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My thoughts on competition are summed up in the simple poem to the left... So, is competition good or bad? It depends on how you take it. The fact is, no business is in a market of one. That simply does not exist.

However, what would your market look like if you put a laser focus on your performance, or even treated it as if it were the last time you would ever get to perform? What would you do differently? How would you prepare? Where would your focus be?

That’s right! You can allow the “noise” of competition to silently fade into the background and push you to be your best…or allow it to become a distraction that causes you to lose focus.

TUNING OUT DISTRACTION

In fact, I’m reminded of the recent dance competition video I watched on Facebook. I was mesmerized by how each couple performed; they were each completely tuned in to their partner and the task at hand. They were not distracted by everything else around them: the lights, the production, the judges, the audience, or the other dancers. This prompted me to interview a professional dancer for her viewpoint. Even though her words are humble, her wisdom and perspective is sheer genius!

She said that yes, when dancers compete, they are aware of other dancers on the dance floor, but they never focus on what the competition is doing. “When that happens,” she said, “It becomes a distraction, and that distraction takes the focus off us being able to do our best. We miss a step, or lose focus. So, we never let the fact that there are others

Perseverance
Attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

We must not hope to be mowers,
And to gather the ripe gold ears,
Unless we have first been sowers
And watered the furrow with tears.

It is not just as we take it,
This mystical world of ours,
Life’s field will yield as we make it
A harvest of thorns or of flowers.
Versatile High-Fidelity Wireless

3000 Series expands the possibilities of performance

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- New rugged eH-style screw-down 4-pin connector on body-pack transmitter
Focus on originality. Focus on the client. Focus on being the best you that you can!

COMPLACENCY: KILL IT BEFORE IT KILLS YOU

I’m reminded of the tech powerhouse of yesteryear: IBM. It ended up in an epic battle with Apple. IBM ignored the customer. IBM was the “content cow,” set in their ways, determined to keep business as usual. Apple focused on the customer. Apple focused on being Apple, not being IBM. That mindset forced Apple to ultimately create a better product. As a result, Apple was able to outwit, out-hustle and outlast IBM in the personal computer space.

Competition forces you to break your complacency, or you will eventually get left behind. Thomas Watson, Jr., founder of IBM, later said:

“How do you view competition? Is it internal or external? Do you use competition to internally pursue excellence one event at a time, or do you cocoon with ‘friendly’ ‘coopetition’ in your marketplace and create a ‘good ole boy club’ to secure your complacency with a mini-monopoly, but little to no differentiation or internal pursuit of innovation or excellence? That happened with Tandy, Atari, Commodore, and many other formerly great companies.

Their eventual failures resulted from myopia, resistance to change, lethargy, laziness, confusion and arrogance.

WHAT FOCUS LOOKS LIKE FOR TOP-LEVEL DJ'S

The best way to drive your competition crazy is pretty simple. Do what’s best for your clients—ALL THE TIME! Meticulously prepare, rehearse, perfectly polish and perform as if you have one chance to deliver a flawless, customized and personalized performance beyond just music. Then repeat.

This is what will always keep the competition guessing. If you keep your focus on the prize, and do what’s best for your company, then what you do and how you do it will continually be changing, but your long-term strategy will be the same: client-focused and a relentless pursuit for excellence.

Yep, I’m saying your job is to know your client. To go well beyond their articulated wants and needs, and to also know them well enough to satisfy their desires they cannot even express. To produce a revolutionary and innovative performance customized just for them—a personalized event that serves their under-articulated needs. (This, of course, is difficult for the many DJs who won’t even meet with clients before booking—which is a whole different article).

To put it succinctly, you aren’t competing with others. You are competing with yourself for your own excellence. That’s what accepting competition does: It makes YOU better—and the customer always benefits!

Thomas Watson, Jr., founder of IBM, later said: “If you are lucky, then your competition is very good. They are smart, continually working hard and trying to be the best in the area. That drive should makes YOU better! If not, then you are on your way to mediocrity and can only compete on price—and nobody survives on price. In fact, using price as a primary weapon against your competition is to force YOU to get better. To keep you honest. To give you validity and credibility in your market area. To give you the resistance you need. To push you to continue to create, innovate, and improve beyond just being complacent and average.

If you are lucky, your competition is very good.
It’s competitive out there. The new Mobile DJ has to be versatile. Offering more than the other guy is important. Creating an exciting and memorable event that they’ll never forget is paramount. DEX 3.11 is here and it’s built for you -- the new Mobile. Now with the most complete set of karaoke features available in any DJ software, ‘Shader’ support for on-screen, beat-aware visualizations, and support for over 100 popular DJ controllers from the best brands in the business. DEX 3 provides all the tools you need to compete -- and excel. This is live performance entertainment software for the new mobile.

**USE COUPON CODE: MOBILEBEAT AT CHECKOUT ON PCDJ.COM TO SAVE 15% ON DEX 3 (NORMALLY $149)**
A Backup for the Backup?

By Stu Chisholm

So it finally happened: Due to some unusual circumstances (which I may explain in a future article) I found myself without backup. Two days before an important gig. If you've been reading my columns for any length of time, you already know that I'm fanatical about having on-site backup for everything. I not only carry two complete DJ systems, including speakers, but every fuse, connector, cord/cable, and even extra clothing, should my wardrobe for the evening experience a “malfunction.”

But this weekend was different. This time, all of my preparations couldn't prevent not one, but both of my DJ laptops from being M.I.A. Also of concern: My controller had burned out on me some weeks prior, and my backup was all I had. Now what?

