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INTERVIEW SERIES

How to Build a Profitable Niche Business

*Michael Senoff Interviews Mark Imperial
Niche Marketing Expert*

Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of HardToFindSeminars.com.

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

Michael Senoff

Founder & CEO: www.hardtfindseminars.com

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Niche Marketing Seminar

How to Build a Profitable Niche Business

Mark Imperial launched his career as a DJ protégé of Chicago's Hot Mix 5 in the early 80's and took his ability to pack dance floors to the recording studio where he pioneered Chicago's House Music Scene.

Mark's trademark is a show-time style of entertainment that incorporates lip syncs, dance routines, line dances, and audience participation. However, despite his fame and success, Mark quickly discovered that relying on word of mouth alone only led to a roller coaster income.

Taking his style beyond the clubs, he strategically aligned with event planners and high profile corporations began demanding his services. Working for Nintendo, Bell South, M & M, and National Lampoon, Mark has shared the stage with The Eagles, En Vogue, The Commodores, and Jeff Foxworthy.

Combining his expertise as a mobile DJ entertainer, a leading marketing, sales and performance coach to the industry, and, a Dan Kennedy Certified Business Advisor, Mark created a proven system of marketing, booking, and performance formulas to bring in a steady stream of high paying gigs that a select group of progressive mobile DJ entertainers around the world have used to dramatically boost revenue, with some clients showing increases of 400 to 1000 percent.

In this interview, Mark not only discusses his roots in the mobile DJ business and his fascinating path to success but also describes how others can capitalize on his experience.

In this interview with Mark you'll learn how to:

- Capitalize on strategic alliances and joint ventures
- Overcome price resistance by emphasizing value over cost by focusing on the quality of the experience
- Place a premium upon your services
- Prospect for clients
- Differentiate yourself from your competition and stand out in your market

- Leverage your success to generate new business
- Create a successful mix that can “turn” the customers to drive up revenue for your client clubs
- And much, much more.

Best of all, Mark describes in detail his hands-on, no-nonsense, mobile DJ package, the result of ten years of intensive R & D. The deluxe package includes step-by-step support and instructions for building a mobile DJ business, from generating leads to interviewing clients to closing the deal in a wide-variety of markets: weddings, bar and bat mitzvahs, institutional parties, amusement parks, and corporate events.

While Mark’s insights are indispensable for up-and-coming mobile DJs, an entrepreneurial marketing coach can use many of his tips to explore niche opportunities in a wide range of under-marketed areas. So sit back and find out how you too can leverage Mark Imperial’s profitable expertise no matter what business you are in. This interview is one hour. Enjoy. I urge you to get on Mark's list to see how a very successful marketer uses, e-mail, direct mail, and internet marketing to sell. There are some real lessons to be learned from Mark. More information on Mark's DJ opportunity <http://www.djsedge.com>

Hi, I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com). For the last five years I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds. Along the way, I've created a successful publishing all from home, from my two car garage. When my first child was born he was very sick and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home. Now my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable, audio business interviews. . I knew I needed a site that contained strategies and solutions and inside angles to help you live better, to save and make more money, to stay healthier and to get more out of life. I have learned a lot in the last five years and today I am going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

Mark: I've got a single operator out in Alaska that reported that before he was using my system, he was pretty much used to making about \$30-\$35,000 a year. In the first year alone, implementing my system, he reported \$130,000.

Hi. It's Michael Senoff with Michael Senoff [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com). Here's an interview with a gentleman named Mark Imperial. Mark Imperial is a mobile DJ entertainer, a leading marketing sales and performance coach to

the industry, and a Dan Kennedy certified business advisor based in Chicago. Some of the world's most famous brands who commonly retain Mark's services include Nintendo, Under Armour, Master Foods, M&M Mars candy, Dunn & Brad Street, Bell South, Frank's Red Hot Sauce, and National Lampoon, just to name a few.

Mark started as a hot-mix DJ protégé of the Chicago's Hot Mix Five in the early '80s. Mark took his ability to pack dance floors to the recording studio and became a pioneer of Chicago's house music scene; recording on DJ International Records and then on his own house national label. Mark created some of the world's most famous dance tracks, including J'Dor Dancer and The Love I Lost. Mark's tracks routinely hit top ten on dance charts worldwide. From the party scene, Mark took residency in the local club scene as an entertainer/director for Walter Payton's Entertainment One. Mark's entertainment evolved to include a signature show time, interactive style, which quickly grew in popularity and swept the nation in both corporate and social circles.

Taking his style beyond the clubs, event planners began to seek out Mark's services and he began performing nationwide. Since then, Mark has shared the stage with The Eagles, En Vogue, The Commodores, Jeff Foxworthy, VH1 and Fox Network's Amy Scott, and celebrity choreographer Darren Henson. Since Mark's departure from the club scene, he's decided to focus on growing his mobile DJ business. Mark has combined all of his real world experiences into a proven system that brings in a steady stream of high paying gigs and eliminates roller coaster income. He now teaches his systemized marketing, booking and performance formula to a select group of progressive, mobile DJ entertainers around the world.

In this interview, I grill Mark in detail exactly how he's able to get clients. And for my HMA consultants, this will be an instructive audio lesson to show you how other people are getting clients in totally opposite fields. So get ready and let's get going.

Michael: Tell me about Nintendo. How did you get the Nintendo account?

Mark: Actually, I got the Nintendo account through an event planner whose specialty is planning events for some of the world's leading brands. So I was introduced to Nintendo through a production company and they were trying to achieve a certain street-level promotion and they really turned to me because they knew I was sort of the go-to guy that can deliver an experiential marketing campaign in a street campaign for Nintendo using my current base of dancers and DJs in my company. I probably shouldn't tell you this, but in my previous incarnation with my DJ company we did a lot of high end bah mitzva's, that was really one of my main niches

because that's a high paying niche. So these same dancers and interactors we had at those parties, I re-purposed them for a street team.

Michael: I see. I know these high end bah mitzva's, some of them run around \$30-\$40-\$50-\$100,000. Now you were hired as the DJ, did you have a part in organizing the dancers, the break dancers, and stuff like that?

Mark: Yes. We sold our DJ packages for social events like bar and bah mitzvah's. Anything that had to do with the musical entertainment, I would take on and I'd really come in as an entertainment director.

Michael: I see. So with the bar and bah mitzvah, you're not just selling the records and spinning the records, you're handling all of the entertainment and you accept contract say a group of break dancers?

Mark: Right. That's something that we could offer. We also work side by side with an event planner if they had one or for some of the smaller parties that didn't have an event planner; we kind of double dutied and served as one.

Michael: What was some of the most popular-type dance entertainment that went along with the DJ? Back then were you doing break dancers?

Mark: Yes. We actually would just have some break dancers as part of our crew; so they would be part of our dancer/interactor crews. There wasn't really a separate thing—it wasn't like a showcase piece—they would just be part of our dance crews that would come out to that event. But for the high end bar and bah mitzvah they would hire some game shows for cocktail hour or they would hire musical trivia or some type of interactive activity that would happen during cocktail hour.

Michael: Where was Nintendo's event? Was it in Chicago?

Mark: Yes. I've done quite a number—

Michael: So Nintendo keeps coming back to you over and over again?

Mark: Yes. The most recent thing I did was their launch for the game Super Smash Brothers Brawl. We did a four city tour. Went from L.A. to San Francisco to Boston and New York City, and we had basically a national competition to find the top Super Smash

Brothers player in the country and the finals were at the Best Buy in No Ho in New York City. We just did that a couple of months ago.

Michael: Every time you went to a city, you were the director of all of the music, dancing, whatever?

Mark: I was the master of ceremonies as well. I handled all those duties.

Michael: That's pretty impressive. What does a gig like that pay, can you share on that?

Mark: It's all going to be packaged and they're all customizable. It also depends, it's not a real accurate number because in some cases I'll build in the travel and book it myself. But those are the kind of gigs that you can get \$10,000-\$20,000 for.

Michael: For each city or the whole thing?

Mark: Again, depending.

Michael: It depends.

Mark: Yes, they're all over the board. I take a look at what is really going to be involved in the planning because if I'm involved in a lot of pre-planning meetings, I'll consider those days as well.

Michael: Nintendo was contracting this out with the entertainment director, right? Were you dealing directly with Nintendo or someone who was organizing the whole event you were dealing with?

