

Disc Jockey News

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The Q Corner, Where Quality Meets Quantity

By Mike Walter

I've seen Michael Franti perform live three times in the past two years. That's an awful lot for a guy whose name I didn't even know three years ago. And each time I've seen him, I've learned something about being a performer and entertainer. And even about being a business man. I'd like to share those nuggets with you and hopefully to get you interested enough to download a few more of his songs (I know you've already got "Say Hey (I Love You)" in your database.)

But first a little background: My girlfriend Kelly came home from yoga one night about three years ago and said the instructor ended the class by playing a Michael Franti song. Did I have anything by him? Embarrassed that my "non-DJing" girlfriend knew an artist that I didn't know about, I went right to work and found some of his music online. We both listened and got into his sound. He's a reggae/hip-hop/rocker with a central message of peace, love and save the earth. (Your typical Republican nightmare.)

What started as a single song during the final meditation of a yoga class has resulted in Kelly and I flying cross country to see Mr. Franti perform. That, in the truest sense of the word, is grass roots marketing. Here are the lessons I've learned along the way:

Even the smallest act of kindness (customer service) can win a fan (customer) for life. The first time Kelly and I saw Michael Franti was at the Nokia Theater in Times Square two years ago. We drove in to the city and hit no traffic so we were early. As we walked to the theater we decided to grab a bite before the show. We spotted this tiny little Asian place that looked perfect. In the craziest of coincidences, Michael Franti and his band were having dinner in the same restaurant. We didn't want to interrupt his meal

so we waited till they were wrapping up and then we told him we were big fans. We showed him our tickets and said we were actually on our way to see him. He couldn't have been nicer, chatting with us for a few minutes and even taking a picture with Kelly (which she cherishes.) And even though we loved the show that night and had a great time, it was that coincidental meeting, and how generous Michael Franti was with his time, that won Kelly and I over as fans. As I said in my introduction, we crossed the country last year to see him live. I'm not sure we would have done that if not for that chance encounter.

I think about moments like that sometimes. When a zitty little guest at one of my events asks me for a Pink Floyd song for example. My first instinct is to just blow him off. But then I realize, I can squeeze "Hey You" into the dinner mix and no one will notice except him. And if it makes him happy, who knows. Maybe his acne will clear up someday and he'll get married and then maybe he'll think of me. You never know.

Be true to yourself. Michael Franti hasn't changed. The message in his music has been consistent since his early days in the music business. His first band, The BeatNigs, released one CD in 1994. The record company called it a "classic slab of political rap/punk/industrial." His next band, The Disposable Heroes of Hypocrisy, "wrote biting, progressive lyrics that railed against the injustices of the world" (I got that from Wikipedia so you know it's true.) Point is, though it took Franti 15 years of recording and touring to finally break the Billboard Top 20, he did it his way. His lyrics are full of geopolitical awareness and cries for peace and love among all mankind. Franti has organized and performed at the "Power to the Peaceful" Festival in San Francisco since 1999. That's the show Kelly and I traveled to in September of last year.

As a business man, and as a performer, I try to stay as true to my own self as possible. I know what I'm good

at and I focus on those things and I've never tried to be something I'm not. If you asked me to sum up my success in one sentence that would probably be it. As Michael Franti sings in one of his songs: "What I be is what I be."



Prompts raise the energy. If you've bought my training program (and if not you need to go to www.TrainingYourNextGreatDJ.com and grab your copy today) you know how much I emphasize prompts during certain times of the night. Hand clapping. Singing along. Waving your hands. These are classic ways to punch certain parts of songs and raise the energy in the room. Michael Franti is keenly aware of this. If you go to a Franti show, you better be in good physical shape. Because he'll have you singing and jumping and clapping all night. I saw a clip online where John Mayer even said to him: "You get people to wave your hands like I never could."

Never ask a crowd to do something you won't do. That's another tenet of my training and it's another area that Michael Franti and I agree on. Franti doesn't ask a crowd to jump and then go back to strumming his guitar. He jumps. When he wants hand waving, he waves his hands (in fact sometimes he doesn't even ask for it, he just does it and the crowd mimics him.)

If a line works, it's not crime to use it over (and over.) When Kelly and I saw Michael Franti in San Francisco "Say Hey (I Love You)" was climbing the charts. He introduced the song by telling the crowd that in 15 years of recording he'd never had a top 40 song. Then he delivered the punch line: "we never even had a top 40,000 song." The crowd loved it. When we saw him this past winter he used the same line (although by that point the song had peaked at #18 so he changed the joke to "Top 20 song" and "top 20,000 song.") The reaction was

the same.

I'm a firm believer in using my one-liners and catch phrases till they just don't work anymore. I'm a devotee: "if it ain't broke don't fix it" follower.

Maximize your opportunities. The most recent time Kelly and I saw Michael Franti was as an opening act for John Mayer at Madison Square Garden. We went into the show with some trepidation. How would Franti's act change as an opener? It's an unenviable position when you think about it. Imagine being hired to play the first hour of a wedding and then handing things over to a super star DJ who everyone in the room really came

Walter continued on page 4



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Where's Your Head At?

By Mitch Taylor

No...I'm not speaking of the popular Basement Jaxx song from 2002...I'm speaking of where's your head at in your business? Are you overwhelmed? Underpaid? Stressed? Always feel like there's too much to do and not enough time to do it (including writing articles for DJN). Well...now that I just described to you how my last few weeks have been...let's start helping you answer some questions about your business.

Do you spend your time working IN your business or ON your business? Working IN your business means the day to day operations of your company. Answering the phones, scheduling appointments,, prepping playlists, gear

maintenance, etc. You should focus one day a week to working ON your business. What does that mean? It means looking at projections for the year. Where were you last year at this time for overall bookings, gross dollars, net dollars, expenses, etc? Where are you now in those same categories? How many more events and/or dollars do you want to achieve this year? How are things looking for next year? What are you doing currently to promote future business? What are you doing to improve your level of service to your clientele? What steps are you taking to better your performance? These are just a few of the items you can and should be focused on to work ON your business so that you HAVE a business to work in in the future.

Now...how do you tackle that? Very simply...schedule it and stick to your schedule. DJ Event Planner (shameless plug) has great features to help you do this. Let's look at a typical week:

Sunday: Day off with family

Monday: Day off with family and for you to recharge your batteries (Hey.... most everyone else in business 9 to 5

gets two days off a week....why not you?)

Tuesday: Work "IN" your business. Schedule appointments for sales and planning meetings, prep your playlists, Fix gear from the weekend and order new gear today, Return all correspondence if not done so previously, Update computers, website and/or blog, social media sites, read Disc Jockey News, etc.

Wednesday: Networking Day. This is your day to network with fellow vendors, stop by the bridal shoppes, take that photographer to lunch and talk with your advertising reps. Make the best use of your time by scheduling out of town meetings or longer distance ones in the same area that you are traveling.

Thursday: Work ON your business. Look at your projections for the year. Where are you at? Where do you want to be? How can you grow your current earnings? What expenses can you pare down or cut altogether? What self improvement opportunities are presenting themselves to you locally and nationally that you can take advantage of?

Friday: Wrap up Loose Ends. Anything that needs to be wrapped up before the week ends, do it today. This could be from networking day if you needed to send information out to a vendor and

didn't complete it on Wednesday...it could be finalizing requests for the week-end or going through your rig to ensure everything is ready....it could be tidying up your office before appointments over the weekend....whatever needs to be wrapped up, Friday is your day to do it.

Saturday: GAME DAY for most of us in the mobile DJ business. Don't let anything that happens on that day affect the outcome of your clients' event that night. Put any negativity aside and put all of your energies into a successful event and day for your clients and your company. Sometimes the world can be falling down around us, but as a wise man once said "The Show Must Go On"

I hope you find this helpful for you in determining a work schedule and focusing your efforts on building your business...one day at a time.

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 WEDGuild TM. 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.

I Think I Am Selling... This???

By Kelly Suit

I was talking with my good friend Bob Moore the other day and he suggested that I do an article on false advertising in the DJ industry.

You know, the website that says thousands of weddings performed (by a single op), biggest light show in the country, ten billion song library.

