Disc Jockey News

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Q Corner: Where Quality Meets Quantity

By Mike Walter

I saw a great one-liner recently on Twitter. Guy wrote: "Is there ever a day when mattresses aren't on sale?"

To me that's a laugh-out-loud observation because there's some truth to it. And while this isn't an article about humor there's a great lesson there.

Humor works best when it relates to people. If the tweet had said: "Is there ever a day when gas isn't on sale?" it wouldn't have been funny. The line also works because it's brief and to the point. Like Shakespeare said, "brevity is the soul of wit." If the guy had tweeted: "You know I was thinking cause I just saw an ad for a mattress sale and I was wondering to myself so I figured I'd share it here on Twitter as a witty commentary, is there ever a day when mattresses aren't on sale?" not only would it not have been funny but he would have exceeded the maximum number of characters on Twitter by 73 (don't bother counting, I already checked).

But as I said this isn't an article about humor.

It's also not an article about commodities. Mattresses are clearly viewed as a commodity because they constantly advertise that they're on sale so evidently the manufacturers and marketers of mattresses feel the only way to differentiate themselves is by price. It's a race to the bottom. And it's a great lesson for all of us to remember that once the public sees our DJ service as a commodity, as similar and/or equal to other DJ services in our market, than we too are stuck using price as our major differentiator.

But as I said this isn't an article about commodities either.

No, this is an article about what's important to the consumer. And why it's up to you to find that out, and speak to that.

If I were manufacturing or selling

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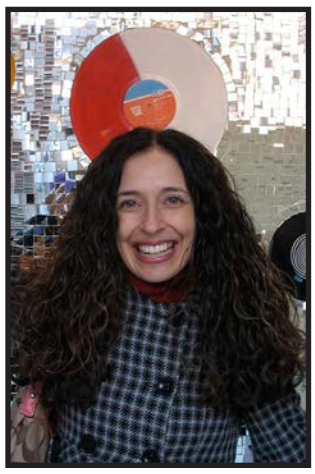
Talkin' Bride: Rejuvenation

By Tamara Sims

Having just returned from a brief vacation to Lake Placid and Vermont, I can without a doubt say that I am rejuvenated and ready to kick the rest of our busy wedding season's ass! But I would be lying if I told you that I was looking forward to taking some time off. In fact, a few weeks ago I was determined to cancel the second half of our trip to Vermont. But then I remembered that Ben & Jerry's was calling my name and as an ice cream obsessed gal I may never get the opportunity again to see how Chunky Monkey is made if I didn't proceed with our trip!



All kidding aside, I really was apprehensive about taking a vacation during wedding season, despite the fact that we have a wonderful staff that will be attending to our clients in our absence. But what if there is a wedding emergency? As I have said before, we are not doctors and if an e-mail or phone call from a client is not returned within a few hours it is NOT the end of the world. So I need to keep reminding myself that whenever we take some time off and return to our business we always feel refreshed, revitalized and rejuvenated. Which is always a good thing not only for us, but also for our staff and clients.

On my last day of work it became

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In The Booth: No Joke

By Brian S. Redd

Not many people bothered to check out the latest video I posted on Facebook. Those who did were ether just offended by the language or didn't seem to understand why I posted it in the first place.

In this particular video post, comedian Louis CK talks about developing his craft. Right out of High School, CK skips college and jumps right into the world of comedy clubs where he eventually develops an hour long act. After 15 years of the same material, he goes from performing at these clubs to doing a stand-up routine in some Chinese restaurant. At this low point of his career, CK proclaims "I Suck" and begins to actually consider "Entering the work force."

Then CK listens to a CD workshop where veteran comedian George Carlin explains how he kept his act fresh for so many years. Carlin's method was to perform and perfect his latest material until it came time to do his HBO special. After the special was shot, Carlin threw out that entire year's worth of material and started all over again. As difficult as this type of writing sounded, CK took this advice and in time became a suc-

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Social Mobile And You: Part Two

By Mitch Taylor

Last month we talked about how the vast majority of people have their smartphone or tablet within three feet of them at all times and the three important items to be sure you have on your mobile website and how mobile impacts your business.

This month let's discuss the social side of social, mobile and you. First off if you haven't already done so you should create business accounts for each of the social networks i.e. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Linked in, Vimeo, Google Plus, etc. For this months article we'll focus on the biggest of the social media platforms, Facebook.

You may be wondering "I don't know what to post...how can I attract brides to my page." A word of caution. You must be careful with the types of contests that you run and ways that you get "likes." A fellow Toastmaster and local business owner recently held contests to get more likes on her page. It wasn't until I pointed out to her that Facebook has contest rules and failure to adhere to those rules can get your whole page taken down, requiring you to build your entire Facebook presence again.

The best way to combat that is to hire a professional to handle your contests or at minimum consult with one to find the best contest app for your desired outcome. Taylored Weddings has recently consulted with Caryn Terradas of SpeakEasy and has had success with her abilities to increase our exposure and outreach on our Facebook page. Do your due diligence here in consulting an expert...there are many fly by night companies trying to get into the game of social media management.

Ok...you've consulted with an expert and determined what you want to achieve with your page. Now what do you say? My good friend Brian Kelm-Master of I Do, I believe has a great approach and one that I have adapted to my business for great success. First be sure to friend your clients on Facebook. This will allow their friends to see your postings when you tag them in one. Second, upon each months anniversary leading up to their event date go to their profile and find a picture that best represents them then click to share that image. Next say what you want to say about that person and the upcoming event. I.E. "@YourCompanyName is looking forward to celebrating with @Heather Smith and @John Johnson in just four weeks from today. Surprises galore in store with fun and smiles all day! So glad they chose @YourFavoritePhotographer to capture their moments!" By including the venue and other vendors you actively promote them as well. It's a win win for everyone!

You can also run a vendor of the week bridal tip Tuesday. Wedding wish Wednesday, tradition Thursday or Friday fun facts. I know one company that does well having a trivia contest and others who put up YouTube videos on their wall and have their fans post their favorite clips as well.

The bottom line with any social media is you must be REAL and interactive. Today's clientele can spot a phony and a sales pitch from a mile away. DON'T BEG for business on Facebook. Provide value first, cultivate the relationship and the referrals will come.

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.

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mattresses I'd emphasize one fact: You spend one-third of your life in bed. That makes your choice of mattress more important than your choice of clothes or shoes or cars. You don't spend a third of your life in any outfit you own, or any pair of shoes and unless you drive for a living (taxi or truck) you don't spend a third of your life in your vehicle either. So you'd think quality and personalization would be key when considering a mattress -- way more than price. Yet except for Dux mattresses and that one that goes up and down and has the sides you can adjust the firmness of, you rarely see a mattress promoting anything else but Price. Or Sale. Or Savings.

I think the same argument can be made for our industry. There are few things as important as the entertainment at your wedding, bar mitzvah or other special event. What other service will have such an impact on the overall quality of your day? Yet I see far too many DJ companies promoting 'Great Price' or 'Special Savings.' Realize that when you do this, you've already lost the commodity argument. You're already admitting to the consumer that you've got nothing better for them to base their decision on. And if you're dealing with a client who cares about quality and overall experience more than how much they can save, then you've probably lost her as well. She's not nearly as interested in your discounts as she is on her dance floor. Instead of speaking to her budget, speak to what really matters to her. The overall experience that she and her new husband and her family and friends are going to have. The excitement that will come from dancing all night. The memories of the joy of the celebration that will last forever. Those are the things that she probably really cares about when she's looking for entertainment. Price is in the mix but it's rarely the most important issue. Till you foolishly make it so.

A wise man once said to me: No one wants discount eye surgery (which is funny for the same reason that the mattress tweet was funny – it's brief and it smacks of a universal truth). And while your DJ service is certainly not the difference between improved eye sight and blindness, I believe there is a way to show the majority of consumers that the quality of their choice is far more important than how many bucks they are saving. You just have to decide that it's important to you.

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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very clear that I really needed some time off. I had a meltdown on the phone when I was confirming our Vermont Bed and Breakfast reservations (they had the wrong dates and the wrong room, despite having an e-mail confirmation 2 months ago). All was fixed, and everything turned out perfect, but the way I reacted on the phone was not good. I also found myself acting a bit "short" on the phone with a father of a bride who was questioning our sales process. After a brief conversation explaining our services, he said, "Well The Knot says…." I retorted by saying "The Knot will also tell you to use an I-pod for your daughter's wedding." Needless to say, my patience was running thin and I desperately needed to get on that plane!

How many of you already feel "burned out" or "in the weeds" by July? And we are only halfway through wedding season. It is not a good feeling, right? Perhaps it is time to get away. If you cannot take an actual vacation, how about taking a day or two away from phones and e-mails with your business partner or significant other (in our case and in many of yours, this is the same person). It IS possible, you just need to make it happen.

So as I sit here completing this article in Lake Placid rooting for Jay at his Ironman Race I am completely relaxed as beautiful mountains, crystal clear lakes, gorgeous blue skies and the most amazing people surround me! I even met a soon-to-be bride this morning who was wearing the cutest shirt that read: "140.6 miles until I get my fiancé back." We strike up a conversation as we are both eagerly awaiting our mates to run passed us after the swim, and she and her mom ask me to share some wedding planning tips. With a big smile I say, "Enjoy being engaged, enjoy planning together and never take this amazing time in your lives for granted." Her mom looks at me, smiles and says, "that's wonderful advice." And with that, my work for today is done…but Jay's work for the day is just beginning and I too, look forward to seeing him at the finish line in 140.6 miles!

Please feel free to share your comments with Tamara at: tamarasims@discjockeynews.com

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Repeat Business

By Dean C. Carlson

As many of my long time readers know I used to manage a large multi op. And at one time during the eight years I worked there the owner offered to sell it to me. What it boiled down to for me was what the actual value of the company was or how I interpreted it.

How do you place a price tag on your company? Is it gear? Because you can buy a system for about $5000.00 now a days without music. Is it your location? I don't know about you but I put the mobile in DJ, I don't have a business office per say. That company I worked at rented a space. So neither of those items actually added value to the net worth of the company, or at least not much.

That leaves just the company name and reputation. Obviously if your name is mud then you have nothing, and if your name is outstanding business should be good already. My guess is most companies fall in the middle somewhere. No man or women land.