IMPROVISATION SHOULD BE A SHOW SKILL, NOT A PROCEDURE

I'll put you at ease, first off, by letting you know that I managed to pull off my gig. A little luck and some great connections worked together to make it happen, but the experience was what our former President might've called a “teachable moment.” Here are my take-aways:

First, prepare for the worst, and in the worst possible ways. My primary and back-up DJ laptops were both stored in the same bag. If this had been a case of damage in transit, naturally both would've been broken. In fact, storing them together means ANYTHING that happens to one is usually happening to the other. So from now on, I'll be storing my laptops separately. I'm also planning on adding a third, to be stored off-site. This will retain 100% redundancy no matter what might happen, aside from some major apocalypse.

The same holds true with the hard drives. I use external drives, which allows me to go from club to club, system to system, and still have access to my music library. But both of my library HDs were contained in the same case. Not only is this bad for the same reasons as those above for the laptops, but a smart DJ also always maintains a “reference library” that stays home. This way, should all mobile drives be lost, one can spool off new ones from the reference library without having to re-rip or re-download an entire collection. However, it's time to go to that next level. The same thing that made my DJ laptops disappear made my reference library vanish, too.

You need to be prepared for the worst. Lucky for today's DJs, there's an abundance of options. The only thing that's a barrier is DOING IT.

DIGITAL ASSISTANCE

For $11.99 per month, Dropbox offers a cloud-based storage option that allows many different computers, phones and laptops to share a virtual hard drive, and you can store some 2TB worth of data. That's enough for a very healthy music library. Upload a copy of your reference library and you've now got multiple redundancy for the office, too. Other options include the Galaxy Cloud, Samsung Cloud, pClub and Synch.com.

Then there's the software. Do the fees or the issues that some popular software platforms have make you uneasy? Or do you want a great backup option just in case your old, dependable software craps out? I've run across two free options that are as fun to use as they are easy on your wallet. The first is Mixxx (mixxx.org). Right away, you'll notice how similar it looks to certain other DJ apps -- but this one is open source. So if your computer skills are as sharp as your DJ skills, you may find this package to be all you'll ever need.

Want the software and the music in the cloud? While it's not my first option, I would feel quite comfortable relying on You.DJ in a pinch. It shows you your music folders allowing access, with fully-functional “turntables” that, as above, have a decidedly familiar look and feel, even if it is a bit retro. Nothing too advanced, but a good option when all else fails.

Cross DJ from Mixvibes [http://www.mixvibes.com] offers plenty of features in the free version, with super advanced upgrades craps out? I've run across two free options that are as fun to use as they are easy on your wallet. The first is Mixxx (mixxx.org). Right away, you'll notice how similar it looks to certain other DJ apps -- but this one is open source. So if your computer skills are as sharp as your DJ skills, you may find this package to be all you'll ever need.

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When NASA sends people into space, they know that they can't just limp on in to a garage should trouble strike. DJ gigs are similar; it's night on a weekend, so most supply places are closed. You are on your own. So, if something fails, or, for whatever reason, become unavailable through theft, accident, etc., then you need to be prepared for the worst. Lucky for today's DJs, there's an abundance of options. The only thing that's a barrier is DOING IT. So back up your backups make your show bullet-proof!

Until next time, safe spinnin'!

Stu Chisholm had been collecting music since he was about age 8 and began his DJ career in 1979. After a stint at the Specs Howard School of Broadcast Arts, he studied the DJ arts with famous Michigan broadcaster Bill Henning, interned at Detroit's rock powerhouse, WRIF, and later added voiceover work and club gigs at Detroit's best venues. He has shared his extensive DJ experience through MB columns, as a seminar speaker and through his book, The Complete Disc Jockey: A Comprehensive Manual for the Professional DJ.

Until next time, safe spinnin'!
iDJPool Pick Hits: 08-25-2019 to 08-31-2019 (Week 35)

### Pick Hits URBAN:
1. Pop Smoke f. Nicki Minaj - Welcome To The Party (Remix)
2. Trippie Redd - I
3. BJ The Chicago Kid f. Buddy & J.D. & Kent Jamz - Get Away
4. Arin Ray & Kehlani - Change
5. Angelica Vila - All I Do Is 4 U
6. Casanova f. Fabolous - So Brooklyn
7. Mariah The Scientist - Beetleyjuice
8. Yo Gotti f. Lil Uzi Vert - Pose
10. Max B f. A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie - So Cold

### Pick Hits ROCK/POP/AC:
1. Charlie Puth - I Warned Myself
2. 5 Seconds Of Summer - Teeth
3. Sam Fender - Will We Talk
4. Young Bombs f. Gigi - Loyal
5. A Day To Remember - Degenerates
6. Violent Femmes - I’m Nothing
7. Incubus - Into The Summer
8. Sturgill Simpson - Sing Along
9. Why Don’t We - What Am I
10. Highly Suspect - 16

---

**08-18-2019 to 08-24-2019 (Week 34)**

### Pick Hits URBAN:
1. Swae Lee f. Drake - Won’t Be Late
2. Quality Control & Migos - Frosted Flakes
3. T-Pain f. G-Eazy - Girlfriend
4. Blueface f. Lil Pump - Russin
5. Johnny Gill f. Ralph Tresvant - Perfect
7. Snoop Dogg - Do It When I’m In It
8. Quality Control & Lil Yachty f. Tee Grizzley - Once Again
9. Deja Got It f. Tyga - Juicy
10. Conkara f. Shaggy - Banana

### Pick Hits ROCK/POP/AC:
1. Alice In Chains - Fly
2. Harry Connick Jr. - Just One Of Those Things
3. Elderbrook - Something About You
4. Illiterature Light - Better Than I Used To
5. Death Cab For Cutie - Kids In ’99
6. Smith & Thell - Hotel Walls
7. Down N’ Out - This Is How We Roll
8. Death Cab For Cutie - The Ground
9. Natasha Bedingfield - I Breathe
10. Japanese Breakfast - Essentially

