Disc Jockey News

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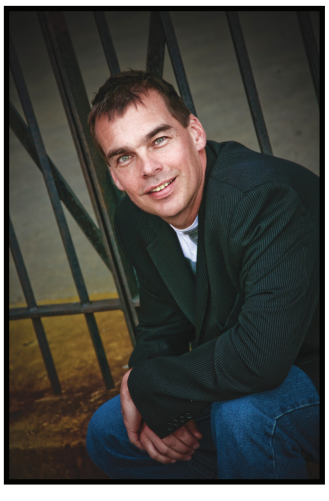
The Q Corner, Where Quality Meets Quantity

By Mike Walter

This is the fourth year that Robbie Britton has produced a show in Tennessee called ARMDJs. (Appalachian Regional Mobile Disc Jockey Symposium.) He had asked me to speak at it previously but due to prior commitments I hadn't been able to. But this year the stars aligned and I was able to make the trek south.



I looked into flying but I couldn't get a direct flight and I am loathe to switch planes. It's part of the pretentiousness that comes with living in the tri-state area. You can fly directly to almost anywhere from Newark, LaGuardia or Kennedy so I've gotten a little smug about the whole "connecting flight" thing. I mapped it out and told myself a 10 hour ride was doable. I'm happy to say it was and I rolled into Johnson City Tennessee Monday evening (June 20th) just in time to join a bunch of DJs at the "Pre-Party/Mixer" at a local sushi place. Sushi in land-locked Tennessee caused me pause but I went ahead and ordered a roll and I'm happy to say it was all good.

The seminars got started the next morning (at 10 am, by the way, which is the perfect time to start seminars at a DJ convention). Todd Mitchem kicked things off. I haven't seen Mitchem speak in years and I'm happy to report the old Todd is back. His seminar was the perfect way to kick off the week: entertaining, energetic and informative. Author and speaker Tom Haibeck was next on the stage. Mitchem is a tough act to follow and I didn't think Hailbeck was up to it. His content was a bit dry (*What DJs Can Do to Avoid the Wedding Toast from Hell*) and his delivery, while polished, was such a step back from Mitchem's energy and humor that I felt the air literally coming out of the room. Oh well, to quote Andrew "Dice" Clay from the movie Casual Sex, "They can't all be golden."

I noticed during day one that the seminars were wisely spaced out. I say wisely because I've been to too many conventions where seminars are back to back to back or even worse, overlapping in adjacent rooms. This gives the attendee no time to actually digest the material they've just heard or return any important business calls that may be coming in. There were two seminars scheduled each morning at ARMDJs and then two or three in the afternoon. That to me, is the perfect amount of content, with enough room between to breath.

Marcello on stage at ARMDJs. Photo by Steven Dail

I'll refrain from commenting on the checklist of the important things needed to ensure a successful wedding, but when it comes right down to it, if those who are behind the scenes are too close to the wedding couple (mother of bride, sister, etc.), or even worse, too disconnected from the wedding industry (club DJ, on-line ordained friend, etc.), mistakes will inevitably occur.

I leave my fellow industry colleagues with one last question to ponder: As a DJ entertainer, is it possible to be too involved or to care too much about your clients?

The speakers for Tuesday afternoon. My good friend Marcello led a seminar called "Energy" and then I spoke with my latest seminar "Running Your Multi-Op." I'd say we both gave tremendous, fast-paced and informative seminars but of course it's impossible for me to be unbiased about that. Suffice to say we got good feedback and Mr. Britton was complimentary (and didn't demand his speak fee back.)

As Tuesday's seminars came to an end Robbie Britton made a huge announcement about ARM DJs 5.0 next year. Robbie has secured author and social media expert Gary Vaynerchuk as the keynote speaker. Whether I'm booked to speak here next year or not, I know I'll be taking the trip to ARMDJs and so should you. If you haven't read Vaynerchuk's books you need to. He is, to social media, what Einstein is to physics.

One of the best things about attending conferences is the opportunity to break bread with some industry peers who you don't get to see that often. I had a wonderful dinner on Tuesday night with Marcello, Ben Miller, Todd Mitchem and Chasen Shaw. 5 DJs from 4 different states and markets. It was a stimulating conversation that wove seamlessly in and out of industry topics. I was reminded for the umpteenth time that attending conferences is always

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Don't Forget The Challah!

By Tamara Sims

Since we are in the heart of wedding season, I wanted to share some stories from recent weddings that may help you instill in your clients the importance of hiring professionals. For many brides and grooms, it is difficult to relinquish control on the most important day of their lives, so as the professional it is our job to educate them on why "letting go" for one day is truly in their best interest. We recently did a wedding where the groom wanted to be in control of everything on the wedding day, so much that he didn't even trust the venue's catering manager to order the Challah Bread for their Jewish Ceremony. Minutes before the Ceremony was to begin, the Groom pulls aside their DJ stating that he forgot to pick up the Challah he had ordered. The DJ quickly found the catering manager to discuss the dilemma and they ended up doing their "Ha Motzi" Blessing over a "pretzel roll" provided by the hall. I'm sure the Rabbi will enjoy telling this story for years to come. And by the way, is that Kosher?

Another recent wedding was plagued by too many family members trying to take control. The mother of the bride ran around the entire reception bragging about how this was "her" wedding since she planned everything and that she should probably become a wedding planner when this was all over. She had grand ideas at our initial sales meeting about having the bride's two brothers perform magic tricks at the tables during dinner (which I actually thought was creative and fun). Unfortunately, unlike a professional wedding planner, the mom did not prepare nor did she have a checklist or timeline; no one in the family remembered to bring the magic tricks to the reception. Later in the evening the brothers were planning to show a Photo montage as a surprise for their sister. They had worked on it for a month and guess what…they forgot the DVD at home. Where was mom "the wedding planner" now? Imagine if they actually hired a professional planner or had our company create the montage. Their guests certainly would have had many more great memories to take home with them from the wedding.

Important tip for brides and grooms: If your mom or siblings are not organized people, do NOT entrust them with coordinating your wedding! They will not miraculously become organized on your wedding day.

We had a bride and groom hire our lighting division and we always ask if they are in need of DJ Entertainment. They politely said they had already hired their favorite club DJ who they were going to fly in for the wedding reception. The week before the wedding the groom called to say that their DJ cancelled, but they found another club DJ to replace him. Fast forward to 2 days before the wedding when a frantic bride calls us to see if we have a master of ceremonies available on her wedding day. What happened? Apparently the replacement club DJ refused to do any announcements or even use a microphone as he was only hired to mix music. We luckily had someone available and the bride and groom were very appreciative. But who wants to have that kind of stress 2 days before the wedding…encourage your clients to hire a wedding professional!

We always do our best at our bride and groom planning meetings by providing a

Please feel free to share your comments with Tamara by visiting her Blog: http://www.something2dance2.com/blog/ or by e-mail tamara@something2dance2.com

Tamara is the Director of Sales and Marketing for Something 2 Dance 2 DJ Entertainment in Schaumburg, IL, which she proudly owns along with her husband Jay Sims. She has over 20 years experience in the wedding industry and loves creating wonderful wedding memories for her brides and grooms.

Connections

By Steve Moody

Don't you just LOVE when a prospective client speaks to you for the first time and they go on and on about what they are looking for without taking a breath? Seriously, if we listen closely enough, they will tell us everything that we need to know in order to close the sale. This extremely chatty personality type usually fits into the category of a socializer and, if handled correctly, they can be one of our easiest sales. So let's dig in and figure out how to nail the sale!

As a quick refresher, last month I began sharing principals from the amazing book The Platinum Rule by Tony Allesandra and Michael O'Connor. According to the book, there are 4 "Key Personality Types" that we come into contact with. Last month we began our journey with the scoop on the "Director" (the no-nonsense Donald Trump personality type). We are going to need to take everything that I shared with you about that personality type and throw it out the window, as this is a whole new ball game!

Let me start by saying that this is my favorite personality type to work with. Why? Well, I honestly believe that it's because this personality type is so similar to my own. I find it very easy to connect with these kind of folks, which leads to a much easier sale on my end.

Think back to the last time you spoke with a prospect that totally spilled everything, before you could even begin to pitch your service. It might be a bride calling to tell you how amazing she wants to look at her wedding and how she wants her guests to be completely blown away. Maybe a couple is throwing their own anniversary party just as an excuse to get the family and friends together for a great time. This may even be a couple that is throwing their own party in the backyard to show off their new swimming pool or deck! All of these prospects have one thing in common. They want to look like a superstar in front of their guests. Bottom Line! That's where we make the connection.

According to The Platinum Rule, the Socializer is usually extremely fun loving, enjoys being the center of attention, has tons of unorganized ideas, loves to talk about themselves and usually invites the entire world to be at their special events. You know the type, right?

If you have ever seen the television show The Office, Michael Scott would be the perfect example of the Socializer. The character, played by Steve Carell, is the complete and total text book example. No matter what the situation, he believes that everything revolves around him. He has tons of "great" ideas for the staff (that are never thought out or organized). Furthermore, Michael is always throwing some kind of party or special event so that he can be the center of attention. As I said, in many ways, portions of my own personality fall into this category. Portions mind you!

Well, now that we know what to look for, how do we connect? Super easy… let them talk! As Socializers are chatty, they will naturally gravitate to anyone who listens to them. If you show that you listen well, you may just become their new BFF. Remember, there is a difference between hearing and listening. So actively listen, take notes, then spice it up and repeat it all back to them as you sell your company.

As I said earlier, our sales approach should be totally different with the Socializer. These folks normally have a shorter attention span and don't wish to be bothered by the details. They don't care what type of lighting and equipment you are going to use. They just want to know that they will look like a rock star in front of their guests. They don't care about your charts, statistics and graphs as other clients do. They just want to know that they are going to have the time of their life. They don't care what you need to do on your end. They just want FUN FUN FUN!

