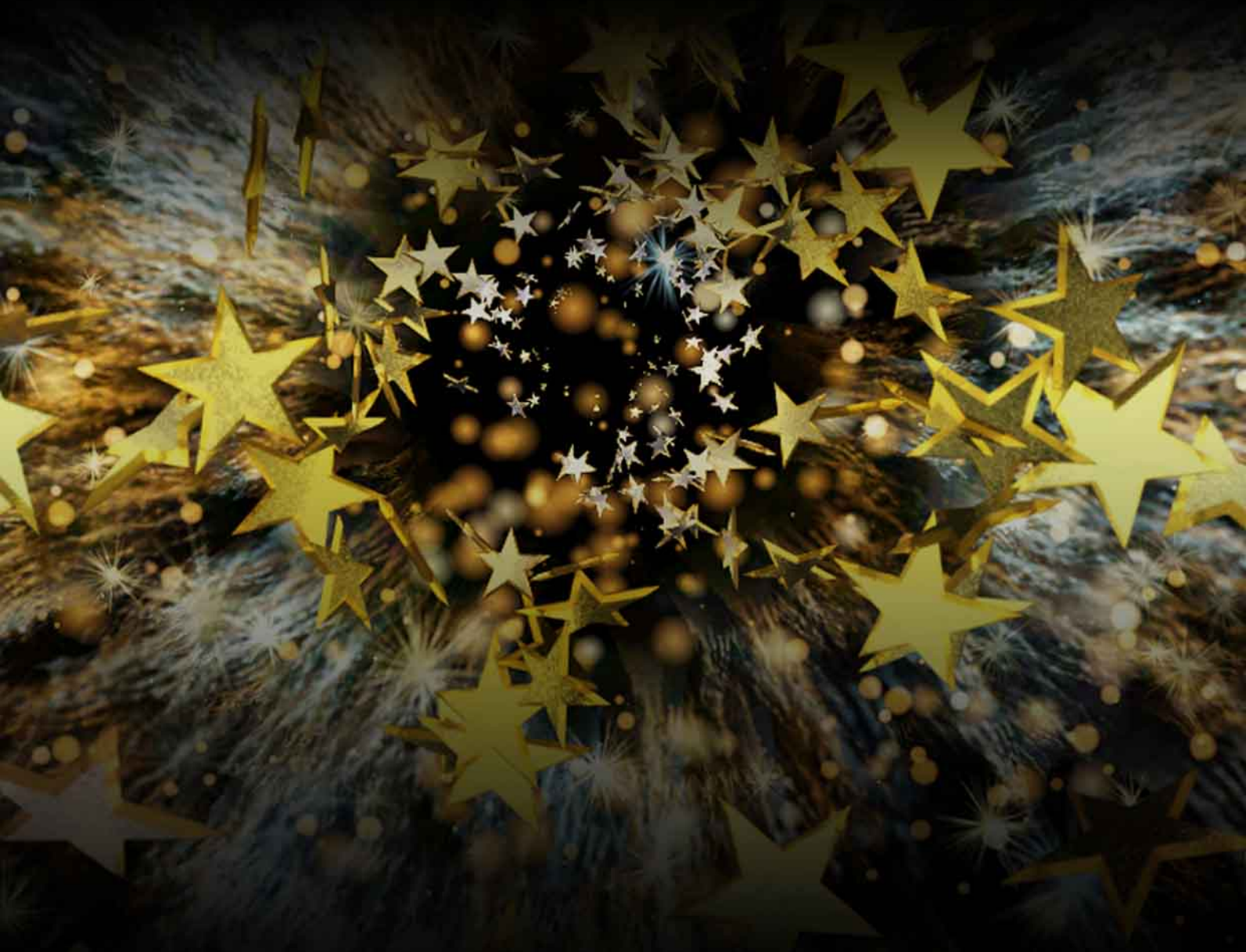


HOW TO MAKE MONEY BY MAGIC™

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A COMPLETE COURSE
IN SIMPLE BUT STUNNING MAGIC

MODULE 5

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Now that you have reached a point where you have a product, in this module we will consider in depth how to promote your shows in the most effective way possible.

The information in this module will be invaluable to you regardless of what types of show you want to perform, as it contains the real secrets to booking shows, and powerful sales letters that you are free to use in your own marketing.

Without further ado, let's start helping you make some money...

How to Book as Many Shows as You Like

Why is it that some magicians seem to have a steady stream of bookings and make lots of money? Is it because they are better magicians? No! Is it because they are lucky? No! Is it because they've got friends in high places? No!

So what is their secret?

Marketing! It is because they have devised a marketing system, implemented it, and consistently worked at it. Once again, we come back to marketing!

What do we mean by a 'system'?

Basically, this refers to a step-by-step process that will *consistently* bring results. By results we mean bookings for shows. It's important to realise that a system doesn't just happen in a flash of inspiration whilst you are lying in bed one night. To the contrary it takes hard work, trying different approaches, persistence, and refinement until it has proven to work consistently well.

A system is also useless if it's not implemented. For example, you might read the system we recommend in this course, think to yourself 'what a marvellous idea' and then promptly ignore it, and do it your own way.

Then too, a system is only useful if it is repeated over and over, yes you have to stick with it. What point is there in using a system once or twice to bring in a few shows, and then never using the system again? Frankly, that is insane, it's just like throwing money down the drain! But you would be amazed how often that happens amongst entertainers!

Take a parallel viewpoint. In books about fundraising for charities, one such book says that the best and cheapest way to get money is to ASK for it. It goes on to emphasise that you need to KEEP ASKING! They hold up as a classic example, the church collection, where every week, the same people keep getting asked for the same thing. Look at the wealth of the churches – the system works!

So with that background in mind, let's review our system which has been extensively honed by expert marketers and magicians over the years. Although most magicians are not aware of this system, that's good news for you, and the crucial thing is - it works!

Step One: *Identify the features and benefits of YOUR show(s).*

This step will take some thought, but it will be well worth it. You need to examine your magic shows, and determine what the features are.

For example, features of a show could include such things as producing various animals, predicting thought of words of some audience members, doing some skilful card routines, making balloon animals, and comedy. Obviously these are just examples - your show will have an individual list of features according to what you do.

Once you have identified the features, you need to assign a benefit (or possibly multiple benefits) to each feature. The benefits can be determined by saying to yourself, "how will the audience benefit from the feature?"



For example, if you make balloon animals, the benefits might be seeing the delight on children's faces, making a child's favourite animal, and free gifts for members of the audience!

If the feature is comedy, the benefits might be making the audience laugh, clap, enjoy themselves, and so on. Can you see the important difference between features and benefits?

The reason for this distinction is simple, but incredibly important. In fact, a lack of understanding about this is probably the main reason why many people fail at marketing and advertising, regardless of the industry.

The natural tendency for most people is to list the *features* of a product or service, whatever that might be, and exclude (albeit unwittingly) the *benefits*.

For example:

“The vehicle includes a 3 year warranty”

“Contains 100% real fruit juice”

“Made with our unique patented material”

These are all features, but they are meaningless to the customer without a corresponding benefit.

Compare those examples with the following:



“The vehicle includes a three year warranty for complete peace of mind. You’ll never have to worry about a breakdown again.”

“Contains 100% fruit juice, to rejuvenate your entire body, and help keep colds at bay.”



“Coated with our unique patented material, which is proven to last 10 times longer than any other similar product.”

Which examples do you think are more likely to generate a better response? The answer should be obvious to you, but the surprising thing is that very few people adhere to this crucial, fundamental rule of marketing. But you will, won't you?

Now let's apply this concept to magic. As an example, instead of simply saying “**Magic Mark will float your child in the air**”, it would be far more effective to say:

“Magic Mark will float your child in the air, which means they will have an unforgettable experience, and it will probably be their best birthday party ever!”

Again, examining this example, to say that you float the birthday child in the air is a feature. It's a good feature, but what does it **mean** for them, or the person who booked you? Your advertising should never elicit the response, “so what?”

Associated with this point of focusing on features rather than benefits, remember that most people look at advertising subconsciously thinking 'what's in it for me'? Everyone does it! If there doesn't appear to be anything in it for them, they will usually not be interested. Selfish lot aren't we?

Let's put it another way - if you have a conversation with someone who just talks about themselves, their accomplishments and so on, you would get bored pretty quickly unless they were someone who you really admired. However, if someone takes an interest in YOU, asking about *your* life, what *you* desire, and if there is anything they can do for *you*, you will naturally find yourself drawn to that person.

