



# Polishing the Rings



A COMPILATION OF HELPFUL THOUGHTS AND  
IDEAS FOR THE GROWING I.B.M. RING

This guide is compiled from the *Polishing the Rings* column written by North Carolina T.V.P. and professional family entertainer Skip Way. Skip draws on more than fifty years of performing and teaching experience, including the creation of adult and youth magic clubs across Europe and the U.S.. This experience provides the basis for more than 150 monthly columns contributed to the I.B.M.'s powerhouse journal, *The Linking Ring*. Each column features tips and ideas for creating, managing, and improving the local I.B.M. chapters that we call Rings. This guide gathers some of Skip's most insightful columns into one convenient location for your review.

Understand that every club is different. There is no "One Size Fits All" program guide! However, we believe that each club officer and member will find helpful thoughts, ideas, and worthy brainstorm seeds within this collection of articles. It is our hope that the thoughts included herein may inspire you and your club's leadership to ever greater ideas to push your clubs through the Twenty-First Century and beyond.



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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### CLUB POSTERS

## BROTHERHOOD

A prospective Ring member recently returned our application brochure with the word "Brotherhood" circled in red and the added comment, "I am not a brother." I've heard this comment many times over the decades from persons questioning the modern correctness of "Brotherhood" in our organization's name. This most recent challenge piqued my curiosity. In an effort to provide our applicant with a definitive response, I began researching both sides of this decades old dialogue and made a few interesting discoveries!



I began with the question, "Is the "B" so prominently displayed between our prestigious "I" and "M" still meaningful after a full century?" Len Vintus, Gene Gordon and Don Rogers carefully selected this title to define our organization on February 10, 1922. Admittedly, theirs was a decidedly different time with different social standards. Since then, our organization has grown and adapted to changing standards. Today, our stated mission commands us to "...*organize and associate those interested in the art of magic and its advancement without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.*"

Our purpose is clear, but there are still those who believe that the term "brotherhood" excludes the rising international cadre of female magicians. They view "brotherhood" as an archaic and sexist label and seek a change to a more modern and inclusive brand. Others support the historical significance and prestige of the brand, recognizing that our organization, in reality, provides a powerful fellowship that welcomes all skilled and ethical magicians regardless of individual differences. Let's examine that premise.

The founders created this organization to promote cooperation among magicians without bias on an international scale. The foundation of this body is the sharing of skills and knowledge associated with the art of magic. Given this goal, would the founders intentionally exclude such prominent female magicians of that era as Adelaide Herrmann, Minerva, Lesley Piddington, Lucille Roberts, June Horowitz and Joan Caesar? June Horowitz and Joan Caesar have both proudly served as the

international presidents of the I.B.M..

In my search, I found several interesting international translations for brotherhood. (A note to my international peers - I am not a linguist nor have I ever played one on TV. I gathered the international content for this column from various library and Internet sources. Any errors in grammatical use or meaning are due to my innate and all too often questionable trust in these sources.)

In Hungary, "Brotherhood" translates to *testvériség* which is a genderless term implying unity. *Testvér* applies interchangeably to male and female.

The Italian word for brotherhood, *fratellanza*, is a feminine noun commonly used in the Italian phrase *fratellanza tra i popoli* or *Brotherhood of Nations*. This refers to all citizens regardless of gender.

In Germany, brotherhood translates to *brüderschaft*, a drinking ritual that celebrates a close friendship. Two people simultaneously drink a snifter, looking into each other's eyes with their arms intertwined at the elbows. Wouldn't that be an interesting way to start each meeting?

The French use the word *confrérie* interchangeably for brotherhood or association. It refers to an association or fellowship of individuals engaged in a particular profession or trade. They also use it to express the belief, feeling, or hope that all people should regard and treat one another as equals. A truly honorable consideration from our *Français* peers.

The Russians use the word *Братство* referring to a genderless fellowship, an association with a particular purpose or a body of persons engaged in a common business, interest, or profession.

Miriam-Webster defines brotherhood as "*The whole body of persons engaged in the same business, especially those of the same profession; as, the legal or medical brotherhood*" and "*Persons, and, poetically, things, of a like kind.*" That appears to define a genderless creed for our century-old organization. But wait, there's more!

I asked several I.B.M. peers to share their vision of our brotherhood. They all seemed to agree that being part of a brotherhood, male or female, meant caring for the people around us and extending a willingness to help whenever and wherever needed. Many added, "*Accepting and supporting all who share a passion for the art of magic.*" For some it meant late nights, early mornings, and long afternoons spent perfecting a special routine, effect, or act. For others, the

emphasis was placed on working alongside fellow magicians in service to the art. Without exception, each individual interviewed understood that being part of a brotherhood means serving others. It's handing down the wisdom of bygone generations to those just beginning their magical journey. It's knowing that someone has our back, helps us grow, and holds us accountable for our own personal growth.

In the words of author Peter E. Terzick, *"You cannot see brotherhood; neither can you hear it nor taste it. But you can feel it a hundred times a day. It is the pat on the back when things look gloomy. It is the smile of encouragement when the way seems hard. It is the helping hand when the burden becomes unbearable."* I didn't see any limiting mention of gender there. Did you?

In the final analysis, I choose to believe that our founders chose this name to define an organization dedicated to artistic camaraderie and friendship for all unique individuals, cultures, traditions, and families. We can certainly agree that for many of us, boys, girls, men, and women, this brotherhood provides mutual understanding and support strengthened by our mutual passion for this art.

My journalism professor taught me that English is a living and evolving language. The meanings of words are constantly evolving within the context in which we use them. Our understanding and use of brotherhood has clearly changed across past decades. We men and women of the I.B.M. have advanced this word into one that encompasses all who share our passion and devotion to this wondrous art. Like it, we, too, have progressed beyond viewing one another as mere brothers and sisters – We are Peers, one and all. We are the International Brotherhood of Magicians.



"For me, I was watching Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, Orson Welles, Victor Fleming movies, and I said, "I want to tell stories like that. I want to move people like that. But I'm good at magic, so what am I going to do?"

David Copperfield



## CLUB RECRUITING

### THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING & SHARING MAGIC

What benefits do local clubs offer that simply cannot be found on an exposè YouTube channel? Sharing the answer to this question may help prospective and current members recognize the core strength of a strong magic club. Mentalist Nakul Shenoy, author of *The Smart Course in Magic*, created this list of benefits derived from the art:



- Self-Confidence sees a strong boost
- Develops creativity and problem-solving skills
- Improves public speaking & presentation skills
- Makes education more entertaining and enjoyable
- The best ice-breaker one can have to make new friends
- Mystifies and entertains friends and family
- Fabulous hobby to keep our minds and bodies active
- Supports positive therapeutic and rehabilitation efforts
- Makes pseudoscientific scams and frauds more identifiable
- Makes us unique among our colleagues and peers
- Effective medium for communicating messages of social relevance
- Enhances the art of storytelling with children and adults
- Essential knowledge for those in the skeptic and rationalist circles

The following well-known professionals, film actors, authors, philosophers, scientists, lawyers, sales and marketing pros, and others all shared an active interest in magic at some point in their lives. Some of these names may surprise you. They certainly define a clear connection between a passion for magic and creative artistry.

Frank W. Abagnale  
Jason Alexander  
Muhammad Ali  
Woody Allen  
Jeff Altman  
Harry Anderson  
Anna May Wong  
Ant  
Art Baker  
Carroll Baker  
Lucille Ball  
Carl Ballantine  
Barbara Stanwyck  
Orson Bean  
Roberto Benigni  
Edgar Bergen  
Milton Berle  
Joe Besser  
Bill Bixby  
Bob Barker  
Ray Bradbury  
Adrien Brody  
George Bush Sr.  
Bushwalla  
Ruth Buzzi  
Nicolas Cage  
Michael Caine  
Carl Kassell  
Carleton Carpenter  
David Carradine  
Lewis Carroll  
Johnny Carson  
Dick Cavett  
Greg Chamitoff  
Ronald Colman  
Dan Frischman  
Homer Croy  
Alan Cumming  
Tony Curtis  
Ben Curtin

John Denver  
Dick Van Dyke  
Charles Dickens  
Marlene Dietrich  
Douglas Fairbanks  
Arthur Conan Doyle  
Bob Dunn  
Nathan East  
Edmund Wilson  
Bob Einstein  
Jenna Elfman  
Sid Fleischman  
Fry and Laurie  
Martin Gardner  
Richard Garriott  
Jeff Goldblum  
Harold Lloyd  
Cary Grant  
Dom DeLuise  
Merv Griffin  
Arsenio Hall  
Neil Hamilton  
Neil Patrick Harris  
Rita Hayworth  
Richard Himber  
Lou Holtz  
C. Thomas Howell  
Jerry Lewis  
Michael Jackson  
Joan Rivers  
John Dickson Carr  
Victor Jory  
Jules Fisher  
Bert Kalmar  
Fred Keating  
Buster Keaton  
Ernie Kovacs  
Veronica Lake  
Jack Lemmon  
Larry Sloman

Béla Lugosi  
Lyle Talbot  
Dave Madden  
Karl Malden  
Frank Marshall  
Chico and Harpo Marx  
Walter Matthau  
John E. McLaughlin  
  
Chester Morris  
Jack Norworth  
Ed Wynn  
Willie Nelson  
Grant-Lee Phillips  
Prince Charles  
George Raft  
Christopher "Kid" Reid  
John Ritter  
Harold Robbins  
Sax Rohmer  
Carnie Wilson  
Peter Scolari  
Dick Shawn  
Red Skelton  
Hal Sparks  
Stan Laurel  
Stan Lee  
Jim Steranko  
Steve Martin  
James Stewart  
Ed Sullivan  
Allen Swift  
Max Terhune  
Rudy Vallee  
Dick Van Patten  
W. C. Fields  
Lisa Ann Walter  
Orson Welles  
Marshall P. Wilder  
Kimberly Wyatt

## THE BENEFITS OF JOINING I.B.M. RINGS



Why do we bother with forming a brick & mortar club in this age of worldwide Internet access? What are the true physical and emotional benefits of creating, joining, and supporting a local magic club?

**SHARING A DEEP FELLOWSHIP.** One of the greatest benefits is meeting new friends with a common passion. Clubs generally host members with varied interests in magic and many other activities. You're bound to hit it off with someone.

**THE MASTERMIND EXPERIENCE.** Napoleon Hill introduced his concept of the mastermind alliance in his timeless classic, *Think And Grow Rich*. Benjamin Franklin called these groups *Juntos*. Mr. Hill described a mastermind as, *"...the coordination of knowledge and effort of two or more people, who work toward a definite purpose, in the spirit of harmony. No two minds ever come together without thereby creating a third, invisible, intangible force, which may be likened to a third mind—The Master Mind."*

Mastermind partners share feedback, brainstorm new possibilities, and set accountability matrices that keep us focused and on track. The successful club, as a mastermind, creates a community of supportive colleagues working together to push each member to new heights. We dive deeper into this concept [in this chapter](#).

**LEARNING NEW SKILLS.** Joining a club offers the member a wider selection of hands-on magic instruction and knowledge. Members interested in learning more about the history of magic or finding reliable sources for collectible items will find our clubs the ideal starting point. A seasoned club hosts members who are happy to share their vast knowledge of performing, studying, and collecting. Healthy clubs take advantage of this knowledge through regular special interest group jams and peer workshops.

**BUILDING PERSONAL CONFIDENCE.** Club members gain experience and confidence by performing or speaking in front of a supportive group. Such groups help us to sharpen our listening and evaluation skills through positive interaction.

Many members sharpen their leadership and master of ceremony skills by taking an active part in club leadership and committee support.

**OPENING BUSINESS DOORS.** There are few more intriguing ice breakers than magic. When we think about it, magic is another form of marketing. Marketers try to get us to see things in a unique, beneficial light. So do magicians! Business and sales professionals with a deep understanding of magic find it easier to open doors!

A well known theory addresses "the measure of fidget." We keep a room of people from fidgeting by capturing their attention. Great marketers, filmmakers, and authors grab attention and hang on tight during the course of an ad, sales pitch, or film. Who else excels at "controlling the fidget"? Magicians!

**SHARING THE PASSION.** One can be enthusiastic about magic yet have no interest whatsoever in performing. Our clubs offer these members an opportunity to share their particular interest within a safe and undemanding environment. Collectors may share their treasures, historians may offer a look into our past, and private performers might test and share new routines before appreciative and respectful peers. Our focus is on fellowship and growth.

**SOCIAL ACTIVITY.** A seasoned club offers plenty of opportunity for enjoyable social activity. We humans can fall into a deep lethargy at times. We may grow tired of the same old humdrum meetings, rehearsals, and business. In the summer, members may prefer outdoor and travel activities. During the winter, leaving the house can be a burden. When we give in to this lethargy, we often end up staying home fighting boredom. Attending regular and entertaining club meetings offers a welcome break from this routine. The more active we are, the more energy we generate. Social activities may include informal weekly lunch or dinner gatherings as well as annual auctions, banquets, picnics, beach trips, holiday parties, and more.

**PURCHASING POWER.** There is power in a group. Savvy leadership can arrange group discounts for their members. These may cover everything from group discount tickets to professional performances and wholesale purchases of magic gear, books, and supplies. Club leaders may use this group dynamic to arrange discounts through local restaurants, theaters, retailers, and more.

**NETWORKING.** Magic attracts people from every walk of life - doctors,

lawyers, teachers, policemen, construction workers. This list is endless!

Clubs offer an excellent opportunity to meld these business and social networks. Friends made in the club may introduce you to other people in their personal and professional networks. If you run a small business, your club family offers opportunities to promote your business and draw upon professional expertise. Networks can help you find employment, discover reliable service and health providers, find significant bargains, and so much more.

**EXTENDED NETWORKS.** Club members are not restricted to a single magic club. Members are encouraged to join additional clubs outside of their Ring. This provides a series of network links between regional clubs promising increased social, lecture, and sharing opportunities. Clubs that welcome one another's members build relationships that strengthen the art of magic across the entire region. Always reach out to and welcome members from neighboring fellowships.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE.** Many Clubs use their skills and expertise to serve the local community. This promotes a positive image for magic as a community service and a valued performance art. Clubs may use their collective expertise to:

- Produce fund-raising showcases for local charities,
- Provide entertainment relief during regional emergencies or disasters,
- Bring treasured smiles to children's hospital wards,
- Provide positive role models and training programs for young magicians,
- Brighten the day for facility-bound seniors, and
- So much more.

Selflessly serving others helps us to feel better about ourselves and sets an upbeat example for others.

**COLLEGE ADMISSIONS.** In addition to solid academics, college admissions boards like to see students who are well-rounded through regular

interaction with social and civic clubs. Club participation, especially as a mentor to younger children or as a volunteer for community service activities, can boost a teen's admission to select colleges. This type of extra-curricular activity looks great on scholarship applications.

## 100 MEMBERSHIP BUILDING IDEAS



### **PROMOTE MAGIC!**

Design a club postcard. Apply a strip of REMOVABLE double-stick tape or BluTack on the back to avoid the need for thumbtacks. Ask members to post these on community bulletin boards at Libraries, Coffee shops, College Student Centers, Churches, Retirement Centers, Grocery Stores, Restaurants, Recreational Centers, Doctor's & Dentist offices, High School Guidance

Counselors, Movie Theaters, Performing Arts Centers, Corporate Cafeterias & Lounges, Airports, City Hall, Police Stations, Banks, Post Offices, Bookstores, Chambers of Commerce, Hair Salons, Barbers, etc.

Organize members to post at and routinely check local bulletin boards within their routine sphere of travel and shopping. Regularly replace cards that are missing.

Consider Bob Ellis' classic *Out to Lunch* effect. If you are unfamiliar with the effect, do a quick Internet search or ask a local Club member. Create and print a unique *Out to Lunch* business card set. For example, the rabbit in the hat effect shown here. Carry a stack of these cards displaying an empty magician's top hat. Ask a spectator to sign the bottom of the stack's top card. Turn the stack face down, slide the signed card out, and place it onto the table face down. After a bit of theatrical byplay, the spectator turns the card over and reveals a rabbit grinning at him over the brim of the hat! The reverse side of the OTL card promotes your youth or club program. Doc Eason's *Out to Dinner Clip*, available from various dealers, is the ideal companion accessory for this effect.



QR Codes offer a number of clever promotional opportunities. QR (short for Quick Response) Codes are two-dimensional barcodes with a black and white pixel pattern that allows encoding of a few hundred characters. The embedded code can send a prospective member to a website, initiate a phone call, send a text, share Contact information or a digital business card, open a Facebook or YouTube page, and much more!

We created a hidden page on our club website displaying a forced playing card along with information about the club. The student or club member hands the spectator a club business card with a QR code. He forces the playing card, then asks the spectator to scan the code for more information. Include meeting day, time, and location along with your best selling points on joining the club. The front of the business card carries the same promotional club information as the *Out To Lunch* card.

Set our QR Code to call a select phone number. Google Voice offers free phone numbers with digital voice messaging. Set up your Google Voice account and select a phone number. Record a message that says something like, "*You've reached Magic Youth Raleigh where pre-teens and teens master the art of magic! Ask about our magic classes today! Oh, and your card is the Queen of Hearts!*"

Record a video showing students huddled and riffing through a deck of cards. One student selects a card and shows it to the other teens. Everyone shakes their heads, "No." The first teen riffles through and selects a second card, showing it to the group. Everyone emphatically shakes their heads, "No." The first teen selects a third card and shows it to the group. Everyone smiles, nods "Yes", and gives a thumbs up. The first student glances at the camera with a smile and reveals the chosen card. Follow this with a very brief promotional message, contact info, and an invitation to visit a meeting.

Ask a local television celebrity to record a short 15-second spot promoting their channel, show, or business concluding with, " ... *and THIS is your card!*" Post the video to YouTube or Vimeo. Copy the video's URL and embed it into a QR Code. Let your imagination run free!

Carry a few give-a-way magic effects on your person, in a handy case, or in your car. You might carry a stack of *Two Card Monte* sets placed in card-size coin envelopes with your club's logo and contact info printed on the front. These cards are inexpensive in bulk sets and make great gifts for teens and adults alike. Age Calculator cards are another bulk item that can be given out to prospective new members. Extend an invitation to attend your next lesson or meeting with each gift.

### **CREATE A WELCOME ENVIRONMENT!**

Once we get prospective new members through the doors, we need to keep them coming back!



Create a simple Visitor Contact Card. The Sergeant-at-Arms should warmly greet each guest as he or she enters and hand them a temporary nametag, one of these cards, and a pen.

Make sure that all members and guests wear their name tags. Don't make people guess at remembering names. Provide temporary adhesive nametags for guests.

We're all human. Take a photo of each member and print the photos onto one or two sheets of paper with their names. Distribute the sheets to the officers and, if you like, the general members. This little tool helps avoid the embarrassment of forgetting a member's name.

If you meet in a public location, have a plaque or other sign erected that announces your meeting location, date and time. For example: "<City> Magic Club meets here, Wednesdays at noon. Guests are Welcome!"

If your club hosts a Magician's Lunch, be sure to place a tabletop club banner or tent card in the center of the table to announce your affiliation. A lunch passerby may take note and ask questions. Invite him or her to join your lunch bunch.

Keep business to a minimum at meetings when you have guests. Guests (and members) don't care for long-winded business meetings.

Ditch the open complaints and bickering! If you are experiencing membership problems, police your members and encourage them to keep complaints, negative comments, and divisive issues away from your meetings. No one wants to join a club with these issues.