Now, here's the kicker! Most times (like the Director), price is not an issue if you have done a good job of connecting with a Socializer. Don't you love it when price is not an issue! Socializers may originally call with a certain budget in mind...but after they have seen how awesome you can make them look

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No Scrubs

By Mitch Taylor

So I'm sitting in the Chicago OHare airport on my way to ARMDJs today when I see one of the cleaning ladies come by. On her shirt in red letters is one word...one word that struck me funny and odd at the same time. I actually couldn't believe what I saw. That one word was "scrub"

Scrub. Now seriously, what company in their right mind would have an employee wear that on the front of their uniform. What person with any sense of self-worth would want to wear that? I'm sure she's a woman like everyone else with her own set of problems, struggles and everyday challenges. I would even venture to say that she needs to keep working at that job as she needs the money. I would also be willing to bet that the owner of the company she works for doesn't go to work everyday with the word "scrub" emblazoned across his or her shirt pocket where their name should be.

Now the cleaning company who employed Mrs. Scrub could surely have come up with something a bit more imaginative and/or something that their employees should be proud to wear instead of embarrassed. What about "the cleaning wizard" or "Queen of Trash"?

What's in your name or title? We're in the fun business. My good friend Brian Kelm of Brian Kelm Productions in Madison, WI calls himself the Wedding Dream Maker. I'm a Wedding Entertainment Director (that one you have to earn, visit WedGuild.com for more info.

What's your title and what does it say about you? Your title should reflect your style and how you handle yourself. It should be representative of your company and the level of service you try to provide. Think clients don't care about your title...that it's meaningless? Think again. EVERYTHING about your company and you communicates a message to your prospective client. Where do you think I came up with the idea for this article?

Take time now to get creative. Ask your past clients how they would describe your services and what you offer. Better yet, go through your past year of evaluations and write down all of the descriptive words that your clients use to talk about your services and see which one comes up the most, 2nd most and 3rd most. There you have it.... there's your new, FUN, creative title. Now be sure to LIVE that title everyday in every way. You've earned it.

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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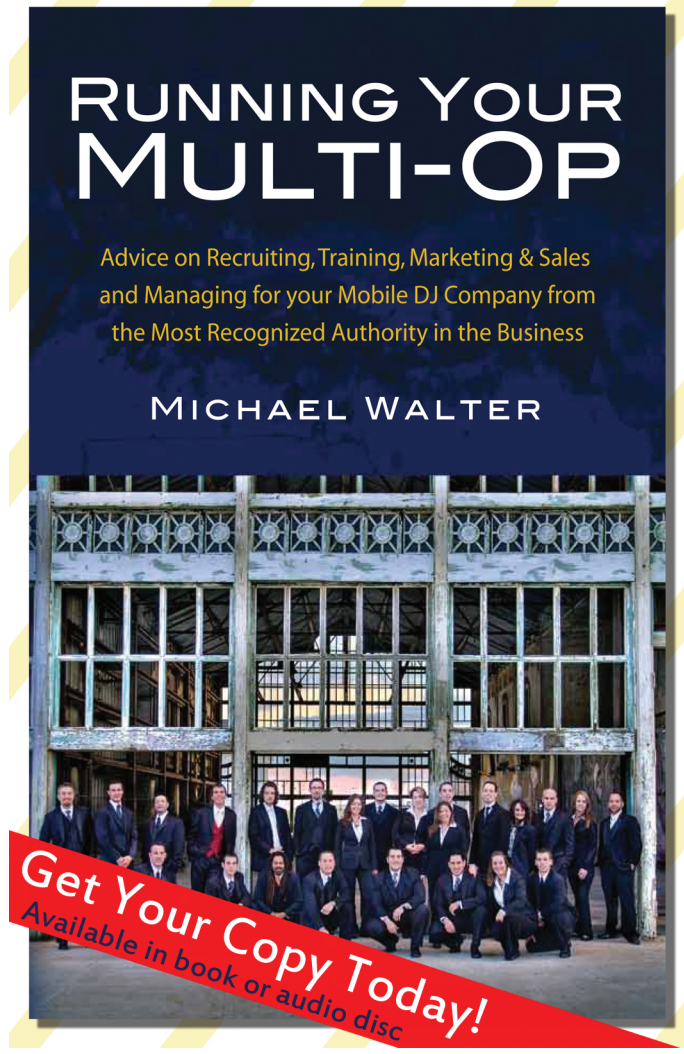

"If there was a college course of study for running an ethical multi-op DJ company, this would be the text book."
Beau Kramer - Kramer Entertainment

"All of the nuggets are delivered with enough real world experience and wit to keep the reader engaged."
Marcello Pedalino - MMP Entertainment

"Mike's book is GREAT and packed full of tips, insights, tricks and information that will help you improve your business regardless if you are a single or multi system company."
Mitch Taylor - Taylored Weddings

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Starting From Scratch

By Jeff Richards

Starting from scratch is a monthly column that will help those new to the Disc Jockey industry. Each article will cover what it takes to be a successful mobile DJ. Today's topic: hints and tips for the wedding party.

Here are more great hints and tips that I have gathered over my 30 years which I would print out and typically give to my bride and groom who would then give copies to their wedding party. With this the wedding party will know exactly what the bride and groom expect from them so that there is no confusion.

1) Never upstage the bride and groom! This is their day and you need to respect their feelings and dreams for their day. When giving toasts, do not say anything that could be embarrassing, hurtful or inappropriate. Keep it light, happy and supportive to both of them. This special day is about them and not you, so be respectful, helpful and perfectly pleasant the entire day. Be on time for rehearsals, fittings and all events you are involved with. Whatever you do, do not make either of them late for their special day. Be prepared and be considerate to their fragile state of mind. Nerves are delicate and feelings can easily be hurt.

2) Pay Attention: When you attend the rehearsal pay close attention to everything going on. Be quiet and listen to instructions and if you have a question don't be afraid to ask. Your first piece of business at the reception is to be part of a grand introduction so pay attention to the DJ for important information of what is about to take place, how to act, where to walk and what will happen. This will make the introductions flow smoother and not make you look like you're out of place or a complete idiot. There will be times that you will be needed to help facilitate particular portions of the evening. You will be asked to participate in the bridal party dance, The dollar dance or other special moments. Stay close to the dance floor and when called upon, immediately stop what you are doing and take care of what is needed. Sometimes the bride and groom will be very busy and not be aware of what is going on. Help them by keeping them focused on what is needed by being their eyes and ears. Keep them on track and on time. Remember to have fun but do not be obnoxious or a hindrance to the evening.

3) Act appropriately: The dance is just that, a dance: don't act like you're on "Dancing with the Stars" It's alright to have fun dancing but do not take over the dance floor where people leave the area or stop to watch you shake your booty. Please be respectful of all the guests and refrain from sexual, suggestive or inappropriate dancing that may cause guests to be embarrassed or uncomfortable.

Be cautious around children, they copy what they see and may do these inappropriate moves later, such as in school. This is a memorable, beautiful once-in-a-lifetime day, not "Weddings Gone Wild."

4) Don't try to run the show: This is the bride and grooms big day and they have planned out many special moments, events and a specific play list with the DJ which may include not playing a favorite song of yours. It is alright to request a song or two with the DJ but do not get upset if they make you wait or do not play it at all. The DJ is working with an agenda, time restraints, play lists along with their ability to read the crowd. They need to be able to mix the right songs at the right times and create a flow to the dance. The song you selected may not fit in with the schedule of music at that moment or may be a song that they feel from experience, might not work to keep the dance floor full and having fun. Continuing to ask for the same song over and over will not get it played sooner; it may even cause the DJ to NOT play the song due to the aggravation of dealing with you. Be kind to the DJ and I'm sure they will play it when it fits into the programming.

5) Don't get drunk! Some people can't handle alcohol well and become angry, belligerent or ill. This is not a pleasant sight to see and will upset the bride and groom. Know your limits and stick to them. It's alright to have a drink or two but you never want to begin slurring your speech or stumbling around. More fights start and friendships end due to wedding party guests getting drunk and doing something they regret later. Be especially careful if you are taking any kind of medication. The mixing of drugs and alcohol can have terrible side effects. Never drink on an empty stomach and NEVER drink before the wedding vows are taken.

6) Do not try to get the bride and groom drunk! This can completely ruin the event and can cause problems later with your friendships. Coercing the bride and groom to have a drink may not seem like a big deal, but if several others have done the same thing the alcohol does add up. They may not be keeping track of their alcohol intake, which will lead to troubles. Make sure that they have food in their stomach at all times and are switching between alcohol and non-alcoholic beverages during the course of the day.

7) Just have fun! If you're not having fun, neither will the guests. If you're smiling, laughing and dancing that is what all the guests will be doing. The guests will immediately know if something is wrong and if you are not happy and this can cause tension amongst all of the guests.

Have fun on the dance floor, talking with the guests and sharing the moments with the newlyweds. This day will happen so fast and you don't want to miss out on the experience. Be pleasant to all the wedding vendors during the course of the night. If you have a problem with one that is minor, pleasantly speak with that vendor out of the view of the guests and hopefully everything will resolve itself. It is easier to get a vendor to work with you and do it your way if you treat them with respect and kindness. You don't want to cause any more troubles for the bride and groom. Humans have a tendency to react the opposite way then you want when confronted with anger or severe tension. Listen to their reasons for doing what they are doing. It could be that with the experience they have and/or knowledge about the situation that you may not be unaware of, is their reasons for what they did. There are always two sides to every story.

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

Mastermind

By Dean C. Carlson

Well I have officially owned my business for a year and a half now. And I have to say, it is not where I would like it to be yet. The big question is why?

After all I have been DJing for 23 years now and have taken numerous performance training classes, so that can't be it. Not to say I am an awesome performer as I can always learn and improve things, but I can hold my own at this stage of the game.

I have also worked at a large multi op for almost 7 years booking almost 500 events a year and close to 600 on our best year. So I know how to sell and promote my business. This leads me to probably the number one problem for single op business out there, accountability.

While working at the multi-op I knew if I didn't make numbers I could be fired, thus I was always accountable to someone. In fact we had weekly meetings to keep me on task. And as much as I hated those meetings it helped keep my eye on the prize.