I thought it was a great idea, but that isn't what I'm going to write about exactly. Instead it got me thinking about one of the things we all struggle with as business owners. What's your USP?

For those that haven't heard of USP, it stands for Unique Selling Proposition. In other words, what makes you different then the next DJ? Or if you want it broken down further, why should I hire you rather then your competitors?

Isn't that the million-dollar question? Why does a client select your business when there are so many other options available to them? Not only do they choose you, but also they chose a DJ

when there are other entertainment options. If you don't know the answer to these questions, how can you repeat the results with future prospects?

As an industry, I think we do a horrible job of differentiating ourselves from our competitors. In this day an age, is it really that difficult to get the best gear? All you need is money, no talent involved there. How about a huge song library? Assuming your you do it legally it's expensive, but again obtainable and if you do it illegally as all too many DJs do, it just takes time and bandwidth.

How about DJs standing on the amount of events they do? Does that make you better then those that haven't done as many? All that means is that you have more experience, but if your experience is doing a sub-par job compared to a lesser experienced, but better trained DJ what good is it for your client?

I'm meeting with all of my DJs tonight (I run a medium sized multi-op company). One of the things that I'm going to share is that most clients don't expect much out of a DJ. They typically expect that you will a) show up on time b) play great music c) not do anything to adversely effect their event. Unfortunately the bar is set very low for us because there are so many DJs that have not even made it to the bar (or they

might be getting another free drink from the bar).

My philosophy for my company is to be excellent on the basics, the details, and do develop report with our clients. When we do this everything else falls into place. This is not to say that being a great MC isn't important, that mixing and programming skills aren't needed, or that some interaction can't help take a party to the next level. It's just that if you screw up the basics, the rest isn't going to be as effective.

So getting back to your USP, this is an area that I personally struggle. What makes us better or different enough that our clients should choose us? I actually had some prospects ask me that exact question once and it took me a minute to think about it before I answered. You know what I told them? I said I have no idea. I don't know what my competitors do as I haven't been to their events. I know that vendors that have seen our competitors compliment us often and we have lots that refer us so I know we are doing something right, but to be fair I really can't answer that question.

My prospects smiled and told me that they had asked that exact question to the couple other DJs that he had interviewed. They went on to tell me that all of them went on about the things I mentioned; their gear, their song library, their years of experience. They all told them that they were the best and that is why they should choose them. The prospects booked our company for their wedding.

I asked them why and they said it was refreshing not hearing lies. I chuckled at the time, but looking back it makes me kind of sad. What a terrible judgment being passed on our profession.

My challenge to you after you read this article is to put away any fluff in your marketing and selling. Be real with your prospects and clients and most importantly yourself. Do some soul searching and ask yourself why you would hire you. Once you answer that question you know exactly how to reach your target clientele.

On a personal note, our company has always done training for both our new employees as well as our seasoned entertainers. We are coming out of the recession (that is my personal belief looking at our books and my being an optimist) and we are starting to grow. DJN's own Dean Carlson shared at the last Disc Jockey News Convention that he implemented DJ School for his staff. He took the training that Mike Walter uses for his staff, tweaked it, and then taught it to his DJs. I like the idea so much that A Premier Entertainment is going to offer DJ School to its staff over the summer as I predict that we will need all of our DJs (new and experienced) to be ready for a huge end of the year push. I'll keep you posted in my coming articles how it's going and share if I was right about a big ending to 2010.

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Ladies & Gentlemen

By Rocky Bourg

May I please ask you to please stand and join me as I welcome the Ladies and Gentlemen in the...

I didn't officially quote that because it is not complete and I wanted maintain any semblance of literary credibility that I may have acquired or had splash up on me through association with this respected periodical. However, the title and the introductory line of this article are about as

verbatim as I can recite without triggering my word processor's grammar checker's redundancy module. I also didn't want to embarrass the orator but I heard it, live and in person.

If transcribed, the rest of that announcement would have read as though my keyboard has an annoying echo/reverb setting that can not be disengaged. Suffice it to say that the announcer used and broadcast the terms "Ladies" and "Gentleman" so often during his uninspiring 10 minute intro, that each guest should have felt as though they were being individually referenced, and there were at least 100 people in the room.

Furthermore, if you were allergic to the word "please" your survival would have mandated paramedic attention or, at the very least, a shot of Crown with an epinephrine back. (The preceding suggestion was not a proper prescription nor is it a treatment regimen recognized by any legitimate medical or health care association.) My event, in the adjoining ballroom, was scheduled to start hours later which allowed me to witness/

hear at least the first hour of the reception. I cringed more during that hour than when watching those "World's Stupidest..." television programs that show wannabe X-gamers crashing, gonads first, into railings, handlebars, or any of the other "not made for crotchular collision" surfaces. Excuse me while I catch my breathe.

Furtherfurthermore, MC Redundant repeatedly asked all in attendance for attention or permissions but never paused, at all, to acknowledge or obtain the requested authority. If you truly ask for something and intend to make it a request, shouldn't you wait for the response? Try not waiting for an official response and simply continue on your vehicular journey next time you ask a Police Officer if he can let you off with a warning. Hint: The consequences will be substantially more severe than simple embarrassment.

All sarcasm aside, I recognize that this amateur Emcee and his audience were simply the victims of his poor planning, limited or non-existent scripting/vocabulary skills, or imitation of others with either or both of those tendencies. Hopefully, his sub par performance is simply the result of him having never reviewed his broadcasts. I subsequently sent him a polite email inviting him to a now defunct association meeting and subtly suggested that he might benefit from recording and reviewing his announcement practices. He never responded and I never gave it another thought.

Unfortunately, I continue to experienced equally amateurish performances at an events which I attend as a guest or find myself in close proximity to at events at which I am hired to perform and I wonder if such bad emceeing occurs with more frequency than imagined or is necessary.

Admittedly, I, as probably most of us, have subjected others to such amateur and poorly planned microphone work. Hopeful-

ly that was in the distant past. That does not validate or excuse; but it does, if we address and put forth corrective efforts, provide tangible proof that we can improve how our audiences view our craft. In the same way lyrics can provide value and importance to a song, our words, scripts, and announcements can elevate our value and contributions.

Knowing that DJN readers are of the educated and always striving to learn sort, I am issuing this month's challenge in the hope that all will benefit and find personal pleasure in an activity that I have enjoyed and from which I have harvested the tastiest of fruits. That being a daily, or every other day but certainly with enough frequency to feel daily, vocabulary exercise. More than simply learning the pronunciation and meaning a new word each day I have become a devotee of researching the etymology of words, our language, phrases and sayings. Basically and simply, I research the roots of those words with which we build relationships, reputations, and achievements. I am frequently amazed at the origins or source of both common and unique contemporary terms that yield revealing underpinnings.

My favorite and free online sources for such information are, in no particular order of favor: <http://www.etymonline.com/>; <http://www.myetymology.com/>; <http://www.thinkexist.com/>; and <http://thesaurus.com/>. There are others but you should be able to find them. I managed even with my limited brain-type capacities.

This practice has lead me to sources for other phrases and sayings and their respective origins. I have discovered some frequently misused sayings and quotes, if repeated, would suggest to the knowledgeable that I have not given any attention or cognition to the words I have chosen to broadcast. Not only has that activity revealed some interesting origins and meanings but it has created a very useful knowledge base for synonyms and alternative terms that I have used in the effort to avoid the "Ladies and Gentlemen" syndrome.

Something as simple as judicious use of foreign languages can add the right change. This practice presumes that you make a concerted and serious effort to know your audiences and clients. At your next wedding for a couple that embraces or openly recognizes, with pride, their Italian heritage, pepper your announcements with a little continental flavor. Open one or two requests for attention with, "Buona sera signore e signori." Quinceañera audiences would certainly appreciate, "Buenas noches señoras y señores."

Ever since the New Orleans Saints earned a World Championship, I have been able to address many of my audiences, as have always addressed the thousands of my fellow tail-gating regulars at the semi-almost WORLD FAMOUS ALLEGRO BISTRO SAINTS TAILGATE PARTY, with a version of the phrase that has yet to fail, "Good Evening SAINTS Fans and welcome to another championship celebration!" The only draw back is the delay that the attendees, except for any Viking fans, create with their responsive chants of "WHO DAT!" If you have to ask, you won't understand but if you understand, you ain't gotta ask.