Applying this reasoning to marketing your magic, it is essential to identify how you can *help* someone, rather than try and force a sale. So remember:

Help, Not Sell

How do you help a person in this setting? By letting them know the ***benefits*** of your show! Once they realise 'what's it in for them' as it were, they will be more inclined to consider your offer.

Let's move onto the next step now:

Step 2: Make Your Offer Better than the Competition

Did you realise that your competitors can be very helpful to you? How? Quite simply, you have a useful advantage of being able to examine their promotional materials and then to make yours better!

And just in case you have a pang of conscience about doing this, remember you are in business, and you mean business! Whether you like it or not, it's a competitive world, and you need to survive in it. The great thing is that with this course you are already infinitely better equipped than anyone else.

So go ahead, take a close look at every competitor you can find, especially those in your area. Look on the internet, in the local directory, in yellow pages, and so on. Review *what* your competitors offer, *how* they offer it, and the prices they charge. You'll be glad you did.

When you browse through the ads, brochures etc that you find, we guarantee you that most of them will focus on features rather than benefits! It's nice to feel a bit smug about knowing their whopper of a mistake, isn't it! But if national advertising companies fall into that trap, you can hardly blame the humble magician who develops their own advertising with little or no experience.

Actually, it makes us cringe at how many business cards and adverts that offer 'Magic for all occasions.' What is that all about? Where is the benefit statement? 'Magic for all occasions' is like saying 'my show is so general that I can't categorise it, so it's impersonal, and ends up being a carbon copy for each type of audience!'

Now, you of course will never use such a general statement in your promotions. You will convince the prospective client that your offer is vastly superior to your competition, won't you?!

The general idea of being able to offer magic for all occasions isn't a bad thing in itself of course. It's just the way it comes across, and the fact that the phrase has been vastly overused. A great alternative would be to say that the magic is customised, but we'll discuss more about the specifics of this later.

Step Three – Create a Magic Mission Statement

A few years ago, a few companies started to publicise what is now commonly known as a 'mission statement.' The idea of this was to summarise in just a sentence or two what the company aims to provide, and sometimes include a longer term objective. For example, British Airways mission statement used to be (it may have changed more recently) was: 'To be the undisputed world leader in world travel.'

Most companies have since jumped on the mission statement bandwagon as it seemed a fashionable thing to do, but for you, the basic concept of summarising what you offer is still a very valid and useful exercise.

By devising a kind of mission statement, you will have clearly in mind how to promote your shows. Your magic mission statement can help you to write a suitable advert that will attract the right people. The mission statement, and subsequently the advert should enable a prospective client to quickly understand the type of entertainment you provide, the type of audience you can perform for, and of course the benefits of your show.

Normally, a mission statement starts off as a long list of items, which you have to narrow down. The same is true with you, so ignore minor elements, focus on the main points that you think are the most useful to promote, and aim for just a sentence or two at the most.

You should have ended up with a punchy, power packed statement that will serve you well. It might be something like:

***‘Personalised close-up magic that’s so funny,
you’ll be laughing for days!’***

Now that is just an example that we made up, so please don’t just use it automatically. You *must* develop your *own* statement that fits your personality, and style. Thinking about the above example, be aware of course that close-up magic is a phrase that magicians commonly use, but the public may not be familiar with what it means. So it might be better to say, for example:

Personalised magic performed right under your nose.

Another example might be:

***‘A customised magic show so astonishing,
you won’t want it to end!’***

What kind of things should influence your development of a magic mission statement? Think about what makes you better than others, and how that benefits the audience. Think about what you provide that others don't and how that benefits the audience. You might also like to include a common problem faced by event organisers, along with how your show solves that challenge. For example:

'A one-stop solution for Corporate entertainment.'

The problem you solve in this example is to provide a one stop resource for corporate event planners.

Once you have thought through your own mission statement and honed it as much as you can, *use it* whenever you can. When someone says, "What do you do? - guess what you say? Yes, you state the essence of whatever *your* magic mission statement is. For example, "I provide personalised close-up magic that's so funny you'll be laughing for days."

What do you put on your business cards? You guessed it! What do you put on your letterhead? You guessed it! Your magic mission statement will be a powerful tool for you to use whenever you can. Are you happy with this powerful discovery? You should be, because it is yet another valuable method that can give you a competitive edge.

Step Four – Promote Promote Promote!

Without this last step, the previous three items will be pretty pointless, because if no one knows what you offer, no one can decide to hire you! It's the opinion of many successful magicians (and ourselves) that direct mail is a key method of promotion, as it brings results consistently.

If you are not familiar with the term direct mail, it is defined as it sounds, namely sending a sales letter to someone directly through the postal system.

It's not the purpose of this course to provide an in depth analysis of this type of marketing, but rather than you having to wade through volumes of waffly books on the subject, we have provided some very useful tips to help you succeed if you plan to use this kind of promotion.

Please don't take these points lightly as they could literally save you thousands in doing it the wrong way. So here are the tips:

1. Long letters are better than short. In the marketing world they use the term 'copy' to describe the selling text of the letter, and experts in the industry unanimously agree that long copy sells, providing the layout is properly set out. Don't be worried about your letter being too long (within reason). The important thing is to make it interesting and to hold the interest of the reader throughout.
2. Use bullet points in the text to break it up, and ensure you use a clear, easy to read font, with line spacing slightly larger than normal, such as the text you are reading now. Use subheadings liberally, as well as powerful mini 'statements' that will be glanced at when the person firsts browses your letter.
3. The headline is the key to drawing the reader in. Admittedly, it is becoming increasingly difficult to hold the attention of a reader because they are so bombarded with advertising, but you can do it. The all important key here is that the headline needs to raise a question or statement that arouses curiosity. "What would you say to....?" "How it's possible to...." "Unlock the potential of your....." "10 ways to....." and so on. You have just a few seconds of someone's attention to grab them and keep them reading, so consider the headline very carefully. A commonly used technique with a headline is to raise a common problem that you later provide the solution to.
4. The sub-heading needs to immediately convey how the reader can benefit from the subject in the headline, or expand on the benefit. Again, you still need to keep the attention of the reader, they are not convinced yet!

5. Use testimonials liberally. Testimonials are incredibly powerful, they provide instant credibility, and assurance that you are who you say you are, and that you provide a great show. If you are completely new to magic then you won't have any testimonials, so what can you do? Why not ask some friends, family, colleagues, and club members to provide some testimonials? Here is a classic example of this. In the early days, a testimonial from 'N.D.of Denham, UK' looked very good on Paul's letters, and it was actually Paul's mother! Why not get a friend after the show to ask people what they thought of the show? You can use that as the basis of a sales letter.

Even if these people know you, they can still provide some useful feedback that you can use as testimonials (as long as they are positive). Please don't invent or make testimonials up, you will be found out sooner or later, and you will lose your credibility.

6. Always include a 'P.S.' at the end of your letter. Why? Because strangely enough, when people open a letter, for some reason most people browse through the letter and glance at the P.S. before they read it! You can include a special benefit, promotional offer, or some other call to action to encourage the reader to find out more.
7. Ask for the order! Yes, don't beat around the bush, because people *expect* you to ask them, they are just *waiting* for it. Don't try and hide the fact you are selling something, just be bold and ask! Human nature being what it is, if you don't instruct readers for them to 'call you today' or 'act now,' or some other clear instruction of how to proceed, then guess what they will do? Absolutely nothing!
8. Create a perception that your services are costly, and then immediately crush that perception with a great offer that will seem too good to pass up! That's not to say you should undercut your competitors, indeed, don't try to be the *cheapest* because someone will always undercut **you** in a price war. However, remember the *principle* to build up an expectation of a high price, then leave the prospective client pleasantly surprised.