Mark: Nintendo has a whole marketing department within themselves, but they are really in charge with communicating with all the vendors; and if I'm one of the vendors, they still have a major event production company that really is brought in to put all the pieces together and that's how I sort of got involved. They called another company here in Chicago that I work with a lot and then they kind of went to them and said, "Who could be our guy? Who's this guy that's going to pull all this together?" And then that production company said, "I've got the guy for you." And that's when they introduced me. So I sort of became that sort of strategic alliance with all of them.

Michael: In a result, what did that mean for Nintendo in this event?

Mark: What it meant was basically an incredible, direct to consumer, experiential marketing campaign; an experience for the consumer to get involved in the excitement of the launch of this new game

and it gave them a tremendous media opportunity for publicity for all four events.

Michael: Did they get that media?

Mark: Yes, there were little news blips on MTV and Fox News, it was all over the internet. In the video game world it's a lot of blogs, so all the major video game blogs covered this thing from A to Z. So we were just doing non-stop interviews when we were at each of these events; I'll send you some links. There's a video you'll see from me conducting the finals on the microphone, for example.

Michael: Where did they find the top player for the game?

Mark: He was actually from Boston and he was already pretty experienced and expert play for Super Smash Brothers Brawl. It's kind of funny because they have their own little underground world going on and this guy's already won \$36,000 in tournament money for playing the previous Super Smash Brothers game, so he came in and won it all for the new game, Brawl. It was the first time they were all playing the game too and nobody got to play it beforehand.

Michael: Tell me about the M&M Mars candy account. How did that come about?

Mark: Again, getting involved in a joint venture with an event planner here in Chicago and introducing me to M&M Mars back in the mid-90s and I've been doing parties for them every year since and they do an annual holiday party. Some of the events are for their company employees and some of the events are for the public. So they basically come to me for any of their music and entertainment needs for their events; same with Under Armour.

Michael: You said something real important. You said, "I had a joint venture with an event planner." Tell me, your students who come on and get your package, do you teach them about joint ventures and how to set up a joint venture and explain to them that one good joint venture can provide them all the business they could ever need?

Mark: Yes. What I do is I really teach them how to create these strategic alliances with these folks and I teach them how to use the same methods we use to prospect for direct clients, I show them how to use those same techniques to prospect for these strategic alliances and get meetings with those folks so they can benefit from things. Not everybody wants to get into corporate; some guys are actually

kind of scared of it, but the opportunity is definitely there for a DJ [inaudible] member.

Michael: Your joint venture with this event planning company, do they get compensated in any way financially, other than them having a great DJ for their clients?

Mark: A lot of times the way that event planners work is whatever they bring in the door as far as other vendors, they tack on a 33% commission for themselves and it doesn't come out of the vendors pocket, it wouldn't come out of my pocket, they would just tack that on top of it.

Michael: I see. So an event planner is going to charge Nintendo an extra 33% to put it all together?

Mark: Yes. And they understand that it's all sort of for the management of it because they're going to actually have some management to do for the vendors that they bring in, so it's fair.

Michael: That's good. It is fair. Under Armour, tell the listeners what that brand is and how you got that account.

Mark: Under Armour is a fantastic sports apparel company based out of Baltimore, Maryland and, again, another event planner was brought in—they were already sort of pitching Under Armour for helping them on their next corporate event, which was going to be just like a sales meeting launch of the next year's catalog line and for that they needed to do essentially a fashion show where they needed musical direction. So I'm the go to guy for that and then they know that "I need to get with Mark Imperial because he's going to do a bang up job getting the right music for this event." They brought me in, set up a meeting, we talked about all the different clothing lines that they were doing and I made my recommendation for musical choices and edits. Basically what I did for them was I put together their musical direction.

Michael: How much music would that have been for that show? An hour, two hours, how much music do you have to put together?

Mark: That particular show was only about thirty or forty minutes total.

Michael: So you put together and string the tracks together and really created and produced the whole thirty minutes of music for the fashion show?

Mark: Yes. That also brings up an interesting point. For that particular project, we brought in a strategic alliance partner that was a choreographer. This person is a choreographer to the stars and worked for Disney, and she was actually the one coordinating how the models were going to come out. So between me and her, she would basically say, "This is the clothing line and I need this many minutes of music and I need it at this sort of energy level. What do you recommend?" So we really sort of worked hand in hand putting that program together.

Michael: Did you get video of that show?

Mark: I did.

Michael: That would be cool to see.

Mark: Let me make a note and I'll send you a DVD copy.

Michael: That would be great; I'd love to see that. You did a fashion show. You and the choreographer had to put on a show to create the mood to sell clothes, right?

Mark: Yes.

Michael: That's big.

Mark: Absolutely.

Michael: National Lampoon, tell me about that.

Mark: That was a pretty quick client. I haven't done a lot of work with them, but they're a little disjointed in their promotions, but the one thing I did do was they hired me out of the New Jersey office, I think it was an event planner who didn't know me, I don't even remember how they discovered me. They were putting an event together which was a national college tour of hot chicken wings eating contest and it was basically co-sponsored by Fred's Red Hot Sauce. So those two came together and they were doing promotions at the colleges and they called me up to handle the Chicago leg, which was done at the College of DuPage out here. Basically, I became the MC and entertainment director for the music for that particular contest and I had to take the whole project and run with that.

Michael: I was reading your bio. Some of that stuff is pretty incredible. Can we talk a little bit about where this all started, where you got into it and just a little bit about the business?

Mark: Absolutely.

Michael: Where are you from? Did you grow up in Chicago?

Mark: Yes. I grew up in the western suburb of Chicago, called Downers Grove.

Michael: And when did you decide to say, “Hey, I’m going to be a DJ.”?

Mark: This is going back and bringing me back to my junior high days and pretty much hanging with friends and our weekly excursions back then were to the roller rink. And I know there was a DJ booth there set up and I just started going weekly to the roller rink with friends and one thing led to another and somebody decided to go to this teen club that was in another town, down the road. That teen club was populated by DJs that were on the radio at the time; it was the Hot Mix Five guys.

Michael: What is Hot Mix Five? Who are they? Explain it to someone who has no clue.

Mark: The Hot Mix Five was really the core group of DJs in Chicago at the time and they were on a radio station, WBMX, which is 102.7 here. They were basically club DJs and they took their art of mixing club music onto the radio. So they used to do things on BMX, like the *Hot Mix Lunch Hour*, in which you would be able to tune in and hear club music at noon. Then they started doing it at the drive time hour.

Michael: So these are guys who created their own music with their equipment?

Mark: They were playing other people’s music, they were just the DJs.

Michael: Oh, okay, they were playing other people’s music.

Mark: Yes. I guess at the time you would call it disco. So these were the disco club DJs that kind of banded together and were promoting their own events and parties that would tour the entire Chicago-land area.

Michael: The Hot Mix Five, were they working as independent DJs?

Mark: Yes. They were all independent DJs that sort of banded under that moniker of Hot Mix Five.

Michael: And there were five of them?

Mark: Yes. You know what they do here in Chicago is when you put together a group of DJs, you kind of call yourself a crew, so they were kind of their own crew.

Michael: Kind of being under the same crew name. Were they tied together in any way other than they were the crew, they were the Hot Mix Five?

Mark: I'm pretty sure that when they banded together their joint venture was probably was limited to any of the parties that co-promoted. They all had their own club residences.

Michael: What's a club residency?

Mark: That's when a DJ gets a contract to perform on a regular night at a club. So they each had their own residencies, they were using the radio station show as the forum to promote their name.

Michael: So you went to this club and that's where this Hot Mix Five, these guys, were hanging out?

Mark: Yes. I was just that bright-eyed kid that would hang out by the DJ booth and was fascinated by it all.

Michael: And when did you decide to give it a try?

Mark: I actually called up the radio station one day and just on a whim, because I was thinking about buying some equipment, and I said, "Where can I find a mixer like those guys use?" And the guy that answered the phone at the radio station said, "Hey, why don't I put you on with Mickey Mix and Oliver?" And I was freaking out because he was one of the principals of the Hot Mix Five. So he put me on the phone with him and he pointed me out to a store downtown where I can get this gear and I just started collecting equipment and I was like your typical bedroom DJ for a while. And then I would go to that club and eventually I had enough cahonies to say, "Here's something I did," give somebody a tape; I don't even know if they listened to it. But eventually, just by being somewhere all the time, I was invited by one of the guys to, "Hey, why don't you come up and play the slow songs." Because at the time, at the

clubs, they would break for a couple of slow songs every few hours; they wanted to take a break and go drink at the bar or something, so I was it.