So, if you undertake the challenge, with enough frequency and devotion, to research and learn the pronunciation, meaning AND origins of the words your script and use, you can provide your clients and audiences with that additional something extra that the less willing never even consider, let alone use with any proficiency.

If you are not performing for members of the Who Dat nation or don't wish to use foreign languages and find yourself in need of an inviting alternative for that over used introductory phrase, simply refer to your audience by what we hope to call everyone we meet, "Good Evening Friends." By the way, the word friend is a good starting point for this exercise, you'll love what you discover.

Rocky can be reached at rockybourg@discjockeynews.com



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10 Ways Of Connecting With Your Audience Like A Professional

By Ken Day

Here are the 10 most important things every “Professional” can do to nail the connection with their audience.

1. One to one eye contact!

a. Consider your eye contact as an object of substance, an almost palpable mechanism of communication, something very real and nearly solid.



b. Remember that a prime reason for eye contact is RECEIVING energy from each person in the audience. Your talk should

never be a monologue. It’s always a dialogue, even when the audience doesn’t speak to you.

c. Keep your eye contact at a conversational manner. Actually speak to and visit with one person at a time. Everyone else will be listening. (We all like to eaves drop a little) As you switch your thought or conversational topic, then it’s a logical time to move your eye contact

to a new person.

2. Take responsibility for the connection with each one of your audience members.

a. Be prepared. Acquire information about the specific group and key individuals within that group.

b. Utilize a thorough and standard interview form for each group to ensure that you have acquired the needed information for your success.

c. Give your energy as though you are the sun, even if you aren’t receiving energy. Don’t dwell on negative people as they will only rob you of your energy exponentially. Look for someone giving you positive energy and utilize it for the benefit of everyone.

d. Prior to being the focal speaker mingle with the quests and find a friendly face. Give them your eye contact and energy later to ensure the energy is positive and familiar.

3. Know your opening and key remarks so well that you can relax and focus on your connection with the audience right from the very start.

a. In situations that you only have time to put in extra work on one part of your speaking, let it be your opening.

4. In your opening remarks, let the

audience know why THEY are important.

a. Why are they important to the other people at this event? Why are they important for the success of this event? Or, why are they important to you?

5. In your opening remarks, make certain they understand why the subject material of your talk is important and relevant to each of them.

6. It is a good idea to acknowledge the person who introduced you.

a. That person took some time and worked to give you a great introduction. That person is probably well known and well liked by the audience. Both the introducer and the audience will feel good if you say something specific and nice about the introducer other than just, “Thank you for that wonderful introduction.”

7. Your connection to the audience will be strengthened if you keep their interest without stealing the show!

8. Add variety to your presentation.

a. Do something different at least four times during you entire event. I.e., humor, props, different speech patterns, visual graphics, music, singing, dancing, juggling, or stories.

9. Connect with your audience by using good organization techniques.

a. A well-organized talk gives the audience hooks on which to hang key points and remember your message. An easy-to-remember talk keeps the audience with you and helps you connect.

b. The manner of organization should always consider a smooth easy flow and transition from point to point. Bearing in mind the desires of the clients and their guests/attendees.

10. Develop and practice your microphone voice, volume, inflection, pacing, and intelligibility.

a. Most speakers Do Not have a perfect microphone voice naturally. If the audience can’t hear and understand you, you will both be disconnected and uninterested in what you have to say. PRACTICE!

Bonus: Enjoy all the positive energy while you have your personal conversations because you are well prepared.

Think – Creatively

Act – Responsibly

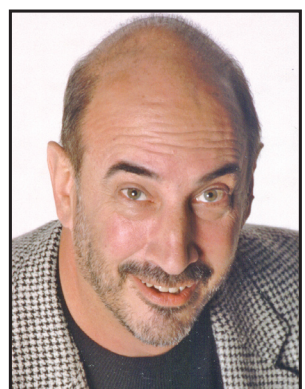
Feel - Passionately

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

Start Providing Value, or Lose to Price

By Jeffrey Gitomer

At a seminar in Kitchener, Ontario, (an hour north of Toronto for those of you without Google Maps) James Perly, of Perly Consulting Group, came up to me during a break and said, “I have a new closing method.”



I said, “Great! What is it?”

“We beat our customers over the head with a value stick until they close us, and ask us to buy. We don’t have brochures, and the whole meeting is about how exactly we would deliver massive value to the client, all done in a friendly, professional manner. We give the client a full strategic map of how they profit if we’re hired. They buy because they believe we are capable of implementing the plan we have offered.”

I smiled.

James continued, “At the end of our sales conversation we have provided our customers with so much value and perceived value that they ask questions like, “OK, what’s the next step?” or “How do we get started?”

NOTE WELL: This is a pretty interesting concept when you consider that 99% (and I may be a bit low on that number) of salespeople (you included) are trying to figure out some manipulative way of closing the sale or asking for the sale. Or worse, they’re wondering when the best time to close is.

Think about it. Is it more powerful for you to ask for the sale, or for the customer to want to buy? Is it more powerful for you to ask for the sale, or for the customer to ask, “When can we get started?”

Your big question at this moment is,

“OK, how do I do that?”

But a bigger question is: Are you willing to jump off the product pitch and price comparison proposal horse and buggy, and onto the value rocket ship?

VALUE is a combination of what you offer that you perceive is in favor of the prospective customer, combined with what the prospective customer actually perceives is in favor of them. Sometimes those are two very different perceptions.

What is your “value proposition?” Do you even have one? What are you saying to a prospect that goes beyond what you do and how you do it and what your product or service is, and how it works? Hard question. Harder answer.

BE AWARE: There are 9.5 key areas where value can be perceived:

1. Ease of doing business with you.
2. Ease of contact with you and anyone in your company.
3. Ease of use after purchase.
4. Increase in productivity for the customer.
5. Availability of service when the customer needs it.
6. Boost in customer moral after product or service is installed.
7. Reasonably affordable and market price aligned. NOT the cheapest – rather the best value.
8. Additional profit to the customer (not savings of money). How does the customer really monetarily benefit from overall use?
9. Assurance to the customer, and perception by the customer that there is a perfect fit.
10. Assurance that there is no risk in doing business or purchasing. Otherwise stated as “their peace of mind.” Total reduction or elimination of their perceived risk in doing business with you. Without this, the first nine points don’t matter.
- 10.5 Continued value messages to help the customer AFTER the purchase has been made.

SALES REALITY: All prospects and customers want to know the same thing: What’s in it for me? How do I profit? And of course: How much is it? When these elements are part of an overall value presentation, you (the seller) win.

If the customer needs it, wants it, and feels there’s a fit – then they will compare perceived value with price.

Most people buy what they PERCEIVE is best for themselves. They first look at the value and quality. How does this suit me, how does this feel, how comfortable with this (and this salesperson) am I? Or better stated: What is THE FIT?

Then they justify the price – or not. The decision to buy is made emotionally, and then justified logically.

BEWARE: Keep in mind that what I have just told you has NOTHING to do with your literature, your sales pitch, your sales techniques, or your product

description. It has everything to do with how the customer perceives things will happen after they take ownership or after they get started.

PRICE REALITY: Don’t worry about a price objection – price is just a customer’s way of telling you that the value is lacking, or not evident.

If you want some questions that lead to motive and value, go to www.gitomer.com, and enter the words VALUE MOTIVE in the GitBit box.

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

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to see. Oh, and the room will only be half filled when you start because the other half of the guests don’t want to see you so much that they’d rather be late then sit through your set.

That’s mostly what opening acts deal with. And I’ve seen plenty that look as apathetic as the crowd. I saw Macy Gray open for Dave Matthews once. I was really into her debut CD “On How Life Is” but her set was so boring I lost interest as fan.

But instead of getting through his 45 minute set without breaking a sweat, Franti seized the opportunity. He brought energy and charisma to his set. He even got out into the crowd for two songs, singing with fans draped around him. And he finished his set by inviting some children up to the stage to help him sing “Say Hey.”

I was very impressed with that. I guarantee he earned plenty of new fans that night for the simple reason

that he seized an opportunity and made the most of it. I’ll think of that the next time I could get away with just “phoning it in.” I’ll channel Michael Franti and dig deep and think to myself: ‘how many new fans can I win tonight?’