### Pick Hits DANCE:
1. Gorgon City & MN - There For You
2. Carlos Curmi & Roland Clark - Higher Place
3. Wolfpack & Vinny f. Joshua Kane - Be Strong
4. WestFunk & TRP - U Remind Me
5. Niko The Kid - Issa Feeling
6. OneDus f. Anthony Flammia - Human
7. David Noakes - Waiting
8. James Chris - Come Closer
10. Danny Foster & Rogue f. Dina Vass - Get It Right

### Pick Hits DANCE REMIXES:
1. Jack Rose f. Kezia - Freak Yo (Callum Knight Club Mix)
2. James Chris - Come Closer (Rod Carrillo Club Mix)
3. Madonna - I Ride (DJ Ace Club Mix)
4. Piper Madison - Last Bit Of Rain (Chris Cox Club Mix)
5. Madonna - I Ride (Twisted Dee & Diego Fernandez Club Mix)

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**08-11-2019 to 08-17-2019 (Week 33)**

### Pick Hits URBAN:
1. Megan Thee Stallion f. Nicki Minaj & Ty Dolla $ign - Hot Girl Summer
2. Trap Beckham f. Too Short & Yella Beezy - Right Back
3. Rick Ross - Turnt Up
4. MGK 'Machine Gun Kelly' f. Trippie Redd - Candy
5. Aya Nakamura f. Lil Pump - Pookie
6. SAINT JHN - All I Want Is A Yacht
7. Loud&Glotch - Undercover Lover
8. Veronica Vega f. Quavo - A Million
9. Pop Smoke - Dior
10. SIR f. Kendrick Lamar - Hair Down

### Pick Hits ROCK/POP/AC:
1. Katy Perry - Small Talk
2. A14 - Bad Decisions
3. Fitz & The Tantrums - I Just Wanna Shine
4. Catfish And The Bottlemen - 2211
5. Pixies - Catfish Kate
6. Public - Make You Mine
7. Allison Wonderland & Quula - Time
8. Judah & The Lion - Let Go
9. Joywave - Obsession
10. AJR - Dear Winter

### Pick Hits DANCE:
1. Duke Dumont f. Zak Abel - The Power
2. Dennis First & Ranzikov - Taking Off
3. Keppin It Heeze - Still Love You
4. Funk13en - Let’s Go
5. WestEnd 40 - Lovely Day
8. Eduke - Don't Be So Too Late
9. Klaus - When We Were Still Young
10. Kastra & TwoTGB f. Evangelia - U & Me

### Pick Hits DANCE REMIXES:
1. Madonna - I Rise (DJLW Club Mix)
2. Ava Max - Se Am (Leandro Da Silva Club Mix)
3. Jonas Brothers - Only Human (J Bruux Club Mix)
4. Katy Perry - Small Talk (Liam Keegan Club Mix)
5. Laverne Cox - Welcome Home (StoneBridge Club Mix)

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**iDJPool Servicing Music To DJs Since 1985 - For more Pick Hits or to join iDJPool visit www.idjpool.com**
Mobile DJs are not known for quickmixing (i.e. mixing quickly in and out of songs). But, the simple fact is that the landscape of mobile DJing is changing. It’s not uncommon now to see mobile DJs spinning on turntables, scratching, dropping creative song transitions, playing in a bar the night before they play at a wedding, and being stronger mixers than MCs hosts. This means any mobile DJ should at least have an elementary understanding of quickmixing just to keep up with the times...whether you decide to add it to your repertoire is up to you.

WHY QUICKMIXING?

How many times have you told a couple that the three-page, stapled list of music they gave you will not physically fit into the amount of time available for dancing at their wedding reception? With quickmixing, you can greatly reduce the number heartbroken faces you’ll see in response. Imagine instead of limiting a couple to 15-20 songs per hour, what if you could play 30? Or 35? Or even 40? While more music is an attractive selling point for weddings, the main draw of quickmixing is to keep the energy on the dance floor high. Skeptics are saying, “But my clients will complain that the song is being cut off.” Let me invite you to remember how the art of DJing was born in the first place. DJ Kool Herc brought two turntables to his house parties in Brooklyn so he could play the hook on side A, then repeat the hook on side B and create a continuous, on-going hook. Since then, DJing has evolved to remove any and all awkward pauses from the dance floor experience. Why? So dancers don’t lose their motivation during an awkward pause and head for a chair, or worse, the door.

If you are DJing well, then your song drops and transitions pique the crowd’s interest (“Hmm...I wonder what’s next?”). The more drops, the more dancers will stick around to see what the next “surprise” is. If it works at night clubs to keep the energy up, there is no reason it can’t work at mobile gigs to do the same.

Finally, quickmixing, in my opinion, gives the DJ more control of driving the energy’s direction. When you are simply letting full songs play out to 3, 4, or even 5 minutes, the songs are driving you—not the other way around.

HOW TO PREP YOUR SONGS FOR QUICKMIXING

In a nutshell, you will need to mark where the ends of choruses are. This is where you will mix out of songs. Most DJs use a 32-bar mix (or, as I learned it, two “phrases”), so you’ll also want to set a cue point two phrases/32 beats ahead of the end of the chorus. Some DJs will tell you to set quickmixing cue points at the start of the chorus and just assume all choruses are 32 beats/2 phrases. I disagree—this has gotten me into trouble a time or two.

HOW TO EXECUTE A SMOOTH QUICKMIX LIVE

In a way, this is like asking Picasso how to paint, so all I can really tell you is how I do it. Be sure the song you are bringing in (“Song B”) has a 32 beat/2 phrase instrumental at the beginning. Having said that, I’ve tried a variety of ways, but my preferred “go to” method is to bring in Song B at my cue point with the bass off or down and the volume fader around 30-40%. I slowly bring the volume up until I feel it’s audible but not overpowering. For some songs that means I bring the volume on Song B up to 100%; sometimes that means I bring it up to only 50-60%. Then I gradually bring the bass on Song A (the outgoing track) down. If I’m mixing two EDM tracks or two hip hop tracks, I might do a bass-flip at the end of the first phrase (beat 16 of 32) rather than a gradual bass transition.