The best way to learn how to attract future visitors is to query your current visitors. Ask each guest for comments at the end of the meeting. This may give you a specific hook to use in asking the guest to join. Or, it may provide you with issues your Executive Committee needs to examine.

The evening's presiding officer should ALWAYS personally greet new and returning guests and warmly invite them to the next meeting, lunch, or other significant event.

Invite every guest to join. Many people are waiting to be asked.

### **GUEST SUBCOMMITTEE**

Form a Guest Subcommittee with your Sergeant-at-Arms or appointed Membership Chair at the head.

Ensure that the Sergeant-at-Arms or the Membership Chair sends a follow up call and/or handwritten note to each guest. Handwritten notes signed by each club officer are ideal. It is an easy task to write these notes and have them signed during each meeting. You might also consider having club officers pre-sign a number of notecards.

If a visitor walks into a meeting without knowing anyone, the Sergeant-at-Arms or Membership Chair should listen attentively to his or her interests in magic and select an appropriate volunteer member to serve as the visitor's Sponsor.

If the Sergeant-at-Arms or Membership Chair is unable to attend a particular meeting, it is his or her responsibility to pass these duties on to another attending member. Don't lose a potential member by failing to give each guest the full V.I.P. consideration.

Enlist an occasional Secret Guest. Ask a friend unknown to the club to pose as a visitor or Secret Guest. Give the Secret Guest a short checklist of actions your club members are expected to perform for guests. Ask the Secret Guest to report whether he or she felt specific members were welcoming or stand-offish. Ask them to report on very positive and very negative contacts. Summarize the Secret Guest's observations at the next meeting. If particular members stood out in a positive way, commend them publicly. You may wish to include the actions of members who rated poorly in the summarization without naming names to avoid embarrassment.

### **CREATE SPONSORS!**

Your Sergeant-at-Arms or Membership Chair may recruit volunteer Sponsors willing to escort visitors through meetings. Sponsors report to the Sergeant-at-Arms or Membership Chair as the central contact. The central contact reports all guests and prospective members to the club Secretary or whomever manages your member rosters.

The Sponsor guides the guest through the next couple of meetings answering questions and introducing the visitor to other members. The Sponsor also follows up with the visitor after each meeting and takes general responsibility for insuring the visitor's comfort.

If a Sponsor cannot attend the next meeting, he or she should introduce the visitor to a new Sponsor to continue the one-on-one support and guidance.

If possible and appropriate, encourage Sponsors to either offer to pick up prospective visitors on the way to the first few meetings or meet them at the door. The hardest step for a guest is building the courage to enter a strange meeting for the first few visits. It's harder to have a change of heart when a Sponsor is standing on their doorstep. It's much easier for a guest when they already know someone at the meeting who will escort them in and help them over those first nervous introductions.

#### **PUSH SPONSOR FOLLOW-UP!**

The same night following the first meeting, the Sponsor should either send a handwritten club notecard to the guest or call to follow up. Handwritten cards and phone calls are more personal and send a warmer message than an email or text. This follow-up should invite the guest to reach out with questions and actively invite him or her to join the club.

The follow-up phone call script should go something like this:

*Hello Lindsay, my name is John Magi. I am pleased to serve as your sponsor to the Raleigh Magic Club and I'm calling to say thanks for visiting with us this past weekend. I hope you enjoyed your time with us and I want you to know that you are always welcome. It's a real pleasure to share our passion for the performance art of magic with others like you.*

*We would love to have you join us again at our next regular gathering on Saturday, <Date> at 7:00 PM. You are also welcome to join us for our weekly magic luncheon every Friday at 12:30 PM at Longhorn Steakhouse in Apex. Let me know if you're interested and I will send additional details.*

*Please let me know if you have any questions. I am happy to assist you in any way. My contact information is John Magi, RaleighMagicClub.org, john@johnmagi.com, (919) 123-4567.*

The Sponsor actively grooms the visitor for membership in the club. If they need help developing a magic effect for membership, the Sponsor offers to coach.

By the third meeting, the visitor should be ready to apply for full or support membership in the club.

#### **ATTRACT GUESTS!**

Expand member knowledge. Ask members from another club or business to attend your club meetings. Reciprocate by sending members to their club meetings. Build a network of these cross relationships. This suggestion includes regional magic clubs and clubs that specialize in theater skills, tech skills, prop customization, marketing, stand-up comedy, choreography, wardrobe development & care, juggling, puppetry, graphic design, etc.

Emphasize often that recruiting new members and making guests feel welcome at ALL club functions is the responsibility of every club member; not just the officers.

Host an open house holiday event (St. Pat's, Halloween, Christmas, Spring, etc.) and encourage each member to invite friends and co-workers. Plan your agenda around a holiday theme. Extend an invitation to attend your next meeting.

Host a free informal showcase performance. Invite members to perform one or two of their best effects within a 5-minute time limit. Encourage members to invite guests from the community. Open with a very brief introduction to the personal and business benefits of learning magic. Extend an invitation to attend your next meeting.

Host a weekly Open Mic magic and comedy event at a local coffee house, brewhouse, pub, or similar venue. Encourage members and invite nonmembers to perform. If you like, charge a small fee (\$5) for performing then hand out ballots for a People's Choice trophy or cash award at the end of the evening.

Appreciation nights. Honor a community VIP or celebrity at a special meeting. Ask the guest to say a few words promoting your club. Perhaps present the guest of honor with a special wand and certificate. Be sure to invite lots of non-member guests to help express your appreciation.

Host a weekly magician's lunch at a popular restaurant. Encourage members to invite a guest. Encourage attending members to bring at least one magic effect to perform for the lunch attendees. Extend an invitation to attend your next meeting.

Orientation week at Universities. Sponsor a booth and spread promo flyers. Demonstrate the benefits of learning magic as a hobby and community service. Extend an invitation to attend your next meeting.

Once a quarter or twice a year, host a "Guest Night." Each member should bring at

least one guest. Make these nights special, informative, and entertaining.

Host a quarterly recruiting booth at local malls. Uses magic to draw attention and teach an easy public domain magic effect to anyone interested. Extend an invitation to attend your next meeting.

Host an evening or Saturday of magic in a local or chain bookstore. With modern self-publishing opportunities, it is easier than ever to create your own club branded beginner magic books and kits to sell at the event. Negotiate a commission agreement with the book store manager. Of course, provide club recruiting materials along with the products.

Break club members into teams and have a one-month membership contest. The team that signs up the most new members is served a special award, treat, or prize provided by members of the other team(s).

Design a club brochure, postcard, or one-sheet. Encourage club members to distribute them around the community.

Develop a user-friendly web site listing your club information and schedules. Make it visually appealing, interesting and easy to navigate. Include an easy Contact Us form or email address.

Appoint a social media team to develop club Facebook, X, and Instagram accounts and post points of magical interest and trivia daily. Host contests with beginner magic effect prizes. The winner must attend a meeting to collect the prize.

Plan a club membership building contest. Members receive one raffle ticket for each new member that joins. At the end of the contest period (quarterly?), donated prizes are raffled off.

Develop and maintain an email list. Do Not SPAM these contacts. Send occasional announcements about meetings and special events.

### **TEACH MAGIC!**

Promote and present an open house beginner's workshop. Encourage members to teach one or two public domain beginner magic effects with materials included. Charge a fee for the workshop that will cover costs and the first year's dues. At the end of the workshop, offer a "free" 1-year membership to all successful graduates.

Promote specialized beginner workshops such as *Magic for Grandparents*, *Magic*

*for Teachers*, *Magic for Fathers*, *Magic for Police Officers*, etc. Teach five or six easy-to-master impromptu effects that can be performed with common home items. Include easy-to-follow lecture notes. Send invitations to the appropriate agencies. Charge a fee for the workshop that will cover costs and the first year's dues. At the end of the workshop, offer a "free" 1-year membership to all successful participants.

Offer workshops on *Magic for Business Men and Women* to local civic groups. Invite the people you do business with on a regular basis to attend the workshop. Some ideas: doctor, dentist, banker, grocery clerk, gardener, veterinarian, postal clerk, real estate agent, clergy, retail store clerk, etc. Do you use the services of a department store personal shopper? These people encounter hundreds of people a day and may be able to incorporate magic business skills into their daily routines. Charge a fee for the workshop that will cover costs and the first year's dues. At the end of the workshop, offer a "free" 1-year membership to all successful participants.

Offer workshops on *Magic for Restaurant Servers and Bartenders* to increase tips.

Approach a local business or vocational school and offer a lecture on using magic for business. Invite students to attend a meeting.

Take your show on the road. Schedule at least one roving beginner's workshop at a new location each month or quarter. Hosting a one-or-two-hour workshop in new locations will help to promote the club over a wider area. This increases club visibility. Libraries, churches, performing art centers, Senior centers, and community centers are ideal locations for these workshops. These locations may be interested in organizing a remote branch of your club. Extend an invitation to attend your next meeting.

### **GIVE BACK!**

Ask members to donate their copies of *The Linking Ring*, *M\*U\*M*, and other magic magazines. Glue your club's business card and meeting info to the front cover and distribute them to local doctor and dentist waiting rooms. I know. *EXPOSURE!* Is sharing our journals exposure or spreading interest in our art? I leave that for you to decide.

Donate subscriptions or donated copies of *The Linking Ring*, *M\*U\*M*, and other magic magazines to the local high school or public libraries in the club's name.

Renew the subscriptions each year. Ask the library to place a “Donated by...” label on the cover of each magazine issue.

Create and train a club Speakers’ Bureau. Offer guest speakers to local civic clubs, businesses and organizations. If your club has a member experienced in corporate public speaking, ask them to handle the training. Recommend that prospective presenters join the local Toastmasters.

Donate age-appropriate magic books to the local library branches, school libraries, etc. Include a “Donated By” bookplate listing your club’s name and website. Issue a press release to local media for press coverage of the donation.

Send out press releases on all your activities. Don’t be discouraged if it takes a while to be noticed. Small community newspapers are likely to give you the best coverage. Press releases can include newly elected officers, workshops, showcases, open houses, tv and public appearances, book donations, major award winners, significant club anniversaries, lectures, speakers’ bureau, etc.

Contact local news media marketing agent and trade services for radio and TV coverage. Offer to exchange magic performances at the station’s open house, trade show, fair, career day, or other remote public event in exchange for on-air promotion, news, and event coverage.

Donate member support for a local television fundraising campaign like PBS, telethons, etc. as a club. Wear club logo hats and shirts.

Exchange volunteer time at a TV or radio fair, festival, or trade show booth for TV and radio airtime. Get to know the people who decide what goes on the air. Use this time for public service announcements, to arrange interviews, etc.

### **SHOW YOUR COLORS!**

Seek out ways to gain publicity for your club. If the news generally covers local charity events and celebrations, try to be front and center when the cameras arrive.

Invite the media to your club during newsworthy events such as swearing in of new officers, showcases, popular workshops, donations, etc. Provide role play training to prepare officers and members for talking to reporters.

Invest in an attractive trade show display booth for local fairs, festivals, trade shows, etc.

Create an attractive parade float for local holiday parades.

Develop a club branded windshield sunshade or window sticker for member cars. *Stickermule.com* offers affordable bulk laser-cut window decals at reasonable prices.

Display personal magic trophies and certificates at work to spark conversations.

Volunteer for the local Adopt-a-Road and have the club’s name placed on a roadside sign. Do the work wearing reflective vests or jackets bearing the clubs name and logo.

Wear club branded buttons, hats, ties, or clothing items. Don’t forget your I.B.M. lapel pins for suit coats.

Encourage members to mention the club whenever they are complimented on their performance skills. Encourage them to ask if they or someone they know might be interested in learning.

Host a brainstorming session to develop new member recruiting ideas. Make sure someone writes down all the ideas and then plan a follow up strategy.

Encourage members to write articles for your social media sites, local newspapers, and community/parent magazines. For example, write articles on hiring pro entertainers for birthday parties, planning entertainment for Blue & Gold Banquets, using magicians to attract business, employing magic for sales staffs, etc.

Encourage members to write articles for *The Linking Ring* magazine. Have them display or circulate it at their place of work.

Write human interest stories for local papers. Write about club members, their experiences, and how they came into magic. Average length is 500 words with photos.

Scan the monthly Ring Reports in *The Linking Ring* journal for fresh ideas on recruiting and program development.

Reach out to other magic clubs to share recruiting and program development ideas. If the clubs are within driving distance, attend their meetings or invite their officers out for lunch or dinner.

Host a one-day magic club officers’ conference inviting officers from other clubs



in and around your state. Host a round table discussion on recruiting and program development.

Distribute flyers and postcards to service organizations, churches, libraries, schools, and colleges.

Develop and distribute a quality club T-shirt. Encourage members to wear it when they work out, exercise, drive around town, etc.

Hand out balloons on sticks or filled with helium with your club's name, logo and website on them at local fairs and festivals.

Develop and distribute bookmarks that promote your club to local libraries. Include school and college libraries. Place club promotional bookmarks in every magic-related book in your local bookstores, public and school libraries – including magic themed fiction like Harry Potter, Magic School Bus, etc.

Place a magic club or I.B.M. license plate holder for your car

Develop a club logo mousepad for members.

Purchase pens bearing the club's contact information and have members leave them after signing credit card receipts at bars and restaurants. The servers will use them with other customers.

Create a club logo coffee cup, travel mug, or water bottle. Encourage members to use and display them. Be prepared to answer questions with a short elevator speech.

### **STRUT YOUR SKILLS**

Reserve sections of a theater for touring magic shows, magic-themed movie premiers, etc. Ask the theater manager to place "*Reserved for <City> Magic Club Member*" placards on reserved seats. You provide the placards!

Volunteer to perform magic in the movie theater lobby in exchange for reserved seating for a magic-themed movie premier. Promote the club with banners, branded table covers, and your professional trade show display. Extend invitations to attend the next meeting to anyone interested.

Volunteer your club to perform magic in bookstores on the release of a popular new magic-themed book, such as Harry Potter and Neil Patrick Harris' *Magic Misfits* series.

Volunteer your club to perform magic in bookstores or libraries on Harry Potter's Birthday (July 31), Hermione Granger's birthday (September 19), or JK Rowling's birthday (July 31 – Imagine that!). Don't forget Harry Houdini (March 26) and other notable magicians. If your town has a celebrated historic magician (such as Columbus, OH and Howard Thurston), commemorate his or her birthday.

Connect with your local raptor or birds-of-prey rescue center. Nearly every county has one. These facilities rescue and nurse injured owls and other birds-of-prey and return them to nature. They work largely on donations and are generally happy to work with you in creating a Harry Potter-related owl display or education event in exchange for the publicity. Check with your local exotic avian veterinarian for a referral. These educational events are news media magnets!

Set up a display window at a store or library during Houdini's Birthday, National Magic Week, or a local celebrity magician's birthday.

Offer an American Pride or Recognition of Service showcase for local veterans' groups and their families. Coordinate this through your local VFW, American Legion, AmVet, or similar group.

Donate performances by members to charity auctions in the club's name.

### **ADVERTISE!**

Purchase a club ad in local corporation newsletters.

Purchase a club ad in local church bulletins.

If your club meets at a church, request that your meeting location be published in the church newsletter or bulletin.

Purchase a club ad in local military base, high school and college campus newspapers.

Create a club resource file listing contacts from other clubs, national organizations, supporting and client businesses, and other vital networking tips.

Have each member make a list of people they personally know that would benefit from or enjoy membership in your club. Have them invite one person on that list to each primary meeting or social function.

Contact your city hall for information on how to get your message displayed on the city's public access cable TV programming. Consider hosting a weekly public

access magic talk and performance show featuring a new magician weekly.

Include your club in the city's community services calendar published through the Parks and Recreation Dept.

List your club in your city's various print, online, TV and radio events calendars. Research to see what is available.

Add your club's meetings and events to the local free events and parents' newspapers. Most cities have one.

Billboard owners will often put up public service announcements at no cost apart from printing the material. If your club is set up as a nonprofit entity, you may qualify for this benefit.

Keep club websites up to date or remove all outdated material. It's hard to make your club look vibrant if the website planner refers to things that were finished with over a year ago!

Develop a club slogan and use it on your advertising. It tells potential guests what is important to you and reminds club members too.

Public relations (PR) is an on-going process. Marketing wisdom says most people need to be offered something 5 times before they buy it. Many of those 5 times for your guests will be from PR from previous executives. Leave a legacy for future executives and schedule PR as a regular component of your club activities.

### **MOTIVATE MEMBERS!**

Encourage members who travel for business or pleasure to look for magic clubs and shops in the areas they will be visiting. Visit the club or shop and see how they look for new members. Sometimes we all get in a rut and it's good to see what other clubs are doing. Have them leave several club cards or brochures and return with contact information to add to the club Resource File.

Ask your T.V.P. or local magic celebrity to come to a membership-building meeting and give an inspirational address.

Talk with your T.V.P about membership problems you are facing. Sometimes getting an outsider's opinion will give you a new way of looking at things.

Your T.V.P. can request a list of all active and inactive I.B.M. members in your area. Reach out to them with a handwritten notecard and invite them to join.

Donate a new one-year national and local membership to charity auctions.

Present award lapel pins to members who achieve certain levels of new member recruiting. *Wizardpins.com*, *stickermule.com*, and *baudville.com* offer a wide selection of stock and custom pin designs.

Conduct a member survey to find why people joined your club, then focus on those benefits in your PR and in your meetings.

### **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE!**

Ask your Chamber of Commerce to list your club meeting information in their newsletter.

Become actively involved in your local Chamber of Commerce. If the club can afford it, join the Chamber.

Speak at your local Chamber of Commerce meetings.

Volunteer the club to perform roaming magic at a Chamber of Commerce social function.

Host a Chamber of Commerce social event with magic performances.

Send club information to your local merchants via the Chamber of Commerce. Ask them to distribute it to their customers. This would include flyers.

Encourage members to network at Chamber breakfasts, luncheons, and social events. Make sure that their status as Magicians is clear.

### **ATTRACT YOUTH MEMBERS!**

Create After-School magic clubs at local high schools, Boys/Girls Clubs, and YMCAs.

Volunteer to assist local schools with talent competitions and fundraisers.

Create a cooperative project local little theater, dance, and other performing art groups so that students experience theater and movement training along with the magic.

Join with local little theater, dance, and other performing art groups to present at high school career and extracurricular activity seminars.

Purchase a club ad in local school newspapers.

Participate in career day at schools where you can tell students about magic as a career and performance art.

Approach a high school that offers business or vocational training. Offer a lecture on using magic for business. Invite students to attend a meeting.

Approach local high school drama departments to host a morning or afternoon class on basic magic. Discuss the theatrical aspects of magic and the role magic plays in theater and film. Conclude by inviting students to join.

Promote a full scholarship to Tannen's Magic Camp for active and accomplished youth members. Use fundraisers to support the scholarship.

### **KEEP YOUR MEMBERS ACTIVE!**

Send personal handwritten notecards to past or present members that you haven't seen for a while. Let them know that they are missed and that their involvement in club activities is valued.

Assign your Membership Committee to send a custom club birthday and anniversary card hand signed by the club officers to all members – active and inactive.

Assign your Membership Committee to send a custom club Get Well card hand signed by the club officers to all members under the weather or hospitalized – active and inactive.