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.

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: Small Claims Court.

Having to go to small claims court is a part of our judicial system that no one likes to do but it helps

the little guy get a fair, legal and equal treatment against those who have done them wrong. Here are a few suggestions to help you with your case

1) If you are taking a client to court or they are taking you to court it will most often be for a breach of contract. The most important part of a breach of contract case is the contract itself. To help you in this area always use a contract written by a lawyer who is well versed in entertainment contracts. The contract needs to be well written, but also simple enough for the common person (client) to read and understand. Without this you are really gambling with your business future. If/when you find yourself in court it most likely will be because the client cancelled the event but doesn't want to pay the remaining balance.

2) HAVE A SOLID CANCELLATION CLAUSE. When you are with your clients, before they sign the contract, read this clause out loud to them and explain why you have this in your contract. Make sure they understand that there really is NO REASON that they will not have to make payment in full if the event is terminated. If your cancellation clause has loop holes or is hard to understand, this gives the defendant a chance to win. When you read it out loud to them then they can not claim they had no knowledge or understanding of the clause.

3) Go to court properly dressed and on time. Look and dress professional and be early. You can learn things from watching other cases. If you act confident and your client sees this, if they are a little worried or unsure it can help to drop their confidence and possibly cause them to lose their cool

or to pay up prior to the case being heard.

4) Before your case will start, the court will give the defendant and plaintiff time to talk about possibly settling without seeing the judge. Stick to your contract, that is why you are there. They forced you to appear in court, now force them to stand in front of a judge. Be confident and professional. Use the fear of court against them. Sometimes they will crumble and pay up.

5) Be very respectful to the judge - refer to as "Your Honor." Be a business person and not the stereo typical clown DJ that is the image we unfortunately have in society.

6) Do not let emotions get in the way. Be factual, be specific and be detailed. Only speak when it is your turn, do not speak over the other party or the Judge. Do not interject while anyone else is speaking. WAIT YOUR TURN! Let the other party mess up, get emotional and speak over you and the judge. Judges hate this!

7) NEVER talk directly to the other party or answer statements or questions opposed by them unless the judge asks you to. Many times each party is allowed to ask questions before the ruling. Have a list of questions prepared that would cause them to disclose your points and let the court know they knew of the clause and the requirement of payment. Like playing chess use their own words to show that they are lying, changing previous statements or knew what your contract reads.

8) Tell the court that your dates/service are your inventory, once a client signs the agreement that date/service is set aside for them and only them. You get many calls for dates/service that are booked and have to turn down other potential clients because the client put down a deposit to retain you and only you for their event.

9) The deposit/retainer of which they paid is only a small portion of the costs you incur for running your business. The total amount is needed from each event booked to successfully operate your business. Let the judge know you rely on your DJ income to pay your monthly business as well as personal bills just as the other party expects to get a check every week from his/her employer. Do this without sounding like an jerk, just state facts with no emotions.

10) Have every piece of evidence with you. Copies of contracts, The amount of music (receipts) you had to purchase for their event, the time spent planning their event, the times/dates/locations of meetings, phone calls and e-mails with the client...etc.. to show you weren't just sitting around doing nothing. Have actual evidence. You can't say "I did this" without any proof.

11) Only ask for the remaining balance of the contract. Do not try to tack on lost work time from a day job or legal fees. This is a big red flag to judges. They hate that. If you win you will get the amount owed and the court filing fee charges will be added onto the ruling.

12) Take both the bride and groom to court, not just one or the other. If both of their signatures are on the contract (as it should be) then take them both. The judge may feel it is unfair to sue just the bride (grooms are more likely not to show up) which gives the bride a soft spot in the judges heart (even though they are suppose to rule according to law and not emotions) If the case continues without one of the parties and the bride/groom loses, then she/he will have to take the missing person to court at a later date to collect their portion of the bill.

13) You have to go in with the train of thought "What would the client have done if I bailed out on them at the last minute?" You can even use this as part of your reasoning why you should be paid in full. Say to the judge "If the party would have gone on as scheduled, and I would not have showed up we would be sitting here but with the plaintiffs suing me for ruining their day and it would have been a bigger lawsuit then just the costs of this contract" - Again, do not sound arrogant, just state facts.

14) Check your states laws about the location the lawsuit will be heard. Some states it is in the county court where the business resides, sometimes it can be where the event was to take place and some may be in the city/county of the residents of the defendants.

15) If they do not show up you still will have to plead your case to the

judge but because the defendant did not show it is like pleading "Guilty" and 99.99% of the time it is a win automatically in your favor. The same goes for you if you do not show up. Don't get cocky with the judge. You still need to be completely honest and professional. The court will send them out a official notice of their loss and the amount owed as well as a due date for the payment.

16) If for any reason they decide not to pay as ordered, then there is another process to file and follow as soon as it is available to you. Don't let it slide. The law is on your side.

Small claims courts are designed to right the wrong. Breaking of contracts is an everyday common occurrence in small claims. Have faith in your court systems. If you lose it's not because the courts are against you, it's because your contract wasn't good enough or you did/said something that turned the case.

If you really want to know about your specific court system, you can do some research at the court house about the judge you are assigned, the percentage of breach of contracts that the judge rules for/against and why. This may help you build a rock solid case.

I hope this helps anyone who is going to small claims court. Let me remind you that I AM NOT A LAWYER, I am a Disc Jockey. These are only suggestions and can vary depending on where you live and your individual circumstances. This is not an implied guarantee to winning a case but mere ideas to help you. Jeff Richards and the Disc Jockey News can not be held liable for anything stated within, your individual court outcome or any legal situation you may find yourself in and should be noted as such.

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

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Closing The Reluctant Bride

By Rick Brewer, GetMoreBrides.com

For many years, part of my trained sales pitch was “You need to be in my wedding magazine because you are part of a ‘must buy’ industry”. The fact is most brides would buy the product or service I was pitching to, but what I did not take time to relate to was the point of view of the bride (purchaser) or the point of view of the business (the seller).



This becomes key in understanding the reluctance of the bride to purchase a product or service which in many weddings, she has determined she would not

go without. The fact is, that in most case, the bride “must” buy, the thing is she this “must” buy doesn’t have to be with you. Let’s talk about how to fix that.

Here is what I mean: A bride decides that she is at the point of talking to a photographer about taking pictures for her wedding. She knows she has to get a photographer and has decided with her fiancé that they are getting a good photographer. She shows up to speak with the photographer and here’s what happens next:

1) 20% of the brides book on the spot (your closing ration may be higher, but based upon what have heard in speaking to many photographers, this is the norm. It also depends upon how

many other vendors they have seen. If you can position yourself as the third vendor they see, your closing ratio will grow)

2) 80% delay the decision even though this photographer meets every requirement that she and her fiancé have set. For one or more reasons they want to “think it over” or “sleep on it”.

Why does this happen? Two reason. In many cases it is plain and simple sticker shock, She has never spent that much money on photography before in her life. In most cases it is because of the photographer skills and ability (by the way, I am not just picking on the photographers -it happens across the board in every industry).

Let me get inside your mind for a minute. What happens when you get a quote for something that you rarely have ever had done? Let’s say you are getting a new roof for your house. In most cases, you put on a roof and it lasts you for 15-20 years, so put inflation into the mix and you don’t regularly get quotes for a new roof. The estimate person comes to your house, climbs around on your roof for 10 minutes, pokes at the eaves with their hammer and then comes down and spend 15 minutes in their car writing an estimate (or if they are a bad salesperson, they tell you they will fax it to you). You get the estimate: \$6,000. The estimator goes on to say that your decking needs replacing because there is some rot and the fascia board is also deteriorating and the cost of roof shingles has just gone up due to import taxes

from China, yada, yada, yada (by the way, I don’t mean to infer that this is a bogus quote, but many times that is how you feel -correct?). You first reaction is to balk at the price because psychologically you are put in a position of stress (you are not thinking of protecting your property right then; you are thinking of draining your bank account or running up your Visa and there goes that Caribbean Cruise next spring). The first reaction of the typical estimator is to say,

“How about you think about it for a few days and I will get back to you”. Let’s face it the only person thinking about it after he leaves is him because you want to take yourself away from the pain of spending your “pleasure” or “fun” money for something not so pleasurable or fun.

