

# How to Remix Your Career

## EIGHT ESSENTIAL STEPS

By Jason Weldon

**I**t's Tuesday morning. The alarm goes off at 6:30 AM and you struggle to get out of bed. Your wife doesn't have to be up for another hour, but you have to be in early for a meeting with the bosses.

You had a meeting last night for a wedding coming up this weekend, and your clients liked you so much, they stayed forever, as usual. You then had to stay up later to prepare for this morning's meeting at your full time gig, which is making it harder to get going on this particular morning. But the feeling you got last night when meeting with your clients just makes you happy. It leaves you fulfilled. So it was worth it.

But, in all seriousness, you hate doing this. You say to yourself as you walk around in a slight daze, "I hate this job." You look over at your wife and tell her, "I wish I could just quit and DJ for a living." But then reality sinks in and you realize you need the benefits and the steady check. Being a DJ just doesn't give you the stability that you need financially and you are afraid to quit.

The next day, the same cycle happens again.

Sound familiar?

It is time to do something about it. You have put up with enough crap. So let's make a change. Let's do something different. The following few steps will help you "remix" your DJ career and hopefully put you on a path to ditching the full-time job and becoming a full-time DJ.

### PERFECT YOUR SKILLS

Practice is the key to everything. You have to be good. Developing your talent will be the one thing that supersedes everything else. So make time to practice. The best people in life make time to get better at all the skills. So don't just get good on the microphone. Practice beat mixing and programming. Be creative. I'm reminded of a saying I heard once and have adapted to my business: "Somewhere, somebody is putting in more time on their skill then you are. When it comes time to compete



against you, they will beat you." Go practice and get insanely, freaking good!

### GET NETWORKING

Next up, people need to know about you. Being in their awareness all the time is the next step. If you are not actively meeting with venues, photographers, planners, florists, etc, people are not going to know about you. Networking events are a must. N.A.C.E. meetings, I.S.E.S. meetings, wedding lunches, whatever it takes to get you in front of people—you have to do it. I like to say that each day you should be calling or emailing three new people. Either to say hi, to set a time to go out and see them or to just inform them about what you have going on. People need to hear from you.

### DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF

I like to think that featuring something no one else has, can give you an advantage. You need to be considered the leader in

your industry. Leaders always set the trends; they don't follow the herd.

It doesn't have to be something crazy expensive. You just want a conversation-starter and something that the other professionals can remember you by. Either trendy CD players, an interesting light, heck, even a cool form of transportation. Don't look like all the other DJs. Be you. Be different.

### MAXIMIZE YOUR INCOME

Don't be too cheap. Cheap work only brings you more cheap work. In order to replace your full-time salary, you will probably need to generate 100% more in revenue than you expect to earn as a salary. For example, if you want to make \$75,000, you will need to generate at least \$150,000 in total DJ sales. Although I am one to think 200% is more realistic. My intention here isn't to get into a "price war," but simply to offer a dose of reality. You need to REPLACE your income. So you can't afford to do events for less than a certain amount. You need to figure out how much you want to make first, then use that as part of the formula for setting your price.

*Jason Weldon is a wedding business consultant who specializes in small to medium-sized companies that want to grow their business. His objective is to help guide people through organizing their thoughts and laying the groundwork for a better, more successful start up. He currently lives in Philadelphia and is also the president of Synergetic Sound and Lighting, Inc. and DJ and A/V company.*



## INVEST IN YOURSELF

Take out a loan. Look, you have to have faith and you need money. And the best person to bet on is you. So go to the bank and take out a small loan that you can use as a draw when times might be slow. Then quit complaining that don't have the money and get back to fulfilling your dream. You also have to learn how to live like a college kid again. The hard times might be sticking around for a while, so get used to no cable, the cheapest phone you can find, lots of pasta, no vacations...you know, all the things that the successful people tell you they did BEFORE they were successful. You want to be successful right?

## PROJECT THE BEST IMAGE

Image. You have to always be mindful of what you look like. Go to the gym, stay in shape, look sharp and stylish. (Find a style that fits you.) People want to do business with someone that is put together and looks good. You can't look like a slob who just rolled out of bed and expect to be successful. Spend some money on a nice suit, a nice business casual outfit and a nice relaxed professional look. You would be surprised how far a new haircut, a nice pair of stylish jeans, a button down shirt, a sport coat and a nice pair of shoes can take you! (Really. People pay attention to shoes, so don't cheap-out in that area.)

## BE HELPFUL

In my office, I have taped up on my wall: "When you help enough people get what they want, then enough people will

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help you get what you want." It's probably one of the hardest things I do. It isn't easy helping other businesses out. And it gets harder and harder over the years as you meet more and more people. But at least you can care. And sometimes caring is all that you need. Pay attention and help your professional associates in any way that you can.

## BE PATIENT

And I leave you with one more important step: Be patient. Look, this kind of major change doesn't come over night. I would honestly tell you that you have four to seven years of struggle ahead of you. Four to seven years of battling every day through stuff that will be ten times harder than the job you have now.

Why? Because it isn't easy. The job you have now is easy. That's why you are still in it. It's your safe place, your comfort zone. But remixing your career into something new and exciting requires that you move. Start working on the above concepts. Do them consistently and do them well. Move out of your comfort zone and watch what happens!

Good luck! **MB**



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