

Oh How I Long for Summer
By Joe Bunn for Mobile Beat

Summer is coming. I just said that in my best Jon Snow (from “Game of Thrones”) accent. Summer is pretty consistent in North Carolina. In May, it’s hot, June is hotter and July and August are unbearable. As you can imagine, May and June are slammed with weddings, July and August, not so much. Being from The South, it’s going to take more than a 100 degree day to stop me from working. Summer can be super productive! Let’s discuss a few things we do here at Bunn DJ Company during those months that maybe you can incorporate into your calendar in 2017.

Music Updates. One of the first things we do at the start of summer is dial in some very “summer specific” playlists. These aren’t necessarily for the weddings that we do (most of those playlists were created in the first two months of the year). The playlists for summer are really for the pool parties, beach events, or even retail gigs that we do around this time. Several country clubs, condo and apartment communities (especially new ones) budget for DJs for all of the summer holidays (Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day), so make sure to hit them up in the winter to get those gigs! They are easy money in that they are normally during the day and are mainly background music for the guests and residents. The playlists for these events definitely need to be updated each year especially if there are going to be kids there. You know they’ll eat you alive if you don’t have the newest pop beats! We also create a summer playlist for the older folks too ranging from Bob Marley to Jack Johnson and even older stuff like The Beach Boys.

Check the numbers. June is technically mid-way through the year. This is a good time to schedule a meeting with your accountant (please tell me you have one) and go through the numbers for the first half of the year. Have a look at the number of shows you did the first six months of the previous year. Did you do more or less? Take a look at how much you spent? More or less? How many upcoming shows did you have on the books in June of the previous year? How about now? These are just a few things that your accountant can help you track. It’s also helpful to have a good grasp of Quickbooks (or a similar accounting program) and to know how to read the reports in your booking system (we use DJ Event Planner). I know that you didn’t become a DJ in order to read spreadsheets, but as a business owner, it’s your responsibility to track the progress of your business.

Have some fun! I love to do a couple of fun things a year with the full staff. We have played laser tag, driven indoor go-karts, had cook outs, shot each other with paintballs and even been to the beach. We are really lucky here in Raleigh, NC in that the beach is only 2 hours away. Your staff will love you if you plan at least a couple of outings a year. As you look at your summer schedule, go ahead and lock down a big cookout for your DJs! Side bar: I think northerners use the term barbecue instead of cookout, whereas down here barbecue is chopped pork with vinegar based sauce. Moving on...

Get ready for the fall. I don't know about you, but here in the South, the fall is now the go to time to get married. October is absolute madness around here. Brides literally camp outside Duke Chapel in Durham, NC the night before reservations start so that they get the date that they want! We talked about getting your tunes ready and making sure you're making money, but the other thing you need to make sure is ready is your staff. If you're a multi-op company, the success and reputation of your company will often rely on how good your DJs truly are. As the owner, you have to train them to be as good or better than you! At some point, if you haven't already, you're going to want to step aside, run the business, and let your guys be out DJing the events. Remember that cookout I talked about earlier? How about before serving up a bunch of burgers, beers and hot dogs, you have a two or three hour training session? You can run through all types of stuff with experienced or semi-experienced DJs in that time. We let our DJs sell themselves so you could run through a mock consultation with them. You could also pull up an agenda from a recent wedding and get them to show you how they would do the introductions, and then maybe pass the mic to the next DJ and tell them to MC the bouquet and garter tosses. If you're hiring more "green" folks that have never DJd, then yes, you are going to have to spend much more time with them even going back to teaching them some music history and even the difference between an RCA cable and an XLR. However, if you took several weeks in the winter and summer for several hours each session, you could get newbies ready for the fall season.

So even though it gets hot in the summer months, don't let it dissuade you from getting a lot done! Look at it as halftime where you get a quick breather and then come out to win!