I have heard it said that the middle is the hardest place to work from. How do you distinguish yourself from the competition? One of the greatest indicators if you're in the middle is if your price is located there. The mud companies feel that they have to charge what they charge just to get business and the great companies invest so much into what they do that they must charge accordingly.

But I stray from my initial thought. Another way to judge where your company is at is the repeat business it generates. In fact it was the greatest factor in my judging the net worth of the company I worked at before. There is the obvious repeat business, schools. Corporate parties have changed a great deal which has made them tougher repeat business, for a lot of DJs. Then there is wedding repeat business, which my guess is a lot of people don't think much about. Well that is what I want to concentrate on for the rest of this article.

It's funny, the company I worked for has been around for 25 years and they do a lot of things very right, yet I don't think they quite got it when it came to repeat business. Imagine how many past clients are in your books if you do 500 events a year? How many are in your list? What are you doing with them? See this is where the real value of a company can come in a big way. You have to think big about this.

Repeat business is really nothing more than a referral from a previous client who thought about you at the right time in the right way. Getting them to that point really starts from the first second you make contact with a potential client. How fast do you get back to them, how nice and helpful you were during phone calls and how great your written to web material is. Not only are they judging whether or not to use your services, they are subconsciously storing information on whether or not they will tell others about you later. So step one is outstanding customer service from the get go.

Step two is to make sure your performances don't suck. The number one killer of any chance of getting repeat business is subpar performances. Here comes the real truth, spend less on advertising and more on performance enhancing content. It is far harder to convince a new customer you are great than having an existing one rave about how great you are. I rarely if ever have the conversations about price with repeat business.

Not so secret weapon number one. Be accessible to future repeat business. Over the last few years I have changed my strategy on all weddings that have a buffet. I now play creative games for releasing the table. It increases the fun factor at weddings, but it also allows me to slip my business cards out to all the tables for those that want them. The first game I always play is to call me on my cell phone. This year I have had several guests' contact me after the event was over just to thank me for how much fun they had. Repeat business in the making.

Step three is genuine follow up. People will put you in the insignificant file unless they know that you genuinely cared about the most important day in their lives. If you just send them an email thanking them and asking them for a review guess what, you are insignificant and your chances of getting future business from that family have just become that much less. Personally I recommend a few things. Give them something unexpected. I send them all the photos or video I have taken at their events. I also send them a card using Send Out Cards and put a photo I took at their even on the cover with a heartfelt note about my favorite moment of their event. Hand written notes are better than computer generate, so if you are sending out an eval through the mail hand write the note that goes with it. How about a dinner gift card for filling out the eval? (unexpected)

All of these are a great way to start, but remember I said they must think about you at the right time also. Unfortunately we can never know exactly when that time is. But here are a few ideas to keep that upfront and real. Send out anniversary cards every year to all your clients. I also keep a file of good photos from their wedding, and use a different one each year. I also hand write Christmas cards. Yes this is a pain in the butt, but if you know you are going to do it you can start months earlier on writing them. Again hand written is personal. If you know their birthdays you could also send out a birthday card. (Facebook stalking is a great way to find this info out by the way) That's 3 touches a year already at about a cost of 5 bucks, not bad.

Speaking of facebook are they friends of your personal or business page. You could add each review that comes in and tag them as you put them up. I also add photos at different times of the year and tag the photos, not just when their event is over. This obviously brings you top of

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The Way I See It: Love Marriage and the Music List

By Michael J. Lenstra

By his estimate, John Noel has seen Jimmy Buffett in concert 20 times. He's a true "parrot head," as hardcore Buffett fans are known. He also has been a mobile DJ for over 25 years.

So, how many Buffett songs does John typically slip in at his weddings?

"Maybe one," John says.

Rob Hall has also been a mobile DJ for several years, as well as the lead guitar player for several local bands. He lists some of his favorite bands as Tesla and Godsmack. However, when he was recently married he told his DJ to try to avoid playing anything from those groups once the dancing portion of his wedding reception kicked off.

You've probably noticed that John and Rob know something that most seasoned mobile DJs know: the music people like to listen to and the music people will dance to are not always the same thing.

This theory is somewhat backed up by a comparison of charts. While some of the all-time biggest hits according to Billboard Magazine, such as "One Sweet Day" by Mariah Carey and Boyz II Men, "I'll Make Love to You" by Boyz II Men, and "The Boy Is Mine" by Brandy and Monica have each spent over a dozen weeks at the top of the Hot 100, they are nowhere to be found on DJ Intelligence's annual Top 200 Most Requested Songs list. In comparison, some of the mobile DJ standards, such as "Cupid Shuffle," "Cha Cha Slide," and "Greased Lightning," never cracked the Top 40 in any week on the Billboard Pop Chart.

In the upper Midwest we are about halfway through our 'wedding season' as it is known, and one of the frustrations I often hear from other DJs is the songs that show up on the dreaded music list. While some lists can be full of great all time dance songs, others can be a collection of mostly forgettable, uninspiring tunes that you just know will not pack a dance floor. And the way I see it, it's part of our responsibility as professional entertainers to educate our clients to that fact.

But how should we do that?

"I ask what types of music do they [brides and grooms] and their friends listen to, and what songs do they absolutely have to hear at their reception," says Kelly Davis of eastern Iowa's Big River DJs, thus emphasizing that their guests' music tastes should be considered as well.

It may also be important to let your clients know the reception's limitations. Letting your customers know that the average number of songs you can play per hour is 15 to 16 will inform them in advance that those lists of 100+ 'favorites' cannot be fully accommodated.

And what about those tunes with explicit lyrics?

"I try not to play anything explicit at a wedding. I believe it is inappropriate for the occasion and sheds a poor light on the character of the client as well as my business," says Davis.

Other Tips:

• Don't ask clients what their favorite songs are; instead, ask them for songs they think will motivate their guests to move to the dance floor.

• Do not discourage clients from providing a list; instead, ask them for a limited list. "If you could give me 20 to 30 songs that you think will motivate your guests that would be a great help, and I can build from there."

• Ask "Why?" questions. For example, "Are there any certain songs on your list that are family traditions or have a story behind them?"

• What are the 'must plays'? "Sometimes things get behind schedule, and if that happens we may not be able to get to all of these requests. Which ones are the most important to you?"

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cessful actor, comedy writer and stand-up comic.

My question is how can a DJ not see the kinship we share with comedians? We both deal with live performances, controlling a room, understanding our audience, timing, material, career highs and lows and if we're smart, the need for artist development along with the time it takes to get there.

Still not with me? In another video, CK says when it's time to freshen up his act, he'll open a performance with his strongest bit. This forces him to really step it up with the rest of his show. Isn't this a bit like playing the most requested song for your first track? Last night, I did an urban wedding and opened the dance floor with the Wobble. That was a tough track to follow, but I made it happen and kept it going.

Jerry Seinfeld talks about using the F-word. Some consider this a cheap laugh but he admits that he's done bits before where they don't work without it. This reminds me of line dances. Many of us don't want to play them, but they can be the only tracks that get things going at some parties. Sure, some people will hate them, but you can't please everyone all the time.

Seinfeld adds 20 to 30% of new material every year while still performing his most popular bits. Think of this as using a list like the Mobile Beat Top 200 then adding new tracks and signature tunes every season.

Do people come to see the actual comedian or to hear their favorite jokes and bits all over again? Where Seinfeld says it's both, Chris Rock feels they are coming to see him and his overall style of comedy. Rock also adds if they've seen your bit once, why pay to see it again? Don't DJs have the very same debate? We may have entire song sets that work very well in a particular order. However, if you play for the same audience more than once, shouldn't you switch it up?

Speaking of Chris Rock, I love his story. He starts out in small comedy clubs then gets picked up by Saturday Night Live. At this point, he feels he's made it big. After SNL he gets a few movie parts here and there, but his career is really starting to fizzle out. Rock thinks it's over for him and goes back to the comedy clubs. It's here he reinvents himself and eventually gets his HBO special that sets a whole new standard for comedy.

Just like Rock, how many of us wanted to be a musician or producer only to realize in the end, we are really talented DJs? By the mid 90's, I thought I had taken it as far as I could. Today, well to say the DJ world has been good to me would be an understatement. The cool part is I'm still learning and growing every day.

If you can bring yourself to look past some of the language and subject matter, take some time and listen to what these seasoned performers have to say about their craft. Just add "DJ" whenever they say comedian, "music" when they talk about jokes and "sets" when they talk about bits. You'll be surprised what you can learn. No Joke!

Brian S Redd is a Mobile/Club DJ in Milwaukee WI, DJ Youtuber & an official "American DJ" Artist/ You can reach Brian at: brianredd@discjockeynews.com/

From The Other Side: Priorities

By Jake Palmer

I think it was in June that I wrote about overhearing a conversation between a supervisor and an employee at a local McDonalds. I was especially impressed by the fact that the supervisor not only gave this employee tips and information to help her do a better job, but also gave "life lessons." This is information and knowledge that this young lady will be able to use for the rest of her personal and professional lifetime. They talked about things like body language, attitude, and professionalism, setting goals, and prioritizing.

Prioritizing is important in a lot of things we do, not just as mobile entertainers, but as people… as parents and spouses, employees and employers, friends and relatives.

That supervisor at McDonalds asked the employee if she had ever thought about her future, about a long term career at McDonalds, if so what goals should she be setting to make that happen, if not, then what goals does she need to be setting to get to the "other part of her life." My immediate thought from the conversation I was overhearing, was how most of what the supervisor was telling the employee was so true for mobile entertainers, from a business stand point and an entertainment point. Goal setting, planning for the future, prioritizing, delegating… as well as things like body language, confidence, and taking control of the situation. This information is be given and shared with a (maybe) $8.00 an hour 18 year old at a fast food restaurant, I was not only impressed, but curious as to how many so-called "real" employers put this much effort, knowledge, and energy into their 18 year old employees that are most likely not going to make a career with you. As entertainment professionals, are we thinking about these things? When we do a show, when we run our business, hire people, train people, or more importantly in our daily personal lives…

I think it's easy to see the connection between prioritizing when you are doing a show. It's pretty obvious what needs to happen right away, and what can be back burner'ed. Things like order of events, what songs when, which requests first, ect… What about the professional or personal side of things?