Once Song B’s bass is full-on, I then bring the volume fader on B up and the volume on A down. If I’m up over 130/140 BPM and two phrases go by in just a few seconds, I might also filter out Song A a bit right at the transition point to help with smoothness. Mess around with different techniques and see what feels comfortable for you. Some DJs adjust the highs and mids on their quickmix transitions too.

FINAL QUICKMIXING POINTERS

It should go without saying that even if your music is cued up for quickmixing, you will still need to practice before going public.
When you start quickmixing, you will also realize real fast that you are going to need a lot more "go to" music ready in the wings. Make sure you have doubled your "wedding" crate and are comfortable with what’s there before your first quickmixing gig.

I also highly recommend downloading short edits of songs (sometimes called "Quick Hits"). All of the major DJ pools offer short edits. If you have Direct Music Service, you’ll notice they often give you a “short edit” (two verses) and a “super short edit” (one verse). Using short edits can allow you to keep the quickmixing pace up without having to worry about seamlessly “cutting” a song in half.

The final puzzle piece of quickmixing simply comes with experience; and that is knowing which songs simply must be played in full to avoid a DJ lynching. In my own experience, the top song for me that I know I should never shorten is Sir Mix-A-Lot’s “Baby Got Back.” Why? Because the women wait for their “shout out,” which is all the way at the end (“So, ladies—yeah! Ladies—yeah! If you want to role in my Mercedes—yeah—then turn around, stick it out...). I thought people would miss “tin roof—rusted” from “Love Shack,” but they haven’t. Newer “disposable” pop can almost always be shortened. Popular sing-alongs are best left alone. Line dances are also best left long (sometimes when I play a short edit of a line dance people are barely getting out to the floor by the time I’m mixing out).

Quickmixing is a really valuable DJ skill to have. Even if you feel it wouldn’t work for every gig, it’s always helpful when you’ve experienced a dance floor “reset” and need to quickly change directions to revamp your crowd.

Quickmixing, in my opinion, gives the DJ more control of driving the energy’s direction. When you are simply letting full songs play out to 3, 4, or even 5 minutes, the songs are driving you—not the other way around.

DJ Staci, the Track Star, has been a full-time mobile DJ for 10 years. She has performed internationally, on the Vegas strip, at festivals, celebrity weddings, and for companies like Lamborghini and Reebok. Staci has spoken at industry conferences and been cd on DJ News TV, ADJA and BookMoreBrides.com webinars, the Wedding MBA podcast, and a BPM Supreme Female DJ Forum. Staci is represented by both Scratch Events & Purim Agency.

QUICKMIXING CUE POINT PREP

Senato (buttons): Green = First Downbeat, Orange = Chorus Starts, Fuscia = Outro

Virtual DJ (bars on timeline): Green = First Downbeat, Orange = Chorus Starts

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There are two competing viewpoints as to the purpose of a corporation. One focuses on the shareholders in the business, while the other deals more broadly with all of the company’s “stakeholders.”

Milton Friedman, an American economist and Nobel Prize recipient, stated that the social responsibility of a business is to increase its profits. Many people understand his views to imply that a business exists to increase the profits for its owners, the shareholders. Thus, when managers focus only on shareholders (i.e., stockholders), it is their intent to increase profits in order to reward these owners with greater dividends and to increase the value of their stocks.

The other viewpoint, one that has gained popularity, is the stakeholder view. This mindset is one where management seeks to consider the benefit of all stakeholders of the company instead of maintaining a singular goal of maximizing shareholder wealth. When making decisions using a stakeholder approach, management asks if their actions will benefit not only stockholders, but also the company’s employees, customers, suppliers, and other businesses in its supply chain. In essence, businesses with a stakeholder approach look beyond one group, their shareholders, and seek ways to make society flourish.

Remind the client that he or she wants EVERYONE to have a great time.

The irony of the stakeholder vs. shareholder approach is that when management expands their focus to all the stakeholders, the ultimate winner is actually the stockholder. Imagine making decisions where the employees are happier; thus, their production increases, making more profit. If suppliers are more satisfied, they are more likely to give discounts or extend their line of credit to the business. If the customers are delighted, they purchase more of the product or service and increase the firm’s bottom line.

### SOMETHING EVERYONE CAN DANCE TO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASSIC ROCK</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 YOU SHOOK ME ALL NIGHT LONG</td>
<td>AC/DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 OLD TIME ROCK &amp; ROLL</td>
<td>BOB SEGER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 TAKIN’ CARE OF BUSINESS</td>
<td>BACHMAN-TURNER OVERDRIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 LIVIN’ ON A PRAYER</td>
<td>BON JOVI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 POUR SOME SUGAR ON ME</td>
<td>DEF LEPPARD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 COME AND GET YOUR LOVE</td>
<td>REDBONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 SATISFACTION</td>
<td>ROLLING STONES</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 SWEET HOME ALABAMA</td>
<td>LYNYRD SKYNYRD</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 I LOVE ROCK ’N ROLL</td>
<td>JOAN JETT</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 GLORY DAYS</td>
<td>BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN</td>
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<td>1 BOOGIE SHOES</td>
<td>K.C. &amp; THE SUNSHINE BAND</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 DECEMBER 1963 (OH, WHAT A NIGHT)</td>
<td>FOUR SEASONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC</td>
<td>WILD CHERRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 SEPTEMBER</td>
<td>EARTH, WIND, &amp; FIRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 WE ARE FAMILY</td>
<td>SISTER SLEDGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 BEST OF MY LOVE</td>
<td>EMOTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 BRICK HOUSE</td>
<td>COMMODORES</td>
</tr>
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<td>8 STAYIN’ ALIVE</td>
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The same holds true for a client booking a DJ. While clients want to dance to music they choose, their ultimate wish is typically for their guests to have a fantastic time at the event. A DJ’s objective should be to get and keep as many people on the dance floor as possible, so that everyone—all the stakeholders—enjoy themselves. Like a company’s shareholders who win when all stakeholders win, the DJ’s client will feel as if he or she won when everyone dances at the event.

