

Ask Mike!

Stressed about an upcoming gig? Work got you singing the blues? Columnist Michael Goode can help!



BY MICHAEL I. GOODE,
LOCAL 10-208 MEMBER

In my last column, in October, we talked about something that I touched on in June's column; how to adjust to getting that first great gig or going from a great gig to one at an even higher level of achievement. Today we are going to talk about the Internet, and how you can deal with it both positively and negatively and how to keep your dignity and what to do about malicious gossip. Here's November's Q&A:

Q: I'm kind of old-fashioned and am just getting started on the Internet. How valuable is it to me as a musician?

A: The Internet is a great service to us as musicians, but you have to know how to work with it. I am grateful to my great webmaster for my site and all that it has done to spread the word about what I do. E-mail is a great and fast way to connect and communicate with fellow musicians and contractors for gigs. In fact today, for some contractors, it is the ONLY way that some of them will communicate with you, so having an Internet connection and readily accessible e-mail is a must.

However, with the ready communication of the Internet also comes some warnings. You must remember that whatever you put out on your e-mail or your website can be read by everybody and that it is no longer private. Never write on your e-mail or website ANYTHING that you could not live with coming out in public! This is important; too many of us get on the e-mail or on a website and do not think of what we just said, and then it is too late. E-mail is very inefficient at expressing subtleties and can be easily misinterpreted, so it is also very important to follow up e-mails with telephone or in-person conversations in order to clarify any details.

Too many people on sites such as myspace.com have found out the hard way that revealing unwanted personal information on the Internet can be permanently damaging. Most sites have privacy policies that try to reassure you

that your information will not be used inappropriately. Unfortunately, I can tell you that from my experience working with the person who wrote the original security encryption software for the Internet, a hacker can break into most security systems in one way or another in a very short time. Identity theft is a huge problem and there are criminal hackers seeking on a daily basis to break into your private information on the Internet. So, the rule is, don't put anything on e-mail or on your website or anywhere else on the Internet that you don't want others to see, or put private information on you don't want stolen.

Q: You know, Mike, I've been on various Internet sites for my instrument, and now somebody has blown a situation out of proportion and is saying out-and-out lies about me on this website for my instrument. Should I just blow this off, not worry about it or should I do something about it?

A: If somebody is saying something about you on the Internet or anything that is a lie, you must address it. Now depending on the situation, and whether this involves a contractor or not, you must figure out the most appropriate way to handle it successfully and put out the fire and clarify what the truth really is. Your reputation and dignity in this business is important and

you must take steps to protect it.

First, write an anger letter about the situation about what was said that was untrue. These are the same anger letters that I have talked about in previous columns that you do not send and rip up when done. This will drain the emotion out of the situation in your mind and allow you to think clearly and effectively. Then, look at what was said and compare it with the truth of what actually happened, noting the person who said the lie and who is actually being talked about in the lie that is being spread. Then come up with a response to their untruths about you. DO NOT send out this response for 24 hours at least. It is always better to sit on something like this for a day and sleep on it before you send it out. Also, talk about the situation and your proposed response with someone your trust for their opinion before sending it. Then after talking with your friend and sleeping on it for 24 hours, if you still feel strongly about responding, then send the e-mail, letter, or telephone call.

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Send your questions to: Ask Mike!, Trumpetworks Press, 715 Lake Street #269, Oak Park, IL 60301, or you can check out my website at www.trumpetworkspress.com and see information on my book, "Stage Fright in Music Performance and Its Relationship to the Unconscious." All names are confidential and will not be published.

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