Michael: So you took over and did all the slow songs?

Mark: Yes. I thought that was a pretty high position at the time, but looking back.

Michael: So you said, "Here's a tape I did." What did you put on the tape? And you gave it to the club, it was kind of like a taped audition that they can listen and see if you were any good and maybe, possibly hire you?

Mark: I didn't even think it that far through. I was sort of like, here's me buying a bunch of records, playing in my bedroom and look what I did.

Michael: Was it a video?

Mark: No. It was just a cassette.

Michael: So when you're auditioning are you talking?

Mark: No talking at all, it was all mixing.

Michael: Explain what that is. What would be on that tape?

Mark: It's a non-stop club mix, like at the nightclubs they would have to keep their dance floor going; you would go from song to song to song, then disco music you would mix it at the breaks where the drums would just break down and your creative DJ would be able to blend songs together where you can't even really tell there's a transition.

Michael: So because it's dancing you don't really want any breaks? You're editing good disco songs together at the right place to make one continuous, long track.

Mark: Yes. You're using your creative programming skills to create that ride.

Michael: Gotcha. Today you can mix all on computers, right?

Mark: Yes, essentially.

Michael: Back then, how did you mix and put those things together? All on tape?

Mark: At the time it was all vinyl.

Michael: Oh, all vinyl.

Mark: Yes. So we were carrying heavy crates and spinning the needle.

Michael: You put together the audition tape and did anything come out of that?

Mark: I struck up a great friendship with the guys of the Hot Mix Five and basically kind of followed them around for a while and eventually they started calling and saying, "Hey, why don't you come and be the warm up DJ for our next event?" So I was at larger parties, warming up for those guys.

Michael: What does it take to be a good DJ? You've got to know your music, right?

Mark: Yes.

Michael: And you've got to have the ability to mix and choose the right music that the crowd's into?

Mark: Yes.

Michael: What's the formula that's going to make you a good DJ? What made you a good DJ?

Mark: The real ability to program a night, or program your set where you have build ups, peaks and valleys. That comes with music knowledge. And nowadays it's a lot different than it was before because the music in the clubs today is kind of monotonous and disposable, when back then they were still actually real songs with vocals. But your ability to really weave, I kind of look at it like you're painting a piece of art. It's really being able to take all the different songs, the ones that go well together and compliment each other, create the right energy level. The biggest mistake a lot of new DJs make is that they literally go to the top ten chart and they'll play non-stop the top ten songs and think that that's all it takes to create a great dance floor, but it's not. You could play those top ten songs verbatim and get no response. It's really in your timing. It takes a little bit of understanding a lot of experience.

Michael: What does it mean for a club to have a real high quality DJ? If a club brings in a DJ that is just terrible, is that lost revenue for the club?

Mark: Absolutely. It means everything to the club. Programming is everything and I'll give you a perfect example. I had a residency for a long time with Walter Payton's Entertainment One. Walter Payton managed five nightclubs in the Chicago-end area.

Michael: So your residency was basically a contract?

Mark: I worked for the club and I was actually assigned to hire and train the DJs for these nightclubs and I had a spot, like one of the clubs was my entire responsibility and I basically had to come up with the format and train everybody to make sure we were on the same page on what style of music we were playing, what wouldn't we tolerate. Basically, the sign of a good DJ is understanding their energy levels and when they need to turn the floor. Turning the floor has to do with creating sales for the club, essentially creating bar sales.

Michael: What's *turn the floor*? Give me an example.

Mark: You've built up a fantastic dance floor, going for about fifteen or twenty minutes; those folks on the dance floor, if you keep going on the same energy level—

Michael: They're going to thin out.

Mark: It will thin out on its own and it's kind of anti-climatic. So what I teach is a method of really doing what we call a *left turn*, and a left turn is perhaps taking a completely different style of music and instead of blending it smoothly, it's a dramatic stop. It's a dramatic slam into something completely different. It's kind of counter-intuitive to what a lot of DJs think they should do, but essentially what we discovered in the clubs was that created an energy surge. If it's a different style of music, the folks that were on the dance floor, they might say, "Wow, that was great, but it's time to go get a drink." But if it was a hit song and you did the left turn correctly, it would create a surge of all new people that were sitting down or at the bar and they would come on the dance floor.

Michael: I see. So let's say you're playing disco, what kind of music would you put in for a left turn to get the existing dancers on the floor over to the bar and to bring in the new ones?

Mark: It could be a multitude of things, but one example could be a modern rock or alternative song that's a monster hit or a monster classic; that would turn the floor great. And just so you know how closely we track these things, we would actually look at the sales. Every so often, the DJ, we would run to the back and the managers were posting the hourly sales on a board in the back.

Michael: So what songs did you see over and over really work for those turns? From what to what? Any examples?

Mark: Sure. If you were doing say, for example, a dance set with just some very familiar dance songs (Black Box, Everybody-Everybody) something real popular but maybe recurrent, meaning an older title that's still hot every time you play it. And if you did that for say twenty minutes and you wanted a left turn, something as dramatic as—at the time one of the biggest left turns we did back in the day was *Enter the Sandman-Metallica*. You'd black out the room and throw on the beginning of that and people would go crazy, and this is going back to the 90s obviously. But that's just one example of doing a completely dramatic left turn that would create a whole different feeling in the room, but not make people look at their watches and say, "Oh, it's time to go." But more like, "Wow, that's a hit. It's something different."

Michael: Right, "It's not my style. I'm going to go sit down and get a drink." And then the people who are into the totally different music will come on. It's like a different market you bring them in.

Mark: Absolutely. And by the way, this is the same sort of formula that you kind of tweak for doing a corporate event or wedding event. But going back to the sales board, we could literally go back into the back room and look at the sales per hour and say, "Okay, we need to do a \$5,000 hour and here's how we're going to do it. We're going to throw in an extra left turn." So a good DJ and good nightclub management would understand that's totally tied into your sales.

Michael: Most DJs out there, they don't have a clue about this, do they?

Mark: No.

Michael: Most DJs, they're just coming in, spinning their records that are their favorites; they're not relating this to business and alcohol sales. What you're talking about is hi-tech selling through music.

Mark: Whole different level, absolutely.

Michael: That's pretty incredible.

Mark: Do you want to hear another cool example?

Michael; Yeah, go for it.

Mark: At this one nightclub we were doing a \$110,000 a week in sales and during our first couple of grand openings weeks, the place was jammed packed and line around the building. Management's smart, they know what's going on and they come to the DJ booth and they say, "Man, this has been great. You've been slamming a lot of left turns and turning the floor as much as possible." But everyone that was in that room weren't leaving and they were drunk; they'd been drinking a lot. "So, quite frankly," he said, "You know what, we've got to dump these people." So literally, we had to change gears and do what most DJs would not want to do and kill the floor and make some people leave because there was still a line out the door of fresh money.

Michael: So how did you do that?

Mark: We had to dig deep and place some real bombs. We might irritate a few people in the short term, but it could take ten or fifteen minutes of hearing something that nobody wants to hear for them to start looking at their watches and say, "Hey, it's getting late."

Michael: And the bouncers controlled who came in, so you're not going to turn off the new people, right?

Mark: Right.

Michael: Because they haven't gotten in yet.

Mark: They haven't gotten in yet, so they really don't know what's going on and we probably had 800 to 1000 folks in there, so there was a party going on regardless. And those people outside, that's all they see is a packed room and they wanted to be part of it.

Michael: You created some of the worlds most famous dance tracks, including J'Dor Dance.

Mark: That was sort of my first foray into dance music and that, in the early 80s, the majority of the clubs and the nightclub DJs were spinning a style of music called *Italo Disco*. So it was all imports.

Michael: So they were importing this disco music created in Italy?

Mark: Yes. In Italy and all over Europe, were creating these dance tracks and that's sort of what was being played in all the clubs at the time.

Michael: You said it came from Italy. Were they ahead of the times compared to the U.S. when it came to this music?

Mark: If you recall, you look back to the 70s, we were in the disco thing and the Europeans were sort of copying the disco thing into their own disco. So it was kind of going on simultaneously.

Michael: But the U.S. was leading?