There are two essential elements to make sure everyone at an event has a fantastic time. One is to remind the client that he or she wants everyone to have a great time. The other essential is to keep watch on both the crowd on the dance floor AND the people sitting down. Ask yourself, “What can I play to make the people sitting down want to get up and boogie?” The songs in this issue’s list are ten “go-to” songs in five different categories to help you get people out of their seats even before they ask you to “Play Something We Can Dance To!”

Mobile Beat’s resident musicologist since 1992 (issue #11), Jay Maxwell runs the multi-talent entertainment company, Jay Maxwell’s Music by Request, LLC, in Charleston, South Carolina. He is also a professor of Business at Charleston Southern University. His passion for detail and continuous research of clients’ requests can be found not only in this column, but also in his annually updated music guide, Play Something We Can Dance To.
In this article I want to talk a little about company culture. What do we mean by that? The Balance Careers (www.thebalancecareers.com) defines company culture as, “the personality of a company. It defines the environment in which employees work. Company culture includes a variety of elements, including work environment, company mission, value, ethics, expectations, and goals.” At Bunn DJ Company, I truly believe that we have built a culture that makes DJs want to work for us. Let’s talk about some do’s and don’ts of building company culture.

DO THESE...

Do have regular meetings with your staff. The purpose of this is so that you can physically see your DJs each month, truly connect with them, and update them on the number of leads or shows coming in. It is so important! We try and do it every other month here.

Do plan on at least two “outings” for your staff each year. I usually do at least one thing like a paintball war or go-kart race or maybe even a cookout. We have even gotten a box for the local baseball team, The Durham Bulls. The other outing is always a fancy dinner around Christmas each year, where I commend them for being awesome and usually give out a small gift and, of course, pay for dinner.

Do have a company manual that lays out exactly how you do things at your company. It can include a mission statement, your goals, and even include specifics like how you do announcements at weddings. These manuals are a pain to write, but so crucial as you grow your company.

Do be willing to help a DJ on staff in any way that you can. If they need a piece of gear to pull off a show, loan it to them. If you have to buy it and they finance it back from you, do that! You have to be accommodating and understanding as the owner of a multi-op DJ company.

Do pay your DJs immediately after every show, and pay them really well. If you truly want to create positive company culture and have people dying to work for you, this is imperative. Trust me, if you don’t pay, or bounce checks regularly, that word gets around.

DON’T DO THESE...

Don’t assume that your DJs know everything, even if they are experienced when you hire them. You MUST take them out to shadow you and your veteran DJs. Don’t even assume that they know things that might seem like common sense to you. For example, you need to tell them that there is no drinking alcohol at events (and add it to the manual mentioned above).

Don’t give your DJs shows beyond what they are ready for. Say you hire a rookie DJ or someone just recently “graduated” from training or shadowing, they are not ready to go out and do a high-end wedding! Start them out at a basic private party like a birthday perhaps or maybe a corporate family day.

Don’t make your DJs compete against each other. Be very honest with them that there is a hierarchy within your company. The veterans get first dibs on shows and it goes down the line, unless of course you mess up.

Don’t jump to conclusions and cuss out a staff member if you end up with a customer complaint. Remember, there are two sides to every story. Call the client, listen to what happened, apologize and try to smooth it out. The customer is always right – right? After that, get the DJ’s side of the story. I can bet it’s a very different tale than what the client said. Even though the customer is always “right,” you do have to side with your DJ most times unless it is something blatantly wrong like being late or forgetting a special song.

Creating a positive company culture isn’t easy, it takes work and time and patience. However, in this case the expression “If you build it, they will come,” is actually true. If you become the gold standard of DJ companies in your area, every single DJ that moves to that area, or is wronged by another company, or is simply tired of being a single-op, will be knocking on your door for a job. That’s a great position to be in.
Ultra-Bright and Efficient

Blizzard Super-G™ 150 features an ultra-bright and efficient 150W LED (7500K) light source and high precision glass optics with a 12° projection angle. It’s as powerful as a full-size moving head yet lives in a tiny, compact body, sort of like one of the Olson twins.

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MAIN FEATURES

- 150W white 7500K LED light source 50,000 hour life span
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- 540°/260° Pan/Tilt movement • Optional Pan/Tilt invert function
- High precision glass optics with 12° projection angle
- Rotating gobo wheel with 6 gobos +open • Static gobo wheel with 7 gobos +open • Color wheel with 7 colors plus +open
- Linear electronic focus • Variable direction, speed adjustable rainbow color effects
- 3-facet prism with variable speed and direction
- 0-100% smooth linear LED dimmer
- 1-25Hz fps strobe + variable/random effects
- 12/13/15 DMX channels USITT DMX-512
- 2” TFT LCD display with 4 button control
- Dimensions: 6.7 x 8.9 x 14.3 inches (170 x 226 x 362 mm)
- Weight: 16.2 lbs, 7.34 kg

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Help Your Company’s Culture Soar with 7 Skillsets of No Fail Trust

By Jason O. Harris

Each day you walk into your office, are you giving consideration to what type of culture you are cultivating? Are you and your team of leaders aware that your actions will dictate whether you are cultivating a culture of compliance or a culture of connection, commitment, and community?