I started to re-prioritize my business about a year ago; I wanted to start thinking about an exit strategy. A way I can work towards not being a mobile DJ every weekend, and morphing myself and my business into something else, or a new direction at the very least. Let's face it, in this business we all eventually age-out, no one wants to party with their dad, or grandpa. The question is what next? What do we do after we are too old? Do we simply retire, go get a "real" job, switch professions all together, or move in a slightly different direction, while staying in the wedding and entertainment industry? Well, as I have contemplated this move in my own life and career for the past year, my priorities changed in a flash when I found out about Sam.

"Sam" is actually an acronym, S.A.M., it stands for Suddenly Another Member, yes my wife and I are expecting another child in February. WOW! While this is only half a surprise, the words "I'm pregnant" still have a way of cutting through you like no other words. It's a sure fire way to snap all of your priorities into line real quick. It's funny how quickly things change…one minute I was thinking about how great it was going to be with my daughter (who I have been stay home dad minimum 3 days a week since birth) is about to start kindergarten in the fall, oh, yeah! Just think of the free time… hmmm.

Well, now more than ever, it seems like I am even more focused on the future. Now I have to maybe realign some of my priorities, but, more importantly I need to stay focused on them. I think, the age old question for DJs as they get older is when and where do you start to draw the line between booking MORE shows and getting MORE out of each show. I don't want to get into the "are you charging enough" debate; we all know what we want, what we get, and what the market will give us. The question is how do we get more out of each event? How do we get more of the market share? How do we do it without lowering our quality or sacrificing our goals and growth? Then we create the added pressure of doing it while continuing to be a great husband, father, friend, and tax paying citizen who goes out does his part to stimulate the economy? Next month I will start to talk more about some of the ideas, actions, and changes, I have started to implement into my own business and life. I don't claim to have all the answers, and I am certain that many of you may have already figured this out, or even do it better than me, but one of the great things about this business and Disc Jockey News is that together, through networking, sharing, and good old-fashioned knowledge, we can help each other, and maybe all get a little bit better, maybe not leaps and bounds better, but just a little better.

My sudden change in my priorities and growth of my family might be just thing to keep me motivated and focused. Sometimes it's easy to get stalled out or even a little lazy, this new baby might be new motivation to stay diligent, disciplined, and focused… and, kids dig me!

Hmmmm, like I always say, "livin' the dream ain't easy, but it sure is fun!"

Jake Palmer can be reached at jakepalmer@discjockeynews.com.

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Passion: The Magic That Begins The Happily Ever After

By Ron Ruth

"The magic is as wide as a smile and as narrow as a wink, loud as laughter and quiet as a tear, tall as a tale and deep as emotion. So strong, it can lift the spirit. So gentle, it can touch the heart. It is the magic that begins the happily ever after."

The above quote comes from an unknown Disney imagineer. It's hard to say if he or she was speaking about the magic of the Disney Theme Parks or one of the other vast forms of Disney entertainment. But, one thing is certain. The quote

conveys a passion and commitment, and maybe even a commitment to be passionate, that we as wedding DJs and business owners should embrace. It is a reminder for me and, hopefully, for you of how far we've come as an industry and why we do what we do.

There was a time in my earlier days in this industry where I believed what many brides still believe today; that every DJ is the same. The only true difference between me and my closest competitor was pricing. Unfortunately, I let that strategy control my business for about a decade. In actuality, it wasn't the pricing strategy that was in control of my destiny as much as it was the clients who contracted me for their events. Their expectations were about as low as my fee. So, we were a perfect match.

Now before you roll your eyes and move on to another article from one of my esteemed colleagues because you think I'm about to go down the road of discussing worth and value, a topic that most of you, the DJN readers, have already come to appreciate, hold on. That's not my focus. The story I shared is, in all likelihood, not exclusive to me. I'm guessing some or maybe many of you could tell the same tale. But, like me, at some point in your career as a DJ, you came to realize that what you do, the impact you have on a once-in-a-lifetime event, the pleasure you receive for bringing at least a moment of happiness to others reaches far beyond financial reward.

At some point you did something during a performance that brought about a smile. When you did it again, you discovered that you could make people laugh or cry or stand up and cheer. As over time you added more emotionally engaging elements to your performance, you realized that the smiles grew larger, the laughter lasted longer and the applause was louder. The good feeling those responses brought about for you and the delight it brought to your client and their guests became incentive to work harder to find ways to replicate that level of energy and emotion in every subsequent performance. Instead of repeating that success, you exceeded every expectation, including your own. You became addicted to a joy that can only be experienced when others feel joy. You, like me my friends, became passionate!

Passion is a powerful emotion. It makes us eager to learn. No more prodding or need to be convinced of the value of education. It makes us let go of negative influences. We suddenly find ourselves surrounded by individuals of like mind and equal aspirations, people who are willing to give of their time and expertise to lift us up and to help us succeed. "Average" is erased from our repertoire and replaced by "excellence," "exceptional" and "extraordinary." Passion is what drives us to bring happiness and special memories to our clients and their family and friends; regardless of the amount of time or effort it takes for us to accomplish that goal. Passion is what gives us the inexhaustible desire to create magic and to surprise even ourselves as to just how capable and creative we can be if we just put our minds to it. Passion is an unbridled enthusiasm to be the best we can be to the benefit of our clients.

The added bonus of being passionate about our profession is that it is contagious. It releases the imaginative spirit and can bring about an incredible opportunity for collaboration and innovation. Passion is not something that is exclusive to you or me, it is meant to be shared with others. If you are truly passionate, clients will be drawn to you and your passion will be compared to every other wedding professional with whom they come in contact. Just imagine what would be possible if everyone they choose as a member of their "creative team" shared the same passion for delivering happiness and exceeding expectations as you.

So you must be wondering why I chose to write about passion. Over the past decade or so we've come to know our worth and have raised the bar of professionalism in our industry. We've worked hard to mentor those just coming into our industry and to teach them not only where we would like to go in the future but to educate them on the mistakes we've made in the past with the hope that they won't be destined to repeat them. Although these are important lessons to be learned, have we fallen short in conveying our passion?

Obviously passion isn't something that can be taught nor can it be contrived. But, let's face it, as essential as it is to make a living at what we do and to behave in an ethical and professional manner, how often do we emphasize the true reward of our efforts; the smiles, the laughter, the cheers and the joy that comes from our passion to bring happiness to others? Passion shapes our future, fuels the fires of inspiration and makes the heart and mind open to changes all around us. It is food for the soul, a spark that ignites our purpose and mission. Passion will prevent our tomorrow from being the same as our yesterday.

I have a placard in my office that reads "If you can dream it, YOU CAN DO IT!" It is a quote from Walt Disney and it is a daily reminder of just how far we've all come during my 20 plus years in the DJ industry. It is a tribute to how much fun it is to do the impossible and the unexpected. Please accept my invitation to share in my passion. It is yours to experience and enjoy. It won't take long to appreciate how passion is "the magic that begins the happily ever after."

Ron Ruth is the owner of Ron Ruth Wedding Entertainment in Kansas City, a WED Guild™ member and a self-professed "Disney Geek." Ron can be reached at 816-224-4487 or via email at ronruth@discjockeynews.com.

Don't Be Pushy...

By Rick Brewer, GetMoreBrides.com

Many people think that salesman are bad, obnoxious and are to be avoided much like a bad smell. There are many salespeople who fall into this category. However, to lump all people who are trying to sell something into the same group simply is not effective in a buyer's strategy. When you think of brides, we all know

that they will buy your stuff (from you or from someone) but they do a lot of weird things that make them have an unproductive buying process where they will waste a bunch of time and energy only to get frustrating results.

In my opinion, when someone comes to meet with you and takes your time, you have the right to ask for the sale. That said, they also have the right to say "no." Studies show that by simply asking for the sale more often, you will find an increase in your bookings. Asking for the sale in an appropriate manner will help even more. When we ask, we don't always get. But, we miss every shot we don't take (to paraphrase Wayne Gretzky). If we are sitting back hoping for the sale to come through, I will say as I often state, 'hoping' is a lousy strategy.

I want you to be honest; do you have a proven system that you use each and every time in your sales approach? In your strategy, do you always (meaning each and every time when it is time to ask for the sale, i.e. you are at the point to where no further information needs to be researched and the client has the information and input they need to make a decision) ask for the sale? I often hear the statement "I don't want to be pushy" which is quite a pant load. If you cannot sell what you are an expert and passionate about without being pushy, you need to get a job that does not require risk. Selling is a risk, a risk that someone will reject what you are trying to sell.

Let me state something often quoted: "Nothing happens until something is sold."

If you cannot sell your product or service to brides, you won't be around long. If you use the proper sales system that fits you and your style and is the best approach for the bride (focusing on being fully honest in your approach) you will stay around and thrive as long as you choose.

The best sales systems accomplish the following:

1) They focus on the customer's needs/desires

2) They will draw the prospects through the same/similar process to get the best results

3) They have a process of discovery to see if there is indeed a match

4) They do not leave room for wonder, you know at the end here your prospect stands

Step one in your business is to get your phone to ring. Step two is to get your cash register to ring. When your marketing works but your sales system does not, you will have the same/similar effect as if your marketing as not working either. Both marketing to brides and selling to brides needs to work in tandem to insure a healthy bottom line.

Start with this step first: Ask for the sale each and every time you have a face to face meeting with a bride. You don't have to use worn out methods that barely worked 15-20 years ago. Simply ask, "What's our next step? Should we do some paperwork?" By asking this question, let me know if you end up with more business on the books.

