

**JD STEWART**

# Preschool Magic

**Selling and Performing Magic  
for Preschoolers**

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## Chapter 1

# The Magic Business as a Business

My approach to the magic business is as a business. The very nature of business is competition. I believe in competition. I am not afraid to compete. Competition makes us better.

Throughout this course, you will find me talking about winning business. Win business even if someone else already has that business. It may even be a friend. Yes, I compete in business with my friends. And I expect them to compete with me. Executives and other business professionals compete against each other. They remain friends while doing so. Nothing makes the magic business special in that regard. There is no reason why you cannot remain friends with those you compete against.

I know some feel uneasy about this. They may even think it unethical. I do not. It is business. It is the capitalist system. In fact, antitrust laws prohibit working together on pricing and dividing up customers.

I have heard professional magicians have complained about amateurs coming into their market. They claim amateurs are unethical by undercutting their prices. I am in strong disagreement. It is not unethical. It is business. If you can do the show for less than I can, more power to you. If you are willing to do a show for less and I am unwilling or unable to reduce my price, I must adjust my quality. I must prove my value. I must sell that value to my customers.

What makes the magic business so different we cannot compete with each other. Nothing!

I can get a meal at McDonald's for under \$5. That does mean I am not going to eat at Hat Creek. They both sell burgers and fries. But the experience and the quality are very different.

I know this makes me unpopular with some. But so be it. In this book, I will be talking about winning business. If you think winning business from a competitor is unethical, this book is not for you.

## **Your Competition.**

You may think your competition is other magicians. It is. But it is also the petting zoo. It is ventriloquists, jugglers, and musicians. You are competing against any type of children's entertainer.

You need to understand their value proposition. What are they offering? What are they charging? What makes your offering better than their offering? Why do they think their offering is better than your offering? In other words, you need to research your competitors. If all you do is hang out at the magic club you do not know your competition.

It may be tempting to ask the magicians in your club what they are charging. I have learned from experience they will lie to you. They will always tell you they charge more than they do. They will tell you they work more than they do. Research your competition by talking to preschool directors and owners. Do not trust your competition to tell you the truth.



## CHAPTER 2

# Why Preschools

What would it feel like to have this happen? You call a new client. This is a client you have never worked with before. This is a client you have never met before. This is a client who has never heard of you before. When you call, you say I am a magician would you like to hire me? And they do not say yes. Instead, they say, Oh I am so glad you called. What do you have available on the 20th?

Then when you arrive you have an audience that loves you. They have been anticipating your arrival for weeks. After the show, several will come up and hug you. They will tell you how great you are. You get paid real money, right then and there. It does not get any better than that.

That is the Preschool Market. Preschools want you. Preschools need you.



I made a lot of money the last several years during working the Preschool market.

This course outlines how I do it. I share all the tips and tricks I have learned. I will share the mistakes I have made as well. I share my mistakes so you do not have to make them.

## Why Perform for Preschools

If you are a children's entertainer, you cannot beat Preschools. Many things make performing at preschools a must. Here are a few:

- 1. That is where the children are.** When asked why he robbed banks, Willie Sutton said, "Because that is where the money is." Why should children entertainers perform at Preschools? That is where the children are. Birthday parties are fun. They have a lot going for them. I love them. Birthday Parties are exciting. But how many children are at a birthday party. A large party may have 20 children. And the average party is 8 to 15. Preschools have an enrollment of 40 to over 100. In the summer that can swell to over 200. Watching the excited children come into your room gets the adrenaline pumping. If you are like me, that adrenaline rush is the high you live for.
- 2. They Need You.** You are solving a problem they have. You are a fixer. And that feels great! Parents

don't need to worry about their children during the school year. The elementary schools care for them. But those elementary schools are out during the summer. Parents need to have someone watch their children during the summer. The parents still need to work. So, those children need to go somewhere. Often preschools are the place parents choose. They are safe and have dedicated staff. That means preschools need programs. They need your show. More shows mean more money for you. Some preschools will book you many times or even once a week all summer!

- 3. Build your repertoire.** Often a preschool will book you more than once a year. I have had them book me every week during the summer. If you only have one show, you need more material. All your tricks were great the first time. But they lose the WOW factor the second, third, and even the fourth time. This is a great way to break in new material. Add a few different tricks and routines each time before long you have enough new material for a whole new show.
- 4. Holiday Shows** - Preschools provide opportunities to do extra shows over the holidays. This is another way of adding bookings to your schedule. The holidays are another time they need you. They need something special during the holiday season. Doing a Christmas show adds money to your pocket.