Daily, you are faced with important decisions, and how you handle those decisions, as well as how you interact with your team, will dictate the culture. Your organization’s culture will ultimately determine what kind of experience your customers and clients will have.

If you were to be placed at the helm of a multimillion-dollar Air Force cargo jet or commercial airliner, under stress and other challenges, there is an absolute necessity for cohesiveness, communication, and commitment in order to be the high performance team required to operate these jets. You already have a great team, but is your team ready to handle their job along with the stress of combat? This is where it is critical to have the right skillsets that will enable you and your team to Trust the Training, Trust the Process and Trust the People.

In order to cultivate cohesiveness, connection, and commitment in these fast-paced, high-performance teams, there are seven critical skillsets that are always present and encouraged.

If you or your organization are ready to soar to new heights, take a look at the seven skillsets and decide how you can apply personally and within your organizations.

1. PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Professional knowledge is critical, and is the foundation to any high-performance individual and team. When your people are equipped with the professional knowledge essential to their jobs, it makes it easier to empower them and trust them to make decisions when things get challenging. Think about a professional pilot and consider how knowledgeable you want them to be. Would you consider your team trained to have that level of knowledge, to execute their job, when hundreds of lives are on the line?

2. SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Situational Awareness (or SA) is the ability to understand and comprehend environmental elements, events, and possible scenarios as it applies to time, space, and the collective comprehension of their possible interpretation. There are multiple types of SA, including individual, team, and organizational SA. In order to make the right decisions at the right time, it is critical that SA be present. SA has been cited as being fundamental to successful decision making in aviation, healthcare, emergency response and many other high stress environments. The lack of SA, according to scholarly documents, has been a driving factor in accidents attributed to human error. In order to keep your operation performing at its best and being positioned for continued improvement, your people need to have collective SA for any threats that might harm the operations. What kind of training has been put in place that helps to cultivate and reinforce this skillset?

3. ASSERTIVENESS

Assertiveness is defined as confident, forceful, self-assured behavior. Further, assertiveness is being self-assured and confident without being aggressive. When it is time to make business decisions and the fate of your organization is on the line, like flying a commercial airliner with hundreds of passengers onboard, it is imperative that your people are trained, ready and willing to speak up and assert their voice to avert a disaster. When the success of your organization is on the line, your people need to be empowered to speak up and assert themselves, appropriately, to ensure the operation continues smoothly and, in many cases, in order for the operation to improve. Can your people trust that the leadership team will be ready to listen and acknowledge when they speak up and assert themselves for the greater good of the organization?
4. DECISION-MAKING

Decision-making is the process and action of making choices, especially important choices, by identifying a decision, gathering information, and assessing alternative possibilities. When you look at decision-making and its application to your environment and how it relates to high-performance teams, you need to be ready and able to make important and significant decisions. Sometimes these decisions will have to be made in very short order, without supervision. In order to make these time-sensitive decisions, your people will need to be empowered, knowing that they are prepared and trusted to make decisions that can be very critical to the operation and success of the organization. Consider what you can do to equip, prepare, and empower your people to make the right decision, in a moment’s notice, at the right time.

5. COMMUNICATION

Communication is defined as the exchange of information or news. When it’s crunch time and critical decisions need to be made, whether in flight at 35,000 feet in the air flying at 600 mph, or when a major deal is on the table for your organization, communication is absolutely essential. When it’s time to make decisions, given the time critical scenario, you want, need and expect your people to communicate. Have your people been empowered and trusted to communicate the critical information at the right time and right place?

6. LEADERSHIP

Leadership is defined as the act of leading a group of people or an organization. Every organization, especially high performing organizations, need true and authentic leadership. They need leadership that is effective at all levels of execution. Leadership in your teams and organization has to be further defined as the people that influence others to accomplish the team and organizational objectives in a manner that makes the team more cohesive and more committed to each other, the mission at hand, and the organization.

7. ADAPTABILITY

Adaptability means being able to adjust to new conditions. When your organization or team is moving at the speed of success, it is imperative that members are adaptable. The organization has to empower its people to be ready and prepared to adapt to many different scenarios. When flying commercial jets across the world, there is likely to be some turbulence and there is likely to be some weather formations along the route. In order to get to the intended destination safely, the crew has to be adaptable to go over, under, and around the turbulence and thunderstorms. Being adaptable can only happen when the people have been empowered.

The next time you walk into your office, you should be clear on the culture you are cultivating! The seven skillsets laid out above will support the cultivation of a culture of connection, commitment, and community. When you start to implement these seven skillsets your team will begin to soar to new heights, you and your team will begin to Trust the Training, Trust the Process and Trust the People!
Over the past year and a half I've really enjoyed heading up the DJ Profile page for Mobile Beat Magazine. Meeting and interviewing some of the best and brightest in our industry has been quite amazing, and being able to tell their stories has been a definite honor and blessing. I'm fascinated by the regional and cultural differences in events. One thing I've learned for sure is that the traits that make us each unique in our markets are the very same traits that bind and unite us as an industry.

I wanted to test that last statement by expanding my horizons to include fellow professionals from the furthest corners of America and overseas. A logical first choice is Hawaii. It's arguably one of our most beautiful states and a must-see location that's on most people's bucket lists. Luckily, at MBLV23 last March, I met two really cool Hawaiian DJs who helped me with the post-conference wrap up article. Friends for years, they run one of the busiest and most popular DJ companies in the islands: Hawaii Events Unlimited (www.hawaiieventsunlimited.com). I caught up with one of the two, Hanson Nguyen to dive a little deeper into their success in entertaining island audiences.

