

Disc Jockey News

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The Q Corner, Where Quality Meets Quantity

By Mike Walter

I've written over 50 articles for this great publication and never once have I written a review of a product or service.



That streak ends now.

Last year, with great reluctance, I switched the data base program that we at Elite Entertainment use to Troy Ackerman's DJ Event Planner.

Since 1994, we had used a program that was written in FileMaker. That's fifteen years worth of data. Over 7,000 parties worth. So when I say "with great reluctance" I mean it. First and foremost, we in the office, my salesmen and also my office manager, knew that old program like we know the steps to The Electric Slide. And while it certainly had its limitations, we had bent and twisted that old program to do so many different things that made our lives' easier. For years we resisted going to a new program because we reasoned: "how much better could a new one be?" One of my favorite Wallflowers songs has the lyric: "Look how wrong you can be?" That line seems appropriate here.

My other reason for reticence was that big pile of fifteen years worth of data. I wanted it to come forward into any new program we decided on so we could access it at any time.

I'm sure you can relate. How often do you have this conversation?:

Caller: We saw you at a wedding six years ago?

You: Oh great. Do you remember who the DJ was?

Caller: No.

You: Well, no problem. Let me have the bride's name and I can look everything up for you.

And then Voila! Not only can you see who DJed the wedding but just as importantly what that client from six years ago paid. That information is vital for a sales call and I wanted to make sure we weren't dealing with two different database programs to access it.

Like any wise consumer, I sought word of mouth referrals. I spoke to my network of DJ buddies and I started noticing a trend. Those that used other programs couldn't give me a ringing endorsement. But those that were using DJ Event Planner swore by it. And they not only raved about the program but also about the man who wrote it: Troy Ackerman. How easy he was to get in touch with and how open he was to making changes in his software.

I made one of my goals in attending Mobile Beat's Las Vegas show in February of 2009 to meet this Troy Ackerman and learn more about his product. And

the more I learned, the more I came to overcome my fears of making the change and actually started to look forward to it. I brought the concept back to my staff and introduced them to the software. We signed up for Troy's free 30 day trial (which I believe he stills offers.) They were excited as well so with their support I approached Troy about the last piece of the puzzle: data migration.

Troy was confident he could pull it off. And he did. 15 years worth of client information came forward. I can look up events from as far back as 1994 and see all the pertinent details. With that last hurdle cleared we made the switch.

Going into it I had told my staff to expect about a one month learning curve. It wasn't even that long. In no time we were flying around the new system, entering client's information while talking to them on the phone and emailing agreements minutes after hanging up (something our old system did not allow.) My sales people rave about the software and how much easier it makes their jobs. My office manager as well. The reports that DJ Event Planner can generate allow us to keep our finger on the pulse of our business better than ever before. And my DJs love it too. When we book a last minute event they can just sign in to their account and see all the details.

And to complete the circle, DJ Event Planner also has great online planning capabilities for our clients. Before they even meet with their DJ they can fill out their Bridal Party Introduction and select their music requests all from the comfort of their homes. Our millennial brides love this feature and it's become a big selling tool for us as well.

The fact that DJ Event Planner is web-based allows everyone to access the system in unique ways. My sales

people can see certain levels of information while my office manager can do even more. My DJs of course can only see their own events. And clients when they sign on to their account can make and save changes to this music requests which my office staff and their specific DJ can see instantly. And without the need for a "Go to My PC" type of program, we can access our data base anywhere and anytime. While I'm on the road I can view it on my laptop or even my iPhone. And while we are at bridal shows we can check availability instantly. We even have brides enter their information directly into our database and email them during the bridal show. Talk about immediate gratification!

And the legend of how helpful and open to suggestions Troy Ackerman is has proved true. I have called Troy numerous times since becoming a user and asked if the program could do something different. He has made numerous "tweaks" for me. I love the fact that, even though DJ Event Planner is already great, Troy is not resting on his laurels. He's ready willing and able to listen to his customers and make adjustments.

If you want to contact Troy you can find him on Facebook or go to DJEventPlanner.com. And as always if you have any questions for me, hit me with an email or Facebook message. I'll be happy to answer any questions and to give you the same kind of ringing endorsement that others gave me. DJ Event Planner has quite simply made my life easier and made me more efficient. And with an ultimate goal of working less and working smarter, that's the kind of product or service I had to rave about.

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.

Know Who You Want To Know

By Michael Port



Tell me, what's wrong with this introduction?

"Michael, thank you for accepting my friend request. Tell me about what you do.

I see you have written a book. What's it called? What's it about? I'm also working on a book and a project you might be interested in. I would like to discuss potential business opportunities with you."

Yes, that's from an actual e-mail I received in my Facebook account. Of course, my Facebook page explains what I do and lists all four of my books. So perhaps it's just my ego talking, but one would hope that this person would make an effort to at least scan the page. To fast-forward the process and ask for business without first gaining some intelligence is more than ineffective, it's a turnoff.

It doesn't matter whether you are prospecting, door-knocking, outreaching, introducing or just plain canvassing. If you do any or all of these without knowing the person or business you are

contacting, you might as well be calling the president of the United States. At best, you'll find yourself winded, time wasted or wares unwanted. Or at worst, humiliated. And no one wants to feel like a cheesy, shady, pushy or unprepared salesperson.

So you say you want to create a never-ending pool of prospects? You want to capture more sales? You want to get booked solid? Make more money? Create a nest egg? Then do me a favor: Show up in the know with all the people you want to know. There's no minimizing your overall effectiveness and confidence when you're packin' preparation.

So find out:

- What motivates them. What really gets their juices flowing? What makes their eyes sparkle? It might be business, family or hobbies. Look at the photos, books and other things sitting on or near their desk. What are they reading, referring to others or genuinely interested in?

- What they have accomplished. Do an online search. Start with a Google image search if you don't know what their smiling faces look like yet. Who is singing their praises? Have they won awards, received public recognition or publication announcements?

- What you have in common. How have your paths crossed? Express your

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Playing The Right Roll

By Rick Brewer, [GetMoreBrides.com](http://www.getmorebrides.com)

If you have been in business more than 5 years, I have good news and bad news.

Good news first: You have successfully beat the odds for a small business. You have run the gamut that usually beats 9 out of 10 small businesses.

The bad news is there has been an influx (and frankly these types will always keep coming) of “competitors” who have watered down the industry by making the veterans a common commodity. You will have to keep on top of and ahead of these “chuck and a truck DJs” whose only advertising is Craig’s List and only selling proposition is low price.

By the way- staying on top of the industry news and techniques through publications like DJ News is one of the ways that sets you apart as a true professional and not just some guy with gear.

Brides are one of the most reluctant buyers out in the world today. There is a study floating around that a bride needs to hear about you 8 times before she will consider doing business with you. I’m not sure if that is true, but let’s pretend that half of that is true. We still need to do a lot of work to get her to even consider doing business with us, let alone signing a contract.

When our marketing works, that just gets them on the phone, to our website or through our doors, all distinct different steps in the Bridal Buying Process.

When we market to our brides, most of us start off with the wrong assumptions. We “assume” they want a fairy tale wedding, come to life. We “assume” that just because they are a bride and we sell the stuff she is looking for that we are an automatic match. We “assume” that she is looking for a wedding package and that 10% off is the deal that means something to her. These assumptions happen far too often and because they happen so often, a bride will dis-trust wedding vendors as a rule and trust wedding vendors as an exception. We need to take a more honest, straight forward path to help her to trust us so she can determine if we truly are or are not a match, rather than simply opting to not make a decision because we did not represent ourselves well enough.

You ever have this happen: A bride emails you or calls you. She has one question that s foremost to her. Can you guess what that question is? It’s a little game she likes to play called “what’s my price”. She will call up and ask “how much do you charge for _____?”. She will ask that, not knowing that we are not a common commodity, but because she only knows how to measure with one yardstick- Money. IT doesn’t help that one of the first questions we ask her is “what’s your budget?”. She is simply protecting her purse because we come off as salesman.

Here’s some ideas on how to not come off as salesman.

1. Never assume that you are an automatic match. In fact, tell her that you are not a match for every bride. There are some of you out there who are getting a little fidgety with that statement, so let me prove my point; Are you a match if you can do only one wedding a day and you are already booked for the day she wants? No. Are you a match if she is going to bounce her check to you after you provide your product/service? No. Are you a match if under your judgment after the wedding, you would have gladly not made the money and would have rather stayed home because she was such a pain in the rear end ? No. Are you a match if every other vendor is a relative and you have to work five times as hard to get half the result because you are trying to make up the room that other vendors usually help with? No.

2. Don’t Assume that she is interested in your ideas of why she should do business with you. Many times, we as salespeople assume that the person buying will/won’t buy because of price, our offering, or some other feature. If we had simply asked at the outset what was important to them, we could have been much more helpful. I have seen countless numbers (in fact I promise you I could fly into your city, open up any wedding magazine in your town and find someone who does this) of wedding vendors telling a bride what is important to them or what should be important to them. This bold assumption repels too many brides.

