

## What in the \$&\*^%#\*! am I going to do now?

### Practical steps for surviving when problems occur at your events.

When I began working with A La Carte Entertainment in Chicago, the company put me in their largest venue, Excalibur. This 45,000 square foot nightclub was actually divided into several clubs in one. My project was to create a new audience interactive show that would utilize the existing DJs and add MCs to the stage. This was not too different from every event that I had done as a Mobile DJ, except that every night none of the people in the room had a common thread. I was the youngest member of this seasoned entertainment team. As their newly appointed director, I was given the awesome responsibility of re-training the staff and changing the concept. This is where the problems began.

As many of you know DJs are proud and ego driven bunch. Therefore re-training older more seasoned DJs was not easy. When I would get on stage during the show the other DJs would purposely turn off my microphone. They would skip music in the middle of my audience interactive routines, and they would often simply turn the song off on purpose! This forced me to make a difficult decision. I could quit or create new ways to handle these expected problems. Of course I decided to fight back with preparedness.

In the Mobile DJ Performer world problems and challenges occur at many events. The good news is that most of you already know what those problems are going to be. Some of the most common challenges that could occur are, CD skipping, microphone not working, wrong song played, guest of honor late, and of course the obnoxious drunks.

What I have created for you is a proven method and way of thinking that will empower you to turn these problems into creative tools. These new tools will make you a better and more professional performer as well as increase your value to the clients in your area.

So Todd, what do I do when all #@\*(\$)&@#&! breaks loose?

Here are my 5 proven steps for being creative rather than reactive

1) Have a plan.

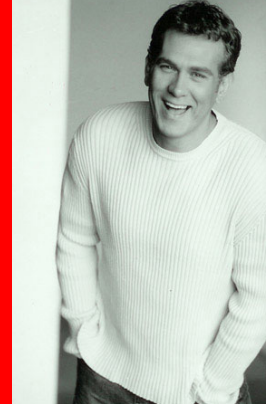
As I mentioned above, you already know what to expect as the potential problems at your events. Now I want you to write one of them down. Once you write down the problems, begin to think of specific and fun ways to direct the focus away from the problems and onto the fun. I will get you started:

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The microphone goes out during your show. Now write down at least 10 ways to get creative when this happens. One I use for this problem is to put the microphone away and draw everyone in to me. I tell them that we are going to have a little contest. My plan is that I am going to do the next routine with non-verbal cues to the audience and then give-a-way a prize to the person that is following along the best at the end of the routine.

## 2) Get control.

Notice in the example above I got control by putting the microphone away and bringing the audience into me. If the music is playing, I simply turn it off. Another could phrase to use next would be, "We have stopped the music for a reason."

I then tell my audience that they must watch me at all times because this surprise will have music. I also tell them about the prize that I am going to give-a-way to the best performer. You may even want to rehearse this with the audience and with the music to make sure you have total control. After I get the control, I move on.

## 3) Execute the plan.

Now I have the control. I immediately go into my above-mentioned plan. You must continue along as if this was your goal all along. Once the problem happens, commit to it. I will also always keep to the plan and not go back to the Microphone. Why?

## 4) Maintain control.

If I go back to the microphone in the above-mentioned plan I will once again relinquish control and this will make me vulnerable to disaster. Instead I want you to not release the control. If you are having a microphone problem then take the microphone out of the equation. No longer think about it and it will no longer control you. When applying this to other problems you must keep in mind that your new backup plan is the path you will now take. No matter what happens do not hope that the previous though will now work. Stick to and commit to the new plan.

## 5) Finish the thought.

After the backup plan is executed keep going into the next part of the event as if that were exactly what was meant to happen. Never acknowledge the problem or draw unnecessary attention to it. Wait until after the music begins or the attention is off of you to further address the problem.

Start to look at your events and problems more closely and begin writing down your most common problems. After practicing these new guidelines for positive thought you will begin to feel comfortable during the tough moments. You may even begin to search out or create fake problems just to give your events more depth and intrigue.

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