Ask I.B.M. national for a list of all registered members in your area. Your T.V.P. should be able to obtain this list for you. Send a handwritten note to every registered member not currently attending your meetings. Even if they can't attend regularly, invite them to share their expertise and experiences with the club.

Following dinner at a nice restaurant, host an induction ceremony for new members. This creates a sense of importance and makes new members feel a part of the organization. Present a certificate of membership and, if possible, an attractive wand and display stand as a keepsake. It's most impressive for family and other guests in attendance.

Create a Perfect Attendance Award for members who attend all twelve primary meetings during a calendar/fiscal year.

Formally recognize various member accomplishments and contributions with

certificates and pins. For example, recognize achievements as performers, historians, lecturers, authors, and mentors.

Encourage financially secure members to offer an annual sponsorship for a new national and local member who may not be financially able to join or renew. Host fundraisers to support the scholarship.

Encourage financially secure members to offer an annual sponsorship for current members who may have run into financial difficulty and can no longer pay current dues and fees.

Host a quarterly or semi-annual drawing for magic-themed prizes. Every time a member brings a guest to a meeting, their name is put into a basket for a drawing. At the end of each period draw a name and award a prize.

Keep an updated photo log of member's faces. Print the photos on a single sheet of paper, if possible, with the member's names attached. Add positions of authority and responsibility. Give a sheet to each member or post it in an accessible spot for each meeting. This makes it easier for member and guests alike to remember names and find a person of interest. Keep the sheet current! It also avoids the embarrassment of not remembering names.

Keep in touch with absentee members by sending out a review of each meeting by e-mail or posting it to the website.

Have a time during the meeting when members can announce personal achievements such as promotions, weddings, graduations, new jobs, new babies, new homes, etc. Recognize these achievements by mailing a custom club greeting or handwritten notecard. Be attentive!

Develop a mentor program. This will help encourage new members to keep involved with the program and will help long term members renew their enthusiasm.

Make your meetings fun. People will want to invite guests to share in the fun.

Host an occasional social meeting to recognize the family and co-workers of your club members. Remember it is the support of these people who help enable the club member's participation. It's nice to include them occasionally. This is often done successfully around a holiday or other special event.

If a member announces that they will be moving or have accepted a new position

that doesn't allow them to continue with club meetings, present a simple going-away gift. If their new town has a magic club, write a glowing letter of recommendation for the departing member and personally mail it to the new club.

Look in the mirror. Do you smile enough. Members and guests want to see a smiling face welcoming them to a meeting.

Celebrate your charter date annually. If you are not at charter strength, make plans to increase your membership so you will be on your charter date. Promote and celebrate special anniversaries like the 25th, 50th, etc.

Set a good example at your club meetings. Encourage excellence. Have at least one meeting each year where the speakers and educational program focus on membership and club building topics.

Does your club stop meeting during the summer months? Continue instead. Even though attendance may be low, you can keep your momentum going instead of stopping and then trying to build from scratch again.

Don't let internal strife destroy your club. Address problems promptly and effectively, resolve it, and move on. Stop gossip or negative comments toward another member the moment it is noticed. Stress the importance of recognizing the intellectual property rights of each member and enforce those rights! Create a club arbitration panel with impartial fair-minded members to resolve major issues of contention.

Ask members to compile a list of the best things about your club. You now have a list of selling points to use when recruiting new members.

Stay on time. Nobody wants to go to meetings that start or end late.

Mail dues reminders to unpaid members. If they are temporarily unable to make a meeting, at least let them know they can keep their dues current.

Initiate a secret pal program within your club. Outside of the meeting times, the secret pal will send encouraging notes, ideas, evaluations, etc. to the person who is their secret pal. Reveal after six months. Keeps people coming to meetings as they try to identify their secret pal.

Enhance membership retention by ensuring that every member is a stakeholder in the success of the club. Put every member on a committee, and make sure that

they have a specific job to do. This provides an opportunity for leadership experience. Members with an important role in the club are more likely to work towards success and growth.

Build morale internally within your club. Thank and praise your members for a job well done or an outstanding performance. A few kind words can keep members coming back for more.

Be truthful yet positive with members seeking feedback on their skill development. Members seeking honest guidance towards improving their skills will shy away from weak, false and hollow compliments. If you can't offer positive and truthful guidance, say nothing.

Stay on task. Keep focused on the important success factors within the club. People join magic clubs for the educational and social opportunities. Don't lose them because you lose sight of your goals.

Share pride in the accomplishments of your members. Celebrate the success of reaching personal and professional goals. Make the club a place that members want to come to share the successes outside of magic as well.

Create a newsletter. Make sure it is sent to all members. If a member has been away for a while, it may help to remind them all the excitement that they are missing.

Consider starting a regular advanced workshop session that focuses on in-depth technique and performances.

Remember Zig Ziglar: *"You can get everything you want in life if you just help enough other people get what they want."*

**FINALLY**, you can help others by submitting your experiences, products, or recommendations for inclusion here. Keep the ideas flowing, talk about your successes and failures. Try and decide why some worked and some didn't. Pass the wisdom on to future club executives. Plan and do. You have just read over one hundred ideas. Merely reading them will not change a thing. Choose those that resonate strongly with you, gather the resources and people you need and **MAKE IT HAPPEN!**



## CLUB DEVELOPMENT

### YOUR I.B.M. SUPPORT TEAM



The I.B.M. has created a superior support team to guide you through the charter process and to help your club grow and prosper in the years ahead. You can rely on each member of this distinguished and experienced team to be there for you and your club members.

#### **The Executive Secretary**

The Executive Secretary is one of the few full-time I.B.M. staff members. The Executive Secretary manages the headquarters' office and fulfills many administrative services for our worldwide members. Nearly all administrative requests and member services, including your New Ring Charter Petition, pass through this staff member's hands.

As you might imagine, this is a very busy and potentially stressful position. Please consider this when reaching out. For your benefit, most club requests should be funneled through your T.V.P. and the Ring Coordinator.

#### **The Ring Coordinator**

The Ring Coordinator is your club's direct conduit to the International President and the I.B.M. Executive Committee. The Ring Coordinator and your Territorial Vice President review all New Ring Petitions and verify that all conditions for the issuance of a Ring Charter have been met. Once approved, the petition is forwarded to the Executive Secretary for the issuance of a formal charter to be signed by the International President.

This volunteer representative accepts responsibility for assisting, directing, and guiding every I.B.M. Ring worldwide. The Ring Coordinator can help you secure forms, submit requests to the Executive Committee on your behalf, and so much more. Don't hesitate to reach out should you or your club every need assistance.

#### **Territorial Vice President Nominations/Ring Counselor Committee**

Your Territorial Vice President Nominations/Ring Counselor Committee oversees the appointment, training, and service of our worldwide Territorial Vice Presidents. Any compliments, complaints, suggestions, or other concerns regarding your Territorial Vice President (T.V.P.) should be funneled through the

chair of this committee. If you feel that your T.V.P. is inactive or unresponsive to your concerns, please contact the chair of this committee for assistance.

This committee also exists to help your club and its members resolve concerns, disagreements, or complaints regarding club operations or impending failure. If a situation arises that your T.V.P. is unable to address or resolve, please contact the chair of this committee.

#### **Territorial Vice President**

The Territorial Vice President (T.V.P.) is the regional representative of the International President and the I.B.M. Executive Committee. Your T.V.P. is your first line of inquiry or assistance for all matters involving the I.B.M.. They are your direct link with the International President and the Executive Committee. T.V.P.s provide executive and ceremonial support for all of the clubs within their regions.

T.V.P.s are unpaid volunteers who volunteer their time and resources to support I.B.M. members in their region. T.V.P.s are encouraged to visit each club within their region at least once per calendar year. As a minimum, T.V.P.s should contact each club president in his or her region by phone at least once or twice a year. They are required to remain available for club and member remote support as needed.

If you feel that your T.V.P. is inactive or unresponsive to your concerns, please contact the chair of the T.V.P. Nomination/Ring Counselor Committee for assistance.

T.V.P.s are appointed by the Executive Committee every odd-numbered year and serve a two-year term. T.V.P.s may serve consecutive terms. Any I.B.M. member may challenge an incumbent T.V.P. by submitting a Petition for Nomination prior to the odd-numbered year elections. Nominations must be received by the headquarters' office no later than the First of February of that year.

If a T.V.P. position is vacated for any reason, clubs may submit names of members willing to complete the current two-year term. The appointment to fill the vacant position is made by the International President following the recommendation of the T.V.P. Nomination/Ring Counselor Committee.

## CLUB DEVELOPMENT

### CHARTERING YOUR I.B.M. RING

#### MEMBERSHIP

Any person 18 years of age or older interested in magic for at least two years previously is eligible for Active Membership. Active members may vote and hold office.

Young applicants over the age of seven and under the age of 18 years, are eligible for Youth Membership. Youth members may not vote or hold office in the adult Ring.

The spouse or assistant to an Active or Honorary Member is eligible to join as an Associate Member. Associate members may vote and hold office.

#### PETITION FOR A RING CHARTER

Creating an I.B.M. Ring requires ten (10) Active or Associate Members aged 18 years or older. Charter members can be either Active or Associate members, so don't forget to invite interested spouses and family members.

Youth members under the age of 18 years may not sign an adult New Ring Petition, however, seven (7) or more youth members with at least three (3) adult Active or Associate members may form an independent youth club called a Link.

Once you have your charter members lined up, you're ready to complete the Petition for Ring Charter. When all ten slots are filled, send the petition to *I.B.M., 13 Point West Blvd, St. Charles, MO 63301 (USA)*.

Once the petition is received, the Executive Secretary will verify the status of each charter member. A Ring number is assigned the new charter is sent to the International President for signature. This new charter is completed using the information on the petition form, so please insure that the information is accurate, spell correctly, and exactly as you want it to appear on your charter.

The approved charter is then sent to the organizing member or the responsible territorial vice president for presentation. You may want to organize a formal dinner or social event and invite your TVP to ceremoniously present the new charter and swear in your new officers.

**PROTECT YOUR CHARTER.** Your I.B.M. Ring Charter is an official document and



should be protected as such. The Ring Charter is the only document that officially recognizes an I.B.M. Ring and authorizes the use of the International Brotherhood of Magicians name and logo. Either the Ring Secretary or Ring Historian is responsible for safeguarding the Ring Charter and delivering it safely to the next elected member to serve in that position. Should the Ring disband for any reason, the original Ring Charter is to be returned by the safest means possible to the headquarters office of the I.B.M..

If you have any questions regarding the petition or the New Ring process, the I.B.M. Ring Counselor will be happy to assist you. You can reach the Ring Counselor through the email link listed under Contact at [www.magician.org](http://www.magician.org).

#### I.B.M. YOUTH LINKS

Youth Rings, called Links, provide local Rings with an excellent opportunity to form active independent youth clubs in schools, magic shops, after-school programs, community centers, Boys & Girls Clubs—anywhere teens with an interest in magic are likely to gather.

Magic Youth Raleigh, the youth chapter of I.B.M. Ring #199 in Raleigh, North Carolina, charges a material fee per lesson and uses part of this money to pay annual I.B.M. Youth membership dues. Three I.B.M. Active or Associate adult members and seven I.B.M. Youth members are required to form a Link. Use the Petition for Ring Charter to apply.

**SURRENDER OR REVOCATION OF THE RING CHARTER.** In the event of a Ring's dissolution, all original membership records, financial records, and official documents must be promptly returned to the Headquarters' office. This includes the original Ring Charter. This includes all Ring property bearing the I.B.M. Shield such as banners, flags, or other meeting items. All other Ring property may be disposed of in accordance with the Bylaws and Standing Rules of that Ring. The Ring president in office at the time of dissolution or other officer acting on behalf of this office is tasked with insuring that these final obligations are met.

In the event that the I.B.M. Executive Committee decides to revoke a Ring's Charter, that Ring must immediately return the original charter along with all original membership records, financial records, and official documents to the Headquarters' office. Upon revocation of the charter, the affected club must remove all references to their I.B.M. Ring status.

## CLUB DEVELOPMENT

### THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL CLUB



The global trend finds fraternal membership dropping across the board. Such distinguished organizations as the Masons, Eagles, Elks, Civitan, Knights of Columbus, VFW, American Legion, Jaycees, and others are all reporting a steady decline in membership.

One reason rests with the convenience and relative anonymity of social networking on the Internet. This is rapidly drawing younger prospective members away from the face-to-face social conventions offered by brick-&-mortar clubs.

A horse-&-buggy business cannot hope to prosper in a Tesla market. The 21st Century Club cannot survive with the antiquated fraternal lodge model. We must climb out of the old “We’ve always done it this way” box and incorporate the modern tools, people skills, and formats favored by our younger generations.

The modern club must be run like a business with a family atmosphere. To compete, our clubs must take a more aggressive role in meeting the social, economic, and educational needs of our members. We need to offer programs with genuine substance and value with universal appeal for the young novice as well as the seasoned veteran.

The primary key to a successful club is making each member a full and active partner in your club’s growth. Successful club shares these most basic fraternal components:

**LEADERSHIP!** Strong beliefs, leadership skills, and a shared vision

**TEAMWORK!** Involve as many members as possible to the fullest extent that they are willing to serve. Insure that the effort they put into the club receives matching recognition.

**INVOLVEMENT!** Give each member an active, meaningful role in the club. This invites members to claim the pride of ownership. Owners are more likely than mere visitors to enjoy and nurture your club.

**RELATIONSHIPS!** Promoting fraternal bonds through positive experiences

**ORGANIZATION!** Planning and organization builds confidence in your leadership and retains members.

**INNOVATION!** Remain open to member requests and suggestions. Remain open to creative solutions and be willing to take calculated risks.

**SAFE SPACE!** Enforce an environment that encourages members to openly share their ideas and skills without the threat of judgement or intellectual property theft.

**REWARDS!** Provide member benefits and recognition in a value equal to or greater than their personal contribution. Our clubs are nonprofit so spend that money on lectures, prizes, community service, and social functions that create wonderful memories.

**PROMOTE! PROMOTE! PROMOTE!** Promoting out clubs has never been easier or more cost-effective. Take full advantage of the vast array of free and low-cost advertising available in your area. Pull maximum exposure through the Internet, television, radio, newspapers, libraries, community colleges, and more. Make promotion a club priority!

**ENJOYMENT!** Foster a friendly and relaxed atmosphere at all club functions. Keep the club environment free of divisive topics, gossip, rumors, and petty animosity. We all love magic. We all take turns serving the club. Be prepared to resolve the inevitable personal conflicts that may arise.

Every successful club employs this total team effort. Relying on one or two people to handle the work is a recipe for burnout, discontent, and failure. Leaving leadership roles in the hands of a select few over time crushes innovation and allows destructive weariness to take root and grow. Indifferent members will eventually fade away. Even worse, members who feel slighted or separated from the main body may work to destroy the Club from the inside.

## GREAT BEGINNINGS!



Start your club off on the right foot!

**Put Someone in Charge.** Make increasing and maintaining your Ring's membership a priority club effort. Appoint a Membership Coordinator to manage a prospect list, receive new names, follow-up with prospective new members, and reach out to members who stop attending meetings. Coordinator duties may be performed by the Ring Secretary, but for larger

Rings appoint someone to work with the Secretary and devote extra time to the effort.

**Secure a Regular, Accessible Meeting Site.** If possible, settle on a set meeting site, day, and time for all regular meetings. Standardizing the meeting schedule and location makes it easier for members to remember. Changing the schedule and locations may keep things fresh, but it can become confusing and frustrating for members.

**Select a Convenient Meeting Day and Time.** Choose a meeting day and time that best fits your Ring members' lifestyles. Consider members' work schedules, both magic and lay employment. Take into consideration commuting time and try to schedule meetings to avoid rush hour traffic. You will never please everyone, so choose a day and time that benefits the clearest majority of your Ring's members.

**Promote, Promote, Promote!** Local radio, television, and cable companies all offer complimentary broadcast bulleting boards. Subscription and free community newspapers offer free club postings in their area event calendars. Area coffee shops offer complimentary cork bulletin boards and business card displays. Include your Ring's meeting and contact information to every available community calendar.

Provide generic Ring business cards displaying the Ring's logo, website, and contact info for each member. Members may tack these to coffee shop and collegiate bulletin boards and hand them to prospective members. Deliver prospect business cards received in exchange to the New Member Coordinator for follow-up.

**Maintain a Current & Attractive Online Presence.** Publish attractive website, Facebook, Instagram, and Linked-In pages that are informative, current, and easy to find. Most prospective guests and members will find your Ring through your online presence.

At the very least, list the meeting date, time, location, and reliable contact information on your website and social media pages. Include a fun description and photos of your Ring's routine activities and list upcoming social or educational events. Make it clear that guests and visitors are welcome.

**Be Easy to Find!** Post your website and social media pages on all printed material including business cards, flyers, brochures, and posters. Include a link in every club email sent out. Add the link to your custom signature on magic forum sites such as Online IBM Ring 2100. Link your Ring website to your T.V.P.'s website. Add a prominent link to the I.B.M. website ([www.magician.org](http://www.magician.org)). Ensure that the I.B.M. posts a link to your Ring website on the international website. If you have any difficulty, contact your T.V.P. or the I.B.M. Ring Counselor.

**Develop a Lead List.** Successful sales people use this approach with great success. Encourage your Ring members to supply new names to the Member Coordinator for follow-up. That lead list becomes a fluid work document that includes every prospective member's name, mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address. If you keep this list on cards or paper allow plenty of space to jot in actions taken and the results of various contacts.

Use this list to track various efforts to bring this person into the Ring. Record the steps such as personal contacts, phone calls, and emails with Ring-related materials. Your lead list keeps accurate records of who's invited and how many persons actually join the Ring.

**Keep Prospects and Members Informed.** Attracting interested prospects requires more than just a list of names. These prospective Ring members must know what the Ring is and where and when you meet. They must also know that they are welcome to visit without obligation.

A regular Ring newsletter can serve this purpose. Monthly email reminders are also effective. A personal phone call from the Member Coordinator or Ring President a few days before a meeting can carry a lot of weight with potential members.



A dynamic, up-to-date Website also strengthens your Ring's visibility, and helps keep both prospects and members informed. Also consider creating a 'New Member Packet,' containing the Ring's history, a list of annual events, a copy of the current Constitution and Bylaws, a membership list, and other information and material which explains what this club is all about.

Ongoing communication is a key. Employ multiple approaches for contacting prospects (personal, phone calls, mailing, newsletters, and e-mail). Ring 160 in New Zealand has had a lot of success using the telephone tree. It gets the message circulated very quickly, is inexpensive, takes little time, and spreads the workload by involving lots of members. All of these contacts and extra efforts are important. They show that you really care and want new members.

**Finding and Recruiting Prospects.** Where do you find new members? The simple answer is "Everywhere!" Promote, Promote, Promote! Encourage members to openly promote the Ring.

The successful fisherman focuses on that part of the lake with the most fish. Ring members will also be most successful by distributing Ring promotional materials at magic shops, magic show audiences, hobby shops, and magic classes. Visit your area libraries and leave a Ring business card in all magic books and magic-themed novels.

**Territorial Vice President.** An effective and responsive T.V.P. is your best friend when trying to form a new Ring. The T.V.P. can request a list of all I.B.M. members residing in and around your area. Together, you can use this list to reach out and invite members to join you in forming the new Ring.

If you need assistance reaching your T.V.P., contact the T.V.P. Nomination/Ring Counselor Committee chair. The Ring Counselor can be reached through the email link under Contact at *www.magician.org*.