3. Don’t sell on logic, sell on emotion. An emotional bride will always put priority over budget. She will trust easier and she will respect you more with what you

do in your profession to help her with her wedding. The logical stuff will be answered later, don’t worry. If you missed my emails on selling emotion rather than logic, check out my blog at [gettingmorebrides.wordpress.com](http://www.gettingmorebrides.wordpress.com)

4. Instead of telling her about your stuff, ask her about her stuff. She has a distinct image of what her wedding should be. If you ask at least twice as many questions as you answer, not only will you maintain control of the sale, but you will also get her to break down her own doors of trust and allow you into her zone of truth. Let me give you an example; Think about the last big purchase you made. If the salesperson asked you more questions than you asked them, did they come off as the expert? What if you asked more questions, how did they come off? When salespeople asked more questions, it means that you are delving into the true needs of the consumer and you are really trying to match them up with everything they need. That doesn’t mean you get in the way of the sale. If a bride is convinced of what she wants and you have offered her options, close the sale, don’t confuse her.

Marketing, when it works, gets the bride to take the next step. Getting the bride to engage with you is key, but even more paramount is getting the bride to trust you because you are not trying to steal her money and not worry about her wedding. Be more of a consultant than you are a salesperson and you will book more weddings next year.

Rick Brewer is a nationally recognized expert on marketing and selling to brides. You can find out more about Rick at www.getmorebrides.com

The Show Must Go On!!

By Dave Winsor

So, I’m on deadline for this months’ article and I don’t have a clue what to write. John Young sent me an email asking if I’ve got one prepared. “No, I’ve been sick and I’m really backed up with work.... blahblahblahblah...” You get the idea.



So I ask if I can slide for a month. John wrote back and said that would be ok. I felt guilty and told him I didn’t have a clue about what to write. I asked for his help on

a topic.

That topic is in the heading of this column.

I had to laugh when I read it. I’m not sure if he meant that as a dig to me, or if he was really interested in what I had to say on the subject, but whatever the reason, it made sense.

When it comes time to do something that you may find difficult, start putting one foot in front of the other and GET GOING. No big deal. Just do it.

Your attitude determines your success. Your frame of mind will dictate your outlook on your world. Here I was feeling tired and listless because I was OVERWHELMED with stuff to do. Kind of funny how that works. I tried to “eat the elephant” with just one bite. Can’t be done. John knew that. So, he did what any great motivator would do: He allowed me to come up with the drive I needed to sit down and write this column.

I feel a little ashamed that it happened. John just keeps getting it done and publishing his DJ newspaper each month and he relies on us to bring you interesting content. So he did what any great motivator

would do, he didn’t tell me what to do, and he even offered me a way OUT of doing my work. But these simple words, “The Show Must Go On” propelled me into action and I’m glad they did.

Now it’s your turn to make the “Show Go On”! What do you do when you are unmotivated? What causes that? Is it laziness? My guess is yes. I really protect my downtime because I tend to do too much in a short amount of time. I also think the damn cold I caught last week really kicked my butt for 2 days and hung around for another 7. So, here I am baring my soul to you in hopes that you won’t fall victim to the same malaise. Do it. Take the extra step. Get up. Do SOMETHING.... work, have fun, plan. As they say in the song “Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life” by Monty Python:

Some things in life are bad
They can really make you mad
Other things just make you swear and curse.

When you’re chewing on life’s gristle
Don’t grumble, give a whistle
And this’ll help things turn out for the best...

And...always look on the bright side of

life...

Always look on the light side of life... I also happened upon the story of a beautiful young woman who was dying of cystic fibrosis. The title of her blog is “65redroses” because that’s what she called it as a little girl. Well, I spent lots of time on her blog reading about her impending death. Here is the address: <http://65redroses.livejournal.com/> This was the most difficult part for me:

Our beautiful girl died this morning at 9:30. She is at peace.

Read. Absorb. Open your heart. Learn that what we are dealing with is MINOR and the way he handle the little things can make us look like spoiled brats. I felt that way. Amazing what some inspiration will do for your outlook.

So, there you are. Thanks John for the incentive and more importantly, the kick in the pants to get me going. I really hope this column will help motivate you to greater things and that the really painful things in life you are dealing with will somehow seem smaller and more manageable.

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What's Your Focus?

By Mitch Taylor

Recently I was having a conversation with a good friend of mine talking about problems at an event he performed at recently. We all know as entertainers that starting off on the wrong foot at an event can be difficult at best to overcome.

If you are stressed about your gear or working with that photographer that you don't get along with very well... it can easily affect your performance with that couple and their guests if you let it.

In this scenario, the bride and groom had a Friday wedding ceremony scheduled for 6:30pm, full Catholic mass and told him that they would be at the recep-

tion facility at 7:30pm at the latest. Now... we all know that everything doesn't always go as planned on a wedding day, and that day was no different. The bride and groom ended up not showing up at the reception hall until 8pm, dinner was late and guests who did not attend the ceremony were left wondering why dinner was over a half hour late.

The overall success of the event was altered from the very start because the bride and groom didn't have a trusted advisor working with them to ensure a successful outcome to their event. Most couples have never been married before and are between the ages of 21 and 29 when they first get married. A young woman from this demographic gets engaged and all of a sudden she's in charge of planning her first FIVE FIGURE party ever. It's no wonder that entertainment is not high on her list of priorities because everything so far in her life has been about remembering through a photograph or fashion in a magazine or TV show through college.

Most of brides thrown in this situation

have no idea where to start....much less where to place priorities without having the foresight to see how their uninformed decisions will impact their party.

So Mitch....how does this relate to sales? Easy. First...THINK ABOUT THIS. What do you sell? When you meet or talk with a client for the first time....what do you talk about? Do you tell them you'll show up before the event at least an hour prior....you send out 2 DJs for every event and that you play music for six hours for only \$XXXX? If that's the case...you're selling a product and not a service. We'll even take it one step further in a moment, first ask yourself if the following scenario sounds familiar.

I performed a reception back in the 90s where I, nor anyone else, was helping the bride see the mistakes she was making with the flow of her wedding day. The couple decided it would be a good idea to take a horse drawn carriage from their ceremony to their reception site.. They neglected to think about how LONG it would take to go from their ceremony to the reception site (5 miles away) in city traffic on a Friday night at 6pm! Dinner was supposed to be served at 7pm, which didn't happen until 8pm due to this oversight by the young couple plan-

ning their only wedding.

If you truly want to help your clients and your bottom line....shift your focus. Don't offer products....don't offer a service....offer SOLUTIONS. When you shift your focus to a SOLUTION base, you become a resource to your clients. You position yourself as an expert in your field and clients will have more respect for you and what you offer. You'll connect better with your clients, you'll have more satisfaction with your work, your referrals will grow and you will improve your bottom line. Remember, your clients may be looking for a DJ....provide them with more....a SOLUTION to their entertainment problem with their event. This one small shift in thinking, from product focused to solution focused, can have a BIG impact on your clients overall success of their event...and the success of your company.

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

Positively Detoured

By Rocky Bourg

This month's challenge is more invisible than tangible, more cerebral than physical, and certainly more philosophical than manual. Hopefully, the results will be obvious and undeniable. Also, if you are not

yet seeing the benefits of the prior monthly challenges issued in this column, please do not give up. The fruits of all labor must be cultivated and, much like Louisiana Creole Tomatoes or Florida Oranges, require diligent attention and, most importantly, patience.

Initially, I had planned to draft this article and take a cynical, vengeful expedition that would lead to a place of selfish but short lived satisfaction at the expense of a few individuals that use internet forums to assuage some personal deficiencies. However, in the process of drafting this month's article, and before the submission deadline, I was lucky enough to receive an email that positively detoured me and lead me to take a more uplifting journey and rethink this month's challenge and article.

In that email, a respected colleague had forwarded an absolutely amazing and envious client appraisal and review of a recent event, held at a very prestigious venue. The fact that this professional received such accolades was not a surprise; anything to the contrary would be more shocking. No, the unusual part was that the performance yielded an unsolicited but equally glowing review from the venue manager, a professional in his own right that routinely experiences superb, unmatched performances, probably every 5 to 10 minutes. I deduced that my colleague must have been hitting on all cylinders.

But as I listened to the words of both the client and the manager, I noticed that the praise was not referencing his other worldly beat-mixing abilities, nor some highly developed scratching skillz or expensive, high end gear. Their words seemed to refer mainly to him, as a person, an individual that simply was prepared with a capacity to be unwaveringly

positive. He is, I have no doubt, a devotee of the philosophy inherent in Mother Teresa of Calcutta's famous words, "Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing." I've never seen a picture of this man without a smile on his face nor can I remember not smiling back. He, apparently, gets it.

That email helped me to realized that I was so mired in negativity that I was preparing to waste this month's opportunity to share with the readers a beneficial and positive lesson and behavioral adjustment. Forgive me if I again seem headed toward Cornyville. I frequently do that but it has never really resulted in anything but a beneficial move to a better place.

Regardless, after several rereads and acknowledgements of the facts therein, I sent my friend a note of congrats and resolved to begin a program of "Smile at all costs", avoid all avoidable negativity and the unnecessary judgments of those I don't admire nor aspire to emulate, and to quantify the results. So I find myself, having to scrap a really juicy, snap filled, much ado about nothing article. Wow, it is working already.

With that in mind and the desire to better utilize the limited time we are allotted in any given period, I hereby resolve, and invite you to join me, in a program of effective time allocation, with primary attention to activity that will result in more smiles per gallon!

This exercise will require active attention as many time wasting, frown inducing habits are routine and second nature, and to that I can certainly attest.

Staring immediately, begin making note of each circumstance that feels less inherently negative. If you have an I-device or phone that can record, use it to make voice notes when you find your self doing something voluntarily or unnecessarily that induces a smile-less mug. Later, during a moment of clarity, review those circumstances and simply but actively avoid them from now on.