9. Provide your contact details in as many different formats as you can. People are all different, and some people prefer to use the telephone, others fax, others e-mail, still others regular mail, and so on. Give customers all the options to make it easy for them to respond in the method of their choice.
10. Try and write in an informal, easy to follow style as if you are having a conversation with the reader. Avoid the opposite, which is a formal, stuffy, wordy, corporate style of letter that will come across as aloof and distant.
11. Wherever possible, hand write addresses, and stick a stamp on rather than using a franking machine. Bear in mind that most people sort their mail over a waste paper bin, so your first challenge is to get the letter opened and read. Many people will see an envelope with a typed label on it and a second class stamp, and immediately bin it as it is most likely a mail-shot. White envelopes generally work best.
12. Think about what types of letters people most like to receive. Normally it's personal, hand written letters from friends. Whilst hand writing letters is not practical, you are usually better off using a layout that looks like a letter rather than a glossy sales brochure.
13. Bear in mind regional differences with direct mail. For example, in some countries a brief 'teaser' message on the outside of the envelope can encourage the reader to open it, whereas in some other areas, it might put people off opening it. Think about how you react to different types of mail as a guide. If you plan to hand write your addressing, you could write on the back, 'A letter from John Simpson.' Arouses curiosity – do I know this person?
14. Bulky enclosures, whilst expensive can produce very good results, as most people are intrigued to find out what is in the envelope, and once the envelope is opened, are more inclined to read your message. A little imagination is all that is needed.

15. Give specific instructions as to what action you want the reader to take, and make it easy for them. For example, if you only give a fax number to return a booking form, you will lose out on those who do not have access to a fax machine. Common sense, but often overlooked. As stated earlier, give as many reply options as possible.

16. A small picture of yourself at the top of the page usually works well to introduce a human element to your mailing. It's a psychological fact that readers don't like to throw away a page that has a picture of someone on it! Also, it aids the reader in relating to you as they read.

So that's the theory, how about an example?

You may use the following letter yourself to book kid's themed shows at schools. All you need is to find out the names of the head teachers and the addresses of the schools, which is well within your capability – just refer to your local directories.

Whatever your feeling about performing for children, you must read the letter and take note of it, even if you don't plan to do kids shows. You can still apply the same principles, and it is actually very important that you do carefully note the main points.

Also, don't worry about the details of HOW to put together these kinds of shows. The next module will cover everything you need to know about performing magic for kids, including a section devoted to devising themed magic shows, a VERY profitable field to be in.

The letter is on the next page...

Urgent Information For School Headmaster/Headmistress

Regarding Assembly Programmes

June 23rd 2003

10:20a.m.



Dear Mr Clarke,

Have you been frustrated at how difficult it is to provide high quality assembly programmes? Most teachers don't like preparing and presenting assemblies, and it seems a continual struggle to come up with interesting ideas that hold the kids attention doesn't it? My own kids constantly tell me how they find assemblies boring!

It's not a new problem, but it's one that has been a cause of frustration to both teachers and students.....**until now**.....

My name is John Simpson, I'm the educational entertainer based locally in Surrey, and I have been working with teachers in the Guildford area to solve the problem of providing beneficial assembly programmes that kids will talk about not only through the day but for weeks and even months afterwards...

My discussions with teachers from various schools resulted in me creating a custom range of special assembly programmes that are not only fun to watch, but highly educational, featuring themes such as **'Say no to drugs'**, **'Make Friends and Keep Friends'**, and **'Preserve the Planet'**. As a professional in performing arts, these presentations are exciting to watch, and feature magic, story telling, and much more in a thoroughly absorbing presentation, whilst never losing sight of the integral educational message.

Get these programmes for FREE!

In a moment I would like to tell you how your school can benefit from these programmes without any cost to the school whatsoever, but before I tell you any more details, I would be grateful if you could note these comments from other schools that have benefited from my assembly programmes:

“Simply Superb”

“Thank you so much for your assembly presentation, it was simply superb.”

Jonathan Haydon

St Peters Junior School

“You won us over”

“I must admit, I was a little sceptical about how successful the program would be but within the first few minutes you won us over, and we were completely bowled over by your professionalism.”

Kay Gardener

Wood Avenue Comprehensive

“...the kids were ‘buzzing’ all day”

“Just wanted to express our appreciation for the presentation yesterday. You delivered far more than we expected, and the kids were buzzing all day, we couldn’t stop them talking about it.”

Mary Dewson

Farnworth Infants School

“...loved every minute”

“I popped into the staff room at break-time, and it was obvious from the teachers conversations that not only they but all the kids loved every minute of your show.”

Kevin Elson

Welsbury School

“...when can you come again?”

“John, your assembly programme was superb again, and a very valuable reminder about the dangers of drugs, when can you come again?”

Francis Grantham

New Brunswick Junior

As you can see, the programmes on offer are a valuable addition to the curriculum, and deal with **hot topics** that are surely of concern to every parent. The great thing is, students in attendance do not feel ‘preached at’ or intimidated because the presentation is always fun, entertaining, and enjoyable. Many teachers comment that they have been able to schedule follow up lessons in the classroom where students open up and communicate about issues they might have otherwise mentioned.

How can your school benefit?

All you need to do initially is select a programme from the following three currently available:

SAY NO TO DRUGS!

This 40 minute programme benefits students by highlighting the following:

- ✓ The dangers of drugs are explained by a visually powerful effect that will long be remembered. Students won’t want to go anywhere near drugs after this!
- ✓ Using some amazing magic effects, students learn how drugs can change a person, from being happy and outgoing to introverted and depressed. Students will note and be moved by the stark contrast.
- ✓ How to say no, and overcoming peer pressure. This part will leave a lasting impression and make it much easier for kids to say ‘no’ and mean it!
- ✓ One of the damaging side effects of stealing and spending money to fund a drugs habit is brought home with an unforgettable ‘money vanish’ illusion. Students talk about this one for a long time afterwards, and no doubt the valuable lesson will be ingrained.
- ✓ By means of a clever magic principle, students discover that staying free from drugs means a much happier way of life.

Note that although this is obviously a serious subject, humour is used widely to drive the points home, and it is always in good taste. Many teachers remark how well this sensitive subject is handled – it’s entertaining and ‘easy to digest’, yet educational at the same time.

‘MAKE FRIENDS AND KEEP FRIENDS’

This 40 minute programme benefits the students by highlighting the following:

- ✓ Point 1
- ✓ Point 2
- ✓ Point 3
- ✓ Point 4
- ✓ Point 5

‘PRESERVE THE PLANET’

This 45 minute programme benefits the students by highlighting the following:

- ✓ Point 1
- ✓ Point 2
- ✓ Point 3
- ✓ Point 4
- ✓ Point 5

As you can see, these programmes cover a wide range of issues, and they are all currently in **high demand** across the county. Don't miss out on the opportunity to sample one of the programmes during the months of September through November, when I'll be visiting schools in your area.

Affordable but Valuable

Well, I'm sure you want to know how much it's going to cost, am I right? By the way, before I mention the price, bear in mind that the presentation works best when given to a year group at a time, as this gives me the opportunity to tailor the presentation to a specific age group, which means an audience of around 100-150 pupils.

As you know, many travelling school theatre groups charge up to £4 per pupil which means the cost per year group is around £600, plus expenses. You'll be relieved to know that the cost of my programme is just £125 inclusive for a year group of up to 300 students, so it is **easily affordable** for most schools!

However, I realise that some schools have extremely tight budgets, and so I have come up with a scheme which works well for many schools.

If you prefer, I can supply a print ready form for pupils to take home which seeks the parents permission to attend this special presentation. Parents appreciate this communication, and on the same form, a note suggests a voluntary contribution of **£1 per student** to cover the costs of staging the presentation. When parents see the educational and fun nature of the programme, with a few details of how their child will benefit, they are generally only too happy to contribute towards the special assembly.

Schedule Further Assemblies on the Same Day for Less!

Awhile ago, several schools asked if I could perform the same presentation to different age groups on the same day. I agreed, and word of mouth quickly spread this idea to other schools, so I have officially decided to offer a special package as follows:

Book One assembly for £125, a second for £100, and any subsequent ones on the same day for just £90 more per assembly! You may decide for example that you would like three year groups to benefit, in which case the cost would be just £315 for all three, or just over £100 per year group!

The choice is entirely yours as to how many assemblies you wish to schedule, and how you wish to fund the programme, but I would encourage you to book as soon as possible, as **demand is always high**, and I have to take schools on a **first-come, first-served** basis. Bear in mind that this letter is being sent to around 140 schools, many of whom have already benefited from one of my other programmes last year.

100% No Quibble Money Back Guarantee

Whilst it is rare for a school entertainer to offer a guarantee, I am so confident that you will be thoroughly impressed with my presentation that I offer an unconditional money back guarantee if you are not satisfied. That said, if you have read the testimonials in this letter, you'll realise that you have **nothing to worry about** whatsoever. My reputation is first class, and I intend to keep it that way!

