Disc Jockey News

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The Q Corner, Where Quality Meets Quantity

By Mike Walter

The Mobile Beat convention this year in Las Vegas was billed as "MBLVXX - Celebrating 20 Years of Mobile Beat." I made my annual trip west hoping for the usual dose of education and inspiration. That's what DJ conventions large and small give me: a double shot of learning and motivation. Overall, I was not disappointed, although like any convention there were some "hits" and also some "misses". I'll use that criteria as I recap the week.

HIT: Randy Bartlett's seminar "Behind The Scenes." This was the highlight of the week for me by far. Mr. Bartlett's main message was how smooth things can look in your performance if, and when you do the proper preparation in advance. He had some great videos that supported his case both in the good and the bad extremes. "The advantage of taking care of things behind the scenes," Bartlett said, "is you increase the likelihood of things going well at your events . If your only goal in the planning stage is to avoid blame for things going wrong at your events, you don't understand the importance of preparation and how it can lead to better events and more referrals." Bartlett's best point was when he said, "The guests want to feel that it's real." Along with the awesome seminar, Randy has added yet another great DVD to his 1% Solution oeuvre. You can get your copy by visiting www.dj1percentsolution.com

MISS: Keynote speaker Ted DiBiase-WWE's "Million Dollar Man". His seminar entitled "Champion in Any Field: The Three C's of Success" was a bit of a disappointment. For a wrestler who was known as an outrageous personality, Mr. DiBiase was a less than inspiring speaker. He regurgitated a lot of famous quotes from historic individuals, but I can Google "inspirational quotes" just like he can. I would have preferred to hear his success story in his own words. Mr. DiBiase did make an excellent point about pursuing one's passion, but recognizing your talents first (meaning: just because I want to be the starting third baseman for The New York Mets, my talent is probably not going to get me there.) My other takeaway from Mr. DiBiase's seminar was his obvious respect and admiration for WWE's founder Vince McMahon. Even his moniker "Million Dollar Man" was Vince McMahon's idea. He clearly still idolizes him. Mr. DiBiase even said at one point, "I love that man". This proves to me what an impact a good leader can have in someone's life.

HIT: Mark Ferrell's seminar "You Only Get One Song." As I've stated in these pages before, I have two criteria for a good seminar: content and presentation. If I get one of the two I'm happy. Mr. Ferrell scored two for two in my book. His message of providing "TLC" (Talent, Love & Care) for his clients resonated with me. I also loved the point he made that "We all 'do' the same thing, it's 'how' we do it that matters." And it was rather humbling when Mr. Ferrell said, "We compete with people like Ryan Seacrest, Oprah, and David Letterman, whom our audiences see everyday. DJ good is not good enough." He encouraged us all to "develop your art form" making the point "As performing artists, your performance is your product."

I've seen Mark Ferrell speak many times before and am always inspired by him. He has achieved such a high level of success in this industry and yet is willing to share so much with his peers. He and his wife offer some great workshops around the country and any DJ would benefit from them. If you're serious about being a performer, I'd encourage you to check them out.

MISS: "Booking Big Gigs" presented by Beth Standlee. Standlee owns a sales training company called TrainerTainment and she is clearly an experienced speaker. She was comfortable on stage and knew her material well, but I have to be honest, it was a bit more basic than I expected based on the title. Maybe it's just a function of how many sales seminars I've seen in the past few years but when someone tells me to "have a website", I roll my eyes and think, "Yeah we've got that, move on!" That said, Standlee's claim that she "shopped" ten DJ companies in preparation for her seminar and only three even returned her call proves that maybe a majority of our industry still needs to learn some "basics" of running a business and doing sales.

HIT: Breaking bread with friends and industry peers. John Young, my esteemed publisher, hosted a Disc Jockeys News Writers Dinner that I was thrilled to attend. I also enjoyed the W.E.D Guild dinner and a breakfast with my fellow writers on "http://promobileDJ.com". In fact, every meal throughout the week was enjoyed with some industry friend or friends I don't get to see so often. These days social media fools us into thinking we stay in touch with people, but no matter how many Facebook posts I read from my friends, nothing will ever replace sitting across a dining table or bar or black jack table and sharing real together time. That's one of the true benefits of attending.

MISS: The Riviera. It's such a tired, old casino at the far end of the strip. I went to a club in Encore (one of Steve Wynn's properties) one night and the stark difference between leaving Encore and then arriving at The Riv was extreme. I know it's affordable and I've heard the argument that our industry can't support anything better.

I don't pretend to know what it takes to host one of these things, but all that knowledge means nothing when you leave a beautiful, high-end property and arrive back at The Riv.

HIT: Cupid. He performed Tuesday night as part of the American Disc Jockey Customer Appreciation party. I thought he was awesome. He packed the dance floor multiple times with The Cupid Shuffle and other line dances and genuinely seemed appreciative of the support our industry has given him.

MISS: Naughty by Nature. Just another over-the-hill-hip-hop group who thinks cursing at their audience gives them some kind of "street cred." I'm no prude but they exceeded my tolerance for "F Bombs" in the first two minutes of their performance. How about having a hit in the last 15 years before you cop that much attitude.

HIT: Other notable seminars throughout the week. Larry Williams kept a packed room enthralled with his "B SIDES:Secrets to Your Next Success!" Dean Carlson was also effective with his seminar "Prepare to be Great!" And my good friend Jorge Lopez gave a solid and thought-provoking seminar entitled "Peak Performance" that I thoroughly enjoyed.

FOULED OFF: The showroom floor. Not quite a hit but not a miss either, this year's expo floor had the usual assortment of booming speakers and splashy lighting effects. Photo booths are clearly the hottest upgrade du jour and there were a total of

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MBLVXX Photos

From left, top row: Ron Ruth kicks of the MBLVXX show. The party at the top of the Riv. Mitch Taylor presenting in the DJ Event Planner room. Bottom row: Warrant performed on stage. Arnoldo Offermann interviewed by American DJ. Arnoldo performing on the exhibit hall stage.

Send And Defend

By Mitch Taylor

One of the latest swirls in sports revolved around Chicago Bears Quarterback Jay Cutler and his apparent disinterest in the second half of the football game once he was sidelined. Other NFL players sitting at home were "outraged" by his lack of passion and desire to get back on the field to help his team. Many of those NFL players took to their social media accounts, like Twitter and Facebook among others, and criticized the star QB's "toughness". Here's the content of a message Maurice Jones-Drew, running back for the Jacksonville Jaguars, posted on Sunday. "Hey I think the Urban Meyer rule is in effect right now... When the going gets tough..... QUIT".

The next day the media announced Jay Cutler had suffered a sprained MCL.

"I never attacked him, called him soft or a sore loser," Jones-Drew then stated in a telephone interview Monday. "I never questioned his toughness. I think people took my joke out of context. I was taking at shot at Florida fans."

What happened on the field doesn't matter, but what happens in cyberspace does. Your "rep" follows you WHEREVER you go. Once you hit send, you better be prepared to defend. Many players "backtracked" on their words the next day, but the point is that once you express your opinion to EVERYONE on the internet, you can NEVER take it back. Online forums are great for asking for help from your peers, and Facebook is fun socially AND can be a great business tool. The power of the "re-tweet" with Twitter is AMAZING.

I remember one gentleman posted in a recent online forum that he didn't care if a client saw all the negativity he was spewing on the board. If they saw that and didn't hire him then they weren't his client. While I can understand his thought process (somewhat), the fact still remains those are printed words on a page. They lack the emotion, inflection, phrasing, pitch, tone and clarity of your voice. The problem is that this power can also come back and bite you in the tuckus if you're not careful. Yours truly has been guilty of this more than once, and I urge you as a businessperson and someone who cares about your reputation to THINK before you hit send. Your words and reputation will forever be out there. Strive to always make a positive impression.

Send and be prepared to defend. Your words are in black and white for all the world to see. In today's society of emails, text messages, tweets, posts and status updates…EVERYONE can take a look inside your bubble by simply focusing on one little engine. Google.

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 his local Chapter President. Mitch has also earned his Advanced Communicator Bronze and Competent Leadership award in Toastmasters and is a member of WEDGuild. Mitch owns and operates Taylored Weddings in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and can be reached at www.MitchTaylor.net or via email at: mitchtaylor@discjockeynews.com

Talkin' Bride With Tamara

By Tamara Sims

Wow! Have we all recovered from the Mobile Beat Convention in Las Vegas? My head is still spinning from all the information I gathered this year. The biggest question I always have after returning from any convention or seminar is: "How can I implement so many great ideas and concepts into my business?" How many of you have taken pages and pages of notes, purchased every book and DVD from each speaker, vowed that you would improve your performance by at least 1%, and then returned home to your business and nothing changed? As Jorge Lopez shared with us in his closing seminar…we must not only set goals, but we must be specific; we must schedule a "Massive Action Plan" for each goal in order to achieve results. This may feel overwhelming, but with a few steps in place our goals will be achieved in no time.