Rick Brewer is the Nation's Foremost expert at Marketing and Selling to Brides. You can sign up for Rick's Free Weekly "Marketing To Brides Tip of the Week" on his website, www.getmorebrides.com

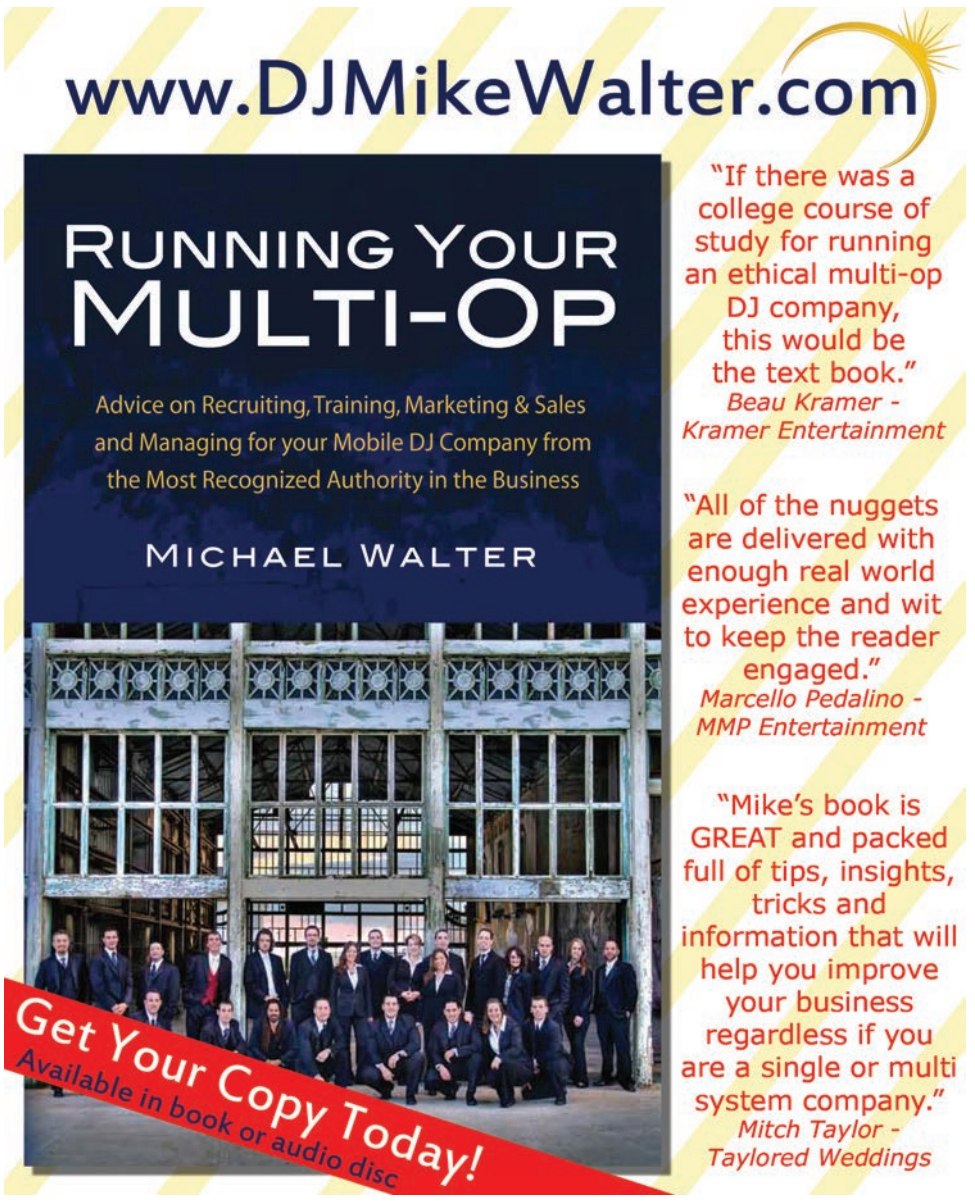
Dean Carlson continued from page 3

mind several times a year, and might just bring back an awesome memory for the client. Also in the line of facebook stalking is if they have a child, send them a congrats card and a gift, wow would your stock rise.

Yes this seems a bit time consuming, but once you get in the habit it almost does it by itself. You need to do as many of these in genuine verses generic manner as possible. This sets up your soliciting repeat business. Do you ever send out letter asking for business? Almost every client works somewhere and you could ask about holiday parties or in the spring you may even ask about family reunions.

During this last year 90-95% of my events have been set up because of a repeat business type referral. At one wedding I had 3 past couple and the newlyweds that I was currently working for. My advertising budget has shrunk to an all-time low. It's never too late to start this, image you are a past client and out of the blue comes a anniversary ort birthday card. I can guarantee no other wedding vendor is doing this and even in a place as big as the Twin Cities only 2-5 DJs attack in this manner. Your UPS could be genuine connection after the event, how awesome is that? Good luck and great shows.

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



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Connections: With Your Competition

By Steve Moody

I am going to come right out and say it. Your own personal perception can easily become your own personal reality. Keeping this in mind, growing to view other disc jockey services as "colleagues" rather than "competition" has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my entire career in the mobile disc jockey industry. Your "perception" and your own personal "reality" are all in what you make them.

From the time I began performing as a disc jockey back in 1989, I had always worked alone as a single op with absolutely no one else on staff. You see, in order to play it "safe" I pretty much stuck to myself within the industry. I guess you might say that I was flying really low under the radar for the first decade or so.

Sadly the only real interaction that I had with other dj services in the earlier part of my life was tainted by underhanded dealings and backstabbing. We have all been there at some time or another. Which makes it hard for many of us not to become jaded where competition is concerned. Those that know me, on a personal level, totally realize that my "thin skin" could not hold up in that type of environment. Therefore I chose to go on my journey alone, rather than open myself up to the possibilities of being hurt again. It's a shame that I had let the actions of a few unethical folks keep me from realizing the amazing opportunities that I was missing out on.

In all honesty, there was only one other disc jockey that I even allowed into the fortress that I had built around myself. Nick Burke (Maryland) was the first and only dj that I even slightly associated with. I believe that I first met him back in 2001and then began seeing him on a weekly basis at the venue where I performed on Wednesday evenings.

After years of putting him off, I finally let him talk me into going to my first convention back in 2007. As you might imagine, I was totally blown away by my first experience at the Atlantic City DJ Expo. I was in awe of all of the djs shaking hands, giving hugs, having conversations in the hallways, sharing meals together and encouraging each other. Beyond Amazing!!!

At that point in my life I could not even look another dj in the eye much less give them a hug! I was totally out of my element. The magic is that by the end of the week, my entire perception of my peers had changed. (This is not to say that I am naive enough to believe that every dj service was now miraculously on the up and up.) I realize that many of those underhanded kinda folks are still out there. That being said, I just made a choice to step above and brush them under the rug.

As I slowly began making connections with other djs, I noticed that I was most comfortable with the entertainers that were not in my immediate market here in Maryland. Naturally. However, after some time, I began to take notice of the relationships created by other djs that happened to share the same market. The outer walls of my fortress slowly began to crumble.

In all honesty, I would have to credit the NJDJN (New Jersey Disc Jockey Network) for this breakthrough. When I began connecting with this group of guys and gals I realized that anything was possible. The NJDJN is entirely unique. Over the past few years I have travelled all up and down the east coast speaking at various conventions and conferences and though there are many groups that have formed great relationships, none has quite achieved what these folks in New Jersey have.

Their monthly meetings are almost like family reunions, different age groups, different sexes, different colors of skin, different performance styles, different business styles...yet one big family. Everyone is welcome. This by no means is meant to be interpreted as any type of negative remark about any other assocations..I would never ever say that. I am only saying that there is something extremely special going on within this group.

They don't just get together once a month for the meetings. Their networking goes much further than that. They refer each other, they work together on events that need an extra hand or equipment, they are each other's back up in time of sickness and they band together in times of need. They do it for each other and for the betterment of the entire industry as a whole.

Following their lead I have tried to open up to my former competition. I know that for some of you it might sound a bit insane…while for others you have already experienced the benefits. I know, I know. In fact, if you would have told me five years ago that I would be sharing my marketing and sales insights in this column, or that I would be presenting seminars (that DJs from my own market were attending) I would have never believed it. Not in a million years.

Lowering my defenses has been truly rewarding all the way around. A willingness to share knowledge opens up more doors than you could never imagine. Do I worry about other smaller DJ companies using my ideas to better their services? Absolutely not. There is plenty of work for all of us...and besides, we can all share the same knowledge, yet we will all present ourselves differently.

Sometimes we lose sight of the principal that we are all unique. There is only one me and only one you. We can use similar marketing strategies, similar sales techniques, similar methods of getting people on the dance floor and similar methods of introducing bridal parties. However, the truth is that we will never do it exactly the same way. Why not share what we have learned to help other companies improve their product, in order to better outsider's perception of our industry? In my case it has been a "win-win" situation for all involved. The better other DJ companies in my market look, the higher the average price goes up and we are all making more money.

I know that it is very easy to believe that opening yourself up in this way could be disastrous. In fact, I used to feel a sense of aggression toward other companies if I were to lose a client to them. That being said, I now realize that my frustration was totally misplaced. The frustration should have been aimed at myself. Rather than feeling animosity toward another company… the question should have been "why wasn't I good enough to close that sale?".. (and blaming it on the fact that they undercut your price is no excuse). If my presentation would have been better they would have booked me no matter what the price. The question should be, "What do I need

Steve Moody Continued On Page 10

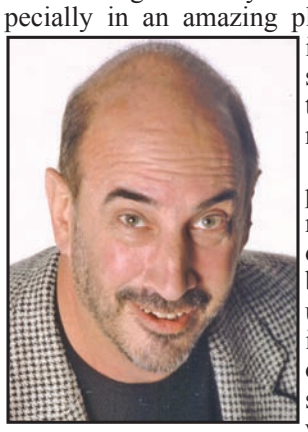
Getting Ready To Think!

By Jeffrey Gitomer

Are you ready? What are you thinking?

I'll be spending the month of August in Paris with my family. I can't describe how wonderful it will be. My goal is to finish a book, take in the culture, enjoy my family, and THINK.

Investing time in your thoughts – especially in an amazing place – creates incredible results. More on that later this month.



Jessica, my partner and mother of our daughter Gabrielle, came up with a great idea to give our staff an insight into what we do in Paris by giving them a week off (with full pay), and challenge them to spend (invest) their time thinking or achieving a lifelong goal.

I'm sending my staff a few ideas on thinking to get them going, and I'm sharing them with you. These are personal insights that will help you achieve some original thought, reaffirm some existing thought, and maybe even get rid of a few unwanted thoughts…

1. Identify your NOW feeling and state of mind. What's up? Happy? Sad? Afraid? Mad? It's important that your mind at least be in "neutral" before you start the thinking process, and the more the needle leans toward happy and positive, the more productive and rewarding the thinking time will be.

2. Wake up and write. It doesn't matter what it is, just write whatever comes to mind. Don't force yourself to do it, just let words flow. As you think, capture your words.

3. Mentally go back to the house you grew up and picture yourself in each room one at a time. Stories will begin to pop into your head about what happened. Pick the fun ones and document them. This may even prompt you to call some people you love that you haven't been in touch with recently.

