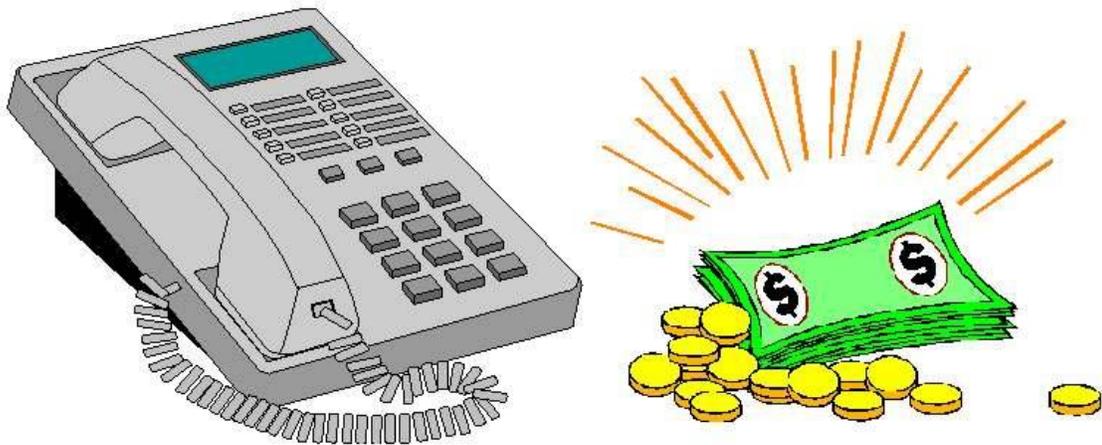


The No BS, Sure-Fire Way To Getting Your Prospects To Book You Over The Phone



***"A GUARANTEED System to handle incoming
phone calls that will send your magic career
into the stratosphere, making your bank
account swell!"***

copyright 2008 by Cris Johnson &
Phantasms Magic Productions

COPYRIGHT NOTICES

Copyright 2008 by Cris Johnson, Inc.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical or electronic, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher except for the owner's personal use as outlined in the materials manual.

Published by Event Horizon Publishing
8310 Lockport Rd.
Niagara Falls, NY 14304

Tel: 716-940-8963
E-mail: crisjohnsoninfo@verizon.net

Printed and bound in the United States of America

LEGAL NOTICES

While attempts have been made to verify information provided in this publication, neither the author nor the Publisher assumes any responsibility for errors, omissions, or contrary interpretation of the subject matter herein.

This publication is not intended for use as a source of legal or accounting advice. The Publisher wants to stress that the information contained herein may be subject to varying state and/or local laws or regulations. All users are advised to retain competent counsel to determine what state and/or local laws or regulations may apply to user's particular business.

The purchaser or reader of this publication assumes responsibility for the use of these materials and information. Adherence to all applicable laws and regulations, both federal and state and local, governing professional licensing, business practices, advertising, and all other aspects of doing business in the United States or any other jurisdiction is the sole responsibility of the purchaser or reader. The author and Publisher assumes no responsibility or liability whatsoever on the behalf of any purchaser or reader of these materials.

Any perceived slights of specific people or organizations is unintentional.

Table Of Contents

Introduction	page 3
Why A Phone Script?	page 5
Know Your Market	page 7
Birthdays	
Day Cares	
Schools	
Family Events	
Corporate Events/Adult Functions	
Features & Benefits	page 20
Describing Your Act to Non-Magicians	
My Scripts' Features & Benefits Breakdowns	page 24
Birthdays	
Daycares	
Schools	
Family Events	
Adult/Corporate Events	
Package Selling	page 42
Why Package Selling Is So Critical	
Constructing Offers: General Tips	
Package Names	
Cons Of a La Carte Selling	
What Can You Add to Increase the Perceived Value?	
Length Of Performance	
“Wow” Tricks	
Live Animals	
Backdrop	
Giveaways	
Strolling/Stage Combos	
Slack Adjuster	
Good, Better, Best	
Other General Selling Tips	page 49
Price	
Guarantees	
Vocal Inflection/Confidence	
Two BIG Tips	
Building Rapport	
Answering The Phone	
Your Answering Machine	
Different Opinions on Answering EVERY Call	
Getting Organized	
Objections	
Price	
Walking Away	
Other Objections	
“Bad” Words	
Questionnaire To Build Scripts	

Closing Remarks.....page 61

Introduction

This book, to put it simply, teaches you a sure-fire, professional way to explain your magic services to your prospects when they do call in ways that they can appreciate and understand, thereby increasing your bookings and money. It doesn't deal with how to get them to call you, although I do have other materials available. This System is focused on how to handle incoming calls in a professional manner

I wrote this book because I firmly believe that if our business, our art, our industry is to grow as a respected way of earning a living, then we as a whole really need to start presenting ourselves as professional businesspeople.

I also want to say up front that there is nothing 'magical' about what I'm going to teach you. Everything you'll learn is based on years and years of sound marketing and psychology. For magic to grow, we all need to move our business practices into the 21st century and join everyone!

Although I have some credit to hand out regarding this whole concept (which I'll get to in a minute), I've had a difficult time finding a LOT of detailed information about phone scripts 'out there' for magicians. (While I've seen things here and there in other courses, I feel that there's a need for a definitive book on JUST phone scripts *for magicians*, and not just a chapter or two in a book.)

First of all, I became aware of the idea of phone scripts in the early 90's when I was working for the Ziebart Corporation. Ziebart, for those of you who don't know, is one of the world leaders in after-market automotive accessories such as rust proofing, car alarms, and car detailing.

At the time, one of the many hats that I wore was that of a salesperson. It was my job to speak to the customers either on the phone when they called or when they actually came to the physical address.

I have to admit, when this aspect of my job was presented to me, I was less than thrilled. At the time I didn't feel that I had what it took to be a salesperson, believing, wrongly at the time, that salespeople were just 'born.' I also didn't give a crap about the company and had no desire to sell their services. I was just collecting a paycheck.

Not long after assuming my duties, I was informed that I'd be required to attend mandatory sales meetings after regular work hours. It was at the first meeting that I was introduced to the idea of phone scripts.

Most of the people there treated the whole thing as a joke, believing that reading out of a book, or even referring to a book, when talking to someone was silly.

I have to admit that while I had no great love for my job or the industry that I was in, I reluctantly had to admit that the psychology used in constructing these scripts was sound. I'd studied psychology in college and despite my desire to fit in with the nay-sayers, I couldn't find any holes in the concepts.

At the time I was also a struggling magician, doing about 20-25 shows a year, and thought that the whole phone script idea might help me. I struggled with the idea a bit, but really wasn't sure how to adapt something written for an automotive niche to my world of entertainment...silly me!

Fast-forward a few years. I'd purchased a course from an Atlanta-based magician named Dave Dee. Dave's course offered a nice introduction to how to sell yourself, package selling, and phone scripts.

While it was a decent intro, I really felt more depth was needed. For instance, what about different markets? Dave Dee's phone scripts focused only on birthdays. It took me several more years of learning what clients wanted for different events and how critical it was that I structured what I said and offered to them based on what they wanted/needed. It was of critical importance, because up until that moment, my scripts were a lot alike, and so was my act for that matter.

In this book, I'm going to give you specific examples of what prospects want based on what market. We'll cover: birthdays, day cares, elementary schools (both 'for fun' programs as well as educational/motivational programs, outdoor shows (such as festivals, family reunions & company events), corporate/adult events, objections, and more.

I'll touch on some alternate ideas from other experts such as Dave Risley, Children's Entertainer, different ways to construct your scripts, how to organize them – and thus yourself -and more.

Finally, I'll also give you the different scripts for the markets I just mentioned. I'll explain a little about why I do what I do, which isn't the only way, but it should get you going on the path to coming up with your own scripts.

As you read this text, it is my hope that you'll come away from this experience with a clearer idea of how to identify the needs & wants in the markets you'll be pursuing, how to structure your scripts to appeal to your prospects, how to overcome objections, and a lot more.

I hope you don't underestimate the importance of being able to sell your services over the phone. You can practice your fancy sleight of hand, buy your expensive props, and craft the funniest & most engaging patter for your show, but until you know how to sell yourself, how to almost 'hypnotize' your prospects, then none of it matters.

My phone script book is literally worth several thousand dollars to me. I have never shared it with any magician in my market, and never will. It has put food on my table, money in the bank, allowed me to be my own boss with no one to answer to, and a lot more. I really hope you use the material in here—it can change your life just as it's changed mine.

Why A Phone Script?

I want to thank you for buying this System. Before I continue, I just want to get one thing out of the way first...

THIS IS NOT ABOUT COLD CALLING!!

This entire system is about how to conduct yourself in a professional manner when incoming calls come to you, allowing you to present yourself and your services in a way that clearly convinces your prospects that you are the right person for whatever event he or she is having.

I know most entertainers out there HATE cold calling, so I just wanted to get that out of the way. (Although I do cold call, it was from a different System that I learned for the day care market. I'll touch upon it briefly, because I think it's a good system, but that will *not* be the focus of this text.)

Back to the matter at hand.

A lot of entertainers look at me with a blank look when I talk about phone scripts. Not so coincidentally, those are the entertainers who are usually struggling the most to get any gigs at all. They just wing it when someone calls.

Not a good idea!

I'd like to pose a hypothetical question to you: Why do we need phone scripts? (Note: If you're a seasoned pro, then chances are you already know the answer.)

Well, for me having phone scripts has meant an increase in bookings, plain and simple. The scripts have made my life a lot easier, because I no longer have to 'think' much when I'm on the phone with the client. I already know how I'm going to present myself, so therefore my attention isn't divided—I can concentrate completely on what the prospect has to say.

I can also concentrate on what I can do to make his/her event a complete success, which is or should be one of our primary goals as magicians.

Another benefit of phone scripts is it allows you to figure out, in advance, what you may say to overcome objections because no matter how good you are, there is no such thing as a perfect offer: people will have objections to price, what you do, and on and on and it's the true professional who recognizes this and has planned for it.

One of the biggest benefits is sounding professional on the phone! Boy is this huge! So many times I've called a business –mechanic, pizza shop, other entertainers, etc – and the person answers the phone and says "Hello?" (Horrible!) Or barks out the name so fast that you can barely understand it: "Tony's!" (Not much better, in my opinion.)

Another side benefit –and I hesitate to admit this – is what if you’re sleeping and the phone wakes you up? Since I’ve gone ‘full-time’ several years ago, I tend to sleep in until 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning if I don’t have any early shows. Many times, the first phone call of the day comes at 8:30 or so, meaning they wake me up!

I can’t tell you how many times I’ve asked a few necessary questions to find out about the client’s event and then read my script, allowing me a few moments to really wake up and focus on what the client says after I’ve explained what I can do for her.

I know that sleeping in isn’t looked favorably by many people, but what the heck, it’s the truth.

What if you just walk in the door with a bag of groceries and the phone rings? One thing about our business is you never quite know when the phone’s going to ring. I don’t carry a pager or cell phone with me when I’m out running errands, so when I’m home, I take most of my calls.

I’ll talk later about the idea of taking EVERY SINGLE call and some differing opinions on it later, but now I just want to hit the basics, and this includes explaining to all of the beginners out there why having a phone script is an absolute necessity.

Know Your Market

Before we get into constructing the scripts, I want to point out something very important that I touched on earlier, and that's the fact that you'll need a different script for every market you're looking to work in.

What do I mean by "market?"

I have to remind myself that some of you may not be familiar with all of this terminology. A market is basically a certain 'niche' or area within a given field. For instance, for magicians, we may work in the birthday 'market' or the 'trade show market.'

For me, my favorite is the 'school market.'

We need different scripts because each market's prospects have their own needs and desires. They differ from market to market, quite drastically in many cases. Understanding what your prospects want in each market is of utmost importance if you expect them to be convinced that you can solve their problem!

That's an important idea, one to think about. From this moment forward, think of yourself as not selling your magic tricks in and of themselves...think instead of the idea that your magic is a vehicle to solving a particular problem, desire or need for your prospect.

This is a VERY big idea, one that usually takes a lot of beginners a while to really grasp. This is closely related to "*Features & Benefits*," the title of a later chapter.

For now, I'd like to take an in-depth look at some of the wants and desires of the markets that I'm currently involved in. While everything that I talk about has definitely proven to be true for me and other professionals, it's by no means complete, as marketing our services is such a broad field.

Let's start with one of the easiest shows to book, birthdays.

Birthdays

I wanted to start with birthdays because this is one of the areas that I think needs the most work when it comes to people actually going out into the world before they're ready to present a show.

Think about it. Birthday moms usually just want someone to make little Johnny's party special. Sounds like a simple idea, right?

Not so.

I'm sure most of you out there could fill a book full of stories of those "horrible magicians" in your market who do a really bad job and drive prices down in your area.

Other markets like schools and day cares, for example, are often a little pickier about who they hire and they're careful to spread the word if they get someone inappropriate.

Birthday moms? They get burned all the time. Birthday moms are usually the easiest to get a job from, meaning that people out there should, in an ideal world, know how to properly present a birthday party magic show, in order to prevent the perception that "anyone can do that stuff."

What do birthday moms want from an entertainer?

Well, let's start with what they DON'T want:

- They don't want anything inappropriate.
- They don't want the kids to be bored.
- They don't want stuff that goes over their heads.
- They don't want someone that's going to yell at the kids when they get out of line.
- They don't want something too juvenile for whatever age group that's involved.
- They don't want something that's difficult or is going to take a lot of work on their part – they already have enough to do.

There's more, but that's a good start. First, what qualifies as inappropriate? Well, now we're getting into a bit of a gray area. That's partially going to depend on you as a person, but I think we can safely eliminate blood and geek tricks (of course the old pulling-off-your-thumb chestnut wouldn't qualify.)

