distance.

•If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.

•Most people aim to do right; they just fail to pull the trigger.

•Most people fail in life because the wishbone is where the backbone should be.

•Courage is not the absence of fear; it is the mastery of it.

•Friendship doubles our joy and divides our grief.

•Happiness can be thought, taught and caught—but not bought.

•Burying your talents is a grave mistake.

•Praise, like sunlight, helps all things to grow.

•Life just gives you time and space—it's up to you to fill it.

•The heaviest thing I can carry is a grudge.

•A stumble may prevent a fall.

•Failure is no more fatal than success is permanent.

Mackay's Moral: Not just words to live by, words to live better. Happy 2010!

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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Being Better Tomorrow Than You Are Today

By Ken Day

What impresses me about the type of individual who hires a leadership coach, seeks out mentors, or attends educational classes; is their eagerness to become a better person tomorrow than they are today. Not in one way or another but in a general sense.

If you and I are as good today as we are ever going to be, the remainder of our lives will be uneventful. Looking in the mirror, can you say to yourself that you have nothing to improve upon as a leader, spouse, parent, friend, or role model?

There is always room for improvement in our lives. Keeping a continual and watchful eye on how we can enhance who we are makes us come alive in ways that at present are unimaginable! Here are some areas most of us can and should seek to improve. Perhaps one or many will resonate with you.

Public Speaking: The irony here is that those who are already very good public speakers are the ones who want tools and techniques to become better. As with leadership below, those who need to improve their speaking skills seldom seem to realize it. Especially in our chosen profession as DJs or mobile entertainers, the importance of developing and improving this particular skill an area seldom considered essential prior to needing it.

Common areas for quick improvement are eliminating the use of fillers and hook phrases like "um," "ah;" "OK," "Ladies and Gentlemen," and a plethora of others. Utilizing the correct 'audience appropriate' words or analogy to get the desired point across; enhancing facial expressions, vocal tones, or useful interaction which conveys the atmosphere desired by your clients and their guests will always have you being the desired speaker. These skills also make you memorable. Thus, offering potential future business.

Fulfilling a Dream: The most highly accomplished individuals became that way because they had and have a vision or goals and are not satisfied with accomplishing just one goal.

New visions for the future of success, accomplishment, and dreams captivate them like writing their book or screen play; expanding what they do locally to a national level; reviving their teen rock band into something big; opening a new business; becoming an actor or fine artist. The list can go on, but it needs to be your own dream. Your dream for something better, something bigger, something for your own expectation of "better."

Coaches, mentors, or workshops often help by taking the large and sometimes overwhelming vision - break it apart and develop long time dreams into a workable list of mini goals; whereas, we often experience unsolicited and sometimes solicited advice from well-intending friends or associates who may find reasons this new endeavor will not work. "You've got it great now; you're fabulous at what you do and people like you the way you are! Why rock the boat by trying to do more?" You have to continually remind yourself that it's your dream, your vision, and you have it in sight no matter what anyone else says.

Spectacular Leadership: As with public speaking, an irony exists within the DJ community. Good DJs who want to become great seek the help of experienced DJs, coaches, and mentors. There are only so many things that books, DVDs, or conference calls can teach. A voice of experience can seldom be overlooked as useful and sound advice.

Then, there are marginal DJs who believe they are good enough with no need for improvement. Sadly, these oblivious DJs can do more damage than good. We have all experienced these "great" DJs and have done ourselves and our community a disservice by saying they are good or even great to their face and opposite away from them. Reach out to them and offer your assistance in a courteous way.

Some still try to influence through verbally bullying those DJs or by acting unilaterally feeling that it's not their problem. They often go on ignoring the talent available for everyone's benefit and making us all very distant from the goal of being "better." Some criticize when encouragement is needed, find fault instead of answers, or grow apathetic. They simply no longer care. Again, we all need to reach out to those that are missing the chance to become better. The goal for us all this year, and for the years to come, should be to bring one, if not many, with us on our mission to becoming better tomorrow than we are today.

Whoever you are (and I mean that), whatever you are doing, you can be better tomorrow than you are today. Be one of the people to be admired in seeking your route to self improvement! If not via a qualified coach, mentor, or workshop, then take a class, join a group with similar interests, take up a new cause or endeavor - anything to enhance who you are and who you are by becoming better tomorrow than you are today.

We can all be "better" in this new year by just seeking out those better than ourselves, in the areas that we need improvement, and then jumping wholeheartedly into your own betterment.

There is always someone out there better, smarter, or more insightful than we personally are; seek them out!

You can reach Ken Day at kenday@discjockeynews.com. Ken Day owns Kenneth Day Weddings at: http://www.kennethdayweddings.com

Gear Review: STAGEPAS 300

By Kirk Holslin

Many of us are familiar with the Bose Compact system, and the Fender Passport systems for small personal PA systems. One family of systems that you may not have heard of is the Yamaha STAGEPAS. The STAGEPAS systems have been around for about 5 years. There are currently 4 different systems within the STAGEPAS family. Depending on your requirements there should be system to fit your needs.