4. Don't write about your goals – focus on things you would like to achieve. Write a bucket list of places you must go before you die. Go online and find pictures of each one of them and paste it next to the place you want to go. Make it real. Going to India may be a place you want to visit, but putting a picture of the Taj Mahal makes it more real. After you have listed all the places, jot down a few things you MUST do. Maybe it's run a marathon, or go to the library more often. Whatever it is, or they are, commit to it (or them) in writing. Add to the lists regularly.

5. Find a quiet place where you can be alone to write. Starbucks is not the best place. A park is better. I spend a lot of my time in parks and by water. Something about thesound of wind or the sound of the water is calming. Just an added note: I do not listen to music while I write, but if I did I would listen to light jazz or classical.

6. Don't let your thoughts get away. Rather than dwell on them, write down the key words so you don't forget. Thoughts are fleeting. If you wait one minute and then go back to it, it's gone.

7. Write your biography. Just a short history of where you grew up, who you are, and what you did. Two or three paragraphs.

8. Write down what you love about work, what you hate about work, and what you wish were different at work. From that list (especially what you hate about it) you will begin to generate a few ideas. Write them down immediately and then let them sit for a day. Don't just write the idea, write everything you are thinking about it. I refer to it as a brain dump. Having written more than 1,000 articles, they often come from frustration, not just ideas. And when I first think of them, I immediately write everything down that's in my head, not in sentence format – just the ideas and words so I capture the thought and can go back and fill it inlater.

8.5 Write everything down at the end of your day. Before you go to bed at night clear your mind so you can dream and wake up with answers. You do this by writing your thoughts, your to-dos, your challenges, and maybe even your hopes and fearsbefore you go to bed. Once it's written, you can forget about it. This will allow you to sleep like a baby and wake up with an uncluttered mind.

Please take advantage of your personal time. It will pass quickly. Try to invest as much of it as you can FOR YOURSELF. I'll be doing the same. I look forward to sharing your experience when I get back.

Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of The Sales Bible, CustomerSatisfaction is Worthless Customer Loyalty is Priceless, The Little Red Book of Selling, The Little Red Book of Sales Answers, The Little Black Book of Connections, The Little Gold Book of YES! Attitude, The Little Green Book of Getting Your Way, The Little Platinum Book of Cha-Ching, The Little Teal Book of Trust, The Little Book of Leadership, and Social BOOM! His website, www.gitomer.com, will lead you to more information about training and seminars, or email him personally at salesman@gitomer.com.

Moody Continued From Page 9

to change in my presentation to do better next time around"?

Once I began competing against myself, rather than competing against my industry colleagues, so many amazing new opportunities came my way. If you get nothing else from this month's column, get this....if you change your perspective a bit and begin to view other DJs in your market as colleagues rather than competition, you will eventually realize that your only true competition is yourself. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose but you always are able to learn and adapt for the next time.

Your greatest competition is to learn more than you knew yesterday about marketing strategies, sales concepts and performance techniques. Keep challenging yourself to learn more about areas where you need improvement. If you are losing sales to another local service it is not their fault.. Time to step up, take the blame, accept them for who they are and make strides to better yourself.

Hope that you are having a blast this summer and can't wait to see many of you in Atlantic City for the International DJ Expo (August 11-14). I have been invited back for the 3rd year in a row to present an all new version of "All Star MC Secrets Revealed". The tips shared by our panel are going to be worth their weight in gold. We are all set for the first Seminar on Monday morning with fellow Disc Jockey New writer Mitch Taylor along wth Jake Jacobson, Tara Feely, Peter Merry and Mark Brenneisen.

Steve has been the owner of the Maryland based Steve Moody's Entertainment Connection since 1989. After his 2009 DJ Of The Year win in Atlantic City, Steve began travelling the East Coast sharing marketing and sales techniques with Disc Jockey and other Wedding Professional Organizations. He can be reached by calling 800-410-3013 or at SteveMoody@discjockeynews.com

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The Referral Coach

By Matt Anderson

The 6 Requirements of Success

Any time I need some extra motivation, I listen to a Brian Tracy audio. His Psychology of Achievement is, ultimately, a tremendous guide for living well.

1. Peace of mind

This is about living free from fear, guilt and anger. There is a direct correlation between how much control we feel we have in life and our mental health.

It is about being able to sleep at night knowing that you are doing your best in life.

2. Good health and high energy

You are already painfully aware of this.

If you're not where you want to be:

a) It's okay to put yourself first – you are not much good to others (including business clients) if you are burned out and on the verge of sickness. It's probably about saying no to something else that you tell yourself is more urgent.

b) See yourself as a prize horse that must be well taken care of in order for you to do yourself justice

c) This is about self-discipline AND about living what you say you value – your health.

Remember that successful people do the things unsuccessful people do not feel like doing either!

3. Loving relationships

For many years I struggled to address this area of my life. I would read this and wince. I would bury myself in more work to numb the emotional pain.

Sometimes your past impacts you in ways you do not understand. Sometimes you need the insights of experts. And sometimes books are not enough partly because we have a way of only identifying with what we already know; you may need interaction with a class, therapist or coach.

Western culture is almost obsessed with the concept of individualism. While this has many strengths, avoiding intimacy is one example of the negative extreme. Workaholism is another. I will never forget the moment I read in Robert Holden's Success Intelligence:

"At the heart of excessive individualism is a broken heart."

I knew I had read something powerful, yet it still took me a year to reach out and ask for help from others.

4. Freedom from financial worries

This topic also requires a book! The amount will vary from person to person. Try David Bach, John Assaraf, Wayne Dyer, and Joe Vitale for great ideas.

5. Worthy goals and ideals

What are your goals for the next 12 months?

Brian Tracy comments: "We perform consistent with our self-concept. We earn a living consistent with our self-concept." Therefore, spend more time focusing on ways to like yourself more.

Otherwise, how can you expect different results? You cannot outperform your self-concept! Like most positive outcomes in life, improving in this area takes frequent, small steps. Acknowledge yourself for what you are doing right and for who you are being.

6. Feeling that you are fulfilling your potential

You, not our culture, must decide what brings you fulfillment. Everyone's best varies.

Listen to what's inside you. Dream a little. Think bigger. Listen to your heart. Here's some wonderful advice from Robert Holden:

Even though life can be difficult, heartbreaking and insane at times, the only way to really succeed is to keep saying, 'yes' to what moves your soul.

What moves your soul?

Matt Anderson is the author of 'Fearless Referrals' at www.fearlessreferrals.com. Matt can be reached at: http://www.thereferralauthority.com

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We Help DJs Build & Grow Their Business!

Look Mom, No Cords!

By Jeremy Brech

With the every changing industry in lighting there is one thing for sure. LEDs have made their mark. There are many great features to LED lighting such as no heat emission, compact, etc., but there is one that makes this next trend possible. Low power consumption! I want you to imagine event lighting as if it is the trend of the telephone. Look how far it has come.

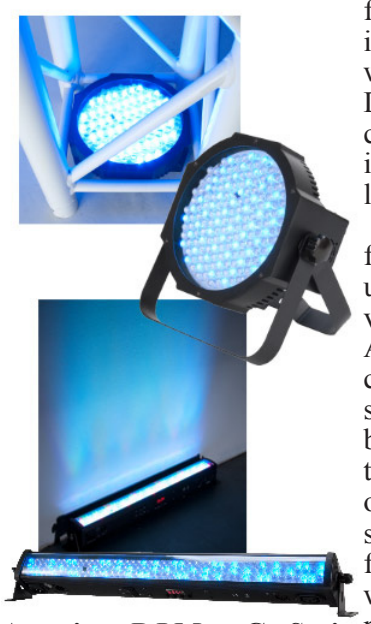
It went from cranking a phone, to rotary dial, to digital touch keys, to a phone without the long curly phone cord by going to a cordless phone, to now having the freedom to carry your cell phone in your pocket and answer it no matter where you are in the world. Now our lives revolve around the power of the cell phone and its capabilities. If you look at the trending in lights, it really isn't that much different. There are many great industry leaders that have been around for years and also some great new manufactures that have seen the need for wireless power and wireless DMX.

Just in the last couple years with the explosion of the LED world, lights have become very advanced and it has simplified many aspects for the average and advanced lighting designer. American DJ, Chauvet, Blizzard, and Eternal Lighting have made some tremendous progress in our industry. If you look at all the categories in the wedding industry, the entertainment and lighting industry has probably made the biggest leaps and bounds. So take advantage of it!

Imagine setting a room of DMX powered lighting with no power cords and no DMX cables. It is now possible thanks to the technology of our lighting industry. It would take me over 1 hour to run an entire room of up-lightings; having to plug them in, finding out your cord isn't long enough, or the power cord doesn't work. Then it would take another half hour to run all the DMX cables to each light hoping the cable didn't go bad since the last time. Once I replaced all the bad cords, I would have to hope that I brought my DMX signal eliminator. Now that all of that is done, it is time to tuck all the cords against the wall and throw rugs over doorways or use a $20 roll of Gaff tape to make this monstrosity looks "elegant." With the new battery power and wireless DMX capabilities we can now set an entire room in 15 minutes and control all of them with our computer.

This dream of mine where everything can be wireless lighting is now a reality. A couple years ago when the Chauvet LED Rain 56 par can came out, within months I was working on a contraption to make it wireless power. After figuring out the amp draw and testing many different styles of batteries I had it all put together. With some self wiring and a power inverter I now had a battery powered par can that would last for 13 hours. As long as it was under a table and not visible to the public, it looked great!

The rechargeable battery powered flat pars are great but they are even better with the capabilities of wireless DMX. Some of the newer units will have built in wireless DMX which I love! If your units don't, then look into getting a couple of the wiCICLE units from Blizzard Lighting. We use the wiCICLES on our Chauvet Q-spot 260 LEDs during our wedding events because it allows us to place that totem or light anywhere in the room. The flexibility that wireless DMX creates is unbelievable.



American DJ MegaGo Series battery powered lights

Time for product review. American DJ seems to be capitalizing on a successful IR wireless remote system with their GO Series. They are a powerful light and can be ran by anyone using the remote. The Chauvet Freedom Series is making a big splash as well. Even though they might not be sleek and sexy they still provide a great product. The Freedom series has built in battery along with built in wireless DMX. The only downside to these two products at this point is the RGB limitations. We have seen a huge trend in colors using amber tones and white tones. Eternal has delivered with their Cube series with battery life, output, Internal DMX and color mixing capabilities. Last but not least Blizzard Lighting has truly created a great product with price and functionality. The Puck Series has been an amazing light for us with the unplugged or battery powered option along with having wireless DMX, these lights are fantastic. The Blizzard Q6U flat par is probably the best selling light on the market right now.