Now let’s get back to the bride - she wants (or you can say needs) the photography but she is reluctant to buy and the photographer (in most cases) is reluctant to sell. Why? Because the last thing anyone wants to be is “pushy.” As a business owner your habits as a consumer creep in. Here is a Very important statement for you to realize:

You sell like you buy and you buy like you sell.

If you put off buying decisions, you will allow you brides to do the same. By being indecisive, you will find yourself identifying and saying in the innermost regions of your mind “Hey, I think like that. I would probably do the same thing.” You would then promptly let her off the hook and while she “thinks if over” you have just lost a customer.

I want you to think about the last 10 “Think About It’s.” How many of them actually came back and bought? Stud-

ies show that 9 out of 10 “Think about it’s” never come back. Here is a follow up I will ask when this comes up with me: *Just to make sure I’ve covered my bases, what are the top items that you need to review before you make your decision?*

There are other items to the sale that need to be there before she will buy. Here are the top three:

The right decision maker- if you don’t get all of them to the appointment, getting the sale will be rough at best. Making sure the budget matches the priority - this is different than simply asking “how much did you plan on spending?” Making sure the personalities match up, this is particularly true with vendors who provide services rather than products. A great personality will trump talent almost every day.

Learn to meet the bride where it matters to her and on the items that matter to her and you will be able to start to overcome Bridal Buying Reluctance.

Until nex time, here’s to your success!

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

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What They Don't Teach You In School

By Harvey Mackay

A college education is valuable, and I salute all the graduates who are heading out into the wonderful world of work. A degree is an important step toward career achievement.

But a sheepskin doesn't guarantee success. Without taking anything away from the value of higher education, some pretty famous "dropouts" have made the grade in business. For example:

• Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics Inc., had no college education at all.

• Sir Richard Branson, owner of the Virgin Brand of 360 companies, dropped out of school at age 16.

• Simon Cowell, American Idol host and music executive, left college early and eventually landed in the mailroom of a music publishing company.

• Barry Diller, chairman and CEO of IAC/InterActiveCorp, which owns Home Shopping Network, Ticketmaster, Match.com, and other companies, dropped out of UCLA after one semester.

• Kirk Kerkorian, real estate investor worth approximately \$15 billion, left school in eighth grade.

• Ralph Lauren, fashion designer, dropped out of business school after two years.

• Rachael Ray, celebrity chef and TV personality, started her adult career working at Macy's candy counter.

• And the most famous Harvard dropout of all is Bill Gates, Microsoft mogul and philanthropist extraordinaire.

What common trait do they all share? The #1 attribute that employers look for: initiative. They all took ideas and put them into action. Some had a little experience that they translated into big busi-

ness. Others trusted their gut instincts and went out on a limb. The best education money can buy won't necessarily include a class on initiative. So, dear graduates, hone this skill, because you will be competing against people whose formal education can't match yours -- but their go-getter attitude will propel them to the top.

As my friend, the late Jim Rohn said: "Formal education will make you a living. Self-education will make you a fortune."

One of the best compliments I can give when writing a reference letter is that the person takes initiative. Translation: the willingness to at least try, to take a risk, to give it their absolute best shot. When I recommend someone in those terms, a light goes on for the prospective employer.

Initiative is not a promise of perfect results. Sometimes it results in failure. Sometimes, a satisfactory, but not remarkable, outcome. Other times, the effort ends in a smashing success. An employee who can step up to the plate three runs down in the bottom of the ninth with bases loaded and two batters out, and envision a grand slam instead of a pop fly is the kind of player I want on my team. That employee will wait for just the right pitch and send it over the fence.

Don't worry if you weren't born knowing how to take initiative -- it can be learned. In fact, a lot of us learn it the hard way, getting stuck in a rut and trying to dig our way out. At some point, frustration sets in and we decide to take charge of the situation.

If that sounds like a challenge you are ready for, prepare yourself to:

• Be creative. Consider different ways to approach the work you do. Brainstorm with your team, or lacking a large group, brainstorm by yourself. Write down even the most unconventional and seemingly impossible solutions. Always, always be open to new ideas.

• Learn new skills. Identify what you want or need to learn to improve your

worth. Set a goal to master a new skill with every project. It doesn't matter if that means learning another language or understanding a computer application. Just get yourself in the habit of adapting to the situation so you can be ready to contribute.

• Do the legwork. You want to convince people your idea will work? Hit them with facts. Do your homework. Find supporting research. Talk to co-workers.

• Don't sit on your ideas. Speak up if you have the idea and the supporting facts to back it up. Volunteer to lead the team or do the project yourself. Let your supervisors and co-workers know you are willing to take responsibility

and evaluate progress, changing course if necessary.

• Try, try again. If your one idea didn't get an ok, don't be discouraged. Keep looking for other ideas, or reinvent your idea to overcome objections. Demonstrate your willingness to adapt.

Mackay's Moral: *When you take initiative, there's no telling where it will take you.*

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



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RISK, It's Not Just A Board Game

By Dean Carlson

I don't know about you, but when I was younger I loved games of all kinds; Monopoly, Chutes and Ladders, Life, Checkers. My favorite was Dungeons and Dragons — yes, I am that geek.



But the game I was best at was Risk, by Parker Brothers. I knew where the best place to start was, how to amass my troops, and just how far to

push them so other players couldn't just sweep me back. Real life is not so unlike the game of Risk.

What I have found is that unlike the game, when it really matters, when we are in the place of risk, we as people usually fold and take the safe way out. Is it the fear of failure, or the uncertainty of the unknown? Maybe we have others that are relying on us, so they would also be involved in this risk action? And maybe we moved into an age group where reason seems to outweigh risk. Whatever it is, something is stopping us.

The question then becomes can we afford, physically, emotionally and mentally to not take risks? I would say that we take risks everyday and don't even know it. Ever have to drive home late at night, say after a show on Saturday night? Simply doing that you are at risk of hitting critters like the bear I almost hit last night, or even at risk of a drunk driver jumping lanes. So, we have to learn how to transfer our willingness to take acceptable risks onto the plane of risks with greater value.

I know all about risks. I have stepped up my risk-taking a major notch in my life this year. As of February 1st I left a job that was a perfect fit for me, and moved to a new city 140 miles away. My old job paid the bills and then some for the last 6 years. I had great people around me, and

I was given a lot of respect from those I knew. Why would I choose this time to risk everything in my life and start my own business? The economy has been bad for the last two years, and I only had about three months of living expenses in my savings account. One answer I found came from this quote by T.S. Eliot, "Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go." And a second answer came from my dad, who told me that if I never try I will never truly succeed. The Dalai Lama once said "Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk."

I would like to tell you about a friend of mine, Julie Pearce, who I think is probably one of the most courageous people I have ever met. She is about 27 years old; she was attending nursing school at the University of Minnesota, Duluth and she was the weekend news anchor for the NBC station in Duluth. Then the earthquake hit Haiti. Sitting in the news room, reporting what was happening, she was completely floored by what was NOT happening in Haiti. She made a decision then that not only changed her life, but that of thousands of people. She grabbed risk by the hand and ran with it. She quit her news anchor job, left school and without any formal plans she was off to Haiti to help. Not knowing what would happen, but knowing that the risk was outweighed by human need, knowing that doing nothing was also making a decision. She is a hero in my book, because she took action where many people would say 'I can't', when in reality yes, you can.

There are many different levels of risk. We as mobile DJs already have mastered one; we speak in public which most people can't do. And yet I see and hear about so many areas in which we still need work. When is the last time you gave video of your show to another DJ for them to review your work? How about to another DJ in your market? Are you still part time, and could you take it to full time? When was the last time you raised your rates? And have you ever raised them up to a livable income level?

Everyone has a different motivation to

tackle risk in their life. For me other people motivate me, like my friend Julie. And sometimes a quote from someone else will wake me up. This is one of my favorites:

*To laugh is to risk appearing a fool
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental*

To reach out for another is to risk involvement

To expose feeling is to risk exposing your true self

To place your ideas, your dreams before the crowd is to risk their loss

To love is to risk not being loved back in return

To live is to risk dying

To hope is to risk despair

To try is to risk failure

But risk must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing. The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing and is nothing. Good luck and risk better shows!