But now as I work out of my home, I find myself easily distracted. My x-box is just behind me and there always seems to be something on the TV. Or my dad calls me and needs my help with this project or that. I want to stop living show to show and start living a better life. Yet….

I have said it before and I will continue to say it, if you don't have a complete grasp on everything that goes on in your personal life and business then there is no way for you to understand how to change it. Personally I need to continually monitor where my personal life and business are at or bad things can happen.

Lucky for me I have several friends who are trying to make a go at it in business, and they have attended some of the same seminars I have attended from a company called Klemmer and Associates. As you advance through their system one of the things they recommend is a mastermind group. A mastermind group is a set of people who all share at least some values between them, and also that have the desire to help others achieve goals.

Now over the last year or so I have had friends whom I call once a week and chat about what my dreams and desires are, but nothing set up formally. And obviously that didn't have the desired effect on my business I wanted. So when my friend Barb suggested we form a mastermind group I was all over it.

Now in our group the only requirement is that you own your own business. There are five of us currently and for the sake of time in a group if you are considering such a group, you might want to keep it this size as it can easily take 30-45 minutes just with this number. And you don't want to have a group that is using valuable time.

For our first teleconference we simply had to write down 3-4 goals that we would like the group to help us achieve. At least one business and one personal goal. We shared these goals and our group mediator took all the info down and then emailed us all everyone's goals.

For our goals we used the S.M.A.R.T. system. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely. I can say that a lot of people whom I have talked about goals with before, don't use a system like this, which is unfortunate. Some people love to set BHAGS (Big Harry Audacious Goals) with no idea how to make them happen. This did happen during our first meeting and because of the S.M.A.R.T. system we were able to address what usually makes goals unattainable.

From personal experience every goal you set and don't make does more damage than good. You are much better off setting smaller more attainable goals and get some momentum going in your life. This is not to say that having a BHAG is bad, just remember the word Realist when setting goals. The beauty of a mastermind group is how other people can help you see all the small steps it takes to make one giant leap.

With goals in hand we next started the accountability part of our mastermind group. This is where we check and see how much progress you are making on said goals. We never tear people down in our group for not making progress, another great aspect of a mastermind group. Instead we offer assistance and cheer each other on towards reaching that goal.

Another great aspect of a mastermind group is if your aren't making your goals work, let 5 people dissect what's really going on and see if we can find what is holding you back. And chances are good that someone in the group can help somehow.

In our group I am the only one who owns a DJ company. And although my challenges might be different than say someone who owns a Market America business, chances are good that a fresh set of eyes might see something I have missed.

My goals this year were to get 5 more Saturday bookings for this year, and loose 30 lbs all by September 1st. When I check in on Tuesday mornings, I talk about what leads I have gotten and how have I handled them, or maybe how I am not getting leads and this is my form of promotion. This opens the door for discussion. I also give an update on my weight, (I have lost 10 lbs already) I am already looking at another couple of goals I can add to that list like a real vacation.

If you are a single op or a multi-op owner how do you make that happen? Do you have a system in place to help you achieve your goals? Maybe you don't even have goals written down. I urge you to stop everything you are doing today, and write down some goals, and put them on paper and keep them in your purse or wallet. Look at them every day, and find someone or a group to keep you accountable. You might be amazed at the difference in your life after just one year of this. Good Luck and Great Shows!

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

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at their event… they are willing to pay for it. Once they see the name in lights monogram, the dancing under stars effect, the uplighting, etc.., they just have to have it at their event! They want their celebration to be better than anything else their guests have seen. Looking back at Michael Scott, time and again the details never mattered. Whether he was planning a company party, ordering supplies or any other project he just wanted it done fast and big! He was always over budget.

In my own personal experiences with Socializers , I have found that it is best to stay away from logistics. It is all about the Razzle Dazzle! Most times these are the folks that won't take the time to read things like your WeddingWire reviews.. but may look to see how many reviews you have and look at your average rating. Marketing materials like super short video logs with testimonials are much more up their alley.

Furthermore, in my personal sales presentation for Socializers I started hitting several key phrases and ideas. I let them know how they will be the star at the office after their company's holiday party. I share that their wedding reception will be the talk of the town when it is all said and done. How their event will be the main topic of conversation at every family function for years to come. Most importantly, I let them know that they will walk out looking like a million bucks. These are the types of things that this particular personality types longs to hear. To other personality types these details are so unimportant but to Socializers they are crucial.

Again, after reading The Platinum Rule and learning about all of these key personality types, I took the time to write down some notes for the Socializer and have kept them right next to my office phone. It has helped more than you can ever imagine. The Socializer can be one of the easiest personalities to sell to if you can make that initial connection! I will be back next month with the scoop on how to alter your presentation to better match the "Relator". No this is not a person who sells real estate, that's a realtor.

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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worth the travel and expense involved. If you're ever on the fence about attending an industry event, my advice is to buck up and go. If you make sure to pack the right attitude you'll never regret it.

One of the unique features of the ARMDJs events is their "Meet and Greet Jam" which took place on Tuesday night. As if to prove my point that musicians make great DJs, the "Jam" features conference attendees who have brought their instruments and literally jam the night away. I was quite impressed at how tight they sounded especially considering they don't rehearse together. Kudos to the band: Brian Harris on drums, Don Larsen on bass, Randy Carroll on guitar, Ed Frank on rhythm guitar, Louie Londono on keyboards and Stacie Carroll doing a majority of the singing. I understand others sat in as well and there were a myriad of singers throughout the night, so if I missed any musicians (or musician-wannabes) my bad.

ARMDJs band. Photo by Steven Dail

Wednesday morning began early with Rick Brewer speaking on marketing at 8 am. Rick's seminar was a little slow to get started and then just as he seemed to be hitting stride, bam, the lights went out. This wasn't just any power outage either though, apparently a transformer had blown and the entire complex was out. The room we were in had emergency lighting and I give Rick credit for continuing his seminar with no sound or projector for his power point. But even more credit goes to show producer Robbie Britton. He got a generator from somewhere and had sound and one of the projectors going again inside of 20 minutes. I was impressed at Britton's poise under pressure.

Shea's master speaking at ARMDJs. Photo by Steven Dail

Peter Merry also spoke on Wednesday morning with a new seminar called "Showcasing Your Value." I've seen Peter speak so often and am always impressed with his content and delivery. This new presentation is all about sales and Peter does a great job of showing how he commands such a high dollar for his services. David Louis provided the next seminar before lunch. "Who Have You Helped Today" was his first seminar ever for our industry and I'm happy to say he was polished and his content was good

Unfortunately, I had to leave at lunch on Wednesday and wound up missing seminars by Patrick Henry (a Gitomer Certified Speaker), Larry Williams and Michael Port. I've spoken to a few attendees who tell me those last three seminars were awesome which means that the content at ARM DJs 4.0 was just about the best you could ever expect at a DJ convention. There is something about these smaller, regional shows that I really just love to be a part of. I give Robbie Britton a ton of credit for organizing such an awesome event. And I like I've said, I've already got June 19th and 20th circled on my calendar for 2012. I hope he invites me back to speak but if not, I'll be there the whole time as an attendee. Although next year, I think I'll fly.

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.

Guest Safety Must Be Priority One!

By Ron Ruth

Last month I wrote about a reception where I was performing that was evacuated due to tornado warnings. That type of incident was my first in 20 years. But, danger passed, the party resumed and the bride and groom had a happy ending to their special day. It was still a great lesson in the importance of guest safety. I wrote that article on the Thursday following the event.

Two days later, Saturday, May 28th, I was working with a couple on their wedding ceremony and reception. Both functions were in the same venue and in the same ballroom. Unlike the prior weekend, it was a beautiful day.

The bride and groom, Greg and Amanda, are extremely athletic. They met playing kick-ball (Yeah! There really are adult leagues! Go figure.). They both play soccer and volleyball on a weekly basis. The bride is even the kicker for the Kansas City Storm, a women's semi-pro football team. The point is that they are both physically fit.

The day got off to a great start. The wedding party was on time for their photographs prior to the ceremony and they all joined the 'nearlyweds' for a trolley ride around the city for location shots. There was little alcohol consumption along the way and everyone returned in plenty of time for the "I do's." There was no reason to think anything "bad" was on the horizon.

The ceremony came off without a hitch. Greg nd Amanda were happy and laughing and having a wonderful time with their guests and their two friends who performed as officiates. All was right with the world.

The venue "flipped" the room while the newlyweds socialized with their family and friends in another area. Both had little alcohol to drink and the mood was still very light and carefree.

Once the guests were seated, Greg, Amanda and the wedding party were introduced and everyone sat down to dinner. A short time later I looked out from my set-up area and saw that the bride was no longer sitting at her table. No big thing.

As dinner was about to conclude, I went to Greg and suggested that we find his bride and move ahead with the formalities. At that moment, he wasn't really sure where she had gone, either. As we looked together, the venue manager stopped us outside the "bride's room" and told us that Amanda was not feeling well and that we might want to give her a few more minutes. Again, no big thing, so I thought.

After a 15-20 minute delay, Greg came to me and said that Amanda needed more time. We agreed that I would go ahead and open the dance floor to the guests and we would get to the formalities when she was feeling better.

For the next 2 hours or so, Greg came back to me a number of times to say that they would do some, but not all of their formalities, reducing the number with every visit. Each time I prepared to move forward, I was advised that Amanda was not available. No worries. The guests stayed and continued to party…even though the bride had not been seen for most of the evening.

By 10:00 p.m. it was fairly evident that Amanda and Greg would not be participating in any of their formalities. Surprisingly, the guests had not really noticed the bride's absence and the party went on.

Finally, at about 11:00 p.m., Greg and Amanda made their way back into the ballroom. Amanda had traded her wedding gown for a pull over shirt and track shorts. They took a seat in chairs placed on the dance floor so they could participate in toasts delivered by the best man and maid of honor. Shortly after, they left the reception and their guests began to dwindle.