How do you run the wireless DMX? The wiCICLES have been amazing receivers for us and they also make a nice compact transmitter in the same style. The Lightcaster Wireless System which also runs on a 2.4Ghz frequency provides a tremendous output signal for large rooms. These systems are affordable and well worth the investment.

For any of these items, contact NLFX in Minnesota. They back their items and take care of their clients. Ben Stowe and his staff are very knowledgeable about each product and can get you some of the best prices out there.

Jeremy can be reached at: jeremybrech@discjockeynews.com.

Tackling Your Marketing Plan

By Mike Kazis

A while back, I wrote an article which addressed the importance of a business plan and discussed the basic content of one. Many business owners may already have a formal business plan, but there are probably just as many who don't. It's not surprising and completely understandable. Business plans are often perceived as long, complex and time consuming; They're all of the above.

Another thing I discovered was that some professionals-turned-business-owners lack marketing knowledge. A few years back, I interviewed a few local small businesses to see if they would share their marketing strategies with me. I walked into a popular, small sized Italian restaurant and asked the owner if he had a marketing plan. To my surprise, his reply was, "What's that?" There's typically no way anyone can expect a chef turned business owner to suddenly have the knowledge in so many areas of business. He may also lack the time it takes to create a formal business plan. That goes for any small business owner in any industry, which is why I'm going to share some information that will help anyone in need of a business plan.

I've always preferred to complete tasks one piece at a time, so if you've never created a business plan before, then start first with just the marketing plan. Understanding your market is one of the most important factors to having a successful business, so why not start there?

In marketing, remember your main goal is to reach and capture customers. I've spoken to lots of folks with great business ideas and some have even attempted to turn their ideas into a money making venture. Some succeeded but many did not. The common factor of those who failed was they had a great idea or service, but didn't have a sufficiently large market. They failed to reach and capture customers. That's what you need to focus on.

There are many different ways to organize the many sections of a marketing plan, but the order below appears to be the one with minimal requirements. Start with these for now and you can always customize it as your business grows. Here's the order:

Target Market

If a marketing plan does anything, it will help you put your business in perspective as to who your customers are, what you're offering them, and how you're going to convey that message to them.

Selecting a target market is very important. Different people are attracted to different styles and products. Teens, for example, are not always inspired by the same things that appeal to adults. Selecting a target market will help you focus your efforts on the group you will appeal to the most. Figure out who that market will be by creating a demographic profile of your potential customers and determine other significant customer characteristics that will help you market your product or service.

Customer's Motivation to Buy

Now that you have a product, why do customers need your product or service?

You'll need to determine whether or not people are interested in your product or service. Conduct some simple market research. Start by simply determining whether the market demand is great enough to support your company and the products you wish to offer. Start by conducting a local survey consisting of friends, family, neighbors, or whoever else and find out what you can about their buying behaviors and whether those behaviors would be right for your company.

Market Size and Trends

Now that you have a target market from the first section, demonstrate how large that market is, how it's growing or shrinking and at what rate. Look for industry-based statistical information. You may even want to consider buying reports or surveys.

Personal Selling Efforts

In this section, illustrate sales related information such as the size of your sales force, compensation plan, and sales performance rates. Your sales strategies, tactics, methods of operation, commission rates, etc. are all documented here.

Advertising and Promotion

Next you want to determine what your message will be to potential customers to draw them to your product. Your methods involved with promoting your product need to be well thought out. You're not going to just build a web site, as I hear so many startups say. After all, how will people find your web site amongst a sea of competitors? You'll need to select a mix of media types, estimate the total cost of the media used and how frequently it will be used. You'll also want to determine ways of obtaining free publicity by building a public relations strategy.

Pricing

This section has several important sections:

Cost Structure – Fixed and Variable Costs

You'll want to illustrate a breakdown of what the costs will be per item or unit of service. There are two types of costs to consider – fixed costs and variable costs. Here are two simple examples. A fixed cost is one that doesn't change based on the number of units you sell. Rent is a fixed cost. It doesn't matter if the rent goes up. It didn't change based on the number of units you sell like a variable cost does. Paying your staff is a good example when it comes to DJing an event because you pay your staff per party.

Desired Image in the Market

Do you want to be known as a cost efficient DJ, a value based DJ, or a top quality, high end DJ?

Whatever you choose, you'll want to document it here. From experience, this section is very helpful when learning how to verbally promote your business to perfect strangers who know nothing about you.

Comparison Against Competitor's Prices

This information can sometimes be difficult to get. I know some DJs still call and pretend to be customers. An easier

Mike Kazis continued to page 15

Promotions: It Can Be Seasonal

By Jason Jones

It's the dog days of summer and Minnesota is true to form this year: hot and muggy. It's also perfect weather for hanging out at the lake, enjoying a few beers from the cooler and taking in the coveted hot days. In a mere six months we'll be in the deep freeze next to the push-ups and pizza.

Just the other day I called my bar client where I host and DJ a weekly birthday promotion to set up one of our quarterly meetings to evaluate how the Birthday Night Promotion is going. I already have a good idea of how it's going but that isn't as important as knowing how it's going for him. Being clued in to his perception of the promotion and sales is critical to maintaining my value. You cannot assume that your bar client will also see things like you do. Perception is everything. George Bush proved that when he won the Governors office in Texas. He campaigned on how out of control the crime was in the state at a time when crime was at it's lowest in decades, and won.

While we talked on the phone my bar client mentioned how weather really drives a lot of different business in Minnesota. It does, especially the bar business. It's something to really look at when you're going to produce/perform and/or promote a public event, or even start a promotion at the bar. You can have the best promotion ever with the greatest prizes and most engaging execution and have a poor turnout. The only thing wrong is that you may not have taken the season into consideration.

It's really important to tune into the habits of the people who come to your shows. In Minnesota, interests shift from season to season. The beginning and end of the school year affects shopping habits, as does the holidays and special occasions. There is very little live theatre to see in the Twin Cities during the summer because the majority of people want to be entertained outside. It's why I don't produce "Jason's Comedy Night" shows at my weekly local location during the summer. It's too difficult to get a sufficient audience to make a profit.

On the other hand, I am researching and prospecting resort areas with cabins near lakes outside the city to see if my audience will come in for a comedy show since they have the mindset of being on vacation. My summer business could very well be touring shows to smaller resorts and then I can enjoy some of that beer and sun on the beach myself while cashing in on an audience that's looking for a unique offering in an area of limited entertainment choices.

However like any public event, I will do my homework, speculate based on some research and then give it a go if it looks like it has a 50% or better chance of success.

Stay cool, it's almost time for school.

Jason Jones will be presenting the Entertainment Experience Power to Create and Art of the Audio Edit with Bill Hermann at the ADJA Las Vegas DJ show on September 12 and 13, 2012. Reserve your seats at www.billcreates.com.

Jason Jones is a producer, speaker, author and DJ who lives in Saint Paul, MN with his wife Kelly, son Max and a couple of cats and dogs.

You can reach jason at: jasonjones@discjockeynews.com.

When You Delegate You Elevate

By Harvey Mackay

"The surest way for an executive to kill himself is to refuse to learn how, and when, and to whom to delegate work," said James Cash Penney, founder of the J.C. Penney retail chain.

When you grow, you have to know when to let go. You have to know when to delegate down so you can rise up. The inability to delegate properly is the main reason that executives fail. I've learned that people will seldom let you down if they understand that your destiny is in their hands, and vice versa.

Delegating is a key management skill. But managers often mistake delegation for passing off work. Failing to effectively delegate wastes your time as well as the company's time and resources.

Personal experience starting and running Mackay Envelope Company, now MackayMitchell Envelope Company, taught me this. There came a day when we had grown to the point where I had to hire a person under me to run the company day to day, while I scanned the horizon, studying our industry and the company's future direction.

The reason? You don't want to be micro-managing and end up macro-mangling. The captain's place is on the bridge and not knee deep in the bilge. As the person steering an enterprise, you keep your head high and your vision unobstructed so you can study the big responsibilities, while maintaining authority and control. Many aspects of this art can't be taught. Pulling it off successfully can't be analyzed or quantified. But it can be qualified. If you don't get quality people, you're doomed.

Robert Townsend in his book, Further Up the Organization, wrote: "Leaders delegate whole important jobs. Nonleaders make all final decisions themselves."

Learning to delegate often requires a detour outside your comfort zone. How do you start delegating successfully?

• Don't look for perfection. Your objective is to get the job done, not create a masterpiece. Establish a standard of quality and a fair timeframe for reaching

Mackay Continued on page 16

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The State Of The DJ Nation: Blame The... BRIDE!

By DJ Avestan Kerenaoiti

I was reading a thread on Facebook recently, and well, it gave me something to think about. You see, it all started when someone posted a video from 'Ruth To The Rescue' - WDIV Channel 4, out of Detroit. The bride hired a DJ nearly a year in advance paying him up front and going through the planning process. And then, just a short time before the wedding, he bailed on her for a better paying 'gig'. He sent a replacement that didn't have (or couldn't find) the song for the first dance, and generally, according to the bride, 'ruined' her wedding day.

The question asked in that post was, "What is the most disturbing about this video?"

And the answers centered around 'You get what you pay for' with some 'We would never do that' and 'It's obvious the reporter doesn't know the first thing about hiring a DJ' thrown in for good measure.

After thinking about it, I realized something. The most appalling thing I saw had nothing whatsoever to do with the video but with the responses. The one thing beyond all others that completely and utterly disgusted me was....

Most everyone blamed the BRIDE.

Why? She didn't do anything wrong. If she had bought a car that turned out to be a lemon you wouldn't blame her. If the general contractor bailed on her half way through the remodel you wouldn't blame her. So why do we, as DJs, opt to blame the client for a bad choice?

Nowhere in any discussion was anyone calling to find out if the DJ is a member of the ADJA or NAME and asking for them to be removed. No one was calling the DJ an unethical scumbag. No one blamed the DJ - when, in fact, he is the ONLY one to blame. HE chose to bail on his client. HE picked a poor replacement. HE claims the music was there but the 'other guy' couldn't find it. HE ruined her wedding.