I say it's a gray area because for 7-year-olds and up, I'll very often perform an arm chopper routine, but I know that some performers would just balk at the idea. Personally, I feel that if you're in a room with a bunch of hyper 8-year-old boys, there's nothing better.

Being in the same room with 8-year-old girls is very often a different experience! That's why it's a gray area. Girls are often more subdued and...well, skittish, in my experience. (I think girls are a much better audience most of the time.)

If you're just starting out, leave the chopping effects at home until you learn to read your audiences, something that only experience can teach.

What about boredom, as mentioned above? You wouldn't BELIEVE how many times I've heard or seen magicians boring their young birthday audiences to tears with fancy split-fan productions or complicated sleight-of-hand with no other entertaining elements.

Here's what kids want: they want to laugh and have a good time. Most of the time, sleight of hand is going to bore the kids because they're not laughing, and they're not directly involved. I think that if you can either involve them directly or keep 'em laughing, sleight of hand will work.

For instance, in my own birthday show, I do a sponge ball routine with some sleight of hand. The routine just KILLS because I've crafted a funny script AND I use a volunteer. The routine also works because it seems as though the volunteer is doing the majority of the magic. Adapt this idea to your own work.

What about stuff that goes over their heads? The easiest example of this would be mentalism. If you think the kids are going to be amazed at your Q&A act or amazed at your headline prediction, think again. Try to keep birthday show trick concepts and patter lines simple so kids can follow them. If they can't follow something, they're going to get restless, and you don't want that!

However, there are exceptions to every rule—I'll often do a funny fork-bending routine for older kids' birthdays. Although it technically qualifies as mentalism, it's still very visual and fun if you get a volunteer to help.

How about the inexperienced person that yells at the kids, constantly getting/trying to get them to sit down and be quiet during the show? What fun is that? Kids have to sit all day and be quiet five days a week in school. They're tired of it!

Of course, this can be a gray area for the novice. I think laughing and having fun is appropriate, but kids running around the room is not appropriate. In most cases in my 15 years experience, the parents and other adults will usually step in if the kids get out of hand. (Of course, parties held at country clubs by rich snobs...well, they're usually as spoiled as the kids...)

Let the kids have fun. Yes, they do need limits. For that, I recommend learning a couple of really good control techniques. If you don't have any, give me a call and I'll help you.

What about juvenile material? Well, this ties in directly to know your age. Doing the blooming bouquet is going to go over like a lead balloon at a 9-year old's party!

Difficulty! This is a biggie. The birthday mom does not want to hear that your show takes two hours to set up, and you have to have every piece of furniture moved out of the room. They want it to be easy!

Now's a good time to get into what birthday moms want...

- **They want it to be easy** – See above! The poor birthday mom is already running around trying to take care of food, cake, games, and trying to keep track of 20 screaming kids who were never taught manners. Give the poor woman a rest!
- **They want their child to be the star** – You’d think this would be obvious, but so many boneheads out there just don’t get it. The whole party is for the child! The only possible exception? One-year-old parties, but I’ll cover that later.
- **They want to impress other parents** – Don’t underestimate this! Ever heard the saying “Keeping up with the Jones?” Birthday parties are getting to be bigger & more elaborate every year.
- **They want it to be funny** – This is a no-brainer because most parents know their kids want to laugh. Think of all the fart sounds a 7-year-old boy can come up with at the dinner table! I have now placed myself in a tiny, prestigious group: The group of magicians who have the word “fart” in a manual!
- **They want the kids to be involved** – If the kids aren’t involved, then why are you there? It’s cheaper to just put a DVD in for the kids!
- **They want a CLEAN show** – By ‘clean’ I mean nothing dirty or offensive. It’s impossible to know for sure what kind of a sense of humor your clients and guests will have, so it isn’t worth the damage to your reputation by chancing an off-color remark or innuendo.
- **Perceived Affordability** – This is an idea that we’re going to cover in depth later...in truth, you’ll be sick to death of it, but it’s one of the keys to the vault. Basically, you want to create the idea that you’re giving the client a lot more than you’re charging them. People like to think they’re getting a deal. It’s also one of the reasons I’m able to charge two or three times what other children’s entertainers charge in my market!
- **Experience helps!** – If you’ve been doing kid shows for 20 years, it’d be a good idea to mention it, because it will help alleviate some of Mom’s concerns.
- **They want approval from their child** – Think of the party as a big bribe! This is something that I doubt any birthday mom or dad (usually mom) would ever admit to, but that’s really the biggest reason you’re there.

Day Cares

Many of the same criteria apply from birthdays to day cares with a few extras. First of all, day care directors are extremely busy people and don’t like to be bothered

with someone who has to make six trips to his car to bring in all of his equipment...I used to be one of those people!

One of the best things you can tell a director of a day care is that your show sets up in a few minutes and you can do it “anywhere.” Many were the times I’d booked myself a busy schedule of shows all day long, and when I got to certain day cares, the room wasn’t ready yet – there were chairs that needed to be moved, tables set aside, etc.

For the preschool kids, things have to be EXTREMELY simple for the kids to understand. I often mention that everything is “age-appropriate,” which is a ‘buzz’ term that directors will pick up on. Here’s a market where color and simple things are critical—most of what you do doesn’t even have to amaze anyone...just make the kids laugh. That’s all these kids want, and if you don’t give it to them, they will tune you out.

As with birthdays or ANY market, for that matter, if you’re not promising (and delivering) a clean show with no offending remarks then you’re an idiot. In this day and age, with ‘political correctness’ being at an all-time high, we can’t afford the risk of offending even one person. Think of it as smart business – you want other people to hire you? Well they won’t if you’re doing questionable material.

Other things to consider when putting together a phone script for day cares is the idea of insurance. Many day care chains that I work for insist that I carry liability insurance. This is not only necessary for some clients; it’s also something you should be doing anyway, especially if you plan on doing magic full time.

Another important note on day cares: the majority of the time, the only shows I get called for are summer programs, when the day cares suddenly find themselves filled with school-age kids as well as their usual preschoolers.

When a director or teacher calls you for a show like this, it’s a good idea to let them know that the shows can be tailored for preschool or for school age kids, or you can structure a ‘combo’ show. Many times, you can also get them to book two shows: one for the preschoolers and a separate school age show if you offer them a discount.

Before I leave this section on day cares, I have to urge you, if you’ve never worked in day cares before, to contact Dave Risley at www.daverisley.com, because his stuff is outstanding.

Most magicians don’t have a clue on how to properly present a program for this age group. Get stuff from the Riz—you’ll be glad you did!

Also, most day cares are usually far too busy to call you. Like I mentioned before, usually all I receive calls for are summer shows. If you want to work in day cares consistently throughout the year, you’ll have to contact them. Dave Risley has a lot of material that covers this, including three-day classes that teach the intricacies of cold calling to day cares.

Day cares often desire theme shows too—if you’re adept at creating theme shows, some ideas to get you started are: nutrition, the environment, dental hygiene, and safety. Of course, if you’re too busy (like me), Dave Risley’s got a whole bunch of theme shows in one package.

Day cares can be a LOT of fun if you present the proper shows.

Schools

As mentioned before, schools are my favorite market. It’s also the most demanding market that I’m involved with. Many times you’ll be performing for several HUNDRED students at a time! The money is great, the shows are fun if you know how to do them, and it can be extremely rewarding.

With those things in mind, here is a list of things that schools want along with some of my comments. Ideally, your phone scripts should cover all or most of these things:

- ***Schools want a PROFESSIONAL presentation*** – By this, I mean schools want their presenters to be nicely dressed, nice props, etc. If you’re a clown, make sure your costume is of good quality. If you’re a magician, same thing: no homes, scuffed shoes, or scraggly hair. I wouldn’t recommend baggy jeans or a T-shirt either! I wear a sports jacket and dress shoes to schools. Presentation goes a long way. Hygiene goes a long way, here!
- ***Schools want the program to be easy*** – Same as every other market...nobody wants to deal with a Prima Dona who needs special lighting, tables, and a bowl of green M&Ms. These people are busy, and the easier you can make it for whoever hires you (as well as the whole faculty) the better results you’ll get.
- ***Most of the time, you need THEMED presentations*** – This is a biggie. Most schools don’t have the time, budget, or desire to bring in programs that are just for fun. To work in schools, you’re going to need themed presentations. There are many resources out there when it comes to theme shows. I sell several programs, Barry Mitchell has some great material, Dave Risley (of course) has some as well as many others.
- ***Having your own sound system is a plus!*** I wouldn’t say this is a necessity if you’re just starting out, but I can’t imagine not bringing my own. I tried using a school’s system once, and I swore I’d never do it again. I just wasn’t used to it, so I wound up doing a lot of “uhhh...” and so on. Besides, by bringing your own, it’s one less thing for the person hiring you to worry about. I know in my own experience that it has often influenced whether or not I was going to get hired.

- ***They want clean programs*** – Yes, this is something I will continue to harp on. It frustrates me to no end when I hear about some moron who tosses out what he thinks is a funny little joke...which only serves to make it harder for guys like me to get hired.
- ***They want audience participation*** – As with other markets, join-in fun is necessary to help justify the idea of having a presenter and not just reading a book or watching a movie. Participation can include on stage assistants and certain actions that the whole audience can do from their seats.
- ***Perceived Affordability*** – Like I said, you're going to see this a lot in this book. People want to believe that you're giving them a deal; not by lowering your prices to every boob that asks you to, but instead creating the impression that you're giving them a lot more value for the fee. Don't worry; we'll be covering this in depth. This idea is especially important in schools where funding may be tight.
- ***They want GOOD magic!*** To build credibility, you really need to be good at what you do. This not only includes working the trick properly but also stage presence, audience management...hmmm, that reminds me...
- ***Guarantee*** – This isn't something that they look for, but it certainly will help convince them that you're for real, simply because so few magicians are doing it.
- ***They want the kids to be under control at all times*** – The teachers who drag their kids back to class after your show are going to hate you if they have a hard time settling the kids down. You'll be scoring some critical brownie points if you point out the fact in your phone script that you keep the kids under control.
- ***They want flexibility*** – No, I'm not talking about being a contortionist; school administrators want presentations that can be done anywhere. You'll encounter all kinds of different situations in schools: Maybe you'll be in the gym on the floor with the kids. Maybe you'll be in an auditorium on a stage. Maybe you'll be in a cafeteria. Letting them know up front that you can work with whatever situation they have at their school will go a long way to establishing good rapport.
- ***They'd like fast set-up times*** – I know I mentioned 'easy' before, but this is a good point. Letting the school know that you have a short set-up time puts you way above the guy that needs an hour or more. Why? The assembly area may be used for something different every half hour! It may be used for lunches, gym classes, band practice, and who knows what else?
- ***They want experience*** – If you've been doing school shows for a while, you'd better let them know. Most schools have been burned at least once...not

necessarily by magicians, but by a presenter of some kind. When talking to them, name-drop a few of the schools you've performed for recently. I wouldn't even mention other markets such as birthdays. Schools don't care...they just want to know that you can cut it for a school show. If you're VERY experienced, a good idea here is to mention that you have a money-back guarantee...and no one's ever taken you up on it. That's actually a powerful technique in any market.

Schools are a very demanding market. Most of the time, to work steadily in schools, you'll need to send out direct mail and push the fact that you have theme shows. That's beyond the scope of this book, but I will say that 15-20% of my school shows simply call me (whether they found my web site, my name in the phone book, or whatever) for a family fun night, spring carnival, end-of-the-school-year celebration or what have you.

These are "fun" events that don't usually require themed presentations. Having a good phone script will ensure you're ready for those calls. You'll also need separate scripts, one for 'just for fun' shows and others for your themed educational material.

Family Events/Company Picnics

This is one of the more "open ended" categories. This could include: Company picnics, family reunions, outdoor festivals, indoor winter festivals, and the list goes on. After I list my thoughts here, you may eventually want to have different phone scripts for different categories.

The reason why I listed family events with company picnics is because in the majority of my experience, there's a lot of common thought to a family reunion or picnic and a company picnic, namely the kids.

For me, most of the people calling for this kind of thing are looking primarily for entertainment for the kids. Oh sure, they may tell you that it's for everyone and it may very well be, but as soon as kids are mentioned, I know that's going to be my main focus, and I think that's important for a few different reasons.

First of all, many adults unfortunately still consider magic as "just for kids" and "beneath them." If there are kids present, in my experience, many adults will ignore you or at least draw most of their enjoyment of your show by watching your interaction with the kids. There's nothing wrong with that, either, as long as the entertainer (you!) is aware of that tendency up front.

I know there's exceptions to this: I've often done programs for kids where the adults are riveted with attention and enjoy the show as much as the kids...right now I'm just talking about the general rule.

Second of all, if you've got kids in the audience and you start playing exclusively to the adults with material kids don't comprehend or care about (mentalism, most card

tricks, etc.) you're going to 'lose' them...and they'll let you know by becoming restless, or shouting things out, or...

In my own opinion, if there are kids in the audience, you must play to them to have a successful show. The whole show doesn't have to involve kid material, but I feel you should walk a balance between the kids and the adults, both in your show and how you sell yourself to your prospect, which is why I mention it here.

Personally, if there are kids in the audience, then two-thirds of my show plays to them, even if I've been hired to entertain 'everybody.'

You should know that many family events are often (at least in my market) held during the summer. It seems as though a lot of events are held during the summer to take advantage of the (presumably) nice weather. With that in mind, here are some of the things people are looking for in entertainment:

- ***Easy to work with*** – Obviously, this applies to any prospect, but in these situations, it often becomes more critical than ever, as the person hiring you is often just trying to find someone, anyone, to entertain their group. Since a lot of events are held outside, the issue of “not needing anything” becomes even more crucial. Here's another situation where having your own sound system helps, because it's one less thing for the person calling you to worry about.
- ***Flexible*** – Can you do a show for 10 people or a hundred? Can you perform outside? Can you perform on grass, on a bumpy hillside? For adults AND kids? For just kids? What about a group of kids...ranging from 1 to 16 years old? And no, they usually can't narrow it down more than that. Can you perform right after the clown...in the same spot? Can you set up right next to the bounce house? Why does your sound system need power???