Create goals you are passionate about! As Jorge stated, "Purpose fuels Passion," and when you are passionate about something you will be driven to achieve your goal. Why create a goal to do more Bar Mitzvahs in 2011, if you are not passionate about doing Mitzvahs? The success rate of achieving your goals will greatly increase if you are excited and motivated. Do what you love and follow your passion.

Create specific goals! How many times have you said "I want to make more money this year?" This is a blanket statement. Don't be afraid to come up with an actual dollar amount or percentage increase. Look at your numbers and really analyze what you need to do to reach your goal. Maybe you need to add more "up sells" or "extra entertainment" to each contract, or hire another sales member so you can schedule more appointments, or hire more talent so you can do more events…whatever it is, you need to create a clear plan.

Share your goals! By sharing your goals with a friend, family member or colleague, you will feel accountable to someone else. As Mike Walter referenced when speaking about running, "if you don't have a partner to push you and challenge you, you are cheating yourself." Having someone who is rooting for you and supporting you will boost your confidence and increase your results.

Don't forget your personal goals! We spend so much time focusing on our business and on our clients that it is easy to forget about life balance and creating personal goals. Every year one of my goals is to have a dedicated day off to spend with my amazing business partner and partner in life, Jay Sims. But until hearing Jorge speak I never put together a plan of action to make this goal a reality. This year I have the steps in place to achieve this goal.

So I leave you with this: What will you start doing to improve your business in 2011? What will you stop doing to improve your business in 2011? And most importantly, how will you achieve your goals?

Please feel free to share your goals 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 East Dundee, IL, which she proudly owns along with her husband Jay Sims. She has over 20 years experience in the wedding industry and loves to create wonderful wedding memories for her brides and grooms. You can contact Tamara at: tamarasims@discjockeynews.com.

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Starting From Scratch

By Jeff Richards

Starting from scratch is a monthly column that will help those new to the Disc Jockey industry. Each article will cover what it takes to be a successful mobile DJ. Today's topic: "DJ vs. DJ" or "You May Not Be a Real DJ".

Last month I wrote how wonderful people like Mark Ferrell, Peter Merry and Randy Bartlett really brought a great change to the industry. They opened up their hearts and souls, teaching DJs ways to be better, smarter and earn more money. These three men, along with many others, turned businesses and lives around, including mine. By listening to their teachings I was able to take my part time hobby and turn it into a full time business. I was able to stop working multiple day jobs to become a full time DJ. As I said, this was a GREAT change for the industry, but at the same time it started an even bigger war amongst disc jockeys. Like the comic book characters Spy vs. Spy, it became a DJ vs. DJ world. These debates have increasingly divided the DJ world into splinters and off shoots of angry, disgruntled DJs who, for whatever reason, believe if you don't do things their way, "You're not a real DJ."

With the internet allowing people to communicate world wide, the local and regional arguments went global. It really began with the introduction of compact discs. The first arguments debated which sounded better, records or CDs - which then created "If you don't use records, you're not a real DJ." Over the years I have heard arguments about everything including: Suit or Tux, Stand or Sit, Eat or don't Eat, Signs or no Signs and of course rates, Too High or Too Low. The industry as a whole cannot agree on simple things such as what is and what isn't professional, and because of these debates it has become a DJs battlefield.

When I first heard Mark Ferrell's "Getting What Your Worth" seminar at a meeting in 2001, I was excited to think there were others like me. People who wanted to earn enough money doing what they love and making a legitimate business out of being a DJ. At that same meeting I heard DJs around me become extremely angry with Mark for sharing his message, claiming he would ruin the industry. In reality the industry grew bigger and better, and even those "Farrell Haters" have profited from others around them raising their rates.

In the Oct. 2010 issue DJN printed the "press release" of a fellow DJ who was bashing what he referred to as "Over Priced DJs." This particular DJ and his "press releases" are well known for their anti-DJ sentiment when it comes to pricing and other subjects. He spread this anger about others who earn more than he does all over the web. He even got into an argument with Peter Merry on Peter's web site. My questions for this DJ, and others who believe as he does, are: Why are you so jealous (scared?) of DJs who earn four to five times the rate you do? Shouldn't this drive you to do better and attempt to earn that kind of pay for doing the same basic thing? No? Instead he and others use the internet to confuse, mislead and lie to brides and grooms as well as other DJs about pricing with his "Top 10 things over priced DJs don't want you to know." The truth is that if Mark, Peter and others all across the globe didn't raise their rates, this angry DJ would still be making less than $200 for a wedding. Unfortunately, it's been well over 10 years that this petty fight has been going on over pricing and it seems it will never stop.

Recently there have been increasing debates on subjects like "If you don't beat mix, you're not a real DJ" - "If you don't use video at events, you're not a real DJ" and "If you don't use (fill in the blank) you're not a real DJ." With the playing fields getting increasingly equal between competition with the ease of electronics and the internet, DJs are squabbling over some of the silliest things. On facebook I recently made a simple comment about a DJ having a sign (skin) for his company on the back of his lap top. I asked a simple question but those who may not understand what true "professionalism" means jumped on the band wagon and began an internet brawl.

You may be asking yourself, what does Mark Ferrell, Peter Merry and others like them have to do with all this uproar and fighting amongst DJs? They started a drive in the industry for DJs to improve; to work harder, closer and smarter with their clients. They inspired many to show real quality and professionalism in their business, and as a result, earn a much higher wage for doing so. This angered some who, for whatever reason, don't want to work hard, have a quality product or be professional. They just want to keep doing the same old thing they have been doing for years.

For these DJs it became an "Us vs. Them" with just about everything. They don't wish to step out of their comfort zone, be legitimate or earn more money. These people (a minority) want to keep the industry in the same place it was in the 80s & 90s (when they started out). They hate the idea of others telling DJs how to… (Fill in the blank) do anything, including making a full time business of what they love to do. I was actually reprimanded on a disc jockey web site just for mentioning the names of Mark and Peter. I eventually was removed from a web site for informing the membership of things that could actually help their businesses instead of minimizing it as others appeared to do. Those in control acted as if they wanted to keep the members businesses down while they themselves built their business up.

Here's a few of my own ideas of what is and isn't a real DJ. (In a Jeff Foxworthy voice)… If you still use police light beacons, if you have your business sign out at weddings, if you eat dinner with the guests…"You May Not Be A Real DJ." If you still wear a tuxedo that looks like it's from the 90s, if you still play the Chicken Dance, Hokey Pokey or the Alley Cat at every wedding, if you still hand out cheesy costumes for the Y.M.C.A… "You May Not Be A Real DJ." If you don't earn a livable wage, if you tell clients you have over 100,000 songs in your music library, if you place poor quality video on youtube, if you complain about others earning more money as a DJ than you… "You May Not Be A Real DJ." If your business is not registered with your Secretary of State, if you're not paying taxes on your DJ business, if you do not follow the teachings of Mark, Peter and Randy… "You May Not Be A Real DJ." If you find yourself getting angry about any of these ideas then… "You May Not Be A Real DJ."

These arguments happen every day on Facebook, DJ chat sites and Youtube and seem to be getting increasingly vicious and violent. Whatever you call it "DJ vs. DJ" – "Part Time vs. Full Time" or "Professional vs. Amateur" as a person who has been in the DJ industry for over 30 years and recently retired, I say "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield." Next month I will be covering the real differences between professional and amateur as well as part time and full time disc jockeys.

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

After The Convention

By Dean Carlson

I haven't any doubt I won't be the only one writing about Mobile Beat Las Vegas this month. After all, this year's conventions was a great success. The parties were fantastic, the networking was priceless and the content was tops.

Sometimes it isn't what happens at the convention that matters the most. It's what happens afterwards, when you get back to the office. Personally, I want to maximize my ROI.

One thing that happens after you have attended conventions all around the country for a few years is you get to know a lot of people. This can lead to many content rich experiences that are not technically on the main schedule. One such experience again this year was Scott Faver's "Breakfast With The Game Master". Amazingly, over 80 people showed up the first day by 7 am.