Dean Carlson can be reached at dean-carlson@discjockeynews.com.

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The Referral Coach

By Matt Anderson

Walter Bond's Six Business and Life Fundamentals

Recently I was fortunate to present at an event that also featured motivational speaker Walter Bond. What impressed me most was the amount of substance in his presentation to take home. Here is my interpretation of his message:

1. Address the flaws in your scouting report

Bond used to play in the NBA. For each player he faced, there was a two-part scouting report. Part One covered their physical attributes and skills. Part Two summarized their mental and psychological strengths and weaknesses: did this person give up if he was shut down in the first half? How often did he come through in clutch situations? Under what circumstances did he get discouraged?

What would your spouse, typical client and/or employer's "scouting report"

say about you? How would you rate yourself when it comes to self-discipline? Follow up? Persistence? Listening for understanding? Kindness?

2. Be confident and openly accept constructive criticism

The one thing he said he missed about being in the NBA was that "I was around 15 people who were thoroughly convinced they were the best in the world at what they did."

These 15 people knew they were not perfect however, and to get even better they had to be coachable. We all know we are not perfect and yet most of us do not handle constructive criticism well. This does not make sense if you think about it. If we want to improve in a relationship or in business and we know we are not perfect, would it not be in our best interests to welcome guidance?

Our society frowns on confidence too often. Confidence is a powerful skill we all need. Having plenty of it helps us listen to ways we can get better.

3. Pass the Eyeball Test

When it comes to how you look in business, "pay attention to every single detail." Looking the part matters: look like success; look like money. This is

why so many accomplished people emphasize the importance of preparation – putting in the time to have everything look polished from your appearance to your materials.

The same is true for putting in the research before you show up. Bond shares how the college coach that recruited him (Minnesota) won over his parents based largely on how much he knew about their backgrounds when they first met.

4. Rainmakers in sales are connectors: be known, liked and trusted by everyone in your marketplace.

Rather than try to impress prospects with facts and figures, CONNECT with them on a personal level. Given that all other things are equal, we like to do business with people we know, LIKE and trust. Keep this in mind when you are out networking next – being interested in others is far more important than trying to be interesting. Remember be-do-have? Be that person first. Then do what it takes so you can have what you want.

5. Create your own offseason

In the NBA this was the time to get bigger, stronger and faster. If it works so well for professional athletes, why don't we all carve out such time to be more effective? Even if it is one day/month to work on your professional development.

6. Carve out a niche.

The more you are seen as a specialist, the easier it is for others to think of you when a need arises. Since Bond was not a well-known pro athlete, he has positioned himself as a great speaker to have when a company cannot afford a Brett Favre or Payton Manning.

Between these six points are a tremendous amount of ideas that can make a marked difference for you. I hope you pick out two or three things to act on.

Matt Anderson, of the Referral Authority, has grown his business exclusively by referrals, relationship building, and networking. He specializes in coaching sales professionals how to network effectively and build a referral-based business.

Recent clients include Prudential Financial, US Bank, Virginia Asset Management, State Farm Insurance, and MetLife. He is the author of the upcoming book Fearless Referrals and is regular contributing author to one of the best known resource for financial advisors: Horsesmouth.com and has recorded several corporate training videos for New York Life on referrals and networking. He lives in Madison, WI but hails from Coventry, England, consistently voted home of Western Europe's Most Unfriendly and Least Intelligent People as well as the Best Place to Get Beaten Up in Broad Daylight.

Gear Review: New Lights

By Kirk Holslin

As I stated last month, Spring is the time of year when new gear arrives at our favorite gear shop. I headed to one of my favorite retail locations in St Paul to see what new LED lights have arrived since last month.

LED lights have been a game changer within the mobile DJ industry. Minimal power consumption, DMX for great color options, and relative low cost are a couple of factors for their success.

One trait of the LED Par systems has had me puzzled. Why build a par can fixture with all of the void space inside? The space within a conventional par can is needed for the light bulbs. To me, it doesn't make sense to have that wasted space within a fixture. Well it appears that someone at Chauvet has been reading my mind and created the Slim56 Par.

Measuring only 2 inches thick and 9 inches across the Slim56 Par goes where other par cans cannot. One of the more obvious uses would be as a truss warmer. Its slim profile allows it to be placed within a piece of truss section with and be almost invisible. I'm sure there are many creative people who are reading this that could find some alternative locations too.

Obviously, the light can be used as a traditional fixture on a light tree. Its double bracket yoke enables it to be set on the floor. There was an unforeseen benefit when using this fixture on the floor as a basic up-light. The DMX connectors have plenty of clearance between the fixture and the floor. I have had issues with other models of LED par cans where the DMX connectors would not allow me to shine the light straight up. The other lights would need to be set at a slight angle. The Slim56 can pivot along a greater range

of motion.

Here are a few of the features from the Chauvet website.

- There are 108 RGB LEDs within the fixture
- The Slim56 can be set to static colors and RGB color mixing with or without a DMX controller
- It can use 3 or 7 DMX channels
- Built-in automated programs via master/slave or DMX with variable speed
- Built-in sound active programs via master/slave or DMX
- Connect up to 46 units @ 120 volts
- 21 degree beam angle
- 2.7 pounds

I prefer the "less is more" mentality when performing formal events. I am impressed with what this light can do for its size.

The starting price point for this fixture is around \$140.

When looking at some of the other new fixtures, Chauvet's Mayhem caught my eye. The design of the chassis is well balanced and rather sleek.

The Mayhem is a dual-barrel, 7 channel, DMX LED scanner. It creates multicolored beams of lights with 6 high-power 3 watt RGB LEDs. The Mayhem offers individual control of each color, strobing, motor direction and speed on both sides. The built-in sound-activated and automated programs operate with or without a DMX controller.

Here are a few of the features from the Chauvet website.

- Coverage angle 79 degrees
- Light source 6 LEDs (2 red, 2 green, 2 blue)
- Weight 6 pounds
- Connect up to 25 units @ 120 volts
- Auto power switching 100V – 240V

50/50Hz

I firmly believe that most DJs will not take the time to program each of their fixtures into their light controller to create a unique light show. Most DJs (myself included) are going to setup the fixture to one of the built-in sound-activated settings and connect it to a controller.

The reason I mention this is based on how the Mayhem operates in sound-active mode. The dual-barrels and bright LEDs combine to form a "sweeping" effect across the dance floor. The lights move back and forth to the music. If the music is off or set at a low level, the Mayhem will still provide a basic changing dance effect.

I wasn't too impressed with the effect Mayhem had when it was operating from its built-in programs. The lights moved back and forth and changed color to the music. I've sure that if one took the time to program a few scenes into their

light controller or mastered the 7 DMX channels while mixing music it could provide a better show. As I mentioned, most DJs are not going to make the effort to do this.

On a positive note, the colors were very bright and I was impressed with the "basic" light show when the music was set to a low level.

The starting price point for this fixture is around \$150.

As a quick side note, dance light effects provide a better show with fog/haze.

Next month I will be taking a close look at Jukebox Jockey, a computer based music/video playback system.

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



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Lessons From Disney: Saving The House Where The Mouse Was Born

By Ron Ruth

In May I was asked to present “Disney’s 3 Keys To Success” to a group of mostly retired motion picture theatre executives at the Screenland Theatre, very near to downtown Kansas City. The Screenland is also located adjacent to an area that was known as “film row” from the early 1900’s through the 1980’s. It’s name was derived from the number of offices along a central corridor that were occupied by most of the major film companies and movie theatre chains of the time.

The Screenland Theatre has most recently become the epicenter for a local movement to restore Walt Disney’s original, 1921, animation headquarters, Laugh O’ Gram Studios. That building, located in mid-town Kansas City was doomed to destruction a few years ago but has been saved and partially salvaged by local volunteers that are a part of a not-for-profit group called “Thank You Walt Disney.”

The plan of “TYWD” is to restore the Laugh O’ Gram Studio site and turn it into a learning center and museum. But, because their efforts rely on donations, the group is still a few years and several hundreds of thousands of dollars away from realizing their vision.

