



Become a Successful Magician
for fun or Profit

DISCLAIMER: This information is provided "as is". The author, publishers and marketers of this information disclaim any loss or liability, either directly or indirectly as a consequence of applying the information presented herein, or in regard to the use and application of said information. No guarantee is given, either expressed or implied, in regard to the merchantability, accuracy, or acceptability of the information.

Become a Successful Magician

Table of Contents

Should you become an amateur or professional magician?

Do you need an agent?

The business side of magic shows: Microphones and other sound equipment

The business side of magic shows: Promotional materials

The business side of magic shows: The media and advertising

The business side of magic shows: Liability insurance

The business side of magic shows: Finding your gigs

The business side of magic shows: What about costumes & makeup?

Should you have an assistant?

Learning the tricks: Buy or make your props

Learning the tricks: Handkerchief Tricks

Learning the tricks: Box Tricks

Learning the tricks: Paper Tricks

Learning the tricks: Rope Tricks

Learning the tricks: Other Miscellaneous Tricks

Should you become an amateur or professional magician?

An amateur magician is anyone who has a minimum amount of talent, skill and knowledge when it comes to performing magic tricks. He or she may be anyone who knows one magic trick or at least three magic tricks.

But basically, a more technical definition of an amateur magician is anyone who does not in any way practice magic as their trade, even if he or she knows four, five, six or more than a number of magic tricks. This is regardless of how good, better or excellent he or she may be in performing flourishes, sleight of hand or optical illusions.

However, there are those amateur magicians who try their very best to expand their current knowledge as well as repertoire and still practice magic as their primary source of income. People who do this are usually called hedge magicians. This is in order to differentiate them from authentic professional magicians who make practicing and

performing magic as a trade and make an actual living doing so.

Meanwhile a professional magician is anyone who has a little bit more knowledge and talent compared to an amateur magician. These professional magicians know sufficient magic that makes it enough for them to use it as their primary source of trade and income, as well as not using magic to assist them in a trade other than magic.

So technically, even if a barber performs his job using magic and no matter how many tricks he or she knows and is capable of, that barber is still not considered as a professional magician because his primary trade is cutting hair and not necessarily being a magician.

Another way to differentiate a professional magician from an amateur is by the way he or she does flourishes.

According to the Online Encyclopedia of Magic, a flourish is any sleight that is performed for the purpose of entertaining an audience and does not in any way contain any moves that are

hidden. Most sleights that are performed are done so in order to deceive a captive audience and to do something that can not be detected. Meanwhile, a flourish is any trick that is done to draw the audience's attention away from where an actual sleight is simultaneously being performed.

There are some magicians who consider the performance of a flourish as simply a finger exercise and not really actual pieces of performance. But those magicians who do put in and include flourishes in their act are considered by some of their fellow magicians as a seriously skilled performer.

If a performance consists of a card trick wherein the cards are spread out on the table and when a performer does a pressure card fan, the image that that performer projects is one of professionalism and experience. But a performer of magic, who simply holds the cards and then spreads them slightly, may then be considered more as an amateur. Although this may or may not be true or this may not be considered as a hard fact, this is the perception and the impression that a performing magician usually gives to an audience.

Flourishes are done not just as a form of showing-off to the audience; a flourish is also done for the purpose of presenting just how a performer is truly dedicated to the magic act. It also shows the degree of professionalism one has for the performance.

When a flourish is done, it makes it easier to know the difference between a magic trick performed by an expert magician and your friendly neighborhood "Jim" who is doing a card trick.

A skilled performer comes off as a natural and will ultimately receive more credit for his or her performance as well as recognition, not to mention respect for the skills he or she has.

When a spectator is looking at a magic trick where the occasional flourish is done, that performer is also seen as more than a magician but a person who is passionate at what he or she is doing. It is therefore so much easier to hire a magician who has more skills and experience than one who

needs to practice his or her craft more.

Do you need an agent?

Some magicians hate agents, while some like them. What is better: having an agent or not having one? Which is which? Believe it or not, the decision actually depends on you. For some, getting agents is a very touchy subject. Usually it is because some find it very hard to accept that their agents get more money and earns more than the actual performing magicians.

So some magicians can not help but think: it is a trick! To help you decide better about whether you should get an agent or not, the following are some details and information which could help you decide whether to have an agent or to get rid of the one you already have.

One thing good about having an agent is that you save yourself from the trouble of having to negotiate yourself.

Usually, there are instances wherein you can get higher talent

fees if it is not you who are doing the haggling. If there is an agent involved, he or she would usually say that your services could only be gotten if the fee is such and such. Doing so usually means you would not create an unfriendly image for yourself.

Also, every time an agent makes money, so do you! The many bookings an agent gets for you, the more money you get from all those gigs. This and minus so much of the hassle of you having to schedule all your performances, collecting your talent fees, practicing for your act, etc.

When you have an agent, all you need to do is show up and give the best performance of your life.

Agents also invest money on advertisements that are all about you. So you also save on the expenses and the stress of having to think of where your name should be placed, what size should your marquee be and all that jazz.

Another advantage of having an agent is that you look and are

considered more as a professional than if you do not have one. It is so convenient to just show up for your performance and let your agent do the dirty work.

Still confused? If you already have an agent and you are still considering dropping him like a bad habit, maybe the following details would assist you to better decide if you should do so or not.

It is best that you talk with your agent and make an agreement with him or her on how much you would want to receive for your particular performance or engagement. Do not rack your brain thinking how much your agent would get out of this. It is more productive to think how much you would get out of that gig. If your agent earns a little more than you do, so be it. As long as you are getting the fee you want, that is okay. A good gig is a good gig. Imagine who they will be getting in the future for any more gigs. If they think of your agent, it is just the same way that they will be probably thinking of you too.