It was during one of these breakfasts that Scott discussed the first thing we need to do after a convention, and that is take action, or just do something. I know it sounds simple, but ask yourself, what have you done with everything you picked up at the convention? Is it just in your notebook, or laptop or maybe a recording? I have heard it said if you let something you have learned lay idle for three days, you are 80% less likely to do anything with it. Victor Kiam said it best, "Procrastination is opportunity's assassin"

The first thing I do when I get on the plane heading home is re-read my notes. I also listen to any audio I recorded. Then I zero in and add things I might have not have had time to include while the presenters were speaking. I also add notes from discussions with other DJs about the various seminars; angles I might not have thought of. The next day I re-write my notes completely. You might think this is overkill, but I can confirm after doing this for a few years you will remember more. More importantly, if you have to look back at your notes, they will make more sense to you. I have mine all the way back to my first convention.

Once I have all of the above done, I make a new list of all the things I want to use from the convention. For those of you who have been to only one or two conventions, I suggest keeping this list shorter rather than longer. We have a tendency to want to change a lot of things in big ways, and by doing so, everything we do then become mediocre. Your best bet is to pick 3-5 objectives in the performance category and 3-5 items on the business side and place the majority of your effort there. If you haven't done this yet, stop everything else for the next hour or two and do this now.

As far as the business side goes, the next thing I have to do is research and learn. Most seminars are only 45 minutes long. There is no way a presenter can possibly give all the information you need to make changes in that time period. When I speak, my goal is to give a few rich content ideas, and a whole bunch of awesome bits that will spark attendees to do some type of legwork. Some presenters offer DVDs or books, and that is a great place to start your research. I personally don't limit myself to just those products on the business side; I also see what is available on the web.

One of the biggest business takeaways for me this year came from Mitch Taylor, and that was relative to follow up emails. Until now, my main follow ups had been just plain text, and some newsletters I created via Constant Contact. Once I discovered my business software, DJ Event Planner, allows me to send beautiful html emails, I had to learn how to make them. For the last three weeks I have learned new software to create the emails. I have completely redesigned my entire email marketing campaign, and I have deployed it. Next, I will work on my snail mail marketing.

I know a lot of DJs go to conventions hoping for their next great shtick. Several speakers this year gave out some fun nuggets. Let me be clear about this: they are just nuggets, and not complete interactions. As I said in my seminar, IT IS NEVER OK to take a performance piece from a convention and put it immediately into your show for paying customers.

First of all we are just getting the main concept of the interaction. I have rarely seen a presenter give the set up, the complete mechanics, the exit transition and what I like to call the "what ifs". In order for a professional DJ to install one of these new interactions you need to create the whole deal first. That means putting the pen to paper and designing it. A lot of DJs believe natural talent and an idea are enough. They rush to place an incomplete piece into their shows, only to find it doesn't work for some reason.

Once you have designed the entire interaction, next you need to practice it. Here are a few tips I gave during my seminar called "Practice: Prepare To Be Great". Always run through the entire interaction, including set up and exit transitions. Practice as if you are actually performing it. Try to practice in front of people, perhaps your family or some of your friends. Another great idea is to approach your local elementary or middle school. Speak to the gym coach and see if you can rehearse there. Most of them are very interested in anything out of the ordinary for the kids, especially during the winter when they have been cooped up indoors a long time.

Finally, you have probably heard me or other great speakers say, "readers are leaders". After a couple of months have passed and you have finished 2-4 tasks on your "must do" list, re-read your convention notes and listen again to any audio you might have. I do this at 3, 6 and 12 months and then try to repeat yearly. This ensures I am getting the most out of my investment. Sometimes I catch something I missed earlier, or something just makes sense now because other things have changed. It is really fun to re-read notes from many years back.

Conventions are great fun, and this year was no different. Truth be told, if all you went to the convention for was fun, then why go? I was exhausted when I got home this year, but I came back with at least 6-8 major things to work on, and maybe 20-40 small things to look at. I have already taken action, have you? It is not too late to start. Good Luck and Great Shows!

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

Hey! Who Is This Guy?

By Steve Beck

I'm honored to have been asked to join the distinguished stable of writers for Disc Jockey News. For my first column, I'll try to answer the question in many of your minds: "Who's THIS guy?"

My start in the disc jockey business came as a total accident. In 1988 I was the office manager of a fine dining establishment when the restaurant's owner asked me to book a DJ for our lounge on New Year's Eve. Unfortunately he didn't make that request until a week before.

I made a lot of calls and everyone I talked to was either already booked, or they set a very high price because they didn't really want to work on New Year's Eve. I finally found a multi-op who had a system available but no DJ to operate it. I regaled him with tales of my college radio experience (shovel, please!) and convinced him I could quickly learn to operate the equipment if he'd rent it to us.

That's how I got my first gig, DJing that New Year's Eve party. When I look back on it, I was pretty horrible, but at the time I thought I'd done pretty well. More importantly, I loved it! When the multi-op owner came to pick up his gear we talked about how the party went and he ended up offering me a job that day. I worked for that multi-op for six years, until my day job transferred me from Chicago to Minneapolis.

In the Twin Cities I caught on with a single-op DJ who also did karaoke shows. When he'd have a wedding I would work his karaoke show. After two years of that, I got another job transfer, this time to Lake Charles, Louisiana. That effectively got me out of the DJ business since I wasn't able to find anyone to work with there.

After a year in Louisiana, one final job transfer brought me back to Chicago. I began to really miss DJing. Often as my wife and I were driving somewhere, I'd point out a banquet hall where I had done a wedding reception, a school where I'd played a dance or a company whose holiday party I had played. We began to talk about my getting back into it. After discussing the finances of working for a multi-op vs. starting my own company, we decided to start our own business. I spent most of 2006 researching; there were a TON of changes in equipment and I needed to learn more about the business side. With my accounting background kicking in, I did a LOT of research. Finally, near the end of the year I bought my gear and A Little Night Music was born.

The point of my little story is to let you know I bring a different perspective to these pages than each of the other writers. We all have our strengths and our weaknesses. In my case, I've worked for a multi-op company whose owner only cared that his DJs showed up and worked the parties. He was so afraid we'd steal his clients that we wouldn't be given any information in advance and we'd literally meet the clients when we arrived for the event. I rarely spoke with other DJs or saw them work. That experience has made me rather fanatical about networking and education. I now own a single-op company, giving me that perspective. I've done karaoke so I'm aware of the issues KJs are facing. And although I got my start way back in 1988, as a fairly new company owner I'm still dealing with a lot of issues that start-ups face.

So that's me. I expect to write a lot about education and training. The members of my local ADJA chapter will tell you I'm really into that, so you can expect columns about seminars, conventions, books, DVDs and all the other training that's available to us. It's going to be a lot of fun getting to know you.

Steve Beck can be reached at: stevebeck@discjockeynews.com.

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six of them on display.

HIT: The ADJA National Meeting. Dr Drax asked me to MC this year's meeting and I'm happy to say things went well. Congratulations to some very good friends who took home some of the annual awards: Brian Hines who won the Peter Merry Leadership Award and the Connecticut Chapter for winning Chapter of the Year.

MISS: No Jimmy Johnson. Veterans of this expo have come to expect "Mr. Lucky", his green jacket and the way he introduces each seminar and keeps the flow of the week going. This year his position was eliminated and there was no mention of him or his absence. Obviously the producers of this show can do whatever they choose, but in the spirit of "Celebrating 20 Years of Mobile Beat" I thought eliminating and then ignoring someone who has been so instrumental to the success of their shows through the years was inappropriate.

Overall it was a successful week in Las Vegas for Mobile Beat and I'm sure most attendees were happy they made the trip. The thing about DJ Conventions is you can focus on the seminar or two that didn't live up to your expectation, or you can remember and learn from the moments that did. I'm a glass-half-full kinda guy, so for me, the "Hits" far outweighed the "Misses."

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.

Who Inspires You?

By Ron Ruth

At the conclusion of my "Disney's 3 Keys To Success" presentation at the Mobile Beat Conference in Las Vegas, I was standing in the hallway outside the ballroom answering questions from a handful of DJ's. As most of them had moved on, one DJ remained. As we spoke, he surprised me with a question I wasn't expecting.

"If you don't mind me asking," he said, "how old are you?" Admittedly, as I've grown older, my age is not something I've really wanted to discuss. I started DJing in my late 30's, and it seems I've grown older at a faster pace than those half my age. Over the past few years I've thought quietly about how Brides & Grooms look at me when we first meet, and wonder if my age has ever been a factor in whether they book me or not. I don't mind growing older. (I can't hide the aging process, anyway). I just don't want it to have an adverse affect on the profession I truly love.