Remember, all the presentations tie in closely with curriculum subjects, so the educational value is very high. However, the kids will view it as a treat, a special occasion where they can laugh out loud, clap and cheer, and be taught in a fun, easy to understand way.

To ensure you get your preferred date, please **fax the enclosed form back to me today, or call me direct at 0800 345 6789. Alternatively you may email me at: john@assemblymagic.com** Again, I must stress that places are limited, and you will need to act quickly to secure the date of your choice.

I look forward to hearing from you in the next day or so, and if you have any questions, I will be happy to answer them when you call.

Yours sincerely,

John Simpson

The Educational Entertainer

P.S. SPECIAL OFFER: If you call me before Friday 6th July to book one or more presentations, I will send you a voucher which will entitle you to **£40 off any future presentation** of your choice at the same school. That's a **1/3rd off** the normal low price! Remember, you must call by Friday 30th June to qualify.

P.P.S. Remember that this educational programme does not have to cost your school anything at all if funds are tight. The choice is yours.

Analysing the Letter

Incidentally, it goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that you should not make any false claims in the letter. Also, where specific features and benefits are listed, you obviously need to insert details of your *own* show there.

Also, although the pricing was just an example, you may be thinking that it is not very much. Bear in mind that it adds up very quickly however with regular bookings, and the next year (or later in the year) if you did a good job you will have many repeat bookings.

Yes, it was a long letter, but do you remember what we said about long copy? It works! Let's just take a few moments now to analyse some of the key points of the letter, and review the reasons why certain things were included. That way, you can tailor the letter to your own situation whilst including the important points.

Headline

Firstly, the headline 'Urgent information...' helps create a sense that the letter can't be put to one side, action is needed immediately. The date and time below this also add to the urgency – how often do you see someone put the time they wrote the letter?

By the way, be careful not to write (or type) the date and time in too far in advance of sending the letters. Ideally, you should insert the date and time as the day before the letter is due to be read. If the date appears too far back from the time when the letter is read, the urgency will be lost.

Next, note that if at all possible you should start the letter with the name of the person you are writing to, in other words, try and find out the specific name of the head teacher. It is far more likely to be read if you address it to a specific, named person.

Gain Common Ground

In the first paragraph you try and gain common ground with the reader by sympathising with them about a common problem they face. Subconsciously the reader is already agreeing with what you say, which is a good thing.

You probably noticed too that the letter referred to meetings with teachers in the area. Now, you won't have done this yet, but I urge you to make contact with a teacher or two through friends, family or acquaintances to confirm what types of subjects are valuable for assembly programmes.

For example, in your vicinity, drugs may not be a widespread problem, but something else will be, so find out what the local issues are. As well as sounding more authoritative, your letter will carry far more weight if you are able to quote the fact that you have had discussions with local teachers.

Next, you briefly state the nature and type of presentations that you do so that the teacher can see that you are providing educational content. Otherwise, they may be quick to dismiss it as 'just another children's entertainer,' which you are not.

Confirm Your Credentials

Also, establish your own credentials by stating that you are a local(ish) resident, if you have kids yourself you can include that, and generally put the reader at ease by being open and honest about yourself. You want them to be drawn to you, even through the pages of a letter.

Note too that the style of the letter generally, whilst fairly conversational, is not overly simplistic. In this case, you know that the reader will be well educated, so try to use words and phrases that are familiar to a professional person. For example, our letter refers to 'performing arts', a term that teachers commonly use themselves.

At this point, we included a reference to the fact that the school can get the programme for free, but they have to read on to find out how. It's a kind of 'tease', which encourages them to continue reading.

Testimonials are Vital

Then, we 'hit' them with the testimonials. One of the most important parts of your letter, it's our belief that you can't include too many testimonials. Why? A testimonial is someone else recommending you, rather than you recommending you, so it is infinitely more powerful, it carries far more weight. Testimonials are third party credibility for you, and people are influenced by them, no question about it.

The problem if you are new to this of course is that you won't have any testimonials. How do you overcome that? Why not perform a few shows for free? Not only will this give you valuable experience without as much pressure as a paid show, but you can also ask for testimonials as a condition of doing the show (as long as they *are* genuinely happy of course).

But always, always include testimonials in any letter like this, view it as a rule. The way the testimonials in this letter are presented is also worth noting. Did you notice how a phrase is picked out of the main comment and highlighted in bold? This is so that if someone scans the letter (as they often do), the key phrases, all of which are very positive, will stand out clearly.

You may not know that outside theatres, where you see phrases from critics written in large type, the producers of the show frequently only take a little positive comment or phrase from the review, even from press reviews that were quite critical! We are not suggesting you are dishonest, but if someone said good and bad things about your show, you don't need to mention the bad!

A New York theatre producer who was fed up of the newspaper critic's narrow mindedness came up with a clever idea. He wrote down the names of the critics that annoyed him, and from the phone directory he found people with the same names, and went and got positive testimonials from them!

Whilst some might say this was dishonest, if you think about it, he did nothing wrong. The people he contacted were real people, who genuinely enjoyed the show, a refreshing change from the somewhat jaded critics!

An English comedian went on the Ed Sullivan show, which at the time was the top TV show in the USA. Ed Sullivan was the rather dour host. The comedian went down so badly that Ed actually walked on in the middle of this guys act and stopped him! The distraught comedian phoned a friend in the UK who consoled him and said, “don’t worry, let me deal with it.”

The subsequent press release in the UK said, “Comedian Stopped the Show!” The comedian came back to the UK, and found himself a star! Testimonials really do matter, and often you can find a way of using them to the best effect!

Getting back to the plot of analysing the letter, further reasons why the school should book the magician are stated. We drove the point home that the programme is **educational and entertaining**.

A brief mention about the availability of the programme is made to plant the thought that early booking is recommended, and then we move onto price.

Build it Up, Then Tear it Down

As recommended in the tips earlier, we built up an expectation of a high price and then shattered it with the real price which then seems like a bargain by comparison.

We then gave a further incentive for a reduced the price, whilst promoting the fact that a number of shows are possible at the same school, on the same day. This is obviously advantageous to you, especially if you have to travel some distance to the school. Three shows on one day is obviously much better than just one!

The Guarantee

Why include a guarantee? Because it works!

This is another item that must *always* be included, as a rule. Guarantees take away the niggling doubts that tend to linger in the back of the readers minds. “But what if this, that or the other....?”

Guarantees virtually remove those doubts, and as long as your show is good enough, you don't need to worry about being inundated with claims for refunds! It simply doesn't happen. You shouldn't have *any* claims if you act professionally, treat people respectfully, and present an adequate show. The reality is that most people forget about the guarantee after the event anyway!

As we come to the end of the letter, we see a definite 'call to action.' This is the 'what do I need to do now' part. It's crucially important to direct the reader to a simple, specific action, and this instance the call to action is to ask them to contact you to arrange a date for a presentation.

Note also that various methods of replying were offered, in order to make the process as painless as possible – freephone., fax or email. That's important because the more 'barriers' you can remove to the reader replying the better. As we said before, make it easy for them!

Don't forget the P.S!

Finally, the all important P.S. As we said, the P.S. will virtually *always* get read, so make sure you put something good in it! In our letter we chose to give a further offer that would be 'too good to miss,' by offering a sizeable discount on a future show. You might choose to offer free information, to include a special bonus illusion to the show that you would not normally add, or some other powerful incentive to make the call or take action, there and then.

Another aspect to the P.S. we used was to state a deadline. This is another subtle way of prompting action as soon as possible. With a deadline, there is a further incentive to make the call. Without it, the letter could easily be placed in the 'things to get around to one day' pile, and you know what happens to *that* pile!

As a reminder too, take extra care to check your spelling and grammar when writing to schools, for obvious reasons. We would go so far as to say that you should get your letter read and checked by two other trusted friends for mistakes. Sometimes you can't see the mistakes in your own writing!

Incidentally, the fax reply form mentioned in the letter consists of a simple page that has check boxes, and a space to fill in the date, such as the example here. Note too that we have filled in the name and school already.

URGENT FAX REPLY FORM

Please fax to: (0800) 345 9876

Yes, I would like to book a date for one of your powerful assembly presentations.