It is also highly advisable for you to get a contract. A contract makes your relationship with your agent more efficient, straightforward and clear. Thanks to a contract, your agent will not be able to hide how much they are getting. Have your agent fax you a copy of the contract.

Let us face it, just like in any profession there are agents that are good in what they do and there are those that are bad in what they do. There are also those who are unethical. There have been instances where agents and agencies merely concentrate on money more than in anything else. Avoid having to do anything with them. An agent or agency that does not call you even if a client specifically requests for your services is bad news.

There are also agents that will get you to lower your price but then still charge a customer with a large fee. Do not let this happen to you. Stick with the price you think you deserve.

You should also try to avoid agents who give you various reasons and excuses about this client being unable to pay

because of such and such reasons. This is a trick, and you as a magician should know this better than the others.

**The business side of magic shows:
Microphones and other sound equipment**

So you have practiced your routine well. You know what to do, what to say and what to wear. There is nothing else you need to do or check prior to your on stage performance. Or is there?

Yes there is. Remember that you will be performing before a live audience. An audience needs to, besides see the best part of your act and your costume, hear what you have to say to captivate their attention.

It is a requirement that every performer who goes on stage must not forget the essential three things in order to have a good if not a positively unforgettable performance: an appropriate costume, a case for where to put your props in,

and – drum roll please – sound.

These three things are the essential must haves, besides the usual add-ons to up any show's theatrical value. But you are on the safe side as long as these three basic requirements are heeded and paid utmost attention to.

Even if you have a totally amazing, mind blowing performance which you practiced day in and day out to make it perfect, if the audience you are performing to cannot hear a word you are saying and so cannot understand what it is that they are supposed to, it would be very difficult - on their part - to appreciate all the efforts you put in to have a good show.

Every performer who is to go in front of a live audience must have a microphone. Duh! Do not forget, it should not be just a microphone, it should be a microphone plus working, if not excellent, sound equipment.

There are magic act performers who prefer, and find it best, to use a Shure clip on their microphones as well as an amazingly

powerful yet extremely simple Fendor Can Amp.

But over all, it really does not matter what type, what brand, what kind of sound equipment you use. What does matter is that your equipment must be able to provide a clear, crisp sound throughout the venue and one that will make the audience hear you as well as laugh at, applaud at, and be in awe at the appropriate moment you would want them to.

However, there are those kinds of performers who cannot wholeheartedly as well as logically appreciate the value of having their own sound equipment. Most of the time, the audience suffer from this kind of technical negligence.

Some performers think that as long they speak loudly – and carry a big magic stick – everyone in the room would be able to hear them.

Or sometimes, they assume – wrongly most of the time – that the people who organized the event or the venue that they will be working or performing in will be the ones to provide the

sound equipment they need.

The best way to go is to assume nothing and bring everything. Your very own sound equipment will definitely work best for you. You benefit more from being prepared and the audience will just as enjoy your company, your act, your performance and probably talk to you later on for other gigs. And all this will be possible because of your sheer foresight.

Someone once said that persons with microphones cannot and should not be trusted. This may be a correct and incorrect statement. It all depends on who is holding the microphone.

Microphones, more often than not, provide speakers with the power to hold an audience captive. For anyone holding a microphone, and whoever is holding that one and only microphone in a crowded room – that person is definitely the only one whom people will be hearing all throughout.

Absolute ownership of the microphone gives anyone absolute power as well as prestige. It also gives the impression that

the one holding the microphone is worth hearing, seeing, and listening to. Those are benefits that any performer may consider as - definitely - priceless.

The same concept applies to any music that a performer will be using for his or her act. If there is to be music on the show that you will be staging, do not forget to use equipment that looks professional as well as provide a service that is professional, if not brilliant.

The business side of magic shows:

Promotional materials

When getting into the business of magic and putting on magic shows, it does not necessarily mean that having a great show will translate to a lot of bookings. As it is with any business, promotion has a lot to do with whether your phone will be ringing off the hook or if you'll be constantly checking whether it's broken or not for the lack of calls.

While it is perfectly understandable to believe in the quality of

your craft and that it will speak for itself, if that's all you're relying on, it falls short in getting non-practitioners (your audience) to make that call and book you. You will need to promote your skills to people who will likely be in need of your craft. That means you would need to come up with promotional materials.

Promotional materials are simply things that will call attention and inform people about your skills and craft as a magician. These could be anything from a flyer, brochure, video, website, calling card – the list can go on and on. What is important is that after being exposed to the material, that person will be motivated to know more and call you for details regarding their own needs and how you can help them.

That said, the heart of your promotional materials should NOT be how good you are in pulling off tricks and how complicated your illusions are. The core of your promos should be how you can solve their problems and address their needs.

For example, if someone planning a corporate sales rally were

to come across your website, that person would not be interested to know how many girls you can cut in half. He/she would probably want to know whether you could entertain their sales force of about 500 strong. Only when you've established how you can address your client's needs can you then delve into certain details about your show.

Now that you have the core principle in promoting yourself, you can start to do so. The range for the cost of promotional materials can go from practically nothing to as far as your checkbook can take you.

Phone calls

Never underestimate the power of a timely phone call. While this may seem simple, this needs some research on your part. This means you would need to know what times of the year magic shows are in demand. If you're seriously into this business, this will not be hard to figure out. If you're a newbie, ask your more established friends when are they the busiest, or simply observe the trends of the craft you're in.

Once you think you've got the period suited for your particular call, make the necessary adjustments to call at just about the time events organizers are starting their plans. For example, if you're a close-up performer, you may want to target events like weddings or Christmas parties. Do your homework and find out what times of the year are those events likely staged then give the organizers a call about 3 to 4 weeks before that time. Call too early and they might forget you, call too late and they've probably already booked someone else.

