# Research Brief for

# Sound Expressions DJ Entertainment

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# Introduction

This white paper will serve as a foundation for our research and Public Relations initiative planning for our client Sound Expressions DJ Entertainment. It will become the research brief component of our Capstone Project. This paper will be comprised of five sections: Company Overview, Competitive Analysis, SWOT Analysis, Research, and Graphic Representation.

**Company Overview**

**Company Background**

In 2005, Chris Allison founded Sound Expressions Mobile DJ Service. In 2009, the name was changed to Sound Expressions DJ Entertainment (SEDJ). SEDJ currently serves a large part of Southern California; all of Orange County, as well as a large part of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego Counties. SEDJ currently provides Mobile DJ services which includes lighting, karaoke and a photo booth. SEDJ’s services are used primarily for wedding receptions, followed by birthday parties, corporate parties, and school dances. SEDJ was created out of Chris’ passion for music since he was a young boy, but it took the right timing and resources to make it a reality. What does he love most about his job?  Getting to use his voice, personality and passion for music, and to create an atmosphere for people to have a great time.

**Current Situation**

Clients utilize SEDJ services for the following events approximately as shown: wedding receptions (85%), followed by birthday parties (10%), corporate parties (3%), and school dances (2%). SEDJ averages 1-3 events per month, but there are times where they have no clients for several months. This is due to several factors: most of SEDJ’s business is not repeat business, therefore they have to constantly look for new leads. SEDJ currently receives leads via word of mouth and from other DJ’s/ entertainers.

SEDJ has only a fractional relationship to the target audience (TA), and that’s via word of mouth. SEDJ does receive some business from the target market by virtue of the fact that DJ's are known for hosting wedding receptions.

SEDJ’s goals for the capstone are as follows: 1) developing a strong website that will generate steady leads from the service area, 2) providing a consistent social media presence, 3) finding strategic ways to draw people to their pages, and 4) building relationships others in the industry such as event planners, so SEDJ has a steady flow of leads to provide more business.

For our campaign, we will be reaching out to a specific target audience, both locally and also on the internet via social media. SEDJ should see an increase in brand awareness as a result of an increase in local outreach and social media activity.

**Current Communications**

At this point, it is difficult to determine what SEDJ’s image and reputation is. When asked about this, Chris replied, “I believe I provide a quality service, although it's not possible to always please everyone.  I'm honestly not sure what my reputation is.  I go by what clients will tell me after an event has ended.” They currently have no reviews on Yelp, which is something we are currently researching.

Current/recent PR efforts are as follows. SEDJ has built relationships with other DJ’s who periodically need SEDJ’s help sub contracting an event for them.  Recently, SEDJ reached out to an event planner that is new to the business, and is on their preferred vendor list. SEDJ promotes themselves at their events in a few ways: they utilize a vertical banner (except weddings) that includes QR code.  SEDJ also provides business cards at every event. When people come up to ask for a song request, Chris is able to better interact with them and build a quick relationship.

 SEDJ tried utilizing LivingSocial.com because they know when the slow times of year are, and by filling up my calendar with events, they could at the very least, get more exposure. After all was said and done, even after offering steep discounts, this avenue yielded no responses.

SEDJ recently added a photo booth to their services, which according to Chris is a great way to promote his DJ business as well. There are a few programs that allow guests to instantly upload their pictures to a desired social media profile, but it's not something that SEDJ is currently offering.  We’re waiting on more product information about the booth to see if adding this software may benefit SEDJ.

**Current Channels**

We discussed current offline channels earlier, which consisted of SEDJ’s network of subcontracting with other DJ’s, as well as an event planner. Online channels are follows:

Company website

Company Facebook page- 71 likes. All Likes were gained by sending out invites to friends
Personal Facebook page- 275 friends
Twitter- 13 tweets, following 13, followers 17  I actually don't use Twitter and have never figured it out for promoting my business.
YT- 5 videos from 1-5 yrs ago
Yelp- no reviews

**Current Messaging**

SEDJ’s message is personified from their slogan that uses the first two words of their name, Sound Expressions: "We Bring The Sound, You Bring The Expression.” This slogan appears on SEDJ’s banner and business card. However, it isn’t on any of SEDJ’s online sites. We believe the slogan is catchy and appeals to the audience emotionally regarding their ability to express themselves. We believe the message can be effective if promoted more.

**Communication Breakdown**

According to Chris “my social media presence and website have done nothing to garner me any business.” It is clear that SEDJ suffers from lackluster business, and one of the reasons why is due to inconsistent and almost non-existent communications with the public. Simply having a website and posting once a month to a social media page or two doesn’t create business or brand awareness. And SEDJ is not alone. Many small businesses just like SEDJ expect business to pour in once these digital elements are created.

SEDJ realizes that the implications of the current state of affairs will not help Chris to realize his dream and be able to become a full-time DJ. That’s why he reached out to us when we posted on Facebook the fact that we were looking for companies to help with a PR campaign. No research is being performed to determine SEDJ’s communication effectiveness due to our inability to know where to gain such information.

**PR Campaign Direction**

Our campaign will continue in the same direction and take SEDJ in a new direction. Since the majority of SEDJ’s business comes from weddings, and since the target audience fits nicely into this area, we will continue down this path. But we are also considering a whole new direction in reaching the target audience for dance parties. Research will be conducted, and discussions are underway with Chris regarding him hosting a dance marathon tentatively called #DanceToDawn. In order to motivate the target audience to attend, and to bolster SEDJ’s reputation, all monies received from the dance will support NAMIOC, a favorite non-profit that SEDJ believes in.