As the home of the “TYWD” movement, the Screenland Theatre has become something of a mini-museum with photos and information regarding Walt Disney’s youthful years in Kansas City, beginning a decade after the turn of the 19th century. The historic information was not only the back drop to my presentation, it reveals lessons in business that Disney learned the hard way.

Walt Disney lived in Kansas City at two different times in his life; from 1911 (when he was 9 years old) until 1917 and, again, from 1919 to 1922. The second time was, arguably, the most influential time of his vast career.

At the conclusion of World War I in 1919, 17 year old Walt Disney was already a very talented artist that had studied at both the Kansas City and Chicago Art Institutes. He returned to Kansas City after serving in the Red Cross in France with the hope of finding work as a political caricaturist or cartoonist. With neither position available, Walt’s brother, Roy, who worked at a local bank, found him a temporary job creating ads for periodicals and movie theatres. It was there that Walt would meet cartoonist, Ubbe Iwerks, another individual that became well known in the world of animation.

When their temp jobs came to an end, Walt and Ubbe tried their hand at starting a commercial art business. But, times were tough and customers were few. Walt needed money to survive and was forced to leave his business to work as an artist for the Kansas City Film Ad Service Company. Iwerks eventually joined him. Walt’s work at Film Ad introduced him to the art of animation. And, with a borrowed camera and a book on the topic of animation that he

checked out of the Kansas City public library, Disney began to experiment with this new medium on his own time.

In 1920, an imaginative and industrious, 18 year old Disney believed he was ready to start his own animation company. He set up shop in the second story of a building located in midtown Kansas City. With the assistance of only one employee, Walt worked a deal with a local theatre owner to show his cartoons in his movie theatres. The cartoons proved to be very popular and it wasn’t long before Disney was able to hire a number of talented animators, including Ubbe Iwerks, to come work for him. In 1921, things were going so well for his company that Disney incorporated Laugh O’ Gram Studios.

But, between the high salaries Walt was paying his artists and his inability to make a profit on his studio’s expensively produced cartoons, plus his ineptness as a money manager, it wasn’t long before Laugh O’ Grams was bogged down in debt.

During the days of late 1921 and early 1922, Walt’s ability to pay rent for housing was sporadic at best and he’d often take up residence in the Laugh O’ Gram Studios’ office. Walt was broke and would trade his artistic talent for meals that he would eat at his desk. At times a crumb or two would fall to the floor. Those tiny morsels became a feast to a small mouse that was living behind a hole in the wall of the studio.

Walt was amused by the little creature and would, on occasion, intentionally leave a trail of bread crumbs for the mouse to follow, just so he could observe him. Years later, as you can imagine, film lore would credit that rodent as the origin for Disney’s most recognized character...Mickey Mouse.

In 1922, Disney’s Laugh O’ Gram Studios could no longer withstand the strain of its debt and Walt filed for bankruptcy, just before heading to California to become the most successful, animated film producer of all time.

There are at least three lessons to be learned from Walt Disney’s time in Kansas City.

First, just because one does not succeed at something the first time does not make them a failure. In fact, Disney had many business pitfalls throughout his life that, through his own tenacity, he was able to overcome.

Hard economic times are no excuse to quit trying. Although the early 1920’s were tough on Walt and his business ventures, what he learned from those adversities helped his California studio maintain a steady course through the great depression a few years later. It

also didn’t hurt that the creative influence that evolved from that little mouse at the Laugh O’ Gram Studios had now become his biggest star.

Finally, inspiration can sneak up on you in the most peculiar ways and may

You Walt Disney” effort to “save the house where the mouse was born.” Please visit www.thankyouwaltdisney.org. On their web site, you’ll also find a wide variety of cool merchandise. Proceeds from your purchase, of course, will further advance the restoration of the historic, Laugh O’ Gram Studios.

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.



come from the least likely sources. Like Disney, we are creative souls that can find success through quiet observation of life’s smallest details and by embracing our imagination as one of our most productive tools. What good fortune might you find behind your hole in the wall?

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Pop

- 1 Taio Cruz
- 2 B.o.B.
- 3 Ke\$ha
- 4 Usher
- 5 Rihanna
- 6 Train
- 7 Lady Gaga
- 8 Jason Derulo
- 9 Script
- 10 B.o.B.
- 11 La Roux
- 12 Lady Antebellum
- 13 Jay-Z
- 14 Katy Perry
- 15 Travie McCoy
- 16 Black Eyed Peas
- 17 Sean Kingston & J.Bieber
- 18 Selena Gomez
- 19 Kevin Rudolf
- 20 Shontelle

- Break Your Heart
- Nothin' On You
- Your Love Is My Drug
- OMG
- Rude Boy
- Hey, Soul Sister
- Alejandro
- In My Head
- Breakeven
- Airplanes
- Bulletproof
- Need You Now
- Young Forever
- California Gurls
- Billionaire
- Rock That Body
- Eenie Meenie
- Naturally
- I Made It
- Impossible

Urban

- 1 Drake
- 2 Alicia Keys
- 3 B.o.B.
- 4 Ludacris
- 5 Usher F/ N.Minaj
- 6 Rihanna
- 7 Young Jeezy
- 8 Trey Songz
- 9 DJ Khaled
- 10 T.I.
- 11 Dondria
- 12 Monica
- 13 Black Eyed Peas
- 14 Usher
- 15 Young Money
- 16 Drake
- 17 Lloyd Banks
- 18 Teairra Mari
- 19 Plies
- 20 Maxwell

- Over
- Un-Thinkable
- Nothin' On You
- My Chick Bad
- Lil Freak
- Rude
- Lose My Mind
- Neighbors Know My Name
- All I Do Is Win
- I'm Back
- You're The One
- Everything To Me
- Imma Be
- There Goes My Baby
- Roger That
- Find Your Love
- Beamer, Benz Or Bentley
- Sponsor
- She Got It Made
- A Fistful Of Tears

Country

- 1 Chris Young
- 2 George Strait
- 3 Miranda Lambert
- 4 Steel Magnolia
- 5 Joe Nichols
- 6 Rascal Flatts
- 7 Jason Aldean
- 8 Clay Walker
- 9 Brad Paisley
- 10 Luke Bryan
- 11 Reba McEntire
- 12 Martina McBride
- 13 Justin Moore
- 14 Jerrod Niemann
- 15 Eric Church
- 16 Carrie Underwood
- 17 Jaron
- 18 Toby Keith
- 19 Lee Brice
- 20 Blake Shelton

- The Man I Want To Be
- I Gotta Get To You
- The House That Built Me
- Keep On Lovin' You
- Gimmie That Girl
- Unstoppable
- Crazy Town
- She Won't Be Lonely Long
- Water
- Rain Is A Good Thing
- I Keep On Loving You
- Wrong Baby Wrong
- Backwoods
- Lover, Lover
- Hell On The Heart
- Undo It
- Pray For You
- Every Dog Has Its Day
- Love Like Crazy
- All About Tonight

Rock

- 1 Stone Temple Pilots
- 2 Ozzy Osborne
- 3 Alice In Chains
- 4 Godsmack
- 5 Three Days Grace
- 6 Breaking Benjamin
- 7 Shinedown
- 8 Three Days Grace
- 9 Slipknot
- 10 Scorpions
- 11 Rolling Stones
- 12 Puddle Of Mudd
- 13 Drowning Pool
- 14 Vince Neil
- 15 Breaking Benjamin
- 16 Slash
- 17 Deftones
- 18 Saving Abel
- 19 Sick Puppies
- 20 Five Finger Death Punch

- Between The Lines
- Let Me Hear You Scream
- Your Decision
- Cryin' Like A Bitch
- The Good Life
- I Will Not Bow
- The Crow & The Butterfly
- Break
- Snuff
- Raised On Rock
- Plundered My Soul
- Stoned
- Feel Like I Do
- Tattoos And Tequila
- Give Me A Sign
- By The Sword
- Diamond Eyes
- Stupid Girl (Only In Hollywood)
- Odd One
- Walk Away