Please present the following at our school:

- Say No to Drugs!**
- Make Friends and Keep Friends!**
- Preserve the Planet!**

Name: Mr A. Clarke

School: Victoria Secondary School, Guildford

Preferred choice of date:

Number of presentations on same day

(second for £100, three or more for £90 each):

Approx number of students:

Approx age of students:

Thank you for your booking, we will contact you by return with full information to help you prepare, and get the most benefit for your students. Should you have any questions about the programme, please do not hesitate to contact me

So that's covered the sales letter, all you need to do now is put it all into practice with your own shows! Incidentally, the same style of letter can be adapted quite easily for a whole host of other types of clients and shows. Just bear in mind the principles, and you should be able to devise suitable letters for all sorts of markets. Having said that, we will still be helping you target other specific audiences appropriately throughout the rest of the course, so you won't be on your own, but you'll note that we always follow the same basic principles whoever we are addressing with a direct sales letter.

As a note of caution, don't expect to be swamped with enquiries from any letters that you send out 'cold,' that is to people who you have not previously contacted. Even with the best sales letter in the world, you will only win over a small percentage of your target audience, so it is a bit of a numbers game. However, with a *consistent* approach, you can work it so that you have more than enough shows to keep you busy. Remember, at this stage of the game, you are starting to build your business, and the number of contacts will increase in years to come.

The Follow Up

Should you or shouldn't you? Follow up, that is. In our experience, the answer is yes! It has been proven over and over that a simple follow on letter sent about a week later will produce more bookings, whatever the market. Why? Human nature being what it is, inevitably people need to be reminded and prompted.

It's quite likely that your first letter will be read, and considered to be a good idea; however, the recipient will have probably received many other letters on the same day, some of which would have taken a higher priority than yours. Maybe it was a letter from a worried parent, correspondence from the board of governors, a demand for payment from a supplier, and so on. Do you see how easy it is for your letter, albeit powerfully written, to get consigned to a much lower priority? That's why you must follow up! Again, we have taken the pain out of the process for you by supplying a letter that you can adapt as necessary, but that's basically ready to use.

**RESERVE AN ASSEMBLY PROGRAM BEFORE 10th JULY,
AND WE'LL MAKE £40 DISSAPPEAR FROM A SECOND BOOKING!**

June 30th 2003

10:45a.m.

Dear Mr Clarke,

A few days ago I sent you a letter outlining the three assembly programs that are benefiting children in schools across the county. **Places are filling fast** for the September through November period, and I'm concerned that I haven't heard from you.

The presentations I offer have become widely respected as one of the most helpful ways to teach kids about issues that are foremost in their lives. What parent is not concerned about their child taking drugs for example? That's why the children in your school need to hear this programme. Trust me, parents *and* kids will go out of their way to thank you for it.

Act Quickly To Secure your preferred date!

Time is running out on the offer I made in my first letter to you. If you reserve just one or more presentations before Friday 10th July, you will receive a certificate that entitles you to a massive **1/3rd off a future presentation**, which you may use at any time.

Remember too, that the school funds don't need to be touched if your budget is very limited. We've found that parents are generally happy to contribute a pound or so, knowing that their child will receive **valuable training** on important issues. What's more, any surplus money collected will go into the school fund, so you may even find the school being better off if you choose to fund the important presentation that way!

Finally, don't forget that my presentations are all covered by a **100% money back guarantee** if you are not satisfied, so there is absolutely no risk on your part.

If you are still unsure, please take a look at some of the glowing testimonials I have received from other head teachers. Really, that should say it all.

All you need to do now is call, fax, or email me with your preferred choice of date, and your preferred choice of presentation, and I'll arrange the rest.

You can **fax the enclosed form back to me today, or call me direct at 0800 345 6789. Alternatively you may email me at: john@assemblymagic.com**

I look forward to your call,

Yours sincerely,

John Simpson

The Educational Entertainer

P.S. Don't miss out on the substantial reductions offered for a second and third programme on the same day. See the fax form for full details.



So there you have a comprehensive example of a method for booking themed shows in schools. You may be wondering why so much emphasis has been put on these types of kids shows. Well, let's reveal a few things that may have escaped your notice so far. I think you may be quite surprised...

1. There are very few magicians doing kids shows in schools. Either they don't know how to approach it, don't want to approach it, or simply haven't thought of it. Whatever the reason, you have a huge, relatively untapped market ahead of you, and you usually have a team of assistants to help you control the children – teachers! That's a big plus!

2. School shows are performed in the morning, during the week. What other types of children's shows could you do at those times? So school shows enable you to use your time wisely, they won't conflict with other shows!
3. If you do perform themed kids' shows at schools, do you think there is a faint possibility that some of the kids in the audience will enjoy your show and beg their parents to have you along for their next birthday party? Of course!
4. Do you think some of the kids will have an interest in magic, and be interested in finding out more about it? You bet!

Taking those last two points in particular, you should be quite excited at the possibilities they represent. For example, do you remember in the letter addressed to the head teacher, you offered to provide a little form that the children take home to gain their parents approval to watch the presentation?

Guess what? On that little form, you ask for the parents name and address, and when you receive all the forms (probably hundreds of them), you instantly have a database of prospective customers for private kids magic shows in their own homes! Wow, now that's useful!

On the next page you'll see two sample forms that you can use, the first includes mention of a donation to cover the cost, whilst the second leaves it out.

Once you receive all the slips back (make sure you tell the school that you wish to keep them), you can of course send an offer to these parents at some time in the future, such as the letter that appears after the slips.

IMPORTANT – PLEASE RESPOND IMMEDIATELY

Dear Parent,

We have arranged for a special presentation to be held during assembly time on
This presentation is on the theme ‘Say no to Drugs’ and it is curriculum based. It will be presented by a professional motivational speaker and entertainer, and features magic, laughter, and story-telling to provide the children with a memorable lesson, that will remind them about the dangers of drugs. As this is not a compulsory activity, we are writing as a courtesy to seek your permission for your child to attend. Also, to cover the expenses of staging this presentation, we are suggesting a contribution of just £2 per child. Again, this is not compulsory, but we would appreciate your support.

.....
I do / do not* wish for my child to attend the special assembly presentation.

*Delete as appropriate.

I enclose a donation of to help with expenses of staging the presentation.

Parents name..... Childs name.....

Address.....

Postcode..... Childs form/class.....

Signed..... Date.....

IMPORTANT – PLEASE RESPOND IMMEDIATELY

Dear Parent,

We have arranged for a special presentation to be held during assembly time on
This presentation is on the theme ‘Say no to Drugs’ and it is curriculum based. It will be presented by a professional motivational speaker and entertainer, and features magic, laughter, and story-telling to provide the children with a memorable lesson, that will remind them about the dangers of drugs. As this is not a compulsory activity, we are writing as a courtesy to seek your permission for your child to attend. Please indicate your decision below, and return the form promptly, thank you.

.....
I do / do not* wish for my child to attend the special assembly presentation.

*Delete as appropriate

Parents name..... Childs name.....

Address.....

Postcode..... Childs form/class.....

Signed..... Date.....

How would you like your child to be the star of their own special birthday magic show?

Dear Mr and Mrs Jones,

Last month, your child, David attended a special assembly programme at school which I, John Simpson presented, and I'm sure David enjoyed it.

Knowing how difficult it is to get affordable and reliable children's entertainers that you can trust, I wanted to let you know that I am available for a limited number of birthday parties or children's shows throughout the year, in between my regular school shows.

Why book me? Quite simply, I have the unique experience and professionalism necessary to make your child's party simply **unforgettable**. You may have seen my advertisement in yellow pages which is now in it's fifth year, which for you means I am firmly established in the community as the first choice of entertainer by many parents.

Every show I do is customised for the child, and they literally become the star of the show. Imagine the joy on their face as they make items vanish and appear in front of all the other kids, almost without realising what they've done! They won't know how to thank you enough for their wonderful experience.

Remember too that David has already met me at school, and children tend to be far more comfortable with a magician and entertainer they are familiar with.

But don't take my word for it. Take a look at some of these glowing testimonials from other parents:

"...simply the best"

"John, the show you put on for Tim and the other kids was simply the best"

Frank & Tracey Newgent

“...terrific value”

“Not only could we not fault your show, it was terrific value too.”

Mr and Mrs Kent

“we...wished it could have lasted all night”

“...everyone said how they wished it could have lasted all night”

Tony & Sylvia Robson

These are just a sampling of comments that I receive regularly, so it should be obvious that your child's party is in the safest hands!