Mark: Yes. It kind of went in waves because the attention would be here and the attention would be there, and then it would come back; the attention's sort of gone back to Europe now. But we were playing a lot of this Italo Disco. Any nightclub DJ was playing pretty much imported music and our big store in Chicago was owned by a friend of mine, Paul Weisberg, and it was called *Imports, Etc.*, so that's where we would go; that was like our secret weapon to go buy the latest import records; this was around 1980-81. And basically, as a DJ, the house music scene sort of started by a couple of DJs tooling around with drum machines and keyboards.

Michael: Which house music scene? What does that mean?

Mark: House music is just a very raw form of disco I guess you'd want to call it. It's sort of what disco morphed into and Chicago really go on the map and I kind of would equate that to sort of how Seattle came on the scene with the grunge scene, while Chicago was known for house music.

Michael: Did they call it house music for any reason?

Mark: That term started because the music initially that was created in all these DJs' basement, including mine, were being played at a nightclub in Chicago called *The Warehouse*. So then they started just saying, "Hey, it's house music."

Michael: So the DJs were creating it, just like what we're going talk about, some of the tracks you created yourself, right?

Mark: That's right.

Michael: And the DJs created it and then they would bring it into the clubs, like The Warehouse?

Mark: Right. And it just rose in popularity. People started paying a lot of attention. A couple of little burgeoning labels came out of Chicago, like DJ International Records was one label. It was interesting because that was a really great time. At the time, DJ International was a company called *Audio Talent* and they were a record pool that a lot of us Chicago DJs belonged to. And records pools, by the way, are serviced by the major record labels.

Michael: What's a record pool?

Mark: A record pool is sort of a promotional company where the record labels can expose their music through nightclub DJs or subscribers; those are the folks that would be subscribers to the record pool and they would get their music for free, promotional, from all these record labels. So we were all members of this audio talent pool and we were getting advanced copies of all these records from all the record labels and that record pool decided, "You know what, there's some people making some interesting music here in Chicago, let's get that out. Let's create a label." So between DJ International Records, they launched that label. There were a couple other in Chicago, like Tracks Records, Larry Sherman, and those folks were like the first two labels to actually commercialize any of this basement track music.

Michael: [Inaudible]

Mark: That kind of came because, again, I was fooling around with the tracks and came up with a song, wrote a hook and used just a French term for "I love to dance," right.

Michael: Was there singing on it?

Mark: Yes. It was myself and another girl doing the vocals on that song.

Michael: How long of a song was it?

Mark: The track was, I think, about 6 ½ minutes, because it had an extended break for the DJs.

Michael: You're listening to an exclusive interview found in Michael Stenoff's [hardtfindseminars.seminars.com](http://www.hardtfindseminars.seminars.com).

So you wrote and composed all from your imagination? Or did you take any music from anywhere else to create the song? Was that all out of your head?

Mark: Yes. That was completely green. I was just playing. I'd buy a piece of equipment, I'd just play with it and stuff would come out.

Michael: So you produced this entire dance track?

Mark: Yes. At the time I was 14 going on 15 years old, so that was a pretty crazy experience that I just jumped in with complete naivety.

Michael: Did that record label feature that?

Mark: It was probably their fourth release ever.

Michael: Really? So you're 14 years old, how did you get that to them? Well, you knew them all; did you say, "Hey, check this out."?

Mark: Yes. Basically, I was already hanging out with the Hot Mix Five and I was already spinning at their parties and I was part of the record pool, so I was showing my face around. I was like a fixture in that place. Naturally I was like, "Hey, check out what I'm doing," and got some attention. They saw that I put together a quality track. I got Ralphie Resario, who was one of the Hot Mix Five, on the production with me, so that probably helped get more attention and them to take me more seriously than sort of a punk kid. It turned out to be a hit record and they were playing it all over Europe as well.

Michael: So did that hit top ten on the dance floor to worldwide?

Mark: Yes. That hit top ten Record Mirror Chart; that's the dance music chart in the UK, a very respected chart. And this is the irony of the whole thing, a lot of records I was playing from the producers that I used to admire back then, they started sampling my tracks and I was hearing my song in their productions.

Michael: So it would list Mark Imperial as the artist?

Mark: Yes, Mark Imperial as artist.

Michael: Did you earn a royalty on that?

Mark: Yes, royalty on sales and mechanicals. I wasn't as good at publishing at the time, I didn't know what any of that was, so I

probably lost certain publishing royalties by not filing the proper paperwork.

Michael: If you produced this track today, in the music industry, could you earn some big money if it went to the top ten? You understand the whole music/song business?

Mark: Yes, absolutely. And I sort of always put it through my filter of the little niche of dance music because it was different. A main street artist today, they certainly are going to make money through the publishing and when anyone licenses that song for a commercial, those sort of things. In dance music, there wasn't a lot of that going on. At the time we made good money on record sales. Nowadays, for somebody in dance music to make a living they really just need to use those records as sort of like self-liquidating lead generation, and you're using that to promote your DJ career. And these guys today are using their records to get their name out there so that they can get hired for high profile DJ gigs, and that wasn't something that I was interested in continuing to do. So I said this isn't where I want to be anyway because that's still, in my eyes, trading dollars for time.

Michael: *The Love I Lost* was something similar. Were you about fourteen when you did that?

Mark: Yes. *Love I Lost*, that was 1988, I was a little bit older.

Michael: Was that one hit top ten?

Mark: The interesting story about *The Love I Lost*, I think it was my second or third release on my own label because the first release I did was with DJ International Records.

Michael: Why did you now do your own label?

Mark: I wanted more control. I wanted to be able to speedily put out stuff if I wanted to. And you know what, I think I probably did it for more egotistical reasoning because back then, when you're a teenager, I was just looking for girls. And like everything else in my life, I bumped into all of that. I didn't go in with any plan. I just said, "Oh, I'm making some music. Wow, wouldn't it be cool to have my own label to do my own thing?" So that's sort of what I did with my second release and then *The Love I Lost* came along; that was *the* staple find. I'm most known in Chicago for that song, that's the number one song; and *D'Jor* for older folks.

Michael: *The Love I Lost*, did you sing on that one?

Mark: I did back background vocals on that one. I had another vocalist that actually ended up signing with Club Nouveau after that.

Michael: Who's Club Nouveau?

Mark: Club Nouveau is an L.A. R&B act.

Michael: Do they still play *The Love I Lost*? Is that still played around the world?

Mark: Yes. It's funny, I searched for it the other day and there's a lot of You Tube videos and people putting together videos with *The Love I Lost*. I saw one where there was a guy just standing there with a needle on the record and just [inaudible].

Michael: Did you sell some records?

Mark: Back then you did make money on record sales.

Michael: Did you sell it as a 45?

Mark: It was a 12 inch; back then, all the dance music on vinyl were 12 inch.

Michael: So how many minutes of music was that?

Mark: Usually, you don't want to go much longer than 8 minutes a side, otherwise the sound starts to degrade a little bit.

Michael: Oh really. So a 12 inch was only about 8 minutes of music?

Mark: If you want it to be a real high quality volume, because that's why when you play a 12 inch album that might have 30 minutes a side, the volume's much lower, the quality comes down a little bit because they need to conserve that space.

Michael: Were you pressing records and selling them yourself?

Mark: Yes, right out of the trunk of the car.

Michael: That's great. What would you sell a record for?

Mark: Back then, and again this was the 80s, we would sell wholesale for about \$2.30 and we were probably paying about a buck a record to

make them; and the record store was probably retailing them for about \$4 to \$4.99.

Michael: How did you share the stage with the Eagles, tell me about that.

Mark: This is all basically through my DJ business and being hired by different corporations to do corporate events. For example, it was Bell South that brought out the Eagles for a surprise show within their company, so it was a corporate event. Same thing with Amy Scott and I hosted something at the House of Blues where they were doing a sales launch within their company and they had the event, which essentially was a sales conference in their company at the House of Blues there, and Amy Scott and I were the hosts and the master of ceremonies for that meeting. En Vogue was one of the entertainers hired for Dunn & Bradstreet for their holiday party here in Chicago.

Michael: How does a DJ market the DJ crowd? Are they receptive to this stuff or are they a tough nut to crack?

