

When you're hiring the entertainment,
your reputation is on the line...



By Lowell Sheets
'The Magic Bartender'

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5 Secrets to Hiring the Right Magician

*Here are some insider tips to help you find the perfect entertainer for your event.
Keep reading and you'll soon be an expert in evaluating and hiring a magician!*

1. Know What You Want—Know What You Need

You should think in advance about what **style of magician** you would prefer, and the **style of performance** for which you are hiring them.

What style of **magician** do you need?



Are you looking for a funny, squeaky-clean kid's entertainer?
An engaging private party entertainer for mostly adults?
Or a sophisticated humorist and [corporate event entertainer](#)?

Note: With the rise in popularity of magicians on America's Got Talent, there's also a new awareness of a specialty type of magician known as a '[magician bartender](#)' or 'magic bartender'. Many of them have appeared and done very well on the show.

What style of **performance** would fit your event?

A stage act
Strolling magic
A [magician emcee](#)
Table to table restaurant-style magic
A [wedding magician](#) for the cocktail hour or the whole reception
[Click to download '[Why Have a Magician at Your Wedding Reception](#)' info sheet.]
A magician stationed strategically at your event to do magic for those who are interested and want to visit them there? [Very effective]
A line management magician to keep large crowds waiting in long lines completely entertained while they wait?
A [trade show magician](#) to draw a crowd and make your service/product memorable for your prospects?
Or as we've mentioned, a [magician bartender](#)?

Being specific with your online search is the best first step to hiring a magician who's the perfect fit for you.





2. Know What Your Budget Will Buy

A local (part-time) kid's magician will be a few hundred dollars, while a professional corporate, trade show or [stage act magician](#) can be several thousand. And there's everything in between.

Add your town or city in the search bar when looking for more affordable local magicians. Better magicians may be more than 60 miles away, and if so, they will usually have a reasonable upcharge for travel beyond 60 miles.

You can greatly expand your search geography, as long as you can afford higher fees, airfare and hotel for the just the right entertainer. The top magicians tend to live near Washington DC, New York City, LA, Las Vegas, Orlando and Chicago.

3. How to Start Your Search

Best strategy: Google and YouTube (the second most-used 'search engine') are the first places to look for the **specific type of magician in your geography**.

With professional magicians, the most important things you should look for are:

1. Reviews
2. Videos
3. Website



Professional, quality magicians will most likely have their own **website**, published **videos** online and many **reviews** to help assure you that you are making a good choice.

I would never hire a magician without watching videos and reading his reviews. You'll be able to see exactly what you're getting and if it's a good fit for your event.

I recommend that you contact individual magicians directly. You'll get quick answers and there will be no middleman to slow down the process of deciding and hiring. If their marketing says you can text them, by all means start there to check their availability and to quickly know if you should speak to him/her.

Other strategies include booking directories, talent agencies, and certified event planners.



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- **Booking Directories**-- Online directories exist like Bark, Thumbtack, Gigsalad, Gigmasters, and others that curate lists of available entertainers. These portals DO NOT screen performers, so quality and pricing can vary greatly. Also, if you submit your phone number and email, you WILL get calls. A lot. If you are looking for a wedding reception magician, at this time don't bother going to wedding vendor sites (TheKnot.com, WeddingWire.com) as most wedding sites don't yet have a general 'entertainment' category or 'magician' category ... YET.
 - **Talent Agencies** (booking agencies) are a viable option if you have a larger budget. They specialize in celebrities and high-end keynote speakers. A booking agency can help you hire a magician like David Copperfield, a comedian like Jay Leno, or some other amazing and in-demand magicians of which you were previously unaware.
 - **Certified Event Planners** can save you a lot of legwork, if you're willing to pay a bit more than if you would hire the magician directly. You'll also capitalize on the event planner's expertise. Choose a planner associated with NACE or ILEA.

In a nutshell....

If price is most important to you, go with a booking portal.

If it's convenience, leave it to an event planner or agency.



If it's quality (and finding the right fit for you), do it yourself on Google.


Remember, it's your reputation that's on the line with your family/guests/clients/boss....

4. Give All the Details to Get an Accurate Quote

There's a big pricing difference between strolling magic, and a banquet stage show. A magician can't give you an **accurate quote** unless they know exactly what you want.

Be specific. Include details like:

- Date and time
 - City, State
 - Venue
 - Audience size
 - Audience age range
 - Length of performance
 - Style of performance (see Secret #1)
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The more specific you are, the better the magician can help you.

And if you don't know what you want... that's the best reason to speak with them personally on the phone.

5. Make Sure Everyone is On the Same Page

What's the required deposit?

How is the final payment handled?

Do you need to supply a microphone system?

If you are handling transportation, hotel and/or meals, what are the magician's requirements in each of these areas? (Usually supplied in a Technical Rider with their contract.)



Getting a **thorough quote in writing** can avoid future confusion. A professional magician will have a contract to protect both parties.

Even smaller local shows deserve a printed contract so there are no surprises or disappointments. You should ask for one.

Lastly, ways to avoid hiring the **WRONG** magician...

3 RED FLAGS

Whether you're inviting someone into your home, choosing the entertainment for a once-in-a-lifetime event (like a wedding, anniversary), or having somebody entertain your boss/clients/donors-- your reputation is on the line. As I've mentioned, always take the time to speak with the magician on the phone. Talking with them is best way to judge someone's character and demeanor.



Here's some warning signs that should be **RED** FLAGS...

1. No Videos

No magician will have their entire act on video for your free viewing (otherwise why hire them?) But you should be able to find a video of them [performing a magic trick](#), a highlight video or a [magician video review](#). No video? Stay away.

2. No Website

Seriously, sometimes you find a performer who has a page on booking portal like GigMasters or GigSalad but doesn't have their own personal website. RED FLAG. If they're not serious enough to put up a website, then they're not serious enough to be trusted to do a great job at important events. (And isn't YOUR event important to YOU?)

3. The Price is Too Low

When it comes to your event, there are many ways to reduce costs, but pinching pennies on the entertainment is the worst way.

Years from now, your guests (whether they're family, bosses, clients, donors, prospects, etc.) won't remember whether they had steak or salmon, but they'll remember a world-class entertainer. So putting your money where people will remember, is a wise choice. Hire a magician they will love.

About the author:

Lowell Sheets is a business owner and a professional magician living in the Baltimore, Maryland area. You can download his *Electronic Press Kit* at www.MagicEPK.com, visit his website at TheMagicBartender.com or email him at info@TheMagicBartender.com.



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