The biggest issue they want to know is can you handle an outside show? Reassuring them about this is important. Of course, not all of these events will be outside, which again serves as a reason that you may want separate phone scripts for outside or inside shows.

The weird requests and situations you'll find yourself thrown into vary greatly. Being able to communicate your flexibility with the prospect will certainly increase your chances of being hired. That's one of the reasons this category is deceptively 'open-ended.'

You may want a separate script for just children shows in family events, a separate one for all ages, a separate one for company picnics...I myself have several headings. While a great deal of the info does overlap, I think it's good to separate things into 'sub-heads' for those little differences. We'll be talking about getting everything organized later—right now I'm still laying the groundwork.

Just be sure you know what you're getting into! (We'll cover that later.)

- ***Clean Humor*** – Yep, I haven't forgotten! Clean humor is critical in EVERY market. If you go to an event and make some comment or do a trick that offends someone, you make the person who hired you look back. Not good for a family reunion, and even worse for a company picnic where the person's job could be affected.
- ***They want to look good*** – Obviously, the other points I've mentioned tie into this, but this little nugget, which again most people won't admit to, serves as their hidden (and often subconscious) motives to how & why they do things...including booking entertainment. Everyone wants to look good! Keep it in mind. Your phone scripts must subtly convey the fact that by hiring you, they will look good in everyone's eyes.
- ***Stage or strolling*** – This may fall under the 'flexibility' category, and I may be in the minority here, but I feel if you're doing any kind of open-ended event, it's a good idea to give your client several options.

I'm actually getting a head of myself because we'll be talking about package selling in great depth later, but for family events such as this, offering close-up magic or a standing show of some kind will increase the likelihood of you getting hired because often the person calling isn't sure what they want or need. Giving them choices also helps because the opposite may be true: they may have close-up in mind, but if you don't mention that you do it, they may just move on to the next name in the phone book, and vice versa.

- ***Experience*** – They want to know they're getting someone competent. With all of the boneheads out there pushing themselves long before they're ready, people's suspicions are often difficult to overcome. Stating that you have a lot of experience is a step in the right direction. Offering to send testimonials to them (along with a bit of name-dropping) is a good idea.
- ***Guarantee*** – Why not? If you're good, a guarantee really reassures some people. I've never had anyone take me up on it, either, so you don't have to worry about people taking advantage of it, as long as you've got a great show.
- ***Perceived Affordability*** – People want to think that they're getting a deal. This means, in a nutshell, that you must justify your prices. Of course, we'll be covering that in great detail later.
- ***Good Magic!*** – As in other categories, they want you to do really neat stuff that amazes people, involves them, and ensures everyone has a good time.
- ***The Really Cool Trick*** – If you've got a terrific effect that always gets everyone excited, now's the time to tell the prospect about it. Getting them to say

“Wow!” about something in your act is going to make an impression. They want to know that you do neat stuff. When ‘shopping’ my competition several years ago in Pittsburgh, I actually had a respected performer tell me (remember, he thought I was a regular prospect) “Oh, yeah, I do all of the usual tricks.” Ugh!

I know this category is so broad, but a lot of what’s rattling around in people’s minds is somewhat similar, just for this introductory section. Once you see many of my headings and script subdivisions, you’ll have a better feel for how I have everything organized.

Now I want to jump right into one of the categories that has a lot of interest to magicians because of the money...

Corporate Events/Adult Functions

I would guess that nothing makes a struggling magician’s eyes light up and the saliva flow than the idea of corporate magic. I’ll be the first to admit that I don’t have a lot of experience performing motivational shows for adults and very little experience in trade shows, both regarded as among the highest paid venues in corporate magic.

Most of my experience lies in banquets, holiday parties, and luncheons, events where entertainment is brought in to entertain the guests.

A lot has been made about the “high fees” associated with this market, but I feel that focusing strictly on the potential for a big payday is a mistake. I firmly believe that the best way to get the gig is to serve the client’s best interests. Many were the times I turned down a more lucrative stage show for a corporate client and convinced them to go with my strolling close-up magic which for me, currently, means less money.

Why?

Many times, the facilities that held these events were in an “L” shape or some other odd configuration that would have made very difficult for a major part of the audience to see and enjoy my show.

Always put the client’s interests first. Always.

Before I delve into what corporate clients want (and therefore what you should focus on when working on your phone scripts), I will say that if you want corporate work, there is a little quirk about many corporate clients that bears mentioning. Many times, a company will not hire someone if the fee is not high enough.

The thinking, supposedly, is that if the fees are not high enough, then the performer must not be any good and therefore not worth hiring. Of course, like any market, if the fee is too high, then the performer won’t get hired either.

For the most part, this is in my own experience, the only market I've encountered this curious tendency. In most other markets, birthday, day care, schools, etc., the client will often –*when all other things are considered equal* (we'll touch upon this SUPER important idea later) – look for a bargain.

Some corporations look for a deal, too, but a lot of them really zero in on that mysterious middle ground. Gleaning what I've learned from several other sources over the years, I've developed a phone script system that solves this problem. When I get to the sections on package selling, I'll credit my sources and you'll see what I mean.

With all of that in mind, let's take a look at what a corporate client wants...

- ***Perceived Affordability*** – There's that phrase again! It keeps popping up for a reason. Why? Even the wealthiest clients will only pay if they feel that you're giving them more value than you're charging.
- ***Experience*** – One of the reasons why this market is tougher to book is because very often these prospects place more of a value on your past experience. They want to know that you've done this before and are therefore worth their time.
- ***Cleanliness Counts*** – Didn't think I forgot about this, did you? As with the other markets, in this day and age it usually isn't worth doing any questionable material. If you've got experience doing questionable material and you have a client base that enjoys it...well, at first, I was going to say "Good for you" but I still disagree, because word travels and what one person finds funny another may not. I firmly believe the key to getting hired a LOT is being clean. People are afraid of getting burned.
- ***Funny*** – Despite the fact that audiences expect cleanliness, they still want it to be funny. In fact, my own personal opinion is this: many adults that I encounter still feel magic is "just for kids," therefore, to entertain them, humor is often more valuable than the magic itself.

Magic is often seen as showing off, so what better way to combat that negativity than with laughter? Look at the brilliant Harry Anderson. For me, his most memorable routine involved a thumb tip and a Himber wallet – not exactly state-of-the-art material, but he's so darn funny for adults that they accept him as "not a kids' entertainer."

I stress how funny my show is when talking to prospects, and I've gotten enough feedback to conclude that while people do like to be amazed (when it's presented properly) laughing along with the amazement is a much, much better package and a much better sell. Good humor helps take away a lot of the "kiddie factor" in adults' minds in my experience.

- ***Audience Participation*** – Believe it or not, corporate planners really love the idea of their people actually getting involved. I think the days of just doing magic without any audience interaction are wearing thin, and more and more people are tending to look at it as just plain showing off. To keep a modern-day audience's attention, audience participation is key, which leads me to my next point...
- ***No One Will Be the Butt of Jokes*** - ...No one deserves or wants to be made fun of. People will enjoy helping out if they're made to be the stars of the show. Communicating this fact to your prospects on the phone will help establish you as someone who will respect the (often frail) egos of the adult audiences.
- ***"Holy Cow!"*** – Yes, people still want to be amazed. You can be the politest, politically correct-minded person in the world, but if your material doesn't sound exciting over the phone...no one will want you. Don't worry, I'm going to give you some great ideas and tips on how to talk about your act in ways that the prospect will not only understand but getting excited about.
- ***Easy To Work With*** – Again, like every other market, they don't want a lot of headaches associated with their entertainment. Being easy to work with in this market will often get you further than if your act was amazing. In fact, when I'm talking to a prospect, I'll even assure her that I'll take care of my own arrangements at the hotel/banquet facility if they're using such a place. That's a huge tip for corporate work.
- ***Look Good to Others*** – Yep, it's that subconscious greed factor working. People want to look good! They want the credit for bringing in a great entertainer! Assuring them of this in a subtle way over the phone helps their ego a lot.
- ***Guarantee*** – In this day and age, people are often reassured by a guarantee, simply because so few entertainers are using one! If you're confident in your work, why not guarantee it? It'll go a long way to setting you above the other jackalopes in your market.

Now that I've given you a taste of what many of the markets' prospects are looking for in their entertainment, its time now to turn to one of the major building blocks in constructing not just your phone scripts but any offer...

Features & Benefits

I'm really excited about this section because this is where we really get into the "nitty-gritty" of constructing our scripts.

For those of you new to this whole idea of phone scripts (and maybe even marketing), a few definitions may prove valuable to you...

- **Feature** – A characteristic of your act. For example, I use live animals in my act. I also make balloon animals.
- **Benefit** – What the client and/or her audiences get from that feature.

This may seem confusing at first, so let me elaborate.

It's important for you to realize that clients are not buying your magic tricks or even you. They're buying the solution that you bring to their particular entertainment concern or problem. It's critical that you make this mental shift in order to truly be successful selling your services over the phone.

This concept comes from the brilliant minds of Dan Kennedy, Dave Risley, and many others.

Let's look at why this is true.

This gets a little deep into the nature of people, by and large, so forgive me in advance. Quite simply, if you look at the majority of people in today's society, they're motivated by differing levels of greed. I don't mean that in a negative sense, but it's true.

Look at our basic desires for food, shelter, transportation, and "stuff." Ours is generally a materialistic society, meaning that a great deal of most people's behavior is motivated by "What am I going to get out of this?"

"If I do my job, will I get paid on time?"

"If I do an exceptional job, will I get a bonus or a raise?"

"If I help my mom cook dinner, will I get extra dessert?"

"If I donate to this charity, will people look at me favorably?"

And the list of hypothetical questions could go on forever. I don't mean to paint people as greedy. We just tend to do things that benefit us, and there's nothing wrong with that. It's a tad philosophical, but it's a key point in understanding the sales process.

How does that apply to selling our magic services? Very simple – refer back to the analysis of each market that I just completed.

Look at each of the points that I listed. Each point has something to do with the welfare of the person hiring you, saving money, the appropriateness of the material, the enjoyment of the audience, and so on.

Nowhere on the lists is there any mention of the magician’s ego, or anything about how wonderful he/she is...*in and of itself*. This means that your prospects only care about THEIR enjoyment & well being, not yours.

The way I see it, most magicians initially get into magic because of the neat tricks. Most of us (myself included) wanted to show off with this neat stuff. In the real world, no one has time for it. People want to enjoy themselves, not provide an entertainer with self-gratification.

Craig Nichols, Lee Earle’s partner in the “Manifestations” séance recreation in Phoenix a number of years back, said: “An audience’s only irreplaceable commodity is their time. If you waste their time, then you’ve wasted their only irreplaceable commodity.”

How true!

What this means to you is that you need to shift your thinking away from simply, “My magic is so wonderful, and you’ll love it” to...

“My magic is so wonderful because *it can help you achieve your goals and make your event a success*” or whatever it is that the client wants your magic to do for them. This requires you to take a look at your act and figure out what the *benefits* are.

First and foremost, I want to cover magic terminology and how to talk about your act in ways the public can understand and appreciate...

Describing Your Act to Non-Magicians

I’m about to go off on a mini-tangent so forgive me. Too often I’ve heard magicians describe their act in this fashion: “I do an amazing coin routine, producing coins at my fingertips and vanishing them with a silk.”

Huh?

People, the regular paying public doesn’t understand much of what was said in that example, and even if they do figure it out (people aren’t dumb), they’re not going to appreciate it.

‘Producing’ doesn’t exactly sound magical to an untrained ear. It’s part of our in-talk, part of our professional terminology. Same thing with the word ‘silk.’ It sounds alien, foreign to laypeople’s ears. A much better word is hanky. That’s how people talk.

Consider, briefly, the idea of car repairs. A large portion of the population doesn’t understand cars...I know I don’t. I’m fortunate to have a great mechanic – he’s honest and he’s great at what he does. However, he does one thing that drives me nuts – he talks to me with all of the crazy jargon and technical terms that mechanics understand.

I’m not sure why he does this. I have a theory that it’s either because he knows I worked for Ziebart for years (even though their main claim to fame was smearing goo on the underside of cars – nothing too technical about that) or because I’m a guy (Yes even in the 21st century, sexism still exists...I know, you’re shocked.).

Anyway, I always insist that he explains things in terms I understand.

Consider the example from the previous page. I’m going to re-write it. “I do a very magical sequence where coins appear from thin air! It’s kind of like everyone’s dream, to be able to make money appear. Who wouldn’t like that? At the end of the piece, the coins mysteriously disappear in a hanky.”

OK, I’m not claiming that this is the stuff of which dreams are made, mostly because I made up both examples off the top of my head, but can you see the difference? Instead of using magic jargon, I tried to be descriptive in the second example, using words that most everyone could relate to.

In that second example, I even went a step further and tried to relate my admittedly made-up example to real emotions and feelings, linking the coin routine to the idea that most people like money and don’t a lot of people wish they could just make money appear?

Can you see why the second example is so much better? It’s vital if you’re going to encourage people to choose your services, especially if you’re in a situation like me, where everyone else in my market is like half the price.

Getting people’s emotions involved is a major weapon in your arsenal. I like to use as many possible emotions as possible when describing my act to someone. It doesn’t matter if they’ve visited my website or were referred to me by a past client. I want them to get excited talking to ME. You can’t show them anything over the phone, so you need to use words to get people excited. “Productions and silks’ aren’t going to cut it.