Mark: It's interesting, and just from talking to a lot of different info marketers and different niches, as you probably also know, the people are always the same. At first, I used to think, "Well, my guys, my DJs are so egotistical, they think they know it all, they don't use the internet. Are they going to be receptive to this stuff or are they just so egotistical?" But then you talk to a marketer to the chiropractic niche; they say that they're the cockiest people on the planet. They're the same people and it's just a matter of what they're used to and what they've been exposed to, and in my niche they're used to going to annual trade shows that are thrown by the associations or by the trade magazines.

I attend those things and the majority of those folks that are offering information to that niche, they're copycatting stuff that they see other people doing in other niches only on the surface and this is what I mean by that. I've gone there every year and see the same guys selling the same \$99 DVD. You and I know that that's a front end product and I've bought everything to see what they're going to come at me with afterwards, on the back end, and nothing; the next year they've got part two. So they don't understand that business at all. That's good news and bad news. Good news, "Wow, hey, nobody's doing it." Bad news, "Hey, nobody's doing it." So I'm sort of pioneering and as they say the pioneer's come back full of arrows. So that's sort of what I'm doing.

Michael: So you're DJ niche, tell me about that. What do you sell them? How much is your package and what do you offer them, like a marketing tool kit?

Mark: My front end, the first thing I started with was pretty much an \$897 kit.

Michael: \$897?

Mark: \$897. And admittedly, I gave away everything and the kitchen sink. And I had other coaches say, "Wow man, you really packed this thing full of information." And they're telling me, "You should pull the thing off the market because you get this thing and you don't need anything else." But it was the time of my first info product and I was really concerned with content. So I really did pack it in tight and I really went at this market that's used to the \$99 DVD. So they were looking at me like I'm crazy.

Michael: You packed it in; what did it come with?

Mark: It came with a 6-CD set which basically walked them through a marketing system that I created and tested, and tweaked for over ten years in my own business. And then it came with a manual going over 106 marketing strategies that I've used and compiled and proven, along with some examples and results. And then I included, also, a marketing tool kit which had examples over 85 different marketing pieces and copywriting examples of my own.

Michael: It took you ten years to put together and grown in your own DJ business?

Mark: Yes. Through all that expensive experience and painful trial and error.

Michael: And you packaged all the stuff that really worked best?

Mark: Yes. A monster kit.

Michael: And do you still sell that?

Mark: Yes I do, sort of reluctantly. But now I've really realized in this next inception of my information marketing business that folks might look at like [inaudible]. Like I said, they're used to the \$99 DVDs, so they look at my stuff like, "This is crazy. It's \$1000, or \$900." But the truth is, it's the best value they're ever going to see. At the same time, I'm going back at them with a lower cost of entry with a

continuity on the back end so I can kind of scoop up the non-converting.

Michael: So are you saying that at the \$800-\$900 price point—I mean, obviously there's some resistance. Did you start off at that or did you do a Kennedy-style ABC?

Mark: I did an AB and this was back in 2005 when I started this business. I had the one kit and I basically did a basic and deluxe version. The basic version of it was \$697 and the deluxe was \$897. And ironically, and I talked to Dan about this several times—he's pretty amazed because I've actually gotten probably a 99% who purchased the deluxe.

Michael: 99%?

Mark: Yes. And of the two or three that perhaps bought just the basic, I've been able to convert them because I use a follow up system and an outbound call to sell them into the deluxe.

Michael: With your basic, do you offer a payment plan?

Mark: I just basically said one payment and you get free shipping, otherwise it was a \$35 shipping charge.

Michael: And the deluxe is a one payment too?

Mark: Same thing, yes. They can either pay it all at once or split it; and the most I ever split it was three payments.

Michael: So how do you think you're able to get 99% to do the deluxe? What was in the deluxe that really made it a much better deal than the basic?

Mark: I'm guessing because I never really decided to pull anything out and test, because again if it's not broken, right. My guess is I included an extra disc that had a tremendous amount of value because it was a sales process CD; I called it *The Ultimate Sales Scripting and Booking Formula* CD. It walked the person from cold call to client, through the entire sales process—where the kit was mostly about lead generation. So I think that bonus of that was probably a tipping point.

Michael: Can I ask how many have you sold to DJs over the years?

Mark: Right now I currently have just about a little over 350 members.

Michael: That's great.

Mark: And again, I've only been really doing it part-time and I'm still in the core business of DJ'ing myself.

Michael: So you're still doing DJ gigs?

Mark: Yes.

Michael: So DJs, essentially, are in a way kind of like the alcohol marketing business.

Mark: What we always said is if we ever owned a nightclub or managed a nightclub ourselves, the number one happiest person in that room is going to be our DJ.

Michael: That's pretty interesting because I never looked at a DJ in that way. That's the bottom line, people are coming out to have fun but that bar is in business to sell drinks and that's still how it is, right?

Mark: Yes and it's so overlooked because most DJs don't think on this level.

Michael: So what are some other things that you're teaching DJs how to think on a different level?

Mark: The biggest thing with my guys is they're coming from the mentality of doing zero marketing, so I'm trying to really get them from doing nothing to doing something and that's pretty rough, but just getting them into a systematic form of marketing. They're biggest problem also is self image related, which is not being able to ask for premium fees. So most guys are stuck on low price, really just looking at what everybody else is doing and trying to undercut them; they're still in that mode.

Michael: Traditionally, how does a DJ usually charge? One with a low self concept and whose copying everyone else?

Mark: He's looking at the lowest priced competitor in the market, which is usually sort of like a bottom feeder company that has the most marketing, that just sells really cheap and taking that price and just cutting a hundred bucks off of it and then that's their price.

Michael: How do they figure their prices? By the hour or by the job? Give me an example of a gig and in experience, someone who is not trained by you, would price it and give me a real dollar amount.

Mark: What's very common is if somebody was to call a DJ and say, "I'm looking to hire a DJ for my wedding. How much do you charge?" It's a very common question that, as DJs, we've learned to overcome, but for most this questions is going to go on forever, this problem. And what they're doing is they're saying, "How much do you charge?" because they don't have any other value with which to compare, so that's what the customer does, right? They say, "How much do you charge?" And the majority of DJs out there, they're quick to either quote a price by the hour or they'll ask a few questions and they might sell by the package.

For one example, you'll hear a guy say, "We're \$595 for a wedding and that's a flat fee for however long you have us, up to six hours," or what's worse is the guy that says, "We charge \$125 an hour, so how many hours do you have?"

Michael: How do you teach your higher level trained DJs to respond to a question like that, what do you charge?

Mark: My first lesson for my guys is, the first thing you have to do is sort of change that buying criteria or determine the buying criteria. So I'm teaching my guys to present packages. So, essentially the first thing my guys will say is, "Well, we have a range of packages and it depends on the type of entertainment we create for you. Can I ask you a few questions so that I can recommend the right program?" And then that's like the icebreaker that sort of allows a conversation where my DJ that I'm training can deliver value.

Michael: And you have this all scripted out for your DJs?

Mark: Yes, it's in the tool kit.

Michael: And then what happens?

Mark: And then basically it allows them to get into a much more bonding situation than a conversation with that prospect. And I recommend to my guys to get them into a face to face meeting because these might be cold calls; so getting them into a face to face meeting is probably the next step at getting premium fees. I still do have guys that close most of their deals over the phone and they just have to sort of tweak the message and I show them how to do that by walking them through presentations on the internet, for example.

But it really is about changing that buying criteria and finding out what that prospect is really comparing and where do they come up with that question, how much do you charge. So really, it's all about packaging and I show people how to package their services and really take the focus away from the hourly so they're not really trading hours for dollars.

Michael: So lets say an inexperienced DJ, not trained by you, will charge by the hour. So lets say the wedding's going to be five hours, he charges \$125 an hour, so we're looking at \$625 flat fee, that's all he's going to make. So lets say your trained DJs, asking questions, setting an appointment, meeting face to face and offering packages to the couple who is getting married; give me the difference. How much more can you charge when done right, offering packages compared to his \$625?

Mark: When done properly, the majority of my highest level members are selling packages for about an average of \$3,000.

Michael: For a wedding?

Mark: Absolutely.

Michael: So tell me, how does one of your trained DJs present that kind of value to the client when maybe he's been shopping around and looking at \$625 DJs?

Mark: In a nutshell, they first get into consultative selling. So when they get together they are able to ask the right questions to find out what their prospect is really looking for.

Michael: Do you give these questions to your DJs?

Mark: Yes.

Michael: So your DJ doesn't have to dream up or think this up, it's all right there in front of him?