Time after time we, as an industry, refuse to accept that we are creating the problem. No, you might not bail on a client, but by blaming the client in this case you might as well have. You see, it's the bad ones getting the press. And the worse the bad - the lower the standards and the lower the expectations when that next clients comes to see YOU. You don't see video claiming, 'The wedding photographer ruined my wedding!' You don't see 'The caterer ruined my wedding!' It's like the criminal blaming the shopkeeper for them being in jail - not the behavior that got them there in the first place.

How about the next time a DJ does something stupid we call them on it? How about the next time we blame the DJ for being greedy and hosing his client? How about we blame the DJ for not giving a rat's ass about his clients?

But we can't do that because deep down, in places we don't like to talk about, we're scared to death that someone might actually expect us to hold ourselves accountable for our actions and more importantly, our performance. Come the end of the night we can't have that, can we?

Incompetence and passing the buck. THAT is the state of the DJ Nation.

You can reach Avestand Kerenaoiti at: avestan@discjockeynews.com

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way might be to call one of the local chapters a nearby DJ association.

Gross Profit Margin

After you figure out your total costs, you'll need to do figure out what you want to earn as a profit. The result will give you a rough idea of the price you'll need to charge. However, this alone will not give you your gross profit margin. It's very important to know how many parties you need to book per month to earn a monthly profit. You need to do some math to get your breakeven point - the minimum number of parties you need to book to cover all of the fixed and variable costs. There are plenty of online resources, but I can cover it in a later article.

Distribution Strategy

This section illustrates all the channels of distribution used to sell your product or service. It's much easier to understand when dealing with physical products if, for instance, you're selling your products wholesale to a retailer. For a mobile DJ business a channel of distribution may be a wedding planner or caterer that recommends your services.

Sales Techniques and Incentives for Intermediaries

Any type of external sales agent, such as a wedding planner, who actually sells your services directly is an intermediary. Keeping it organized in one designated section will mean an easier way of managing sales made by outside sources.

Test Market Results

In this section gather the data and outcomes of your marketing efforts. It will help you determine whether or not your marketing efforts are paying off. Gather surveys, customer feedback, and focus group data. Analyze the data and generate results which will help you make the necessary changes to your marketing strategy.

I did omit a lot of information from the sections above because I wanted to keep this as painless as possible for busy business owners. For those of you who are attending this month's DJ Expo in Atlantic City and plan to attend the many workshops and seminars, be prepared to walk out with a lot of helpful notes and tools that will help you improve marketing your business. When you get home, I recommend you weed through the marketing information you've collected (notes from seminars, flyers from business card vendors, website hosting companies, wedding magazines, etc.), select the information you wish to keep, and document it into your marketing plan so you now have a well organized game plan.

Happy marketing!

Mike can be reached at mikekazis@discjockeynews.com.

Top 20 Music Charts

By www.PrimeCutsMusic.com

Pop

1	Maroon 5	Payphone
2	Katy Perry	Wide Awake
3	Rihanna	Where Have You Been
4	Carly Rae Jepsen	Call Me Maybe
5	Ellie Goulding	Lights
6	Usher	Scream
7	Gotye	Somebody That I Used To Know
8	David Guetta	Titanium
9	Calvin Harris	Let's Go
10	Demi Lovato	Give Your Heart A Break
11	Cher Lloyd	Want U Back
12	One Direction	One Thing
13	Pink	Blow Me (One Last Kiss)
14	Havana Brown	We Run The Night
15	Flo Rida	Whistle
16	Owl City & Carly Rae Jepsen	Good Time
17	Wanted	Chasing The Sun
18	Gym Class Heroes	The Fighter
19	Neon Trees	Everybody Talks
20	Pitbull	Back In Time

Country

1	Dierks Bentley	5-1-5-0
2	Kenny Chesney	Come Over
3	Gloriana	(Kissed You) Good Night
4	Eli Young Band	Even If It Breaks Your Heart
5	Love And Theft	Angel Eyes
6	Toby Keith	Beers Ago
7	Blake Shelton	Over
8	Band Perry	Postcard From Paris
9	Brantley Gilbert	You Don't Know Her Like I Do
10	Josh Turner	Time Is Love
11	Keith Urban	For You
12	Jana Kramer	Why Ya Wanna
13	Little Big Town	Pontoon
14	Dustin Lynch	Cowboys And Angels
15	Zac Brown Band	The Wind
16	Thomas Rhett	Something To Do With My Hands
17	Thompson Square	Glass
18	Hunter Hayes	Wanted
19	Big & Rich	That's Why I Pray
20	Easton Corbin	Lovin' You Is Fun

Adult Contempory

1	Train	Drive By
2	Kelly Clarkson	Stronger (What Doesn't Kill You)
3	Gotye	Somebody That I Used To Know
4	Adele	Set Fire To The Rain
5	Adele	Rumour Has It
6	Carly Rae Jepsen	Call Me Maybe
7	Katy Perry	The One That Got Away
8	Maroon 5	Payphone
9	One Direction	What Makes You Beautiful
10	Fun.	We Are Young
11	Norah Jones	Happy Pills
12	Jessie J	Domino
13	Jason Mraz	I Won't Give Up
14	Hot Chelle Rae	Tonight Tonight
15	Katy Perry	Wide Awake
16	Wanted	Glad You Came
17	Katy Perry	Part Of Me
18	Neon Trees	Everybody Talks
19	Karmin	Broken Hearted
20	Margo Rey	Between Us

Urban

1	Big Sean, Kanye WestÉ	Mercy
2	Usher	Lemme See
3	2 Chainz	No Lie
4	DJ Khaled	Take It To The Head
5	Wale	Bag Of Money
6	J. Cole	Nobody's Perfect
7	Trey Songz	Heart Attack
8	Wiz Khalifa	Work Hard, Play Hard
9	Meek Mill	Amen
10	Ca$h Out	Cashin' Out
11	Trey Songz	2 Reasons
12	Chris Brown	Till I Die
13	Rick Ross	Touch ÔN You
14	Nicki Minaj	Beez In The Trap
15	Lil Wayne	My Homies Still
16	Mary J. Blige	Why
17	Drake	Crew Love
18	Driicky Graham	Snapbacks & Tattoos
19	Chris Brown	Sweet Love
20	Elle Varner	Refill

Rock

1	Volbeat	Still Counting
2	Shinedown	Unity
3	Linkin Park	Burn It Down
4	Offspring	Days Go By
5	Adelitas Way	Criticize
6	Chevelle	Hats Off To The Bull
7	Five Finger Death Punch	Coming Down
8	Black Keys	Gold On The Ceiling
9	Soundgarden	Live To Rise
10	P.O.D.	Lost In Forever
11	Godsmack	Rocky Mountain Way
12	Staind	Now
13	Deuce	America
14	Green Day	Oh Love
15	Art Of Dying	Sorry
16	Saving Abel	Bringing Down The Giant
17	Serj Tankian	Figure It Out
18	Seether	Here And Now
19	Halestorm	I Miss The Misery
20	Redlight King	Comeback

Alternative

1	Linkin Park	Burn It Down
2	Of Monsters And Men	Little Talks
3	Imagine Dragons	It's Time
4	Fun.	Some Nights
5	Black Keys	Gold On The Ceiling
6	Grouplove	Tongue Tied
7	Alex Care	Too Close
8	Offspring	Days Go By
9	Green Day	Oh Love
10	Silversun Pickups	Bloody Mary
11	Walk The Moon	Anna Sun
12	Killers	Runaways
13	Lumineers	Ho Hey
14	Metric	Youth Without Youth
15	Dirty Heads	Spread Too Thin
16	Gaslight Anthem	45
17	Alabama Shakes	Hold On
18	Awolnation	Kill Your Heroes
19	Chevelle	Hats Off To The Bull
20	Passion Pit	Take A Walk

Mackay continued from page 14

it. Once you establish the expectations, let your staff decide how to carry out the project.

• Provide complete job instructions. Make sure your employee has all the information needed to complete the job. Confirm that he/she understands - and accepts - the requirements.

• Stop believing you're the only one who can do the job properly. Just because an employee does things differently, doesn't mean they won't do the job right or as well. If you establish expectations of the end goal and the standards to follow, then methodology shouldn't be an issue. An important and often overlooked part of delegation is that it helps develop employees for advancement and creates a better work environment.

• Focus on teaching skills. Delegating doesn't mean passing off work you don't enjoy, but letting your employees stretch their skills and judgment. As you hand over greater responsibility, it's important to understand that learning new skills sometimes includes making mistakes. Don't punish employees who make a good faith effort to do things right.

• Check on progress. Let the employee do the work, but check in periodically on progress. Don't look over employees' shoulders or watch their every move. When you outline the expectations in the beginning, make sure you build in checkpoints for follow up.

• Say thank you to the people who have accepted the responsibility. Make sure employees know that their efforts are recognized and appreciated.

A new hotel employee was asked to clean the elevators and report back to the supervisor when the task was completed. When the employee failed to appear at the end of the day the supervisor assumed that like many others, he had simply not liked the job and left. But then after four days the supervisor bumped into the new employee. He was cleaning in one of the elevators.

"You surely haven't been cleaning these elevators for four days, have you?" asked the supervisor, accusingly.

"Yes sir," said the employee. "This is a big job, and I've not finished yet. Do you realize there are over forty of them, two on each floor, and sometimes they are not even there."

Mackay's Moral: The most successful managers aim at making themselves unnecessary to their staff.

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," "We Got Fired!...And It's the Best Thing That Ever Happened to Us," "The Mackay MBA of Selling in the Real World," and "Use Your Head To Get Your Foot In The Door."

It's Time For A Change!

By Ed Spencer

There's a book and even a song about how "Last Night A DJ Saved My Life." But day in and day out, I see my fellow DJs making choices and doing things that aren't in keeping with that title.

As DJs we struggle with late nights, eating poorly, stress and sleep deprivation for starters. When you finish up a late night there just aren't that many healthy options for eating. Stress can mount up given limited set up and tear down times, pushing ourselves and our performance, and even just the day after day of trying to make your business a success. Add in the high number of DJs who have day jobs and the resulting schedule can lead to additional sleep deprivation!

