

Dress for Success  
By Joe Bunn for Disc Jockey News

You know that old saying, “Image is Everything”? I honestly believe in that. I think a huge part of your image as a pro DJ is about the way you dress. In the DJ world, there are at least four times that you have an opportunity to “dress up” for your clients or other vendors. Let’s talk about each one and what is appropriate for that occasion.

**Client Consultations.** If you are like us, we meet with the vast majority of our clients in person before they even write a check to Bunn DJ Company. I don’t have a dress code for my DJs for this, but I do expect a level of either professional or “cool”. What I mean by that is no shorts, no logo’d up Ed Hardy tees, no “work shirts” from their 9-5 job, etc. I want them to either wear our company polo shirt or something that fits their personality. Is it OK to go all out and wear a suit here? Yes, but maybe take it down a notch and leave the tie at home, or go with the blazer and jeans look. Be careful with the shoes if you go blazer/jeans. I recommend Cole Haan Lunargrand or Zerogrand.

**Networking Events.** If you aren’t going to at least two to three networking meetings a month, you aren’t doing enough to help grow your DJ company. Trust me, these groups like ISES and NACE are crucial in meeting the right folks to help you get to the next level of bookings. As the owner of the company, I am usually the one that goes to these vs. sending one of my DJs. I think it’s important to show my face and to be involved in our local event vendor community. For me though, this is outside of the “work environment” and this is where I let my personality shine. I wear my Jordans or my Yeezys (everyone knows I love my sneakers). I wear my jeans and my Henley t-shirts. That’s me and I think it’s perfectly acceptable in this scenario. Do I see guys there decked out in their “wedding suit”? Yes, and that’s ok too. It’s just not my style.

**Loading In.** There is nothing greater to me than loading into a venue that does multiple weddings in a day and seeing some scrub DJ loading in in a pair of shorts, some tired looking sneakers, and a pit-stained t-shirt. It just makes my day. Why? Because if I noticed how ragged he is, so do the people at this nice hotel or country club and he’ll never be recommended there like we are. Trust me, I know loading in is the worst part of our job, but I have been doing it with no help in the 105 degree summer heat of North Carolina for 30+ years. The key is to just try and be comfortable and professional. My suggestion is this. Try and wear your dress pants (unless you think you are going to rip or tear them) and your company’s polo. I highly advise against wearing your dress shirt and jacket until the last minute before guest arrival. I even changed our dress code a little this year. I allow my guys to wear the company polo when doing outdoor ceremonies in the summer, and they love me for it. It was simply too hot to be out there for an hour running audio in a suit! As we know, that 30 minutes is the most stressful part about being a DJ.

**At the Gig.** Finally, we come to the most important part of “dressing for success”, how you actually look at the performance. Let’s start with the most crucial part, your suit. First and foremost, you don’t have to spend a fortune to look like a million bucks. Trust me, I’m living proof. I’ve had all of the high end suits and even had a half dozen custom made ones at one point. I thought I was the coolest kid on the block because the label on the inside said “Custom Tailored for DJ Joe Bunn”. But guess what? Total waste of money. Stupid in fact. The truth of the matter is that you can get a decent suit or multiple suits for a great price from somewhere like Jos. A. Bank. In fact, I’m on their site right now. You can get two suits for \$300 and 3 dress shirts for \$99. That’s a steal! Shoot for a two button in navy to start and then work from there depending on the season. Grab yourself a white, a pale blue and a patterned buttondown shirt. Now maybe the suits don’t fit perfect right off the rack, but that’s where a great tailor comes into play. I have one that I found ten years ago here in Raleigh, and I’ve been using her ever since. She can take off the rack and make it look “Timberlake style” in a matter of a few days. Next let’s talk about finishing the look off. Your tie should be about the width of your lapels. Really wide ties look dated. Your belt and shoes should sort of match. Speaking of shoes, please STOP with the ridiculous all black running sneakers with your suit or tux. Just stop it. If you have serious swag, you might be able to get away with rocking sneakers with a suit, but they need to be way understated (all black leather Vans with a white sole is my go-to move), but to be safe, stick with some nice, comfortable dress shoes in black or darker brown. You can’t go wrong! Socks have become increasingly wilder and more colorful lately, and I’m actually OK with showing off some of your personality in those. Go for it! Before wrapping up, I would like to mention something to those DJs that still wear a tuxedo. If you are going to rock that look, please update it. If you are wearing the same type of winged collar shirt that you wore to your prom, with a pre-tied bowtie, STOP. If you are wearing a bedazzled clasp at the top of those Nehru collar shirts, STOP. If you are rocking a patterned vest and matching cummerbund, STOP. That was your prom...in whatever year that was. It’s 2016! Update the tux! Look at what Daniel Craig wears when he is James Bond. Channel that look! Get a real black bowtie and learn to tie it. Get a nice black tux, get it tailored and get a nice white tux shirt with a spread collar to go with it. Now you’re set.

I’m sure this article is going to raise a few eyebrows, but trust me on this one. Do yourself a favor and go through your wardrobe in the off-season. Get rid of the old stuff (consign it or donate it), and get yourself some new threads before Spring. You’ll thank me later.