Brochures/Flyers/Cards

Printed materials are only as good as the distribution system that goes with it. One may use high quality paper and professional layout for their printed collateral and have no bookings to show for if the materials are not distributed properly.

Take care not to annoy people with your flyers or brochures by thrusting them at their faces, especially when they're in a hurry. A lot of businesses fail to see this point and find their costly printed promos tossed in the wastebasket as quickly as

it was handed out.

Instead, distribute your cards and flyers on occasions when people will be more receptive to the idea of magic shows. One idea is to stage a short casual show at a park where there are a lot of people and have a friend or two hand out your flyers and brochures to those who pass by to watch. (The same principle should also apply for your booked shows.)

Just remember that the idea of the printed materials is to generate interest in what you've got to offer and provide information to people on how to contact you.

As a final word on this topic, with competition practically growing by the minute, you will need to find a way to distinguish yourself from the rest. In creating your promotional materials, avoid presenting yourself as a do-it-all guy or gal. While this may sound good at first, you may not necessarily be able to live up to that claim. Find a specific need you can address well and build your reputation on it. In this line of work, that's about as big an investment on promotion you can

make.

The business side of magic shows:

The media and advertising

A lot of people get intimidated by the word media and advertising and usually take it to mean powerful conglomerates of print, broadcast and the Internet. While that is a common perception, it should not come to the point that people like you would feel inferior because of it.

One thing you should know about media and advertising is that they are simply tools. The high-profile nature it has stems from the fact that the people in it want this to be so. But if you choose not to fall for this illusion, you'd find that you are in as much a position to use these tools as anyone else. To be more specific, you can use these tools to promote your business as a magician or illusionist.

Now before you protest with how much it will cost to put up ads in the paper, radio and TV, allow yourself to be informed

on alternatives that may increase your bookings without breaking the bank.

First of all, your advertising strategy will not have as wide a coverage as a national campaign, which makes your costs all that much smaller. Second, you don't need to be an established performer to get your own advertising. Even a newbie or someone building on a career in the magic business can make use of advertising tools.

Now you can move on to knowing what kind of media is out there and how you can advertise on them.

Tri-media

Print, TV and radio are the traditionally held avenues of advertisement and these are what you see as newspaper ads, TV and radio commercials. As the most established forms of media, these have the most circulation in a population. It is this ability to reach literally millions of people that advertisers pay a lot of money for.

Print

Since you don't need to reach a million people, you may just do as well to start with your own local area. Very likely there is a community paper that you can visit to inquire about placing ads. If the rates are too high for you, consider putting out a press release and sending it to the paper's editor. Press releases don't cost you anything because publishers are always on the lookout for material to fill in blanks in the layout. Just make sure your press release is relevant to the paper you'll be sending it to.

TV

Given the right circumstances, you can advertise yourself on TV and/or radio without spending a cent on production costs. You can do this by lending your services to existing shows that may need your skills as a magician. A deal can be worked out with the show's producer where in exchange for your skills, your contact information will be put on air.

Radio

Obviously, the suggestion for TV will not work for radio but

even then, you can advertise on radio in a similar way you did for print. Benefit shows or fundraisers enjoy the privilege of free radio announcements. If you can work out a deal with the fundraiser organizers, you may be able to have your name included in the radio announcement, thus creating awareness of your services.

New media

New media has come to identify everything else outside the realm of tri-media. For now, this pertains to the Internet and mobile technology that is growing at a breakneck pace while remaining affordable to the common Joe.

Websites

Most magicians now maintain their own websites meant to promote the performer and the show. One thing you should know about websites is that more does NOT necessarily mean better. Sometimes a website could have so many pictures or words that the information is literally in the visitor's face.

Instead of inviting the person to learn more about you, you may end up turning them off with a website that's too

cluttered or too loud.

Restraint is the key here. Remember that the idea is to generate an interest in you. Don't rely on the website (or any other form of advertisement) to get you booked as only you (or your agent) can do that. Give enough information that answers typical questions like what you do and to what events have you performed at. Leave the nitty-gritty details of your act to the actual conversation you hopefully will have with a prospect after they've visited your site.

Other forms of new media like email and mobile technology employ the same principles as with websites and tri-media. It is simply a matter of mastering the technology of your choice and making it work along with your core message that you can help solve people's problems with the services you offer.

Finally, after all that glitz in media, your quality of work is still the final deciding factor whether you can convert the hype to reality. So don't forget to build on the skills you are advertising and your reputation in the magic business just

might take off sooner than you know it.

The business side of magic shows:

Liability insurance

Whether you admit it or not, we live in a severely litigation-obsessed society. Basically anyone in this country stands a chance to be sued for any or whatsoever act that is proven to be his or her fault. Arm chair sociologists call it simply as the deep pocket syndrome.

We are not legal experts and the following information is provided for your consideration only.

When one is doing public shows, especially the ones that deal with magic, the very best thing anyone could do to stay in the safe side is to buy insurance for your act. It is not an option. It is a need for goodness sake.

One of the good insurance that some entertainers have has a one million dollar liability. It came from an agent from the

Farmers Insurance Group.

Having insurance is like having a fire extinguisher. It is so much better to have one than not have it at all. You feel safe, protected and covered. One million dollar tops and is quite enough to give you a sleep-heavy night and a wake-up-fresh morning.

It has been said that the Society of American Magicians has the kind of insurance of this type. It is very important that you get insurance. If you have one or if you are planning to purchase one, make sure that the insurance policy you have a product clause.

This works well just in case you use balloons for your act, or birds for that matter. If one of the audience members happen to take it home with them and they accidentally choke on the balloon or get bitten by the bird, you have nothing to worry about because you are definitely covered.

For your information also, if you have performer's insurance

and you happen to perform a magic act while you were not in your costume, most likely you are not covered.