With that in mind, here’s a real quick list of some common ways that magicians describe their effects, with my own suggestions on how to change them, making them more suitable for the selling process:

What a magician might say

Appealing to laypeople

Production.....appearing from thin air
Vanish.....disappear before your eyes
Silk.....hanky, cloth, handkerchief
Levitation.....floating, flying, thin air
Card flourishes.....visual feats with cards that cause people to gasp
Spectators, volunteers.....join-in fun (kids) audience participation (adults)
Magic vignettes.....choreographed routines set to music
Transposition.....changing places in the blink of an eye

There! Study those and consider the differences. I know full well that the list isn't anywhere near complete, nor do I necessarily believe the examples I gave were the best ones, but they're better than the more sterile-sounding magic terms. The list is just intended to get you thinking in the right direction.

Learn to be creative in your wording. Study my examples later on in this book. After a while, it can get to be a lot of fun!

Creating phone scripts isn't necessarily the easiest thing to do if you've never done it before, so now I'm going to list several features from my own acts, and then I'll cover the benefits that I've associated with my examples and why they address the concerns I've listed above. I'll start with birthdays, and then move to a few examples from other markets.

In birthdays, as discussed earlier, some of the things most if not all birthday moms are looking for from an entertainer include: making the kids laugh, holding their attention, making their child feel like a star, and getting all of the kids involved.

In my first package (we'll cover package selling in a later section), I cover all of these and more.

My Scripts' Features & Benefits Breakdown

Basic Birthday Script Breakdown

For this first example, of my work in the birthday market, I'm going to describe some of what I do for my smallest show – don't worry, we'll cover package selling later – then I'll explain how I put the features of the act into the context of benefits for the client.

Here we go:

First, I mention the fact that I've got several different options for them. I then explain that in the 30–35-minute show, I produce live birds, a live fish, and a live hamster. I then outline different effects, some with audience participation, some without. I then mention my backdrop, my expensive and nice-looking props, and a couple of giveaways that I use to advertise my services to other birthday moms. I also mention that I do balloon animals after the show. If I were just talking about this one package, then I would conclude with the fact that I have 15 years experience and am a full-time entertainer. I also stress that I bring my own tables, don't need any help carrying anything in, bring my own music, and even use batteries so I don't have to worry about using one of their wall outlets. Finally I'd give them the price, along with my guarantee and the fact that I do 25-30 shows a month.

From a magician's standpoint, not too shabby, but nothing that going to land anyone a TV special. Doesn't matter.

How do I put these *features* into the context of *benefits* to the birthday mom?

First, the fact that I've got different options for them is a HUGE benefit once I point out to them that they can choose whatever best suits their needs and they can mix and match things if they have their preferences. I haven't told them a single thing about my act, but I've already established myself as different because I'm going to be giving them choices.

Giving someone choices is of paramount importance. It's an effective way to guide the sales process on the path to booking. Giving people a choice between something and something is much more enticing than simply stating the fee for the show, the only choice. It increases the likelihood of a 'no' answer while the possibility of choices is pleasing and changes the direction of the prospects' thinking from "Do I book this guy?" to instead "Which program do I want?"

People like choices; it's as simple as that. Nobody likes to be told what his or her only choice is. It's too final.

From that point, I move right to the length of the show. That's one of the first things that I tell the prospect because that's one of the first things they like to have answered.

After that, by talking about the birds, I further distance myself from most other performers in my area, because most don't use animals.

Of course, in my actual script, I don't say, "produce birds," but instead stress that I cause beautiful live birds to appear from thin air. It's a lot more descriptive and sounds more engaging and fun.

I also mention that the appearance of live birds will get the audience to laugh and clap in amazement, generating an *emotional response*, which is key.

In my act, I also produce a live fish. Of course, in my script, I stress the fact that the birthday child causes a live fish to appear from thin air. Pretty strong sounding, wouldn't you agree? I don't stop there, however. I continue to lay it on thick, stressing that the birthday child will be the center of attention and his/her friends will react with amazement and wonder at this neat effect that their friend, not the magician, did.

It's incredibly powerful and unique. In reality, I'm the one producing the fish, but I have the child hold the glass of water that the fish is to be dumped into and say the magic word, thereby giving him/her the credit.

I then stress that the birthday child will also cause my live hamster "Harry" to appear at the end of a really funny routine with several magic wands. **I stress that again the birthday child is the center of attention and gets all the credit for this amazing and funny routine.** The reality? I first goof around with "Multiplying Wands" with the kid and then produce the hamster out of a tiny dove or chick pan. Simple stuff to a magician, but when presented this way to a birthday mom, it's powerful stuff.

Remember how I mentioned earlier that a birthday mom really wants her kid to be the center of attention. All of this really sells that fact.

The hamster? I also mention how cute and fuzzy he is and stress that the whole audience will go "ohh" and "ahh" and they'll even get a chance to pet the animals after the show.

With that description, I'm stressing the fact that the show and the animals in particular will evoke an emotional response out of the whole audience and by allowing the kids to pet the animals, I'm getting them to experience a tactile sense, too, stressing that the experience is hands-on, a huge benefit for a live show.

I then stress that I use a lot of audience participation *which is important because kids don't want to just sit and watch...they want to be involved.* That added line in italics is a critical lesson in constructing phone scripts. Don't ever assume that a prospect is familiar with the benefits of what you're describing. I feel it's important to explain in emotion-producing detail the features of what you're offering...and then stress what the benefits are.

Yes, some people will make the connections themselves, but others will not. I like to stress everything in the same way to everyone because you really don't know a whole lot about who's on the other end of the phone (unless you've worked with them before, of course).

I then discuss some of the other features of the show, like the fact that I incorporate some storytelling, puppetry, music, and other things into the show. The idea behind this is that by mentioning all of the different elements of the show, it comes off sounding a lot more packed and fun-filled than just a magic show. It's an important point: Ask yourself the question...what's in YOUR act that you can 'separate' from the bland description of a magic show?

Consider my act. I talk briefly about puppetry. I use Rocky Raccoon, which probably isn't what most people consider a puppet, but it certainly qualifies, since you're giving 'life' to an obviously fake animal/creature.

I also talk about the Zombie effect as a Floating Puppet, which sounds really magical and mysterious. See what you can apply to your act.

Further in the script, if you review what I wrote above, you'll notice that I mention my backdrop and nice props. The benefit, which I explain, is the fact that with all of this eye-candy, it's one more thing to hold the attention of the kids.

I mention balloon animals because it's something the kids can take home, which is a concern for birthday moms and it's a time-burner, which they also like. The actual phrase that I use for the balloons is "they give you more time-coverage for your event, meaning less for you to plan."

I also mention the goodies that I pass out, namely a piece of Ed Harris artwork of magic tricks and a fortune telling fish, both of which are VERY popular with kids. Again, I stress the benefit of having the kids take home a souvenir of the great time they'll have at your event.

Toward the end of the script, I state how long I've been performing and the fact that I'm a full-time entertainer, which is important in establishing my credibility. Many times the birthday mom, after hearing of all the neat things that I promise, ask me if I can really fit all that into the time I've allotted.

I consider this a compliment, because it confirms to me that I've made my show sound like a Big Deal, which is what I want.

I should also point out that I like to mention the fact that I'm a full-timer toward the end of the script because I do want it to stick out in their minds. I insist on mentioning the fee dead last because I really want to build up my program in the prospects' minds before giving them the fee. If the prospect hears my fee first, which is often three times what the

local amateurs are charging, it may paint an unfavorable picture in their mind because of one unmistakable truth in marketing:

When two items in one category have two different prices, the prospect will choose the cheaper choice when all things are considered equal.

What this means is if the prospect hears your price for your show without ever having heard of you before and not knowing a single other detail about your offer and the prospect also hears a lower price from a competitor and they've also never heard of the competitor, then there's no logical reason why they should pay more money for you because they haven't been given any reasons to think of the two of you as anything but the same.

What this also means in the big picture is that to be perceived as different and worth the higher fees that you want (otherwise you would have never bought this text) then you must state your case, so to speak, BEFORE giving your fee.

Remember another one of the birthday mom's concerns from earlier? Perceived affordability: to justify your prices, *you must under-promise and over-deliver*. People want to think they're getting a deal.

Now let's take a look at what I've accomplished with this phone script (for the exact wording of my birthday scripts, you may of course refer to my personal phone script book, which came with this course).

The first concern of a birthday mom that I listed (in no particular order) was the fact that they wanted the entertainment (and preferably the whole event) to be easy.

I answered this concern by stressing that I was experienced and could hold the attention of the kids by my multi-faceted show.

The second concern was making their child the star of the show.

This was prominently answered throughout the script, ensuring the child would indeed be the star, with the animal tricks and the attention they'd be receiving.

The third concern: they wanted to impress other parents.

I answer this concern subtly, conveying the idea that with my expensive props, live animals, and experience, that everyone would be impressed, not just kids. I tend to not dwell on this too much because it could be perceived as a somewhat shallow concern.

The fourth concern: they want it to be funny.

If you look at the descriptions of some of the routines I use in my actual script, you'll see how I address this concern, especially which the idea of the hamster and wands

routine being funny, the description of my Mouth coil routine (which is very funny) and other effects.

The fifth concern: They don't want any inappropriate material.

By stating that you have a guarantee, you're doing a lot to calm fears right there. In my scripts, I also mention that in 15 years NO ONE has ever taken me up on it. That's an important point with guarantees...it's impressive if your track record shows that you've never had to honor a guarantee.

The sixth concern: Perceived Affordability

I touched on this earlier, but to justify your fees, you must convince your prospect that they're actually paying LESS what something is worth. Everyone likes a deal!

The seventh concern: Experience counts!

By stating that I was a full-timer with 15 years experience, I effectively addressed this concern because if I wasn't good, I couldn't make a living doing this, which I'll often point out.

The eighth concern: They want approval from their child.

This goes hand-in-hand with the idea of making the birthday child the star of the show. By bringing in my show, I let the parent know that their child will be the star, and the fact that their friends will be amazed at what "they" do during the show and the fact that they will be the center of attention.

Again, this concern is implied subtly, but effectively.

The ninth concern: Everyone's involved

With this I address the fact that I use a lot of different volunteers during the show and that EVERYONE gets to help out in some way.

And with that, I've addressed all of their concerns, both stated and implied, created an emotional mental picture of how much fun the event will be and how easy it will be. Finally I've created the perception that I'm giving them a lot more value for their dollar, which is important.

Please go over this section again and again when creating your birthday show scripts. When you take a look at my birthday show scripts, you'll see that I have several scripts for the birthday market, appropriate for different age groups. I think it's important to break down your scripts into different age groups because you certainly wouldn't want to do the "Blooming Bouquet" for 11-year-olds!

Now I'd like to move on to a market that a lot of magicians don't "get" ...

Daycare Script Features & Benefits Breakdown

In this example, I'm going to be a bit more concise, partially because my day care script is so much shorter than my birthday script and also because I covered a lot of in-depth ideas in the last section.

First of all, for this example, I'm going to discuss my script for day care age audiences ages 2-5. In reality, for an inbound script for day cares, it's probably a good idea to have two or possibly three scripts because generally in my experience, day cares call me for three different reasons:

One – It's during the school year or nearing graduation and they want something special for the preschoolers 'graduating' to kindergarten. This event will be for ages 2-5.

Two – It's during the summer and the day care is looking for something for the school-agers 'trapped' at the center all day. The kids see a day care as juvenile and beneath them.

Three – It's some sort of event, usually the summer, where they want you to play to ALL age groups, from age 2 to age 12. Yep, it happens.

Like I said, I'm going to focus this example on the preschool age kids, but once you understand both the nuances and concerns of day cares and how to view the features and subsequent benefits of your act for different age groups, you'll be able to create the different scripts you need/want easily.

Here we go...

When a day care director or teacher calls and asks about entertaining preschoolers, I first explain in my script that I'm a full-time children's entertainer with over 15 years experience (*this is different than birthdays, but I'll explain my feelings later*). I then stress that unlike a lot of entertainers, I specialize in getting to the preschoolers' level without being condescending. I stress how the show consists of magic, storytelling, puppetry, join-in fun, funny skits to keep the kids laughing, and colorful props and effects to hold their attention. All these things give the show a feeling of variety. I also explain how there is nothing frightening, nothing dangerous, nothing inappropriate as far as humor or content, and that I'm fully insured, which should ease a lot of fears. From there I talk about a few of the simple effects that I do and specifically how I get the kids involved, stressing that EVERYONE gets to help out in some way, which is important for a live performance. I also stress that in my case, my performances set up in just a couple of minutes and that the kids can be in the room while I set up, making it extremely easy for the center to host my program. I also stress that I need very little space to

perform. Finally, before giving my fee, I stress two last important points: First, I offer 13 different shows if they'd like to select a particular theme, and I offer a money-back guarantee, guaranteeing their satisfaction.

Obviously, my script is a lot more detailed than what I've listed here, but you can read the full script itself in the other book.

First, you'll notice that for daycares I prefer to stress right away that I'm a full-time professional with a lot of experience. After dealing with day cares for several years, I've noticed how busy these people are, and they generally don't want to be on the phone as long as a birthday mom. By stating my level of expertise and experience first, I at least have that in the director's head if they grow impatient and want to know the fee so they can deal with one of the hundred problems that pop up daily in a childcare center.

By stressing the fact that I specialize in getting to preschoolers' level without being condescending eases the fear that many directors have of even bringing in a magician—the fact that many magicians do material that preschoolers don't understand or care about.

You'll notice in this outline that I stress how involved the kids will be and how much they'll laugh. I feel this is of critical importance, because preschoolers don't give a rat's behind about being amazed, but they do care quite a bit about laughing and being involved.

The whole idea of magicians being so oblivious to the needs of this age group can be so prevalent in some day care director's minds that I've actually adopted a strategy of Dave Risley's to combat it.