Adult Contemporary

- 1 Lady Antebellum
- 2 Train
- 3 Kelly Clarkson
- 4 Colbie Caillat
- 5 Michael Buble
- 6 Rob Thomas
- 7 Uncle Kracker
- 8 Kris Allen
- 9 John Mayer
- 10 Adam Lambert
- 11 Daughtry
- 12 Taylor Swift
- 13 Owl City
- 14 Script
- 15 Lady Gaga
- 16 Miley Cyrus
- 17 Lifehouse
- 18 Nickelback
- 19 Lady Gaga
- 20 Lady Gaga

- Need You Now
- Hey, Soul Sister
- Already Gone
- Fallin' For You
- Haven't Met You Yet
- Someday
- Smile
- Live Like We're Dying
- Heartbreak Warfare
- Whataya Want From Me
- Life After You
- Fifteen
- Fireflies
- Breakeven
- Paparazzi
- When I Look At You
- Halfway Gone
- Never Gonna Be Alone
- Bad Romance
- Telephone

Alternative

- 1 Dirty Heads
- 2 Muse
- 3 Thirty Seconds To Mars
- 4 Stone Temple Pilots
- 5 Rise Against
- 6 Silversun Pickups
- 7 Three Days Grace
- 8 Phoenix
- 9 Muse
- 10 Cage The Elephant
- 11 Crash Kings
- 12 Temper Trap
- 13 Neon Trees
- 14 Phoenix
- 15 Jack Johnson
- 16 Civil Twilight
- 17 Breaking Benjamin
- 18 Shinedown
- 19 Deftones
- 20 Broken Bells

- Lay Me Down
- Resistance
- This Is War
- Between The Lines
- Savior
- The Royal We
- The Good Life
- 1901
- Uprising
- In One Ear
- Mountain Men
- Sweet Disposition
- Animal
- Lisztomania
- You And Your Heart
- Letters From The Sky
- Give Me A Sign
- The Crow & The Butterfly
- Diamond Eyes
- High Road

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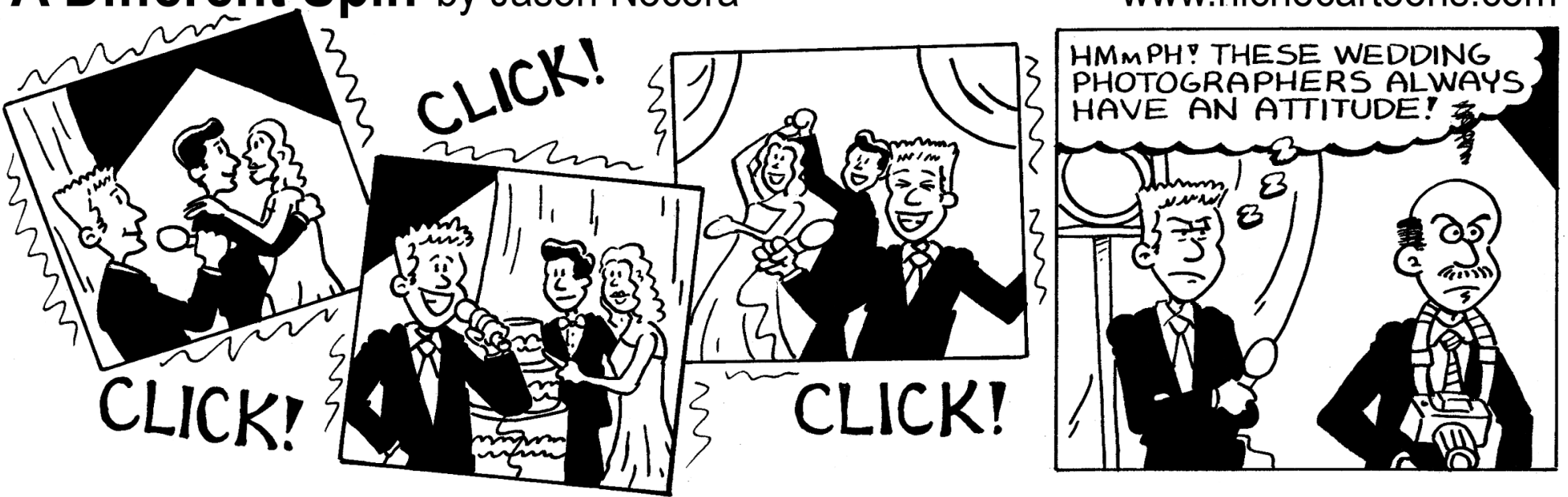
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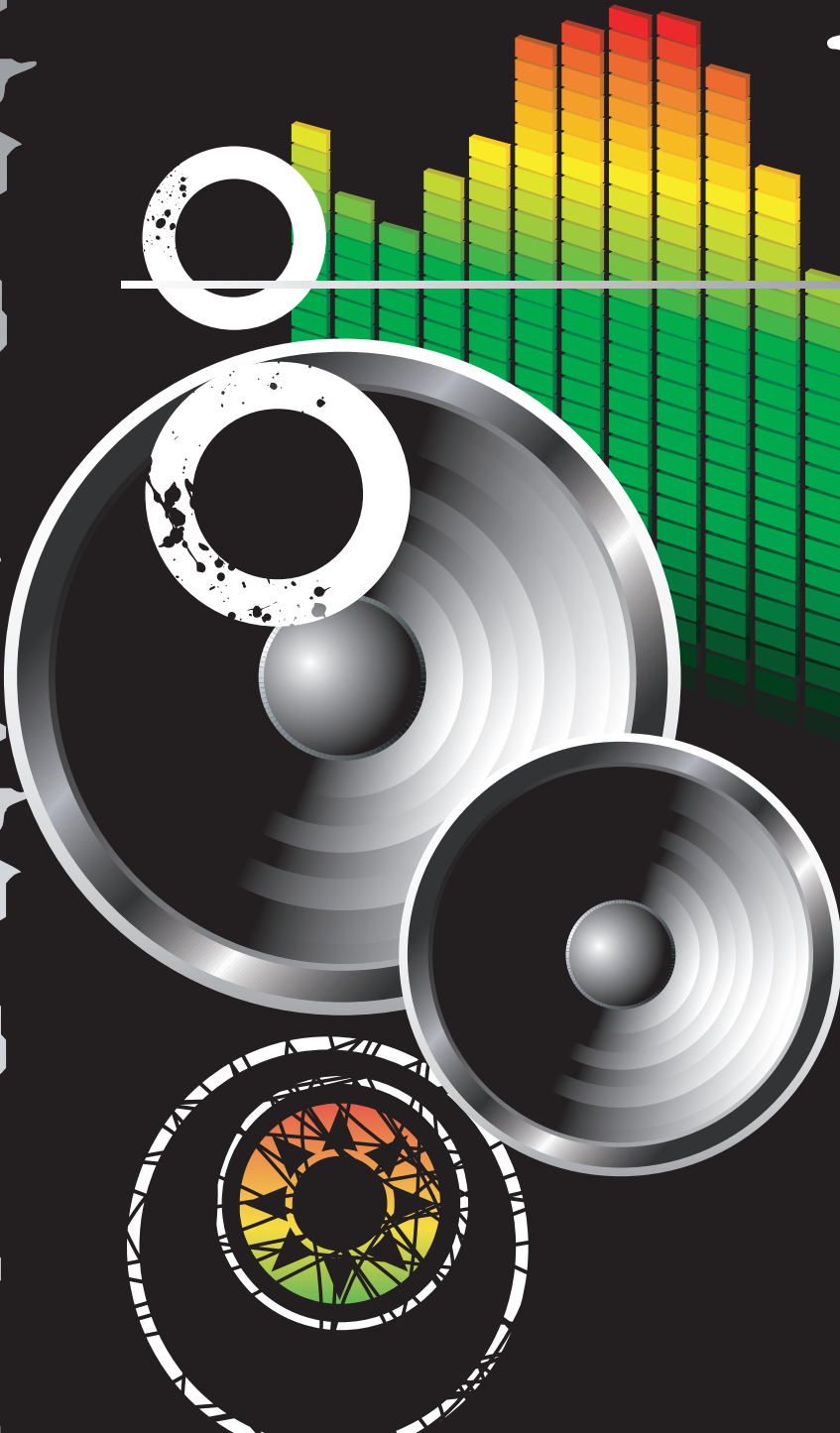


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