If you have liability insurance and while you are performing, a child insists that he or she wants to touch or to have one of your props, make sure that you make it clear and known to everyone concerned – as they may be potential witnesses – that you are giving the prop or props to the parent. Hand it over to the parent. Doing so transfers the liability on the hands of the child's parents.

There are also magic tricks performed by clowns. Currently, it is highly inadvisable – fortunately or unfortunately – for clowns or any performer to hug children or to get close enough unless it is to shake hands.

These days you really cannot be too careful. And being too careful is still the best way to go.

It is best that prior to doing a magic act or any public show for that matter, that you - as a performer - tell all the adults and

children in the audience about some specific props that you might be distributing to them during the course of the show. If for example you will be using balloons, announce beforehand that children's mouths and balloons do not mix. Doing so keeps you from any liability and your audience safe from choking unnecessarily.

One performer has an existing one million dollar liability; it also includes five hundred thousand dollars worth of product liability. The insurance also covers any event wherein the performer and his or her employee are entertaining. However, it does not cover any contractors that are independent from the performer which the performer has hired. If the performer needed to hire someone outside, the performer always requested for an 'additional insured' from the insurance company.

Make sure though that once you get an insurance, that insurance company should be able and willing to give you a rider that will be able to cover you if in case you are working or need to work off premises and on a particular client's

house, business office, facility, or any other area that is different from where you regularly and usually work in. It is a standard item and there should not be that much fuss over it. Any good insurance company should be able to do it.

All you need to do is be persistent. It is an item that is almost always considered a standard on many insurance policies.

The business side of magic shows:

Finding your gigs

If you've got the heart to perform, the desire to entertain and the will to succeed, then the magic business might be for you. The line of work isn't considered conventional by most people, but unless you are like most people, this shouldn't be a problem for you.

You've decided to embark on a career that involves connecting with audiences by entertaining them with magic and illusions. You've worked on your skills, your presentation and on your show. Now you're ready to get out there and find people who

will want to see you perform.

That can get tricky because with so much competition out there, being good at your show may not be the only requirement to get bookings. And unless you're prepared to do some more work and to wait for the fruits of that work to pay off, you might be disappointed at the lack of gigs you can get for yourself. But if you're prepared to go the distance, learning how to find and get performance gigs will eventually pay off with results you may never have initially imagined.

First thing you should know is what kind of audience you'd want to perform for. Are you more inclined to work with children? Or is a more mature, corporate environment more to your liking? Don't be concerned now with what is more financially rewarding. The idea is to get you performing at your best because this increases your chances of referrals and repeat bookings.

Once you've established your target audience and you've created the best show you can for it, you can go out soliciting

bookings for your performance. But before you do, it will do you a world of good to have a video presentation of one of your performances (preferably with the target audience of your choice). This is so that as you approach potential clients, you will be able to demonstrate your skills and how your audience responded to your performance. For a prospective client, being given this kind of information is important as it answers their concern of your effectiveness as an entertainer. Once that has been settled, it greatly increases the chances of you getting awarded the project.

After creating your demo video, you will need to look at your calendar to see what times of the year does your target audience hold most of its events that will be needing your services. If you plan to perform for corporate audiences, it will be best to take note of a company's annual conventions or sales rallies. Also note the organizers who will be planning such events and call to inform them of your services. This initial call is meant to introduce yourself. (Your demo video will be important here.)

However, that one call should be followed up by at least 2 more over the course of a quarter. Make sure that you're within the organizer's radar especially a month before the events you're targeting take place. If you call too early and not follow up, they might forget about you. But if you call too late, you might miss the opportunity and someone else would have snapped up the gig.

If you are prepared to do some pro-bono work or for a very low fee, then participating in as many events as you can will get you exposed to as many people as possible. As more and more people get to know you and your show, interest may drum up and requests for better paying gigs may come in.

Finally, if you are truly committed to the profession of magic and illusion shows, it will help for you to be a member of magic guilds and societies such as the International Brotherhood of Magicians, the Society of American Magicians, or the Society of Young Magicians. These groups can help you not only with your magic skills but also in getting you recognized in the area you are based in.

With all these information in getting your next gigs, it cannot be stressed enough that you need to be dedicated to this kind of work. It is not the easiest and the rewards may leave much to be desired especially if you're just starting out.

But if your desire to entertain and interact with your audience is genuine, they will be able to feel that and connect with you in turn. That is by far, the most effective basis of getting asked to perform again - the rewards for which aren't simply measured in terms of money.

The business side of magic shows:

What about costumes & makeup?

The field of magic, like any other show business, has different departments created to specialize on a special production process in order to make sure that everything is in order and systematized. One of these special queues is the costume and make up department. Although they belong to the same

department, each has their own set of crews to work with.

The costume department crew serves as the performance dressers. Their task is not only to assist the performers for the magic show but should be up beat, systematic, and organized in everything that needs to be prepared. The costumes and the people involved can vary from one show to another. The costume designer should then be flexible and able to adapt the performers' personalities to their costumes.

The whole costume department involves the beaders, sewers, make-up artists up to the hair and wigs. This special set of people working behind the stage report to the head of the wardrobe department every meeting. They should be very energetic since their work demands a lot of walking around from one set to another.

A wardrobe assistant should always have the following handy:

- A small box or pouch of safety pins. One can even identify a wardrobe crew by the safety pins pinned on their clothes.

- Needles with ready black or white threads for on the spot repairs.
- Pencil
- Pair of scissors

They are also assigned to different areas of responsibility such as laundry, ironing, steaming, sorting and hanging of costumes, unpacking, costume repair, purchasing team for supplies, collecting and polishing of shoes, carrying make up cases, delivering and picking up of costumes from the dry cleaners, brushing of fur and wigs, and the setting up of dressing rooms. They also assist the magic show performers change into their costumes while others are the ones who collect all the materials used and return them to the right packages. There will also be a different set of people who will be doing all the emergency repairs.