If talking about certain topics, in social settings, induces an uncomfortable tightness, find another conversation. When regularly visiting specific areas of the internet typically result in having to deal with annoying but constant misunderstandings, don't sign in. As you read this, I'm particularly embracing that one. Simply put,

if X doesn't make you smile, try Y.

For example, I found myself fussing and grimacing whenever I approached a particular intersection during my daily commute. My predictable demeanor shift was in direct reaction to the endless number of self important morons that refuse to adhere to the clearly established and visible road markings and ordinances. They purposefully sped pass other commuters, myself included, that were properly waiting in the legal turn lane to access a busy ramp. These selfish vermin, routinely, forcibly, rudely and dangerously cut in front of everyone.

Now I realize that people run late, typically due to their own irresponsible behavior and bad habits, and may suffer consequences, rightfully and properly so, for tardiness but G.D. I wanted to annihilate every single one of them each time I was made to witness their carelessness and made to wait through additional signal changes, spending additional time in order to proceed legally. I could not ignore the obnoxiousness of their illegal actions and it caused regular aggravation, but only for me, the arrogant lawbreakers could have cared less.

Anyway, I continued to foam at the mouth daily until I mentioned this to a

friend. He suggested, with a smile and a knowing ocular glint, that I simply try a slightly different route and possibly avoid the annoying idiots. He was right. I made a minor alteration in my course and, viola, the annoyance was no more, it ceased to be, it was an ex-annoyance. (Apologies to M. Python).

Apparently, while festering in disdain, I was not in the right frame of mind to see the simple, positive solution to a insignificant problem. Mind you, if I ever get military clearance and a bumper mounted grenade launcher, I plan to revisit that intersection and introduce those idiots to "my little friend." (Apologies to Scarface) But I digress.

Beginning now, when I find myself saddled with a frown, I pledge to either stand on my head or adjust my attitude to allow a smile to surface. I want to be the subject of reviews and appraisals like those which my ever smiling friend was the recipient and subject of...and probably due in no small part to his constant, infectious smile, which I suspect is a result of his propensity to swim, mainly, in happier waters.

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compassion, enthusiasm and understanding for these shared interests. Keep your focus coming back to the person. Use these common interests as a starting place to learn more about how he or she feels and thinks about the world.

- Who they know. Do you have any mutual friends? Do you have common Facebook friends or Twitter followers? Be informed and stay connected.

- What challenges them. Know the opportunities and competition they face in their business. What challenges will you help them overcome? What opportunities will you help them fulfill?

- How they have helped you. We all want to feel appreciated, acknowledged and respected. Share how their work and opinions have influenced or affected you. Be yourself and be complementary.

- Why you are indispensable. Do you truly know why they should know or work with you? Do you believe that

their lives will be happier, easier, fuller, richer or just plain better with the benefit of your services?

Sales isn't always sensible. Even if your proposition seems picture perfect, life, decisions and relationships are always wrapped up in underlying influences.

But when you show up knowledgeable and prepared, you address the human needs of the people you want to serve. Then you might have a shot of getting what you ask for. Doors will stop slamming. People will start playing--and start paying.

Michael Port has been called "an uncommonly honest author" by the Boston Globe and a "marketing guru" by The Wall Street Journal. Michael Port is a New York Times Bestselling author of four books including Book Yourself Solid, Beyond Booked Solid, The Contrarian Effect and The Think Big Manifesto. Michael Port can be reached at <http://www.michaelport.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: Cancellation Policy.

I spoke briefly in the last article about having a "120 Day Cancellation Policy" to help ensure your business stays in business.

What does this mean to you? Simply put - it is a time period if the client for any reason decides to cancel the contract, they are still required to make a payment in full to complete the agreement with you.

Back in the days before the exponential influx of DJs to the industry and the economy went down the drain, most DJs had a 30 or 60 day cancellation policy or had none whatsoever. When the bottom started dropping out in 2007, more and more events were being canceled due to money restrictions.

Clients sometimes cancel out a higher priced entertainer and opt for a lower rate entertainer. It is all about the economics and not the value, quality or experience of that entertainer. As I mentioned in the previous article those with a larger retainer (deposit) required at signing had fewer cancellations because the retainer was large enough that the client could not lose the money paid, hire a cheaper DJ and still

save on the costs. Those DJs with a very low or no retainer were simple to cancel out, hire a new DJ and still save on the clients checkbook.

The other problem that arose from all these economic cancellations were that if the entertainer did not have a set time period for cancellation restrictions then the client could wait until the last minute to cancel leaving the DJ without a paycheck for that date. I would recommend having a minimum of a 120 day cancellation policy that clearly states if the client cancels the event with less than a 120 day notice prior to the event date, payment in full is still due. This means if they cancel less than four months prior to the party, they are still required to pay the remaining contract value even if the event doesn't take place. My cancellation policy is clearly written in my contract and I will go over the policy with the client at the time of contract signing so that they can not later plead to the Judge that they didn't read/know that the clause was in the contract. If a client books me at a time that is less than 120 days prior to the event, I make it clear that after their three day retainer cancellation period runs out, that there will be absolutely no refund available if the event is canceled by them or by an "Act of God" (fire, weather, illness, death etc.)

Unfortunately the last few months prior to a wedding can be very stressful and it is then that clients decides not to go through with it. With less than 120 days it could/would be nearly impossible to rebook the date. Now you're out the income expected from the contract. After a few cancellations in a year this could really have an effect on your bottom line. With an 120 cancellation policy you are guaranteed to still earn a paycheck even if the event does not hap-

pen. It's not your fault that something went wrong on their end, why should you have to pay for it? I read on a chat board where a DJ had three cancellations in one week for 2010. That is a lot of lost money, hopefully his retainer and/or cancellation policy will help to keep him going.

When I meet with my clients and they sign my company, in their packet are two separate forms with an official cancellation notice for them to fill in the blanks and mail back to me. I do not accept phone or e-mail messages as an official cancellation notice. Each client who signed the contract (always have both the B&G sign the contract) must sign the cancellation policy form together on one sheet or individually on the two separate forms I give them. They are instructed if either one does not sign and return it to my office before the 120 day notice, then they both are still responsible for the payment in full and both will be taken to small claims court. The reason being that sometimes one of the two parties involved do not wish to cancel the wedding. They are holding out for hope and/or a change of mind from the other. If the groom calls or e-mails the cancellation, but the bride doesn't want to cancel, this can lead to problems. One of them can believe that since they paid the retainer (deposit) that they now have control over you and want to switch dates, venues or events and use that deposit for this new event. Many years ago I had an angry groom who thought he would change the contract and have a "drinking" party with his buddies and have a DJ. The very "drinking problem" that lead to the bride canceling the wedding. Because my contract said that I will not change dates/locations or events (wedding to a "drinking" party) the new party did not happen but payment in full was still paid.

Some DJs offer to a client that if they do rebook the canceled date, then they will return the amount paid by those who can-

celed. This is a bad policy to have. The likelihood that you will rebook that event is very small. If you should get lucky enough to rebook it and you pay back the original clients who canceled, what happens if the second client then also cancels? I use to offer the money back if rebooked and the problem was then that couple who cancelled would be calling several times a week, every week until the night of the cancelled event to see if I rebooked or not.

Pretending to be a new potential client asking questions about the date can be annoying as well as time consuming for you. If you don't rebook it and decide to just go out and have fun, when the former client calls and don't get an answer they will assume that you did rebook and demand that you pay them back. This could lead to court time and proving you just went to a movie could be tough when your court date comes around months later.

Once the client cancels get that payment as soon as possible after they cancel. The longer you wait, the tougher it will be to collect. Whatever problem caused the cancellation will only grow bigger as the date approaches and paying for something they did not receive will really anger the lost client. Call or e-mail both subjects with a reminder of the payment due and let them know it is due upon that request. Explain that if they do not pay by the original date of the cancelled event, that you will file a small claims court case on the following Monday. If payment is not received, go and do this. Stand behind your threat and many times they will pony up the cash. If not, you now have a case against them. Next month I will talk about going to small claims court and winning your case.

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

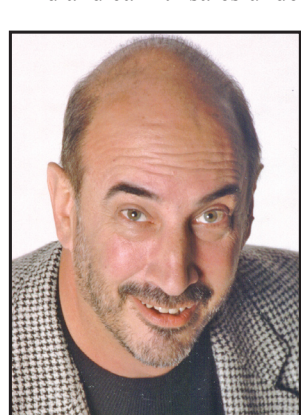
I'm Not In A Slump, The Economy Is!

By Jeffrey Gitomer

In case you hadn't noticed, the economy is still hurting. And the universal cry of salespeople not making enough sales is, "IT'S THE ECONOMY!"

In a slump? Not making enough (or any) sales. Feel like you're unable to get out of the rut? Is it the economy, or is it YOU?

Maybe you're not in a big slump, but just can't seem to hit the quota numbers. Let's be kind and call it "sales under-achievement."



Don't panic. Don't press too hard.

Don't get down on yourself.

Don't get mad.

And above all - don't quit.

OK, OK, there's a slowdown (a recession), but don't be too quick to

blame your lack of performance on "it" before you take a hard look at "you." And take a closer look at "slump" before you blame "economy."

Here are the prime causes of sales slumps:

Poor belief system. I don't believe that my company or product is the best. I don't think that I'm the best.