Riz will not identify himself as a "magician" when talking to a day care director. Rather, he simply identifies himself as a full-time children's entertainer. It's a rarely used term that doesn't associate Riz with other (more than likely) bad magicians. For day cares, it's a tactic that I've just started using with fantastic results.

In my script I stress the different elements of my act, like music, magic, storytelling, etc. in order to build up the perceived value of the show. This is important even more so in day cares than birthdays, because many daycares & childcare centers have very tight budgets and therefore really have to justify every penny they spend. As a children's entertainer providing what they perceive as a variety show, they will tend to look at this a lot more favorably.

I also explain what I DON'T do, as far as objectionable material, frightening material, etc. This is a big, big concern with directors, and it's one I like to address even more strongly than birthday moms.

It's strange to consider, but in my experience (and I'm willing to wager this isn't restricted to my experience), a birthday mom is on the whole a lot less fussy about who she hires and is often willing to pay a lot more than the day care director.

Commenting that I'm fully insured also goes a long way because many centers cannot or will not allow you to come to their center without insurance. Keep that in mind, too.

After talking about the different effects that I do, which for this market is a little less important than the overall concerns that daycare directors have, I mention the fact that I use a lot of audience participation or as I prefer to call it, '*join-in fun*,' which has a lot of kid appeal. In fact EVERY child helps out in some way, which is a huge benefit to the director.

I also want to stress the fact that my daycare shows set up in just a few minutes and the fact that the kids can be in the room while I set up. This is a VERY big deal, because it can be regarded as a pain to shuffle the kids into another room while you set up. You must understand that daycares are incredibly busy and hectic, and any intrusion is considered by some as one more hassle to deal with. (For a more comprehensive look into daycares, I highly recommend Dave Risley's 2-tape audio set, "The ABC's of DayCares")

By adding the fact that I need very little space to perform, I've really positioned myself as a person who is very easy to bring into the centers. I have to add that this wasn't always the case. I used to haul in 4 loads of stuff, which was very inconvenient for the center.

If the center is calling me for a non-specific event, I have my standard script which you can read later in the full script section. I also mention that I offer several different theme shows, which really piques their interest. Anytime a daycare can bring in an incoming program and have it 'link up' in some way with what they're working on with the kids, well, it really raises your value in their eyes.

In closing, I finally mention my fees and ask if they have any questions for me...then I SHUT UP! Too often entertainers keep yammering, trying to get a yes without giving the prospect a chance to gather their thoughts.

This is a good bit of advice for ANY market, too—think about it: you've just given them more info than most magicians would ever consider. The prospect isn't likely to be familiar with everything you've given her so she's going to need a moment to gather her thoughts or perhaps finish scribbling down some of the highlights on a pad of paper.

Not only is your silence at this point a professional courtesy, it's also an effective tool: First of all, it gives the prospect a chance to ask questions and it also gives you the opportunity to *listen*...so few people do that. Maybe they have a special request? Maybe they want to ask for references? Maybe, maybe...listen! The days of fast-talking

salespeople *should* be over. They're still out there, but they're more of a joke now. Don't try to add to the laughter.

Now let's get to my favorite market, schools.

School Script With Features & Benefits Breakdown

Although when I outline what I offer schools in this exercise will be in the context of a just-for-fun performance, I just want to stress again that to work consistently in schools, you'll need educational/motivational themed presentations. (I currently offer three such shows for purchase, along with a comprehensive course all about working & performing in schools that has been called the "best ever" by many magicians... but now's not the time for a cheap plug.)

If you don't have any experience doing a show in elementary schools, it's probably a good idea to get some experience actually performing in schools first. Go back over the section where I outlined what school officials look for in a school performer. It's as good of a place as any to start.

Once you've gained experience working for large groups like this (300-500 is my average) then you can start working on educationally themed material. It's important to have experience in this market first, because in addition to effectively working the stage, you'll also need to make sure you're 'hitting your marks' with the messages you're trying to convey.

It can be nerve wracking when you're just starting out. My first themed presentation was a disaster! I learned a lot over the years, and I hope I can spare you from some of the mistakes I made.

With that being said, I'm going to jump right in...

When a school calls me, the first thing I do is ask some questions regarding their event. (This is necessary in any market) I need to know the date, time, age group, location of the school, what the event is, where the performance will be, whether or not the performing area needs to be clear immediately before or after – or both – the performance...all of which will affect what I offer.

At that point, I'll then begin explaining a little about myself and what I offer. I explain that I'm a full-time performer (big benefit...schools' time for extra events in very limited. If they elect to bring you in, they're really taking a chance with you) and I specialize in working for children (another benefit. They want to know that you're going to be able to hold the students' attention. Simply put, in my experience, most of the magicians in my markets don't know how to properly engage children. There's more to it than tricks and reassuring your prospects that you're a professional entertainer working with children is very important.). I guarantee the prospect that I do NOTHING dangerous during my act, such as fire use, sharp objects, etc (Obviously this is

important simply because schools by and large have extremely strict policies regarding anything dangerous, guns being the most severe...guns can't even be mentioned in many schools). I also inform them that I'm fully insured (yes, a concern for many schools). I explain that I use plenty of onstage volunteers and in fact everyone in the audience gets to help out in some way (Major, major benefit because without audience participation, there's a less of a point to having an incoming presenter...there's an argument that without volunteers it's better to have a film or video presentation which is cheaper and easier of course). At this point I also make sure that with my 15 years of experience, I guarantee that the children will be 100% under control at all times. (MAJOR benefit. Too many presenters come in and don't know how to handle a big crowd of kids. With all of the other bottom-feeding magicians out there, you really need to stress this). I also explain that my programs consist of magic, music, join-in fun, clean comedy, puppetry, and more (Again, by stressing the fact that I have many elements of my show, it really pushes the idea that what I offer is more valuable and filled with more variety than just another magic act).

I also mention the optional LIVE animals (I stress the word optional because not everyone likes live animals, though for most it's a huge selling point.) I also stress the professional aspects of my program—the fact that I have a glittering backdrop, my own state-of-the-art PA system (remember, one less thing for them to worry about and also convinces them that I understand the logistics and needs of school assembly programs!)

I really like to stress, too, that my programs are easy and fast to set up, around 15 minutes (Stressing that you are easy to work with is vital because school officials are even busier than day care directors. They don't want, nor do they have time to deal with, presenters that have a whole list of demands that must be filled. You'll get a LOT more work by being accommodating and flexible.) I also like to offer a 'Big Show' option that still sets up in under 30 minutes (not objectionable for many schools), again with the live animals and bigger effects that is available for just a few dollars more. (My thinking with offering these two options is that some schools will have more money to spend and will want the bigger show, thus increasing my profit. Of course, other schools will be concerned with your set up time because you're in the cafeteria and the turnover of people/activity in that area is fast. It's my way of trying to offer schools different choices and really cater to their needs. Some presenters say to never offer schools anything 'big,' but I completely disagree—many of my school clients—and I do themed shows most of the time- appreciate the bigger effects, saying that the kids have 'tuned out' other magicians and presenters because there wasn't enough visual appeal. Ultimately, though, it's your decision. I just want you to know that you do have options and anyone who says that you MUST have a smaller act is wrong.)

At this point, I'll start describing some of the effects that I can do, based on the size of the audience (Some entertainers fly over this part, but that's a mistake. If they're looking for a magician, they want to know what kind of magic the magician will do. In short, they want GOOD magic appropriate for the ages of the kids attending. Yes, if you're doing themed shows, that's more important but let's face it, the kids are into your

*show for magic & laughs, and if you're not good at the magic, they're not going to care about the messages and the school officials know this). **One thing I stress over and over is how clean my programs are, meaning that no one will be offended; no off-color humor, nothing but good clean fun and humor** (In this day and age, you really can't stress this enough...kind of like what I'm doing through this entire text! At the same time however, you do need to convey the fact that the program is funny and enjoyable. I don't care how good your magic is, kids will tune you out or worse begin to shout what they think the secrets of your tricks are unless you get them to laugh. So few magicians realize this critical element when working for kids! It's a lot easier to fool someone when you're also making him or her laugh!)*

At this point, I'll finally mention my price. Bear in mind that I've read them two pages of information, stressed the fact that I'm experienced, flexible, and professional, with a show that has different elements to it. By doing all of this, I really want to convey the fact that they're getting a lot more than they're being charged for their fee...that idea of 'perceived affordability.' (In any discussion of price, it's important to point out that in any market and region of the country/world, what one person can get for any given show is different depending on where you are. When you look over my own scripts in the full-script section of this text, some of my fees may seem excessive or they may seem extremely low...it depends on your market. I don't happen to live in a very rich economical region. Keep in mind that if you're new to this, you'll have to do some research and figure out what your market will bear.)

Before I leave schools, I just want to mention to you that I've found schools to be one of the most rewarding aspects of my performing career...and one of the most challenging. This phone script discussion on schools is just one aspect of this very demanding market. If you're new to schools and really want to get started, give me a call.

You'll also notice that in this discussion I didn't touch upon the specifics of how to sell themed presentations. Again, schools are such a complex market that I really couldn't do themed presentations justice in this smaller section.

Now, let's turn to one of the most 'open-ended' types of performing...

Family Reunion/Outdoor Event Script Breakdown

Again, this is kind of a broad heading and when you begin constructing phone scripts you may want to have several different scripts, such as scripts for outdoor shows, indoor shows, church shows, family reunions, company picnics, etc.

I pretty much use one script for this general kind of market. I've learned what questions to ask, and when you look at my full script later on in this text, you'll see that in the script I can go in a number of different directions based on the answers they give me. I should also point out that I don't specialize in this forum (and don't enjoy it as much as my favorite markets) but I feel I've learned enough to give you some good tips.

As before, when constructing your scripts, be sure to go over the “*Know Your Market*” section of the text. Although many of the prospect’s concerns will be the same as other markets, there are some important little nuances that you need to address.

With that being said, let’s take a look at an outline of what I use to sell clients.

The first questions I ask them are: The date and time? (*Of course! Am I available?*) **Where will the event be held? If it’s during the summer months, I ask if it’s going to be in or outdoors? How many people are they expecting? What kind of event is it? What is the age range? If there are children present, how many will there be? What kind of performing area will I have?** (*Meaning am I going to be in the grass in the middle of a field? In a church basement? Huddled under a tree? Under a pavilion? That’s assuming they want a stand up or stage show...some clients will call and specifically ask about strolling or close up magic...I love those calls!*) **Will there be access to electricity?**

Based on the answers to those questions, I then move into the main body of my script, adjusting it as I go according to the information I’ve received about their event. I will still stress the same things here that I stressed in other sections, such as my experience, the different aspects of my show in order to establish my pricing under the “perceived affordability” area (*although if it’s an outside show I do NOT offer any live animals whatsoever. In my opinion, it’s not safe for them due to temperature, other animals, and heaven knows what else can happen outside*), **my PA system if needed, my insurance, the join-in fun aspects of the show, how easy it is to work with me, along with descriptions of my effects. From here, I will then stress the fact that since I’m very adaptable, it makes no difference to me whether the show is outside, other than the animals** (*Actually I dislike outdoor shows. What I’m doing here is very sneakily trying to ‘nudge’ people into making special arrangements to having the show indoors if at all possible. Most of my prospects REALLY want the animals in most cases and will often – though not always - try to arrange an indoor show. I say it’s sneaky because by stressing the safety of the animals, I don’t come off as difficult to work with by refusing the animals in an outdoor setting. It’s a powerful but passive technique that has benefited me a great deal.*).

As I’ve said before, you can refer to my full script later on in this text for more insight to this open-ended branch, but what I want to do now is briefly cover some of the individual concerns that clients may have, depending on the nature of their event.

What Specific Clients May Be Concerned About...

Churches: I think I can safely say that the biggest concern of churches is that your material is squeaky-clean. I should also point out that the churches that do call you will be very ‘skittish’ about certain aspects of the act, especially if you do a Floating-A-Person-In-The-Air type of effect. I have a Floating Princess Carpet as well as an X-type Suspension illusion, both of which don’t in any way resemble anything “evil,” but many

churches will request that I leave it out. Most of the time I don't even bother to mention it for that very reason.

Churches also are concerned with the fee, perhaps more so than any other prospect, including day cares. Dave Risley has a technique he uses when dealing with churches, that of charging an "honorarium" as opposed to a regular fee, which is a way to side-step the inevitable question future prospects may pose: "Why do I have to pay this much when the church only has to pay X amount?" Riz's system works for him, and he explains his reasoning and the psychology on his tapes.

Personally, I don't offer "special" rates of any kind for churches. My thinking is this: the second I offer a special rate, for whatever the reason, word will get out. As a full-timer, I have the luxury of not having to play that game. Nevertheless, it's a concern you should be aware of, regardless of how you choose to handle it.

Family Reunions – The vast majority of the reunions that I've done have been outdoor events. The biggest concern the prospects usually have for this is how well can I perform outside? As a result, I spend a great deal of the time on the phone with these clients explaining that outdoor shows aren't a problem, although there are certain things I can't do, such as the animals.

These clients also often want to be assured of the fact that your act will play to all ages of children or even all ages, from children to adults.

Company Picnics – Again, these clients are most concerned with the idea of whether or not you can do a good job with an outdoor setting. I've also found them to be a bit more discerning with who they hire based on experience and testimonials. When on the phone with these prospects, I like to drop a few well-known names that I've worked for, such as General Motors or United Airlines. I also offer to fax or mail an info-packet with plenty of testimonial letters.

These companies, like any prospect to a certain degree, are concerned about money, meaning that these smaller companies don't have a bottomless source of money. Some larger companies have larger budgets and even hesitate to book entertainers who don't charge a large enough fee, believing that if they don't charge enough (which can be very subjective), they must not be good.