**Public Relations.** Consider reaching out to other I.B.M. and prospective members by projecting a positive image of the I.B.M. within your area. Public relations (PR) is generating publicity about magic and the I.B.M. for the purpose of helping it grow.

**Share the Benefits of Magic.** Chapters One and Two of this guide outlined the benefits of learning magic and uniting in local fellowship. Brainstorm ways to share these benefits with others in your area. Share your passion for the

opportunities that await those who join the I.B.M. and your Ring. Consider creating a professional display or booth for libraries, theater lobbies, convention centers, family trade shows and similar events, and more. Demonstrate the thrill and benefits of learning the art of magic. It's easier than you might think!

**Recruit and Support Youth Members.** Offer family Ring memberships to encourage entire families to join. Promote magic workshops through the schools, libraries, and colleges. Establish a separate youth or collegiate Link sponsored by the Ring. Host a Saturday Ring Open House and invite local Boy & Girl Scout Troops, Y Guide groups, Boys & Girls Clubs, and other youth oriented groups to attend.

**I.B.M. and Ring Brochures.** A Ring flier or brochure helps tell your Ring's stories in writing. It can be handed out, posted on bulletin and notice boards, and left in stacks at your local magic and toy shops, libraries and community centers, military recreation and youth centers, college campus student centers, company lunchrooms and break rooms. It can also be distributed at fairs, community events and town hall meetings.

Full color I.B.M. brochures are available for the asking through your TVP or the Ring Coordinator.

Include the usual who-what-where-when-why-and-how information on your printed materials. Include a phone number, e-mail address, and website URL. Make a smaller electronic version of your flier (using the PDF file format) that can be e-mailed as an attachment or downloaded from your club's website.

**Business Cards.** With online printers like Gotprints.com and Vistaprint.com, full color business cards are more affordable and easier to design than ever. Many Rings create their own business cards to personally hand to prospective members and community leaders. You may also want to include day, time, and location of Ring meetings with a very brief tagline defining your Ring.

Some Rings print a coupon on the back that is "Good for one complimentary evening of Great Magic & Fellowship!" You and I know guests are always welcome, but this coupon statement bestows a real value to the evening.

Tack the cards to community bulletin boards. Leave stacks at your local magic and toy shops, libraries, community centers, military recreation and youth centers, college campus student centers, company lunchrooms, and break rooms.

**Elevator Speeches.** An elevator speech is a 30-second overview of your Ring's mission. The term comes from the time it takes to complete a normal elevator ride from the top to the bottom floor. An elevator speech is an opportunity to introduce your Ring in a timely manner.

Create a brief script for your members and present it with the Ring business cards. Ask your members to memorize the script and present it whenever business cards are exchanged. A sample Ring elevator speech might follow these lines:

*"My name is Harry. I am a member of Ring #999, the local chapter of the International Brotherhood of Magicians. The Ring is a local guild of amateur and professional magicians and devoted magic enthusiasts from this area. We share a common passion for magic as a valued performance art and share that passion through open fellowship. We get together on the first Saturday of each month and I warmly invite you to visit as my guest."*

**Ring Newsletters.** A strong monthly Ring newsletter provides members with regular news, reminders, information, and entertainment. They help prospective members understand the Ring and the I.B.M. They record and reinforce the Ring's fellowship.

Newsletters should generate a pride of membership among your members. Members love to see their names and individual accomplishments in print. Newsletters with small mailing lists are free and easy to generate through websites like Mailchimp.com, Sendinblue.com, Madmimi.com and others.

Solicit newsletter and website contributions in the form of articles, tricks & routines, product reviews, and more from members. This is one way to keep members active and involved. Award plaques or certificates for the best member submissions at the annual banquet.

Consider archiving PDF copies of your monthly newsletters on your website as a running historical record of Ring events and news. This makes it easy for members to catch up and for prospective members to examine your Ring's activities.

**The Open House.** Open Houses are wonderful events that showcase your Ring, its meetings, and what the I.B.M. is all about. Attending a meeting may be scary to a prospective member. Walking into a family-focused and social Open House is

often less intimidating and much more inviting.

Appoint Ring ambassadors to warmly greet, introduce, and guide guests as soon as they enter the room. Provide nametags for members and guests. Include food and beverages, a Q&A session, a talent showcase, and a sampling of what occurs at a meeting. Leave informal time for mingling and small group discussions.

**Public Performances.** When the Ring presents a show, promote your club from the stage along with Ring contact information. Place a prominent ad in the program and, if possible, refer to it as part of a performance from the stage; perhaps as a card reveal or mentalism effect.

Plan and announce a youth or adult magic workshop to run a few days after the show. Announce the workshop from the stage during the public show. Consider hosting a complimentary "teaser" lesson in the lobby before, during, or after the show to promote the workshop. As people respond, add their names to your New Member Coordinator's lead list and follow up.

Stay alert for opportunities to show case your Ring's presence and talent. Movie theater managers welcome lobby performances and displays linked to a new popular movie. Watch for magic themed movies and offer complimentary lobby performances in exchange for movie passes (for meeting door prizes) and your Ring's promotional display in the lobby.

Stay alert for local charity telethons. These televised programs are hungry for local talent to keep viewers engaged and giving.

Town festivals, county and state fairs, and local family-themed trade shows also offer a great opportunity to man a promotional booth and give residents a sampling of the skills and services provided by your amateur and professional members. Promoting your art generates an awareness and creates demand. Treat it as a business!

If your community has a dedicated children's museum, approach them and offer family shows in exchange for recognition as museum sponsors and an advertising space in their newsletters and on their website. Performers may leave their business cards for audience members.

**Community Events and Opportunities.** Consider committing to community programs such as the "Adopt-a-Highway" Program that offer high, year-round visibility and promotion opportunities. Members will gather four times a year to

remove litter from a 1-to-2 mile stretch of local highway. A sign prominently names the Ring as the group responsible for the care of this stretch of roadway.

Consider purchasing reflective safety vests with your club's name printed prominently on the back for these occasions. Folding sandwich or wire campaign signs placed at each end of the mile as your club polices your assigned highway stretch offers additional visibility for your club.

**Host a Public Charity Event.** This gives the Ring a significant promotional opportunity with the local interest departments of local electronic and print news media. Many Rings use National Magic Week, October 27th-31st, for promotion. Create special magic displays at your local libraries, malls, or other public locations. Present teaser magic lessons in public locations to attract potential members and create greater community visibility for your Ring. Solicit Magic Week proclamations from your mayor and governor—it's free and easy to do with advance planning and is very newsworthy!

**Press Releases.** A press release is the standard way in which an event or campaign is announced to the media. Radio, TV and newspaper news editors all prefer to receive such information through a short, typed announcement containing the vital information about your event. Include your contact information. Write your piece from the perspective of benefits to the reading or viewing audience. A quick Internet search will provide a wealth of information on writing and submitting these news alerts.

We have many great opportunities each year to capture the attention of the news media. Open Houses, contests, member accomplishments, education events, Ring civic activities, the I.B.M. Youth program, and roles in community affairs are just a few. Rings helping a local theater promote a magic-themed film or a bookstore promotion leading to the release of a hot new magic-themed book are ideal press release topics. Celebrating Houdini's or another favorite magic star's birthday each year may offer a foot in the newsroom's door.

Request a proclamation from your state or provincial governor recognizing National Magic Week and other significant magic events. Most state governors provide beautiful proclamations upon request. Check your governor's webpage for details.

Present articles to local entertainment newspapers and magazines explaining the benefits of hiring professional magicians for family and corporate events. Our goal

here is to promote and enhance the art magic rather than to compete with working pros in the area.

**Celebrate Special Dates in Magic.** Take advantage of historic dates that can capture public imagination. A few of these dates include March 24th, Houdini's birthday, or October 31st, Houdini's death. May 8th, VE Day, celebrates the end of the World War II in Europe aided by the war wizardry of Jasper Maskelyne. October 25-31 is National Magic Week. January 27th is the anniversary of the liberation of Germany's Auschwitz Death Camp, an excellent time to recall and celebrate the life of Werner Reich, a young boy who survived by showing magic tricks to the guards. July 31st is the shared birthday for Harry Potter and author J. K. Rowling. January 31st is the Feast Day for St. John Bosco, patron saint of magicians.

Seek out other dates associated with famous magicians from history or your area. For example, Columbus, OH might celebrate the July 20th birthday of their native son Howard Thurston. Set up public displays in local libraries with on-site performances. Create an informational kiosk or a free magic showcase in your local mall, arcade, or park. Send out press releases and seek appearances on local and regional radio and television morning shows, talk shows, and late night programs. Invite your newspaper community interest reporters to your meetings and displays.

Arrange with local theaters to invite club members to perform in their lobbies during the weekend premier of a hot new magic-themed movie. With the increase of popular magic-themed television programs, approach the channel's local affiliate and offer to help them promote the new show's debut.

Seek permission to set up an informational display in the lobby of theaters hosting magic themed movies and touring magic stars.

**College Campuses, High Schools, and After School Programs.** College campuses welcome extracurricular and community service programs. Many high schools have after-school magic clubs formed by interested teens. Reach out to the guidance counselors of every high school in your area and make your Ring's presence known. Do this with YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs of America after-school programs. These teens may have no idea that you exist.

**Word of Mouth.** Encourage members to create a 30-to-60-second personal "success story" associated with magic. Their stories should explain why they

belong to a magic club and how the club has helped others to grow as magicians. Personal experience stories, kept short and interesting, are compelling testimonials. Along this line, begin collecting one and two line testimonials from new and long-standing I.B.M. members to include in your promotional materials and on your websites.

**Show Your I.B.M. Pride!** Encourage members to wear their I.B.M. membership pins wherever they go. Create a club logo and have it printed or embroidered on club shirts. Companies such as *Queensboro.com* will embroider individual items with no minimum order. They can also help you link to a “Ring Store” to your club website to help your Ring earn a profit from customized product sales.

Dress to impress when representing the I.B.M.. Remember that you represent one of the largest and oldest magic organizations in the world.

Share the Fun! As you can see, there is no shortage of avenues to promote your Rings. The fun is in exposing others to the Magic of your I.B.M..



“I am a great believer in  
mystery and magic. Look at  
this life - all mystery and  
magic.”

Harry Houdini

## CLUB DEVELOPMENT

### MISSION, OBJECTIVES, AND GOALS

**A Meaningful Mission Statement.** Every Ring should create a meaningful mission statement. Your mission statement must be a solid expression of your vision and values. It becomes the criterion for everything your club stands for. Business coaches tout these four keys to a meaningful mission statement:



- **Pass the Mother Test:** The best mission statements are a single concise paragraph describing what your Ring hopes to do and for whom. Show this statement to your mother, if she doesn't understand it, start again.
- **Self-Igniting:** Your statement is for your Ring and its members. It doesn't have to be an earth moving proclamation, but it should inspire your members to swell with pride whenever they read it.
- **Measurability:** A good mission statement must be measurable. You must be able to track your club's progress, or lack thereof, toward the achievement of your stated mission.
- **Flexibility:** A mission statement can guide your Ring in good times and bad. A meaningful statement acts as a moral compass. A good one helps you to make decisions aligning with changing Ring goals.

**Meaningful Ring Objectives.** Real-world objectives are very important. Most Rings echo the I.B.M. objectives of promoting magic as an art, opposing the exposure of conjuring secrets, and deploring the maltreatment of livestock. Local clubs need to reach a bit further.

For example, one objective may be to help all members become better magicians. That is more personal than suggesting that we improve the art of magic as a whole. Set objectives that speak to your members and create a fun and supportive environment.

**A Five-Year Strategic Plan.** The Five-Year Statement is a vital part of any Ring. The Ring executive committee should decide where they would like the club to be in five years. Determine what the committee must do to attain this club vision.

Long-range goals must be achievable and measurable and may address club membership, member engagement, service or educational projects, public image, leadership development, and support of the International Brotherhood of Magicians mission. Review this strategic plan at every executive committee meeting and adjust as needed.

**Setting and Tracking Annual Goals.** Once your long-range goals are in place, you'll need to set supporting annual goals. These goals must be achievable and measurable. Post these goals where they can be easily reviewed by club members such as your club website and in a special repeating section of your club newsletter.

Find that special something that your club excels in. Build it into something you can all be truly great at. Post updates whenever progress or changes occur.

Have a "Goal Progress Check-In" at each meeting or at least once each quarter to update members. Including members in the goal tracking process creates pride and confidence in the Ring. Knowing that someone is watching and holding you responsible is the best way to keep on track.

## CLUB DEVELOPMENT

### USE AND DISPLAY OF THE I.B.M. NAME & EMBLEM

The International Brotherhood of Magicians grants each duly chartered Ring the license to use and display the I.B.M. Shield for official purposes and in any manner that brings credit and honor to the organization. The shield may not be used in a manner that may bring dishonor to the organization.

Members may download camera ready versions of the I.B.M. Shield from [www.magician.org](http://www.magician.org) under Ring Resources.

The background of this emblem represents the world. The figure is Mercury, the messenger of the ancient gods and a magician. He carries a wand in his left hand. At the bottom, the letters IBM are joined to indicate Unity and Cooperation. The oak leaf denotes strength while the two acorns represent the Eastern and Western hemispheres. The hands are clasped together to signify the Fellowship and Brotherhood in Magic throughout the world.



"Magic is believing in yourself. If you can do that, you can make anything happen."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

## CLUB LEADERSHIP

### RING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Once your rules are in place, it's time to elect your Ring leaders. The average Ring executive committee includes the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms. The secretary and treasurer positions may be combined into the single position as secretary/treasurer.

**Ring President.** The president is the Ring's chief executive officer and bears the responsibility for guiding the Ring for the benefit of the members. The president presides over all Ring and executive committee meetings, appoints committee chairs and members, and provides executive oversight of the other Ring officers. The president generally serves as an ex officio\* member of vital Ring committees.

**Ring Vice President.** The vice president assists the Ring president in the duties of that office. The vice president presides over the Ring and executive committee meetings in the president's absence. The vice president may serve as an ex officio\* member of vital committees in the place of the president. Some Rings make the vice president responsible for planning and managing educational and social activities. Other Rings select a first and second vice president to divide the educational and the social programs. We recommend that the vice president maintain the Ring's Policy & Program Manual, serve as the chair of the Audit Committee, and as a member of the Budget Committee.

**Secretary.** The secretary maintains a true written record of all meetings, maintains files of significant correspondence related to the Ring, executes Ring correspondence including the submission of the annual Ring report and any other information requested by the Headquarters Office and officers of the International Brotherhood of Magicians. The secretary tracks I.B.M. and Ring membership, attendance, and performs other duties assigned by the Ring executive committee. The secretary usually presides over the Ring and executive committee meetings in the absence of the president and vice president.

The Ring secretary is required to submit an annual Secretary's Report to the I.B.M. office no later than the 1st of November each year. The secretary is also

responsible for sending member *Broken Wand* and *Sick & Convalescent* notices to *The Linking Ring* for any passing I.B.M. members. Whenever possible, death notices should also be provided for I.B.M. members who live in your area but may not belong to the Ring. Every I.B.M. member is important to us.

**Treasurer.** The treasurer oversees and records all financial obligations of the Ring including but not limited to maintaining the Ring budget, deposits and receipts of Ring money, prompt payment of all approved Ring financial obligations, and maintaining the Ring's checking and other financial accounts. The treasurer must maintain an accurate accounting of all receipts and disbursements and report the status of these against the Ring's budget as required by the Ring's standing rules or executive committee. Some Ring's require their treasurer to secure a fiduciary bond covering the officers and other persons deemed necessary by and for an amount approved by the Ring executive committee. We recommend that the treasurer chair the Budget Committee and serve as an ex officio member of any committee requiring financial review or obligation. We recommend that the treasurer submit a brief financial report at each monthly Ring meeting as well as an end-of-year financial summary.

**Sergeant-at-Arms.** The sergeant-at-arms is not a required officer position. Most Rings will elect or appoint a member to this position to serve as the head of Ring discipline and hospitality. The sergeant-at-arms is generally tasked with preparing the meeting room and leading the clean up afterwards. The sergeant-at-arms maintains order and discipline during meetings and should be given the authority to respectfully control or escort disruptive and uncooperative members or guests from the premises. The sergeant-at-arms may also be tasked with assuring that all persons attending closed Ring meetings are members of the Ring in good standing or approved guests.

**Ring Executive Committee.** To ensure a broader representation of member interests, the elected Ring officers may be supported by additional appointees to the Ring Executive Committee. This committee may consist of the elected Ring officers, the immediate past president, and at least two additional at-large Ring members. The Ring executive committee assists the officers in administering the business of the Ring. They may discuss and act upon proposals submitted by Ring members or prepare a suitable motion to be presented to the members for consideration. Inducting additional Ring members into this committee enhances the training and selection of future Ring leaders. Ring's with an active Territorial



Vice President (T.V.P.) in residence may consider inviting him or her to serve as an at-large member of the executive committee. Attendance at an executive committee meeting should be open to all interested Ring members to promote open leadership and member involvement.

**Suggested Committees and Appointments.** The president may appoint several standing and ad hoc committees to carry out specific Ring functions. Suggested appointments include, but are not limited to:

**Independent Audit Committee** to audit the treasurer's books periodically and at the end of the fiscal year. This committee may provide a written record of their audit to the Ring's year end report.

**Budget Committee** to oversee the creation and management of the Ring's annual budget.

**Nomination/Election Committee** to solicit annual nominations for elected Ring offices and to oversee a fair and impartial election process.

**Social Committee** to create and present pleasant and fun social events for members and their families.

**Membership Committee** dedicated to creating a welcome club environment for members and guests. This committee may manage the club's guest sponsor program and maintain a club connection with inactive members.

**Technology or Social Media Committee** to create and maintain the Ring's website, social media accounts, and electronic newsletter.

**Creative Director**, an experienced theater or creative arts director empowered to help members see themselves and their actions through a spectator's eyes. They see the potential flash and fatal flaws in each performance. Their practiced eye spots poor blocking, extraneous patter and the common physical and verbal tics that plague far too many acts. We examine this position in greater detail [here](#).

**Youth Committee** to manage, mentor, and direct the Ring's I.B.M. Youth program.

**Scribe** to work with the Ring secretary and submit timely monthly reports, articles, photographs, Parades, obituaries, and sick & convalescent notices to *The Linking Ring*, Ring newsletter, and website. The Scribe should report to the secretary and work closely with the Ring Historian to preserve vital items.

**Ring Historian** to maintain a running historical record of members, Ring events,

copies of all Ring reports and Linking Ring Parades/articles, copies of all newsletters and special notices, reports and photos of significant events such as banquets and lectures, and other items of historical significance. The Ring Historian may also maintain a Memorial Book posting the obituaries and photos of late members. The Ring Historian may report to the president and work closely with the Ring secretary. In theory, the Ring Historian must be able to examine his archives and report on Ring activity, officers, or member names and information during any given portion of the Ring's existence.

**Webmaster/Editor** to lead the technology committee and to accept responsibility for the Ring website and timely publication of the Ring newsletter and special notices.

**Ring Librarian** to manage your Ring's magic library. Most Ring's create a co-operative library with all of the members listing the books and media that they are willing to share from their personal libraries. This list is compiled and distributed by the librarian. Requests to borrow a book or media item are submitted to the librarian who makes arrangements with the item's owner.

## RING REPORTS

Ring Presidents are responsible for ensuring that specific reports are completed and submitted in a timely and professional manner.