Mike C.: Hey Hanson, so you, DJ Flip and Marvin run Hawaii Events Unlimited, correct?
Hanson Nguyen: Marvin owns the company and Flip and I work for Marvin.

MC: Are all of you full-time?
HN: Marvin is full-time and the rest of us work part-time. We have so many events it’s like having a second full-time job, though.

MC: About how many events each year are you working?
HN: The company books between 200-300 events per year.

MC: How did you choose the name of the company? It doesn’t have “DJ” in it.
HN: We wanted a name that is easy to remember and gives people an idea of what we do. We are not limited to just DJ services. We offer a wide range of event services. There’s no limit to what we can do for our clients.

MC: I like that. Is that your company philosophy?
HN: Our motto is, “One Company – Unlimited Possibilities”.

MC: That’s a great mindset to have. What is the range of your services?
HN: All the main things like DJ, photo booths, lighting, confetti drops, laser shows, live sound, pipe and drape, and event production.

MC: Do you have different teams for each event that specialize in certain things? Do you have a sound and lighting crew, photo booth crew that are separate from the DJs or do you each do a little of
HN: We are trying to focus on having a professional at his/her own craft in each position. Someone who has mastered through years of experience, their specific role in the event industry. We separate the DJ position and the MC position, where the two support each other but individually work on continuously mastering their own skill set. We have a dedicated lighting designer, who creates picture-perfect moments and moods throughout the event using his visual mastery of light concepts and animation. We have separate crews for each service but there are a few people that are crossed-trained to operate several of the different services that we provide. Having everyone able to do multiple things keeps our guys busy. On days where there are no DJ jobs but several photo booth jobs, I can have one of my DJs run a photo booth. Relieves us from the need of hiring a new person.

MC: Why do you have separate DJ and MC positions?

HN: The MC role is to concentrate on being the host for the event. They are also in contact and coordinate with the wedding coordinator to ensure things are on time and running smoothly. They also interact with guests and use their time to obtain any last-minute information. They solely concentrate on the task at hand and have the freedom to move freely while not having to worry about the music.

The DJ concentrates on the music, making sure songs are cued up for the right event. They also read the crowd and try to play music that fits the mood or situation. They coordinate with the MC for any music that is needed for the activities that the MC will host. Our DJ also acts as a backup for the MC and assists the MC with things like moving chairs for activities or setting up mic stands for a singer. Things run so much more smoothly when we have a separate MC and DJ.

MC: You are based in Oahu. Do you travel to the other islands for events?

HN: Rarely, but sometimes.

MC: What is your primary role at Hawaii Events Unlimited?

HN: I handle sales and marketing, while DJ Flip takes care of all the sound and DJ production. Marvin is the owner and CEO.

MC: When did you get your start as a DJ?

HN: Some friends and I started in high school. After a few years with some influence from friends and other DJ companies we were able to turn our hobby into a business.

MC: How would you describe your DJ style?

HN: I started out as a turntablist, but I spin digitally now. All of our guys have their own niche. It makes it easy to work any type of event. We have someone to fit whatever the client is looking for.

MC: Who were some of your early DJ influences?

HN: A lot of different mix DJs. My biggest influences were...
Q-Bert, Mix Master Mike and Funk Master Flex.

MC: Do you stick to certain types of events or do a little of everything?
HN: We do a mix of events, from birthdays and graduations to proms and weddings. We also do live sound for concerts and corporate events.

MC: How does Hawaii Events Unlimited stand out in your market?
HN: Mainly we stand out by providing services that other companies don’t. We are always trying to raise the bar and do things no other local company is doing.

MC: Which type of event is your favorite?
HN: For me, proms.

MC: Really? Proms, not weddings?
HN: Don’t get me wrong. We love weddings. But proms tend to be our most creative events with sound, lighting and design. We get to experiment with a lot of new things, and mostly because they’re a lot of fun.

MC: Any crazy event stories you can share?
HN: I have seen so many things in the last twenty years. I’m not sure if any are appropriate to repeat here.

MC: That crazy? I think we all have a few wild stories to tell.
HN: Yes. More than a few.

MC: Do you find big differences in Hawaiian weddings versus those on the mainland? Are there certain cultural elements that make Hawaiian weddings unique?
HN: In Hawaii, since we are in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, we are a melting pot of the many cultures and people that reside here. Being able to accommodate and anticipate traditional wedding customs of many ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and the merging of multiple ones is always something we have to prepare for. Like this past weekend, our DJ was prepared by having a Samoan “Siva” Money Dance song at hand in his music library since the client forgot to bring one; that’s something a DJ would not commonly have in their library on the mainland. Also, another cultural difference is that local weddings tend to be more relaxed and not as formal. Sometimes there are bands playing local Hawaiian songs. Guests are in shorts and t-shirts, with a Heineken in...
their hand.

The other difference is not so much between us and the mainland but the difference between local and destination weddings. With a lot with local weddings, the guests tend to leave right after the program ends. They don’t stay for the dancing portion. It happens quite often. Destination weddings are the complete opposite: They are there to party till the last song.

As for the industry, The biggest difference I see a lot is the separation of DJ and MC. There are a lot of DJ companies here that do not MC. The master of ceremonies is a separate person. It is also one of our strong beliefs, to keep it separate.

MC: What goals have you set for Hawaii Events Unlimited?

HN: Marvin, the owner has stepped back from all disc jockey work to run the company. His goals are for our DJs to be the best and most sought after in the islands. He is working hard to get us our own warehouse and increase the number of full-time employees. He wants to be able to offer everyone benefits like medical, dental and 401K.

MC: What are some of the obstacles and challenges you’ve faced along the way?

HN: Our biggest challenge has been staffing and training. We don’t have the same resources as the mainland. Since we are always trying something new and different we can’t look at how another company did something. There’s no instruction manual. We’re creating new techniques and event styles as we go. We learn a lot from experimenting.