Mark: Right. And it really opens up and allows the prospect—so you essentially get to read their mind to see what solutions you have that will meet what their criteria is, their buying criteria. And it's also designed to demonstrate a much higher level of what you can do and your talents without just sitting there and rattling your own horn so to speak. You get to ask the questions, you get to give examples and to get the focus away from the hourly in our scripts we sort of turned the package more into experiences so they're

able to see different types of experiences that they're going to have at their wedding. And at the end of our conversation they understand that they're dealing with a much higher level entertainer than we just come in and set up some equipment and push play.

Michael: Plus, this is their wedding. This is almost like when you're having surgery you're not going to question price, this is their one day and they don't want a bad wedding.

Mark: That brings up an interesting topic because I've tested things like fear selling versus the positive, happy selling. And actually, I've gotten a poorer response with fear selling. That was kind of surprising, but we got a better response really focusing on the positive parts rather than saying, "Hey, don't sabotage your wedding by hiring the wrong person." That didn't get as good a response as something that says, "How to make your wedding unforgettable, successful and fun."

Michael: That's true. Well, think of all the commercials. When they're selling toothpaste and they're not showing people with rotted out teeth, but they're showing beautiful people with beautiful smiles; that would make sense.

Mark: We tested every which way and we've really got it down to a science. But really being able to demonstrate that higher value and it really turns into educational-based selling.

Michael: So you're doing consultative selling, you're asking the clients questions. So as an example, from your experience, a couple getting married, throwing a big wedding—what's keeping them up at night? What are the hot buttons that they're concerned about for their wedding reception and a DJ?

Mark: That's a great question because that's the one we've always been focusing on and what we've determined has been—they're not really sure what they're worried about. To be honest with you, the bride prospect—just like you said, that you didn't really pay that much attention to the DJ, they're not really paying that much attention to the DJ as well, unless they've already had a bad experience at someone else's wedding that they've attended. So it depends on the particular bride, because really, if they're not focusing on the importance of the DJ then there's nothing on their mind, they're really looking at how much do you charge.

Really, our job is to position ourselves in a way and we do that through not just a consultative selling, but even beforehand, we do that shock and awe packages and pre-emptive mailings and things of that nature and interviews. But what's really on their mind is they want to have a great time at their wedding, that's the number one thing. They're not thinking about what if the guy doesn't show up, but that's another huge thing. We sort of set the buying criteria by bringing all these elements up.

Michael: When do you do that, at what point of the sales process?

Mark: It's peppered throughout.

Michael: So a telephone call comes in, you set the appointment, you meet with the couple, you ask questions. Can you sometimes close after that first meeting or does it sometimes require a second, third?

Mark: In my system we get the booking on the spot.

Michael: Right there?

Mark: Yes.

Michael: So how are you able to pre-empt and education them about all the potential things that could go wrong? At what part of the presentation do you do that? You've asked questions, how do you bring up the things they've never thought of that separate you from the other guy charging \$625?

Mark: A lot of times they bring up issues on their own. The prospect will start telling about horror stories and if they start talking about things they've seen at their friend's weddings that they don't want, you can resonate with those and you see what's on their mind and you could demonstrate examples of how you've helped other clients not run into those problems. If they talk about an equipment breakdown, for example, that they went to a wedding and somebody's equipment broke, well there's a perfect opportunity not for you to say, "Well, that's not going to happen with me" but to say, "Well, you know what, I had a client that had that similar concern and that hasn't happened to us and here's why." And then go on to demonstrate your backup equipment, how it's on the spot, onsite and not have to be delivered offsite; all those little nuances. It really does bring up a bunch of things that they never thought about and by the end of that sales presentation it naturally lends themselves to say, "Man, this is the only guy in the world that I want to hire."

Michael: Do you offer a sales letter that really breaks down all the details of what separates you as a DJ compared to everyone else, where you bring up all those things, like the ten critical mistakes consumers report, things you should—like the Dan Kennedy style—things you need to keep in mind before you ever hire a DJ. Does your DJ have backup equipment, all the concerns that you know as a DJ that a couple getting married have no clue about?

Mark: I'm glad you asked because that's exactly the essential part of the DJ marketing system is we do a lot of pre-emptive positioning. So before they meet with this prospect, I have a package designed that they mail out to the prospect, which includes an interview audio CD.

Michael: There we go. See, that's what I'm asking. So for your DJs who buy your package, you've got a system that's already pre-selling the prospect before they ever meet with them?

Mark: That's right. It's a consumer awareness report.

Michael: I know you've got a lot of steps in your system. Lets start from the beginning. You've got a trained DJ, he's trained by you, he's studied the system, he has all of the system in place, lets say he's generated a lead somewhere—whether it's in advertisement or a card or referral—and a call comes in, walk me through the system of one of your star DJs. What's going to happen? A call comes in from the prospect, do you use 24 hour voice recorded messages?

Mark: Yes.

Michael: So take me through the system, step by step.

Mark: The first time they actually have a contact over the phone, the DJ's already positioned.

Michael: Show me how. Is he positioned before the person calls?

Mark: Yes, because what we'll do is we'll take a list of brides or lets say they do one of my new generation ads in a trade magazine—

Michael: I'm a DJ here in San Diego. I'm trained by you. How am I going to get a list of brides that I can market to?

Mark: You can simply take out one of the least expensive ads in your local magazine, like a bridal magazine. In most cities, those bridal magazines, what they offer as one of their bonuses is the monthly

list of new brides that either subscribed to the magazine or joined one of their bridal shows.

Michael: Really? So if I advertise the cheapest ad in a bridal magazine in San Diego, they have a list of brides. They'll offer me those names?

Mark: Yes and you'll have to find out what level ad that they want you to buy in order to be privy to that list.

Michael: Do you get it just one time or ongoing?

Mark: Every month.

Michael: Every month. And you have name, address and everything?

Mark: Yes.

Michael: That's a gold mine right there.

Mark: That's pretty darn good. What teach my guys is it's much better than the actual ad itself.

Michael: That is a great piece of information. Other than that technique, how else can I get a list of brides? Have you ever been able to find a mailing list on the open market through any of the mailing list brokers or any other way that you can get a list of brides other than that technique?

Mark: I haven't personally tried it, but I've seen for example an Arch Diocese list and they're getting all the folks that are getting married and applying for marriage licenses and that sort of thing and booking their church.

Michael: How about rent names from bridal magazines geographically?

Mark: I haven't tried that one because essentially, if you place that ad, they're giving you that list.

Michael: That's true.

Mark: You're basically getting the list of everybody that's signing on to them.

Michael: So you and your business, do you mail out currently to brides or do your students do that?

- Mark: My students do it. In my niche I cherry pick my gigs now; I'm corporate.
- Michael: So one of your students, he gets the list of brides and then he does what?
- Mark: He'll take the list, he'll send out a lead generation postcard, which I'll start with a 6x11.
- Michael: And you give me the whole artwork and the design in your kit?
- Mark: Yes. You basically send that out and it has a call to action for a free report.
- Michael: What's the headline on it, do you remember?
- Mark: How to make your wedding unforgettable, successful and fun. Guaranteed.
- Michael: And you're doing some selling on the postcard?
- Mark: No, not direct sell.
- Michael: Just a lead generation postcard and call to action is to call 24 hour free recorded message?
- Mark: Yes or a web page to request a free report, a consumer awareness report on how to make your wedding unforgettable, successful and fun.
- Michael: Are you guys using that arts technology? I just interviewed Jeff Troyer from the 24 hour on hold recording service.
- Mark: I know the company you're talking about. My guys are all free to use whichever company they choose and I've recommended freedom voice for voicemail.
- Michael: So there's an 800 number and there's a web page. With the 800 number, do you give your guys the script that they read into the voicemail?
- Mark: Yes, and they have actual examples of my very own messages that they can swipe and deploy.
- Michael: What is the purpose of the 24 hour recording?

Mark: It sets the buying criteria.

Michael: How long of a message is it?

Mark: Mine are on the average of about 10 to 15 minutes.

Michael: Why is it important to have them call a 24 hour recorded message rather than call someone personally, on the postcard?

Mark: I use it for sort of the scaredy cat person or the person that's not that far along in their buying process that they're ready to talk to somebody. I've heard so many marketing arguments both ways about giving them one thing to do or a choice of two things to do. I know Gary Halbert talked about having the phone number and that's it because if you put anything else it starts to diminish response.

Michael: I never agreed with that.