I remember nearly two years ago I was talking with a performance DJ and producer friend who told me he was headed to Mobile Beat to showcase some new gear for a company. He joked about how he was going to see all the "fat wedding DJs." It was a stereotype that actually fit many of the people I saw at DJ conventions. I was even reminded of Peter Merry's talk when he mentioned Mark Ferrell telling him in a post ride-along review that he needed to 'lose some weight.' Both were something I found quite humorous at the time.

However, when my doctor retired I had to find a new doctor. So a few weeks ago I went and we talked about my health and he ordered a set of blood tests. Well, yesterday I went in for the results. Much was as expected, my bad cholesterol was moderately high, my good cholesterol was a little low and my blood pressure was a little high. Nothing too out of the ordinary.... but then, while sitting there talking to the doctor he said something that reached out and slapped me senseless. Suddenly, I thought about my grandfather, my uncle, and friends who suffer from a debilitating disease. This disease has the potential to rob you of your kidneys, your eyesight, your limbs, and even your freedom. It has the potential to kill you. But we caught it early.

What was it? I was told I was pre-diabetic.

Why was I pre-diabetic? Why was my pancreas ability to function properly and metabolize sugar being impacted? Because I am fat. That's right. I'm overweight. At 265 lbs (120 kg) and 5 ft 10 in tall (1.52 m) I carry my weight pretty well. Most don't realize how much I really weigh. But that doesn't matter. I'm a long way from my 175 lbs frame with a resting heart rate in the low 40s I saw 20 years ago.

However, I was given something important. Hope. Every single problem I was suffering from, high blood pressure, cholesterol problems, and yes, even my pre-diabetic condition could be corrected with one action - drop some weight.

It's not as easy as it sounds, even though I've lost weight in the past through diet and exercise. I didn't get to this point overnight, and I won't fix it overnight. But what I do know is it's time for a change. I have to lose weight or I can lose something much more important. Today starts me on a journey of self improvement with regards to my health - not just for me, but for my loved ones as well.

So, why would someone write an article telling everyone they're fat, out of shape, and was just warned about a very serious threat to their health? Because I am being given a chance to 'fix' what's wrong with me. And with this gift I've been given, I want to issue a challenge to ALL DJs regardless of age, weight, race, income, prices, or anything else - please, get a physical. If you haven't had a physical in two years, get one NOW. Many insurance companies will actually pay for a physical with no deductible (check your policy to be sure). A simple physical and blood test can help to determine if you have any health issues that might be a ticking time bomb. A ticking time bomb that could manifest itself in the form of a heart attack, stroke, diabetes, or maybe just not show up until it takes your life.

I challenge everyone to make a change for yourself. Be selfish. Realize you happen to like being a DJ and want to keep doing it. Realize that maybe you have actually have people you love and love you that want you to stay around for a while. I implore you all to make a change, get a physical, and last night the life the DJ saved might just be your own.

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Top 30 Clean High School Songs

Will return next month with a new chart for the upcoming school dance season!

The July 2012 issue is available online to print the list at: www.discjockeynews.com

Behind The Mic:

By Dave Winsor

What are you selling?

If you are a mobile DJ and you represent your services to people in your market, what exactly are you selling? Music? Gear? Lights? A combination of all three? Good if you answered yes to any of those questions. You are in the race to the cash with thousands of others who are selling the same thing. You are selling "things" and there is NO competitive advantage to that. Unless your THINGS are light years ahead of everyone else's things in your market. Things are facts. In the world of sales, "Facts tell, stories sell." So what is your story?

It's no wonder that we are struggling as an industry to provide clarity for those who are looking for our services. From the baseline buyer to the purchaser of your things, they are all looking for something: The best price. Why? Because that's all we've ever emphasized! "I'll DJ your wedding for 5 hours for $850." NEXT. "I'll DJ your wedding for 6 hours for $600." NEXT. "I'll DJ your wedding for 6 hours for $450!!" Who got the job? Chances are the last DJ with the price of $450. Why? Because the client didn't know the difference between the three quotes other than price. They may not know that for a few hundred dollars more they can see a real difference in delivery. Now, it's entirely possible that the client bought the right DJ because of price and perhaps that DJ was a real up and coming talent. That's possible; but most likely not probable. So, how do we avoid this whole price war?

Decide NOT to participate in it. You may be thinking "that is a crazy idea!" For you, it may be crazy, but for a real business person in this industry who cares about things like talent, personal and professional growth, talent (sorry, did I mention that already), customer focus and product delivery; it's time to change.

How much to you charge and what do you bring to the table for that price? If your answer involves music or gear as one of your first two answers, you'll win in the short term, but you won't sustain a suitable business model. Why? Refer back to my original question: "What are you selling?" If you're not selling experience, personality, warmth, awesome planning, and creativity then you lose. You can't sell music vs. music, gear vs. gear, hours vs. hours or cost vs. lower cost. Why? If you haven't figured that out yet, then you are not ready for the answer.

Answer: Because the only thing truly different is….YOU! Answer: TALENT! Answer: YOUR UNIQUE ABILITY TO DELIVER AN EXCEPTIONAL EVENING OF PROGRAMMING! Huh?

In my career, I've been a radio programmer, an Executive Producer for a MLB team and an NFL football franchise along with a few major colleges. I HAD to deliver unique, compelling programming each week that would satisfy the ravenous hunger of fans all around the country. By the way, don't even try to pull that BS "Well, that's different than a mobile DJ" or "You're in a studio all week long and you don't talk directly to people face to face!" Blah, Blah, Blah. You lose. While I may not be the best music director, I will be able to paint a verbal picture for my brides and grooms that will have them in the moment. I WILL win that battle.

Now, the tough part is imparting value to EVERY bride that contacts me. Will I win them all? NO. You know what? That's ok because they aren't my client to begin with. The brides that are searching for the lowest price wouldn't understand what I do and most likely would be pissed that I charged so much. Why? Because they don't understand the value of what they could have. Who's fault is that? Ours. Have you read any of Michael Ports books? Have you read Gary Vanyerchuck? You should.

How are you different than GM, McDonalds or Starbucks? How are you different than Disney? There is a saying in the burger war: The Battle of the Burger has nothing to do with food. It has to do with a pleasant dining experience!" That's amazing. That's not what you thought, I bet! Are you in the same business? Yes or No? What industry are you in? If you didn't answer entertainment and customer service, then you aren't committed to your business. It's what any great, solid, caring business owner would answer. What business are you in? The "working 45 hours a week at the garage, DJ on the weekend" business? I'm not picking on people who work in a garage, insert whatever business you wish. What's your focus? What's your goal? How TALENTED ARE YOU?

Can I help you?

Hit me. Hard.

Dave Winsor can be reached at davewinsor@discjockeynews.com.

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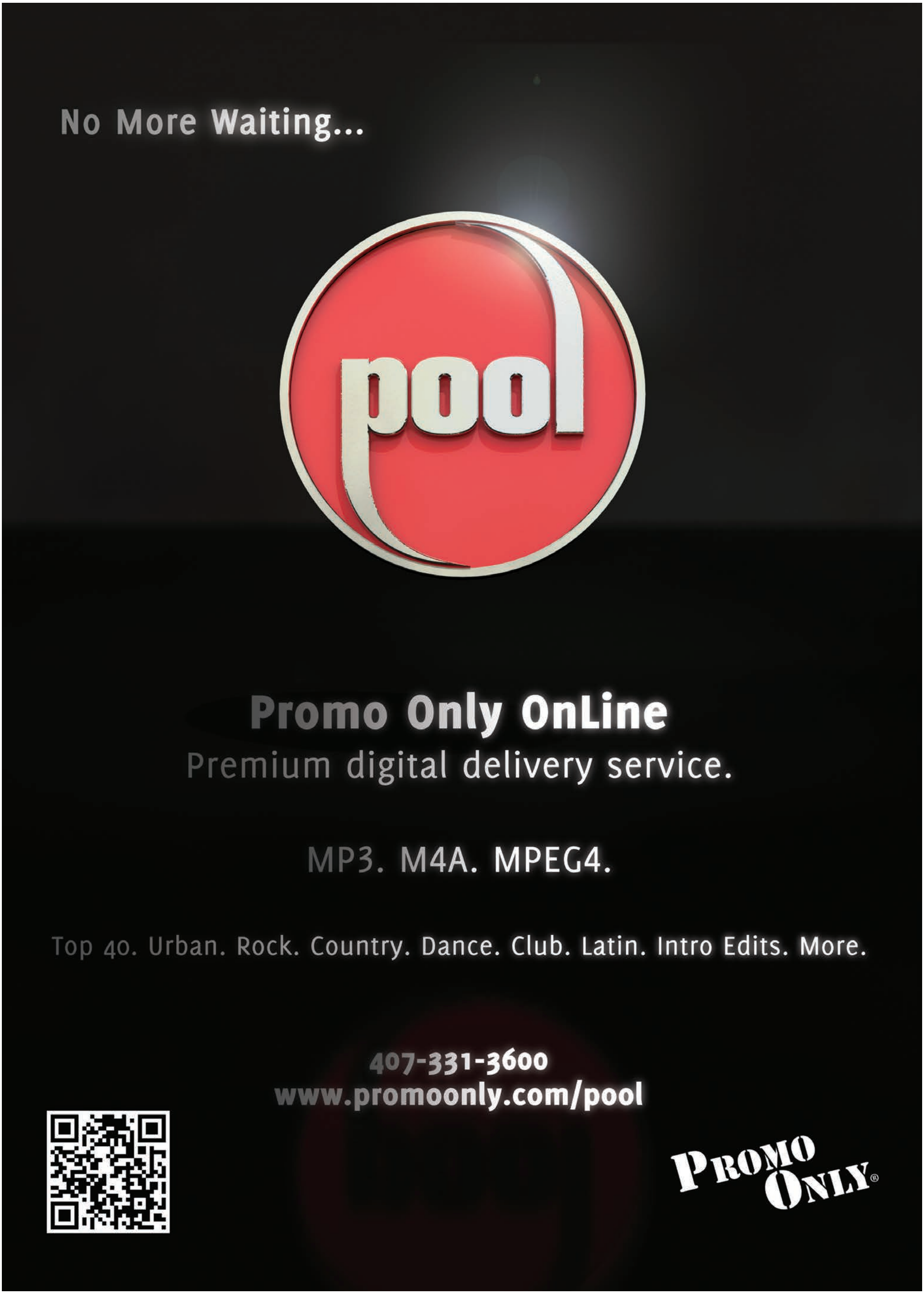
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