MC: So other companies watch you do things to see what works and then copy you.

HN: It happens. That’s the price you pay for being a leader and innovator.

MC: True. I remember you mentioning about working with school kids when we met in Vegas.

HN: Marvin has created a program at a local high school to teach kids the art of being a DJ.

MC: That’s awesome! Kind of like a “DJ Club” instead of the AV Club.

HN: Yes. Marvin really believes it’s important to mentor young kids and give them a positive outlet. He wants to help kids become DJs and also pass on the artistry and knowledge of what we do.

MC: That is definitely something we need to see more of in our industry. At the end of the day, what drives and motivates you, Marvin and DJ Flip?

HN: I’d have to say, when you strip away all of the lighting, effects, planning and behind-the-scenes work, it comes down to giving our clients an event they’ll remember forever and learning to live in the moment.
One of the things I’ve always admired the most about the DJ industry is the diversity. As DJs, we come from all social, economic and cultural backgrounds, with the unified goal of sharing a passion for music and giving people a way to escape their daily lives through the celebrations we create and the dance floors we pack. We come from big cities like New York, Boston, Chicago, Miami, Dallas, Las Vegas and Los Angeles, with their big clubs and vibrant event scenes. We also hail from small towns in Maine, Kentucky, Iowa, Oregon and Colorado, where life is a little slower and one event can bring a whole community together.

I’m glad to have become friends with one DJ who truly understands the importance of bringing communities together through music. I first met him almost eight years ago at an MBLV event. I thought he was joking around when he told me his name. He smiled politely and said, “I get that a lot.” After talking for a while and hanging out at that conference I quickly developed a respect for him. Here was this dude from Colorado sporting a big ole’ cowboy hat and rocking a mythical birth name. He carries himself with that cool quiet vibe like John Travolta had in Urban Cowboy. His name: Robin Hood.

Mike C: How did you get your start as a DJ?

Robin Hood: I started out doing karaoke about twenty years ago and gradually moved on to DJ clubs and private events.

MC: This is your full-time profession, correct?

RH: Yes, since 1997.

MC: What were you doing before becoming a full-time DJ?

RH: I was a horse jockey before I was a disc jockey.

MC: No pun intended, right? Like at the Kentucky Derby type jockey?

RH: Yes, I still train horses for racing. Working with them keeps me grounded.

MC: I like watching your Facebook videos when you’re out riding. You live in a beautiful area. It’s a pretty small town.

RH: I live in Platteville, Colorado which is small, but I service a much bigger area.

MC: Which services do you provide?

RH: DJ, photo booth, karaoke, DJ Trivia nights, all the usual services.

MC: Your company name is fairly unique. How did you decide on it?

RH: Rooster Entertainment was originally born from a Disney idea. If you’ve ever seen the animated Robin Hood, a rooster tells the story. A friend of mine added the slogan “Rock with the Cock” (cue up me spitting out my iced coffee and choking, while laughing my butt off at that) but I had to change it for obvious reasons.

MC: I get why you had to change the name. Not sure how many brides would dig that. Which events are your favorites?

RH: Weddings, without a doubt. I really like helping couples have an amazing day with their family and friends.
MC: Being in Colorado, do you mostly spin country music?
RH: Yes, but I'm pretty solid with most other music.

MC: How do you stand out in your area?
RH: Typically it's my cowboy hat (LOL) but mostly I just try to be known as the guy that goes above and beyond for his clients.

MC: Another great name. What are some of the biggest challenges you face in your local area?
RH: Mostly keeping the workflow going during winter. They can be long and cold. I'm sure many other guys experience that as well.

MC: New England is the same way. You attend Mobile Beat Vegas each year. How has that helped your business?
RH: I've learned so many great things at MBLV, the list would be too long to post here. I will say Mobile Beat Vegas has taken me from below average, to being in high demand.

MC: Do you have any mentors?
RH: Randy Bartlett and Mike Walter are two people I look up to. I have a lot of great guys in my area also, like, Brian Howe, Matthew Kays, Ron Michaels, Rich Salazar, and so many more, that help as well.

MC: You had a milestone for your DJ career last fall. Mind sharing?
RH: I got to present my first seminar on board the Mobile Beat PBX cruise last fall.

MC: How did that go?
RH: Great! I would like to do more seminars in the future.

MC: What would be your dream gig?
RH: Being the DJ for a big country festival. That’s something I have yet to experience.

MC: You live in a quiet area. Anything crazy ever happen at your events?
RH: I have plenty of stories that I can’t share here. I did a wedding where a huge brawl broke out (que up the Benny Hill theme). Almost the entire group got involved. Not sure how it started, but it ended the wedding quickly.

MC: How do you juggle family and career?

MC: That is a big hat you wear. Have you ever ridden a mechanical bull while working an event?
RH: On numerous occasions. A good friend of mine has a mechanical bull company, and we work together frequently. Bull Corp. is the name of his business.

MC: It can be super tough sometimes, but I have a great family and wife that support me.

MC: Where do you see yourself and company in five years?
RH: In five years it will be 2024. Hard to imagine, but hopefully I’m still having great success, and loving this.

MC: What idea or belief do you try and live your life by?
RH: I always say, “Make it count.” Meaning everything you do should be for a purpose and to always give it your best shot.

MC: What is something you’d like other DJs to know about you?
RH: Yes, Robin Hood is my real name! It's the name my parents gave me when I was born. No, I did not change it!

MC: What are your thoughts about the future of the DJ industry?
RH: Technology has made it easier for the entry level DJ, however if you want to be successful for the long term, you need to put in the work and get the education and skills. If you truly want to do this for a career, don’t let the fly-by-night bottom-feeders get to you. MB
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