**LINKING RING REPORTS.** Ring Reports are a brief narrative description of a Ring's monthly activities submitted to *The Linking Ring* for publication. The Ring Secretary or Scribe is generally responsible for compiling and submitting this report.

**ANNUAL RING OFFICER REPORT.** It is generally good practice for the current Ring President to compile and provide a written summary of the Ring's status towards the end of each year in office. This *State of the Ring* report may feature elections, general meeting stats and reports, important membership votes and actions, special projects, lectures and workshops, membership gains and losses, plans and projections for the coming year and a formal financial audit and summary. Submit copies of this report incoming officers, and the Ring Historian. Share this report with members through an email or on the club website.

**ANNUAL SECRETARY REPORT.** Each Ring Secretary or Link Director is required to submit a written Ring or Link status report to the I.B.M. Executive Secretary each

year. This report must be received by the I.B.M. Executive Secretary no later than the **1st of November** every year.

This report may be submitted any time during the year—preferably immediately following the induction of new Ring officers—however, it **MUST** be submitted and received no later than the 1st of November of each calendar year if it is not submitted earlier.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A MANDATORY REPORT FOR EACH CHARTERED RING OR INDEPENDENT YOUTH LINK PER THE I.B.M. BYLAWS.**

All Rings are required to submit a current membership list including officers to the Headquarters staff by **November 1st**. Reports should be mailed to:

**The International Brotherhood of Magicians  
13 Point West Blvd  
St Charles, MO 63301-4431 USA**

PDF copies of the reports may also be emailed to **[office@magician.org](mailto:office@magician.org)**

or faxed to **1-636-724-8566**

Information submitted on this report will be used to update Headquarters Office records, the IBM web site, TVP records, etc.



"That's the magic of art and the magic of theatre: it has the power to transform an audience, an individual, or en masse, to transform them and give them an epiphanal experience that changes their life, opens their hearts and their minds and the way they think."

Brian Stokes Mitchell

## TERM LIMITS

As a young club member, I was always a bit indifferent about officer term limits. My novice mind recognized that the best and most experienced members tackled a job very few wanted and made it work. As my understanding of Ring dynamics matured, I began to develop a greater respect for term limits.

Yes, there are a few highly gifted and enthusiastic officers who serve their members with distinction for years and years. Yet even these cherished maestros of management fail to convince me that the perceived benefits of unrestricted continuity outweigh the real benefits of regular leadership changes.

To be clear, I am referring to the senior positions of Territorial Vice President, Ring president and Ring vice-president as well as the at-large members of the Ring executive committee. As a former Ring Counselor and T.V.P. Coordinator, I've heard every argument for retaining the best members in these positions. It can be difficult to bid adieu to a truly gifted president. It can be especially difficult for a dedicated leader to hand his or her authority to another when there is still so much left to accomplish. Still, our clubs remain far healthier when there is an orderly and regular succession of leaders. Here's what I see as the advantages:

**Share the Opportunity.** Term limits promote diversity and inclusivity. Members come with a variety of skills, experiences, and perspectives. Investing this diversity into our leadership promotes innovative approaches to club management, event planning, and member engagement. Term limits offer every member an opportunity to lead and contribute. Which is the better leadership strategy: "Let's hope no one quits," or "Let's train quality new officers"?

**Balance the Power.** Term limits prevent executive boards from concentrating power within a small elite clique. A dynastic power structure can be intimidating to new members and make the executive committee appear closed to others. True club growth requires leaders who continually involve and train younger members in the operation of your club. Allowing other members to actively



participate in the ins, outs, ups and downs of club management creates advocates and strengthens the club's support base.

**Build Leadership Skills.** Actively encouraging members to move up the executive committee ladder develops leaders with a firm understanding and appreciation of our magic community. The great leaders provide a positive role model for members developing their own leadership skills. Moving members through the ranks of the club's executive committee builds a deeper bond with the club. It invites members to understand, appreciate and grow into the senior leadership roles. Knowing that leadership positions will eventually open, members may be more motivated to engage in club activities and develop their leadership skills. This active participation fosters a vibrant, dynamic club environment that attracts new members and retains existing ones.

**Consider Fresh Perspectives.** Clubs prosper through the continual flow of new ideas, fresh assessments, and innovative solutions to common problems. Like water, we humans naturally seek out the path of least resistance. Decision makers tend to rely on the methods and routines that have worked for them in the past. Doing things the same way year after year digs deep ruts along our path that may keep us from exploring new ideas and fresh opportunities.

**Create Fresh Connections.** A steady flow of new officers inevitably leads to new club contacts, new relationships, new connections, and new opportunities. Each new connection presents fresh new opportunities.

**Create Ambassadors.** New connections do not mean casting out the old! Former officers assume the role of club ambassador. Their experience and insight remain available to the new officers. They continue to support and promote the club to our growing communities. These knowledgeable Ring ambassadors are the ideal choice to chair audit committees, membership drives, fundraising, club visibility within the community, and its social structure.

**Avoid Founder's Syndrome.** Limits restrict a condition that occurs when one or more founders or influential leaders maintain disproportionate power and sway over the management of the club. These leaders may prefer the status quo and resist change. They may refuse to adopt new ideas, approaches, or skill sets. The domineering officer falsely believes that he or she is the best person for the job; that no one else can deliver their level of leadership. It is this very thought that tags them as the least qualified individual for this task. To sidestep term limits,

they may inject their own “puppet officers” into positions of authority and control them from the side.

**Reduce Potential Problems.** Mediocre officers may fail to deliver the level of leadership needed for a club to prosper. Members hesitate in removing them to avoid hurt feelings, to prevent splintering the club, or simply because no one else wants the job. Term limits make it easier to weed out these unproductive officers without rocking the proverbial boat.

**Set and Track Goals.** Term limits establish a finite period that keeps officers focused on providing their best service and achieving their leadership goals. Without the pressure of a finite term, it is far too easy for an officer to fall into the “I have years to do this, there’s no rush” trap.

Those who oppose term limits cite the potential loss of expertise and institutional memory. They point to the loss of resolute leaders with a proven success and growth record. This is especially noticeable with positions that require a specific proficiency such as the treasurer and secretary. Extended terms for these positions make sense and, with proper oversight, will ensure continuity.

Regardless of where you fall on the term limit issue, clearly defined terms of service are important for clubs like ours. If your club does not currently support term limits for its board members and senior officers, this column will help you start that conversation.



“There is real magic in enthusiasm. It spells the difference between mediocrity and accomplishment.”

Norman Vincent Peale

## BYLAWS AND STANDING RULES



Once your charter is received, you must create the rules by which your officers will fairly and effectively manage operations. Two types of governing instruments, Bylaws and Standing Rules, detail specific policies and procedures to be followed by decision-makers in the conduct of business. Despite having the same functional objective, these two instruments complement each other and are not interchangeable.

Your Ring Bylaws must be submitted to the I.B.M. office immediately following receipt of your Ring Charter. The I.B.M. will perform a legal review of the bylaws and file them with your Ring Charter.

**Bylaws.** Bylaws are the rules that lead the overall operation of your Ring. There is no single format that must be followed. Bylaws often address the authorized number of executive committee members and terms-in-office, membership standards, voting rights and privileges, approved business activities, appointment of officers and committees, quorum percentages, annual meeting frequency, procedure for amending the bylaws and for dissolving the organization, and other issues that are part of the integral management of the organization.

Bylaws are adopted and amended by a vote of your Ring's members at a general meeting. Ring bylaws may not conflict with the bylaws of the International Brotherhood of Magicians or with state or federal law.

If your Ring is a 501(c)(3), bylaws are required for nonprofit status. If you cannot find a copy of your Ring's original bylaws, request a copy from the I.B.M. office.

All officers, executive committee, and other Ring committee members should be familiar with the I.B.M. and Ring bylaws. Each member has a right to view the bylaws. Each executive committee member should have a personal copy of the I.B.M. and Ring bylaws.

Bylaws do not have to be complicated. However, they should provide the following important information:

- The structure of the local Ring Executive Committee

- may include how meeting notification is given
- May include meeting location and frequency
- Committee assignments
- How and when to conduct elections
- Dates for the fiscal year
- Requirements of a quorum for conducting business
- Directions for making, amending or revising the bylaws

Your Ring must comply with its bylaws. If your Ring is having trouble staying within bylaws, consider amending the bylaws to meet your current needs. Be sure to follow your bylaws when you revise or amend the document.

**Standing Rules.** Standing rules outline the administrative policies and procedures of the Ring that are subject to change with a greater degree of regularity. Standing rules cover specific details that are not included in the bylaws. Standing Rules must not conflict with the bylaws.

Standing rules are an executive committee document. Unlike bylaws which can be changed only by membership, standing rules are subject to change by the members present at any business meeting or by the Ring executive committee, if the bylaws permit. Standing rules may be changed from administration to administration or from meeting to meeting.

**Understanding the Bylaws and the Standing Rules.** The key differences between bylaws and standing rules relate to scope and effect. The parliamentary procedure guide "Robert's Rules of Order" explains that bylaws "should include all the rules that are of such importance that they cannot be changed in any way without previous notice," while standing rules "should contain only such rules as may be adopted without previous notice by a majority vote at any business meeting." At the core, bylaws are designed to be overarching and procedural, while standing rules are specific and administrative.

Bylaws usually are drafted at an organization's inception, while standing rules tend to be established as needed by committees or other subsets of management. Bylaws govern the organization as a whole and can be amended only by providing notice and gaining a majority vote. Standing rules can be adopted at any meeting without notice and can pass upon a simple majority vote of people in attendance.

Some examples of the differences between bylaws and standing rules are:

- Bylaws usually state the number of meetings a Ring must hold or the group responsible for setting the meeting calendar. Standing Rules tell where and what time these meetings are held.
- Bylaws assign the primary and general responsibilities of officers and chairs. Standing Rules give the specifics.
- If the Bylaws state that the vice president is responsible for a program, the Standing Rules would list the various chairs who work with the vice president under that program.



"Sometimes, magic is  
just someone spending  
more time on  
something than  
anyone else would  
reasonably expect."

Teller



**SAMPLE BYLAWS & STANDING RULES**  
**RING NO (number) OF THE**  
**INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF MAGICIANS**  
**BYLAWS**

**ARTICLE I, NAME**

Section 1. This organization shall be known as (descriptive term if one used), Ring No. (number) of the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

Section 2. The Headquarters of this organization shall be (city, and state, province or country).

**ARTICLE II, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES**

Section 1. The structure of this organization shall be (governed or incorporated) under the laws of (state, province or country), as a (type of legal entity/structure) organization.

Section 2. The mission of this organization shall be \_\_\_\_\_

Section 3. To accomplish this mission, the following objectives are established:

(Objective 1)

(Objective 2)

(Objective 3)

**ARTICLE III, MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. There shall be (number) classes of Ring membership: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. (The most often used classes include Active, Youth, Associate, and Honorary)

Section 2. An Active member must be at least \_\_ years of age.

Section 3. A Youth member must be at least \_\_ years of age and less than 18 years of age. Upon reaching the age of 18, Youth members immediately become Active members with all privileges.

Section 4. An Associate member must be an immediate family member or bona fide assistant to an Active or Youth member and be at least 18 years of age.

Section 5. Ring Honorary membership may be awarded to an Active Ring Member who has significantly advanced the Magical Arts.

Section 6. All Ring members must join the International Brotherhood of Magicians and remain members in good standing.

Section 7. As a condition of membership all Ring members shall pledge to be bound by the International Brotherhood of Magicians' Code of Ethics.

Section 8. In accordance with the bylaws of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, any applicant for membership currently listed on the Sexual Offender Registry ...

**ARTICLE IV, OFFICERS**

Section 1. The affairs of the Ring shall be (conducted or directed) by an executive committee comprised of the following elected Officers and Directors: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, (or Secretary/Treasurer) Sergeant-at-Arms, Immediate Past President, Youth Director, and (other Directors/Committee chairs).

Section 2. Terms of office shall be for one year.

Section 3. The President shall not hold that office for more than two consecutive terms.

**ARTICLE V, QUORUM**

Section 1. At least (number) members of the Ring executive committee must be present at any Ring executive committee Meeting to constitute a quorum.

Section 2. At least (number of members or percent of membership) members of the organization must be present at any regular Ring meeting to constitute a quorum.

**ARTICLE VI, AMENDING THE BYLAWS**

Section 1. Amendments to these bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of this organization by a three fourths vote of the members present, provided that this proposed amendment or amendments have been posted and/or read at the two immediately previous regular Ring meetings, or provided that such proposed amendment or amendments have been distributed to the membership and received three fourths votes of those votes cast by mail ballot.

**ARTICLE VII, GOVERNING BODY AND INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD MAGICIANS**

Section 1. Any provisions within these Ring Bylaws that are in conflict with the



Bylaws of the International Brotherhood of Magicians and/or laws covering the (state, province or country of location) will be superseded by the rules and laws issued by the latter governing bodies.

## **RING STANDING RULES**

### **ARTICLE I, MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND PRIVILEGES**

Section 1. Application for Active membership must be made on an approved membership form and be properly signed by the applicant. Two Active, Associate or Honorary members of the Ring stating that the applicant is of good moral character and worthy of membership must endorse the application. The application will be accompanied by the current membership fees established by the Ring executive committee.

Section 2. Youth Memberships are secured by the same procedures as is required for Active membership. Youth Members shall enjoy the same privileges as Active members except they shall have no vote in the meetings or may they hold office; however, they may serve on committees. Upon reaching the age of eighteen years they shall be recognized as Active members.

Section. 3 Associate Memberships are secured by the same procedures as is required for Active membership. Associate Members shall enjoy the same privileges as Active members.

Section 4 Honorary Membership in Ring (number) may be granted to Active Ring (number) members who have attained distinction in the Magical Arts. Recommendations for Ring Honorary Membership shall be initiated by a unanimous recommendation of the executive committee and shall be decided by a three fourths majority vote of the members present at a regular meeting in which this item of business is on the published agenda or via a mail ballot. In addition to their distinction, Honorary Ring Members shall possess the same privileges as an Active Member but pay no Ring dues.

### **ARTICLE II, MEMBER SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

Section 1. Members may be suspended or expelled from membership or removed from the executive offices of the Ring for: any conduct, which is not in the best interest of the Ring; violation of the Code of Ethics; and violation of the Ring Constitution and Bylaws. The decision to expel, suspend or remove from office rests on first, a recommendation by the Ring executive committee to do so,

followed by a three fourths majority vote of the membership at a meeting in which the membership is notified of the issue at least one month prior to the voting. Members considered for expulsion, suspension or removal from office will be formally notified and be given due opportunity to meet with the Ring executive committee and membership prior to any vote on such action.

### **ARTICLE III, DUES**

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall establish annual dues for all membership classes during the annual budgetary review. Any changes in rate will be published in the Ring newsletter. Dues shall be payable before (date) for the following calendar year.

Section 2. Any member who becomes in arrears may be subject to late payment fees, and if for a period greater than three months shall, subject to a decision by the Ring executive committee, forfeit their membership and be subject to reinstatement only upon making application as a new member.

### **ARTICLE IV, DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

Section 1. President—It shall be the duty of the President to be the chief executive officer of the Ring and to guide it after due council with the Ring executive committee; preside at all meetings of the organization and serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.

Section 2. Vice President—The Vice President shall assist the President in the duties of that office, and in the absence of the President serve as the Ring's presiding officer. The Vice President may serve as an ex officio member of committees in substitution for the President and assume other duties delegated to him. The Vice President will serve on the Budget Committee (and jointly with the Secretary maintain the Policy and Program Manual; use if one is maintained).

Section 3. Secretary—The Secretary shall: keep a true record of all meetings; maintain files of significant correspondence related to the Ring; execute in a timely manner the Ring correspondence including submission of required reports and requested information to the executive office and officers of the International Brotherhood of Magicians; and perform other

duties as delegated by the Ring executive committee. (The Secretary in conjunction with the Vice President is responsible for updating annually the Ring's Policy and Program Manual. Use if one is maintained).

Section 4. Treasurer—The Treasurer shall oversee all deposits and receipts of money of the Ring and shall assure prompt payment of all properly approved Ring obligations. The Treasurer shall maintain accurate accounting records of all receipts and disbursements and report the status of these against the Ring's budget to the Ring executive committee(or the Ring Membership) on a schedule specified by the Ring executive committee. (The Treasurer will secure a fiduciary bond covering the officers and other persons deemed necessary by and for an amount approved by the Ring executive committee. Use if appropriate) The Treasurer will also Chair the Budget Committee and review the Ring's financial accounts and recommend alternative banking facilities and investments.

Section 5. Sergeant-at-Arms—The Sergeant At Arms will assure the hospitality of the Ring is extended to members and guests. The Sergeant of Arms will assure that all persons attending Ring closed meetings are members of the Ring in good standing or approved guests.

Section 6. The routine business of the Ring shall be administered by the Ring executive committee. They shall consider and take action on any proposals submitted to it by members of the Ring. They may act upon such proposals or prepare from them a suitable motion to be presented for consideration at any regular meeting of the Ring. (modify this section as desired to reflect Ring membership involvement in the decision making process).

Section 7. Committees—The President shall, after due counsel with the Ring executive committee, appoint standing and ad hoc committees as necessary to carry out the Ring's activities and functions. It is mandatory that the President upon assuming office promptly assigns the following positions and committees:

An Auditing Committee, which shall audit the books of the treasurer at the end of the fiscal year and provide a written record of their audit to the Ring executive committee.

A Budget Committee, which shall present a proposed annual budget to the Ring executive committee within forty-five days after the start of the fiscal year.

A Nomination Committee, which shall prepare nominations for elective Ring office annually.

A Scribe who shall work with the Ring Secretary and submit monthly reports and other articles to The Linking Ring.

A Ring Historian who shall maintain the historical archives and critical permanent records of the Ring.

A Webmaster/Editor who will be responsible for the Ring website and publication of the Ring newsletter.

Section 8. In the case of the death, resignation or inability of any officer to serve, the Ring executive committee shall appoint a successor. Such successor will serve until the next annual election.

Section 9. The Ring executive committee shall investigate all grievances arising from conduct unbecoming a Ring officer or member. They may present proposals to the membership for action to expel, suspend or remove from office any members for such conduct.

#### ARTICLE IV, FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS & SECURITY BOND

Section 1. No officer or other member of the Ring shall make any expenditure or enter into any contract that becomes a financial obligation of the organization, unless the expenditure or contract has been approved by the Ring executive committee (or the Ring) either as a special commitment or as part of its annual budget. Committee Chairs of major functions, e.g. public shows and banquets, shall submit a budget to the Board (or the Ring) for approval prior to commitment of funds.

Section 2. An emergency fund in an amount agree upon by the Board (or Ring members) shall be established for President's use to cover unforeseen expenses. Payments made from this fund must be reported to the Ring executive committee (or Ring members) who may sustain it at the authorized level. Approval for payment of an extraordinary expense beyond the limit of the fund shall be authorized only upon the approval of the Ring executive committee (or Ring membership).