For the purpose of this article I will be writing about the STAGEPAS 300.

The STAGEPAS 300 consists of two (2) passive speakers with a built-in powered 8 channel mixer. The two-way bass reflex speakers each contain an eight inch cone for the lows and a 1 inch compression driver for the highs. The back of each speaker contains a compartment that can hold the powered mixer or act as storage. You could put items such as the included speaker cable and power cord into the compartment. There is also room for a microphone, mp3 player and the number one mobile DJ item – a tin of Altoids.

Due to the relatively small size of the speaker chassis, you will need an optional adapter for mounting it on a speaker stand. If this is an issue, you could look into the STAGEPAS 500. It has built-in pole mounts for speaker stands.

The mixer is not much to look at compared to the larger multi-channel boards that we may be used to. However, it has what is needed to get the job done. Channels 1 through 4 are selectable for microphones or instruments. Channels 5 & 6 and 7 & 8 are stereo inputs. The audio output of the mixer is from two ¼" jacks. Each channel of the mixer has its own high and low control. I know many of us would like a mid control especially when someone is using a microphone. However, the mixer does have a feature called a "Speech/Music" switch. This will cut out some of the bass frequencies when someone wants to use the mic.

There are independent level controls for each channel. Plus there is a master volume level and a 5 stage level meter. The power output is listed at 150 watts peak per channel at 10% THD. Complete system specs can be found at www.yamaha.com.

Depending on the location of use, the mixer could be left mounted to the speaker. For live performances, you might want to consider getting the optional BMS10A microphone stand adapter. This will allow you to place the mixer on a mic stand and be able to make adjustments on the fly during a performance.

Given our taste for big sound, many of you may wonder how this system can benefit my business. There are a couple of factors that I believe that would make an impact. First is the size of the setup. One trip and you are in. Time is money. The quicker you are able set and strike your equipment the more money in your pocket.

Ease of use is the second factor. Let's see: Power? Check. Microphone connected? Check. Output to speaker(s) connected? Check. You could be setup and ready to go in under 5 minutes. (Side Note: I'd give Bill Hermann at least 10 minutes to setup)

Practical application methods: The first application that came to my mind was wedding ceremonies. The bride and groom have friends playing for their wedding and they don't have a PA. You could be a hero and say, "I have the perfect solution." The mixer can accommodate guitars, microphones, keyboards, harps and portable mp3 players. The musicians can connect their instruments to the mixer and you could mic the officiant.

If you are doing live sound at a wedding, the mixer has a monitor out. You could place one speaker on the floor as a monitor for the musicians. The second speaker could be placed on a speaker stand to project out into the audience.

Another application would be music for the cocktail hour in a separate location from the wedding reception. Leave the mixer attached to the speaker and plug in an mp3 player. The setup is quite small. Guest can enjoy quality music with having a huge system in their way. You could also have a microphone connected and ready to direct the guests to the main reception area when dinner is ready to be served.

Whatever your need, it's nice to have the right piece of equipment to handle the job. Small to mid-sized events, as described above, can be a bit tricky to provide the right balance of equipment and sound.

Price Point: Online price searches for this light weight system found prices ranging from $550 to $600. Since this product has been in the market for a few years you may be able to locate a used system online for substantially less money.

If there is a piece gear you would like me to review feel free to send me a note at kirkholslin@discjockeynews.com. I'll see what I can do for you.

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Pop

1	IYAZ	Replay
2	Lady Gaga	Bad Romance
3	Ke$ha	Tik Tok
4	Owl City	Fireflies
5	Jason Derulo	Whatcha Say
6	David Guetta F/ Akon	Sexy Chick
7	Jay-Z F/ Alicia Keys	Empire State Of Mind
8	Britney Spears	3
9	Kelly Clarkson	Already Gone
10	Jay Sean	Down
11	Jay Sean	Do You Remember
12	Beyonce	Sweet Dreams
13	Taylor Swift	Fifteen
14	Lady Gaga	Paparazzi
15	Boys Like Girls	Two Is Better Than One
16	Cascada	Evacuate The Dancefloor
17	Miley Cyrus	Party In The U.S.A.
18	Orianthi	According To You
19	Rihanna	Hard
20	Kings Of Leon	Use Somebody

Urban

1	Trey Songz	I Invented Sex
2	Birdman	Money To Blow
3	Melanie Fiona	It Kills Me
4	Young Money	Bedrock
5	Trey Songz	Say Aah
6	Ludacris	How Low
7	50 Cent	Baby By Me
8	Jay-Z F/ Alicia Keys	Empire State Of Mind
9	Usher	Papers
10	Gucci Mane	Spotlight
11	Rihanna	Hard
12	Alicia Keys	Try Sleeping With A Broken Heart
13	Snoop Dogg	Gangsta Luv
14	Robin Thicke	Sex Therapy
15	Omarion	I Get It In
16	Snoop Dogg	I Wanna Rock
17	Chris Brown	I Can Transform Ya
18	Maxwell	Bad Habits
19	Drake	Forever
20	Mary J. Blige	I Am