Personally, in most of my work with summer picnic company events, I haven't encountered those kinds of companies very much, although I know of several entertainers who have and there's been a lot of interesting work done in that area. In my own experience, I encounter this kind of client more often with winter holiday parties, which is the subject of the next section.

Corporate Script Features & Benefits Breakdown

When I was living in Pittsburgh, PA, I was doing a fair amount of corporate work, especially around the winter holidays. I do less of this kind of work in Niagara Falls, although I'm striving to increase the amount of these gigs.

I've found that in the world of magic, if you just mention the word "corporate" to any number of fledgling magicians, you'll get a Pavlov's Dogs sort of response. It's actually kinda funny!

The truth of the matter is corporate work is like any other work in magic: you need to know their concerns. Go back and look over the corporate section in the "*Know Your Market*" section. You'll quickly find that they have many of the same concerns as a lot of other markets.

For my corporate prospects, when I get an incoming phone call, I ask a LOT of questions first. Asking questions to find out what the prospects' needs/concerns are is always important with any market, but in corporate work, a single misstep can mean getting the gig or not, or worse: getting into a bad situation. You need to ask questions!

I start off by asking the date and time of the event, of course, to see if I'm even available. Then I ask questions such as, how many people are you expecting? (*What if you get the prospect all excited about your stage show, which can comfortably entertain 300 people, but then you find out that the event is expected to be attended by 1000 people? Hmmm, problem*)

In terms of geography, where will the event be held? (*Even though it's a local branch that calls you, maybe the event is going to be a big regional meeting, to be held 400 miles away from where you live! Will that affect your price? I hope so.*)

What sort of facility in which will the event take place? (*Important! What if they're expecting 200 people and your stage show can handle that...but the hall where they're having the event is L-shaped? Half the audience will have a tough time seeing you. What if the hall has no "riser," that is, raised performing area? Think of the platforms where they often put the wedding party at a reception. This is important because if the hall doesn't have platforms and if you don't provide them, most of the 200 people will have trouble seeing your act. In this situation, I push for strolling.*)

What is the event's purpose? (*Holiday party, awards banquet, etc. The nature of the event may present some unique opportunities for customization: what if it's a holiday party and at the end of dinner, there's a special gift presentation to the boss? You may be able to work the boss into a special part of your presentation where he/she is the star. Very powerful thing to consider.*)

What kind of entertainment have you used in the past? (*This is a critical question. Let me explain why.*)

Some corporate clients are very open to the idea of having a magician—maybe they've had one before and he was really good, and everyone had a great time. Last summer I booked a very lucrative 6-hour strolling gig for a company. They were already pre-disposed to the idea of a magician because it worked so well in the past. In this case, the previous magician had retired, opening the door for me. In another case, more recently, a prospect called me for a potential mid-afternoon office party. After asking some questions, it turns out that this particular prospect was really looking to hire a singer/singing telegram/singing Marilyn Monroe impersonator or something like that. At this point, I was bewildered as to why they'd be calling me. I was then told that no one else was available. As I asked about how receptive she felt the group would be to the idea of a magician, the prospect happily chirped, "Oh, the manager is always bragging to his friends how he can figure out 'those tricks' when he sees them on TV."

Well, I turned the gig down. As a professional performer, why would I want to subject myself to that kind of situation? Strike one against the gig was the fact that they originally wanted something more risqué than I provided. Strike two was the fact that the prospect took great delight in telling me how much the manager loved picking apart magicians. Strike three was her balking at my rate, which was extremely reasonable based on what my market typically bears.

The point is this: at least in my experience, some of the time, adult/corporate audiences tend to look down on the idea of magic as a kids' entertainment. As a whole, I think magicians need to do a better job educating the general populace that magic can be just as wonderful for adults as for kids.

There are, however, some people who still cling to the old belief...and there are plenty of others who feel just the opposite: that magic is a vibrant, fascinating art form that adults can enjoy.

I'm not even saying that these things will happen to you. However, it's happened often enough even to big name pros that I've seen and talked to that I feel you should be prepared.

My whole point of the above "rant" is that before dreams of big pay days dance in your head, you must decide now, right now, what your boundaries are, what kind of gigs you'll take, and you must burn into your mind that you must, absolutely must, insist on asking a LOT of questions before you begin to tell them ANYTHING about what you have to offer.

Once I've asked enough questions to the point that I feel satisfied that both I can handle the logistics of the gig and I actually want the gig, I'll then begin explaining a little about myself, such as my experience, name-dropping of some big-name clients, the fact that I'm a FULL-TIME entertainer (*This is critical. Corporate clients are even more suspect of part-timers than other clients. There's NOTHING wrong with being a part-timer in my book...I just wouldn't recommend telling corporate clients. I'm not saying you won't get the gig, but I do believe it'll be tougher.*), **and the fact that my**

programs, while loaded with humor, are 100% clean. In fact, it's at this point, before I even tell them WHAT I do that I stress my guarantee: For me, I tell prospects that they get the show for free if anyone is upset at any sort of humor (*major, major concern with corporate clients*).

I further explain that my programs are customizable for the event, in that I use different effects with people's names and different elements to create an event that is truly one-of-a-kind (*This isn't as hard as it sounds. Give me a call and I'll tell you some of the specific effects I use and how I customize certain segments of the show for a given client.*).

I also assure them that while I use a lot of audience interaction (*again, a big benefit in the eyes of the prospect—why do you think karaoke is so popular?*), **I also promise the prospect that no one will be the butt of jokes.** (*This is important and something that I feel a lot of fledgling magicians should consider—how much fun is it to be made fun of on stage? Why else do you think a great many adult audiences want no part of getting on stage? Think about it.*)

From here, I then move into the section of my script where I try to deal with the whole issue of money. You'll recall earlier in the text that many corporate clients have a range in mind for what they want to pay. Go too far below that range, and they won't take you seriously—I've lost my share of gigs for that reason—and go too far above it, and you'll lose the gig.

My solution isn't really original with me. It's been discussed by magic marketing people including Dave Dee, Dave Risley, Tim Hall, and many others. Unfortunately, I personally haven't found anyone willing to go in depth about the idea I'm going to share with you...maybe it's out there, but I sure haven't found it. Too many people keep the REAL secrets for themselves!

As a result, it took me several years of trial and error to develop the system I'm going to share with you.

At this point in the conversation with the corporate prospect, I explain that due to the differing budgets and needs of clients, I have three "ranges" for them to choose from. I then explain that Range One is the smallest and easiest to work with in terms of set-up time and Range Three can be very elaborate with a "big show" kind of feel to it.

Without asking which one they'd like to hear about, I'll then give the ranges. Again, you'll see my actual fee ranges in the full script section elsewhere with this course. If you're in a huge market, don't be horrified by my "low" prices. You'll have to adjust for your market. If you're in a tiny market, don't be horrified by what may seem to you as "high" prices. It's all relative.

For the purpose of this exercise, let's assume the ranges are: Range One- \$100-\$350; Range Two-\$275-500; Range Three-\$375-600.

Again, they're just examples, but can you see why this is such a great technique? The client will then tell you which range one to read from! Maybe they have a \$5000 limit, but they want to play it safe and just get something small. Maybe they only have \$200 but want to spend it all. The key here is to have enough of a range that you'll appeal to most of the people in your market area. Of course, you'll occasionally run into prospects who only have an extremely small budget or companies that expect to pay six times your highest fee, but in my experience and a lot of other professionals' experience, those really big-budgeted pay days don't come along often for strictly entertainment gigs. (Trade shows and motivational programs are the obvious possible exceptions.)

Another thing to consider is the fact that if you're in a HUGE market, you may need to set your lowest "Range" very high to be taken seriously. Again, while it's all relative, having ranges like this allows the client to have a feeling of control while allowing you to get a sense of what they're willing to spend. It's light-years ahead of the old technique that I was using: "How much is your show?" "X\$" Without choices, you're limiting yourself and the client's choices, but I'll be touching upon that subject in the package selling section.

Here's a word of warning, though, and I suppose this is time to call out the "Ethical Police." ***While this range method is very effective, you can NOT simply charge different prices for the same show!*** People do talk. This is extremely sleazy, and I've heard of people who actually do this. If you're one of those people and you're reading this, shame on you!

Seriously, though, it'll only hurt you in the long run. Here's what I personally do to make my "ranges" drastically different from each other.

First of all, each range will include the option of strolling magic. This will be covered in more detail in the next section on package selling. My three ranges will also include an option for a stand-up or stage show of some kind.

The Range One stage show is very sparse as far as stage props and equipment is concerned. In fact, 90% of the act can be carried in a briefcase. I'll also provide a PA system, if needed.

The Range Two stage show will include all of the above plus my live dove production act (*people of all ages generally love live animals*) as well as my silver glittering backdrop (*helps convey a sense of 'theatre' or a 'big deal,'*) and some larger tricks, including the "Snowstorm," which is very popular among adults.

The Range Three stage show will include most of the above plus some VERY large effects, such as transforming the birds into a live ferret (*I use a Doves to Bunny cage. Very big, very impressive*), a six-foot guillotine effect, and Floating a Person in The Air (*Again, very big, very impressive.*)

Again, this type of selling is very effective because the client loves to have choices. Very often when explaining one of the ranges to a prospect, they will then ask me the differences between the ranges, which again is why it's critical that your different ranges have significant differences.

Personally, in my corporate shows, I prefer to use a lot of mentalist effects. I just think that mentalism "wows" adults more than the regular magic, with live animals being the possible exception in my book.

When you look over my full scripts for all of the ranges, pay close attention to the fact that I stress customization for several effects, and I even make suggestions for certain effects as to who's going to be used. You have to do a little thinking for the prospect.

From here, I'll mention that I take care of my own arrangements, even calling up the hotel/banquet facility myself to take care of my own arrangements, be it directions, the need for an outlet to plug in my PA, dimensions of the room, platforms, whatever. *(This REALLY goes a long way, because very often the person who's booking the entertainment isn't as much concerned with great entertainment as she's concerned with having the whole ordeal not be a pain in the rear because she's - almost always a she - got a regular job to do.)*

This person also doesn't want to look bad; so the idea of CLEAN entertainment is so critical here that I just can't stress it enough.

Flexibility is key, too, because while you may offer a 45 minute show, they may only want a 30 minute show, so it's a good idea to have price points in place in case they ask about the differences in price for a shorter or longer show...although I personally don't like to offer anything beyond 60 minutes for a stage show because people do get fidgety, even adults!

Before I close this section, with corporate work (as any work in the magic world) a little professionalism goes a long way. As you read the full scripts later in the text, pay attention again to how I stress how easy it is to work with me.

Also pay close attention to my descriptions of my effects, most of which are standard mentalist effects. Describing them in fun ways that stress how much fun it is for the people involved goes a long way, especially the idea that the spectators are the ones that will actually be doing the 'mind reading.' I'm actually trying to structure my show for adults so that it appears that the volunteers do everything...that way it appears less like showing off and more like working together with people, so they appear to be the stars.

Again, if you have any questions about any of the effects that I'm doing as far as descriptions for any market, just call me. Most of my stuff is fairly standard props or techniques, although I try to be original in the actual presentations that I use & create. I'm just describing them in fun ways that prospects can relate to a lot better than magic store catalog descriptions. I'll be happy to help you structure descriptions of your effects for maximum impact.

While I touched on the idea of package selling a lot in the corporate section, I really want to examine it a lot more closely in its own section.

Package Selling

Why Package Selling Is So Critical & Effective

Package selling is one of the “keys to the vault” for many reasons. First of all, it gives your clients a choice for the kind of service that they wish. Think about it: if you only offer stage shows and your client really wants strolling, then you’re out of luck. What if your client wants a stage show that 45-minutes long and your act is only 30-minutes long? The possibilities are endless with package selling. I’ll be giving you some simple suggestions to create your own packages very soon.

The second reason package selling is so critical is because it’s psychologically easier to sell this way. If you offer your show – one choice, say a 30-minute stand-up show – then your client has only to make the decision whether or not to hire you...and it’s therefore easier to say no!

If you offer your clients several choices, then they will naturally begin to consider which choice is best for them. In selling, always remember this: *if a prospect raises his/her hand, then he/she has some interest in what you’re selling*. It doesn’t mean that they’ll necessarily book you, but because they “raised their hand,” they’re at least pre-disposed to the idea.

Constructing Offers: General Tips

When constructing your offers, it’s been said by many professional marketers including Dan Kennedy & Dave Risley that it’s best to offer three choices. Why? The number 3 has powerful psychological properties for people. I don’t want to get heavy here, but the nature of most people is to jump right to the middle choice—it’s a comfort thing.

Offer three packages, with the first being \$100, the second being \$200, and the third being \$300, most people who are looking to buy what you’re offering will go right to the middle ground of \$200.

You see, most people don’t want the cheapest and a lot of people are scared to buy the most expensive...the middle choice is psychologically the most comfortable for most people. This won’t work all the time, but if you keep track of your numbers, I think you’ll find this to be true. Again, it comes down to pricing in your market. I’m not going to go in depth on pricing here, because the fees will be different for everyone reading this.

Package Names

So, you’ve decided to sell three packages. What are you going to name them? Personally, I like the “bronze, silver, gold” approach, although recently I’ve been leaning

more toward “silver, gold, platinum” simply because “bronze” doesn’t have as much appeal. Still, either approach works.

You can simply label your packages “A,B,C.” A lot of entertainers use “Basic, Deluxe, Super-Deluxe.” Personally, I’ll always prefer the bronze, silver, gold, platinum labels.

The Cons of a La Carte or Cafeteria Selling

I think you need names for the packages because it gives a nice, tidy feel to the whole thing, which brings me to another benefit of package selling: it’s fast & easy. A lot of entertainers use the “a la carte” system...that is, they’ll offer their basic show, and then use what are called “add-ons” to increase the amount of money they get for the show.

