

Keeping Your DJs Happy
By Joe Bunn
For Disc Jockey News

This article really applies to multi-op owners, but it's still going to be a great read, so follow along. If you're like me, you have some really great DJs on your staff. Let's face it, without them, your company wouldn't make it. When they do a great job, which I hope is all the time, it builds your reputation as an amazing, reliable and professional DJ company.

Now, we have all been here: We've trained a DJ, let him stand beside us for weeks and shadow the best of the best, we've even given them a company polo shirt and company manual and then BOOM, they are gone. They either leave to "start their own thing" or they decide that they didn't really want to be a pro DJ in the first place. Like they say, **it happens. However, what you don't want to happen is for that guy to be around for a few years, make you a lot of money, get tons of people asking for him and then disappear. Here are some tips that will help keep them on your staff (hopefully) forever.

First and most importantly, pay them and pay them well! You remember when you first started out, and you did those bar gigs for \$50 and a couple of beers? You paid your dues, but then you started getting top dollar for your services when you got good. Your pros expect the same. If you have DJs that are as good as you are (or sometimes even better), PAY THEM! If you have a sliding scale for how long they have been with you, or how many good reviews they have, that's fine, but just make sure it's set in place each year before the season starts. At the end of wedding season, have a review and talk money again. Don't let money steal away your best DJs. Of course, if it comes to a negotiation over money and they are just asking for too much, then sometimes you have to cut your losses and let them walk. One more point about money. Plan on paying them every Monday and make sure that their paychecks aren't made of rubber (they aren't going to bounce).

The second thing that you should do is set up a monthly full staff meeting. If your office can't hold all of your DJs, then strike up a deal with a local hotel for one of their board rooms. Trade them out their holiday employee party for it. This meeting not only lets you talk about things that are right and wrong with the company, but it also gives the guys a chance to bond and get to know each other.

Next, keep them busy. It is better to be overstaffed than understaffed. However, sometimes the guys at the end of the roster don't get many shows each year. There are times when you have to talk to them and explain the hierarchy. Many times they still will stick around if you are just open and honest with them. Explain it to them like this, "There is turnaround in the DJ business, some people burn out, some people have kids, others get married and have wives that don't like DJs. So your place at the bottom of the roster eventually becomes the middle and then you start

to make money!" If you have a great company, they will want to stick around for the ride.

Lastly, incentivize! What does that big word mean? It means, give them something more than just a paycheck every week. We do a few fun things here at Joe Bunn DJ Company. During the monthly meeting (mentioned above), we always start the meeting with the positives, mainly the DJ of the month, which is usually based off Wedding Wire reviews. That winning DJ gets a \$25 iTunes card right there on the spot, their name in the monthly newsletter, and the envy of the other DJs. Another thing we did when we had a lot of add ons like photo booths and uplighting was to give them a percentage of the booking. And finally, to me one of the most important things we do, is a couple of fun things each year. For example, last year we all went and rode go-karts and played laser tag at a local place called Frankie's Fun Park. This year I think we are going to play some paintball. I also host a couple of hotdog, beer and burger parties at my house during the year.

If you can try to implement these things into your program at your company, I can assure you that you'll keep your top talent around much longer. Keep it rocking!

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