

Gear Needs Vs. Wants By Joe Bunn for Mobile Beat Magazine

The majority of this issue of Mobile Beat is about gear and tech. This writer LOVES anything techy, new, shiny, geeky in the DJ world. I WANT IT ALL, however, as a small business owner, you MUST distinguish between Need and Want. Let's dig into this a little bit deeper.

Every ad in our beloved Mobile Beat Magazine is dripping with the hottest, sexiest new gear, your Facebook ad feed is steaming with the greatest gear known to man, every Guitar Center and Sam Ash seem to be having a sale with 0% interest. It's all too much for a DJ to handle! Trust me guys, I've been there, but you have to control yourself sometimes. As this year comes to a close, and you start to consider making new purchases, think, "What do I NEED that will make me money and pay for itself fast?" You need to generate a quick R.O.I. (Return on Investment) when you work for yourself.

Make a list of what you need, not want, and start from there. Speakers looking rough or sound like garbage? Get new ones, that is a smart purchase. Is your computer lagging or shutting down during gigs? Get a new one immediately! Do your black speaker stands look like they got run over? Grab some new ones! I think you get the point. These are the things that you need NOW to have you ready for the next wedding season.

While you are still in the "need mode", think about the add-ons that you offer or want to offer. If you are like our company, many of our clients now book us to do the audio for their actual wedding ceremony. If you are using your DJ rig for this and carrying it back and forth between the ceremony site and reception location, not only do you look unprofessional, you aren't using the right stuff. Get yourself a separate "ceremony rig" in which you have the BEST wireless lavalier microphones that you can possibly afford (I recommend two and prefer Shure or Sennheiser). These will be for your officiant and possibly the groom if he has written vows. Also, get yourself a great handheld wireless mic and stand for your readers or in case they have a singer. You will also need a line mixer with 4-8 inputs for your mics, ipod and possibly any musicians that show up and need an input. Instead of having a monster 15" cabinet on a stand for the ceremony, try something like a DLM8, a QSC K8, or even a Bose L1 Compact. That's all you really need to pull off a great sounding ceremony! Plus, you can charge top dollar for this service because I can assure you that the hotel where they are having said function is going to charge double or triple what you quote.

Ok, now let's shift gears for a minute. It's OK to WANT, but go about it the smart way. Is your 3 year old DJ controller still working like the day you bought it? If the answer is yes, then STAY AWAY from buying a new one. Like my grandma always said, "If it ain't broke, don't try to fix it boy!" Not only will it cost you a pretty penny, but it's going to cost you time trying to re-learn the 100 extra buttons that they

added to the new version! Maybe you want to invest in something new for your company for 2015 like uplights or a photobooth perhaps? Ok, maybe that is smart money, but before running out and buying that stuff, do some research. First, research what the gear is going to cost you. Post online in some of the DJ forums and see which brands that DJs are really liking and then price them out from somewhere reputable. After that, do a little market research. What are the DJs and lighting companies in your area getting for 16 uplights? For a 4 hour photobooth rental? Then do a little simple math and think "How many times do I have to rent this stuff out to get my dough back?" If it's several years, it's probably not a smart move.

I've been DJing almost 30 years now, since I was 13! I've bought, returned, used, sold, had, broken, thrown, destroyed, ruled almost every piece of DJ gear/speaker that has been manufactured during that time and for what reason? None! It was just dumb spending. If your stuff looks good, sounds good, you're awesome on it, and you rock parties, then keep on with trucking with what you have! Have a great year DJs! I'll see you all at Mobile Beat Las Vegas next month!