Section 3. A fiduciary bond payable to the Ring and equivalent to the maximum amount in the treasury will be secured on the treasurer and other officers and members deemed necessary by the Ring executive committee. The Ring shall pay the premium for this bond. (note, security bonds are highly desirable if cost justifiable)

#### ARTICLE V, METHOD OF ELECTION

Section 1. The Ring nomination committee will annually recommend candidates

for nomination for the elected offices of the Ring. This shall be completed by ninety (specific number) days prior to the date of the annual election, the first regular meeting in May (date). Such recommendations shall not exceed two candidates for each office and shall be published in the Ring newsletter at least sixty days prior to the election. In addition any qualified member may be nominated for offices of the Ring by petition, provided said petition is submitted to the Ring Secretary before March 1 (date) and is signed by fifteen (number) Active, Associate or Honorary members. (Note elections may be accomplished by mail as described here or held at a regular Ring meeting. Larger Rings tend to do mail ballots whereas smaller Rings elect at meetings. Change Sections 1 and 2 to reflect the Ring's desired approach)

Section 2. Thirty days prior to the annual election an official ballot, containing the names of all qualified nominees, shall be distributed to each Active, Associate and Honorary member. Ballots shall be marked and returned no later than the date designated on the ballot and to the address shown. The ballots shall be sent in an envelope marked "Election Ballot" and delivered to a Ballot Committee, consisting of three members appointed by the Ring executive committee. The Ballot Committee shall secure and count all ballots and report the results to the Ring executive committee within one week of the election. The decision of the Ballot Committee shall be final in instances involving the validity or questionable marking of a ballot. Election to all offices shall be by a simple majority of the ballots cast. Nominees named for elective offices, who are uncontested, shall be elected with out balloting.

Section 3. The Ring executive committee shall in establishing the rules and timetables for the conduct of the election are guided by the principle that all qualified members should have the privilege of voting.

Section 4 Elected Officers assume their responsibilities after the first regular meeting in June (month).

#### ARTICLE VI, MEETINGS

Section 1. The Ring shall hold its regular meetings on the (first Friday or whatever day{s} of the week are appropriate) of the month. At the discretion of the Board of Directors, meeting dates that conflict with holidays or other events may be canceled or moved to a different date. The Ring executive committee may shift the meeting night to accommodate special events and it may add additional

meetings for lectures and other magic or social activities.

#### ARTICLE VII, AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING RULES

Section 1. Amendments to the Standing Rules may be made at any regular business meeting of this organization by a majority vote of the members present.

#### ARTICLE VIII, GENERAL

#### ARTICLE IX, DISSOLUTION

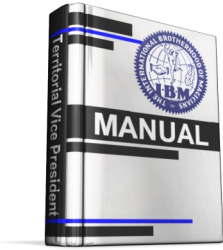
Section 1. In the event of the dissolution of the Ring, the Ring executive committee shall after the payment of organization's financial liabilities, dispose of all its assets to an organization or organizations organized explicitly for the advancement and support of the magical arts. Such organization(s) shall at the time be qualified and operating explicitly as an exempt organization, organized under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or future provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. (Consider such a statement if applying to become a not for profit corporation in the United States.)

Section 2. The Ring executive committee will maintain a Policy and Program manual to provide working guidelines for the Ring officers and membership. The Policy and Program Manual will be updated annually and will be based on Ring executive committee decisions that delegate responsibilities and create actions that maintain direction and focus to Ring activities and policies. (note maintenance of such a manual is encouraged and is highly beneficial to incoming officers. This is also an excellent place to keep protocols of and for Ring ceremonies, contests, etc.)

Section 3. The Ring Secretary will package and send the original Ring charter along with all Ring membership and financial records via the safest means available to the I.B.M. office for archiving.

## CLUB LEADERSHIP

### RING POLICY & PROGRAM MANUAL



A Policy & Program Manual is an informal collection of executive committee decisions, program changes, and rules. It complements a Ring's Bylaws and Standing Rules, recording important Ring decisions, protocols followed, and documentation of activities. It provides a consistent record of decisions eliminating the need for officers and members to repeat decisions on the same subjects and recreate protocols and procedures.

This Policy & Program Manual supplements broader procedures outlined in the bylaws and standing rules with specific date-stamped details. It is not a substitution for either the bylaws or the standing rules.

A Ring may also wish to keep additional administrative items in their Policy & Program Manual. These include such items as: Ring Ceremonies (officer installation and new member induction); contest rules; award qualifications; executive committee and/or Ring Calendars. job descriptions and responsibilities for officers and committees can also be recorded here so that persons assuming responsibilities quickly have a guide and understanding of expectations of the offices or positions they hold.

We recommend that each Ring or executive committee decision posted to the Ring Policy and & Program manual include the date of the Secretary's minutes in which the original decision is recorded. As these decisions are rescinded, amended, or superseded, the content and date of the Policy & Program Manual entry should reflect that change.

The manual should also maintain a record of key categories where action is required and provide a description of the historical precedent. Add applicable changes made by subsequent Ring or executive committee motions as they occur. Finally, add and update the procedures and forms that apply to repetitive functions such as contests, showcases, auctions, and ceremonies.

We suggest that the Vice President be tasked with maintaining the Ring's Policy & Program Manual in a secure loose-leaf binder format. The Vice President should be aided by the Ring Secretary and the minutes of Ring and committee meetings.

This allows the Vice President to become well versed in the manual's content in preparation for eventual advancement to President.

#### **SUGGESTED ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN A RING POLICY & PROGRAM MANUAL**

- Auction procedures, rules, & forms
- Auditing procedures, obligations, & forms
- Award procedures & forms
- Banquet procedures, budgets, & forms
- Budgets
- Calendars
- Ceremonies
- Charter & vital records location and safeguard procedures
- Committees & Appointments
- Contest procedures & forms
- Disciplinary Committee procedures
- Dues collection procedures & forms
- Election procedures & forms
- Executive committee meeting procedures
- Historian procedures & forms; Location of Ring Archives
- Installation of officers & new member ceremonies
- Lecture procedures & forms
- Meeting structure & responsibilities
- Meeting site procedures, obligations, & setup
- Membership procedures, certificates, and forms
- Member recognition procedures (Birthdays, anniversaries, etc)
- Mentoring and Educational procedures & forms
- Newsletter procedures

- Showcase responsibilities, procedures, & forms
- Sickness, Family loss, and Broken Wand notifications & procedures
- Specific officer/committee responsibilities; Location of Ring Records
- Treasury reserves & security bond
- Website management, guidelines, & procedures
- Youth program procedures & forms

#### **A SAMPLE POLICY & PROGRAM MANUAL ENTRY**

##### **AUCTION**

The annual auction is to be held during the November meeting. (Ring Meeting Minutes, Sept 2001)

The auction is open to the public. Ring members are admitted free of charge. Nonmembers will pay a \$5.00 admission fee. (Executive Committee Minutes, June 2007)

Ring members and nonmembers may submit magic-related items for sale. Only magic or entertainment-related items will be accepted for sale. (Ring Meeting Minutes, Sept 2001)

The minimum and starting bid for each item will be \$10.00. Items valued at less than \$10.00 will be bundled to meet the minimum bid. (Executive Committee Minutes, June 2007)

Auctioneers will attempt to display and describe all items in an equitable fashion. Modus operandi of effects will not be exposed. (Ring Meeting Minutes, Sept 2001)

Buyers paying in cash will be permitted to settle their accounts first. Seller accounts will be settled in cash where possible. (Ring Meeting Minutes, Sept 2001)

The Treasurer will provide a sufficient change-fund to cover cash transactions. (Ring Meeting Minutes, Sept 2001)

Digital copies of all Auction registration forms, bid paddles, and tally sheet masters are stored on the CD-ROM marked AUCTION in this manual's appendix. (Ring Meeting Minutes, Sept 2001)



"A lot of magic is designed  
to appeal to people  
visually, but what I'm  
trying to affect is their  
minds, their moods, their  
perceptions."

Apollo Robbins

## RULES RULE!

"Never trade bubble gum cards with a gurl, never lend your best fishin' worms to a gurl and never let a gurl carry your books home from school!" For many, Spanky McFarland's *Our Gang* club first introduced us to the concept of club rules as he rattled off these preadolescent. The lovable Darla, of course, crushed the club's "No Gurlz" resolve with a flick of her beribboned hair, but that's a topic for another day.



Who can forget Brad Pitt's break down the Fight Club rules? *"Do not talk about fight club. Do NOT talk about fight club. If someone says 'Stop', goes limp or taps out, the fight is over. Only two guys to a fight. One fight at a time. No shirts. No shoes. Fights will go on as long as they have to."* Violent as they were, Tyler Durden's rules were meant to protect Fight Club and its members.

Throughout my military and magic careers, I've enjoyed working with service and civic clubs across the U.S. and Europe. The success or failure of these clubs generally came down to how well they respected and served their members. Each club's construction of and compliance with club policies and procedures provides a member-approved foundation supporting a stable Ring environment.

There is a distinct difference between a policy and its procedure. Policies document what officers and members can or cannot do. Procedures provide step-by-step instruction on how, when and where each policy is implemented and enforced.

For example, suppose your treasurer is the sole manager for all club accounts – checking, savings, Paypal, Venmo, Square-Up, Zelle, etc. If the treasurer is a trusted member, this simplifies things, right? No harm, no foul? Now, suppose that this trusted treasurer suddenly leaves the Ring without leaving a record of logons, transfers, or passwords? Is a system in place to access or transfer the accounts without him? What are the account numbers? Who are his bank contacts and phone numbers? Confusing, right?

Your policy might require a defined record keeping method and a two or three person treasury team to simplify the transfer of authority. Your procedures may

direct the treasurer to maintain all account information, checkbooks, ledgers and passwords in a single secure location. You may decide that your president should maintain a backup set of account records. Your procedures may also define the frequency of account audits, reports and the detailed steps needed to transfer authority from one treasurer to the next. Regardless of how you manage club finances, documenting each procedure greatly reduces the errors and stress that occur with inevitable changes.

Another important example is found in our I.B.M. Youth safety protocols. If your Ring hosts a youth program, establishing and strictly enforcing a very specific set of youth protection procedures may prevent devastating situations.

**Identify Your needs.** We create policies and procedures in anticipation of or in response to a need. Rings must constantly assess and, if necessary, change these policies as the club's culture changes. Should that need cease to exist, remove the policy.

**Assign responsibility.** Delegate responsibility for each policy to a specific officer, member, team or committee. Require progress or status reports as necessary and assign oversight to ensure that procedures are properly performed and documented. Should the members or the executive committee approve this policy? Designate an audit officer to periodically review policies and procedures to keep them current and productive.

**Gather information.** What are the things that make your Ring tick for your members? Have other clubs addressed this same issue? Do sample templates exist? How will the general membership react? Is this policy necessary or mere bureaucratic foolishness? Will this policy enhance or hinder Ring operations?

**Draft your policy.** Does the wording adequately explain the policy's reason, intent and obligations? Keep it direct and simple. There is no need for rigidly formal documents filled with Harvardenesque wherefores and henceforths. Tailor your policies to match your Ring's culture, mission and members. This will make them easier to implement and help to preserve what makes your Ring unique.

Include these items to your policy template:

**Header** - The policy title, effective/revision dates, approver's signature, and responsible officer or committee.

**Purpose Statement** - What is the reason for this policy?

**Definitions** - A strong policy defines its related terms. This serves to clarify specific language as it applies to your policy and may save later arguments.

**Conduct** - Define expected behavior and restrictions and the consequences for violating these expectations, if applicable.

**Reporting and Modification Requirements** - What specific monitoring and reporting steps are needed? How can a member or officer request review, revision or removal of the policy? How often should this policy be reviewed?

**Consult with all participants.** Policies are easier to introduce and enforce if you include everyone directly tasked in their creation. If you're creating a new policy for your membership committee, it makes sense to include them in the creation process. If the policy addresses Ring volunteer activities, ask the members what guidelines they are most likely to support and respond to.

**Policy approval and authority.** Who has the authority to approve each new policy? Should your members have approval authority or is this a matter best left to the executive committee? For example, does a new policy uniquely affecting the Ring treasurer need to be presented to the members?

**What, if any, procedures are needed?** You've written the "what and why" policy. Are step-by-step "When, Where and How" procedures needed to implement and support this policy? For example, a policy on member complaints explains what needs to be done. An accompanying set of procedures details when, where and how the designated officer must handle, process, and report each complaint. Is officer training needed? Who is tasked with introducing and managing the policy? Procedures ensure that each policy is addressed and implemented in a uniform manner.

You and your members will enjoy the long-term advantages of committing to writing, fine tuning, and enforcing your club policies and procedures. Day-to-day operations will be less stressful, your club will function in a more stable manner and, if done well, you'll finally have a clearer picture of your club's path forward.



"Theft annoys me more than anything else. The purloining of effects from another magician. Some people think it's massive to steal the secrets of nuclear reactors, but to steal a card move is trivial. They're wrong."

Ricky Jay



## CLUB TREASURY



The growth of your club relies on member confidence in its officers. A high standard of accountability and integrity with the Ring treasury is one of these success or failure keystones.

The money your Ring receives from dues, fundraisers, and other events is owned by the Ring, not by any one member or officer. The Ring's executive committee are morally obligated to protect the treasury and the club through careful, responsible, and accurate handling of all club finances.

**NON-PROFIT STATUS.** I.B.M. Rings generally operate on a non-profit level. Non-profit status varies from country to country, so be sure to verify your club status through applicable local laws. In general, a non-profit social club must:

- Be organized for exempt purposes .
- Manage all of its activities to further exempt purposes.
- Maintain minimal income from nontraditional sources (i.e., from investments or from activities that, if conducted with members, would threaten the club's tax-exempt purposes).
- Be supported by membership fees, dues, and assessments.
- Not allow the club's governing bylaws to contain any provision that provides for discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, or religion.
- Not hold itself out as providing for-profit goods and services to the general public.

**OBTAINING 501(c)(7) STATUS.** For U. S. Rings, Section 501(c)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code grants tax-exempt status to some clubs organized as not-for-profit entities and operated for the enjoyment or recreation of members. These can include fraternities and sororities, country clubs, dinner clubs, amateur sport clubs, yacht clubs and hobby clubs. The chief benefit for a 501(c)(7) tax-exempt

club is that it does not pay federal taxes on its day-to-day activities, but there are other advantages as well to the club having tax-exempt status.

Not-for-profit social clubs are organized for pleasure and recreation. Congress exempts these clubs from paying federal income tax, reasoning that members band together for mutual enjoyment, and had they paid money to have fun on their own, the members wouldn't have been liable for income tax. Social clubs can run members-only golf courses and swimming pools, build clubhouses, encourage model railroaders and other hobbyists or even operate yacht clubs. Unlike other tax-exempt organizations, 501(c)(7) tax-exempt clubs need not provide a public service or other community benefit.

If a 501(c)(7) club's money comes entirely from membership dues, it is generally okay with the Internal Revenue Service. However, many clubs are corporations, created under state laws, and corporations can own land, buildings, stock, bank accounts and other assets. In those types of cases, club income from rents, dividends and interest may be subject to federal taxation. In order for a 501(c)(7) tax-exempt club to abide by IRS requirements, a "substantial" amount of the club's activities must further the club's exempt purposes. Generally, no more than 35% of the club's revenues can come from non-member sources.

Additionally, a 501(c)(7) club could be subject to taxation or lose its tax exempt status if it engages in business outside of its exempt purpose or if it receives too much income from non-members. For example, adding a dining room or library to the club's facility may be okay, but adding a gas station, barbershop or liquor store probably is not, even if members' take recreation to mean personal grooming, oil changes and open bar parties.

In a for-profit club, when new members replace old members and (usually) pay higher dues, there's a taxable-income gain to the club. The 501(c)(7) tax-exempt club, however, can avoid that tax. Taxable clubs also must pay Uncle Sam on member assessments, such as when the boiler bursts or the leaky roof needs replacing. Tax-exempt clubs can avoid those levies, too because they may qualify for tax breaks that won't be available to for-profit clubs. Any windfall must be carefully documented and used only for the exempt club's stated purposes.

Most of a tax-exempt club's money should come from membership dues. Rings that derive revenue from purely commercial activities can jeopardize their tax-exempt status, like a Ring-owned theater running an adjacent restaurant or spa.

Clubs that discriminate based on things like race or religion in choosing members can lose their tax-exempt status. Also, it should be noted that the benefits of 501(c)(7) tax exemption flow to the club, not to its members. One difference between 501(c)(7) tax-exempt clubs and traditional charities is that donations to the club, including dues, are not deductible as charitable contributions on the members' individual tax returns. Check state, province, or country regulations for local options.

**INCORPORATING YOUR RING.** Most magic Rings are informal operations with minimal organization; basically a once-a-month social club. There is little-to-no benefit to incorporating such a club. However, as the Ring grows and prospers, you may want to consider incorporating. There are advantages to incorporating.

Corporations are entities unto themselves, shielding individuals involved in the corporation from personal liability while conducting business. If a lawsuit occurs, an individual member's personal assets are not on the line and they cannot be held responsible for a corporation's debt or taxes. The only exception is if a director or manager of a corporation performs unethical, illegal or self-serving behaviors.

For example, if your Ring purchases and maintains a private meeting hall or theater specific legal obligations arise. In a non-corporate Ring, each registered member may be equally liable for injuries sustained in the club facility or caused by club-owned equipment. Incorporation offers protection.

Money changes many things, including the nature of your Ring. Raising money for equipment, education, travel, competitions, and conventions without a formal corporation or non-profit organizational structure can lead your Ring into financially murky waters. For example, when your group raises money, whose money is it? Your Ring president might have to report it on her personal income tax return because she could be seen as the Ring's proprietor. Forming a corporation or a 501(c)(7) non-profit entity to handle the money separates Ring money from personal money.

U.S. incorporated Rings may apply for IRS tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code. Check state, province, or country regulations for local options.

**OPENING CHECKING AND SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.** Banking regulations vary from country to country. Check with your local banker to determine local requirements.

Generally, in the United States, the following information is needed to open accounts for incorporated (formal) and unincorporated (informal) Rings:

**For Incorporated Non-Profit (Formal)**

- I.B.M. Ring Charter
- Certificate of Incorporation
- Employer Identification Number (EIN) from IRS
- Signed Account Resolution or Signature Card
- Proof of Non-Profit Address
- Minutes from staff/board meeting acknowledging account opening, signers and/or changes to account/signers.

**For Unincorporated Non-Profit (Informal)**

- I.B.M. Ring Charter
- Ring Employer Identification Number (EIN) or the Social Security/ Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) of the responsible Ring officer\*
- Signed Account Resolution or Signature Card
- Proof of Non-Profit Address
- Minutes from staff/board meeting acknowledging account opening, signers and/or changes to account/signers.
- Personal Information: In addition, the following personal information is usually required from all signature-authorized officers of the Non-Profit:
- Two (2) Valid IDs (including one photo ID and one with a signature)
- Social Security or EIN number (if applicable)\*
- Proof of Address

\*It is a good idea for U.S. Rings to apply for and use an Employer Identification Number (EIN) for the Ring. This EIN document and number should be protected along with the Ring Charter. Details and the application may be found on the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Similar government identification procedures may apply

in other countries. Check your local tax agency requirement.

**DEVELOPING A BUDGET.** A budget is a written plan for raising and spending money for the Ring. Budgets are usually developed at the beginning of each fiscal year. Ring officers should work with Ring members to set goals for meetings, educational activities, administration expenses, community service projects, youth programs, and other Ring activities.

Typical Ring expenses include:

- Meeting location rental fee
- Meeting décor (Banners, backdrops, signage, etc)
- Refreshments
- Education (Lectures, workshops, etc)
- Field trips and carpool expenses (Neighboring Ring meetings, lectures, conferences, etc)
- Recognition and awards
- Postage
- Printing
- Member and leader orientation & training
- Recruiting
- Fundraising expenses
- Liability insurance

Once you figure out what the Ring wants to do, you can begin to map out how much each year's activities will cost and how the Ring wants to pay for them.