Mark: But I always looked at it like if somebody gets my thing and they're in the car, there's the phone number.

Michael: That's pre-internet days.

Mark: Yes. He actually was talking about that in '05. I saw at his fusion seminar he was still saying it.

Michael: I know. He swore by it, but you know what, I just know from my experience—look, we're in the internet age, people are going to hit the internet before they call a live person.

Mark: And again, it probably depends on the age of the person as well. I do understand his point saying if somebody's going to say, "I'll wait until I get home to look at that site," and then they never get around to it; I sort of get that too.

Michael: I agree. He was referencing Claude Hopkins' test, that was a long time ago. But maybe he's right, maybe he's wrong; who knows. So a 24 hour recorded message is the way to go. Outgoing message starts pre-selling them and then what's the call to action? What's the purpose, besides pre-selling them on that 24 hour recorded message, what's the call to action after that pre-sell?

Mark: After the pre-sell they request a report so we've captured the name and address because we're going to send it physically to them and we send a shock and awe box, essentially.

Michael: What is a shock and awe box?

Mark: It's going to be a lot of pieces; it's what they want initially, just a report on different, unique ideas and ways to make their weddings unforgettable and fun. In there we've also positioned the DJ who's going to be the author of this piece as the expert giving the information. Then the audio CD interview is positioning them even further as the go-to expert which will lead them to call and say, "I want to set up a meeting."

Michael: The interview in the shock and awe box, is that interview the same with all your students or is it a specific interview with that DJ? What's on the CD that comes with it?

Mark: Well, the audio recording is sort of a backend service that I help them with. I try to personalize it as much as possible. They have my example to go by, but I really wanted to use that audio interview to position that person with their particular expertise and their knowledge. For example, I have a DJ, his little unique twist is he plays live saxophone during his performances, so we talk about that. So the interview is really designed to put them in their best possible light.

Michael: I see. So if I buy into your marketing package, part of that is you're going to interview me to position me as an expert that I can use in my marketing?

Mark: Yes, an optional module, absolutely.

Michael: That's great. And that's in your deluxe package?

Mark: Yes.

Michael: That's nice.

Mark: We really help these folks from A to Z; lead generating, getting them the proper shock and awe package to get out to the prospect. That is the most direct way of positioning them as the expert.

Michael: You know I'm into audio and I'm all for sending out an audio CD. Tell me, how does that work for your students?

Mark: It works fantastic, like gangbusters. And at one point or another we've seduced by let's go video, but the truth is the audio is still number one and here's why; that audio CD is more likely to be played and listened to in the car, passed along to friends. Whose really going to sit down and pop a DVD on the tube? It doesn't happen as often.

Michael: Do you offer that audio on your students' websites to get downloaded? Does it get played that way?

Mark: We recommend it. That's certainly up to them. It's another really good point about why folks need to be in coaching because literally I can lay this blueprint out from A to Z. But like you know, in factorial math there's four things to do; there's a gazillion combinations of ways you can do it and screw it up. To be able to actually show them how they can use all these things, I think it's vitally important that folks have the follow up to make sure that they're implementing properly.

Michael: So, shock and awe package is sent. Audio CD is sent. What's the next step? Do you wait to hear from them or will your students follow up automatically after a certain amount of time?

Mark: I've been having them wait and then basically sending them a sequence of mailings. And we want to keep our positioning as not chasing the prospect, so we do everything in our power to get the prospect to come to us. We're going to be testing outbound calls made on their behalf because I know that that's another huge hinge, no matter how anybody looks at it, telemarketing is still a very strong form of sales. All of our mailings and the shock and awe packages, and all these things are great, they're going to get a bunch of sales up front, but they're meant to soften the beach head for the phone call as well.

Michael: Tell me about your sequential mailing. How far off are they spaced? How many of them are there? I'm sure you've done some stats on where the sales are coming from at what point in the series.

Mark: Essentially, in my system, to get people started, we have a series of ten sequential e-mails for their auto responder, which drip on them simultaneously. Then we have a weekly mailing that goes out. Each mailing has a deadline on it for response and their bonuses for responding by the deadline could be customized the actual DJ, whether they want to do an upgrade and some bonus items for the wedding, or lighting upgrades or things like that they could put in. But having a deadline, as you know, is crucial. So

we're spacing the mailings. I start them off with a three letter sequence and that's, again, taking a guy from zero to something. You don't want to show them the 86 step thing, that's just mind boggling to them. So we start them out really with just a three letter sequence and then in the coaching I explain, "Hey, by the way, there's no rule for this thing. You go with as many touches as economically makes sense."

Michael: And what do you see happening with that sequence? Has that sequence worked?

Mark: Absolutely, because what happens is we get the majority of the response within the first two mailings and the rest of the folks that may come in after receiving the sixth to tenth e-mail for example, those folks really were ready to book already—they knew they were going to book but perhaps weren't ready to get in touch with their vendors yet. I teach that you really have to just stay on their mind so that when they are ready to get in contact with all their vendors, because they usually do it all in one [inaudible], you just have to be that person that's there on top of consciousness so that they call you first.

Michael: Now I want you to give me a comparison for the listeners. Someone untrained, a DJ who is mobile, does weddings and who is untrained and has no idea about these types of follow up systems, tell me what he's going to do compared to what you're explaining to me now.

Mark: The typical mobile DJ that gets in the business, they start usually as a hobby as I did, and they're focusing on their equipment and really going to buy more and more equipment, and they're focusing on their mixing ability and their music libraries, and they're paying very little attention to the sales process. So when you call those folks you're going to find a very unsophisticated technician trying to do sales.

Michael: He may have an ad in the yellow pages and call will come in and he'll try and sell them right over the phone and never follow up?

Mark: Oh yeah.

Michael: Outline how he would handle a lead generation call. Someone who's not trained.

Mark: Let's say that a prospect called in and said, "I'm having a wedding. I need a DJ. How much do you charge?" Then that inexperienced

person will focus on, “Where’s it going to be? How long is it?” or, “This is what I charge per hour.” And I find a lot of sort of newbies, they really are very just defensive in their posture. They’re not really astute on sales, so they’re really kind of defending themselves about price most of the time. Again, it’s linked to self image and if they want to charge a little bit more money they’re really tacky about why they get that much money. And that’s what they’re focusing on, it’s mostly price.

Michael: If they just had a new strategy and a system put in place instead of that prospect hanging up and never calling back, they just lost out on a potential \$3,000 gig. How much profit is there doing this?

Mark: Well, you can make a really great living as a single operator. You can make a high six figure income. In my prime, for example, I never wanted to be what’s called a “multi op,” which means you have multiple DJs working for you. I kind of have an enackma for staff, so I never wanted to do that. So as a single operator, if you’re in the right market and you have premium fees, you could easily make a \$140-150,000 a year just by yourself, and that’s if you’re doing sort of higher end events charging \$2,500 to \$4,000 an event and doing high-end corporate stuff. And then, obviously, there’s some good income there but where the majority of folks are they’re charging the low fees, which I think that goes nowhere because they dump it all back into equipment and the next thing you know they wonder why they’re broke all the time. At low fees you cannot multiply yourself because what could you possibly pay your other DJs?

Michael: So the sequential letters go out, the call comes in, you teach your students to set an appointment; you do consultative selling, you’re asking questions, identifying needs. And then how do you close the deal? How do you teach your students to close the deal and get the gig?

Mark: If I was Bruce Lee, I would say it’s the art of selling without selling. What I mean by that is throughout this whole process, it naturally lends to the sale and it naturally lends to the booking. So we don’t really do a close, it’s an assumptive close and the entire presentation, by the way, is framed in the assumption that this person you’re meeting with is already a client. So all the language is, “As my client, you get this.” As a matter of fact, one of the pieces we send in that shock and awe box is actually a client welcome kit; it’s framed like that. So it’s like saying you are a client and this is how we really get the folks to book on the spot.

We really focus on the importance of locking in their date, because one thing that I think people just don't think about, and it sounds like common sense but as you know common sense isn't very common, but common sense says if I know who's going to be my photographer or who I want I better book that guy so that nobody else can get him, right? But believe it or not, brides don't think about that so much. So we really need to bring that up front and say, "Hey, listen, —and by the way, this is all in one of the interviews that we send out in the initial package that gets their focus on, "You better take care of this now, not later." It basically says, "Hey, the most important thing is lock in your date." If you offer them different packages to choose from, what we do is we really focus on showing them the one package that really will work for them and trying to get them not to focus on making a lot of complicated choices. We really make it simple and say, "Just authorize this, we'll take care of the rest."

