

You Gotta Know When to Go By Joe Bunn for DJN

Often times when I'm consulting with DJs around the country, they ask, "Joe, how do I know when it's time to go?" In other words, when is it time to cut the proverbial umbilical cord to that 9 to 5 job and go to full time DJing. This could be one of the toughest life decisions that you make, and not one to be taken lightly. I will assume for the purpose of this article that you are already a somewhat successful DJ in your town and not just getting started. I am going to give you a few tips that may help you know when it's time to pull the trigger by breaking it down into three parts-Money, Time, and Growth.

There are no two ways about it, money is going to be the biggest factor in this life decision. Your full time job pays you weekly (or every other week). You know what you are going to make (or pretty close to it), they pay your taxes, they take care of your benefits. There is security in knowing that check is coming. You can budget for you and your family based on that number. In the DJ game, it's never certain. The wedding business (where the money lies) is seasonal. There are peaks and valleys. You may have slow years based on the economy. In other words, it's never certain what you will pull in from month to month. Are you going to be able to ride that wave? Are you starting the company with the money that is in your bank account currently or are you able to get a small business loan and actually have some capital on hand for things like slow times, gear, marketing, advertising, rebranding, office space, etc.? I told people recently that I've started several businesses and the ones that failed did so because they were undercapitalized. Period. My suggestion is that if you have some money saved up or can get access to a good amount of cash to put in your reserve tank, then you could make the jump to a full timer and be able to endure that first couple of years as you build your DJ empire.

Time is one of our most precious commodities. We only have so many days, hours and minutes on this planet so we might as well take advantage of that. Take a few minutes to write down answers to these questions. How many hours a week are you spending at your current full time job? Now, how many hours are you spending on your DJ business? Are you spending as much time working on your DJ business as you are at work? If so, it's probably time to make the transition to DJing full time. If you aren't spending as much time on your DJ company, is it because your full time job is taking up all of that time? That's totally understandable! However, if you had unlimited time to work on your DJ business, to answer emails, to send out marketing pieces, to meet with vendors around town, would your business grow leaps and bounds? If you believe that more time would help you grow, it might be time to make the transition to full timer.

I know a few single operators that do very well, and are full time, but I know a lot more guys that are full time because they have amazing multi-op businesses with incredibly talented DJs working for them. Ask yourself a few questions...Can you be a good boss? Can you manage people and huge personalities? Are you the type of

person that can have 5, 10, 15 DJs working for you and will they be loyal? Can you afford to pay them what an awesome DJ is worth? What will your margin need to be to not only pay them, but keep some for yourself, your family, your expenses? These all have to be addressed. If you think your company is scalable and can grow into a multi-op, then it's time to jump to full time.

At the end of the day, nothing gets me more stoked than a DJ telling me he is getting ready to take his passion full time unless it's one of my employees telling me he is leaving "to become the next Joe Bunn" but in the same market as I am. At that point, I make them my mortal enemy and I destroy them. I hope to get an email from you soon saying that you're making the leap! It's not an easy decision or easy path, but it's an amazing ride! Good luck!