The show must have dress tracks wherein all costume assistants should have a copy since there are so many shows everyday that might cause confusion. Dead costume is the term used to call wardrobes that will not be used again on the

same show.

The members of the make up crew are the ones who set up the changing rooms and double check if the performers' make up is not too heavy or too light for a show. A make-up designer collects and pulls up all the supplies needed for face and body painting. These set of people undergo training in applying and maintaining the quality of the cosmetics.

The following are the best make up selections used by professional magic show business owners:

- Ben Nye Theatrical Make up - promises make up in action and consistent quality.
- Color Cake Foundation Makeup - it easily blends to the skin that gives a more perfect look. This is great for oily and sensitive types of skin.
- Proscenium Series Creme Foundation - ideal for stage and on film for it naturally changes the skin tone.
- Ben Nye Eye Shadow - this creates a dramatic eye style. Matte finish that adds stunning and shimmering array of colors

for richer eye effects.

- Cream Highlights - it emphasizes the texture of the facial skin. Conceals black under eyes and also projects hollowed cheek illusion.
- Mellow Orange Concealer - provides enough natural color to hide, tattoos, eyebags, scars, veins, etc.

This part of the magic show business is very vital to giving life and color to the magic presented on stage. The aesthetic development of the show and the business lies in their hands. Each performer, actor, magician, assistants have to be thankful, for they could never do their performance at the right time and poise without the entire costume and make up department. Business owners should never falter in providing enough budget and support for the members of the wardrobe crews just to make sure that everything will be beautifully in place for the big show.

Should you have an assistant?

Some magicians prefer to work alone, they never want anyone

mingling or catching the viewers' attention while performing their magic tricks. If noticed, these are the magicians who only perform using cards, balls, flowers, birds, boxes, bottles, and other kinds of paraphernalia used in magic tricks. Though amusing, for very rare and really mind boggling tricks, a pair or a group of people performing the magic in front of an audience is more highlighted, making the whole performance longer since the magician could perform numerous kinds of tricks and illusions without having to move around and just concentrating on his master piece.

Oftentimes, magicians are seen doing their tricks in magic with one or two or even more assistants to help him with the trick. This is done especially when the magic show requires a person as a part of the trick or simply to hold some of the magician's props for him. Their interaction with the assistants greatly influences the people watching the show. They help in making the audience feel comfortable watching and even joining the show as volunteers in performing some of the tricks. They also attract the audience to applaud by striking a pose. Once the assistants move, the audience may be prompted to clap

their hands.

The assistant may also serve as the extra vision of the magician. Since she has access to the back stage, she can be the first onlooker of the performers' costumes and other props as well. She can immediately tell which costume belongs to whom. Some magicians may just require their assistants to simply take care of his equipment back stage. Packing up props is also another responsibility of an assistant, since an assistant is usually the only person entrusted by the magician to touch his priced equipment or tools. However, there are times when the magician would like to pack their own props, the assistant can help by making sure that the magician has indeed packed everything and nothing got left behind.

The magician's assistant can also make it a point that all tricks have been made. There are times when magicians lose track of the succeeding tricks due to the concentration and it is the assistant's duty to make sure the next prop is presented to the magician to remind him of the next trick to be delivered.

Aside from having another set of hands for the show and keeping the props in their proper place, assistants could also help in entertaining volunteers for special tasks as part of the show. They will be the volunteers' guide when there is already a need to stand, move or take a bow. Assistants can also play a big role in taking care of any volunteer or who is beginning to act like a nuisance. This can be accomplished by informing the security department of the show or by simply using his own strategies or following the instructions of the magician to tame the party-poopers.

Also, assistants play an important role in drawing the audience's attention since the audience will look where the assistant is looking while a trick is being performed. However, since a slight movement could catch attention, there should be an agreement between the magician and the assistant when to be still and when to start moving again. The assistant's reaction is also vital for it causes the illusion of a trick happening for the first time, thus, giving more thrill to the audience. So once the magician halts for a few moments of applause, the assistant should halt as well.

Keep in mind that the magician's assistant is not only assistant to him but to the rest of the performers who are also willing to help whenever she is free of her tasks. This builds camaraderie between the magicians and other fellow performers as well as on and off stage. It is very appropriate to offer the same relationship and respect with other workers in the magic show. The whole success of all the tricks performed will never be complete and effective without the assistant's effort and hard work, too.

Whether to have an assistant is entirely up to you. However, if you do as a form of motivation, good magicians should acknowledge and commend the assistant's great job after a certain magic show. A simple pat on the back or a salary increase can help a lot.

Learning the tricks:

Buy or make your props

For beginner magicians, it is a combination of skills, talents,

and acquired tricks that brings magic to life. However, for those who haven't really tried any magic at all, there is one question always asked - "Do they have to buy the props for their tricks or just make them themselves?" Don't worry tips and practical suggestions will be provided as you read along.

The only problem with learning different tricks for beginners is that they do not know what is in store for them in the magic world. Before even buying or trying anything, the very first thing that they will have to do is get books that relate to magic that tackle the different areas of magic and then decide which specific magic tricks they will be focusing on.

Once this has been decided, watch a few magic shows or watch magicians that do such tricks. It will be very thrilling of course and the beginner will end up buying a lot of stuff almost every time. The experience they get from just seeing a lot of the supplies in magic stores that provide a lot of samples and information about how such trick will be made with its effect is very pleasing to the eyes. It's like giving the beginner the idea that he'll soon be an expert and very powerful. Just

the thought of young men gasping and young women fantasizing gives him the chills.