Poor work habits. Getting to work late, or barely "on time." Not spending your time with people who can say "yes."

Misperceptions that lead to sour grapes. I think my prices are too high, or my territory is bad.

Outside pressure. Caused by money

problems, family problems, or personal problems.

Poor personal habits. Too much drink, too much food, or too much after hours play.

Boss giving crap instead of support. Someone who says, "You better do it," instead of, "I know you can do it."

Events that go against you. New salesperson passes you, someone else gets promoted and you knew it should have been you.

Customer cancels a big order. Weakening your personal belief or causing severe money problems - or both.

Competition cuts price and steals the order. This is the new reality of business.

Getting depressed. From any of the above.

When you're in a slump, you begin to press for orders instead of working your best game plan (which is: "sell to help the other person," and let your sincerity of purpose shine through). When you have the pressure to sell, the prospect senses it, and backs off.

Then things get worse. You can't seem to sell at all, and begin to panic. Oh my gosh, I can't sell a thing, I'll get fired and miss my house payment. Aaaahhhhhh! False fear. Relax, you're better than that.

What causes a slump? You do. Therefore, you are the best (only) person to fix it.

Here's a prescription to help cure sick sales:

- Study fundamentals - Usually what's wrong is not complicated. In fact, you probably know what's wrong. Your problem is that you think it's someone or something else's fault. Wrong. List two or three areas that need immediate care. Have the guts to take action.
- Revisit your (or make a new) plan for success. Today.

- List 5 things you could be doing to work smarter AND harder. Make a plan to work as smart as you think (or say) you are. Hard work can change your luck.

- Change your presentation. Try a different approach. Take the customer's perspective.

- Talk to your five best customers. Ask them to evaluate your situation.

- Get someone you respect to evaluate your presentation. Take them with you on sales calls. Get a coach.

- Visit your mentor. And have a new plan to discuss when you get there.

- Get to work an hour before everyone. Put in more productive time.

- Stay away from pity parties. Don't make a slump worse by whining or hanging around a bunch of negits and underachievers.

- Hang around positive, successful people. The best way to get to success.

- Have some fun. Go to a comedy club. Do a little extra of what you like to do best (unless too much fun is the cause of your slump).

- Spend 30 minutes a day (in the morning is best) reading about your positive attitude. Then listen to attitude CDs and sales CDs in the car ALL DAY.

- Listen to your favorite song just before a presentation. Go in to your next call singing.

- Take a day off. Chill out, take stock, make a plan, re-group, re-energize, and return with renewed determination and better energy.

- Rearrange your office. Shake things up a little, make them look new.

- Record your presentations live. Then listen in the car immediately afterwards. Take notes. Act to correct.

- Video tape your presentation. Watch it with others who can give you constructive feedback.
- Take the best salesperson you know out

on calls with you for a day. Get a written evaluation after each call.

- Take your boss with you on calls for a week. You'll get more feedback than you can handle, but it will help.

- Avoid negative talk and negative people like the plague. Find people who will encourage you, not puke on you.

- Become more valuable to your customers. Send a weekly value message by email to everyone (it can be the same message to all). Tweet a value message or inspirational message daily.

The best way to get out of the rut is keep the slump in perspective. Once you accept the fact that you can change it, you can begin to recover. Be cool - you're the greatest, if you think you are. Believe in the most important person in the world. You!

THINK ABOUT THIS: When a baseball player is in a batting slump, he'll do anything to "change his luck." Things from superstition (rabbits foot, not shaving, wearing the same underwear) to changing batting stance, to video watching, to extra coaching. But the one thing that usually breaks the slump is extra batting practice - to regain the groove.

Fundamentals, baby.

They, like you, have the professional ability, but temporarily lost it. They, like you, need to revisit the raw fundamentals to regain lost talent.

If you want to learn my secret for long-term name recognition and loyal customers, go to www.gitomer.com and enter the word NAME 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.

Does A DJ Need An Office?

By Kelly Suit

So I was sitting in front of my computer brainstorming about what I wanted to share concerning Facebook and how social media has had a positive effect on my business several times over the last couple weeks. You see, I've been wanting to share this information with you 2 articles ago, but something always seems to come up and of course this article is no different.

I promised my editor that I'd get a couple articles ahead so that I'm not under the gun at the deadline, like I am right now, but again things are coming up. For the past 2 months our company has moved locations and we are going into our busiest time of the year ... Prom season. Try as I did, every time I would get comfortable and ready to impart some profound knowledge I'd get sucked back into the reality of life and more specifically life as a DJ business owner.

Before I continue, I need to apologize to my local DJ Association. I'm part of the Tampa ADJA and in my last article I mentioned being at a local association meeting and didn't acknowledge this fine group of associates. My good friend and top shelf DJ Bob Moore brought this to my attention

and I told him I'd correct that mistake at my 1st opportunity.

While going through the hassle of moving to a new office I decided on what this article was going to be about Does a DJ Need an Office?

We started our DJ company like I'm sure many do, from our home. For the first six years of our business it was a home based business, but we were also a single operation during that period of our business. We did pretty well, but the option of meeting clients either at my home or some neutral location always bothered me. I had a personal bias against home based businesses and I think looking back that personal bias hampered my ability to grow the way I wanted.

In 2004 I took on a business partner (ultimately it was a huge mistake, but that is an article for another day) and we tried to continue to run the business from home. In three months it became unbearable so we went looking for our first office. After looking at several locations we finally decided on our new space. In our first year at a "real" office, our business doubled, but to be fair it was also my first year as a multi operation. In our second year at that location we grew another sixty percent. Pretty crazy growth that I can attribute to having a much more professional appearance than the majority of our competitors.

In 2006 we purchased a home that had extra space that was designated specifically for running our business. It had office space as well as meeting space and storage,

but I saw a difference in the way that our clients perceived our company. While our company was better then it had ever been, clients that came out to our home office just didn't seem nearly as impressed with our company as when we had been in a "real" office. Our sales continued to grow, but not at nearly the rate that we had experienced prior to the move.

In 2008 we again decided to move into a commercial space. Unfortunately 2008 was also the beginning of the current economic climate that we have been dealing with for the last two years. We did experience a drop in gross sales, but compared to many of the business owners I spoke with, we weathered the storm better than most. Last year we rebounded and this year we are on pace to have a pretty good year. Is it all because of having an office ... of course not! We are doing lots of proactive things in order to stay ahead of the curve, but I do believe that having a commercial location gives you an edge over competitors that don't have one.

Think of it like this, you're looking for an accountant to keep your books. You go online and narrow your search down to three that you like and then you call them to make an appointment. Two of them invite you to their office to discuss your needs and to share with you what you can expect if you decide to use their services. The third one says that he would be willing to meet you at your home or you can meet at the local Starbucks. You haven't gotten prices from any of them and you don't have any recommendations or referrals from any of them, all you have is your impression of their professionalism and how successful you think they must be. Who do you think

is at the disadvantage? Now with DJs it's somewhat different in the respect that most DJs don't have an office. Many DJs have told me that they think not having an office is an actual advantage since they can meet the client where ever is convenient for their client. I'm not suggesting that meeting your client somewhere other than an office is bad business, in fact I meet a client last night at a Panera Bread because it would have been over an hour drive for the client to meet me at my office. With that said, I truly believe that we have booked more events because we have a physical commercial location.

Now to be fair, there are down sides to have a location as well. Most obvious is the additional cost you incur. I have spoken to DJs that tell me that not having a location allows them to keep costs down and that is true. If you are a single operator I can absolutely see how having an office could be very cost prohibitive. If I was ever to go back to being a single operator I still would look at options to have a location for the purpose of meeting clients. Some possibilities would be to pair up with either a bridal shop or a photographer and see if they would let me meet clients at their location. I would most likely work from home while taking calls, returning emails, and doing event prep, but when it came time to meeting my clients for the sale, I would want that professional location to enhance my image with the prospect. My belief is any where you can get an edge over your competitors it's a good thing!

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

From The Other Side...

By Jake Palmer

Focus...

Last month I talked about the importance of self-improvement, and "cleaning up your own yard before you worry about your neighbors yard," and I talked about what I can do to improve me.

This month I want to continue that thought. I am pretty sure we are all feeling the steady decline in wedding spending over the past 3-4 years. The interesting part is that there are still wedding professionals out there making a very nice living doing what they love. I personally know of a 3 or 4 Wedding Entertainers in my part of the country that are charging more today than they did two years ago, and they are busy full-time, not just weekend warriors.

How? That's the question I would ask, and I am sure you would too. How does someone charge MORE in a bad economy and not end up working at a gas station? The answer is surprisingly simple, it's the execution that can be the tricky part. With that said, it's important to know there is no quick fix or magic potion, and the harder you work at it, the more successful you will be.

Focus... This is probably the number one thing we can do to stay on top. Your focus needs to be sharp. First focus on the big picture, in chess they say "see the whole board." Some of us have been in this business for so long we start to lose focus, and we expect things to happen, we expect brides to call, we expect people to dance, we expect wedding season to be busy. It's easy to lose focus and get so caught up on one thing that we over look over more obvious details. For example, in last month's article I made a comment about Brett Farve's in-

terception in overtime of the NFC Championship game.... except... the game wasn't in overtime! oops... I (along with many other Viking fans, I'm sure) just expected that the game would go into overtime and that was that. I lost site of the details. Details are the important stuff. It's the details that make us stand out.

