

There's money to be made in the DJ booth

Sleeping Giant Music celebrates its ninth anniversary

By [Peter Holslin](#)



With record sales slumping and many bands struggling, being an indie-rocker isn't exactly the most lucrative career. But being a DJ? Now we're talking! Lately, name-brand DJs and producers have been paid anywhere from \$30,000 to \$100,000 to play at swanky nightclubs and massive festivals, says Freddie Harb, aka DJ Fresh One, president and co-founder of San Diego music agency Sleeping Giant Music.

Even lesser-known DJs can live comfortably, Harb says. Just consider the array of avenues available to an aspiring tune-slinger: "You can be the club DJ. You can be an EDM / producer DJ. You can be a mobile DJ, do a lot of private and corporate events—weddings, per se," he says. "There's so many different ways to do it."

Sleeping Giant has been mighty successful itself. Since launching in 2004, it's expanded from a relatively low-key record label into an agency with a global reach that boasts a roster of 28 acts, including well-known locals like DJ Artistic and Chris Cutz.

Sleeping Giant will celebrate its ninth anniversary this week and next. There'll be a blowout at Hard Rock Hotel's 207 and Float nightclubs (207 Fifth Ave., Downtown) on Saturday, June 1, with DJs Fresh One, Cutz, Artistic and several others. And there'll be an industry party at Barleymash (600 Fifth Ave., Downtown) on Wednesday, June 5

Though many of the DJs at Sleeping Giant started by playing hip-hop and house, they've gotten skilled in EDM and open formats. Harb says the key to a good show is what he calls "crowd control"—you want to hype up the crowd and get the dance floor moving, but you also want to toss in tracks that get people to chill for a minute and buy a drink. Indeed, at a club, he says it's a DJ's job to make the venue money.

For all the moolah that's changing hands, though, it's the magic of controlling the crowd that keeps Harb going.

"I think that's the funnest part, knowing that you basically can change the life of the party any which way," he says. "It's kind of like going fishing. Once you get them hooked, you can pretty much take them anywhere you want."

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