A Very Special Offer

I realise that the timing may not be right for my services just at the moment, however, I do get booked up for some time in advance, so as an incentive to book now for your child's next birthday, or perhaps another family celebration, call me in the next 48 hours for an early bird discount of 25% of the regular price. This offer won't be repeated, so please act fast to secure your preferred date - one phone call, that's all you need to make!

Thanks for taking the time to read this letter, and I know you'll be delighted with your child's next party, if you decide to use my services. As a final reassurance, bear in mind that when you book a show with me, you are also covered by my unique 'enjoy every minute or I'll refund every penny' guarantee, so you have nothing to lose!

Thanks again, and I look forward to hearing from you shortly,

Yours sincerely,

John Simpson

John Simpson

The Childrens Entertainer

P.S. Refer my name and details to another parent, and when they book a show, I'll send you a £20 store voucher to spend as you wish, as my thank you. Who else do you know whose children have a birthday coming up?

So that's the letter. As a reminder, you need to adapt the features and benefits according to YOUR type of show. If, for example you don't do a trick where the child seems to do the magic, then don't offer that in your letter!

What a powerful side benefit of performing school shows. Think how easy the 'snowball effect' will start to happen, when one show leads onto another, and so on. And people say this business is hard!

There's More Money Available to You...

Now, recall back a few pages, we mentioned that there was another benefit to school shows that relates to kids who are interested in learning magic. How could you provide these children with something useful whilst earning more money as a result?

There are a number of possibilities with this, but for a start, how about offering a booklet with a couple of tricks as a little package? All you would need to do is say something at the end of the school show, such as:

"You've seen a few tricks today in the presentation, and I'm often asked how I got started in magic. Well, I learnt from a little book like this (show your booklet), and I practiced a lot until I became good at it. If there is anyone here that is interested in learning magic, I have put together a little package of tricks that are easy to do, fun to learn, and you can easily do your own little magic show for your friends and family. Would you like that? Well, I've got one of these sets to give away now to the first person that can answer this question: Who is the headmaster of Hogwarts school?"

(Response)

"Well done! Would you like to come up and collect your prize? Now, if anyone else would like one of these special sets, please take a flyer from the table as you go out, and go and tell your parents that if they love you, they'll buy you a magic set as a present!"

You probably realised that the idea behind giving a magic set away is to create a desire amongst the other kids, a sense of losing out! You know they'll have fun with it if they do get it, so why not encourage them a little?



All you have to do on the form is have a little picture of the booklet and magic tricks, with a simple explanation of the types of tricks the child can learn, and make sure it is priced extremely reasonably (under £5 (\$8), as well as properly put together and packaged. You can obtain these ready made from various sources, or produce them yourself, perhaps with a series of envelopes, each containing a secret. These could cost you under 50p (\$75c) to produce!

By the way, you don't need to spend a fortune on these leaflets - a half page, good quality, black and white photocopied leaflet is perfectly acceptable.

Incidentally, recall that the question we suggested was related to Harry Potter. This was deliberate. You must keep updating the question to whatever is relevant at the time. Also, don't make the answer too obvious.

If you were to ask who the bespectacled little boy who flies on a broomstick is, everyone would shout out Harry Potter! However, if you were to ask who is the headmaster of Hogwarts School, that would be a more suitable question because not everyone will know it.

At the bottom of the form, put the usual tear off strip section, where the parents complete their name and address, and enclose payment for the right amount. Then, tell the school that you'll collect the orders in two or three days time, and at the same time you will leave the sets there for the kids to take home.

The other benefit of getting the kids to take your leaflet home is that all your contact details are on it, with a brief note that you are a children's entertainer. So yet again, you have a great way of getting noticed, promoting your services for a tiny cost directly to the people who can make a decision!

Special Marketing Techniques

This section contains some *additional* secret techniques that are proven to increase your bank balance! Once again, very few magicians will be aware of these techniques, so let's keep them to ourselves!

The Power of a Name

A great technique I learned from an entertainer and compere friend of mine is to use your name early on in the act, and repeat it liberally throughout the show, as a natural part of the show. So for example, if your name was John James, you could say to the kids, "Now if you happen to see the rabbit, I want you all to shout out, '**Hey John James, there's the rabbit!**'"

This is quite brilliant because if you repeat something similar at appropriate times through the show, it is subconsciously etching your name into the minds of both the youngsters and adults in the audience. When you also reinforce this at the end of the show, you have effectively had some very powerful marketing for free, because the spectators will know, and remember your name.

As an extension of that principle, if there is a good memory aid for your name, then use that too! If you have an unusual sounding name, it's ideal to compare it to something else as a useful memory aid.

If you can think of something funny to associate the name with, then so much the better. Yes, it's been proven over and over again that when someone is given a powerful word association, they remember a name far easier, and for longer than without one.

Paul used this idea of repeating your own name in his first TV show, and it worked. People watching spoke specifically about *Paul Daniels* afterwards, rather than referring to simply 'that magician on TV.'

Use a Banner

Also on the subject of making your name unforgettable, you could have a banner made that you can hang behind you when you do a show. That way, the audience has no choice but to see your name through the whole show! They are surprisingly inexpensive, and it could be as simple as:

THE KEVIN HOWARD MAGIC SHOW

Or you might want to add a subtle marketing line such as:

KEVIN HOWARD
Spectacular & Unforgettable Magic!

Giveaways are Great!

We've touched on it when we mentioned the magic set at the end of the school show and it's a technique that is valuable for the kids show magician - have a giveaway for kids at the end of the show. Do we hear you mumbling that you don't want to spend any money? What if we said that a giveaway that costs you 50p (\$0.70) for each child could generate more than a thousand pounds (\$1500) for you after each show? Now we're talking!

So how can a giveaway generate that kind of money? Simple. Your giveaway has your contact details on it! The specifics of the giveaway are really not that important, but you want something with a perceived value that is easy for the kids to have fun with, so it could be any simple magic effect that they can do. These are the type of magic tricks that you usually find in a boxed magic set, and that can be purchased inexpensively in bulk from many magic suppliers.

For example, a 2 *Card Monte* trick can be purchased in bulk for around 20p (\$0.50) each from www.the-magic-store.com or from your favourite dealer. Other inexpensive giveaways are magic wands (with your contact details printed on a label, and then stuck around the centre of the wand), and other inexpensive 'packet' tricks that contain just a few special cards.

It's really the same principle as promoting the magic set at the end of a school show. When the kids leave the auditorium, many of them will pick up a leaflet with all your details on it because they are interested in the magic set.



With a private kids party though, magic tricks as giveaways work especially well, because not only is there a higher perceived value to your show, but the kids will ALL take home the magic trick, and you can be sure they will talk about it and show their parents. We suggest putting a little package together in one of those clear plastic re-sealable bags, to include one or two simple magic tricks, your business card, the instructions for the tricks, and perhaps a little leaflet with some further simple tricks that can be performed using everyday objects (these are the kinds of tricks that appear in beginners books on magic in your local library).

You can also use the giveaway idea as a feature (and benefit) of your show when you promote it. For example, in your advertising you could say: **'At the end of the show, every child's face will light up with excitement as they receive a free magic trick of their own!'**

By the way, have you started to notice that instead of just placing ads and moaning about the lack of response, when you start to work proactively on promotion, you will generate many more bookings, and it will seem easy!

If none of this extra 'work' is of interest to you, do not despair. If you just want to play with your magic 'toys' you can still benefit by getting someone to do it for you! This could be your partner in life or a magic club member who wants to be involved with a real performer. Let them become your promotional agent for a percentage of the work they get you. Make sure that they are organising all the promotions we suggest, and not just taking the bookings.

It is amazing when you look around your friends and family. Their talents can often be used to help their business, and because you are perceived as being in show-business, they are more than willing to help. Are you any good at graphic design for example? Probably not. The chances are however, that you know someone who is, and they can do it for you for a fraction of the price that you would normally pay!

A Bag of Tricks

As an alternative idea, you may decide to offer these packs with three or four tricks and a few sweets in them, and sell them as an add-on sale, an 'option.'

For example, when you are booking a show, you could say to the parent that your show includes a special magic set for the birthday child, but that many parents who book shows don't want the other children to feel left out, so you offer a little magic pack of tricks and goodies for, say £2.50 (\$3.50) extra per child. The kids love it! The price of course is negotiable, and the contents will be adjusted accordingly!