We will focus on reaching the target audience via Social Media as well as by providing a local campaign to get the word out about SEDJ. The campaign’s effectiveness will be determined by the gauging the change in social media engagement such as Facebook Likes, shares and possibly other social platform followers such as Twitter and Pinterest.

**Competitive Analysis**

When asked about their main competitor, or a DJ company in which SEDJ could aspire to, SEDJ’s reply was that there too many DJ’s in Southern California. By doing a Google search on “DJ” and other variations, we discovered ActiveSoundsInc.com kept popping up as the first result in the ad section of Google.

ActiveSoundsInc.com offers services that are the same as SEJD: Mobile DJ, karaoke, and photo booth. For the Mobile DJ component, both companies offer the same event services which are weddings, corporate parties, private/ birthday parties and school dances. ActiveSoundsInc.com also offers photography and videography services- SEDJ does not currently offer these services.

SEDJ is unique in a few areas: they only book one event per day, whereas other DJ’s often book several events per day. This is advantageous for the client because they are well taken care of and not rushed. Another benefit of SEDJ is that even though they provide high quality, professional services, their prices are on the low end.

SEDJ will be set apart by their customer care, professionalism, donating time for charity, and price. When asked why should someone select SEDJ over another DJ, Chris replied “I'm very passionate about what I do and I believe my personality, expertise and charm is a winning combination.”

**SWOT Analysis**

**Strengths**

Chris at SEDJ has a real passion for music, entertainment, and to provide his guests with a memorable, enjoyable time. Another strength of SEDJ’s is that they are always prepared for the event, always act in a professional manner, and as was noted earlier, they only book one event per day. SEDJ puts people over profit. To this end, we are considering SEDJ hosting a dance marathon tentatively called #DanceToDawn.

**Weaknesses**

SEDJ does not have a proactive social media content strategy. Nor do they have much if any involvement in the community. They also have not targeted a specific audience for their PR efforts. We will recommend a social media content strategy with the target audience in mind in order for SEDJ to increase brand awareness.

**Opportunities**

SEDJ has so much potential despite being in a very competitive industry. Providing a campaign that appeals to the target market both via social media such as Facebook and locally via the dance marathon, SEDJ should see a real improvement in brand awareness.

**Threats**

One of the largest threats that SEDJ faces is for them to continue to be mostly reactive in nature. Business as usual will not improve their business. Another threat could be that SEDJ doesn’t have the time or resources to make the dance marathon a success. One of the ways they we can help is to assist SEDJ in their dance marathon event.

**Research**

In order to increase SEDJ’s social media presence, we need to find out how to generate a greater number of target audience (TA) followers, what social media platforms they use, what content they share, and why they share it.

**Secondary Research**

1. a. What social media platforms do women use the most? This question is quantitative and helps SEDJ know where to focus their message. According to Clifford, women use Facebook, Tumbler, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter.
2. b. What content do women prefer to share? We do not have any data for this yet.
3. c. What emotions cause people to share? According to Libert, there are three elements that all viral content has in common: positive feelings, emotional complexity, and the element of surprise. “There was a significant correlation between the number of content views and the number of positive feelings (such as joy, interest, anticipation, and trust) reported by study participants. This suggests that [generating positive feelings](http://blog.bufferapp.com/how-to-rewire-your-brains-for-positivity-and-happiness) is a key step in garnering initial views.” (para 10 Libert). Kelsey claims that these finding hold true regardless of age and gender.
4. What’s an effective way to share across social media platforms? This question is being asked because SEDJ has struggled thus far in creating both quality and quantity content. Finding a way to share across platforms may help them. According to Cherenson “For marketers and professional communicators, hashtags are potent tools for boosting a campaign’s online visibility and have the potential to sync multi-platform social media and traditional media programs. It could prove – at least for now – to be the ideal means of bridging all social media platforms.” (para 3 Cherenson). It was this article that spurred our decision to consider using #DanceToDawn as part of the PR campaign.

**Primary Research**

1. What social media platforms do the target audience (TA) use the most? This question is quantitative and helps SEDJ know where to focus their message. This was one of the survey questions. However, there have only been four responses, and it’s doubtful that any people from the target audience will take the survey. Therefore, this question will be further researched.
2. How do new small businesses grow a solid fan base of TA on social media. Depending on the results from question 1, we’ll look specifically at the appropriate platform(s) such as Facebook and/ or Twitter.
3. If you were in need of a DJ, what resource(s) would you use to find one? This question will help SEDJ to know where to focus their resources. This was also a survey question. It will also be asked in a focus group that is comprised of 4-5 TA people.
4. What would influence the target audience in selecting one DJ over another? The answers will help SEDJ with their messaging. This was also a survey question. It will also be asked in a focus group that is comprised of 4-5 TA people.
5. What qualities are important in selecting a DJ? According to McMichael, “finding the right DJ can transform your event into a true experience, a set of memories that your guests and your clients will enjoy forever. Be sure to reflect on the ‘Three Ps’ - preparation, professionalism and presence - when looking for a professional disc jockey.” This is qualitative in nature and helps with messaging to TA.

**Further Research**

More research needs to be conducted to determine the validity and ROI of the #DanceToDawn dance marathon event(s). Also, focus group research will be conducted where TA/ DJ qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered.

**Graphic Representation**

At this time, we do not have enough research data in order to create any original infographics. But stay tuned, I can’t wait to do so!

# **References**

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