Returning to the inquisitive DJ in the hall, as I heard this question about my age, a little voice in my brain was telling me that no good can come from a question like that. I tried to avoid a serious answer by making some stupid joke that I can't remember today. See, age really does play tricks with the memory.

As I looked closer at his face, it was apparent his question came with a purpose and he wasn't asking so he could take a shot. So, I told him, "I'm 57. Why do you ask?"

His answer blew me away. "I find you inspiring." His reply was not what I was expecting at all. At first, I was uncomfortable with that level of compliment. No one has ever said those words to me before. So, once again, I tried to respond with a quirky off-hand comment to disarm my own uneasiness.

"Why do I inspire you?," I asked. "Is it because I'm still vertical or because I made it through my presentation without the use of an oxygen tank?" (Yes! My reply was uncalled for, insensitive and rude. I know! I apologized to him afterward.) "No." he said. "I'm in my mid-40s and I've already been wondering how long I can continue DJing. You've shown me there are no age limits as long as there is passion in what you do. You've inspired me to keep doing what I love and to not worry about the fact I'm getting older."

There are few times in my life where I can honestly say I ever felt as humble as I did at that very moment. I have to tell you, over the past few weeks I've come to enjoy the emotion. I feel a sense of accomplishment that was rewarded with those four words, "I find you inspiring." Wow!

My presentation was on Monday at noon. There were three more days to go for the conference. As I continued to absorb what that DJ said and the strange impact it was having on me, I had a flashback to 1997 and the very first DJ conference I ever attended, the first MBLV conference at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

In those days, I was cocky and self-assured that I was not only doing everything right already, but that I was better than most of the other hundreds of DJs in attendance. I was a fairly successful, cheap DJ making very small sums of money hand over fist. As it still is for a few DJs that make the trek to Vegas, I wasn't there to learn as much as I was to enjoy the nightlife and to get away from reality for a couple of days. What an arrogant SOB I was!

It wasn't until 3 or 4 years later that something unexplained happened and I started going to the MBLV conference to actually learn something that could help my business and to help me grow as a business owner and entertainer. Although I still wasn't taking advantage of the networking opportunities with other DJs, I was sitting through the seminars and workshops, taking notes and coming home to implement what I had learned. As I saw positive results, I became even more serious about gaining as much knowledge as I possibly could.

I believe it was 2001 when Mark Ferrell spoke in Vegas. He delivered a passionate plea to DJs to realize they were worth far more than what they were asking in fees. As I remembered that moment, it occurred to me that Mark was my earliest inspiration. It was his words that actually put me on the path to where I am today. But, the inspiration didn't end with Mark.

A year or so later, Peter Merry and Mark "Peace" Thomas came to Kansas City. Peter was the President of the ADJA and he was in town to convince our local, informal group of DJs (also inspired by Mark Ferrell) to become a local ADJA Chapter. Peter didn't just make a sales pitch. He delivered a compelling, 90 minute presentation on how to sell high-end DJ services to a Bride & Groom. He filled in a huge gap for me between Mark's reasoning to "raise your rates" and how to actually ask for more. It was Peter who inspired me to double my fees overnight. It was because of what I learned from him that I was able to close my first sale at my new rate and finally begin to make a livable salary. But, the inspiration didn't end with Peter, either.

I can't remember exactly when I first saw Randy Bartlett in Vegas. I'm guessing it was about 2004 or 2005. I can vividly remember, however, how inspired I was at the end of his presentation on improving performance skills. I was so inspired, as a matter of fact, I ran with his advice and realized I could make even more money. And I did! But, even Randy wasn't the last of the inspiration I've enjoyed over the years.

The sad thing is I've never taken the time to let a number of people know how much they have inspired me. Without their assistance, support, mentoring or friendship, I would not be in a position to even consider inspiring others.

So, to Mark, Peter and Randy, thank you for giving me the shove I needed to realize I can always be better at what I do. Thank you (in no particular order) Dude Walker, Marc O'Leary, Peter Merkle, Scott Faver, John Young, Dr. Drax, Dean Carlson, Mark "Peace" Thomas, Bill Hermann, Ron Brown and every member of the Wichita ADJA, Liz Daley, Jim Cerone, every member of the WED Guild, Todd Mitchum, Mike Buonaccorso, Wade Nelson, Cap Capello, Mike Walter, Carrie Valentine, Lisa Merry, Rick Brewer, Danny Goyer, Larry Williams, Marcello, Tamara Sims, Brian Harris, Jose Heredia, every MBLV, NDJ and DJN conference presenter (and anonymous attendees) that taught me something new and all of the DJs that not only sat though my Vegas presentation, but took time to speak to me or email me afterward. You have all inspired me in one fashion or another to be a better entertainer and person. I can't express how much I appreciate all of you.

A very special thank you goes to my latest inspiration and new best friend for life, Sean "Big Daddy" McKee. You are truly an original and someone I deeply regret not getting to know better years ago! Thank you for giving me your time and for sharing your passion. RRLY!

The danger in creating a list like the one above is I know as soon as this paper goes to print, I will remember someone I inadvertently left off. To those individuals I say I'm sorry. Please know how much I appreciate all that you've done for me and how much I value you as friends and colleagues.

And, to that 40 something DJ (I've omitted his name purposely) who spoke to me in the hall, thank you for spending so much time with me throughout the conference and for inspiring me with your greatest marketing secret. I appreciate your permission to try it out in Kansas City and I look forward to many more conversations with you.

Before Bette Midler's "Wind Beneath My Wings" drowns me out, I'll conclude by asking every reader here to take a moment to think about all of the DJs who have unselfishly provided you with some form of inspiration to be better than you could have been on your own. Then, give them an opportunity to experience the same level of gratification I have had the pleasure to enjoy since the first of February by sending them a short note, letting them know how much you've gained from your relationship with them.

Who knows? You just might be on the receiving end of one of those notes, yourself!

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.

How 'Bout A Beer?

By Jake Palmer

'Tis the season. Bar season that is… well non-wedding season I should say. In most markets, we see a dramatic drop in wedding business this time of year. A lot of us look for other ways to fill the gaps with company parties, clubs, bars, maybe school or kids' shows, or karaoke. These shows are a great way to not only stay busy and keep your checking account in the black, but they can also give you a great outlet to stay creative and try new things.

Sometimes it's nice to break out of the "rut" of weddings and have some fun on a different level. For the purpose of this article, I'm going to leave the school, teen, and kids' shows out of the conversation, and focus on bars, karaoke, and company events. These types of shows bring a new element you have to factor into the equation… alcohol.

Now, obviously, we all deal with alcohol, or the effects of alcohol on the average guest at our events, pretty much every weekend. I believe the big difference is that at the average wedding most people know each other. They are invited and welcomed guests, and everyone genuinely wants to have fun. When it comes to company parties, on the other hand, things can get a little more dicey. It's almost typical that someone gets drunk and does something stupid at the company party. A little known fact is that more people are fired the week after their company party than at any other time of the year. This fact, along, with more challenging legal alcohol issues, have lead to most companies eliminating the "open bar" at company events, and most bartenders are trained not to over serve people. However, this doesn't mean you will never have issues or drama at these types of events because of alcohol.

Over the years of mobile entertaining, (and there have been a lot of years…) I have seen my share of bizarre alcohol induced behavior in bars, at company events, even weddings, but a company holiday party I did this January was a reminder of how over-indulgence can lead to some awkward moments.

At this event the President and CEO of this multi-million dollar company managed to get cut off from the open-bar at about 11:30 pm. He then proceeded to dance and get pretty rowdy, throw things around the room, and was yelling. It was pretty obvious he was extremely intoxicated. He then insisted on giving a speech, where he promised a 5% bonus to all employees.

When we were 30 minutes over the contracted time, the hotel security turned on the lights and told me to "shut it down". I informed the CEO we had to end the party. He then tears, yes tears off his shirt and throws his tie at me, the whole time yelling to "f" off. Nice…

Sadly, this did not surprise me or even offend me; it's just drunk people. These situations come down to how well you handle not only the situation, but the person, and yourself. Dealing with drunk people is just part of the deal with our industry. As Jason Jones mentioned in his presentation at the MapDj's event last November, "you must love drunk people, otherwise find a new gig." Drunk people are just part of the deal, but there are ways to handle drunk people without making things worse.

First, remember that most drunk people are just looking to have fun, and have gotten a little carried away. Never argue or try to reason with a drunk person; you can't, you won't win, and you will only make them mad. Drunk and fun is one thing, drunk and mad is a problem. Never judge. You are not there to be anyone's mother. They are adults and are out to have a good time.