Michael: What do they need to do to lock in their date? What does a DJ need to get from them?

Mark: I teach a form of just getting a retainer agreement that basically locks in their date for a sizable deposit or retainer, which they're not used to seeing thousand dollar retainers, but that's what I'll teach to use because then you can use that thousand dollars for more marketing.

Michael: How do you come up with the amount for the retainer? A percentage of the total price of the package?

Mark: Sure. In this industry they're accustomed to maybe 50%.

Michael: So 50% down to lock in the date. When they ask, "Is that refundable?" What's the criteria once they put that money down? Are they committed?

Mark: In our industry we sort of position it that our dates are inventory and when you take one of our dates it's like we take it off the market and it's unavailable for anyone else to take it. So we build in certain criteria where it's refundable up to a certain amount at a time. This is the sort of principle that I teach, but they're all kind of left to their own devices of what works for them. But essentially, in fairness is sort of the way I look at. You are locking the date and preventing me from selling it to someone else. So we have to agree that there's a certain commitment on both parties.

Michael: Do you sign a service contract?

Mark: Yes. It's all set up with professional agreements.

Michael: And you provide all of the agreements and everything?

Mark: They have samples of mine, but again I don't position myself as offering legal advice or anything so they just can see what I'm doing and I recommend whatever they choose to do they have to run it by their own attorney.

Michael: So tell me, a lot of your students, are they all across the board? Are they younger teenagers? Who is this business really good for? I guess, tell me what type of people do you have out there DJ'ing? Is it part-time, full-time, all across the board?

Mark: Yes. Believe it or not, it's all across the board. I have guys that have been running multi-op DJ businesses with multiple DJs that have been in the business for 24 years and they come in, get my system, and say, "I've never seen anything like this." Because there isn't anything like this in the DJ industry. A lot of the breakthroughs that I've brought into the business and, as you know as a marketing consultant, we get from outside of our industry.

Michael: You've seen some huge jump in gross sales once they get their system, like these multi-op guys?

Mark: I've got a multi-op that was really struggling, in debt, couldn't pay his bills; really only bringing in less than \$50,000 per year—jumped to half a million dollar business in the first year and a half implementing modules in my system. He told me a story about when he first got started and how he jumped in and he made all the same mistakes we talked about where he was copycatting sort of the cheapest DJ around that was selling \$500 parties at every bridal show and he came in at \$395 bridal show special. Basically, he got real busy but he worked himself broke. It's like the woman that gets the muffins for \$12 a dozen and sells them for \$1 a piece; [inaudible] not the solution. So this guy was having similar issues and he really was booking himself solid at such a low fee he couldn't pay his guys, so he had issues keeping staff happy. Whenever a piece of equipment broke, my goodness, he was forced to work with shoddy equipment. Nothing opened up that would give his client better service. So when he learned my system and he said, "You know, this all makes sense. I've got to get better fees; I can pay my guys better." He's got an incredibly loyal staff. He's got clients that just rave because he shows up with top notch

equipment, the best stuff in the industry. It's just exponentially exploded his business.

I've got a single operator out in Alaska that reported that before he was using my system, he pretty much was used to making about \$30-35,000 a year. In the first year alone, implementing my system, he reported a \$130, 000.

Michael: What are some niches that your different DJs focus on? You're doing corporate, I'm sure there's some people who prefer weddings. What are some of the different niches out there, if I was to get into the DJ business, that I could niche?

Mark: Well, there's the wedding market, which is probably what most people focus on. Then there's what I call the "institutional businesses," which would be school parties, park district parties, things of that nature. There's residencies you can set up in nightclubs, bowling alleys and places like that. You could be creative and do things for amusement parks and festivals. The corporate market are probably the biggest. There's things you can do—I started really twisting and tweaking my business to focus more on experiential marketing and the marketing end of what we do in entertainment and that's how I got companies like Nintendo and the State of Illinois, really seeing that they're using my service for consumer marketing.

Michael: Do you have any students who are females? Are women getting into this or is this primarily a male kind of profession?

Mark: It is a predominantly male profession, but we do have a few female members.

Michael: How much money would it cost me if I was to get into it generally, to get the equipment and get set up equipment-wise; can I operate this out of my car or do I need a truck?

Mark: Definitely it would be helpful to have a vehicle like a minivan for the equipment. That sort of has been the challenge and one of the biggest problem is there is a low cost of entry to become a DJ and that's led to there being a lot of DJs, but the majority of them are just like the part-time. Having that kind of influx of DJs, they're sort of ruining the market for the professional, full-time guy because they're ruining the buying criteria; coming in part-time just kind of as a hack so to speak and not really demonstrating a lot of values; so it's brought the industry reputation down as a whole. But it is relatively inexpensive to get into the business and people don't put any money into marketing unfortunately either.

Michael: So could I get into the business for \$5,000 with equipment?

Mark: Certainly.

Michael: Less than that?

Mark: I think \$5 to \$10,000 is probably a good number to set up a decent set up and a music library, because that is vitally important is your music library.

Michael: I don't know if you've heard, there's a DJ out here who's—I don't want to say famous and I forgot the guy's name—he's in San Diego. Do you know any pretty well known DJs here in San Diego?

Mark: Mobile DJ?

Michael: Yes, he's a mobile DJ. Anyway, I remember my nephew, for his bah mitzvah, had him. He does all these skateboarding tricks. He brings his skateboard and he does all these incredible skateboarding tricks. This guy was really good. I remember his station with the digital technology and MP3s, his whole set up was all digital. So he had is whole library of music digital. How is the DJ business different now with the digital world compared to the old vinyl? I mean, are there DJs still spinning vinyl?

Mark: Yes, there are, but I think that's more of the nostalgia thing.

Michael: But it's easier now, right?

Mark: It absolutely is and that's also led to some of the problems with the huge influx of everybody's a DJ sort of. I'm glad you brought that up because that brings up a real interesting fact that one of the challenges that DJs are facing now are sort of these iPod weddings. We've overcome those in a few different ways that the DJs edged. But the technology and the ease of folks getting music—I was first to jump onto the digital scene. I was one of the first guys that had a completely digital set up in 2000 and we'd show up with the gear and at the time, remember Nabster and all the people that were pirating music? That created an incredible influx of DJs with these hack music collections and people didn't understand recording rates and qualities of MP3 files. So you'd hear these DJs with just horrific sounding songs being played and that just really put a huge black eye on the industry as well. So there were more horror stories from people like that coming into the

business than any other time. We've really come a long way to try to overcome those problems as well.

Michael: Can a DJ buy a collection of music? How does a DJ get his inventory of songs, decent quality songs? Do they have to buy that with their own money or are there companies who sell packages, like DJ packages with all the most popular-type music?

Mark: Yes, certainly. The DJ wants to subscribe to a service, like a music service similar to a music service that services radio stations where they get the advanced music and they will give it to you on CD where you would be responsible for ripping it into a high quality MP3 file to play if you have a digital setup. The problem in the beginning was a lot of these folks were just pirating music and getting them off of Nabster with questionable quality. But yes, there are professional music services for DJs and that's another big issue. There's a huge difference between a professional mobile DJ with a legitimate music library as opposed to just a hack.

Michael: Did you subscribe to a service?

Mark: Yes, I've always had a subscription service to keep up with all the new music.

Michael: So anything new that comes out, they'll provide you CDs of the new music?

Mark: Yes. At the same rate that they provide for the radio stations.

Michael: Do the radio stations subscribe to the same service.

Mark: They pretty much get their advanced copies directly from the record companies, but these record pools or these record subscription services are also getting provided this music for the purpose of promotion directly from the record companies. So going through a subscription service, you're still going to get it in advance.

Michael: I see. So it's in advance. And how much does a service like that cost?

Mark: They break it up usually by different series. If you're looking for mainstream radio hits, that might be \$25 a month and getting one or two CDs, for example. Then they might break it down to urban with just hip-hop and that's another \$25. It just depends on how many subscriptions you want; all the different types of music.

Michael: [Inaudible]

Mark: Yes, absolutely. They can visit me online at
<http://www.djsedge.com>.

Michael: Is there a best number to call if they want to talk to you directly?

Mark: Yes. They can reach my office at, toll free, at 1-888-523-1987.