

Expect the Unexpected By Joe Bunn for DJN

Whether you own a multi-op DJ company and book several shows every weekend, or just work as a solo operator, at some point in your career, there will come a time when you run into an emergency situation and need to send a replacement DJ. It's inevitable, life happens; a car wreck, an ill family member, wife goes into premature labor, you blow out your back. Believe me, these have all happened to guys in my company, and I mean good guys, pro DJs, real "soldiers" that show up early and rock the house every weekend...not some kid that wants to get out of a show to go see a hip hop concert that happens to be in town on that weekend. So what do you do when the unexpected happens? Do you panic? No! Read this article for some tips on being ready.

First off, always advance the show with your DJ, whether you do it through automation in DJ Event Planner, or whether you call or email all of your DJs on Thursday before the weekend. Advancing the show with your DJ means simply asking them, "Are you ready for your gig?", confirming the times, location, and extra services. After all of the shows are advanced, you will have a firm grasp on everything happening that coming weekend and feel more confident to be able to do your own show without getting a phone call in the middle of it from one of your DJs. In addition, this gives you a final "big picture" of everything going on in the coming days show wise.

I'll mention DJ Event Planner again in this paragraph because unlike back in the day when we had for each of our clients a paper folder containing their planner, contracts, and music list, now all of that is stored in DJ Event Planner. Our clients are all required to complete at least the planner and are highly encouraged to do a music list as well. Not only does this have the DJ more than ready before he even leaves his house, it's the blueprint for a show should he not be able to get there. Several years ago, on a Saturday afternoon, I was at the movies with my kids. I got a phone call from one of my best DJs. I knew immediately something was wrong. I've told my guys NEVER to call me on a Saturday unless something is wrong, like you better be on fire in a dynamite factory, that kind of wrong. It turns out this DJ had blown out his back while loading his truck. He was literally lying on the kitchen floor calling me. I immediately left the movie, and pulled up the DJ calendar to see which DJs were still open. I found one, called him, woke him up from a nap, gave him the login for the show, and the gig was handled. How? Easy. He was able to see the times, the couple's names, the location, their agenda and all of their song suggestions including the "special songs" like first dance, bouquet toss song, etc. He showed up to the gig in plenty of time, introduced himself to the bride and explained the situation, rocked the gig, got a tip and a killer review. She didn't even mention the switch in the review or ask for any money back from us. She got the same incredible service even though it was not the original DJ she had booked. It's not something that we want to get in the habit of doing, but like I said, sh** happens.

It's imperative that you have DJs on backup for every big weekend. In other words, if you have 10 DJs on staff, don't book all 10...that's going to lead to trouble. Always have at least one guy on call. He can still make money that weekend if you wish. You can either pay him a flat "on call" fee, or maybe just get him to help out some other DJs on their setups or strikes that evening and have his gear and suit with him just in case he is needed at a full service gig. If you aren't running a multi-op, know that you too, at some point, are going to need a backup. This is where networking and being a good guy comes in. Years ago I started a local DJ organization. It was one of my proudest moments. My whole purpose was to try and bring together the DJs that had been at each other's throats for years. It worked...for a while. That's another article. My point is that you have to have a short list of local guys that you can call on and trust should the unexpected happen to you. Do you? Put those numbers in your cell phone right now as VIPs. They will be your first call the moment that you don't think you can make a gig.

Remember DJs, it only takes one abandoned couple for them to destroy your business. Not only are they going to leave a negative review on every site online, they are more than likely going to report you to the local news (one of those "troubleshooter" type programs) and the Better Business Bureau, not to mention all of their social media channels. Honestly, one wronged bride can take down all that you have built. Get your backup plan in place and do it today! As an Eagle Scout, one of the most important things I learned was the Boy Scout motto "Be Prepared" which I still live by almost every day!