On the other hand, buying more of the supplies and props for the trick is not as important as really knowing all the secrets and skills to perform such trick. Some aspiring magicians have wasted months and even years in buying the props they needed only to realize in the end that they should have done things differently. Effort should be exerted more in understanding and practicing a specific trick thoroughly.

Instead of buying props and supplies, books should be bought. Even videos that show how to do the trick are not as helpful as doing it personally and visualizing the action when reading.

Here are tips in order to specialize on a specific trick before investing in a lot of materials:

- Buy or borrow books to get more information about magic, from its history up to how it is being done in front of an audience.
- The internet could also be a very good source of information.

- Visualize and ponder about how the trick is can be performed effectively.
- Go to magic stores to examine the props and supplies, chat with some of the magic enthusiasts, ask questions from the dealer, or even watch demos. Keep everything in mind, those can be bought next time when already sure of the trick to be used.
- Instead of buying new cards with holes in the middle, why not ask anyone who has an old deck of cards not being used anymore.
- Recycle materials that can be suitable for the trick being practiced. Card boxes, matchboxes, sticks and cloths can be available at any home. Practice first and once the trick is mastered, then go buy materials from the magic store so that the whole thing will be presentable to the audience.

Friends and dealers in a magic shop will be demonstrating something that is a totally new trick that causes amazement. There are even those who can afford such luxury of the hobby, get to spend up to a hundred bucks a week just buying props. Buying them could be fun because of their color and sounds or

excitement they provide. Just be careful of some tricks that could be very entertaining during the demo but end up terrifying the audience. Also, there are some tricks that do not exactly work as they do in the store. Those who buy that stuff end up throwing it away and develop the "Next Time" syndrome (buy another, new one next time).

Keep in mind that magic does not lie on the trick made or bought, not on the way the coin was folded, not in the way the money was printed. The whole thing lies in the playful imagination of the minds of the audience. The real secret occurs when a magician competently manipulates the minds into a reaction that experience the magic.

Learning the tricks:

Handkerchief Tricks

Magic tricks have been around for centuries and are practiced in every society. They are among the most popular past times both for children and adult.

Tricks may make use of materials or objects such as coins, cards, tables, game cards, and number tricks but the one that remains to be the most popular among children and the one that is first learned by a beginner is the handkerchief.

Linen or Silk?

Tricks using a handkerchief can be either performed in whatever material it was made of. However, the type of tricks to be performed determines the type of handkerchief you are to use.

For knots and similar activities, a silk handkerchief is chiefly used because they slide quickly in the process of tying up.

Other magic tricks using a handkerchief require a hard material like linen as in the case of bringing about a hypnotized effect on a handkerchief.

Below are just some of the most common magic tricks that involve the use of handkerchief together with explanations on

how magic works.

Standing Handkerchief – This type of magic trick makes use of a hemmed linen handkerchief which is ironed to make it even stiffer. This very same stiffness determines the success for this performance.

The handkerchief is taken folded from somewhere and spread on the table. The magician picks it up on the centerfold and raises it up in the air until it takes the shape of a small tent.

He will do the usual mystic hand pass while putting the handkerchief in an upright position. The hanky will stay upright as predicted as if it was put on a spell.

Detachable Thumb – In this trick, you will need both a hanky and a piece of carrot. The carrot should be cut in a way that resembles your thumb. It should be as small and has the same thickness as your finger.

Partly cover your hand and parts of your thumb finger with the

hanky. You will need both sleight of hand and dexterity in this kind of activity. Quickness is the rule of the game in order not to spoil the trick.

Place the carrot in the same position as your thumb showing only that portion while covered with handkerchief. Patter a little bit with your audience describing how you have been feeling about your finger since you accidentally hurt it.

Ask one to participate to do the inspection and possible massaging for them. The moment they hold the carrot, release it and act like you were surprised.

Handkerchief That Changes Color – Apparently, this is one of the simplest magic trick usually done by magicians in terms of minimal effect on the audience but one of the most difficult when it comes to preparation and production.

The magician will show the audience a hanky and toss it around, up and down, right and left, and changes color along the way. The hanky does not actually change its color since

the magician is holding not one, but two hankie!

As the hankie is tossed up and down, he makes it a point to reverse the position of the topmost hankie so that the one in the bottom with a different color is showed up and the hankie apparently changes color.

This is quite a difficult thing to do for many suspecting audience are trying to find out if you got several hankie at hand. This requires swiftness in the movement of your hand and making sure that the hankies you are holding do not move independently of one another.

Tips on Performing Handkerchief Tricks

Be swift – Try to be mindful of astute members of the audience at all times. Even the most seemingly attentive spectator are keen enough even the slightest mistake made along the process of performing your tricks thereby spoiling it.

Mouth Shut – Secrecy is the basic rule that magicians should

keep in mind. Blabbing about the secret of your tricks makes it even less appealing to onlookers. Allow the audience to make their own guesses and find it out in their own way. In short, keep them mystified.

Practice! Although practice may not help you master all the skills needed for a certain trick, constant and intense practice helps and keep you on the right track.

Additionally, convey a feeling of excitement and enthusiasm in what you are doing for it helps you connect with the audience and infect them with your attitude along the way.

Learning the tricks:

Box Tricks

Are you one of those people who would like to learn the tricks after seeing a magic show? Would you like to do some tricks on your friend especially when you want him to just "poof!" out of your life for a while? Then, it is time that you learn the secret in doing magic tricks.

The problem is that most people who want to learn magic tricks could not get them directly from a magician. Probably, they were just afraid you could outwit them, or maybe they do not simply want anybody to learn the tricks.

However, the truth is that everybody can learn magic tricks. Obtaining the skills in order to perform magic tricks is not limited. It is open for everybody who is willing to learn and master the craft.