Country

1	Reba McEntire	Consider Me Gone
2	Dierks Bentley	I Wanna Make You Close…
3	Tim McGraw	Southern Voice
4	Lady Antebellum	Need You Now
5	Luke Bryan	Do I
6	Miranda Lambert	White Liar
7	Jason Aldean	The Truth
8	Darius Rucker	History In The Making
9	Josh Turner	Why Don't We Just Dance
10	Brad Paisley	American Saturday Night
11	David Nail	Red Light
12	Jake Owen	Eight Second Ride
13	Billy Currington	That's How Country Boys Roll
14	Toby Keith	Cryin' For Me
15	George Strait	Twang
16	Keith Urban	Til Summer Comes Around
17	Jason Michael Carroll	Hurry Home
18	Carrie Underwood	Temporary Home
19	Easton Corbin	Little More Country Than That
20	Blake Shelton	Hillbilly Bone

Rock

1	Three Days Grace	Break
2	Foo Fighters	Wheels
3	Alice In Chains	Check My Brain
4	Breaking Benjamin	I Will Not Bow
5	Shinedown	If You Only Knew
6	Creed	Overcome
7	Godsmack	Whiskey Hangover
8	Puddle Of Mudd	Spaceship
9	Shinedown	Sound Of Madness
10	Cavo	Champagne
11	Chickenfoot	Sexy Little Thing
12	Them Crooked Vultures	New Fang
13	Nickelback	Burn It To The Ground
14	Nickelback	Shakin' Hands
15	Alice In Chains	Your Decision
16	Mudvayne	Scream With Me
17	Skillet	Monster
18	Slipknot	Snuff
19	Metallica	Broken, Beat & Scarred
20	Adelitas Way	Invincible

Adult Contempory

1	Taylor Swift	You Belong With Me
2	Colby Caillat	Fallin' For You
3	Michael Buble	Haven't Met You Yet
4	Rob Thomas	Her Diamonds
5	Miley Cyrus	The Climb
6	Daughtry	No Surprise
7	Pink	Please Don't Leave Me
8	Five For Fighting	Chances
9	Mariah Carey	I Want To Know What Love Is
10	Kelly Clarkson	Already Gone
11	Keith Urban	Kiss A Girl
12	Kings Of Leon	Use Somebody
13	Uncle Kracker	Smile
14	Owl City	Fireflies
15	Bon Jovi	We Weren't Born To Follow
16	Norah Jones	Chasing Pirates
17	Foreigner	When It Comes To Love…
18	Jordin Sparks	Battlefield
19	Brad Paisley	Then
20	Michael Franti	Say Hey (I Love You)

Alternative

1	Muse	Uprising
2	Weezer	I Want You To
3	Thirty Seconds To Mars	Kings & Queens
4	Three Days Grace	Break
5	Phoenix	1901
6	Breaking Benjamin	I Will Not Bow
7	Rise Against	Savior
8	Cage The Elephant	Back Against The Wall
9	Shinedown	If You Only Knew
10	Flyleaf	Again
11	Them Crooked Vultures	New Fang
12	Pearl Jam	Just Breathe
13	Kings Of Leon	Use Somebody
14	Silversun Pickups	Panic Switch
15	Death Cab For Cutie	Meet Me On The Equinox
16	Slipknot	Snuff
17	Foo Fighters	Wheels
18	Green Day	East Jesus Nowhere
19	Chevelle	Jars
20	Alice In Chains	Your Decision

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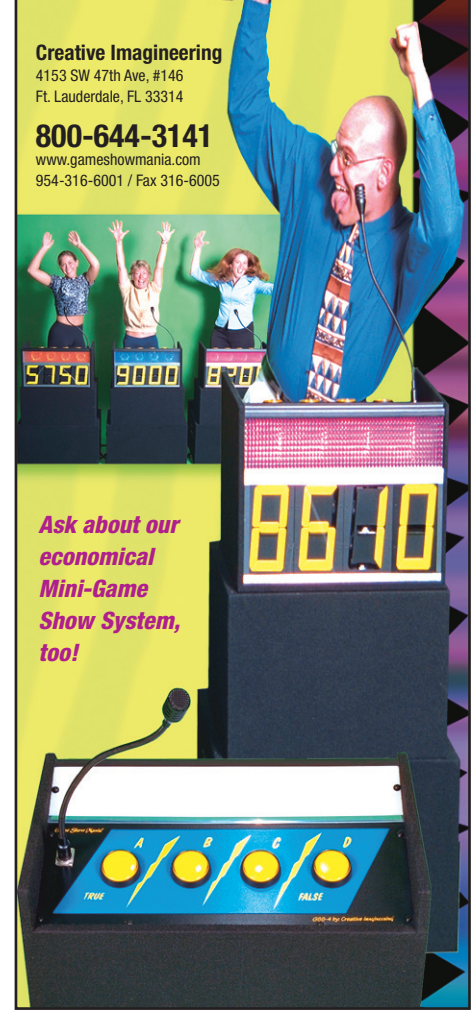

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