The next day I learned that the bride had suffered from a sudden drop in blood sugar from not eating anything earlier in the day. She also experienced a slight anxiety attack in the process. Between the two, she felt nauseous, light headed, anxious and was sweating. Amanda described her symptoms as flu-like. But unlike the flu, what happened to her may have been easily prevented.

Like the tornado situation a week earlier that made me realize how important guest safety remains, Amanda's inability to enjoy her one and only wedding reception prompted me to find out how you and I can help assure that her incredible disappointment is never repeated. No bride or groom should ever miss the fun and memories of their wedding day

After all, as wedding professionals, do we not have a certain responsibility to care about our client's well-being? Shouldn't we be able to advise them on how best to take care of themselves on their wedding day so they can enjoy every moment?

I took my questions to a dietician. I asked her to share what advice we can provide to our couples and here's what she suggests:

As difficult as it may be on one's wedding day, brides and grooms should never let their nerves dissuade them from eating. The dietician adds that combining protein and carbohydrates are the best bet to prevent an unexpected drop in blood sugar. Those food items can include cheese, eggs, toast, yogurt or something as simple as crackers and peanut butter. They foods need not be consumed in large quantities and can be spread out through the day as small meals or snacks. Eating a half of a sandwich is still better than not eating anything at all.

She went on to say that brides and grooms should avoid sugared drinks, candy and alcohol. Water, make that lots of water, should be the drink of choice leading up to the wedding ceremony and reception.

With Greg and Amanda's permission, I've shared their story with a few of my couples that have weddings scheduled with me. As unlikely as it is that their situation will ever happen again, I do not want any couple to suffer the same letdown. Soon, my planning packets will also include a short list of nutritional foods that can be, should be, consumed on their wedding day.

The lessons that can be learned from this experience and the one I wrote about last month, is that our area of responsibility to our clients is ever changing and growing. It is incumbent upon us to evolve accordingly and to continually look for ways, beyond our performance, to help our brides and grooms enjoy a wedding day experience that exceeds their every expectation. This extra care is what separates true wedding professionals from those that call themselves "vendors." It is also what elevates the perception of our industry as a whole. .

Ron Ruth is the owner of Ron Ruth Wedding Entertainment in Kansas City, a WED Guild™ member and a self-professed "Disney Geek." As a frequent visitor of Walt Disney World and as a student of Disney's best practices for business excellence, Ron speaks to wedding and service industry professionals on "Disney's 3 Keys To Success," a presentation that demonstrates the steps for becoming a business leader in innovation and customer service. Ron can be reached at 816-224-4487 or via email at ronruth@discjockeynews.com.

Opps, I Did It Again...

By Jake Palmer

We've all been there. We've all done it. It doesn't matter if you own your own company or work for a super multi-op company. We've all found ourselves looking over music requests and dance information for an event and thought… "Why am I doing this show?" Who knows how it happens, it just does. You get greedy, bad communication with the client, the guy who does the scheduling for the big company you work for just didn't pay attention… that's a topic for another article.

So here you are about to go into an event that isn't really a great "fit" for you and your style. Now what? You could just tub the show, just mail it in and hope no one notices... but that's not you. So you need to find a way to make lemons out of lemonade.

Yes, I know, it's a little cliché. Ok, a lot cliché. We all know that we have to make the best of every bad situation, we don't just give up, and this is what makes you better than the other guy down the street. The question is how? This same thing happened to me just two weekends ago. I have been a mobile DJ since 1986, and yes, I booked a wedding that was a terrible fit for me, and what I do well. Yet, by the time dinner was over I handed out 4 business cards and had the wedding planner ask, if I mind her referring me to some of her other clients. Ok, now that I am done tooting my preverbal horn…

Here's what I did.

Despite the strict instructions to not take requests from the guests at the wedding, I still had to find a way to entertain these people and get them on the dance floor. So first I went back to the basics, sometimes as flamboyant, outspoken, entertainers we have a tendency to OVERDO things. This wedding a musically a big challenge for me, so I knew I needed to use my other tools. I wanted to create as much entertainment during dinner as I could. This way I took the music out of the equation, and put ME into it. One of the things about weddings I have learned, is that during the reception and dinner you are really "earning the trust" of the guests. As the DJ we have an odd relationship with the guests, we are trying to get a read on them and they are trying to figure out if they trust us. They know that in a few hours we are going to want them to wear a necktie as a headband, and make a complete fool of themselves as people snap pictures for facebook and other humiliating reminders. This requires trust. Earn their trust by making them feel comfortable, guide the guests through the events of the day, so they feel included, and are aware of what is happening.

Comfortable guest will stay at your event longer, and loosen up faster. This means they will dance more, and worry less. I also suggest your create a template or guide line for your shows (weddings especially), so now YOU know what is happening and where you are going next. This template should NOT be set in stone, be willing to change it, keep it flexible, use it as a guideline, not a rule. This will also help you plan the event timeline as well. The point is, when life hands out lemons, some people want lemon-aide, others want tequila and salt. If you find yourself in the group that isn't quite right for you, don't give up. You just might find, your handing out cards.

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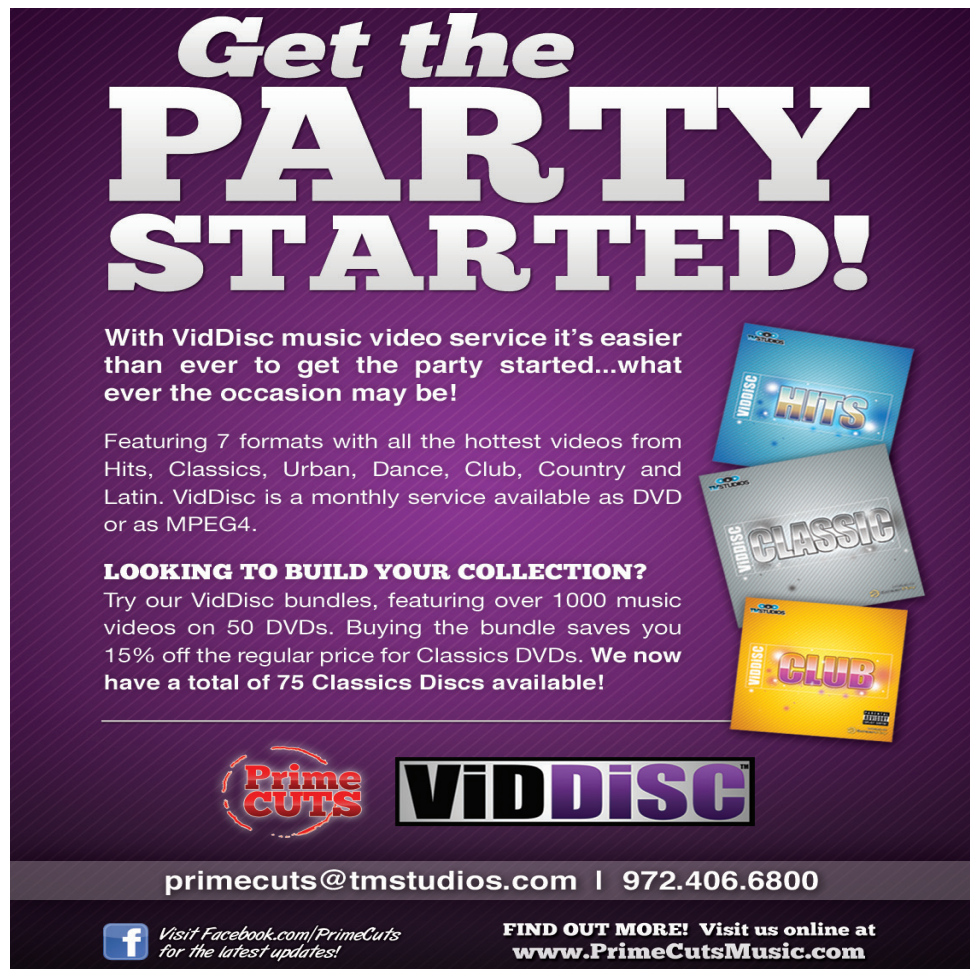

The Illusion Of The First Time

By Carr Hagerman

The entire enterprise of national media along with a cacophony of political pundits have been hammering on, at infinitum, the economy and tough this recession has been. It leaves one to believe we're all going in the sink and circling the drain. Certainly, it's true; the economy has taken a big old dump that has affected a lot of people in adverse ways. But, it is equally true that opportunity and exchange are both alive and well and, in many cases thriving.

We all want to have our businesses booming, have every possible date booked, work with great clients writing us the big checks, and the newest technology shipped right to our front door (for free, if possible). But that is a wish to build a dream on, it's the factory setting of the success mindset, and we all want THAT! It is also true that the economy is frequently an unreliable and drunken sot stumbling about, making mischief, and has proven to be unpredictable.

But if bad economies and tough times are the rule, than why are some companies, large and small, thriving, while others are spoon feeding themselves from their shrinking bank accounts? The answer is that good businesses have the game figured out, and though money is a bit tighter, they're still growing, even if that growth is modest What is the trick? In our line of work, the answer is should be bloody simple. It's connection, baby, it's all about connection.

Successful business isn't built on the shoulders of great service alone. Yeah, yeah, I know, you need to be service oriented to survive, but that's not enough, that's normal. The guys that wrote the book "Funky Business" put it straight up, "In a winner takes all world, normal equals nothing." That's right, providing good service is important, it's just not enough anymore, and it doesn't amount to much.

In order to stand tall, you have to really stand out. This isn't a gimmick, but a real cultivation of your abilities to make authentic and whole connections to what your customers want, and who they are. It means taking every moment you have to invest your attention into what story they want to have their event be about, and what this all means to them. You're really not in the disc jockey business as much as you're in the celebration business, and every aspect of that celebration matters to your customer, and must matter to you. Their event, and what they want, is normal business for you, but you've done this before, heard that song a million times, in fact you've heard it all before. But that thinking is the downward spiral, because the event or celebration isn't about you, and their event is anything but normal for them. This is a celebration, and celebrations are something out of normal!