Take for example the well-loved box tricks. Most people are so amazed with the fact that people can disappear with just a snap while inside the box. The good thing about it is that they can easily reappear in the box.

Impossible? Think again.

Box tricks, like any magic tricks are all based on illusions. The purpose of these illusions is to amaze and bewilder the audience, generating a belief that something extraordinary

had just taken place.

In reality, people knew that these box tricks are just forms of trickery but the fact that the action is truly baffling; everybody is entertained.

Generally, box tricks entail the disappearance of a person after he was placed inside the box. With just a tap on the lid, and some "magic words" the person inside the box disappears.

Usually, the secret to these box tricks is based on the box itself. These boxes are made from a huge "cardboard box" that is carefully made in such a way that the trick can be executed without having to give the audience a hint.

Hence, the box should be made in such a way that the person who will fit into the box could easily get hide behind it without having to reveal any means of knowing the trick.

How to Make the Box

The greatest secret in box tricks is based on the composition of the box. Here is how to make the magic box:

1. Choose a box that has plenty of room for the person who will get in. Be sure that he will still be able to move a little once he needs to get out of the box at once.
2. Cut the box's base. Be sure you to leave an edge on the three sides.
3. Slit the "false bottom" from an additional portion of the cardboard fixing it in the interior, and fastening it with the center of a sturdy tape.
4. Fasten them on the grip.
5. Slash or fasten jointly a "one-piece" cardboard cover. Try to color it with a dark hue to add more fuss.

The Box Trick

Basically, the magic box that is being used in the trick has a bogus base. This means that the box has no real, solid bottom. This make up is generally made in order to allow the box to be tipped forward without having to reveal the person inside the box.

The tricky part here is that when the magician tries to tilt the box forward, so that the audience can see whether the person is still inside or not, the box actually slips over the person who is inside it. The reason why he is not exposed to the audience is that he is tugging the "hinged" base closed by simply clutching its grip at the same time.

In this way, the person is blocked out at the back of the magic box. The magical part is that the audience is amused on how the person had vanished.

This type of magic trick is usually known as stage magic, wherein the magician or the performer will do the trick in front of many people.

With the demands of the audience, the effectiveness of the box trick as one type of the stage magic is based on stage presence, proper timing, comedy value, and other skills that would generate amusement without having to appear that the performer is making a trick out of the audience.

The most important thing, when somebody wants to learn this kind of magic trick is that he should be able to divert the audience's attention from one area to another. It is through this moment that the trick is being executed without the audience realizing it.

So, if you want to learn the box tricks, be sure that you have all the skills properly coordinated with the ideas you will obtain. Keep in mind that a good trick is only applicable to those who were amazed with your act, so be sure to perform your best shot.

Learning the tricks:

Paper Tricks

Performing magic tricks has always been one of the most

popular past times enjoyed by a lot of people from all walks of life. There are various kinds of magic tricks. One of many kinds of the usual scene-stealing tricks is a paper trick. There could be innumerable ways to deliver a paper trick. Here are a few of those paper tricks that can be easily learned by a new magic aficionado:

1. A paper-tearing trick is a clever method of tearing and bringing back the form of a sheet of paper. You can do this trick mostly on tissue papers. This could be a little different compared to other paper tricks.

You will hand out two kinds of tissue papers; it can be color white or black. You will tear both the papers and fold them into tiny squares. When he opens the paper, the two are still there, but surprisingly it is formed into a large white square and in the center, there is a black square.

You wonder why there are no torn traces on the paper. The have an idea on the trick, the restored paper is already formed by sticking a black square on each side of the large white

paper. On a particular side, the black part is paste all three edges and one edge is left open.

The paper formed is then folded into a tiny square, and the outside have an opening. It is then laid on the table for about 5 seconds. You will get the restored form and place it behind his back.

The paper is divided into four pieces of squares, and the whole bundle is again shown in the front, the tricky part on this is that you will make a little wave in his hands, making the two torn pieces together, and then slowly opening the restored torn paper. This takes a narrow chance to poke the torn pieces into the secret pocket. Ending the trick with showing both hands and they will find nothing.

2. Another trick is called the generous offer. You will need a piece of paper and hand it out to a person. Ask him to tear it into quarters. It must be torn equally; you will then get the papers and give him back a quarter of it. He then thinks that the task is easy enough, and then he may ask for a prize for

doing it.

You will then applaud him and give his prize of another quarter of the paper. From there you gave the person one of the four pieces of the paper, which was supposed to be a quarter also of the sheet of paper. You can use a different way to approach this trick in using slang expressions of offering or donate "two bits". In this approach two pieces of paper is given to him, as it presents the two bits you said.

3. The next trick you may learn is the look easy trick. Find a sheet of paper and tear it in two thirds. It is required not totally tear the end sections. It should be a little loose, and the outcome will be a slit parallel sheet of paper with three flaps.

Give it to the person and tell him to have a hold on the edge of the flaps and hide one in each hand. From the center of the paper, you will make him tear the end flaps. It seems to be a piece of cake, but it is not. When he tries to work on it, only one edge of the flap is torn. The pull is purposely even distributed.

4. The floating paper ball needs to be performed under proper situations because it requires a little experiment. You need to crumple one piece of paper into a ball and you will have to hold it using your left hand with your right hand on top of it. You will remove your left hand, and have the paper just floated in the air moving upward to your right hand.

The trick is done because of the black silk thread. The thread is placed over your right ear forming a loop in one of the ends. The other end is tied loosely to your black coat button. They do not have the idea that you squeezed it around on the loose end, before the paper ball is formed.