Is there anything else you can fit in your car that you can sell, or offer as an extra service? For example, a bouncy castle will fit in the back of most estate cars, and it will keep the kids amused both before and after your show. They are not expensive to buy, and are very easy to setup. If this appeals to you, and you live in the UK, this website is most helpful: <http://www.biha.org.uk/>

How to Get Paid for Three or More Shows at Once

Here is an idea that may work well in your area for birthday parties. Rent your local village or town hall (or a community centre) every Saturday, and place adverts in your local paper, letting people know that you do a magic show each morning and afternoon in the hall.

The idea is that rather than going to homes, the kids come to you in several groups at a time! You would need to insist on supervision of the children of course, but with several groups of children at one time as an audience, you would be able to earn much more, for the same effort.

Other Ways to Book Your Shows

We've already reviewed a number of ways that you can get kids shows in homes just by promoting them during other shows, but some of you will want to market other types of shows directly. Small adverts in your local directories and newspapers are a prime way to get noticed and get the phone ringing. Remember to carefully devise an ad that focuses on benefits though.

When placing an advert in, say, the yellow pages, be sure to follow these simple guidelines:

1. Focus on benefits rather than features (no harm in repeating that one). State a major benefit in the headline, e.g. 'The memories will last a lifetime...' then if there is room, you can expand with a sub-headline such as 'For an unforgettable magic show, choose Henry Gold'
2. Choose an ad size that fits with your budget and availability. For example, a lineage ad will obviously draw fewer enquiries than a box style ad. However, an ad that is too large could well bring in more enquiries than you can handle, which would be a waste of resources.

3. Don't try and use every inch of space. A brief, to the point ad that is easy to read at a glance is far better than an information packed ad that looks cluttered.
4. If you can, try and use the word free! Tests have shown that the word 'free' attracts more interest than any other word in advertising.

Remember, you are probably competing for the readers' attention alongside other magicians. So you could refer to the free tricks that you give out to all the children at the end of the show, a free booklet on how to choose a party entertainer, and so on. Use your imagination a little on this one.

5. Advertise in the right section. Don't rely on the advice of the salesman for which section to appear in. Do some research and, if possible, look at the current and past editions of the same directory to see which magicians are using the same adverts, and in which section. Obviously, if they have renewed an advert in the same place for a second period (or more), it must have worked for them! Don't try and reinvent the wheel on this aspect!
6. Whatever you do, don't use your name in the headline! I see this so often in entertainers adverts. I think these people think a bit too much of themselves, and are anxious to have their 'name in lights!' A typical example is something like:

FREDDY JONES – MAGICIAN
Magic for all Occasions
I do card tricks, balloon animals, and more!
Butlins award winner
(07000) 123 456

Frankly, who cares what the magicians name is? 99% of people looking for a magician are looking for benefits, they are not interested in the name of the magician!

And who cares if he has won an award? What does that mean to the reader without a benefit statement? Nothing!

Compare the advert you just read, with this one:

3 Things You Need to Ask

When Booking a Magician:

- ☺ **Do they make your child the star?**
- ☺ **Do they give away free magic tricks?**
- ☺ **Do they have hundreds of testimonials?**

Andy Davies creates unforgettable magic!

Call 0800 246 357 for a FREE info pack

You should be able to see the difference immediately. Without even saying it directly, the advert indicates that the magician provides all the benefits listed, and comes across as professional. The reader will think ‘this guy knows what he is talking about.’

So once you’ve placed the ad and the phone starts ringing, what do you do then? The amateur magician will try to bluff their way through the conversation, and pray they get the gig, but you’re not going to do that are you? Frankly, there is no need to.

The Biggest Secret to Booking a Show

Why do we say this is the biggest secret? Well, it’s quite possible that you might muddle through the earlier stages with an average advert and still receive a few calls. However, it’s the part when the phone rings that is the most critical stage out of everything you do. It’s make or break time, and sadly for most magicians, it’s break rather than make, because they simply don’t know what to say.

Which bring us neatly on to...

Learn to Love the Telephone

You *must* realise that telephone selling is a skill in it's own right. A friend of mine has a business devoted to training people to sell on the phone, and after speaking to her at some length about this, my understanding of how to handle telephone enquiries properly completely changed.



Students of my friend's training school pay hundreds of pounds to learn these crucial techniques, but she has given me permission to reproduce the most critical points to help you succeed.

So when someone contacts you by phone, here is the biggest secret to booking a show:

USE A SCRIPT!

We suspect you were expecting more than that weren't you? But the reality is that using a script will make the biggest single difference to booking more shows than virtually anything else you do. Of course, you'll have to try it yourself to convince yourself, but that's exactly what we want you to do!

Let's face it, even if you are a gifted speaker with the best memory around, there will still be times that you will hang up after a conversation and think to yourself, 'if only I had said such and such' or 'I completely forgot to tell them about so and so.' As most of us are not gifted speakers, and don't have great memories, the need for a script becomes even more apparent.

A telephone script enables you to take control of the conversation rather than letting the caller dictate the structure of the call, and that is also an important difference.

Psychologically, it's important for you to be in control of the call, because not only will you be more confident, but the caller will perceive this as professionalism, which is another benefit.

Before we go into detail about the structure of the script, please note the following points, which you should act on:

Firstly, although we use the term 'script', don't worry unduly about sounding 'wooden', fearing that the caller will be able to tell that you have pre-prepared what you are going to say. They won't. In any case, after just a few calls, you will start to become very familiar with the content anyway, and you'll be able to make it sound more conversational.

If you are still worried about it sounding natural, why not ask a family member to pose as a prospective caller, and go through it with you, like a role-play session. You'll soon have the confidence to use the script if you do that.

It was mentioned in an earlier module, but it's worth repeating now, that you should install a separate line for your business, and never allow your children to answer it. It would be better for the caller to hear an answer phone message that says, "Sorry, I'm out entertaining at the moment" than for the phone to be answered with 'daddy isn't here!'

Smile – It shows!

The next tip is to smile! Believe it or not, the caller can sense your mood over the phone, and you obviously want to greet them in a happy, cheerful way rather than the other extreme which is almost 'grunt' like. It amazes us how many businesses have miserable people as a first point of contact for their company! Don't be the same, make the effort to smile!

Keep a pencil or pen, and a standard form by the phone to make some notes as you talk. You'll see why this is important as we go through the next steps, but essentially it is often helpful to be able to recall specific points the caller mentions, as well as of course their name, phone number, date the show is required and so on.



Make Friends

Another valuable tip is to try and make friends with the caller, to get them to like you. Really, this should be part of your personality anyway, but it may require extra effort initially to be more conscious of it. The adage that people buy from people they like is just as true in this context of the telephone call as in any other sales situation. But how do you do it?

Start by taking an interest in the caller. Try and gain common ground. Do they live locally? If so you might tell them that you are 'just round the corner' or say the name of the road. How old is their child? Do you have a child of a similar age? Maybe they go to the same school! There are many ways of gaining common ground to get the person to like you, the bottom line is to be genuinely friendly! Believe it or not, that simple act sets you apart from many other entertainers!

A Case in Point

Without going too much off track, I just want to prove this point to you briefly. A few years ago, I worked in a theatre with a children's entertainer who was very funny. The guy was technically very good at his job. However, off stage he was miserable and rather depressing to be around! He was not the sort of person you would want to spend time with.

And it wasn't just a passing phase, because the run of shows lasted for about 6 weeks, and the entertainer was miserable throughout, constantly complaining about something. He even said that he didn't like children very much, so he must have just been a good actor.

Here's the point - I had the opportunity to give that guy much more work after the run of shows had finished, but did I feel inclined to do that? No way! I would much rather work with someone who was less technically competent at what they do, but easy going, genuine, and fun to work with.

Do you see the point?

Technical ability is not the most important thing for most people, they want to like and trust you as a person! If you are a nice guy (or girl) who always goes the extra mile to ensure the client is satisfied, that's what matters, and you will find yourself in regular employment.

So with those general points in mind, let's now go through the process of handling a telephone enquiry, step-by-step...

