

Ditch 'Em

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I'm sure that we have all had jobs before DJing that we were fired from. Kinda sucks doesn't it? However, have you ever had to fire someone? One of your DJs perhaps? Your office manager? That could be even worse. You know what's even worse than that? Firing a venue.

Let's face it. There are some places that we as DJs dread playing for various reasons. I've played all over North Carolina and beyond and have done everything from the nicest 5 star hotels to the worst backyard BBQ wedding. I have tons of venue horror stories from my 30 years of DJing. A few have even made my "Never Go Back There" list. When do you pull the plug? When do you fire a venue?

1. **Load In**-If a venue has an insane load-in policy then it may be time to fire them. A particularly nice hotel near Raleigh had the greatest and easiest load in when it first opened. It was literally pull up to the second entrance, unload and roll your gear a few feet down the hall to the ballroom. Well, it only took one lighting company one time to roll a hand truck into the corner of a piece of furniture in the hallway for that all to abruptly end. So now what do we have to do? Pull up the loading dock (keep in mind that some of my guys drive little Prius type cars, not box trucks). Next, take your gear out and lift it over your head to loading dock height. Then travel down three corridors to a filthy service elevator which goes into a chaotic kitchen. Next you have to navigate that maze in order to finally get to the ballroom with the too narrow single door to pass through. MISERABLE! In fact, I just convinced myself to fire them after writing this!
2. **Staff**-If someone on the staff at a particular venue treats you like garbage every time you set foot on the property, well then it's probably another sign to fire that venue. Look, I get it, we are in the service industry just like they are. We aren't divas (well most of us), but I feel like there a few things they should be willing and able to help with. Where's the power? Where is our table? Small things (in fact, the only two things I require in my "rider"). I've asked venue staff members for the easiest things before and been looked at like I asked them to write out the long form of pi. I think it's time you fired the venues that consistently hire staff members that treat DJs like poop.
3. **Communication**-This can go either way, too much or too little. Have you ever encountered the fresh out of college new girl at a hotel where you are working? The one that has literally coordinated zero events, whereas you have probably played that place 100 times? Yeah, that girl. She will absolutely wear out your email and cell phone with 1000 questions or changes or comments about an upcoming event. 999 of them aren't urgent at all and could have been handled the day of! Or maybe you have encountered the coordinator at a venue that thinks they are "too busy" to return your phone calls and/or emails about what time you should arrive, where you

should load in or park, etc. In other words, they literally will not respond to you which eventually leads to you having to bother the bride and groom to get you the answers to these simple questions. Too much communication or lack thereof should be grounds for firing a venue.

4. Referrals-There are several places around Raleigh that we play all the time, like out of four Saturdays, one of the Bunn DJ Company DJs will be there three of them. I'm sure you have some of your "go to" places as well and you probably recommend these venues to couples that may be early in the planning process, for example, the ones you meet at a bridal show. You probably even think that you are on their holy grail preferred vendors list, but at a particular bride meeting, you get a glance at that list stuck in one of your bride's binders and guess what? YOU AREN'T! And even worse, three of the douchiest DJs in your area are on it! As Trump would say to that venue, "You're Fired" and then do that hand motion thing he does.

At the end of the day, do I really want you going around town telling people you aren't going to DJ at their venue anymore? NO! You'd probably go out of business. However, if 3 out of 4 of these things listed above are occurring on a regular basis at a venue where you work, I would highly considering dumping that venue. You will be much happier in the long run knowing you don't have to go back to that place. And when you aren't happy in your surroundings, it is going to rub off on your performance. Ditch 'Em!!!