Read your crowd, watch for tension, and remember YOU are in control of the mood and atmosphere. If things seem a little TOO crazy, slow it down. If a fight breaks out, do not draw attention to it and DO NOT get involved. Most DJs I know are not qualified or built to be bouncers. You are not expected to answer the phones or serve drinks, don't think you are responsible for breaking up fights.

I hope this is just a review for most of you, but this time of year, when we are in the bars more than normal, it's always good to refresh a few tips.

Oh yeah… don't forget, despite what a drunk does or says, IT'S NOT PERSONAL. Don't take it to heart. Shake it off, have fun, and enjoy your time with sober people more. Now how about a beer.

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MAY 9-10, 2011 Atlanta, GA
MAY 16-17, 2011 Knoxville, TN
MAY 25-26, 2011 Greensboro, NC
JUN 7-8, 2011 Frederick, MD
JUN 20-21, 2011 Hartford, CT
JUL 6-7, 2011 Akron, OH
JUL 13-14, 2011 Chicago, IL
AUG 2-3, Minneapolis, MN
AUG 16-17, 2011 Kansas City, MO
AUG 29 & 30, 2011 Denver, CO
OCT 12-13, 2011 San Jose, CA
NOV 1-2, 2011 Seattle, WA

Silver Master of Ceremonies Workshop
JUL 18-19, 2011 Chicago, IL
AUG 8-9, 2011 Minneapolis, MN
SEP 13 & 14, 2011 Las Vegas, NV
OCT 17-18, 2011 San Jose, CA

Bronze Love Story Workshop
MAY 2-3, 2011 Gainesville, FL
MAY 30-31, 2011 Greensboro, NC
JUN 12-13, 2011 Frederick, MD
JUN 27-28, 2011 Hartford, CT
AUG 24-25, 2011 Denver, CO
NOV 13-14, 2011 San Jose, CA

Silver Love Story Workshop
JUL 25-26, 2011 Chicago, IL
NOV 16-17, 2011 San Jose, CA

The Kids Are All Right: A Monthly Column About Entertaining Kids

By Rob Peters

Welcome to my new column! It's all about DJ entertainment for kids. Watch this column every month. It will be filled with information, performance and marketing tips, ideas and more.

My progression to adding kids' entertainment to my DJ business actually happened thanks to my good friend and mentor John Allo. John was a DJ in my market who I met some years ago, and we became friends. When I decided to become a full time mobile DJ in 1998, John was very supportive. He offered advice and ideas that helped make the transition a very smooth and positive decision for me. John called me frequently to chat about everything from politics to Boston sports and more. He was someone I looked up to and I found myself striving to build my business to be as successful as his.

In 2004, John and I were both asked to speak at the annual Maine Disc Jockey Network convention. We talked in advance of the event and decided to drive up together. During our three hour drive to Lewiston, Maine, John told me about this exciting new concept he'd come up with called a Bubble Party, and that it was becoming popular for him. He even encouraged me to start doing them, describing how fun they were to perform. At the time, I found the idea and concept to be amazing, but also felt I would be "stepping on his toes" if I did them, since our businesses were in close proximity to one another. I was also busy working on several other big projects, so I chose to look at this idea when I had more time to really focus on it.

Over a year later, on Easter Sunday of 2006, I was driving home from visiting family and my cell phone rang. It was John. He told me he was in the hospital and asked if I could come see him, as he had something important to discuss with me. Having known about John's medical condition over the past few years, I couldn't help but think something was terribly wrong. I arrived at the hospital, where John asked me if I would take over his Bubble Party business. His doctor had advised him continuing on would not help his recovery. We sat, went over dates and he gave me a "crash course" about the program and how it worked. He even arranged for me to use his bubble machines and equipment, as the first job was 4 days away!

As I started doing these shows, I found out exactly what John meant in that car ride to Maine. These jobs were FUN! Doing performances for kids has helped me grow my business over the past 7 years in multiple ways. In addition to the increased revenue of the program I took over, this program has generated many referrals for weddings, corporate events and even a contract with an independent league baseball team to produce and host on field and pre-game promotions. This increased business did not just happen; it did take some unique marketing and promotion, as well as a great performance.

John also taught me that you can be KID FRIENDLY to enhance those events we generally perform for, such as weddings, family birthday or anniversary parties and even corporate events. Generally these events are more directed at entertaining the adults; however, there are occasions when these events include children. In most cases, they are usually seated at a table, fed separately than the adults, and usually end up running around while the adults are eating which can be disruptive.

There are ways to make a difference at these events. With some creativity and pre-planning with your client, you can entertain both age groups and keep everyone happy in a simple, effective manner. When planning the event with your client, ask if there are kids coming, when they will be fed and whether your client would like you to keep the kids entertained. If the kids are being fed first (which is usually the case), find out if you can entertain them while the adults are being fed. This prevents the kids from running around and being disruptive. In most instances, this is one thing your client has not thought of and they will appreciate your offer.

So what can you do? Well, the easiest way is to plan out a simple dance set of kids' interactive dances and lead them. Songs like "Hokey Pokey" and "Chicken Dance" are a great way to keep kids entertained and smiling. Consider doing a game like Freeze Dance or a small scavenger hunt to keep them amused. Using songs in your existing repertoire can also help you create some activities and games to keep the kids entertained.

You may run into some cases where your client may want you to use a more discreet approach. In this case, consider learning how to make balloon animals or simple magic tricks you can perform at their table. There are plenty of simple, easy to learn books and kits to learn magic or balloon animals online. You do not have to spend a long time learning these things, your magic can be simple to do, and your balloon creations do not have to be a replica of their favorite cartoon character. However, I HIGHLY recommend that you practice these things before doing them at an event. Practice the actual trick or creation, and integrate your existing skills as an entertainer to make it funny and enjoyable for the kids who will be watching.

Being kid friendly and a kids' entertainer go hand in hand, but you do not have to be a kids' entertainer to be kid friendly at your events. Being kid friendly with some of the information listed above can lead to happy clients, great events, more referrals, and even gratuities or tips.

Remember: "Don't strive to be the best at what you do…be the ONLY one who does what YOU do!" – Jerry Garcia

With over 20 years experience in the Mobile DJ industry, Rob Peters is the owner of Rob Peters Entertainment, Inc. located in Braintree, Massachusetts. Rob is an Endorsed Professional Entertainer, author of "The Business Of Mobile DJing" from ProDJ Publishing, a member of N.A.M.E. and ADJA, and the owner of Bubble Parties.com, which offers a business plan and materials to help DJs make money performing Bubble Parties for children.

Rob is also known as "The Bubble Music Man" throughout the greater Boston area and performed over 180 children's events in 2010. In 2010, The Bubble Music Man was a finalist for a Parent's Pick Award from Nickelodeon for Best Kid's Party Entertainer in Boston

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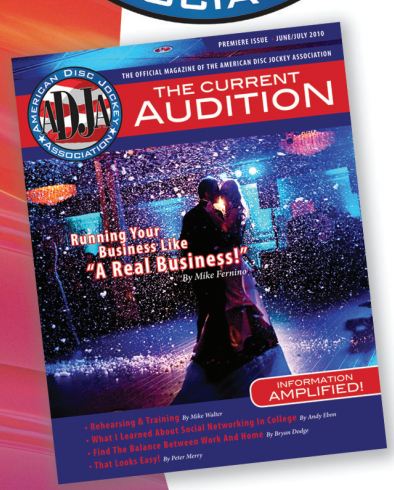

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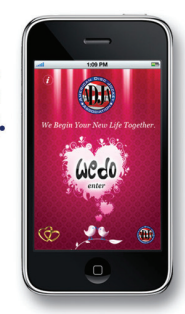

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Have Water, Will Convention

By Kelly Suit

Greetings from aboard the Carnival Imagination! I'm writing this article from my states room as we set sail for the WEDJ 2011 cruise. This is my 3rd time doing the WEDJ cruise and my second time as a presenter.

This year I'm doing 2 presentations, DMX for DJs (this is a reprise from my 2007 seminar) and Making Money with Lighting. I'm a huge fan of lighting as part of your DJ business, but that is an article for another day. Today I want to share some about the WEDJ cruise experience in the hope you might consider joining us on a future cruise.

What makes the WEDJ cruise so cool is it's a vacation and business trip packaged up very nicely. I've been to Vegas and to other conventions and I highly recommend attending conventions in general. They are such a great way to tap into many sources of knowledge, ranging from the presenters to the other DJs attending, whom you can network with and learn from. You also have a chance to try equipment you might not otherwise have an opportunity to test before purchasing. Many people take advantage of the abundant nightlife and other attractions. They utilize these conventions as a vacation, but I find by the end of a day of seminars I'm not up for doing much. If you stay out too late you miss some great nuggets that are the early morning seminars.