Typical sources of Ring income include:

- Membership dues and fees
- Member participation fees
- Grants
- Donations
- Sponsors

- Raffles (check local laws)
- Fundraisers (Showcases, tag/yard sales, etc)
- Lecture and event admissions
- Branded Kit and Book Sales
- Magic Auction fees

With a complete list of incomes and expenses the Ring officers can create the annual budget. The total estimated income should equal the total estimated expenses producing a balanced budget. If the Ring has any funds that will carry into the next year, these should be listed first followed by income. Expenses are listed after income. If a balance is expected at the end of the year, it should be listed last and carried over into the next year. The final proposed budget should list each specific income or expense along with the source, date, and estimated amount.

Ring members should verify that the proposed budget adequately addresses the cash flow needs of the Ring. Plan fundraising events and dues collection near the beginning of the fiscal year prior to incurring expenses.

When a new Ring treasurer and president is elected, the current treasurer should sit down and go over the Ring's entire financial portfolio and record-keeping system with them. Review recording and reporting procedures, and share tips on budgeting and managing Ring funds. If practical, allow the incoming treasurer to assist with the current treasurer with routine duties before being sworn in. This hands-on transfer of power can prevent future difficulties.

After the last Ring meeting of your fiscal year, ensure that all funds, accounts, records, and any other related materials are successfully and entirely transferred to the new treasurer.

I.B.M. RING 999 BUDGET (Sample)			From JAN 2024 to DEC 2024		
FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD FROM 2023					
ACCOUNT		DETAILS	AMOUNT	NOTES	
Checking		American Bank, 123 Main St, Hometown, NC	\$225.00		
Savings		American Bank, 123 Main St, Hometown, NC	\$400.00		
Petty Cash on Hand		Treasurer's Petty Cash	\$27.00		
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD			\$652.00		
PROJECTED INCOME					
INCOME SOURCE		LINE ITEM	DETAIL	PROJECTED	ACTUAL
Ring Dues			20 Members x \$20 per year	\$400.00	\$480.00
Spring Showcase			200 Tickets @ \$5 Each	\$1,000.00	\$1,055.00
Fall Showcase			200 Tickets @\$5 Each	\$1,000.00	\$925.00
Magic Auction			20% of Avg \$2000 in Sales	\$400.00	\$420.00
Meeting Raffles			Avg \$75 per meeting x 12	\$900.00	\$775.00
Lecture Admission			\$10 per/Avg 15 /4 Lectures	\$600.00	\$780.00
TOTAL PROJECTED 2015 INCOME				\$4,300.00	\$4,435.00
PROJECTED EXPENSES					
EXPENSE		LINE ITEM	DETAIL	PROJECTED	ACTUAL
Meeting Rental		Facility	Free meeting space - no rental	\$0.00	\$0.00
Refreshments		Meeting	\$50 per meeting	\$600.00	\$600.00
Lectures		Education	4 Lectures @ \$300 per	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
Postage		Admin		\$49.00	\$49.00
Supplies		Admin	Paper, Toner, Pens, etc	\$100.00	\$76.00
Printing		Admin	Flyers, Posters, Recruiting	\$200.00	\$125.00
Ring Website		Admin	Hosting per year/Domain	\$125.00	\$125.00
Ring Newsletter		Admin	Email - No Cost	\$0.00	\$0.00
Recognition		Admin	Medals, certs, wands	\$225.00	\$175.00
Spring Showcase		Fundraising	Stage Rental, Promotion, Ins	\$500.00	\$578.00
Fall Showcase		Fundraising	Stage Rental, Promotion, Ins	\$500.00	\$529.00
Annual Banquet		Banquet	Supplement Member Tickets	\$800.00	\$800.00
TOTAL PROJECTED 2015 EXPENSES				\$4,299.00	\$4,257.00
PROJECTED YEAR END				PROJECTED	ACTUAL
2014 Funds Carried Forward				\$652.00	\$652.00
Add Projected Income				\$4,300.00	\$4,435.00
Total Projected Income				\$4,952.00	\$5,087.00
Subtract Projected Expenses				\$4,299.00	\$4,257.00
Projected 2025 Funds Carried Forward				\$653.00	\$830.00

## RING LECTURE WORKSHEET

Lectures may be one of the most common high-ticket expenses on a Ring's Balance Sheet. The following format simplifies tracking lecture income and expenses. Form created by Michael DeSorbo, Ring #199 (Raleigh, NC) Ring President 2015-16.

Ring Lecture Worksheet		
DATE		
LECTURER		
ADULT MEMBER ADMISSION PRICE	\$	
YOUTH MEMBER ADMISSION PRICE	\$	
NONMEMBER ADMISSION PRICE	\$	
TOTAL NUMBER OF ATTENDEES		
FREE MEMBER ATTENDEES		
PAID MEMBER ATTENDEES		
PAID GUEST/NONMEMBER ATTENDEES		
TOTAL INCOME	\$	
ATTENDANCE	\$	
CONCESSIONS	\$	
OTHER	\$	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$
LECTURER FEE		\$
HOTEL		\$
MARKETING		\$
ROOM CHARGE		\$
OTHER		\$
SUBTRACT TOTAL EXPENSE FROM TOTAL INCOME		
NET INCOME/LOSS		\$

## CLUB HISTORIAN



Early in my military career, a supervising sergeant showed me his daily journals. He never missed a day and the stories dated back to his involvement in the Korean conflict and the early days of Viet Nam. Each page listed the names of people he'd met or worked with, duty and posting assignments, their connection to him, and anecdotes that led to laughter, tears, and a few unanswered questions. Photographs glued to the pages

included vital details. Sketches clarified combat encounters. Old documents, airline and train tickets, leave forms, pay statements, and USO flyers offered an intriguing peek into his life. He documented the weather, his moods, his successes, and his failures. I began my own journal that day and fifty years later these volumes have been a blessing when I try to recall a certain name, event, or memory. It's something that I hope future generations may read with a bit of wonder.

This is the power held by a club historian.

This executive committee position is one of the most overlooked and underutilized positions in most magic clubs. The truth is that the club historian is one of the most important, toughest, and demanding positions in any club. They are the keepers of a club's memory. They collect and organize photographs, articles, and other historical artifacts that preserve the club's story.

The best historians share a creative blend of club photographer, filmmaker, interviewer, director, storyteller, cataloguer, and researcher dedicated to preserving the club's past and present for the future. These efforts connect present members with a club's values, traditions, and achievements. They foster a sense of camaraderie and pride.

Historians provide valuable insights into the evolution of the club over time. A skilled historian can identify patterns, trends, and lessons from the past that may affect current concerns, projects, and decisions. Current club leaders may make informed choices and avoid repeating past mistakes by examining and understanding the successes and failures of previous generations.

Each club event offers potential milestones and stories that may mean little to us today but may stand out as key moments for future generations. Historians work closely with the club's executive committee to track, record, and store these events. They ensure that someone takes photographs and videos of all club events. They carefully document the date, time, and location, names of individuals portrayed in each photo, video, and interview. Don't forget to add positions held within the club, the magic community, and the local community. It won't do you any good to display photos fifty years from now if you have no clue as to who is in the photo or the story behind it. If you have a collection of old photos or films, pull them out today, sit down with your older members, and begin this identification process! Don't delay! I promise that you will regret it if you put it off.

Storytelling is a vital part of connecting a club's past with its future. How many clubs have lost the wisdom and anecdotes of older members upon their passing? I spent hours listening to Warren Stephens, Bev Bergeron, Buffalo Bob Smith, Phil Willmarth, and Joe Lefler recall personal encounters and hilarious anecdotes with other very well-known celebrities. My mistake, to my lasting shame, was not recording these hours for future generations of magicians. These stories create a real connection with past generations for our younger members. The tales transform names that are little more than a line from a book or the title of a sleight into flesh and blood beings. We rely on our historians to record and preserve these stories with in-depth interviews before it is too late! We can't know where we're going if we don't know where we've been!

Our historians remind the executive committee of upcoming milestones and other important dates. They take a guiding role in planning anniversary celebrations ensuring that milestones are honored in a meaningful and historically accurate way. Celebrating these vital events forms a lasting legacy for future generations and preserves a club's rich traditions and heritage. The inherent publicity potential with these events can enhance a club's marketing efforts, attracting new members, fans, and sponsors.

Ideally, historians will maintain an annual scrapbook, one for each calendar year. These scrapbooks may consist of a simple collection of material in a standard flat file box, bound paper scrapbooks, or scanned digital files stored in a shareable medium with multiple backups. It depends on your historian's level of skill, creativity, and budget.

Include all significant documents connected with the club such as charters,

recruiting flyers, business cards, club advertisements, club member rosters and sign-in sheets, newsletters, *Linking Ring* reports, media news coverage, correspondence, meeting minutes, committee reports, event programs, event tickets, lecture reviews, recorded interviews, streamed meeting files, and photos. Record all officer nominations, elections, and committee appointments. Keep track of contest winners, prizes, honors earned, etc. Record the dates that a member joins and departs. Create an "In Memoria" feature for members who have passed. The important thing is to collect keepsakes that club members can look back on.

Maintain a "Hall of Fame" for members who have attained a level of recognition with the magic, local, or national community. Include past club officers, lecturers, pro performers, authors, and such. My Raleigh NC club includes four Past International Presidents, several internationally known lecturers, performers and authors, Academy of Magical Arts Fellows, and more. Recognizing these star members enhances the club's prestige.

The creative historian will maintain an attractive display of key items for regular meetings and special occasions. Key items may include news reports, the club charter, awards, and community recognition earned by the club, special recognition earned by club members, photos from previous events, and so on.

Club historians ensure that we remember and honor our club's legacy. They provide valuable insights into its evolution over time. Preserving our history and stories is a key element to our future growth. Start preserving these treasures today!



"When I was 9 or 10, I had a ten-cent business: I would walk your dog for a dime, go to the store for a dime, empty your garbage for a dime - and then I could use the money to buy tricks at the magic store."

Lily Tomlin

## THE CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Orchestras rely on their conductor to choose a score, set the tempo, monitor and guide the disparate “voices” into a harmonious blend, and shape the music’s phrasing. Without a skilled conductor’s direction, the most accomplished orchestras would quickly devolve into an ear-crushing cacophony of discordant noise.

Stage performers gain this same attention to detail from the theater director. Directors routinely oversee such choices as actor roles, character development, costuming, hair & make-up design, lighting, music, blocking and script adjustments. A good director draws out the best of each performance from everyone involved.

Have you considered creating a panel with a leading creative director to mentor and improve each member’s creative efforts? Many of us perform creative pieces during our club meetings. Very few receive honest and experienced guidance on improving these works. This is an idea worthy of consideration.

If you’re a birthday or restaurant magician, clown, comedian, balloon artist, puppeteer, or juggler, you’re probably thinking that a creative director isn’t for you. Please think again. I watched Max Howard carefully transform a top children’s magician into a heart-tugging powerhouse over the course of a few days.

Regardless of how you entertain, we all create an artist/audience dynamic with each effect we perform, each joke we set up, and each balloon we twist. Audiences judge every facet of our performance as they decide how to react. No matter how strong the effect, the most considerate spectator will quickly shy away from a constant stream of umms, uhs, okays, gonnas, and other nervous fidgets. The simplest birthday party magicians to the most complex stage illusionists can all benefit from an external review of presentations.

The simple truth is that we can’t fix what we can’t see! While rehearsing, our focus is generally on the effect’s patter and mechanics. When we perform, we add



audience reaction to this mix. These factors often blind us to the flaws or potential improvements in our acts. This truth demands an external pair of experienced eyes cataloguing our verbal and physical flaws from the spectator’s point of view. This is where a skilled and knowledgeable creative director comes in!

Great directors force us to see ourselves through our spectator’s eyes. They see the potential flash and fatal flaws in each performance. Their practiced eye spots poor blocking, extraneous patter and the common physical and verbal tics that plague far too many acts. If we’re willing, they can help us identify and remedy behaviors that distract or repulse an audience. Bottom line, a director can help us improve our creative projects and tell the story we are trying to share.

In spite of the suspiciously similar spelling, directors are not dictators. Directors are leaders who create a cooperative environment. They push artists to reach inside themselves and stretch beyond their self-limiting boundaries. Creative directors may consult with members openly during meetings as a learning experience for everyone or privately to protect sensitive egos or routines.

Even so, working with a director is not always easy. They may question the motivation behind each word and action. They may advise replacing a routine, rewriting a script, or adjusting your stage persona. They may encourage you to scrap your current stage character and create something entirely new and radical because the old one just isn’t working. They may very well push you and your act into a direction you never considered or don’t immediately understand. Suppressing our egos and submitting to the guidance of a skilled director can easily elevate our performances to a level we never thought possible.

We must grant our director the authority to override our own very personal creative vision. We may disagree with a suggestion, but we must open our minds and thoroughly test each proposal before declining. For many performers, the inability to compromise creative control is a difficult and damaging flaw.

A good director will ask ego-bruising questions about your act. Why is that line in your script? How does this line explain your action? Does your action fit the line? Is the patter too drawn out or confusing? What was the intent of that gesture? Does that action jive with your performance character? What emotions are you trying to evoke?

This attention to fine detail separates us from those magicians who just "do tricks." Directors pull us away from thinking that the object of magic is to fool our



audience. (Hint: It isn't). Working closely with a good director can transform a mere trick into a shared theatrical experience that connects with your audience.

Member connections may include hair stylists, tailors, carpenters, graphic artists, musicians, electricians, and other external artisans vital to the growth and success of a magician. A creative director leading a panel can recruit, track, and recommend these skilled artists for the club.

Where does one look for a skilled director? Look within your own club! If your club lacks a skilled director, recruiting a skilled and well-established performer who has worked with a skilled director is a good start. Check for a drama or theater department at local universities or high schools. If the school offers a Directing MFA, grad students may be intrigued by a fresh new challenge. High school drama teachers may be willing to lend their support in return for assistance with their own productions.

I hear you thinking! "Bring an outsider into our magic act? What about our secrets!" Read my lips – No One Cares! A skilled director could care less about your precious secrets. If you're a paranoid mess or have tens of thousands of dollars wrapped up in some super-imaginative effect, ask the director to sign a legal nondisclosure agreement. The fact is that an accomplished director is more laser focused on the best way to present your effect and achieve the desired reaction than on tipping your precious secrets.

Appointing a creative director to guide serious members through the egocentric creative minefield can be the difference between a "WOW!" and an "Eh!" audience experience. Appointing a volunteer panel to work with the director adds even more. Consider appointing a club creative director at your next club meeting!



"I've worked ever since I was  
a kid with a two-bit kit of  
magic tricks trying to  
improve my skills at  
entertaining whatever public  
I had – and to make myself  
ready, whenever the breaks  
came, to entertain a wider  
and more demanding  
public."

Johnny Carson

## CLUB INTEGRITY



How do we measure the health of our clubs? Not unlike a thermometer, the rise and fall of our membership numbers is a gauge of our club's health. Civic and social clubs traditionally experience a fifteen-to-twenty-percent member turnover each year. The primary reasons a member may leave includes conflicting activities, a loss of interest, health or financial problems, problems at home, work, or school, evening or weekend jobs, or they simply move away. The most common reason for leaving is because the club no longer serves their personal needs.

In many cases, club leaders simply drift away from meeting the shifting needs of their members. Imagine visiting a business that shows little interest in the customer's needs and expectations. Would you stay with such a business or would you quickly move to a more attentive competitor? This same model applies to our magic and youth clubs.

What does it take to build and maintain a club or organization that draws people in rather than driving them away?

**Create an identity.** Energized members of a healthy club readily share their experiences with others. Offer club branded items like certificates, shirts, pins, binders, and folders to spark these conversations. Host fun "Friends & Family" events. Help members establish a strong presence across the popular social media platforms. For youth members, suggest magic-themed school topics for term papers and reports covering history, math, science, speech, drama, and other classes. Give members something to talk about!

**Be inclusive.** Magic is a universal artform. It easily crosses language, cultural, and social barriers. It allows members to build bonds of fellowship, develop decision-making skills, explore performance identities, participate as a valued member of a structured group, and advance within the art of magic. Use your club to open doors and explore multicultural connections.

**Positive leadership.** Leaders set the club's tone. They model the desired style of leadership and gently guide students through their personal growth. Strong adult

leaders ensure the safety of each student, inspire students to push steadily forward, and provide a stable platform for student growth.

**Youth leadership.** Give youth members a say in the club's activities. Build skilled leaders from the ground up. Teens appreciate and respond to adult guidance, but they also need to feel empowered to develop and follow their own paths. Actively invite shy or reticent members to step up and share the mantle of responsibility. To avoid leader burnout or dominance, spread responsibilities and tasks among all members.

Conduct a youth member skill and interest survey. What style of magic are they most interested in? What activities or skills outside of magic appeal to them? Do your students include budding writers, website designers, artists, carpenters, dancers, or actors? Would an occasional break from lessons to enjoy a professional sporting, picnic or theater event be of interest?

**Ring resources.** Conduct a resource survey of adult Ring members and parents. This inventory may include specific skills, knowledge, contacts, facilities, field trip options, and general logistic support. Update the inventory every six months and make it available to your adult and youth leaders to simplify planning.

**Involve parents and families.** Encourage parents to participate in club activities whenever possible. You may suggest that they serve as adult consultants, provide transportation or equipment, serve as chaperones, provide youth counseling, or assist with project planning. Let parents know that they are always welcome to join or observe club events. Welcoming parents helps to guarantee a safe environment for our youth.

**Be consistent and predictable.** The ease with which leaders set aside or reschedule meetings is a major failing. If we set sessions for the first and third Monday of each month, then we need to stick to that schedule. Change it solely in case of common travel holidays and major emergencies. If you cannot hold a session for some reason, consider posting an online video or live web session. Hosting regular and reliable sessions keeps interest high.

**Recognize achievement.** We reinforce learning by recognizing individual and team achievements. Young and adult members crave approval and recognition for their achievements. This recognition can take the form of a thumbs-up gesture responding to a question to a tiered advancement program featuring certificates, lapel pins or display wands.

**Maintain a progressive program.** Plan programs that maintain interest and meet the objectives of your club. Keep business to a minimum. Focus on educational and challenging activities that are fun, light and model personal and group growth.

**Model Problem Solving.** The way we teach members, especially our younger members, to work through problems and make choices will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Stay alert for opportunities to help members apply constructive decision-making skills. Demonstrate stepping back, taking a deep breath and calmly brainstorming solutions to stressful problems. Model the power found in working as a team or asking for help when needed. Guide them toward routinely reaching the single best option for their group.

**Reflection.** Encourage members to adapt the lessons of past experiences to present or future situations. Do this by asking questions that help them think things through. Did all members participate? Was anyone left out or pushed aside? How did club members influence the contributions of others? How were disagreements resolved? What evaluation skills did we use? How did we reach our decisions? Did the plan cover all situations adequately?

Building and maintaining a successful club identity takes planning and effort. It takes a dedicated team sharply focused on the needs and expectations of the members. The future success of your club depends heavily upon you.



"You're dead if you aim only for  
kids. Adults are only kids grown  
up, anyway."

