

The Home Stretch By Joe Bunn for DJN

One of the most important parts of DJing weddings is the planning. Most of us can show up at a private party, corporate event, or retail store gig and just “freestyle” it. We can play about anything, maybe make a couple of brief announcements, collect a check and call it a day. Weddings, well those are a whole other animal. You best be prepared and have your game face on when you walk into a venue to DJ the biggest day of someone’s life.

One of my favorite things to do these days when I meet with other DJs (at networking events, DJ conferences, etc.) is ask them how they do certain things. One of the things I’m always interested in is how they get planning information from their couples. In other words, do they send a MS Word document or Excel file to them and ask them to fill it out with their song choices and itinerary? Do they use DJ Intelligence or DJ Event Planner? I wanna know!

I also ask them about the final phase of planning, the “home stretch” we’ll call it. How do you make the clients feel at ease? How do you make sure that you are ready or your DJ is ready for the gig? I’ve seen very successful companies do this in very different ways.

Option 1. The office staff (or owner) handles all of the planning for the DJ. In this scenario, the DJ that works for the multi-op basically just shows up, picks up the gear and filled-out planning forms, and goes to DJ the wedding. Does it work? Yes, I’m sure it does or these companies would be out of business. My main issue with it is the lack of personal interaction. It just seems a little cold to me, like you’re running a wedding factory. Which leads me to Option 2, the way we do it here at Bunn DJ Company.

Option 2. The DJ is in charge of each and every one of their clients for the entire year. Let me break down for you how things work from the very inception of the lead.

- The lead comes in via phone or email (usually email). I immediately respond and yes, I share the pricing right up front (sorry to all Gitomer fans or folks that think I’m a moron). It works for us.
- Once the lead responds and says the price looks OK, then I qualify that as a “hot lead” and I send it to an available DJ so that they can either set up a face to face meeting or Skype call.
- At the meeting, we do our routine sales presentation, but also use this as a chance to get to know the couple and show our personalities. Truthfully, if someone takes the time to come in and meet with us, they want to book. We are over 90% closing those that take the time to meet.
- The DJ turns in the information about the event, and I handle the contract sending and collecting the money.

- Now, from that first meeting forward, the client has the DJ's mobile number and his email. Any time they have a non-money related question, it goes right to the DJ. Again, building trust and that personal touch.
- A month before the wedding, the client gets an automated email reminding them to fill out their planner and music list on DJ Event Planner.
- Two weeks later, a reminder goes out again to PLEASE complete their planners.
- Finally, six days before the wedding, a final automated email goes out saying, "Do you have some time to talk this week to go over everything?" This is what we call "advancing the show".
- In that advance call, we go over the music list, but more importantly, the schedule of the entire day making sure that the first dance is still XXXX and that you pronounce their last name Smithe and Smythe. All of the important things! As soon as that call is done, my DJs notify me and I update the status of that show to "Advanced". In other words, they are ready to ROCK!

The bottom line is that this keeps me, as the owner of the company, sane. I know that if someone calls or texts me on a Saturday, then something is really wrong. And luckily, that rarely happens (as I knock on wood).

Let me mention this. Some folks love the "hands off" approach, where they come in or have a video conference or phone call, the DJ does their presentation and then they don't see us in person again until the day of the wedding. Others need a little more "hand holding" or get a little panicky leading up to the big day. They want to come in a couple of weeks to a month before and actually work on the planners with you or go over their choices and get your input. You are, after all, the expert. Embrace that time! Use it as another chance to get that personal interaction and that one on one time. By the time you arrive at their reception and walk out in the hall to line them up, they are going to be thinking of you as an old friend. And when people think of you like that, that's when the tips come out! Go get 'em!