For instance, they might have live animals available as an add-on, or goody bags, or special larger effects, such as floating someone in the air. Personally, I don’t feel it’s nearly as effective and a lot of professional marketers agree with me, such as Dan Kennedy.

Why is this kind of selling not considered as effective?

Several reasons. First, it will seem to some people that you’re simply trying to ‘nickel and dime them to death.’ They’ll see all the possible add-ons for ‘just a few dollars more,’ and when they get to the final price, it will seem over inflated. Second, people these days are very busy, and by allowing/insisting everyone to make every single choice, it just seems like too many choices and too much work.

Many studies have been done to support this idea and one only has to look at McDonald’s for confirmation: They have plenty of those combo meals now, and of course the Happy Meal is probably the ‘granddaddy’ of package selling at a fat...er...*fast* food place!

People want everything to be fast! They want to glance at a menu and make one choice. Consider this idea when constructing your offers. I will close this thought with one caveat: I do mention, at the end of my speech to the client that I will ‘mix and match’ things if they have their preference, simply because some people are very hands-on and may want it “their way,” as Burger King says.

I’m sure that some of you who have never had any training in selling are panicking right and thinking, “what in the world can I offer to my clients to make ‘packages?’” It’s easier than you think and is the subject of our next section!

What Can You Add to Increase Perceived Value & Create Packages?

There are many ways to create packages easily and effectively without a lot of work or more importantly having to spend a ton of money on new props or anything like that.

Here's a MAJOR point to consider: **In my opinion, to make different packages really appeal to people, you should really have several differences between packages. In other words, don't let the only thing separating your Silver Package from your Gold Package be the fact that you offer balloons with the Gold and not with the Silver, or something like that. I try to combine several different aspects to create truly different packages.**

First of all, look at what you're offering now. Chances are you can take away part of what you're offering to create a "basic" package. Let me explain...

Most of the clowns in my area are giving away far too much for their services. Most will give the client an hour-long package consisting of a magic show, face-painting, balloons, skits, and more for one low (and I do mean LOW) fee. They're doing a disservice to themselves and the other entertainers in the area, but that's a rant for another time.

Length of Performance

One fast & easy way to create differences in your packages is to offer different lengths for your performances. Offer a 30-minute show, a 45-minute show, or an hour show. For most performers, this isn't much of a stretch, and only means the addition of a few routines.

"Wow" Tricks

I've mentioned this earlier, but another way to create differences among your packages is to add a "wow" trick or even a selection of "wow" tricks to your upper packages. Some of mine include: 'floating' a volunteer/guest of honor, the guillotine trick for older kids/adults (obviously you need to be a little selective), "Snowstorm" and others.

Live Animals

In my opinion, this is one of the easiest ways to creating differences in between packages, but again, I feel it's time to call in the "Ethical Police:" Please don't consider using animals in your act unless you are both a HUGE animal lover and well-versed as to their needs as living creatures.

Backdrop

A backdrop is one of the things I add to create a sense of "theatre" and a sense of a BIG deal. By itself it certainly wouldn't warrant a separate package, but it can certainly

help the differences in packages. Remember what I said earlier about using multiple differences to create your packages.

Giveaways

Giveaways could include: Goody or 'loot' bags, magic trick pamphlets (consider the artwork of Ryan Pilling), balloon animals, and more. For additional ideas on giveaways, just call me. Giveaways are one of the easiest, fastest ways to create differences in your packages.

For me, one of my best ideas was adding Polaroid pictures to one of my highest packages. I explain to the client that after my show, I take a picture of each child holding one of the animals. Each child gets to take the picture home and the picture-taking burns up more time, always a plus in the birthday mom's mind.

Strolling/Stage Combos

When I first started creating packages, the first thing I did was offer the client a choice between a stage/stand-up show, strolling magic, or a 'combo' show with a discount. For certain markets, like outdoor summer picnics, this worked really well, while in birthday parties, it didn't appeal at all for fairly obvious reasons.

Still, it's a great way to instantly create packages if you're just starting out.

Now that you've got some different ideas to use when creating packages, let me give you a couple of different techniques for pulling everything together.

The Slack Adjuster

Now, it's time for one of the most important package-selling techniques that I've ever learned. I first heard of this idea from Rick Allen, a magician from the Midwest somewhere.

Rick mentioned, in a Dave Dee newsletter, the idea that a photographer had come up with. He would start off by offering his clients a photography package where he'd travel anywhere in the world and would include in the package a number of interesting bells and whistles, so to speak.

Understandably, the fee for this "Gigantic" package would be quite high. After the customer hit the floor from shock (I'm guessing that if the guy was talking to the prospect on the phone, he'd listen for the audible 'thud.') he would then explain that he had other packages and would explain those.

The whole point of the huge package was to psychologically cause the other packages' prices to not sound as bad by comparison. In other words, the photographer

never really intended anyone to actually buy this package, but if anyone did, well, it would certainly raise his “averages,” making it a dual-purpose package.

Personally, I only do this with my birthday shows, although I should really get off my butt and do this for my other scripts because the technique works so well. Not only do most people actually *not* pass out when they hear about my huge package, but many actually buy it.

Here’s a HUGE Tip: *Those who don’t buy it are actually then more pre-disposed to buying my next package down, thereby increasing sales of the more expensive package, thereby increasing my profits from each show. The major benefit that you receive when people buy your more expensive packages is, obviously, more money for each show: if you’re already going to a show, then it’s a good idea to try and earn more money from that show if you’re making a living doing this as I do.*

When constructing your packages, consider ways you can build a H-U-G-E package that will effectively allow you to “step down” and increase buys for your other packages.

The key is to usually make your BIG package WAY out of line with your other offers. Go wild! A 3-hour stage show! Each kid at the birthday receives a big magic set! The other thing to consider is that if you do offer something, make sure you can actually come through if someone actually wants the big package.

It’s a great way to psychologically cause your prospects to respond more favorably to your fees, especially if they’re a lot higher than your part-timers’ fees in the same market.

Good, Better, Best

This is a concept that I have to admit that I don’t have a lot of experience in, but I’d like you to be aware of it. I first heard about it from Dave Risley. In its briefest form, it breaks down like this: Start with your lowest priced package, saying at the end of the description, “That’s a good package. Now I’d like to tell you about a better package.”

When you’ve finished with the description of the “Better” package, you’ll say something to the effect of, “That’s a better package, but most of our clients want our best package,” and then you proceed to tell them about your biggest package, NOT the huge slack adjuster.

The idea here is that most clients really want the best. Why else do people wind up over-extending themselves on car payments? With this method, you’re trying to build from the lowest to the highest. It’s the opposite of what most people teach, and like I said, I don’t have much experience with it, but I’ve been experimenting with it a little and so far, the results are encouraging.

For more information on this, I strongly suggest that you contact Dave Risley directly or go to his website, www.daverisley.com and get his video, “*Selling Tips from A Marketing Guru*,” which details this concept in addition to other psychological strategies. “Riz” has years of experience running big corporations in addition to being his own boss with his magic business for 20 years, so it’s sound advice.

Now, I’d like to close out this section and move to some general selling tips and guidelines to make using the phone script system easier.

Other General Selling Tips

Price

This is the first thing that most magicians want to know when they learn any kind of marketing...unfortunately, as I've alluded to earlier, it's not an exact science.

Dave Dee once said to call your competition, act like a prospect, ask prices and then, using that information, price yourself slightly below the most expensive competitor and gradually raise your prices. I think that's a decent approach, but it's far from perfect. Let me explain.

In my market of Niagara Falls, most of my competitors are so under-priced that it's not funny. There aren't very many professional-caliber competitors that I can call because they don't advertise. As a result, I had to raise my prices a lot higher than my competition and just hope that I wasn't going too high, simply because their prices weren't high enough to even be worth doing in order to become a full-timer.

I feel that if you start off too low, it's going to take way too long to raise your prices to a satisfactory level because too sharp of a price jump and you may start to scare away some of your existing clients.

Calling your competition is a good start, but you must then factor in different thoughts such as, what's your experience level? Have you ever performed for a paid audience before? Until you gain experience, you probably should have some lower fees. Maybe you're a part-timer who does a good number of shows but you're looking for some kind of marketing edge to boost you over the hump. Maybe, like me a few years ago, you're a full-timer and starting over in a brand-new market.

All I'm saying is, do some research into your market and temper it with a realistic look into your experience level, what the market can realistically bear, and what you need to both earn a living as well as profit from.

Guarantees

Guarantees are one of the easiest ways to boost chances of getting hired. I feel one of the keys to it is to not stress it too much. Tim Hall advocates this approach in his course. Just mention your guarantee policy and move on. By not stressing it too much, you're conveying the idea that you're confident in your abilities that no one ever calls you on your guarantee, which is a point that you should mention: If no one has ever taken you up on your guarantee, then prospects will look at you even more favorably.

The most common guarantee is the performance-based guarantee: that is, the client gets your show for free if they don't feel that everyone thoroughly enjoyed your show. This is the guarantee that I use most often.

Let's face it: in this day and age, with as easy as it is to put up a website and place an ad in either the phone book or a newspaper or magazine, people really don't know how good an entertainer is. I like to also mention that I'm the only entertainer in the area who gives a guarantee, which is a subtle jab at my competition as well.

Another guarantee that I use is for skittish clients such as churches: If anyone is offended for any reason, then they again get the show for free. This can be very reassuring to prospects who are concerned with the idea that you may use objectionable language or offensive material (think blood!).

I know that most small-time entertainers do not offer guarantees, probably because they're concerned about being taken advantage of by certain clients. In 15 years, I've never had anyone even try to take me up on the guarantee.

If you do offer a guarantee, make sure your act is really up to snuff. You don't have to have David Copperfield-sized props or dancing girls, but you have to provide a good, solid act that fulfills everything that you promised your client, and more.

Vocal Inflection/Confidence in Prices

Here's something that's a little difficult to convey, but I'll give it a shot. When you're explaining what you offer to your prospects, you must sound confident. I don't mean arrogant or full of yourself, but sure of yourself, especially when you tell the prospect your prices.

People are not dumb, and most anyone will be able to hear any kind of a tentative quality in your voice and they'll pick up on it and immediately begin to doubt whether your show is really worth what you're charging because you yourself apparently don't really believe your show is worth what you're charging.

I know many people may consider this kind of work to be "play" at least while they're part-time and still have to go to a "real" job, but trust me, when it comes to running your own business, you'll work very hard, even though you may and should enjoy yourself. Consider that when stating your prices: you WILL earn the money, and you ARE worth it.

Still not enough? Sit down and consider all the years that you've been interested/working in magic, even if only as a hobby. All of that experience needs to count for something.

Need more? Sit down and add up the cost of all your props *and* living expenses. If you're like I was, you've got quite a bit invested, even before you've done your first 'professional' show, not to mention all of your household expenses, retirement, etc.

Still more? Consider the fact that magic is a very skilled art. I don't believe in 'self working' magic, because even if the prop is super-simple to operate, you've still got

to keep the audience entertained and engaged, which is not easy. Consider that people can get full time jobs with little or no skill, such as most fast-food jobs (no disrespect intended, but cooking fries is not particularly skillful) and realize that what you're doing is skilled and not everyone can do it.

Consider that one of the top few fears for most people in the world is public speaking...which, in some form, is what magic is all about: It's about standing in front of people and being the center of attention as you speak...and perform...so it's public speaking *plus* performing. That's worth decent pay, isn't it?

All I'm saying is, if you expect clients to take your prices seriously, then you must believe in yourself first, and it must come through in your voice, and it all comes down to confidence.

Two BIG Tips

Another huge tip is this: Sound excited and upbeat on the phone! In most cases, when people hire me, it's because they want some fun and excitement added to their event. You must convey this over the phone without being obnoxious. Be accommodating, helpful, vibrant, and happy without sounding hyper, desperate, or manic. It can go a long way!

The second big tip is a bit more subtle: If you're able to, get the prospect to laugh! People will remember the laugh. It forms a connection and may help you just as much as what you say about the act. A laugh sells you as a fun person.

Keep in mind, though, that I'm not talking about cracking a big 'knock knock' joke, but simply weaving an amusing exchange between you and the prospect in a natural way. I can't give you an exact way to do this because every call is different. It's just something that develops over time. Needless to say, keep it clean!

Building Rapport

This tip is also tightly connected to the basic idea of establishing a rapport with your prospect, if the time permits...meaning if you're talking to a birthday mom and there are kids yelling in the background, she may prefer that you get to the point.

However, if you have the time and you sense the client is relaxed enough, spend a few moments creating a connection with the prospect. Listen for openings. If she talks for a minute about nearly sliding off the road because of the snow, listen, say something encouraging, and if possible, get her to laugh.

Remember that in the real world, people are often extremely busy in all walks of life and very often they may be lonely and, with the customer service ratings of bigger companies dropping like a rock, forming a bit of a bond with a prospect will create quite an impression.

It's not that hard, either. In life, when a lot of people are trying to book a show or sell a car or whatever, too often they "listen" only with the intent of speaking when the other person stops talking...or pauses to take a breath!

Once again, I can't offer any definite ways to do this, other than listening and being observant.

Be different. Listen. Create those connections. Magicians are supposed to be people-persons. Be one and have empathy with your prospects. It will brighten their day in many instances, and it will help you.

Answering The Phone

Before any phone script can get you shows, you should really consider the idea that when you answer the phone, you should do so as a business. My business name is Phantasms Magic Productions, so when I answer my phone, I say, "Thank you for calling Phantasms Magic Productions. How may I help you?" This is very professional sounding and really creates quite an impression on people, especially after they've called the other part-timers who answer the phone with a simple "Hello?"

I'm not saying that you necessarily have to convince prospects that you have a bustling office with a staff of 20, but I do think one more method to establish yourself as a professional will go a long way in the client's mind.