So what do we focus on then? What details are the most important? Self improvement? Image? Beat-mixing or mic skills? How do we focus on specific details without losing sight of the whole board?

First, lets take a look at the whole board, the wedding industry is down, but people are still getting married. They are spending less, and they are spending wiser, meaning brides and grooms are better educated thanks to the internet and more research before they buy. As much fun as being a wedding DJ is, it is still a business, and in business there are only two groups of people that matter... Buyers and Sellers.

We are sellers. If you spend all of your time focusing on performance skills, and equipment, you could become the best Wedding Entertainer in the country, but if you can't market or sell yourself, no one will see you. Sales is the key in a bad economy, it's not good enough to be a great entertainer, amazingly creative, or just a really nice guy... you have to be able to sell. Ever wonder why everyone doesn't buy the same car, or why DJs don't all use the same speakers? I mean can't we easily say which brand or style is the best? Why doesn't everyone simply buy the best product? Is it price? I think it's sales. Some people are better sales people than others. Now I realize not every client is a perfect fit for every service, and I am not suggesting that you try to become the "Peddler Man" or a fast talking, cheesy used car salesman. I am simply suggesting that you look for ways to improve your selling skills.

Last month I talked about things I could

do to improve myself, one of the things I did was to attend a seminar hosted by the Minnesota Professional Videographers Association. On a side note I highly recommend joining or creating a professional organization like this in your area, it's a great way to stay motivated, to learn, share, and grow. M.P.V.A. hosted a sales seminar with Rick Brewer who is a key note speaker, author, and consultant to wedding professionals all over the country, and he has some excellent thoughts and ideas on selling to brides and grooms. This is not a sales pitch

for Rick's material, but if you want to learn more about sales, and marketing to brides and grooms, I highly recommend you visit www.getmorebrides.com

Selling to brides and grooms is a unique challenge, but isn't that why we are in this business? Focus on the big picture on detail at a time, look at your marketing, look into more sales training, and be willing and able to diversify... something I will talk more about next month.

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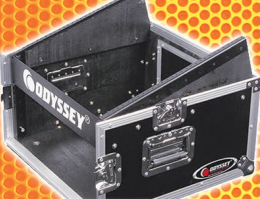
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Lessons From Disney: The Magic Of “Yes, if....”

By Ron Ruth

Have you ever had a spectacular idea that you enthusiastically shared with someone, only to have them “burst your bubble” with a less than enthusiastic response? Or, maybe you’re guilty of putting down someone’s idea before giving it the consideration it deserves. It’s easy to do, especially if the idea is not your own.



Hey, I’ve been as guilty as anyone else. But as they say, admitting you have a problem is the first step to recovery. Taking a lesson from Disney’s best practices for business excellence, you can learn how to build on ideas, making them more practical and useful, simply by changing a “No, but...” attitude to a more productive, “Yes, if...” approach. This constructive style invites others to share their thoughts without fear of being summarily dismissed. It can also make your company more appealing because an enthusiastic, “Yes, if...” manner is far more fun for clients and other wedding professionals to work with and will lead to a better, collaborative, end result.

Walt Disney once said, “We allow no geniuses around our studio.” No idea is ever a bad idea. And, from everything I’ve researched, he insisted that ideas be allowed to evolve in an environment where the words “No, but...” were prohibited. As a matter of fact, Mr. Disney went on to say, “If anybody gets high-brow around the studio, out he goes.” In other words, the end product was and still is more important than the individuals that may have proposed the original idea.

Even today, no one cast member or imagineer can take credit for the genesis of a creative thought. Once it is uttered, it becomes a free floating “bubble.” It bounces from one person to another, each embracing the original concept and adding to its intent with the goal of making it more practical, entertaining and efficient.

In the end, the “bubble” will either take on the form of a ride, attraction, show or even a policy or procedure, or simply be allowed to burst because it is simply not viable to pursue. But, make no mistake about it. The original brain-child is nurtured and given every feasible opportunity to blossom and grow.

The most difficult thing for a great number of us in this creative based and ego driven business is to give up our claim to an idea that worked well. We’re all too anxious, however, to blame others when it doesn’t succeed. We’re also too willing to keep ideas to ourselves to protect our so-called, proprietary rights. Or, more often than not, we don’t share because we fear rejection. Although understandable to a degree, these factors do nothing to make us, our ideas or, more importantly, our client’s event better. They hold us back from truly exceeding expectations.

Last week I met with a couple planning a June, 2011, wedding. When I asked them to tell me about their vision of their wedding celebration, the bride was hesi-

tant. Before she shared one thought, she said “You’re probably going to think this is a stupid idea.”

Her response was not one I’d heard before. Surprised, I interrupted her before she could go on and asked “Why?” “Why would I think your idea to be stupid?”

The bride told me that she and her fiancé had shared their vision with a few other DJs and other wedding professionals who gave them all of the reasons their ideas won’t work. Keep in mind that no one scoffed at their budget. Few had even asked. It was their dreams alone that were being summarily dismissed by individuals that were “expert” at wedding receptions and what works “best.”

After putting them at ease, assuring them that I would not think their ideas “stupid,” they eagerly painted a vivid picture of their ideal wedding celebration. They have some incredibly imaginative ideas that they had obviously spent a great deal of time discussing with each other. As one would start a thought, the other would finish it.

Admittedly, they have far more ideas than time available and some will take additional effort on my part to help them successfully execute. Much of what they want to do will also involve a tremendous amount of creative input and cooperation from their entire reception team. In the end, there’s little doubt that they will live their dream and their guests will experience a unique wedding reception.

It would have been simple to shirk off their ideas with a big, “No, but...” and add to the heap of reasons why their ideas won’t work. By embracing their vision and taking a “Yes, if...” approach, their ideas remain intact. Working together,

we can find imaginative solutions to making them more entertaining for their guests and more efficient to perform.

“Yes, that’s a great idea if we are clear in the way it is conveyed to your family and friends.”

“Yes, that’s an incredible idea that, with a couple of tweaks, will be a lot of fun.”

“I love that idea. I can’t wait to discuss it with you in more detail when we get into the planning process. Let’s also get your photographer and caterer in on the discussion. They’ll be able to add another, creative dimension.”

In this case, “Yes, if...” probably got me a booking. But, imagine how powerful this tool can also be with other wedding professionals. A simple idea, through a collaborative effort, can become an extraordinary moment that produces an incredible memory.

The possibilities are limitless. As an entertainer known for your “Yes, if...” attitude, you could very well become the inspiration everyone turns to whenever a creative spark is needed.

I leave you with this challenge. Focus solely on what is in the best interest of everyone you work with, especially the client. Remember that what you may consider “best” can always be made better. And, the next time a bride and groom, co-worker, wedding professional or even a family member comes to you with their next big idea, embrace it as if it were your own and contribute at least one, constructive “Yes, if...” solution to allow the “bubble” to float on.

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Overcoming The Fear Of No

By Harvey Mackay

Rejection is a part of life. You can't avoid it, whether you're a salesperson with a tough quota or a shy nerd hoping for a date with a supermodel. But you can't let the fear of rejection paralyze you from the start or you'll never get any sales--or any dates.

Like many of us, Jonathan Robinson (now a professional speaker and author) was shy as a young man--painfully so, especially when it came to women. One day in college he decided to do something drastic about it. He handed a friend \$50 and told him, "Don't give this back to me unless I get rejected by 10 different women by the end of today."

The idea was to push through his fear of rejection, with money as a motivator. Robinson headed through the campus, looking for women to ask out. The first time, he was barely able to stammer his question, and the woman involved thought he was experiencing a seizure. She turned him down. After a while he grew calmer, and women became less dismissive of him.

Then something unexpected happened: His seventh target agreed to go out with him. Robinson was so surprised he almost didn't have a response, but he managed to get her phone number. Then the next woman also said yes to him.

In all, he collected eight phone numbers, and had to resort to some mildly annoying behavior to reach his quota of 10 rejections in order to get his \$50 back. Not only did he get his money, and plenty of dates, he vanquished his fear of rejection.

Would I recommend this exercise for

overcoming your fear of rejection? Of course not! But I offer it lightheartedly to show that persistence in facing your worst fears can actually help you -- even embolden you -- to take on bigger challenges, knowing that success is also possible.

Early in my career, when I was struggling to start my company, I made a list of all the accounts I wanted to sell. Some were immediately attainable, and others were far out of my reach. That list was the impetus for my eventual success. It made me really listen to my potential customers and find out what I needed to do to change "no, thanks" to "where do I sign?"

You can overcome your fear of rejection. It doesn't have to be permanent. Instead look forward to facing challenges. It requires reprogramming your mindset. You can't escape rejection. But you can let it go. Practice these exercises:

- Analyze and evaluate your thoughts. When faced with a challenge, what do you tell yourself? "I'm no good . . . this is too hard . . . I'll never make it . . . ?" Don't let negative self-talk sabotage your chances. Take an objective look at the evidence. Chances are you'll realize your worries aren't accurate or realistic. By confronting your irrational doubts, you remove their power.

- Identify realistic fears. Whom do you fear? What might go wrong? After all, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday. Knowledge is power, so clarify the facts: Who has the power to reject you? Why would that person say no? The answers will help you prepare your best offer, and facing them will help you keep your composure.

