

Weeding Out Talent

By Joe Bunn
For Disc Jockey News

If you run a multi-op DJ company, or are thinking about growing, then at some point you will have to hire more DJs. Trust me, this can be quite a daunting task, but in this month's article, I will give you some tips that I've developed over the past 15 years of hiring (and firing) DJs.

My company is a little bit different than some. I only hire experienced DJs (Mike Walter just rolled over in his grave, and he isn't even dead yet). They may have worked in a skating rink, or done hundreds of weddings, it doesn't matter to me. It just matters that they have some knowledge of the DJ business, how to read the crowd, what to play next, and own their own gear.

There are a couple of ways that we have had success in finding great DJs. Back in the day, it was old school methods like posting flyers on campuses or even going in the record stores (remember those?) and asking the store managers who the good DJs were. We also used to put ads in the local newspaper (remember those?) or even the campus newspapers. Nowadays, it's all online. For the longest time, we left up a link on our home page that said "Now Hiring!" and people that were interested could click on it and contact us for an interview. We are pretty staffed up now, so it's down. We also got some of our best guys from posting ads on Craig's List or social media. The thing about Craig's List is that there are a lot of crazies out there (just watch the nightly news), so it does take some "weeding out" to find the good DJs. Our ad usually reads something like this:

Joe Bunn DJ Company (www.bunndjcompany.com) is now hiring EXPERIENCED mobile DJs. If the following criteria apply to you, then email us at info@bunndjcompany.com to set up an interview.

- 1. Have been a DJ of some sort in the past few years (mobile, club, radio)*
- 2. Have your own gear*
- 3. Have transportation*
- 4. Willing to work weekends, mostly Saturdays for weddings*
- 5. Love to make great money!*

We look forward to hearing from you!

Ok, so you see what I've done? I've made it very specific. I even added numbers to tell these folks what I'm needing. You will also note that I told them to EMAIL me, not CALL. I hate the phone.

You may get an influx of emails from this and here is how to get down to the ones you really want to interview face to face.

1. If they call you, don't return their call, they didn't follow directions.
2. If you write your ad and request calls, and they call you or leave a voicemail

- that you can't understand, delete them.
3. If they contact you via email and don't know how to spell, use poor grammar, or don't know where the shift key is, drop them.
 4. If they don't have a car or gear (if your company doesn't provide it), they gotta go. Plus, they didn't read the ad.
 5. If something feels off, it probably is. Don't end up as a news story about a missing DJ.

Once I have vetted them through the email process, I would usually set up a short phone interview. Some of the questions I usually ask are:

1. How many years have you been DJing?
2. How many years have you been DJing weddings?
3. Do you have any DJ/Wedding references that we can contact?
4. Do you have all of your own music and gear?
5. Do you use CD, Vinyl, Digital?
6. Do you have reliable transportation?

As you can see, some of these are redundant from the ad, but I want to make sure they understand what kind of company we are right from the start. Once I feel comfortable that I have a good DJ on the hook, I'll ask them to come to our office for a face to face meeting with me. Sometimes I'll have another one of my senior DJs sit in on the meeting just to make sure that I'm reading the person right. At this face to face interview, I am really just trying to get a feel of their personality and if I think they are a good fit. I'll usually ask a few additional questions such as:

1. Can you describe your DJ rig?
2. What do you use for backup?
3. Do you have reliable transportation?
4. Can you travel for shows?
5. Are you able to go out over the next couple of months and observe our DJ's?

That last question is key. We don't pay our trainees to go out and shadow our DJs. That is our way of showing them how we like to do things. In a future article, I will get more into the training of the DJs, and how to "teach an old dog new tricks"; in other words, breaking bad habits of cheesy DJs.

Joe Bunn is the owner of Joe Bunn DJ Company and Next Level DJ Consulting. He and Mike Walter will be hosting The PhDJ Workshop November 4th and 5th, 2014 in Raleigh, NC. Visit www.phdjworkshop.com for more information.