An important note about answering the phone: if your family members are not going to answer the phone in a professional manner as discussed, you'd be well-served to get yourself a separate business line for your home.

In my case, my wife will answer the phone as a business and takes messages for me, thus maintaining the business side. The whole point of this is you can't afford to have your 3-year-old run to the phone and chirp, "Hello?" It just won't do.

Your Answering Machine

This is related to the above discussion about the phone—when no one is home is when you're not home and the loved ones decide to let the machine answer, you need to have a professional sounding phone message. While I didn't intend for this text to delve too deeply into marketing outside of the phone, I feel this is important.

Here's what my machine says: **"Thank you for calling Phantasms Magic Productions** (*I want people to know who they're calling*), **We're sorry no one can take your call at this time, but your call is extremely important to us** (*assuring the prospect that their call is important*), **so at the tone please leave your name, number, and a detailed message, or you may visit our website at www.crisjohnsoninfo.com** (*giving them another option in case they want info right away*). **Thanks again for calling**

Phantasms Magic Productions and we'll get back to you later today, guaranteed
(telling them that I'll get back to them the same day will hopefully persuade them to wait for me as opposed to calling someone else)."

As you can see, my feeling is that all of these details add up to really creating a sense of professionalism for your business, which leads me to a final topic on answering the phone...

Different Opinions on Answering EVERY Call

There are some people who feel that you should answer every call when it comes in or risk losing the client. Others feel that by not answering the phone, you establish a sort of 'dominance' in the situation, especially corporate work.

Obviously, the best solution would be to have someone answer the phones for you, like an actual office. I know that's not possible for a lot of people, but for some people, well, it's worth considering. There are services in most areas that actually will set this up for you, take care of sending contracts out, read phone scripts, etc.

My solution is to answer the phone when I'm home, but if I'm not, I don't worry about it until I get home. I mention that because some people believe you need to have your phone line forwarded to your cell phone so as to not miss a single call. Personally, I think that's taking things way too far. I don't want to blow off people, but I also don't want to be a slave to the phone, either.

Another thing to consider is how many rings before you answer? It seems trivial, but these little things add up. I feel after two rings is perfect: one ring and you look too eager and desperate, but three rings make you seem like you don't care...two rings are perfect.

Getting Organized

One of the last things I want to discuss is the idea of getting organized. You really don't know when prospects are going to call, so when the calls do come in, you don't want to be scrambling around trying to find your material.

Here's what I do: I have all of my phone scripts 3-hole punched and put into a 3-ring binder, with every topic/market divided with those little tabs that can be labeled. I also have a day runner calendar and contact system so while I'm talking to a prospect, I can instantly check to see if I have the date and time open that the client is asking about.

My 3-ring binder comes with a zipper so that even if pages are accidentally torn out, they won't fall out of the binder. I've also recently upgraded to a briefcase/notebook/binder system with slide-out handles for easy carrying.

Inside the notebook, I'll also have a sheet for every booking that lists the date, time, names, and specifics about each show. I carry it with me whenever I go out of town so that if I check messages and a client calls me to change the time or whatever, I can instantly update their file immediately so that I don't forget.

That's a real quick bit of advice on how to get your Script Book organized. Obviously, you should have your scripts and customer info copied onto your computer so that if your book ever turns up missing, you've still got your info intact.

I also cover a more detailed system for organizing your business in my course, **The "How I Quit My Day Job in Six Months" Course**

Objections

One important thing to consider is the fact that there is no such thing as a perfect offer. Some people may have objections and you need to know how to handle them.

Price

This is the biggest objection that I encounter, and come to think of it, it's usually the only objection I encounter. When people use price as a way not to accept your offer, in my experience I've found that these instances can most often be broken down into two categories:

First, you may encounter some people who in reality can't afford your fee. I'll cover one possible way to handle this kind of situation in just a moment.

The second category of people who quibble over price are simply trying to get a better deal. You have to realize that many people are professional negotiators in their day jobs, and they continue to use those skills in all aspects of their life.

I have rarely allowed prospects to 'negotiate' fees with me—probably three or four times. Each of those times came during the time immediately after I moved from Pittsburgh to Niagara Falls and was desperate to get gigs, any gigs that would move me closer to quitting my day job.

In each instance, when I got to the site of the gig, I was appalled by the homes the parties were held in—homes that had to be in the \$1,000,000 range. The birthday moms had played me like a fiddle, claiming they couldn't afford my regular fee. They may mention that the competition is so much cheaper. **There are a few things you can mention when they claim they've found cheaper competition. Well, are they insured? Do they have my level of experience? How about my testimonials or references? My guarantee? Do the thinking and comparison for them!**

Dave Risley talks about this extensively. He likes to make the prospects think through their own logic. In other words, he guides them, gently but firmly, through their

own arguments until they see that all things are not equal, and the prospect shouldn't be motivated strictly by the cheaper price.

In my own experience, 99.9% of the time, by the time I finish telling the prospect everything that I offer, I'm already at a higher place in their minds because my competitors sum up their acts in just a few quick sentences. I know this because I "shopped" my competition when I first moved in to see what I was up against. In comparison, I take between two and three pages of information to describe what I offer to prospects. As a result, I haven't had anyone quibble over my prices in a few years, with the exception of charitable organizations, which I'm not going to cover in these pages because my views are a little controversial. Email or call me and I'll be happy to share my thoughts with you.

Anyway, I no longer just drop my fees to get the show. Over time, you'll be able to 'read' which prospects are simply trying to work you for a better price and which ones truly can't afford it.

In my experience, in 99 times out of a hundred, I've found that if the person really can't afford you, they usually don't call back. They'll usually make a vague claim of 'talking to the husband' or 'the committee,' and you don't hear from them. I've actually called many back, not trying to push my way into the gig, but just to see where I went wrong.

That's how I know it's usually price.

I believe that the reason why most people don't call back is because of the confidence in my voice and the fact that I project a strong sense that my prices are my prices...period. You can't bargain with Wal-Mart, so why should people 'feel' that they can bargain with you?

Walking Away

If someone is unable or unwilling to pay your fee, and you've previously established that most clients accept your fee, then you have the choice of walking away from the gig.

Too many magicians feel that they must get the gig, even though they crush their credibility in the process—once you drop your price, you've admitted to the prospect that your show isn't really worth what you claim is your fee.

As Dave Risley says, "Once you drop your fee, then it's only a question of how far you'll drop it."

Personally, I'll walk away from the gig before I allow anyone to even try to bargain with me. I've come to accept that not everyone is going to book me, so to

immediately drop the fee in a futile and desperate attempt to get the gig is to compromise everything I've worked for over the years.

Other objections

Other objections you may encounter are concerns of experience and professionalism. This may be common if you're just starting out and don't have the rock-solid confidence in your voice. Rehearse those scripts!

This is also a good time to offer to let the prospect call a few references that you've received permission to use. I'll often offer to fax or mail a large collection of testimonial letters.

I've also put several pictures of my show on my website in 'real world' settings, not a studio. The prospects can see smiling people enjoying my show, not me posing for pictures. If you have the capacity, you can also add video to your website.

At this point in my life, I don't encounter questions about my ability or professionalism hardly at all. Most people now will take a look at my website before they call because it's non-confrontational...they don't have to worry about being 'sold' on a website by a fast-talking salesperson.

After looking at my site, which is loaded with pictures, testimonials, and client lists, a great deal of sales resistance has been taken away. I'm also recommended by many of my past clients, so word-of-mouth, while slow to build, is the best way to convince people that you are worthy before you've spoken directly to them.

If you construct your scripts properly, the only "common" objection should be price, or whether or not what you offer is what people want, not based on experience, but simply because they may decide that magic is not what is best for their event, regardless of who offers the magic.

Here's a HUGE tip: Take away value if you're going to drop price

This is the one technique that I use when price is an issue, and it's something I never bring up myself...the prospect has to do it.

The concept is simple. I'll use my birthday script as an example. Let's say I offer the client my three birthday shows at fee levels of \$200, \$160, and \$140, which are my current fees. Furthermore, let's assume I've got a prospect who's interested in my \$160 show, which consists of a 45-minute magic show, 10 goody bags, the Floating Carpet, the live animals, and balloon animals. I describe it in more detail in my actual scripts, but you get the idea.

Occasionally, a prospect will want the \$160 package but for whatever reason will say they don't need/want the goody bags and how much of a discount would they receive if we left off the goody bags?

To me, this is a fair question. The prospect isn't asking for a drop in price without taking away something...*they're asking how much of a discount would they receive if we left off one of the services.*

To me, this is fair, because if I offer a discount on the show and I leave out something, am I then offering the same service? No, something has been left out.

Again, I don't bring this up – they do - but it is a technique that I use on occasion. I'm sure some people are just trying to save a few bucks and that's fine, but they're not going to get the same exact package that other clients are willing to pay full price.

Oh, to answer the question above, the client would receive a \$10 discount because I establish the value of each goody bag at \$1.00, and my \$160 package includes 10 bags. Pretty simple math.

The idea of taking away value can be used in other ways, such as the length of your performance, what effects you do, and other aspects of your business.

Some performers at the professional level may offer a “weekday” discount for booking on a day that normally isn't busy. Personally, I wouldn't do that, but I wanted to put it on the table for you to consider.

In closing, it's important to realize that some clients will attempt to haggle with you. It's a good idea to have in place exactly what your own policy will be and the fact that you will stick to it, because if you don't, word will spread.

“Bad” Words

Before I left the section on objections, I wanted to touch briefly on some words that most marketers (myself included) recommend that you do not use when talking to prospects. The reason?

These words have a connotation that causes many people to subconsciously put their guard up. The words are associated with negative stigma or experiences and it's not worth using them for that reason. Sales work is tough enough. It may seem like I'm splitting hairs, but all of these little things add up, especially if you're just starting out with this sort of phone script system.

Cost, Fee, Price, etc. – When talking about your fees, it's good to use a softer word such as “investment.” ‘Investment’ sounds friendlier, and it doesn't have the same cringe-inducing qualities as cost, price, and other words. Those ‘negative’ money-words invoke bad emotions. “Oh no, how much is THIS going to cost?” Sounds more like the

price gouging that people experience (or PERCEIVE they experience) when getting an auto repair estimate. Avoid those words!

Contract – Wow, is ‘contract’ a scary word! In the entertainment business, we do of course use contracts, but since it’s such a scary sounding word that conjures up images of thousand dollar-per-hour lawyers, why not try using friendlier sounding words such as performance agreement or paperwork? I can’t emphasize enough how certain words frighten some people. It seems silly, on one level, but we’re dictated by our emotions, on some level, in nearly everything we do.

“You Get What You Pay For” – When dealing with a prospect that tends to cling to the “but you’re so much more expensive than everyone else I’ve called” approach, it may be tempting to inform Mrs. Smith that Sillies The Clown, who charges \$23 for two hours, wears a costume with fresh vomit stains on it to his gigs (if you think I’m joking, call me. I’ve got great stories that are all true!). The truth is you don’t want to slam your competition too harshly or directly. Also, using the above phrase, while it may be true, is negative and adversarial. I think to do so is very negative and paints you as a negative type of person. By NOT slamming your competition by name, you set yourself up as someone who is more professional than the others. If a prospect is leaning toward the stained-clown entertainer, I simply encourage her to ask for a lot of references from whomever she chooses. I then offer her several of my own, while recapping all of the benefits that I offer.

But – This is a big one to me. When trying to overcome objections, using the word ‘but’ sends off warning signals in the minds of the prospects. Let’s say, for example, that they object to your price. You say, “I understand how you feel, but...” “But” just became the eraser that took away everything you said before it. In effect, by saying ‘but’ you’re really saying that you don’t agree with the prospect at all... which may be true, but to present yourself in such a way sets up an adversarial situation. It’s like if a guy asks a girl out and she responds by saying, “You’re a nice guy, but...” I don’t even have to finish the sentence, do I? Try to use ‘and’ to connect your statements. It flows better and doesn’t have the “uh-oh” quality that ‘but’ does.

Questionnaire To Build Scripts

I wanted to give you a simple tool to help when you’re first starting out when building scripts. I realize that many of these concepts may seem like reading Martian at first, so I’m hoping that this simple questionnaire will help you.

Feel free to reproduce these questions and use them whenever you’re writing a new script.

Magicians’ Script Writing Questionnaire 101

1. What market are you writing the script for? (birthday, school, etc.)

2. What are some of the concerns this prospect has? Be market-specific.

3. List the different features of the act you'll be presenting to this market.

4. Convert the features above into benefits, based on what the markets' prospects typically are concerned with. Refer back to the text! Be descriptive and make everything sound fun and/or professional, based on the needs & desires of prospects.

5. Include any general benefits of hiring you, such as experience, high-level clients, special features of what you offer (PA system, backdrop, giveaways, etc.)

6. Create different packages for this market. Consider things you can add or takeaway to your act. Consider stage/strolling combos and so forth. Summarize here.

-
7. Create price structures for each of the packages. Do research into your market.
Hint: Call your sophisticated full-time competition to get an idea of what to charge. Call your unsophisticated, part-time entertainers in your market. You may want your fees to fall below the highest full-timer, but high above your cheapest competitors when starting out. Test for results! Keep track of your results!
-

Closing Remarks

Writing this text has been a wonderful experience for me. As I've gained more and more experience with my magic business, I've also become more aware of what I feel are fundamental problems in the world of magic, both in the performing end and the business end.

As I've previously stated, I feel that one thing we can do to increase the public perception of our craft is to present what we do in a professional manner if we really expect people to pay us for our art.

I sincerely hope you use this information and profit from it. I'm living out my dream of being a professional magician and I'm confident that with some effort on your part, you can too.

Please contact me at: crisjohnsoninfo@verizon.net if you have any questions. Thanks for buying this and let me know of your success!