- 5. Special Programs** - You can providing shows for a Parent's Night or a Parent's Night Out. Grand openings or any other occasion a preschool hosts. These special events are generally held in the evening after dinner. The preschool needs to show parents how much fun the children have at their school. A magic show is exciting for all ages! (Even the parents!)

## The Secret Revealed

Want to be busy performing in the preschool market? You need two things. You need a quality product and good business practices. That's it. That's the secret.

This is going to be unpopular with a several of you. I know I run the risk of insulting many or you. Please remember that is not my intention. And unfortunately, many to whom this applies will think this is not about them.

Many magic writers suggest that local magician are not good entertainers. They do so with the assumption that if they were any good they would be well known.

That is not true. There are many good local entertainers. Not being well known does not mean you are not a good entertainer. That being said, you need to have a good show before you charge people money for it. Yes, that includes a children's entertainer. One of my pet peeves is when I hear someone say something like, "It just for kids."

You must have a good show, especially if it is for children. What do you call a business that sells poor quality products? Sleazy!

I can assure you. The preschools do not have the attitude that something can be second rate because it is "just for kids." And remember they are the ones who pay your salary.

You need to be able to do more than tricks that fool them. You need to entertain them. They need to laugh. They need to smile. They need to love you. If they love you they will love your magic.

Add to a good show, good sales skills, and business practices. And you have a winner. I will show the business practices you need in this book.

My prices are higher than anyone else in my area. Why? Because I have a high-quality product. And I use good business practices to sell my service.

They know they are dealing with a professional and not a fly-by-night wannabee. In other words, they know they can trust me from the first contact to post-show follow up.

I have taken clients from other magicians in the area. Why? Well, I'll say it. They sucked.

It is easy to delude yourself into thinking you have a good show when you actually suck. How do you know if you

suck? You cannot rely on your local magic club to let you know. You can't rely on your friends. They will all lie to you. Their general interest is technical. Did you flash? Did you fool them? The magic club members love magic. They will put up with a lot just to see a trick. Your friends will tell you, you are good because they know that is what you want to hear.

When someone offers you constructive criticism take it. That is gold. We all have egos. Do not let your ego get in the way. Do not become defensive. Do not dismiss it with ready-made excuses. Here are some of the more common ones I have heard.



"You don't understand my audience."



"My audiences love me."



"I perform for real people. I don't perform for magicians."

I have news for you magicians are real people. Ask for criticism. Look for help from everyone. If someone has a comment they have a reason for it. Take the criticism and apply it to what you are doing. Then tell the person who helped you what you did to adjust. They will feel good about helping you. And they will be willing to help you again in the future.

That attitude is what has made the biggest change in my shows.

How do you know you are good? Here is my rule of thumb. This is the way I judge if a show was any good. I need at least one person to come up after a show and tell me I am the best magician they have ever seen. If I don't get at least one person telling me that, I know the show sucked. Think about it. How many magicians does the average person see? Chances are you are the first one they have ever seen live. If you can't be the best in a group of one, you really do suck.

I had one preschool owner tell me she had brought in a magician before and he bored the children. She was not going to chance it again. I was curious who she brought in. I figured if I knew him and I thought he was good then I had real trouble. But if I also thought he was bad, I might have a chance. The owner gave me the name. I knew the magician. As it so happened I did not think his show was very good. His technique was fine. But he was not entertaining. Here is the bad news. Everyone in the local magic club told this guy they thought he was great. Don't trust your local magic club. They will lie to you.

I won that owner over. Here is how I did it. I offered a free show to her to prove myself. After the show, not only did she pay my full fee, she started helping me sell myself to other schools in her franchise.

Now to be honest I have occasionally lost a school to another magician. Like I said, I expect to compete. It was usually based on price. As I said, I believe I am the high-

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est priced show in my area. But they always come back. If you have a good product and can sell, you will always have customers.



## CHAPTER 3

# Understanding Your Customer

### **They are Preschools**

Let's start by understanding how preschools see themselves. They are schools. They are not daycares. They educate children. Do not call them daycares. That is, do not call them daycares if you want them to hire you.

They do not warehouse children. They are schools. They teach children a variety of things. They teach academics subjects. They teach citizenship. And they teach hygiene and basic health.

Parents have high expectations. When they choose a preschool, they choose a school with care. They want their