The WEDJ Cruise is kind of the opposite of traditional conventions. It's a vacation that also has some great presentations available to its attendees. We are going to Key West and then to Cozumel, Mexico. During our days at sea there are seminars on topics ranging from School Dance Marketing to Accounting and Taxes. There is a bit of something for everyone. WEDJ is also different in that it's not just for DJs. Photographers and videographers also attend. Networking with these professionals can provide helpful insight and improve your relationship with others in these fields. If you haven't had the chance to discuss DJ issues with other wedding professionals, you really should take advantage of the opportunity, especially with vendors that aren't from your market!

As I said, it's truly more of a vacation then just a convention. If you've never been cruising before, you are missing out on quite possibly the best value vacation option available. With the purchase of your ticket, you receive all your meals, entertainment, and visit many beautiful ports of call. When I say all meals, what I should say is there is food available twenty-four hours a day. There are so many delicious choices, you have to really be careful not to pack on a few extra pounds.

Carnival Cruise lines have on-board casinos, so if you like the action, there is plenty. Lots of nightlife choices, too, like a piano bar, dance club, and karaoke. Every night there is a Vegas style show and comedians. The comedians do 2 shows on board, one family friendly and one "R" rated. There is something going on every day until 2am, so it is impossible to be bored. If you want to relax, there's an entire deck with multiple pools so you can just lounge in the sun.

It's a family friendly environment. I wouldn't bring small children to a convention, but we take our kids with us on the cruise and they have a blast! Cruise ships pamper you in every way; you don't have to cook, clean, or make your bed. Everything is done for you. I love coming back to our states room after dinner to see a clean room with towel animals laid out on the bed with a chocolate. If you aren't used to this kind of treatment, it's really hard going back to reality afterwards.

Now that I've sold you on the virtues of cruising, you do have the same benefits available that a more traditional convention offers. I've met and had the chance to learn from several of our industry's finest businessmen and entertainers. I've learned things that have helped me as a business owner and as a performer. Most of all, it's done in a much more relaxed environment. You learn at your own pace and if you have questions after the seminars, you have much more access to the people who are presenting.

The WEDJ cruise is in January and leaves out of Miami. On the bus ride over I heard several of my fellow cruisers mentioning how cold it was in their home towns. I live in Florida so I'm kind of spoiled, but if you want a break from winter there isn't a much better way to do it than taking a cruise to the Caribbean.

Next month I'll share some of my seminar on Making Money with Lighting. Until then, stay warm and be thinking about possibly taking advantage of a DJ Cruise next time.

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

Can You Connect With Clients?

By Arnoldo Offermann

I watched "Britain's Got Talent" a couple of years ago and they were featuring this guy by the stage name of "DJ Talent". He looked like a thug wannabe, complete with gold grills. Surprisingly enough, he was very likable. His charisma really pushed through the TV and he had me pumped up just by hearing him talk.

He came out on stage and there was no equipment laid out. I thought to myself, "what gives?" Simon and Co asked him a few questions, many of which involved his gold teeth, and his answers were light and comical. The crowd instantly LOVED HIM! Then the music came on and he started hyping the crowd up. "Ohhh, he's a rapper whose name begins with DJ. He's industry confused. Gotcha." So he started his rap with some hyping:

I say Britain, you say Talent
Britain's Got Talent
It's the DJ Talent!

Then he said it again.. and again… and again. He got buzzed a couple of times, but he kept going, chanting the aforementioned again and again. He finally got buzzed out, even though the crowd was pumped up and dancing around.

Simon admitted he wouldn't have buzzed at all (he was the first one) if he had known the song would be so catchy. He wasn't voted out; they kept him for quite a bit more. I didn't watch the whole season so I have no idea how far he made it. The point is that he did. They LOVED him. HE SUCKED, BUT THEY PUSHED HIM TO THE NEXT LEVEL TO PERFORM FOR THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND!

Wow, imagine if you have that type of charisma and combined it with TALENT!!!

You can instantly see how this applies to us. We often focus SO much on sales, performance, equipment, and other tangible or displayable items; yet I have to ask: how often do you work on building rapport? Why are there so few seminars and books on this important part of customer service? One could argue you cannot teach personality. Well, I am here to say: yeah, that's pretty much correct. You can't fix stupid, haha. However, I am sure as heck going to try. I'm going to share some methods I use to build rapport, but first, here are some advantages my tricks have afforded me:

* I get to be more relaxed around clients and don't have to be "hoity-toity professional" all the time
* I get to be more honest and blunt with them, which helps me prevent event disasters.
* Better tips
* More referrals
* Repeat bookings through Constant Contact
* Best of all, new friendships arise!

So here are my personal rapport building tips:

* Add clients to your personal Facebook profile. I always let them know this is personal, and not business, so don't expect happy posts all the time. This used to be a marketing no-no, but with social me-

Offermann continued on page 9

Turning The Page

By Bill Hermann

The guests are arriving at Mike and Erika's wedding reception. The lights are dimmed, the candles are lit, a smart eclectic mix of standards, jazz and world music is helping to set the tone of cool smart elegance for the social hour. Dinner is about to begin and the guests of honor are waiting to be announced. Erika and Mike expect an introduction of their wedding party to set a fun and exciting tone for dinner. You take the microphone, turn up the music and hit them with a hard driving bass line as you explode into the room like a stick of dynamite about to introduce Kanye West himself.

The guests are startled. Some of them cover their ears…others dive for cover as if hiding from a gunman. The introduction goes exactly as you rehearsed it at home and the wedding party bursts into the room dancing across the dance floor just before Mike and Erika are announced. By this time the music is louder and you have been so carried away by the excitement you've created that when you say their names the speaker cabinets just rattle with distortion from the shear pulse pounding power of the presentation.

Immediately following, the energy in the room drops back from a standing room only stadium introduction of the Los Angeles Lakers to quiet, cool, smart, elegance.

What we just described happens all the time at wedding receptions. In one way or another it seems what we create for our clients gets arbitrarily dropped into the guest's collective consciousness like a bomb on an unsuspecting daycare. The guests then spend the next 10 to 30 minutes talking about the interruption they just witnessed instead of the exciting things about to come.

I promise you this was not the intent of Mike and Erika and it certainly was not the intended affect you wanted. So what was missing? You had it down pat. You rehearsed it for weeks, you hit all your marks and you pronounced all the names right, bringing it all to an end just as the music energy soared to a climax. So why does everyone seem to be on the defensive? Like they had just been attacked.

Well, all things being equal you probably just forgot to define only one key ingredient in your presentation … a transition. To be fair there was a transition evident but in the eyes of your audience it was an abrupt, jolting, shocking and jarring transition. So they took the next 30 minutes to transition themselves back to quiet, cool, smart, elegance and they are not sure they trust you anymore to transition them anywhere else.

Webster defines "Transition" as a passage or movement from one state, stage, subject, or place to another. There are natural transitions in every event. What many of us forget is that we have the power to "transition" an audience anywhere we wish. How you transition them will define how they feel, how they move and if they respond well or not.

Transitions can be soft or hard, vocally or musically. They can be done with lighting or fog. The magic of a well designed and executed transition can transform an otherwise lackluster performance into a room full of people talking about how good they feel, how loving they feel toward the bride and groom or even excitedly anticipating the next event at the reception. Like a great book, as the chapter ends you are left excited about what's next and can't wait to "Turn the Page." You are in control.

To create a good transition you have to be clear where you want to take your audience, how you want them to feel about it, how you want them to react or respond and why. The transition is the bridge between what they are feeling and doing at the moment and the answer to those questions. Your execution of that transition is how you communicate this. The guests want to be lead and you have the power to lead them wherever you wish. It's important to remember this power also comes with responsibility. The guests are giving you their trust and if you handle that trust with care, love and likability the audience will go with you all night long and they will do it with more ease as the night progresses. But, if you do it poorly...bullying them and tricking them into doing your bidding they will give up on you and they won't trust you enough to lead them to the unbelievable party that you know you can deliver.

Transitions can transform your performance and help you "Turn The Page" to another level of expertise in your business and your performance. It has for me and I know it will for you.

Bill Hermann is the owner and operator of "Bill Hermann Entertainment" in Minneapolis/St Paul, MN. Bill is a nationally known Wedding Entertainer and Speaker and is hosting a rare opportunity for a limited amount of people to attend an all day hands on workshop on Sunday, March 20th 2011 in the Minneapolis/St Paul area.