When you move your right hand upward, you will use your right thumb to catch the thread. You will then draw the thread tightly so that when you take off your hand, the ball automatically floats. Move your hand forward, and then raise the ball. Bringing it back lowers it. On the last part, you will have to get the ball on your left hand and untying it from the thread. The right hand brushing your hair will lift the loop from

your ear, and the thread just falls down on the floor, without one noticing it.

Learning the tricks:

Rope Tricks

Rope tricks rely on the illusion you give to your audience that you're doing something to the ropes when you're really doing something else. You need to be deft with your hands and to practice your tricks you have mastered it. You should also try to find videos of this trick being done.

Here is one classic rope trick that never fails to amaze children and adults alike. It's called the 'cut and restored' trick.

Basically what you will tell the audience is that you 'cut' a rope into two pieces, say your magic words and 'restore' it back to one piece looking as if it wasn't cut in the first place. It will sound impossible and because of that, finishing the trick efficiently will result in more applause.

You will need sharp scissors for cutting the rope. The rope should be about 2 meters in length. You might also need to

practice what you will say while doing your trick. Sometimes that will help you distract the audience more than the trick itself.

Show your audience your rope. Start telling your story while passing it around. Tell a few jokes perhaps to get things started. Then double up your rope and then triple it. You will end up holding three sections of the rope. If you could come up with some story for that too, then do that.

You should do a cat-shank knot on each end. If you don't know how to do this, just put one end of the rope through the larger loop and then around itself and put it down through the small loop that resulted with what you've done. Try practicing this bit at home as it is the most important part of the trick.

Tighten the knots in place and show to the audience that you have divided the rope into three sections. Tell them your story again. Just make them laugh while preparing the most anticipated part of the trick. Now you can tell them that you will cut the rope.

Now here is where the illusion starts. Yes, you will cut the rope but what you're cutting is the small section of the rope with the knot at the end. This will result to 2 new ends. Grasp this two ends and pull the rope tightly between your two hands. The knots will stay in place if you managed to remember to tighten the knots earlier.

If you have done this correctly, your audience will just think that you've cut the rope and is eagerly waiting for your next move both because they think it's impossible to make or probably skeptical that you can do it.

Say to your audience now that you're going to repair your rope. While grasping with both of your hand, you will now cover your left hand with your right hand and slide your hand from end of the rope to the other end. You will notice here that as you slide along the rope, the knots will slide easily with your hand. The remaining trick to do is hiding the knots in an unseen way. You could do this by either pocketing it or letting it drop to the floor if you're hidden behind something,

preferably a table.

Remember that part of the illusion in this trick is the story you are going to tell. Once you have your audience enchanted by your story, you will have an easier way to complete your trick. This is one of the traits of a good magician, to be able to tell a story while doing a trick.

Another tip is to research more variations of this trick. This trick has been done for a long time now that most people will find it boring. One advantage of that dilemma is that you will find out that other magicians have found different ways to do this trick. What you need to do is inject more life to the old ways to make your trick seem original in their eyes. This could also be helpful if your audience asked for you to repeat that trick in the hope of catching how you do it. You just show them a different variation and the secret of the trick remains.

Learning the tricks:

Other Miscellaneous Tricks

Magic has always been a fascination for children and adults.

We see David Blaine mesmerizing us with his street magic, from biting a coin (and restoring it back) to doing stunts which might seem impossible for the rest of us. We heard of Harry Houdini and his death-defying acts.

Magic tricks have always been just illusions. A magician's true aim is to deceive the eyes of the audience into seeing something else. This can be done in different ways and gives different results and reactions.

Here is an example trick. It uses two techniques to deceive the audience, namely substitution and misdirection. The trick is to show your audience a clean sheet of paper then after putting it in an envelope and saying your magic word, the paper will now have writing on it.

This one is really an easy trick. You just have to prepare it before the show starts. You will need two envelopes, two pieces of paper. First thing you do is to paste the two envelopes together (back to back), so you will have two pockets where you could put the papers. Then write something

smart on one paper and stuff it in one of the envelopes.

At the time of performing, just show your paper. Exclaim that it is really blank. May be you could pass it around for them to see. This is called misdirection. You are putting their attention on the paper that they will forget about the envelope.

After getting the paper back, fold it twice and fit it in the other pocket of the envelope. Close it and saying your magic word (or just do other stuffs to make the audience laugh), open it and just get the paper with the writing in it. This is called substitution. The audience didn't know that there was already a paper inside and that you have made a switch. Show the paper around and while doing this hide the envelope so no one will be able to inspect it.

Here is another trick where everything you do is planned and the audience will not know how you did it. It's a simple trick that even you, once you know how it's done even you would laugh at how simple it really is.

The trick will go like this. First you will let your audience write a word on the center of the paper. Then you will let him/her fold the paper in half and then fold it in half again. Then you will tell them that you will tear the paper into pieces (without looking at the message) and put it into a pot and then you'll pick one to burn what's inside the pot. As your audience watches, reveal to them what the word that was written in the center of the paper.

This is really a very simple trick. Try doing the trick yourself and you'll be amazed at its simplicity. Get a clean sheet of paper. Write your name at the center of paper. Try folding it once. From that point of view you know that your name is somewhere in the middle of the crease in the paper. Then try folding it in half again. You will probably notice that now your name is now in the top left portion of the twice-folded paper. Try tearing that part and you'll see that you've got your name in your hand. Of course, if you're doing the trick, you must remember not to put that part of the paper in the pot. Try holding onto it and once finding someone to burn your pieces of paper, look at that piece (without letting them see!) and

dispose of it somewhere.

Add some suspense before you tell them of the word you have just read and you've done your trick. This is a really good and easy trick. If done properly, your audience will not just clap, but would be amazed at you and would be talking about it for some time.

Try practicing these two tricks at home. They're both simple and easy to do. They just both need some practice and a creative story to keep them laughing. Remember the audience is expecting fun so give it to them.