- Focus on the moment. Keep your perspective. Rejection lasts only a moment, and once it's over, you'll be able to move on to the next opportunity. Also, overcoming your fears can be an exhilarating experience. Anticipate the rush of tackling the challenge, and you'll be more positive in the heat of the mo-

ment.

- "It's just practice." One way to take the pressure off is to treat the situation as a practice session, regardless of the stakes. You still need to prepare and be at your best, but approaching the challenge as a learning experience will relax you. You'll get a better sense of what works and what doesn't--knowledge you can use in the future.

- Be more assertive. Most fears of rejection rest on the desire for approval from other people. Don't base your self-esteem on their opinions. Learn to express your own needs (appropriately), and say no to requests when you genu-

inely can't help. People respect peers who stand up for themselves.

Mackay's Moral: Don't look at rejection as failure -- think of it as an opportunity to succeed the next time.

Mackay's Moral: Money talks, but it shouldn't have the final say.

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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When Your Health Fails..

By Dean Carlson

When your health fails... who you gonna call?

I would like to continue to live in my little glass house, believing that all things will always be a ok. For the last six plus years that's how everything in my life has played out. My life was running as if I had been overly blessed. And then April 15th came along. No not tax day, something worse.

Thursday around 4:00 pm I started to get a cramp in my abdomen. Thinking nothing of it, I set my entire light show up in my pole barn as I was getting ready to do some new programming for my light shows this year. I had a major benefit that I was scheduled to work for and they wanted my full lighting. Several times as I was lifting some lighting I felt sharp pains in my stomach. I passed it off as just a bout of irregularity.

By 7:00 pm I was off to meet a few friends for one of their birthdays, by now they pain waves were staring to come closer and closer. I couldn't even stay with them an hour before I decided to shoot home and lay down, because I thought that would fix this for sure. By 10:00 pm I started to worry that something was very wrong with me, and within the hour ended up in the emergency room.

I was diagnosed with an obstructed bowel, cool I thought. A little rest and I will be good to go. My show will go on. The hospital released me because I was starting to feel better by 6:00 am. Things then took a turn for the worse, I didn't get better. And my stubborn pride made me think I could do something that was impossible for me to do, my show on Saturday.

Several months ago I left the umbrel-

la of a large mulit-op. The answer to the question there was easy, call the on-call manager and let them know and they will send out the back-up. As the only guy working for me who was I going to call... No, not ghost busters, but my local association members.

Mike Anderson of Chrystal Entertainment out of the Twin Cites was my first call on Friday night, when I thought I might still be able to do the show the next day, but thought maybe I should just see if I can get help. Mike is the President of the Midwest Association of Professional DJs, a member of the American Disc Jockey Association and a good friend. He simply said; let me know what you need I got your back.

On Saturday I thought maybe I could still do my show, but I ended up back in the hospital again for another 3 days. Since the show was in Mankato Minnesota, Mike had already called Don Larson, owner of Don The Entertainer, who lives there. Don is also a MAPDJ member and an ADJA member. I called Don about noon said I was on my way to the hospital again, and he said I got your back. As simple as that.

You know I have been going to the Mobile Beat Show for many years, and I have heard stories of other DJs going down, several worse than I did. And all of those stories ended the same way, a local chapter or member of an association stepped up to the plate, and sacrificed their time for another DJ. If you're not in awe just from that you should be, and I am more so now because I have now become that person in need.

I have to say I am proud that I am a DJ, even prouder that I belong to an association or two. But I am most proud of the relationships that I have build over the last 6 plus years. These relationships don't pit DJ against DJ. We aren't competition; we are brothers and sisters who have a common goal. We are rooting for each other to succeed. And when one of us falls another picks us up.

If you don't belong to associations like the ADJA or MAPDJ, what are you waiting for? These associations aren't about "you should raise your price" or "you need

to DJ this way," they are about a common goal. That is gaining nationwide respect for our industry. We will get respect when we respect each other, and that has happened for me. I can't believe that every DJ in the industry isn't involved on some level.

Here is where the rubber hits the road for me. I have developed relationships with other DJs in my market. I respect them. I offer all that I am to them, and in turn they will do the same thing for me. I have a minimum of 10 DJs that I can call at any time for help, and know that if they

can they will help, and they know they can get the same from me. Do you have that same type of relationship with DJs in your market? If not join a association, go to chapter meetings, offer more than you get, get involve and become a "I can call" person. Let's show the world that we respect each other and value our industry. And in turn the world will value us more.

Good luck and great shows.

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



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The Referral Coach

By Matt Anderson

Asking for Referrals As Conversations Get Shorter

If you haven't noticed already, we are almost all having fewer face to face meetings with clients and prospects. This is a major bummer because the best way to ask for referrals is when you have a captive audience.

So how do you adapt to the changing reality? The trend is that now people want to get things done quickly, so face to face meetings are being increasingly seen as an inconvenience. How do continue to get the referrals now you are asking more by phone and online?

The basic fundamentals are going to be the same:



1. You've earned the right to ask for the referral. There is water in the well with the relationship.

2. Your relationship with that person is strong enough such that they know, like and trust you.

3. You are specific about who you want to be introduced to. I mean so specific the other person knows who to talk to. You should never hear "I can't think of anyone" if you are doing this right.

4. Sometimes you explore a way for the other person to warm up the referral that s/he is comfortable with (otherwise they won't do it anyway). This could be done after the call with a follow up email.

For example, I did this today. As I talked by phone with someone who attended one of my referral workshops last Friday, I simultaneously emailed her the name and number of someone I wanted her to 'name drop' to the person she was contacting. Why? Because it added credibility. It was a reference from someone

in the same managerial role at her company in a different part of the country. Usually I will also include wording in the email about what to say so the opportunity is not botched (this happens a LOT!)

5. You make sure you keep control of the process: get permission to follow up with your referral SOURCE: "When should I get back to you to see if this person might be interested in hearing from me?"

If you're reading this and saying: 'that doesn't sound any different from any other ask,' you'd be right. I think my biggest takeaways are:

a) That we can't wait for face to face chances all the time (indeed, less and less) AND

b) We must pre-plan what we want to ask for. We have increasingly less time to chit chat and 'fish' for names.

The good news is that more people want to schedule times to talk by phone and these calls are meetings that can be treated as the once face-to-face meetings. You can still develop agendas for these calls even if they are shorter. You can still manage people's expectations

by saying something like: "Before we hang up, there are two super quick things I want to touch 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: Horsemouth.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

Spring has arrived here. If you are a DJ reading this article, then you know what this season means. (If not, just keep reading) Spring is the start of the wedding season and the special time of year when a majority of new gear hits the showroom floors.

There are many new lights that have been released by Chauvet and American DJ. If you are looking to add more punch to your light show then now is the time to head to your gear shop or visit your favorite online store.

I don't believe I'm alone when I say that "I've always had a fascination with lasers." (It probably stems from watching Star Wars and Star Trek during the 70s.) Lasers add a lot of excitement to lightshows. Coupled with fog/haze a good laser display is hard to beat.

Chauvet has created the Scorpion GBC (Green, Blue, Cyan) I was able to view the light in action in sound active demo mode. It was not connected to a DMX controller, so I was not able to adjust any of the channels to get a better feel for the light. (hint hint – Anyone from Chauvet please feel free to contact me.) Overall, I was impressed with the fixture. The large variety of preprogrammed patterns and 3 color options really give you some dynamic DMX programming options.

The variety of built-in programs can be controlled via channel 1 of your DMX controller or sound active mode. If you have a school/club dance event in full force, I would leave the light on all night. I don't know if I would use this light much for a formal event.

The follow points are excerpts from the Chauvet website.

The Scorpion™ GBC aerial effect laser features blue and green lasers that mix to create cyan and can be programmed to



rotate, roll, morph and zoom into 32 built-in pattern selections. Each pattern can accomplish all of these movements through 10 channels of DMX control. This spectacular show, with a 53-degree coverage

angle, is powered by separate 30mW green and 40mW blue diodes. Color selections include green, blue and/or cyan with strobe control.

- 10-channel DMX-512 controlled green, blue & cyan aerial effect laser
- Programmable pan, tilt and zoom with separate X, Y, and Z rolling effects
- 32 built-in pattern selections each with adjustable parameters
- Color selection of green, blue and/or cyan with strobe control
- Built-in automatic programs via master/slave or DMX
- Built-in sound activated programs via master/slave or DMX
- Complies with FDA / CDRH standards for Class 3R
- Multiple mounting locations for bracket
- Additional power output: max 20 units @ 120V
- Coverage angle: 53°
- Light source: 532nm/30mW green laser diode, 473nm/30mW blue laser diode
- Power and current: 120V, 60Hz: 23W, 0.3A operating, 0.3A inrush
- Power and current: 230V, 50Hz: 20W, 0.2A operating, 0.2A inrush
- AC power: Autoswitching 100V-240V 50/60Hz
- Weight: 7.8lb (3.5kg)

• Size: 10.9in x 12.3in x 9.2in (276mm x 312mm x 233mm)

Priced at \$899, the Scorpion GBC may be a bit out of one's comfort zone for a light. However, if you play at venues that allow the use of fog/haze I would consider purchasing one of these lights.

Another new light on the market right now is the Jellyfish by American DJ. Yea...It is called the Jellyfish. The first thing you will notice about the Jellyfish is its opaque chassis. This design feature allows the Jellyfish to become 2 lights in 1. As the lights change colors the fixture glows the color being displayed. Initially this seems to be a rather neat effect.