To keep your energy fresh, and remain engaged, you must present the "illusion of the first time," a useful phrase coined by the legendary turn of the century actor William Gillette. Gillette was a consummate performer who understood that playing a roll repetitively, and knowing how the story would end, meant an actor might become overly mechanical and detached. He knew, that the first time was always the most vital, and therefore an actor would find utility in staying conscious, connected and fully aware while on stage in order to keep the whole thing fresh. So, one way to best your competition is to own your attention and stay connected in heart and mind to what your customers are doing, as if it were the first time, which for your clients, it is. Make every effort to be memorable, break away from normal and predictable. This will get people talking about you, because surprise and delight are key corners on the page of success. Do it!

Believe it or not, many people are still thriving in this cow crap economy because they know "times are tough" is just a dare, a provocation and opportunity to make their business better, more engaged, and less like the competition. It's not always easy, and it requires effort and endurance, but so is the life of the small business entrepreneur. You already have everything you need to beat the odds and win out over your competitors, and this economy, because you have that one big weapon your competitors do not possess, they don't have you.

Carr Hagerman is the author of "Top Performer: A Bold Approach To Sales And Service." (Hyperion). You can contact Carr at: carrhagerman@discjockeynews.com

Backing Away From The Plastic!

By Steve Beck

Earlier this year, I saw the light at the end of the tunnel. Unfortunately it was a financial train bearing down on my wife and me, about to run us over. I had heard other DJs talk about personal financial advisor Dave Ramsey, so I thought I'd check him out.

After reading one of his books and perusing his website, we signed up for his Financial Peace University classes. While I realize Ramsey's teachings aren't for everyone and some are put off by the occasional religious references Ramsey makes, I have to say his system is working for us. So far this year we've paid down over $9,000 in personal debt. Nice.

But why am I talking about this in a publication for disc jockeys? Easy answer. Because while we were working on our personal finances using Ramsey's teachings, I kept my DJ business as a separate entity and continued to operate it as I had previously. While driving to Tennessee for the ARMDJS conference, I decided I should apply the Ramsey system to my business as well. (A 12-hour drive gives you a LOT of time to think!)

I think this was a sensible decision. My business is a sole proprietorship, so any credit (and debt) of the business is really simply additional personal debt. The two credit cards I've used to finance purchases, education, travel, etc. were issued to me personally, not to the business based on its credit.

While my wife and I have made such a good start of paying down our personal debt, the same thing wasn't happening with my business. I've been spending money as fast as it's been coming in. Or faster! When I was working a full-time, salaried day job this situation was masked somewhat. Sure, I've been keeping my books for the business but I wasn't reviewing them often enough or thoroughly enough. Once that salary was gone, the effect became much more obvious.

Making the decision to get my business debt free and then keep it that way was not easy. I like new gear as much as the next DJ, and if you've been reading my columns you already know that I'm a HUGE proponent of education and training. My instinct is to go to every conference, read every book, listen to every CD and watch every DVD I can get my hands on. That attitude is going to have to change, at least for a while.

I'm going to have to be more selective about what conferences I attend. This year I've already been to Mobile Beat Las Vegas, ARMDJS, and a Disc Jockey News conclave… and I've already paid for another DJN conclave coming up in November. Can I add any more conferences this year? Probably not, and I might have to pare the list down further next year.

The same thing will happen with training. I've taken the MarBecca bronze level Love Story workshop and I'm in the MarBecca bronze level Master of Ceremonies workshop in July. I've also taken Bill Hermann's Entertainment Experience – twice! I've considered other training options, but they're going to have to wait a while as well.

I won't be so quick to jump on the next book, the next CD, or the next DVD either. I have to admit I've purchased some training aids that were not worth the money, but they were impulse purchases. I have a large enough training library now that I can keep myself busy reviewing the quality items I already have for the next year or two!

Going to a cash based business will force me to focus much more closely on cash flow, and it will force me to really think about and prioritize my purchases. If you don't need that, good for you! Getting rid of the plastic means I need to insure enough income to cover those expenses that are absolutely required to stay in business. A side benefit is that is forces me to seek out additional revenue to cover those "nice to have" items that previously would have gone on the Visa card.

I'm going to be forced to get better at budgeting, especially on the income side. It's a difficult thing for many people who don't have a regular paycheck that's the same every pay period. While it's helpful that most weddings are booked fairly well in advance, a lot of other jobs we get can come about very quickly. I suspect my budgeting process will become a lot more fluid, and I think I may have to switch from preparing an annual budget to quarterly budgeting.

It's going to be an interesting ride, because it requires a big change in attitude on my part. Luckily my wife is involved with my business and supportive of this new commitment. She's very good at getting me to justify expenses. She'll ask me why I want to make a purchase, what's the intended result of the purchase, and so on. She helps me see the difference between "we've got to have that" and "I'd like to have that" and now she'll be adding one more question: "How are you going to pay for that?"

I'll update you occasionally on how it's going.

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The Kids Are All Right

By Rob Peters

I once read an article once that was entitled "Everything I Needed To Know I Learned in Kindergarten." This series of articles has turned into my own version of "Everything I Needed To Know I Learned From Someone In Kindergarten." This month's column is going to be a variety of tips and ideas for kids parties.

One of the things I sometimes hear from other DJs when I tell them that I perform for kids is that they are concerned about their equipment, especially when it comes to performing outdoors and around kids. "Kidproofing" your setup and equipment is pretty easy to do and is common sense.

When setting up, start with looking at the area you will be performing in. If you are at a school, or an auditorium, if there is a stage, use it, as long as you can easily get on and off of it. Being on a stage gives you "star power" in the eyes of the child, and once you tell the kids that they can not come onto the stage, they normally will oblige. Set everything up on the stage and arrange your gear so that you can easily access everything you need to perform your show.

If you do not have the option of a stage, set up in an area where you can have space for your equipment and allow an adequate area for the kids to enjoy the show and dance. Establish a designated space for your performance and where you will set up your gear and equipment. Make sure you designate an area with enough space for the kids to enjoy your show. Blocking an area in front of your equipment with traffic cones is a good visual for the kids because you can instruct them that they can play, dance and enjoy your show from the area on the other side of the cones, and that they can come up to the cones, but not beyond them. You will find that you may have to repeat this a few times throughout your performance. Children are curious, and their curious nature will cause them to "forget" where the cones are. Asking a teacher or parent to stand by the cones and help keep the children where they belong will be helpful, because the children know and respect them as someone they know who is a grown up. They are more likely to listen to them when they tell the children to back up or move to where they belong (which again, is an area you have designated). This will also allow you to focus more on performing and entertaining, as opposed to being the "safety monitor."

Another key to "kidproofing" is using your common sense, such as taping down your cables and keeping items such as hula hoops and other items the kids will want to try and play with behind your table. Remember to control what the kids see and experience and keep to the format of your performance. If the kids see something that you are not ready to do, such as hula hoops, they can cause interruptions when you are performing. A child who sees hula hoops and wants to play with them is more likely to ask you repeatedly when you will be using them and what they are for. And they are more likely to ask you when you are trying to focus on a different element of your performance.

When performing kids parties, you may want to consider purchasing your own table. If you are traveling to someone's home to perform a kids party, your client is less likely to have a table for you to set up your equipment on. Having your own table can also be handy when you are performing other events too. If your children's entertainment service involves performing outdoors, it may be a good idea to purchase a portable canopy or tent (similar to the ones used by flea market dealers). They are fairly inexpensive and can help protect your gear (and you) from excessive sunlight and heat, as well as the moisture based weather elements.

During your show, you should be using a philosophy of "Do As I Do." If you are playing a dance song, and are JUST asking the kids to wave their hands in the air over their heads, you will get a response. But by actually waving your hands over your heads and asking the kids to wave their hands will create a better response. Kids respond better when they can HEAR what you are doing and SEE what you want them to do. Also, remember that you should look like you are enjoying what you are asking them to do, so put SMILE behind it. I have always been of the belief that if you look like you are having fun, your guests will have fun...and that applies to ANY event, not just performing to children.

When using the "Do as I Do" philosophy, you also want to avoid using directions that involve being too specific. Todd Mitchem taught me this idea in one of his training seminars and it DOES work, especially for children. For example, when you want your audience to move in a certain direction, instead of saying " step to the left", ask them to "move this way" and point and move to the left. Using a "follow me" approach will help avoid confusion and make instructing your audience easier because they will not be confused with hearing the direction. They will see what you want them to do and copy your movements.

Feel free to email me questions you have about performing for children. I will be happy to use these questions in future articles.

Happy Summer!

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Gardening And DJing.. Alike?

By Dave Winsor

You are actually in the gardening business.. You start out with a plan, then you get the plants, you stick them in the ground, nourish them and if all turns out ok, you'll harvest something great. Here is the problem: many times we plant corn and harvest radishes. How is that possible? Easy and here's how.

The plan is your clients wedding. The plants are the people. Your ability to create a unique and memorable wedding will nourish them and if you take care of all these things, they will give to you a bumper crop of goodwill and reviews. That's if you do a good job. Plant corn and harvest corn.

If you plant one thing and harvest another, you've missed something critical along the way. You weren't paying attention, you were confused about some direction or worse, you didn't care. The harvest you'll get from this garden will be bitter and confusing. The yield will be minimal and poisonous. You most likely will be overrun with weeds.

Why did I choose this analogy? Because it's a one to one relationship, people can understand it and it goes to show you that you can't take shortcuts. I also chose this topic because I was guilty of trying to trick the system. My clients count on me to "get it right" not some of the time, but ALL of the time. I really struggled with this concept when I first started in the DJ business. I would meet with clients and I "thought" that I was really paying attention to their needs and desires, but I wasn't. It became clear during one wedding when a bride came up to me and asked me, in a panic if I remembered a certain song and request that we had talked about during our planning meeting. I swallowed hard and tried to remember, but I couldn't. I just hadn't cared enough. I was reaping a bitter harvest. I have since changed my ways.

I take detailed notes regarding everything we will be doing. I invested in the tools needed to make sure I don't miss another thing. I bought a "smart pen" that records what I write and what is being said as I'm taking notes. That way I can revisit the meeting from both the written perspective but I can also click on the document and hear the conversation. It really is amazing. But the payoff is I don't have any excuses anymore. If someone disputes my recollection, I can provide them with rock solid evidence to the contrary. That is a great feeling. So, I guess technology and gardening go together.