1. Picking up. This might sound finicky, but don't answer the phone as if you are sitting right by it, even if you are! In other words, let it ring a few times before answering it, say three or four rings. The reason is that if you answer immediately, subconsciously it gives a message that you are not very busy, because you were able to pick up the phone as if you were just waiting for it to ring.
2. The greeting. This is largely a matter of personal preference, but it should always be said in a warm and friendly tone. You might start by saying your name and then "how can I help?" Or perhaps "Good morning / good afternoon, (your name) speaking."
3. The caller will briefly state the purpose of their call, to which you listen politely, and without interrupting, you then need to ask their name. Why? Remember, a person's name is their most important possession. When you get their name, use it frequently in the conversation, addressing them directly as 'Mr Smith', or 'Mrs Jones'. It may seem a little unnatural at first if you are not used to doing this, but it will pay off. Psychologically, the caller will feel much more drawn to you when you use their name.

4. Whatever the person asks you initially with regard to your show, you need to take control of the conversation and take it in the direction YOU want to take it, so you would say something like, *“Before we go any further Mr Jones, could I just ask you a couple of questions in order to offer you the best package to suit your needs, is that okay?”*
5. You now have control of the conversation, and there are several more questions you need answers to, such as:

“Do you have a specific date in mind?” Always have a desk diary for bookings at hand, to save fumbling around. (However, there is obviously not much point continuing the conversation if you discover they want a specific date that you are already booked for. If that is the case apologise, and thank them for their call). Alternatively, if you have a relationship with another magician not too far away, why not recommend them, and arrange for them to do the same for you when they are already booked, or not available for a show.

“How did you hear about me?” (Was it a recommendation, an advert etc – that information is valuable to you)

“What type of event are you planning?” (Is it a kids show for example)

“Have you decided on a budget yet?” This question will allow you to immediately ascertain what you are dealing with, whether it's the lower or higher end of the market. If they haven't decided on a budget tell them not to worry, and that you'll explain what you offer.

6. Once you have the basic information answered, you need to ask a very important question. Supposing they have told you the show is for their child's birthday, you would say something like: *“Tell me Mr Jones, what are you looking for, for your child's birthday party?”* This question obviously invites a response, but importantly, the caller will **tell you what they want**. This is so simple and powerful, that you could almost miss the point here.

Just think, if they tell you what they want, what will you reply with? You'll **give them what they want!** So whatever they say, respond with something along the lines of, "Great! That's exactly what I provide."

Obviously, don't make any false claims if you can't or don't provide what they want, but at the same time, it can often pay to make the effort to provide exactly what is required.

Occasionally the caller might tell you about a negative experience they had previously, in which case take careful note of what they didn't like, and make sure you respond appropriately by reassuring them that you are different! If possible, give reasons why you are different.

Many times, the caller will simply say, "I'm not sure what I'm looking for" in which case you can move on to point number seven.

7. You can now move into the sales mode, with an overview of the features and benefits of your show, which should now be second nature to you. Here's a little summary of the points you should cover in this part:

- ✓ Ask what length show they require, or suggest the length of the show (in minutes) if the event is a childrens party, as most parents won't know what length to expect.
- ✓ If it's a kids show, that their child will be involved throughout and treated as a very special guest by you.
- ✓ That the whole audience will laugh, clap and have the time of their lives with all the comedy you include.
- ✓ Again, if it's a kids show, that all the kids will receive a special magic bag to take home with them (or insert your USP here).
- ✓ That the audience won't know how to thank you enough as the host for arranging the show/event.
- ✓ That you offer a complete service that takes all the hassle out of the arrangements. Tell the client that they will only have to deal with one person throughout the process, and that on the day they can relax and enjoy the show as you will look after everything. What a weight off their minds!

Throughout this section, endeavour to get the parent emotionally involved with what you, by for example creating vivid imagery for them. Use expressions such as “imagine the delight on your child’s face as they themselves perform some amazing magic....with a little help from me of course. They will be on a high for days afterwards!” That kind of enthusiasm and specific descriptions of the benefits have a very powerful affect.

Don’t be afraid of describing a specific effect in detail to hook the parent into the show, even to the extent that they visualise the actual event happening. Imagination is a wonderful thing, and you should aim to unlock the imagination of the caller as you speak to them. Describe emotions of the kids in graphic terms such as ‘fits of giggles’, ‘uncontrollable laughter’, ‘beaming smiles’, ‘booing the baddie and cheering the good guy’, ‘happily joining in the song’ and so on.

8. State or restate your unique selling point, and emphasise why this is such a useful benefit. Basically, you have to convince your caller that they should book you rather than the other three or so magicians that they just called. So your USP must be persuasive. If **you** don’t think it’s strong enough, it probably isn’t, and you may need to rethink it or change it.
9. At this point you should ask how that sounds to them so far, to which they will probably reply ‘great’ or quite likely ‘how much do you charge?’
10. The price part. State the price without hesitating, but include a brief summary of what’s included. Remember, you may know your show inside out, with all the benefits, but this is probably the first time the caller has heard this information, so it doesn’t hurt to restate it briefly.

A useful phrase to say is, “your investment for this show is...” then name your price. Psychologically, the word ‘investment’ sounds much better than saying the words price or fee.

By the way, coming up in the future, you'll receive some very special information with regard to pricing and 'packaging' shows that is one of the key components of the entire course, so look out for that. You'll be excited when you find out this information because it will unlock phenomenal potential for your business.

There is one thing we can tell you right now as a powerful technique. When a caller immediately says: "How much do you charge?" you should say, "I have a full range of prices and each one is specific for the type of entertainment package I'll create for your event. Let me ask you some questions to make sure I recommend the right package and then I'll be able to give you an exact price. Does that make sense?"

11. Ask the caller frequently, "how does that sound?" The reason being it is a viewpoint question that can't elicit just a yes or no response. When you ask 'how does that sound' it is a much deeper probing question, which will give you a helpful answer. For example, they might say, "it's a little more than I wanted to pay" to which you might be able to suggest leaving something out of the show in return for a slightly lower price. Or they might say, "that sounds great so far" in which case you can assume they want to book the show, and pencil it in your diary, reassuring them that they made the right decision!

12. Commonly with children's parties, usually the caller will be the mother of the child whose party it will be, in which case at the conclusion of the call they might say that they need to talk to their husband or partner about it. Respond by saying "that's fine, but I would recommend that you get back to me as soon as you can, as I do get booked up very quickly, and I wouldn't want you to be disappointed.

Make The Script Your Own

So you now have a detailed overview of what to put in your script. We deliberately decided not to provide an actual script for you to copy for several reasons.

You need your own personality to come across, and your show will have its own specific features and benefits, which will be different to any other magician.

When you put together your script using the guidelines we have provided, sometimes you will go in a different direction, according to the response of the caller. That being so, try and make your script like a flow chart so that it's clear which section to move onto, whatever they say.

At this point, it's worth emphasising that although you have all the necessary tools provided for you in the form of a step by step plan, it is only of use if you put it into action. Don't wait for the calls to come in on their own – they won't. None of the systems we give you in this course are difficult. They don't require large sums of money or a college degree, but, and it's a big but, ***they will only work if you put them into practice!***

Having agreed a date and time on the phone, it will cost you little to be efficient. Create a booking form, and send it in duplicate, with a covering letter that says 'thank you for booking me to appear at your event. I enclose a stamped address envelope for the return of the enclosed form.' On the form, you should have the clients name, address and telephone number, the event venue if a different address, type of event (retirement party / kids party etc), start time, time you can get access to the room, how many in audience, the age of any special guest or honorary, the dimensions of the room, and so on. A sample of this form is provided later in the course.

In the next module, we'll be looking at exactly how to perform magic for children. You may have heard the expression, 'never work with children or animals.' Well we'll show you how to perform for kids in a way that works every time. You'll be 100% in control, parents will love you, kids will love you, and your bank manager will love you, because there is great money to be made.

We'll discuss every aspect of performing for kids, from A to Z so that you'll be able to go out directly and start making money. As usual, we leave you with the action points to work on ...

ACTION TASKS

MODULE 5

1. As per the guidance in the module, identify the features and benefits of my show.
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2. Create my own, magic mission statement and USP.
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3. Gather information about the schools in my area, specifically the head teacher's names, and the school addresses.
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4. Seek out teachers through any means possible to get their viewpoint on topics that are of concern in the area, and that fit in with the curriculum.
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5. Devise and place an advertisement (within my budget) in my local yellow pages and local paper when I am ready to offer some shows.
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6. Compile my own telephone script to effectively handle enquiries, and practice it until I am completely comfortable with it.
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