As the light went through its sequences I couldn't help but pay more attention to the fixture itself instead of the effects on the showroom floor. This gave me pause for a moment. "Would I want the people dancing to stare at my light tree all night?" "NO!" I want them having a great time on the dance floor and not looking at my light tree.

Having "vented" a bit, the Jellyfish does put on a nice lightshow. The wide beam angle and the RGBW color options really give the dance floor a lot of action. If you are considering getting this light and you have a truss system, buy 2 of them. The fixture isn't strong enough to be a main center piece. You are going to need a light for each side of the truss and link them together. The price point is very reasonable; around \$130.

Here are some of the Jellyfish specs from the American DJ website.

- Unique LED lighting effect with clear plastic case that offers two effects in one; (1) Bright RGBW colors beams and (2) a color changing, glowing case
- 84x 5mm LEDs 21 Red, 21 Green, 21 Blue & 21 White LEDs)
- 2 DMX Modes: 3 Channel mode or 28 Channel mode for programming flex-

ibility

• No moving parts! - No Duty Cycles! - Runs extremely cool! - Run all night! Designed for continuous long-lasting operation

- 3 operational modes: DMX-512, Master/Slave or Sound Active
- Built-in "high-energy" lighting programs (Master/Slave & Sound Active)
- Beam angle: 116 degrees
- Color strobe effect (fast to slow)
- Electronic Dimming 0 - 100%
- Linkable via 3-pin XLR cable
- 4-button LED DMX display on rear panel
- IEC IN/OUT on rear to daisy chain power (up to 46 JELLY FISH)
- Includes mounting bracket
- Compatible with the UC3 easy-to-use controller (sold separately)
- Power Consumption: 13W max
- Long life LEDs (100,000 hr. rating)
- Multi-voltage operation: AC 120-240V 50/60Hz (IEC Plug)
- Dimensions without bracket (LxWxH): 8"x12.5"x7.25" / 250x317x182mm
- Weight: 5 lbs. / 2 kg.



In closing, each of these fixtures will add a degree of "Wow" to your light show. Next month I will take a look a couple more new lights that have entered the market. If there is one you would like me re-

view, please drop me a note.

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.

Package Your Marketing.. Today

By Ken Day

Packaging will help your marketing stand out from the crowd. It can help you add and increase your perceived value, allow you to comfortably increase fees, and attract more quality business. Packaging for a service business - what does that mean anyway?



The packaging I'm talking about refers to how you communicate through images, your personal image, verbally, and in writing. Whenever you meet someone, intentionally or randomly,

and speak about your business or put your materials in front of them directly or through your marketing materials, you are packaging yourself. Every little detail is noticed and it counts toward the success of your message. You can't provide Rolex services with a Timex presentation and image.

Packaging is what makes your business more tangible and at the same time carves out your unique marketing proposition (UMP) by positioning in the area that you desire to be operating in with a focus on a specific target market. Whether that is a individual demographic or location. Let me try to explain this concept because too few small business owners understand the power of this idea and end up ignoring it to the detriment of their business growth and ultimately their business survival.

When you are a professional service business provider, you face some unique challenges. Selling services is not like selling products or retail. These challenges are what prevent many people from taking action towards becoming your client's solution. Without having a UMP you are going to waste almost all of your time, money, and effort trying to get and improve business. The following is just a brief overview of these unique challenges...

Your services are intangible. They can't be seen, heard, or felt prior to you delivering them publically. The various benefits of your services aren't realized until after the service has been provided and there is no recourse for correction or return if the services are not to the liking of the client or clients. It could be days, weeks, months, or even years after becoming a client that the benefits materialize or become evident. That makes it more difficult to convince your prospects versus selling hard goods like a cake or a photo album.

A big part of securing your value to the client is the ability to demonstrate all of the services in detail prior to you being hired and well in advance of the event. The best way to accomplish this is by knowing your ideal client, having a UMP, and especially, by communicating frequently with your client. The question that always arises here is; how do you know when your are communicating too much or too little with the client? Simple; ask them how often they'd like you to be in contact with them.

Because DJ services are intangible, it's more difficult to convince prospects and clients of how you're different from everyone else who says they do what you do. Without much else to choose from, fees end up becoming the primary deciding factor. When you compete on price, nobody wins - not even the client. This is because in order to lower your fees, you naturally end up offering less service and

then feel compelled to provide your usual standard of service, which is always at the upper level for an experienced professional. Thus, giving away your upper level services and convincing the client, and their friends - who are going to be getting married, that they can get top shelf services for basement level prices.

Raising your fees to grow your business is a tough proposition. Prospects typically find it more difficult to understand the true benefits of what your services can do for them. If they are uncertain what the benefits are for them, they sure as heck aren't going to pay a premium for your services just because you say you and your services are worth more than the other DJ.

The good news is that packaging can help you fairly easily overcome these obstacles. Packaging your services clarifies your marketing communications. It helps your clients understand what they will get and what your services will do for them. It will help you generate attention, interest, and a willingness to take action. You can more effectively demonstrate the items that make you different. The one mistake that is commonly made is that we fail to inform our potential clients of all the things we do for them, item by item, in a written format with explanations of each item, because we wrongly assume they know what we do and how we "professionals" do it vs. the amateur.

Plus, you'll gain an immediate competitive advantage. As I mentioned before, not too many service businesses spend any time packaging their services in a way that shows all that we do instead of trying to consolidate "the list" into a contrite and concise synopsis of services that fits on to a 5x7 handout piece or mailer. They don't even understand what they should know, why they should know it, or even what we want to tell them, or what difference it will make to them. We should be taking a couple of hours of their time to explain to them, at length, what is import and why. All without the sense of a hard sell, just the amount of information that is required by professionals to perform in a professional manner. Nobody goes to the doctor and says; I hurt myself a little while ago, I need you to fix it! Without the doctor asking a few more questions to get a better idea of what they are dealing with. After asking several questions and maybe a few tests, they will figure out the problem and offer some sort of a solution. We should be asking a few more questions for clarity and then providing solutions not just answers.

What do you need to consider for packaging your marketing? Take a good hard look at these important elements that need to be addressed by each and every one of us:

What does your identity package say about your business? Have you even created an Identity Package? Too many small business owners forge ahead in getting the business started without proper attention to this. Your business identity package consist of a logo, business card, company letterhead, envelopes, web site masthead, presentation folders, and anything else that could be "out there" representing your company. A consistent look and feel of these things needs to identify and express your positioning to your predetermined target market along with your UMP. Meaning, not a shot gun blast hoping you hit something. You need to know who and what your single target market is. Narrow it down to the one ideal person, i.e. Female, 27 years old, recently engaged (within 90 days) for the first time, with an income of \$43K, BA or BS college degree, living in the xxxxx and xxxxx zip code,

that is looking for a DJ in the \$XXXX to \$XXXX range, who can provide Master of Ceremonies and Gobo lighting, for 100 to 245 guests, in a non-hotel facility, in these 5 Zip codes. Get it? Be specific with who your ideal client is and provide an identity package that caters to that ideal client with your targeted UMP, because others outside of your ideal client will see something they want. Mostly they will see that you know what kind of client you want and that's the point!

What are the services you're offering and how will they be delivered? You need to be clear about what each service is out to accomplish by cause and effect, and how it will provide a solution to for a concern of the client with the result it's intended to deliver. You clients want to see that you know what you are before they want to know what you can offer. Taking the time to clearly define each service and documenting how it will be delivered to your ideal client is packaging. Will it be one-on-one consulting for just one time, every week, group coaching once a month, or a ten-part workshop conducted over a three month time frame? Which, by the way, is a great way to establish yourself and your company as a subject matter authority? Even if it's by bringing in varied professionals to enlighten the client in other areas effecting them.

Create a work flow or process diagram for each service. Logically defined stages and steps show potential clients that you know what you're doing and that you have thought about the details along with the variables.

Give each service a name that has meaning and tells the client what they will get from it. Also, consider various ways you could bundle services or offer extras that would make the service package more valuable. These days, with our climate of frugality, the clients seem to prefer the ala-carte method of service selection much more than they have in the past were many companies offered the all inclusive packages.

Consider creating an array of service packages with different price points. If each package offers a bit more value at a higher fee, you'll be presenting prospects with the multiple choice of yes options. This packaging tip alone could blow your competition out of the water. The days of 1, 2, or 3 packages have gone by the way-side. Today, clients like to have as many options as possible. This often times does feel like a reversion to single line items that they can choose one by one. The elemental difference is that they want to have a more defined explanation of each item and the purpose it serves.

A Continuation of Services beyond the event. The continuation aspect may be one of the unique elements overlooked by

many service businesses and something that cake companies have been doing for years to keep their companies in the forethought of their clients. The freshly made 1 year anniversary cake. We can and should be offering the client a one year anniversary small system DJ for their anniversary party or just a compilation CD from their wedding day that includes the vows and toasts along with their 1st dance song. There are many other possibilities for the follow-on service to the clients.

Of course your marketing materials need to reflect all of these packaging considerations as well. Be sure that your materials stay focused on what's in it for the client. Don't create materials that do nothing more than list out the things you offer or laundry list the tasks you'll do. Focus on outcomes and results and then demonstrate how the service package delivers these. Keeping in mind, you are addressing your ideal client.

Start taking a look at your marketing packaging. What message is it sending about your business? More importantly, what actions do you need to take to begin improving it? If you can't make the entire package appear to be done by a professional with a professional company. Go to a professional! None of us can do everything by ourselves.