Can you see the point? You get a return on your planning and patience. You get a return that will either benefit you with word of mouth referrals and more business or people will spread the word that you're to be avoided like the plaque. Which do you wish for? You can't fool mother nature and you can't fool people. Well, you actually can fool "some" people but in the end, it will be "YOU" who is the fool.

Plan, plant, nourish and harvest. It's all up to you.

Thanks for your thoughts and ideas for future columns.

Dave

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

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Time: How Are You Using It?

By Kelly Suit

Do you ever have an intention of doing one thing and then for one reason or another you wind up dong something else? That's what happened to me prior to writing this month's article. I had intended to write about

my recent trip to Infocomm, but while writing the article I got writers block. I knew what I wanted to share, but for some reason it wasn't coming out in my writing. I've been having some things in my personal life that are causing me to reflect so I figured it was just that I had too much on my mind and I shelved the article (at least for this month).

So instead I'm going to share my personal epiphany that has been revealed to me in the light of some reason events in my life. I'm 40 years old and for those that haven't gotten here yet, it's a time where some men start taking stock of their lives. This happens at many different milestone dates in your life, but to me 40 is in many ways the halfway point. Not necessarily in longevity, but in the reality of where your dreams and goals can be measured. I have no illusion that I'll become a famous athlete, movie star, or rock star anymore (all dreams of my youth), but being realistic about what the future might hold, am I on the right track?

In my youth I thought that if I could do something I loved for a career that would be my definition of success. Those ideals went out the window when I got married and started a family. Not saying that isn't important! To the contrary I think, as I get older, that is even truer then when I was younger. Responsibilities have a way of changing your opinions. In my later 20s and through my 30s I was increasingly stressed because my focus had changed to money and things being the measuring stick of success. I was working very hard trying to grow a business that would allow me the ability to give my family every reasonable comfort and opportunity.

I noticed that over the past couple years that the stress of trying to accomplish as much as I can (in the face of an economy that has been unforgiving), I've been disillusioned. I've had physical and emotional push back from my body and mind and I struggled trying to figure it all out on my own. I finally understand why so many people are on medication trying to regulate their emotions and health.

Ok, so that brings me to some recent events in my life that put things into perspective. First is the predicted "rapture" that was suppose to happen on May 21st. As a Christian I knew that it wouldn't happen that day and I'm not going into all the reasons in this article, but all that exposure did was get me thinking. I was working that night doing a Prom, it was a great event and we rocked the event as usual. The thing that stuck with me was if this was it, was this how I wanted to spend my final moments on Earth?

Next up, my father's health is deteriorating and while he could live for another couple years, that likelihood is that it will pass sooner rather then later. I keep thinking that at the end of his life, what is he got to show for it? If we held a funeral for him (which we won't), less then a dozen people that would show up. He invested much of his life in his own happiness and at the end it seems very hallow. I know for a fact not making enough money or working harder aren't his regrets.

Finally I was at church listening to my pastor's sermon. One of the ironies of going to church is that everyone can get something out of the sermon and often it's complete different for each person. The thing that stuck with me from his sermon was his personal account of something that happened in his own life. He described how unbelievably busy his life had become when he was younger that he actually wound up in the hospital thinking he was dying. While the story was riveting, the one thing about the story that hit me was that there was only his family and one friend in the waiting room. He was involved in so many important organizations including President of his local chamber of commerce, mayor of the town he lived, president of the bank he worked at, and involved in so many civic organizations that I forget them all.

He closed with if he had died that day, all of those organizations would have gone on without him. His work would have continued on without him. He's sure that he would have been missed, but all of those places that he invested all of his time and energy would move on quickly and it would be like he was never there. The place where his passing would have been devastating was to the people that loved him, ironically the place that he had the least amount of time and invested the least amount of his energy.

I've never felt like I've cheated my family and friends of my time and energy. I also never felt that I had my priorities out of balance since I think that working is important. I still feel that work needs to be a priority, but if you give your clients your absolute best, if you leave it all on the floor for them each and every event, are you doing the same for the people that count the most and need you the most? I don't believe that you can live your life each and every day like it's your last. If I knew tomorrow was my last day I can promise you I'd try to fit in as much as I could and I don't have the energy to keep that pace up for very long.

I do think that you should live each day keeping your priorities in focus. Give those that matter the most your best. Never let an opportunity go by to show the people you love how much the mean to you. Block out time from your busy schedule and invest it in the people that would be by your bedside when your time comes. The last 40 years flew by in what seams like a blink of the eye, I'm going to capture as much time to spend with my loved ones as I can and I'm going to encourage you to do the same!

Kelly Suit can be reached at kellysuit@discjockeynews.com.

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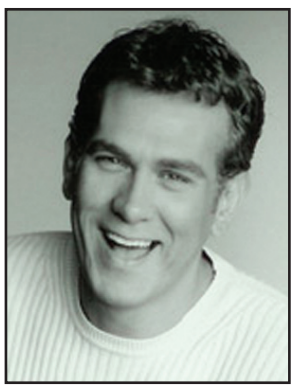
Don't Be Fooled By Other Associations Slick Presentations

Power Up Partnerships By Becoming An EAGLE!

By Todd Mitchem

"5 Steps to a more results focused partnership with you and your clients"

Have you ever made a decision that you knew would impact every aspect of your life only to get about a month into that decision and say, "What was I thinking?" Not me. I go into things with my hair on fire and travelling at two hundred miles per-hour. I lead with instinct, gut or whatever name you have for that little voice inside you that constantly says, "GO THAT WAY!" It is a strange life to be the one people look at with eyes of curiosity mixed with a little fear, but it has always worked for me.



What drives us to truly learn as humans is remarkably not long Power Point presentations or catchy phrases or even four hours of a training professional speaking at us about our behavior. Ultimately the driving force in unlocking our human potential is experience.

When you were a child you did not learn to ride your bike because someone spent three days with you in a classroom showing elaborate presentations on the mechanics of the bicycle. You never went to seminars about how to unlock your inner rider. So how did you accomplish learning the seemingly daunting transformational skills necessary for riding a bike on your own? You just got on the darn bike and rode it. Certainly you often fell off, skinned up your knee and even crashed a time or two, but if you learned how to ride a bike you did so through experience. The transformational power of experiential learning is a container where anything is possible around the individual's own growth. Being a professional, an entertainer, and a business person, I always have my own sense of fearless accountability.

As with all of my businesses, Mitchem Interactive and my role as VP Business Development with Eagle's Flight, I have learned many lessons. As a performer I put the lessons on DVD, but here are some key lessons from my business to yours. Before you read on, remember to think of your self as a partner in all you do. With other vendors, with your audience, with your partner….everywhere!

What is a partner? Truly?

Being married for a while now and having three amazing kids I can say with certainty that a true partnership is complex. Regardless of it's complex ever changing nature however a true partnership needs one element that without it the whole partnership is doomed to failure. Transparent trust is an element my wife and I established early on. We live by it. Sometimes the day is messy with kids needs, our individual needs and the needs of all around us. There are days where we have rather challenging discussions. What we always agree on however is that we are partners fully engaged in the experience of marriage together. We share it all to keep the trust strong. In our marriage the saying is, "I appreciate all of you." Trust then is the base of, in my mind, all client/vendor partnerships.

Here is my complete list of E.A.G.L.E partnership principles:

1) Engage Transparent Trust – This is the foundational base of any partnership. When interacting clients or vendors come into it with your cards on the table. Instead of hiding facts, company relevance or the details of your needs -share them. If you are there to show how your company could help people meet their needs, you must get them to tell you the needs. If not you will be flying around in the dark. Eagles have great eyesight, but we are not psychic. There is only good that can come from mutual Transparent Trust. If you are not willing to build this foundation then don't allow the initial meeting to take place.

2) Assumptions No More! – Instead discover each other. Most of my first meetings with partner clients are spent in discovery. After all I need an intimate understanding of the company's history, team, leadership, needs, and challenges if I am to innovate solutions with you. Often the vendor can feel a little like a doctor with a closet full of remedies if the client would only tell the truth about the company's medical history. The lesson here for both vendor and client is to ask questions, discover and never assume anything. I don't want to put your leg in a cast if it's your head that hurts.

3) Get Flexible – "There is nothing more flexible than water and nothing more powerful." Flexibility is the key to success throughout business certainly most prevalent in the partnership between vendor and client. Often the complexity of human interactions causes us to stand our ground or not move from our point. Inflexibility is many times caused by a strong sense of ego. When your ego, or the need to be right, surpasses the need to get results in the partnership flexibility dies. When you engage the ego you are essentially Edging Greatness Out. In partnership, there is no win; there is only desired promised results or not. Be flexible in your approach to the other by listening and using phrases like, "yes and" instead of "I'm sorry but" When listening, imagine a chalkboard in your head. When a person starts speaking to you that chalkboard is blank. As they continue to speak imagine they are writing their intent of their words on the chalkboard. Then be flexible in your response based on the intent of their words.

4) Leap in for Results – Many times people just start talking. On the DJ side, it is usually because they want to get their service message across quickly. The vendor then works vehemently toward an information dump. On the client side the response is more about vague concepts designed to feel standard so as to not give away the challenges of that particular person. (See partnership rule 1) True vendor client partnership is different. In this level of interaction we only respond for results considering all of the other partnership principles, related context and needs. Leaping in for results literally means that you leap in when the time is right with a passion for achieving the desired outcome. Think about it this way, in every interaction both from DJ and client, you should be working to close to the next phase of the partnership. Client's can learn a great lesson here. For example, one of my clients called me to literally download EVERY initiative he had for the year to me. Then he said, "Tell me where you see Eagle's Flight helping here?" Now that is Leaping in for Results based on Transparent Trust!