Spots are very limited for "The Entertainment Experience Workshop" on Sunday, March 20th, 2011.

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dia, this has all changed. One time I posted about a real crappy day I had including a struggle with many personal facets of life. A few clients chimed in and offered advice (good advice, too). Not only does this build a friendship (and people buy from people they like), but if THEY offer YOU advice, it levels the playing field a bit and they seem to like that.

* Smile when you talk over the phone.

* Don't be afraid to talk about personal stuff. If you had a bad day, don't say "I'm doing well." Your stress and body language will say "I'M A LIAR!" If I had a bad day, I'll tell my client when asked how I'm doing. "Oh I've been stressed… had both cars break down on me… how about you?" Then they tell me about their day in an honest manner. Warning, this conversation may wind up taking 15-30 minutes of your time… but it's very well worth it. I have clients and vendors that have trusted me with some very personal stuff…. how do you think that translates to future referrals?

* Never EVER trash the competition…. but once you know your client better, you can joke about it. Oh yes, with corporate and school events they ask me about other vendors and competition. You best believe I give them my honest opinion.

* Text often: Birthday, anniversary (this one requires some conversation to get the date without seeming weird), holidays. Yes, send a text… it's easier than a phone call and better than an email.

* Dinner! I've had a few clients and vendors that my wife and I hang out with or take to dinner. This is after a friendship has been established. These friendships mean a lot on a personal and business level!

* ALWAYS make them laugh. I have salvaged MANY horrible sales demos because I was able to make them laugh. Kelly Suit will attest to this. My #1 goal in sales is to make them laugh. Roger Rabbit once said that people love people who make them laugh. This is 100% true. Take classes if you're not quick-witted. Watch tons of comedy shows and take a comedy improv class!

Here's a quick story. There's a photographer in the Orlando area who I talk with from time to time. We've only done one event together but often chat via Facebook. Last week I posted on Facebook how I needed to replace the water pump on my Cadillac. This is NOT a one-man job. He sent a text offering to come over and help out and I gladly accepted. Thirteen hours later, some blood and sweat, and an 80+ MPH drive through Lakeland in a Mini Cooper equaled one heck of a time! I had another client reply about helping me move to our new home last year. That was another 12 hour day. What these two did for me meant a lot, and you can bet we talk on a daily basis. There's another photographer who is now one of my closest friends. My wife and I were going on a cruise, and I joked that if he was free he should sign up (it was the next week). He said "OK" and we had one heck of a time on the cruise.

So there you go…. try these tips, which can be done using Facebook as a primary source. Put them to work and make those friendships! Then turn those friendships into more business!

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The Referral Coach

By Matt Anderson

5 Things to BE: Insights from Self-Made Millionaires

Last week when I was in Foyles on Charing Cross Road in London, I chanced across Tammy Cohen's book on sixteen self-made millionaires called "How I Made My First Million". I find these true stories inspiring and want to share them with you. Yes, they talk about hard work, taking risks, taking action, and being willing to fail, but here are the takeaways that struck me most:

1. Fulfilling Your Potential

Make your definition of FAILURE in life: "Not fulfilling my potential"

I find this unbelievably inspiring. I opened my year's "Quotes of the Day" with Oprah Winfrey (see below if you don't receive this). I watched her being interviewed in December when Barbara Walters asked why she kept striving to do more given all she had accomplished.

Oprah answered, "I am seeking the fullest expression of myself as a human being on earth."

I assume that's her definition of success. What finally lit the light bulb for me was reading property developer Paul Bassi express his belief on what I would consider the definition of failure: "I'd feel I had failed if I didn't fulfill my full potential."

Both are brilliant ways to get powerful leverage on yourself! We are capable of so much when we believe in ourselves, focus and do our best. Pick the one that works best for you.

2. A BIG Thinker

"All the successful people I know are exactly the same as everyone else – they argue with their kids about homework, they have two arms and legs. The only difference between them and the next guy is they think bigger – they set their finishing line further." Paul Bassi

How can you think bigger? When can you make the time to do that regularly? Nobody's better than you.

Set bigger goals: it's what they make of you (who you become), not what they make for you.

Do they take you out of your comfort zone every week? They should. When you have goals, you also need the belief and confidence in yourself that you will keep showing up to achieve them no matter how long it takes. Read John Assaraf's "The Answer" if you're struggling with unhelpful beliefs.

3. Good at What You Do

Few people have consistently high self-esteem. While it can be developed, the good news is all sixteen people featured in the book did have a conviction in their own competence. This led to higher self-belief which is a must for others to have confidence in you.

4. Strong Under Pressure

"That's the thing about successful people – they grow under pressure, while unsuccessful people shrivel." Paul Bassi

Got a point to prove? Maybe you should find one. It's fascinating how some people leverage positively what others call a disadvantage or personal slight to fuel their achievement. Often it is the result of having very little growing up, having a learning disability, being told by a teacher they would never amount to anything, or being picked on for being "different".

Paul Bassi is a Sikh Punjabi Indian who encountered quite a lot of racism at school. He claims, "Paradoxically, it would always bring out the best in me." His story (as you can tell from the number of times I quote him!) is inspirational.

How do you handle pressure?

5. Seeking Financial Freedom, Not Retirement.

Retirement planning is being marketed incorrectly. How often do you hear about someone who died shortly after retiring (or losing their spouse)?

My step-dad shared a story with me last week about one of his colleagues who talked for years of his dream to retire to Cornwall (south coast of England). At 65 he uprooted his whole life, moved to the seaside, and was dead within three months. It's a terribly sad story of someone who quickly became lonely, bored and could not handle the dramatic change of routine to his entire life after 40 plus years of always doing the same thing.

Andrew Reynolds, who has made £30M ($50M) working from home, comments, "We've all been sold the myth that you work at something you don't particularly like but at 65 you get to retire and all will be rosie. To me that makes no sense. If you love what you do – if you get a buzz out of it – why on earth would you give that up?"

How do these ideas translate into something you can do and keep top of mind? Incorporate them into your planning and self-awareness. Let me know what's working for you!

Matt Anderson, of the Referral Authority, has grown his business exclusively by referrals and now speaks and coaches not only across the US, but in Canada, the UK and the Middle East. He specializes in training and coaching sales professionals how to build referral-based businesses.

In 2009 he spoke at the International DJ Expo in Atlantic City. In 2010 he spoke at Million Dollar Round Table in Vancouver and at the Institute of Financial Planners annual conference in the UK.

As well as being published in numerous US and UK publications, Matt has recorded several referral and networking training videos for Hoopis Performance Network and New York Life. He is also the author of Fearless Referrals, which Brian Tracy, author of The Psychology of Sales, says "teaches you the "Golden Rules" for developing a continuous chain of high quality referrals for any product in any business."

He hails from Coventry, England and is based in Chicago where he enjoys local customs such as sitting in traffic, driving like he's being chased by the police, never letting other motorists merge into his lane and refusing to use his turn signals.

Top 30 Clean High School Songs

SchoolDanceNetwork.com

LW	TW	Artist	Title	Featuring	PC #	BPM	Notes
2	1	Enrique Iglesias	Tonght	Ludacris	201047	126	Edit Sh*t
1	2	Katy Perry	Firework		201041	124	
5	3	Hold it against	Britney Spears		201103	134	
4	4	Far East Mvmt	Rocketeer	Ryan Tedder	201047	96	
3	5	Chris Brown	Yeah 3X		201044	129	
6	6	Bruno Mars	Grenade		201044	111	
8	7	Rihanna	What's My Name		201043	100	H.S Only
7	8	Chris Brown	Deuces		201031	74	EDIT
12	9	Usher	More		201047	125	
9	10	Pink	Raise Your Glass		201041	122	EDIT
15	11	Taio Cruise	Higher	Travie MacCoy	201102	128	Radio Edit
11	12	Rihanna	Only Girl (In the world)		201037	126	EDIT
16	13	Flo Rida	Who Dat Girl		201046	125	
10	14	Black Eyed Peas	The Time (Dirty Bit)		201045	128	
13	15	Enrique Iglesias	I Like It	Pitbull	201019	129	
14	16	Nelly	Just a Dream		201032	90	
20	17	Nelly	Gone	Kelly Rowland	201101	73	
28	18	Lady Gaga	Born This Way		201102	120	
19	19	Mann	Buzzin		201050	104	Edit
24	20	Edward Maya	Stereo Love	Mia Martina	201013	127	
17	21	Pitbull	Hey Baby		201037	128	
29	22	Ke$ha	Blow		201102	120	
27	23	Keri Hilson	Pretty Girl Rock		201042	80	
25	24	Will.I.am	Check it Out	Nicki Minaj	201037	130	edit
26	25	Cataracs & DEV	Base DownLow		201044	113	Edit
21	26	Kesha	Take It Off		201028	125	
18	27	Katy Perry	Teenage Dream		201031	120	
30	28	Jennifer Lopez	On the Floor	Pitbull	201104	130	
New	29	Black Eyed Peas	Just Can't Get Enough		201106	94	
New	30	Tinie Tempah	Written in the Stars	Eric Turner	201104	93	