Remember this; When any company large or small tries to cut corners on their package materials it stands out like a scarecrow in a corn field - you notice right away it doesn't belong there even though it has purpose. The corn field looks nicely planted row by perfect row, it has all those healthy looking stalks rising up, so very straight and such a nice deep green, and then the scarecrow towers above it all with a tattered ball cap on a drooping neck of straw, torn and faded flannel shirt and coveralls, keeping the crows away. Your clients are the crows being kept away from your beautiful and delightful service of corn by a ragged and torn scarecrow conflagration of marketing pieces, because it's the first thing they see. You should be showing the bountiful harvest of your services to the clients not the various tattered elements that make it possible.

Have one common theme of your UMP in a cohesive representation of you and your company, solidly coalesced in your marketing package for everyone to see right away - Who you are, what you want, for and from whom.

Think - Creatively
Act - Responsibly
Feel - Passionately

You can reach Ken Day at kenday@discjockeynews.com. Ken Day owns *Ken-neth Day Weddings* at: <http://www.ken-nethdayweddings.com>

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Pop

- 1 Rihanna
- 2 Jason Derulo
- 3 Train
- 4 B.o.B.
- 5 Taio Cruz
- 6 Lady Antebellum
- 7 Lady Gaga
- 8 Script
- 9 Timbaland F/Timberlake
- 10 Ke\$ha
- 11 Black Eyed Peas
- 12 Ke\$ha
- 13 OneRepublic
- 14 Selena Gomez
- 15 Lady Gaga
- 16 Adam Lambert
- 17 Trey Songz
- 18 Christina Aguilera
- 19 Usher
- 20 Iyaz

- Rude Boy
- In My Head
- Hey, Soul Sister
- Nothin' On You
- Break Your Heart
- Need You Now
- Telephone
- Breakeven
- Carry Out
- Your Love Is My Drug
- Imma Be
- Tik Tok
- All The Right Moves
- Naturally
- Alejandro
- Whataya Want From Me
- Say Aah
- Not Myself Tonight
- OMG
- Solo

Urban

- 1 Ludacris
- 2 Rihanna
- 3 Monica
- 4 Trey Songz
- 5 B.o.B.
- 6 Drake
- 7 Usher
- 8 Usher F/ N.Minaj
- 9 Alicia Keys
- 10 Black Eyed Peas
- 11 Timbaland
- 12 T.I.
- 13 Waka Flocka Flames
- 14 Gucci Mane
- 15 Dondria
- 16 Young Jeezy
- 17 The-Dream
- 18 DJ Khaled
- 19 Young Money
- 20 Maxwell

Country

- 1 Joe Nichols
- 2 Lady Antebellum
- 3 Kenny Chesney
- 4 Chris Young
- 5 Zac Brown Band
- 6 Steel Magnolia
- 7 George Strait
- 8 Justin Moore
- 9 Keith Urban
- 10 Rascal Flatts
- 11 Miranda Lambert
- 12 Eric Church
- 13 Taylor Swift
- 14 Jason Aldean
- 15 Martina McBride
- 16 Tim McGraw
- 17 Reba McEntire
- 18 Brad Paisley
- 19 Clay Walker
- 20 Luke Bryan

- Gimmie That Girl
- American Honey
- Ain't Back Yet
- The Man I Want To Be
- Highway 20 Ride
- Keep On Lovin' You
- I Gotta Get To You
- Backwoods
- Til Summer Comes Around
- Unstoppable
- The House That Built Me
- Hell On The Heart
- Fearless
- Crazy Town
- Wrong Baby Wrong
- Still
- I Keep On Loving You
- Water
- She Won't Be Lonely Long
- Rain Is A Good Thing

Rock

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

Adult Contemporary

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

Alternative

- 1 Stone Temple Pilots
- 2 Muse
- 3 Dirty Heads
- 4 Crash Kings
- 5 Rise Against
- 6 Muse
- 7 Chevelle
- 8 Alice In Chains
- 9 Phoenix
- 10 Breaking Benjamin
- 11 Temper Trap
- 12 Silversun Pickups
- 13 Weezer
- 14 Three Days Grace
- 15 Sick Puppies
- 16 Thirty Seconds To Mars
- 17 Metric
- 18 Jack Johnson
- 19 Phoenix
- 20 Cage The Elephant

- Your Decision
- Between The Lines
- Cryin' Like A Bitch
- Break
- Let Me Hear You Scream
- If You Only Knew
- Give Me A Sign
- Snuff
- The Good Life
- I Will Not Bow
- By The Sword
- Raised On Rock
- Feel Like I Do
- Shakin' Hands
- The Crow & The Butterfly
- Plundered My Soul
- Stoned
- Walk Away
- Valleys Of Neptune
- Odd One

- Need You Now
- Fallin' For You
- Already Gone
- Hey, Soul Sister
- Haven't Met You Yet
- Someday
- Smile
- Live Like We're Dying
- Heartbreak Warfare
- Fifteen
- Whataya Want From Me
- Fireflies
- Life After You
- Paparazzi
- Breakeven
- When I Look At You
- Never Gonna Be Alone
- Bad Romance
- Empire State Of Mind (Part II)
- In Pieces

- Between The Lines
- Resistance
- Lay Me Down
- Mountain Men
- Savior
- Uprising
- Letter From A Thief
- Your Decision
- 1901
- Give Me A Sign
- Sweet Disposition
- The Royal We
- I Want You To
- The Good Life
- Odd One
- This Is War
- Gold Guns Girls
- You And Your Heart
- Lisztomania
- In One Ear

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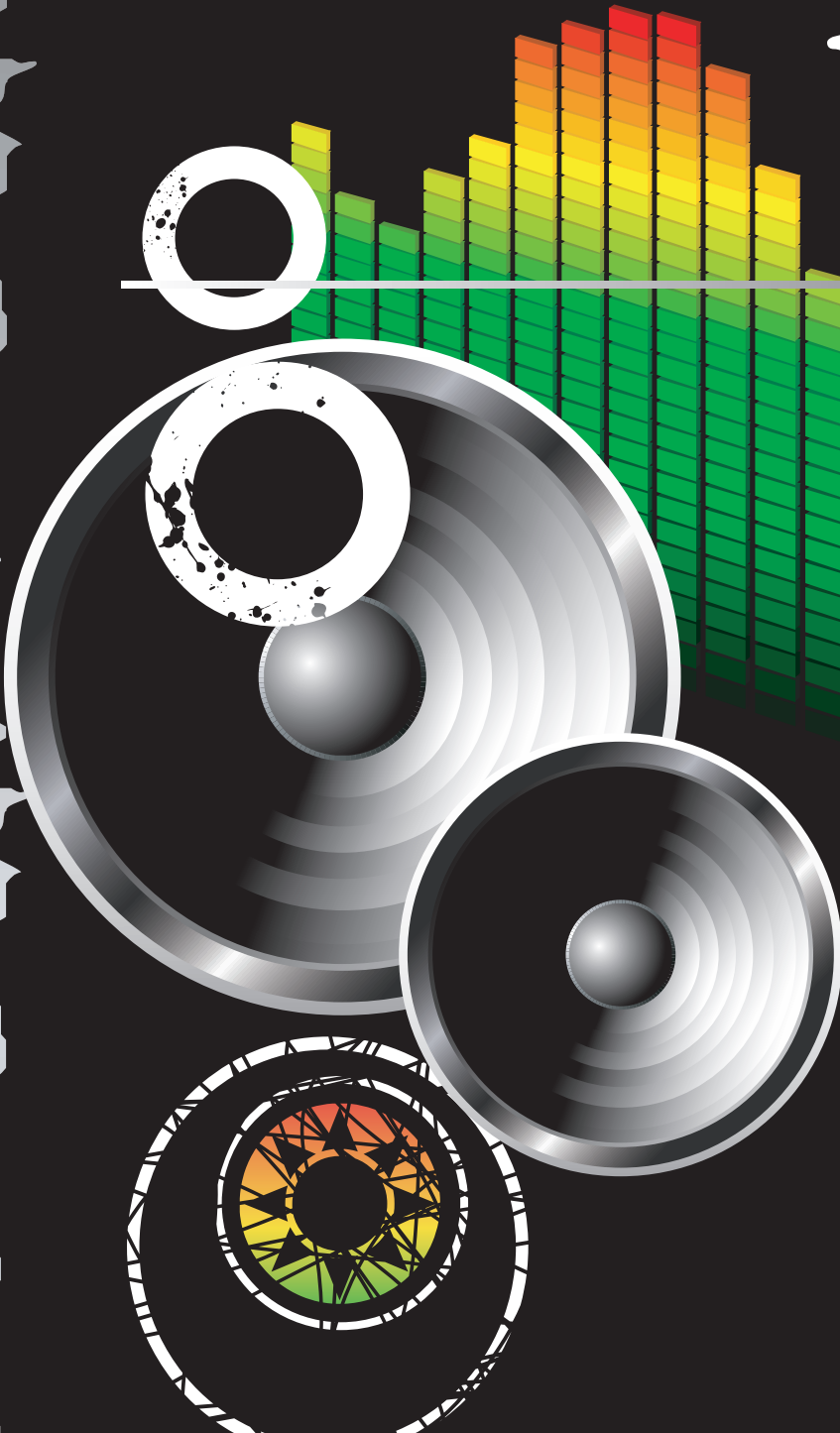


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