5) Engage their Passion – We call this the heart of the partnership. What is it that makes the partner or client tick? Do they love baseball, food, family, or work itself? Whatever the passion, you as a partner must engage that passion. Get to them on their level. One of my partner clients at a multi-billion dollar organization loves to be involved in the process of developing programs. When her company was interested in using mine for a roll out to all of their ten thousand employees I kept reminding her that she would be involved in the process of developing the custom content. Her passion was ignited to say the least, thus creating a joyous experience working with her on the project. We could all feel her passion coming out in the work. Dare I say it made the project even more enjoyable?

So does this work? You better believe it does. This past two years alone my incoming sales revenue topped out in the millions, I watched our youngest son walk for the first time, my daughter got her first stitches, my wife and I took our first vacation in four years, I brought someone on my team who is becoming an Eagle and by using the partnership principles illustrated, my clients became something more than merely clients.

Through experience we learned to trust each other then ultimately we achieved amazing results. What will 2011/2012 hold for the economy, or business at large? All I know is what I can personally control…and I am certain that 2011/2012 will hold for me many more opportunities to make new partnerships, and to experience new ways to solve challenges for my existing clients and the thousands of DJs who buy my materials. The real question is what will the next couple of years hold for you? I hope this article gives you some insight into what is possible. After all what what we all really want is to become eagles not pigeons.

Go be an eagle!

Todd Mitchem is a Father, Husband, Seeker, Speaker, Trainer, and Entertainer. Mitchem Interactive includes DVDs, Audio/Video Downloads, and FREE Articles for the professional Mobile DJ http://www.mitcheminteractive.com

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Before You Start Your Own Business, Take This Entrepreneur Test

By Harvey Mackay

I have never met anyone who left his or her job, whether fired or voluntarily, who started his or her own business -- and regretted it. What these people always regret is not having done it sooner. This includes people who eventually failed and had to go back to work for someone else.

Afraid to try something new? Most of us are. But our regrets will invariably be for what we didn't do rather than for what we did.

So are you ready to be an entrepreneur? Do you have the right stuff? Before you take the plunge and start your own business, take this test:

Do you need a new idea? It isn't the quality of the ideas you have that will determine whether you are successful, it's the qualities you bring to those ideas. New ideas are wonderful if you can come up with them. But your best chance of success is working hard, using established values and ideas if necessary.

Who are your customers? "Everyone" is the wrong answer. If your concept is going to succeed, you have to identify a realistic target audience, big enough to be profitable yet small enough for you to service it thoroughly.

Why should anyone want to buy your product or service? Find an unmet, unanswered need by identifying a market segment that isn't being served or is being served inadequately. For example, take the post office which served everybody, but unprofitably. Then FedEx and UPS jumped in and redefined the industry. They are profitable, while the post office is bleeding red ink.

Who is your competition? If there is a market for your product or service, someone is supplying that market. He may be using another product. Or she may be using a nearly identical product that you can beat on quality, performance or service. Either way, the existence of competition is a mixed blessing. It doesn't really matter how many others are doing something similar. All you have to do is find a way to do it better.

What advantages does your organization have over the competition? Management? People? Product? Service? Financial strength? Reputation? Recognition? Marketing? One is not enough. Sometimes all are not enough. But you can usually beat better-financed competition with superior customer advantages.

Do you have a business plan? If you haven't gotten around to that, make one before you do anything else. It serves several very useful purposes. It forces you to think your way through the startup process and your long-range goals. It's also a document you'll need if you plan on getting outside financing from anyone except your relatives. If it isn't persuasive and effective to an independent outside businessperson, that might tell you something about your real chances for success. Your plan should include a situation analysis; objectives; target audiences; mission statement; objective; strategy and tactics; execution; budget; measurement; and time and action calendar.

What do your banker and lawyer say? Bankers see and evaluate business plans all day long. That's their business. They might even have seen one like yours. And while you're at it, ask if they would lend you money to finance your business. Attorneys can help you avoid pitfalls. They are there to protect you.

What does your mentor say? Find a "tiger," preferably someone who's been around the block. Retired professionals are a marvelous resource for this kind of advice. I can't urge you enough to check out SCORE. They have access to people with every imaginable kind of business experience. They also have the time, patience, skill, wisdom and understanding to help and sometimes, just to listen. They are invaluable at helping you expand your network of contacts.

Have you done an honest self-survey? Do you really want to do this or are you just trying to escape your own problems? Be brutally honest and make sure the problem is not you. If you're going to be an entrepreneur, you have to believe in yourself more than you believe in anything else in the world.

What will you do if you fail? Don't be discouraged if you do fail. Few entrepreneurs make it the first time they try. Failure teaches you not to fear failure because if you can survive it to fight again, you haven't failed. You have only heightened your appreciation of success.

Mackay's Moral: If you're looking for a big opportunity, look for a big challenge.

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

The Referral Coach

By Matt Anderson

How Can You Have More Happiness In Your Business?

Not long ago I was reading about Clive Woodward who coached the England rugby team to its World Cup win in 2003. What caught my eye was that he asked each player to read a business book - Paddi Lund's *Building the Happiness-Centred Business* (1997) - and said it was the only book he'd ever read twice.

I was inspired by Lund's simple message:

If you're not happy with the work you're doing, change how you're doing it.

Lund, a dentist in Australia, made his discoveries after emotionally hitting rock bottom in his 30's. As his income grew, he found himself spending all of it and then focusing increasingly on ways to make even more money. His logic was that buying things made him feel good so he always needed more money.

Eventually he became so disturbed at work that he found himself crawling on his hands and knees to lock his office door, seriously worried that he was losing his sanity. He was hearing voices and needing Valium to sleep. (In many western nations, dentists have the highest suicide rate among white-collar professionals.)

Over time, Lund realized he had defined his worth based on his job. He wanted to see if he could feel good at work instead of feeling miserable, stressed and obsessing about making more money. He turned himself around and decided to set a goal of happiness at work.

He learned many things:

Focus On Happiness Not Money.

Why do we think that business has to focus mostly on money?

This often induces a great deal of stress and can cause us to neglect our loved ones, our health and spiritual life.

"Business is hard," writes Lund. But once he found out that he was not alone in experiencing this; "I didn't feel so isolated and stupid."

When we're not working, we tend to do things that make us feel good. So why don't we focus more on doing things that make us feel good in our work? Google gives its employees '20% time' to work on their own projects.

"When money is the focus, human beings assume a lesser significance."

Your business will be more profitable when:

You're happier and having more fun: We enjoy buying from happy people and we buy more. We prefer to spend our time with happy people.

You're focused on making clients happier,

You're not focused solely on the bottom line

When you have a business problem: "the decision that gives everyone the most happiness is usually the decision that is best for the business."

Love, sympathy, and joy are good for business – they ARE appropriate. And many people "are starved of positive human contact." Be kind, generous, and honest.

Learn to Control Your Stress

He found that his reaction to stress was often a "performance" and that he "had a purpose in losing control." Maybe you are not aware of it, but he believes that we "do" stress because:

We want to show others that we are overworked

We are not getting enough attention

We feel that the way we were being treated belies our importance

The environment we work in (and live in) has a bigger impact on us than we realize – change it if it does not uplift you!

Great Relationships Are the Sum of All the Little Courtesies

He finds that the source of much unhappiness is in how people treat each other at work. "What made us most unhappy were the little forgotten courtesies and the unkind or thoughtless words or actions."

You need a Courtesy System – Lund created eight performance standards. For example, Number 1 is: Speak very politely using a person's name – please and thank you as a minimum.

"Politeness is the oil of the wheels of society. It is even more important between married people than strangers." Humanize and personalize all your business relationships more often. Start with your team at work; then do it with your clients.

Apologize more often. It is not a sign of weakness – hardly anyone does it – it is a sign of courage, strength and honesty.

He argues that the big things usually get addressed; it's the seemingly small things that end up causing interpersonal problems.

Systems Make Difficult Things Easier

There aren't many books that give you work systems that make you feel good.

We have all let go of habits or systems that once worked well for us and we almost all could improve or add new systems.

Two brilliant insights:

"A new system will work only when it is easier to use than to ignore it!"

For example, if you're not asking for referrals consistently, the question to ask yourself is: How can I make referral asking easier?

"Build in the rewards that make it easier to continue with the system than to go back to old ways."

Make sure your system encourages warmth and bonding with clients. "Customers return to places where they feel cared for."

Emotional rewards work more consistently than financial ones for your team. (Read Daniel Pink's book, *Drive*, for more on this)

Build Your Happiness-Centred Business and Get More Referrals!

How does this relate to getting more and better referrals? If you focus increasingly on happiness at work for all parties, and educate your clients on the benefits of your products and services, they will do the advertising for you.

When we spend more time enjoying ourselves at work, we make more money! What have you done that's seen results in this area?

"There is nothing worthwhile in life that doesn't take tremendous effort."