Recurrents (Still Popular at HS events)

22	KE$HA	We R Who We R		201043	120	Edit
23	Mike Posner	Please Don't Go		201034	121	
	Usher	DJ Got Us Fallin In Love	Pitbull	201029	120	Edit
	Bruno Mars	Just the way you are		201030	109	
	David Guetta	Memories	F/Kid Cudi	201012	130	Edit
	Ditty-Dirty Mon	Coming Home		201047	84	Edit
	Nicki Minaj	Right Thru You		201040	81	
	Jay Sean	2012 (It ain't the end of the world"		201032	127	
	Michael Jackson	Hold My Hand	Akon	201047	90	
	Eminem	Love The Way You Lie	Rihanna	201027	87	Edit
	Taio Cruz	Dynamite		201020	120	
	3OH!3	Double Vision- Dance Edit		201035	120	
	Sean Kingston	Letting Go (Dutty Love)		201025	92	
	Travie McCoy	Need You		201037	74	
	Flo Rida	Club can't Handle Me	D Guetta	201024	128	
	Taio Cruz	Dirty Pictures (Clean)	Ke$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	
	Lady Gaga	Alajandro		201012	99	
	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$ha	201019	138	
	Nicki Minaj	Your Love		201013	95	
	David Guetta	Getting Over You	Fergie & LMFAO			
	Cali Swag District		Teach Me How to Dougie			
	Jason Derula	In My Head				
	Justin Bieber	Baby	Ludacris			
	LaRoux	Bulletproof				
	KE$ha	Tic Toc				
	Black Eyed Peas	Imma Be				
	B.O.B.	Nothing on you	Bruno Mars			

DO NOT PLAYLIST ADDITIONS

	New		Snoop Dog	Wet/Sweat
New	Kanye West	H*A*M	Jay-Z	
	Rihanna	S&M		
	Pink	Fr**kin Perfect		
	Twista	Make a Movie	Chris Brown	
	Lil Wayne	6 foot 7 foot	Cory Gunz	
	Problem	My Ex		
	No Hands	Waka Flocka Flame	Rosco Dash	
	Birdman	Fire Flame	Lil Wayne	
	Jeremih	Down On Me	50 cent	
	Wiz Khalifa	Black and Yellow		
	Kanye West	Runaway		
	New Boyz	Spot Right There		
	Waka Flocka Fl	No Hands		
	Kanye West	Monster	Jay Z -Rick Ross	
	Eminem	No Love	Lil Wayne	
	Trey Songz	Bottoms Up	Nicki Minaj	
	Bumpy Ride	Mohombi		
	F**K You	Cee Lo Green		
	Right Above It	Lil Wayne	Drake	
	Fancy	Drake		
	Rick Ross	Blowin Money Fast		
	Drake	Fancy		
	Richard Vission	I Like That	Luciana	
	Far East Move	Like a G6		
	Glasses Malone	I Get Doe		
	Soulja Boy	Pretty Boy Swag		
	Kanye West	Power		

Monthly Music Charts

By TMStudios.com

Pop

1	Bruno Mars	Grenade
2	Enrique Iglesias	Tonight
3	Britney Spears	Hold It Against Me
4	Katy Perry	Firework
5	Pink	F**kin' Perfect
6	Lady Gaga	Born This Way
7	Chris Brown	Yeah 3x
8	Far East Movement	Rocketeer
9	Ke$ha	We R Who We R
10	Pitbull	Hey Baby
11	Cee Lo Green	Forget You
12	Usher	More
13	Taylor Swift	Back To December
14	Pink	Raise Your Glass
15	Diddy-Dirty Money	Coming Home
16	Rihanna	What's My Name?
17	Taio Cruz	Higher
18	Avril Lavigne	What The Hell
19	Ke$ha	Blow
20	Wiz Khalifa	Black & Yellow

Urban

1	Nicki Minaj	Moment 4 Life
2	Lil Wayne	6 Foot 7 Foot
3	Jamie Foxx	Fall For Your Type
4	Trey Songz	Love Faces
5	Keri Hilson	Pretty Girl Rock
6	Chris Brown	No BS
7	Rihanna	What's My Name?
8	Fabolous	You Be Killin Em
9	Chris Brown	Look At Me Now
10	Wiz Khalifa	Black & Yellow
11	Jeremih	Down On Me
12	Bobby V	Words
13	Waka Flocka Flame	No Hands
14	Rick Ross	Aston Martin Music
15	Kanye West	All Of The Lights
16	Lloyd	Lay It Down
17	Travis Porter	Make It Rain
18	Kanye West & Jay-Z	H*A*M
19	Jazmine Sullivan	10 Seconds
20	Snoop Dogg	Sweat

Country

1	Blake Shelton	Who Are You When I'm Not
2	Brad Paisley	This Is Country Music
3	Jason Aldean	Don't You Wanna Stay
4	Luke Bryan	Someone Else Calling You Baby
5	Taylor Swift	Back To December
6	Billy Currington	Let Me Down Easy
7	Chris Young	Voices
8	Lady Antebellum	Hello World
9	Thompson Square	Are You Gonna Kiss Me Or Not
10	Zac Brown Band	Colder Weather
11	Darius Rucker	This
12	Sunny Sweeney	From A Table Away
13	Jerrod Niemann	What Do You Want
14	JaneDear Girls	Wildflower
15	Sugarland	Little Miss
16	Miranda Lambert	Heart Like Mine
17	Joe Nichols	The Shape I'm In
18	Sara Evans	A Little Bit Stronger
19	Rascal Flatts	I Won't Let Go
20	Craig Campbell	Family Man

Rock

1	Alter Bridge	Isolation
2	Stone Sour	Say You'll Haunt Me
3	My Darkest Days	Porn Star Dancing
4	Saving Abel	Sex Is Good
5	Three Days Grace	World So Cold
6	3 Doors Down	When You're Young
7	Shinedown	Diamond Eyes
8	Godsmack	Love-Hate-Sex-Pain
9	Disturbed	The Animal
10	Gracious Few	Appetite
11	Jonathan Tyler	Gypsy Woman
12	Hinder	All American Nightmare
13	Five Finger Death Punch	Far From Home
14	Kid Rock	God Bless Saturday
15	Avenged Sevenfold	Welcome To The Family
16	Buckcherry	I'Õs A Party
17	Ozzy Osbourne	Let It Die
18	Buckcherry	Dead
19	Stone Sour	Hesitate
20	Skillet	Awake And Alive

Adult Contempory

1	Bruno Mars	Just The Way You Are
2	Daughtry	September
3	Script	Breakeven
4	Train	Hey, Soul Sister
5	Taylor Swift	Mine
6	Sara Bareilles	King Of Anything
7	Train	Marry Me
8	Katy Perry	Teenage Dream
9	Katy Perry	Firework
10	Michael Buble	Hollywood
11	Plain White T's	Rhythm Of Love
12	Pink	Raise Your Glass
13	Bon Jovi	What Do You Got
14	Onerepublic	Secrets
15	Neon Trees	Animal
16	Josh Groban	Hidden Away
17	Taio Cruz	Dynamite
18	Christina Perri	Jar Of Hearts
19	Rihanna	Only Girl
20	Taylor Swift	Back To December

Alternative

1	Cage The Elephant	Shake Me Down
2	My Chemical Romance	Sing
3	Linkin Park	Waiting For The End
4	Rise Against	Help Is On The Way
5	Black Keys	Tighten Up
6	Mumford & Sons	The Cave
7	Middle Class Rut	New Low
8	Young The Giant	My Body
9	Black Keys	Howlin' For You
10	Muse	Undisclosed Desires
11	A Day To Remember	All I Want
12	Social Distortion	Machine Gun Blues
13	Florence + The Machines	Dog Days Are Over
14	Foster The People	Pumped Up Kicks
15	Neon Trees	1983
16	Avenged Sevenfold	Welcome To The Family
17	Airborne Toxic Event	Changing
18	Kings Of Leon	Pyro
19	Shinedown	Diamond Eyes
20	Strokes	Under Cover Of Darkness

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