Matt Anderson can be reached at: http://www.thereferralauthority.com

Top 30 Clean High School Songs

SchoolDanceNetwork.com

LW	TW	Artist	Title	Featuring	PC #	BPM	Notes
2	1	Bruno Mars	Lazy Song		201108	87	
4	2	Jennifer Lopez	On the Floor	Pitbull	201104	130	
7	3	Britney Spears	Til The World Ends		201111	133	Small edit
1	4	Black Eyed Peas	Just Can't Get Enough		201106	94	
8	5	Lupe Fiasco	The Show Goes on		201045	72	
11	6	Wiz Khalifa	Roll Up		201106	94	Edit
18	7	Pitbulll	Give Me Everything	Ne-Yo & Nayer	201114	129	Suggestive
3	8	Katy Perry	ET			105	
24	9	Adele	Rolling in the Deep		201048	105	
15	10	T-Pain	Best Love Song	Chris Brown	201108	81	Edit
9	11	Tinie Tempah	Written in the Stars	Eric Turner	201104	93	
27	12	Lady Gaga	The Edge of Glory		201120	128	
19	13	LMFAO	Party Rock Anthem	Lauren Bennett	201102	131	Edit
6	14	Hold it against	Britney Spears		201103	134	
5	15	Lady Gaga	Born This Way		201102	120	
30	16	Nicki Minaj	Super Bass		201115	127	Edit
12	17	Usher	More		201047	125	
13	18	Enrique Iglesias	Tonght	Ludacris	201047	126	Edit Sh*t
14	19	Lady Gaga	Judas		201117	131	No Catholic
23	20	Kanye West	All of the lights	Kid Cudi	201050	71	clean edit
28	21	Jason Derulo	Don't Wanna Go Home		201120	122	Edit
10	22	Nicki Minaj	Moment for Life	Drake	201050	98	edit
29	23	Chris Brown	She Ain't You		201114	91	
16	24	Ke$ha	Blow		201102	120	
25	25	Beyonce	Run The World		201118	127	
17	26	New Boyz	Backseat		201103	124	Edit "A**"
New	27	Lil Wayne	How to Love		201123	77	
New	28	David Guetta	Where them Girls at	FloRida	201119	130	
New	29	Beyonce	Best Thing I Never Had		201124	100	
New	30	Jennifer Lopez	I'm INto You	Lil Wayne	201115	84	

Recurrents- (Still popular)

20	Far East Mvmnt	Rocketeer	Ryan Tedder	201047	96	
21	Chris Brown	Yeah 3X		201044	129	
22	Katy Perry	Firework		201041	124	
26	Keri Hilson	Pretty Girl Rock		201042	80	
	Mike Posner	Bow Chicka Wow Wow		201107	74	edit sh*t
	Taio Cruise	Higher	Travie MacCoy	201102	128	Radio Edit
	Nelly	Gone	Kelly Rowland	201101	73	
	Bruno Mars	Grenade		201044	111	
	Chris Brown	Deuces		201031	74	EDIT
	Rihanna	What's My Name		201043	100	H.S Only
	Edward Maya	Stereo Love	Mia Martina	201013	127	
	Pink	Raise Your Glass		201041	122	EDIT
	Flo Rida	Who Dat Girl		201046	125	
	Nelly	Just a Dream		201032	90	
	Enrique Iglesias	I Like It	Pitbull	201019	129	
	Rihanna	Only Girl (In the world)		201037	126	EDIT
	Pitbull	Hey Baby		201037	128	
	Black Eyed Peas	The Time (Dirty Bit)		201045	128	
	Mann	Buzzin		201050	104	Edit
	Will.I.am	Check it Out	Nicki Minaj	201037	130	edit
	Kesha	Take It Off		201028	125	
	Katy Perry	Teenage Dream		201031	120	
	KE$HA	We R Who We R		201043	120	Edit
	Mike Posner	Please Don't Go		201034	121	
	Usher	DJ Got Us Fallin In Love	Pitbull	201029	120	Edit
	Bruno Mars	Just the way you are		201030	109	
	David Guetta	Memories	F/Kid Cudi	201012	130	Edit
	Ditty	Coming Home	Dirty Money	201047	84	Edit
	Nicki Minaj	Right Thru You		201040	81	
	Jay Sean	2012		201032	127	
	Eminem	Love The Way You Lie	Rihanna	201027	87	Edit
	Taio Cruz	Dynamite		201020	120	
	3OH!3	Double Vision- Dance Edit		201035	120	
	Sean Kingston	Letting Go (Dutty Love)		201025	92	
	Travie McCoy	Need You		201037	74	
	Flo Rida	Club can't Handle Me	D Guetta	201024	128	
	Taio Cruz	Dirty Pictures (Clean)	Ke$ha	201038	120	EDIT
	New Boyz	Break My Bank	Iyaz	201028	91	Edit
	Katy Perry	California Gurls	Snoop Dog	201020	125	
	B.O.B	Airplanes	Hayley Williams	201016	94	Edit
	Travie McCoy	Billionaire	Bruno Mars	201011	88	
	Usher	OMG	Will I am	201012	130	
	Mike Posner	Cooler Than Me		201014	130	
	Tao Cruz	Break Your Heart		201004	122	
	Black Eyed Peas	Rock That Body		201013	125	
	Ready Set	Love Like Woe		201020	90	
	3OH!3	My First Kiss	Ke$ha	201019	138	
	Nicki Minaj	Your Love		201013	95	

DO NOT PLAYLIST ADDS

Katy Perry	Last Friday Night		
Enrique Iglesias	Dirty Dancer		
Rihanna	Man Down		
Nicole Scherzinger	Right There		
Kelly Rowland	Motivation	Lil Wayne	clearly sexual
Waka Flocka Flame	Grove St. Party	Kebo Gotti	
Travis Porter	Bring it Back		
Chris Brown	Look at me Now		
Nicki Minaj	Did it on em		Nasty
Big Sean	My Last	Chris Brown	Glorifies Alcohol
Snoop Dog	Wet/Sweat		
Kanye West	H*A*M	Jay-Z	
Rihanna	S&M		
PinkFr**kin Perfect			
Twista	Make a Movie	Chris Brown	
Lil Wayne	6 foot 7 foot	Cory Gunz	

Monthly Music Charts

By TMStudios.com

Pop

1	Adele	Rolling In The Deep
2	Pitbull	Give Me Everything
3	Lady Gaga	The Edge Of Glory
4	Bruno Mars	Lazy Song
5	Katy Perry	E.T.
6	Black Eyed Peas	Just Can't Get Enough
7	LMFAO	Party Rock Anthem
8	Lupe Fiasco	The Show Goes On
9	Britney Spears	Till The World Ends
10	Jason Derulo	DonÕt Wanna Go Home
11	Katy Perry	Last Friday
12	Hot Chelle Rae	Tonight Tonight
13	Jennifer Lopez	On The Floor
14	Nicki Minaj	Super Bass
15	OneRepublic	Good Life
16	Wiz Khalifa	Roll Up
17	Selena Gomez	Who Says
18	Martin Solveig	Hello
19	Enrique Iglesias	Dirty Dancer
20	Tinie Timpah	Written In The Stars

Urban

1	Kelly Rowland	Motivation
2	DJ Khaled	I'm On One
3	Big Sean	My Last
4	Miguel	Sure Thing
5	Chris Brown	She Ain't You
6	Marsha Ambrosius	Far Away
7	Lil Wayne	How To Love
8	Lloyd	Cupid
9	Trey Songz	Unusual
10	Jamie Foxx	Best Night Of My Life
11	Chris Brown	Look At Me Now
12	Young Jeezy	Ballin'
13	Rihanna	Man Down
14	Ace Hood	Hustle Hard
15	Keri Hilson	One Night Stand
16	YC	Racks
17	Lupe Fiasco	Out Of My Head
18	Nicki Minaj	Super Bass
19	Nicki Minaj	Did It On 'Em
20	Wiz Khalifa	On My Level

Country

1	Taylor Swift	Mean
2	Blake Shelton	Honey Bee
3	Band Perry	You Lie
4	Justin Moore	If Heaven Wasn't So Far Away
5	Jason Aldean	Dirt Road Anthem
6	Chris Young	Tomorrow
7	Zac Brown Band	Knee Deep
8	Lady Antebellum	Just A Kiss
9	Dierks Bentley	Am I The Only One
10	Luke Bryan	Country Girl (Shake It For Me)
11	Kenny Chesney	You And Tequila
12	Jake Owen	Barefoot Blue Jean Night
13	Trace Adkins	Just Fishin'
14	Brad Paisley/C.Underwood	Remind Me
15	Eric Church	Homeboy
16	Josh Turner	I Wouldn't Be A Man
17	Billy Currington	Love Done Gone
18	Eli Young Band	Crazy Girl
19	Scotty McCreery	I Love You This Big
20	Martina McBride	Teenage Daughters

Rock

1	Seether	Country Song
2	Foo Fighters	Rope
3	Sixx A.M.	Lies Of The Beautiful People
4	Shinedown	Diamond Eyes
5	Sick Puppies	Riptide
6	Alter Bridge	Ghost Of Days Gone By
7	Theory Of A Deadman	Lowlife
8	Stone Sour	Say You'll Haunt Me
9	Saving Abel	Miss America
10	Three Days Grace	Lost In You
11	Avenged Sevenfold	So Far Away
12	Kenny Wayne Shepherd	Never Lookin' Back
13	Black Stone Cherry	White Trash Millionaire
14	Buckcherry	It's A Party
15	Volbeat	Fallen
16	Rise Against	Savior
17	10 Years	Fix Me
18	Foo Fighters	Walk
19	Adelitas Way	Sick
20	Disturbed	Warrior

Adult Contempory

1	Adele	Rolling In The Deep
2	Bruno Mars	Just The Way You Are
3	Katy Perry	Firework
4	Pink	F**kin' Perfect (Perfect)
5	Plain White T's	Rhythm Of Love
6	Onerepublic	Secrets
7	Train	Marry Me
8	Michael Buble	Hold On
9	Script	For The First Time
10	Bruno Mars	Grenade
11	Jason Aldean	Don't You Wanna Stay
12	Christina Perri	Jar Of Hearts
13	Cee Lo Green	Forget You
14	Kenny Chesney	Somewhere With You
15	Matthew Morrison	Summer Rain
16	Richard Marx	When You Loved Me
17	Josh Groban	Higher Window
18	Lady Gaga	The Edge Of Glory
19	Andy Grammer	Keep Your Head Up
20	Katy Perry	E.T.

Alternative

1	Foster The People	Pumped Up Kicks
2	Death Cab For Cutie	You Are A Tourist
3	Incubus	Adolescents
4	Sublime With Rome	Panic
5	Airborne Toxic Event	Changing
6	Foo Fighters	Rope
7	Coldplay	Every Teardrop Is A Waterfall
8	Awolnation	Sail
9	Mumford & Sons	The Cave
10	Rise Against	Help Is On The Way
11	Foo Fighters	Walk
12	Black Keys	Howlin' For You
13	Naked And Famous	Young Blood
14	Cage The Elephant	Shake Me Down
15	Seether	Country Song
16	311	Sunset In July
17	Sick Puppies	Riptide
18	Cage The Elephant	Around My Head
19	Joy Formidable	Whirring
20	Danger Mouse & D. Luppi	Two Against One

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