Walt Disney

## OUR PUBLIC IMAGE



For better or worse, every Ring is a Brand. Marketing innovator David Ogilvy defines a brand as a consumer's perception of a product, service, experience, or organization. This public image has the power to define our Rings as fun and energetic or archaic and out-of-touch - or worse. Considering the very stiff competition for new members and supporting sponsors among local service clubs, creating and maintaining a strong and positive public brand is vital to Ring survival and growth.

**Consider your favorite coffee shop.** When we think of them, we generally recall soft music, a clean and well-organized store, friendly greetings, heady aromas, bold flavors, and the relaxing tones of quiet chatter. This is their brand. Contrast this with Morning Mud's poor or absent greeting, the rancid smell of burnt coffee, and a vacant echoing room cluttered with dirty tables. You have two completely different experiences connected with two unique brands. Which one would you choose?

**Our brand needs to remain fresh and current.** Coca Cola, for example, started out as 'The Great National Temperance Beverage.' That's a far cry from their current 'Real Magic' image. We face a constant struggle in balancing our public image to attract younger members and keep our skilled older members. The chant of "we can't abandon our traditions" often stifles this effort before it starts. Some clubs just can't seem to push through this sluggish barrier to examine and update their public image.

Another obstacle is the reality that new members will irreversibly shift the social dynamic of any club. Our more settled members may resist such change, however, if you want your club to prosper, change is unavoidable.

**Every group is shaped by its own DNA.** A club's DNA forms around the way individual members engage with one another. This DNA is formed around mutual trust and a sense of belonging to a valued group. The mere act of adding a new member changes the social dynamic of any group. Each new member presents fresh ideas, skills and network connections. Adapting to these changes ensures

that our public brand remains fresh and inviting.

**Coasting members.** A third all-too-common obstacle is the fact that the same few people struggle to keep the club alive while the bulk of the members just coast along. Mediocre clubs result when members are subliminally allowed to take little more than a passive interest in their club. They're willing to participate in the workshops, lectures and auctions but are generally disinterested in fundraisers, social, volunteer events or anything that requires genuine effort. Gently challenging passive members to become more active boosts our public brand.

Even the best officers can develop a form of tunnel vision. They fail to see the negatives in their brand and see no reason to rock the boat. Surveying members and nonmembers can help with this "everything's fine" myopia. We must understand the goals and interests of our members before we can consider what, if any, changes may be needed. How do we want our club to be perceived by our target market? How do we want to be perceived by the person who is considering joining our club?

Encourage members to think about what makes your club different from other local service clubs. Are we more modern? Are we edgier? What makes us stand out? What do we offer? What do we expect in return?

**Try this discovery exercise.** Hand members a few sheets of bond paper and markers. Move around the room and ask each person to say and write down in large letters a single adjective describing what he or she expects from the Ring. One word per sheet! Repeat until we have thirty or forty notes. Use painter's tape to stick the sheets of paper onto a wall.

Choose an adjective and move it to a side wall. Invite members to select words with a similar meaning and move them to form a common group. For example, the words 'Trusted,' and 'Reliable' may form a new group. 'Creative,' 'Imaginative' and 'Innovative' might begin a new group and so on. Move any leftover adjectives that don't fit into their own unique group.

Great brands are focused, and focus requires decisions. The members must now select one adjective from each word group that they feel best describes that group. For example, from the group 'Modern,' 'Forward-thinking,' 'Progressive,' and 'Youthful', members might choose 'Progressive' to best define the entire grouping. Move these selected words back to the front wall.

You will ideally end up with a list of ten or so key words that your members feel best define their image of their Ring. Begin an in-depth discussion as to whether your Ring's current practices are in line with these key words. If not, what do you need to change?

Break away from the old magic guild image. Broaden your social reach by rebranding your club as a community service organization rather than a private and secretive magicians' cabal. Adopt a children's home, charity, or hospital ward. Transforming our brand into a fun and energetic community service club creates a stronger public presence, unlocks new sponsors, and attracts new and younger proactive members. It gives us a whole new reason for existing beyond a chair-bound social hour around a deck of cards.

Our brains are designed to spend as few mental calories as possible filtering the worthy from the unworthy. We have a natural inclination to label things as Exciting, Intriguing, Hmmm and Trash. If our brand fails to define who we are in a way that encourages people place us under one of the first two labels, we have set ourselves up to be bypassed and forgotten. Stand out! Be unique! Be exciting and fun! Be a club that people brag about to their friends and new members will stand in line to join! Build your brand!



"I loved theatre and did magic, too, but I was never the best at it - there was never a teacher saying, 'You're great, you have to make this your career!' I was good at science and math. I figured I'd go into science and become a dentist."

Nathan Fielder



## LEADERSHIP IS A TWO-WAY STREET



Generating member involvement is key to any successful organization, but leaders often forget that this is a two-way street. What does your club leadership do to engage with members on their turf?

Involvement is a vital part of being a club member. Members volunteer for committees. Members provide the club's talent, knowledge, and labor. Members serve in leadership roles. Members participate in local meetings and events. Members

offer specific skill sets as mentors and lecturers. Members review products and performances. Members fund the club's programs. Just keep filling in the blank: "*Members \_\_\_\_\_*." The need for member involvement within a club is endless and vital.

Closer examination exposes a common one-sided and club-centric point of view. The goal of club leadership is to entice each member to renew their membership, support the club, and contribute to the club's health and growth. The "*Members \_\_\_\_\_*" list acknowledges this, but where is the "*Leadership \_\_\_\_\_*" list? What do members expect from their club leaders in return?

True powerhouse leaders empower their members with "*Our club provides \_\_\_\_\_*". Our club negotiates a generous discount at the local or online magic shop. Our new club members are inducted with a ceremonial wand and certificate. Our club provides carpools or ride sharing to and from meetings. Our club offers quality and affordable apparel, business, and gift items bearing our logo. Our club aids members who can't afford their dues. Our club puts concern for each member first and foremost. Our club puts people above profit and peer support above ego.

Clubs that deliver the broken record demand of "Give! Give! Give!" while offering little in return soon begin losing members at an alarming rate. When club dues and services benefit a very select clique within a club, members left watching from the outside will gradually move on. Consider this. If your club uses club funds to host an annual conference or workshop and fewer than 10% of your members

participate, you're ignoring 90% of your members. Every club member has the absolute right to expect access to club privileges, recognition, and programs commensurate with what the club leadership asks from them.

For instance, does your club leadership post a daily – or at least weekly – item of general interest to the club's Facebook, X, and Instagram pages? If the only leadership posts and emails we ever see promote a club event, push ticket sales, or guilt members into volunteering, there's a problem.

Do your club leaders send out an informative and entertaining newsletter each month? Do club leaders seek out free or heavily discounted offers from international vendors and service providers—without strings? How many lecturers or dealers might agree to a free download copy of their lecture notes from two years ago to attract new customers?

Do your club leaders alert you to special television or local magic programs? Do they maintain an informative website that appeals to new prospects or clients? Do your club leaders share leads for paying or beneficial promotional gigs with club members or do they keep the choice offers for themselves?

Do your club leaders provide workshop opportunities for members to improve their performance, marketing, and business skills? Do they consistently recognize member birthdays, induction anniversaries, and personal achievements? In this digital age, it is so easy to create databases and preset announcements for later release. Failing to recognize the individual achievements of members is the top failing of indifferent club leadership.

Not sure where your club stands? Ask yourself, do our members view their membership renewal notices as another bill to pay or as an opportunity to dive into another exciting year with the club? Do your renewal notices suggest "It's that time again – Pay up!" or do they sell the member on the exciting new year ahead? Perspective is everything!

No club leader should ever take member enthusiasm for granted. The best leaders reward enthusiastic members by showing them that they were heard and that their feedback matters.

How many club leaders physically poll their members? To be truly member centric, club boards must rely on member interests in all major strategic decisions and core processes. Spot checks indicate that this is rarely the case. A random

survey of ten U.S. Rings revealed that only two of the ten has conducted a formal member preference and skill poll within the past year. How can a club prosper when the leaders are guessing at the needs of their members, or worse, injecting their own personal image of the club's goals ahead of those held by the members?

In his book *Good to Great* (2001), Jim Collins cites 5 elements of member centric associations:

**Culture.** Understanding the needs and expectations of the members.

**Metrics.** Tracking and responding to member derived data that defines success through their eyes.

**Knowledge.** Collecting, sharing, and meeting the challenges, needs and expectations of members.

**Technology.** Using methods such as surveys, social media, and databases to collect, share, and deliver information to all members in a timely manner.

**Segmentation.** Developing profiles of and understanding specific segments of members to address their unique expectations. Not all members share the same goals, needs, or levels of skill.

Adapting these elements into your club's leadership role can make the difference between growth and dissolution.

Is your club making member engagement a two-way street? Think back on recent leadership meetings. How often were member insights or polls used to reach an informed decision? What benefits are leaders sending to the members in return for their service to the club?

Failing clubs need to pull their heads out of the elite-member-driven model and refocus on their mission of serving all members. Leaders and members alike must ask what specifically is our club trying to accomplish? What is our primary mission? If that member-driven mission is being pushed aside for any purpose other than full member support, your club has a problem.

In the oft-quoted words of hockey great Wayne Gretzky, leaders who listen closely to their members will have the club "skating to where the puck is going, not to where it's been." Where is your club headed?



"Magic touches people in the way great art does. It lets them see the world with new eyes."

Drummond Money-Coutts



## CLUB LEADERSHIP

### BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL CLUB

**Secure a Stationary Meeting Location.** Members are more likely to attend if you have a regular meeting location. Changing meeting locations each month can be confusing. For new smaller groups, a member's home may suffice. As the Ring grows, you may want to seek a larger facility. A local church, library, school, retirement center, community center, YMCA, or restaurant may have just what you're looking for. Some may be willing to barter a complimentary show once or twice a year in exchange for use of the space.

**Make a Good First Impression.** Those first few minutes count when prospective members first walk into your meeting. If prospects see poor or no planning, constant bickering, drawn-out business meetings, and indifferent members, they are likely to walk out and never return.

**Run Your Ring Like a Business.** One of our most common mistakes is viewing social clubs differently from a business. Accept that your Ring is, in fact, a business. You offer products or services. You hope to attract customers within an established market. You rely heavily on your leaders and workers to make it happen. You are in competition with countless other recreational, social, service, and educational entities within your market.

As with any business, if your Ring is simply gliding along with the same meetings, projects, and fundraisers year after year with no drive to improve or make a bigger impact, you are courting failure. Businesses that consistently fail ignore their competitors, neglect the demands of their customers, allow customer service and product quality to lapse, and fall short on changing or improving over time. Social clubs around the world embrace this foolish behavior and, just as foolishly, expect a different outcome.

**Look Ahead.** Train your officers to answer a well-defined set of questions when planning for each new year. For example:

1. How will we know if our Ring is doing a good job?
2. Who are our customers? What are their needs? What are their wants? How do we meet these demands? How will we know if we



are meeting these demands?

3. What standards are our leaders being held to?
4. What do we expect from our members? Will we allow people to do the bare minimum (or less) and still call themselves members? Will we hold everyone to specific standards of performance?
5. How are we helping members learn, grow, and make an impact within the Ring?

If your Ring has room for some improvement in these areas, consider taking the following actions:

First, discuss and agree on a unified vision of success. Be as specific as possible. "We will do fundraisers" is less specific than, "We will raise at least \$5,000 for juvenile diabetes." "We will increase membership" is less specific than, "We will increase active membership by 20%."

Next, brainstorm and agree on the projects, initiatives, and changes that you need to accomplish these goals.

Finally, ask each member which item on the objective list above they are most interested in working on for the remainder of the year. Ask them to volunteer for that focused committee or subgroup.

Now, instead of one large group that meets monthly, you have several goal oriented teams intensely focused on meeting the club's objectives. They can meet and interact with whatever frequency they need. Your monthly Ring meeting becomes a check-in for each subgroup.

**Quality or Quantity?** This is an age old question. Should we be selective in accepting members to maintain Ring quality, or should we open the doors to any and all comers in fellowship and welcome? The fascinating point behind the quantity vs. quality debate is that people assume the two terms are mutually exclusive. People tend to focus on the conjunction OR, as in "We can go for either quality OR quantity."

But it doesn't have to be that way. Some Rings strive for quality to improve their own skills and advance the image of the art. Other Rings push for quantity to promote fellowship and community service. We don't need to choose between the two terms. What if every Ring worked toward a Quantity *OF* Quality. Let's

break this down.

Focusing on member quantity insures greater fellowship, more future leaders, greater artistic diversity, a stronger community service force, and a stronger treasury. A quantity driven focus improves a club's chances for basic survival at the price of accepting lower standards of membership.

On the other hand, focusing on member quality insures higher standards, focused sharing, fewer inactive members, and enhanced advancement of membership skills and knowledge. However, this approach bears a high price in fewer members and lesser club growth.

Smart club leaders seek the common ground between the two objectives. Open your doors to members genuinely passionate about the art of magic. Seek and recruit members of quality and use them to raise the standards of the lesser experienced members. Reach beyond basic survival and build a club that promotes quality from the bottom up and the top down.

Consider creating a multi-tier system of recognition. For example, novice and new members enter on the lowest club level. Active members with a year of active attendance and completion of a set number of club performances, presentations, reviews, or club support functions rise to the second tier. Active members with three or more years of active attendance, maintain their level of participation, and have served in at least one leadership or committee chair position rise to the third tier. Active members with five or more years of active attendance, maintain their level of participation, have served in a senior leadership position, and have presided over a set of advanced workshops, lectures, public performances, or community projects rise to the top tier. Each advancement is recognized with a certificate, pin, medal, or other visible form of acknowledgement. This idea actively promotes the quantity of quality concept.

**Develop your Club's Reach.** Reach is very important in business. Reach is the ability to touch various aspects of your community. It is that most vital strength found in social and business-to-business networking. When recruiting members, look beyond their interest in magic and examine their community reach. A prospective member associated with a local theater group has the ability to reach vital facilities, directors, choreographers, tech staff, stagecraft, training and more. A member associated with a local high school or college has the ability to reach young prospective members.

Members with the greatest reach tend to make quality members. They are more likely to be people who get involved and are comfortable moving through a variety of social and business circles.

Successful Rings attract and retain those members with the greatest reach. Members with reach have the ability and desire to make things happen. This energy creates a positive environment that attracts like minded members. This self nurturing cycle promotes growth and success. Explore and utilize the reach of your members.

**Create a Concrete Plan.** Plan your Ring meeting in blocks. For example, set a very short 5-10 minute block for business followed by blocks for new member presentations, member performances, themed teach-in or mini lecture, breakout subgroups, and a social mix & chat.

Ideally, the Ring Vice President or Presentaton Chair should reach out to members during each meeting and ask them to commit to performing, lecturing, or presenting for the next meeting. Follow this up with a phone call, text, or email one week before the next meeting. Follow up again with a phone call, text, or email the day before the meeting.

**Set a Theme.** Setting a presentation theme for each meeting enhances creativity. Themes are discussed in greater detail [here](#). Themes challenge members to use the materials, knowledge, and props at hand to meet present something new. This energy translates into excited attendees and fresh ideas. While themes provide a central focus to each meeting, grant members the freedom to deviate from the theme. Not everyone enjoys venturing outside of their box!

**Formalize your Meetings for the Fun of It.** Ceremony is part of our lives. Consider opening each meeting with an official token gesture such as ringing a handbell three times and placing the President's Ceremonial Wand onto a decorative pedestal or stand. This tells members that it's time to settle and get down to business. Close the meeting by ringing the handbell once and ceremoniously returning the wand to its protective case. You might open each meeting with a recitation of the Magician's Oath or calling upon the spirits of magicians past to guide and watch over your members.

**Trial & Error.** Like a quality magic act, we use trial & error to identify and refine the bits that are worth keeping and promptly ditch those that are not. It is important to systematically track these trials so that future officers can study

those that worked and avoid those that failed.

Add each trial, adjustment, and result to your Program & Policy Manual. When a new president is sworn in, require the outgoing president to sit with them for a joint review of your Program & Policy Manual. The new president may have a different direction in mind for the club, however, the wise leader will use these past trials, errors, and successes as a guide for future success.

**Train Your Leaders.** Regular leadership changes provide opportunities for core members to tackle new roles. It is vital that these new leaders understand their roles. The simplest method of training new leaders is through involvement on various active committees before entering the Ring officer ranks. This gives Ring members a chance to identify those who truly care about the club and have the skills necessary to push the club forward.

Ring officers should include committee members in the executive committee process. As the hard workers and the true supporters of the club are identified, officers should begin mentoring them to assume a more active leadership role in the club.

When new officers are elected, the outgoing officers must make time to sit with their replacements and fully familiarize them with each component and obligation of the job. Officer Continuity Binders for each officer detailing every aspect of the position are highly recommended. Include a registry page in the front of each book listing the names of previous officers and their period of service. This creates an important historical record and gives current officers a list of whom they may turn to for guidance and assistance.

**Ring Mini-Conferences.** If you are fortunate enough to have other Rings or magic clubs within a 1-to-4 hour drive of your Ring, consider hosting a quarterly or semiannual Ring Mini-Conference. Invite the clubs to your area for a full day of fellowship, magic sharing, and entertainment once each quarter or at least twice a year. Invite one of these clubs to host the next conference in their hometown.

If you can work each conference around a professional lecture or magic workshop, even better. The goal is to promote a stronger bond through magic with other magicians across your state, province, or region.

Area hotels will offer room discounts with bulk registrations. These same hotels may offer a complimentary conference room with “X” number of room bookings.

Visiting club attendees can cut costs by sharing rooms.

If club members from other areas remain overnight, provide a fun evening of fellowship. Set a great host the example and the next hosting club will likely do the same.

**Special Interest Groups (SIG).** Strong leaders recognize that member skill levels and interests cover a wide spectrum. Mastering a ball vase routine is as much a milestone to a novice as a perfect muscle pass is to the advanced coin artist. Overlooking these differences can drive novice and experienced members away. Only by maintaining the passion for magic on all levels can we weave these diverging tastes into a cohesive club experience.

The Ren Clark Ring #15 of Fort Worth, Texas, has accomplished this through the creation of Special Interest Groups (SIG). These groups are essentially small clinics focused on a specialized segment of magic. SIGs meet either at the end of regular meetings or independently on separate nights.

To keep SIGs active in the general club, encourage them to routinely present brief lecturates on some aspect of their special interest before the entire club. Clubs may also form SIGs into expert panels for club-wide demonstrations, discussions, and teach-ins. SIG members benefit by having their specialty recognized and the club benefits through the expansion of knowledge and experience.

Expert panels may also be convened to provide one-on-one critiques of member performances and routine development. Be careful here as uninvited and negative critiques can destroy a club. Keep all critiques positive and supportive. Avoid negative evaluations that lack a positive solution. Most importantly, the panel members must keep an open mind and understand that their methods are not necessarily the best or only solution for every peer. An appointed panel leader conducts the affair and may ask for questions, suggestions, or comments from the spectators.

Consider recognizing SIG members who achieve specific milestones. For example, cloisonné pins may be awarded to recognize levels of achievement in specific segments of magic. Special pins may be awarded to members who qualify for SIG “Instructor” or “Mentor” status.

The Ren Clark Ring #15 recognized an issue with new and beginner members feeling uncomfortable around the more experienced members of their Ring. In

response, they created a New Member SIG. The first half of the clinic is a round table discussion on how the club works, magical ethics, earning recognition from other magicians, the theory of conjuring, and so on. This should be an open discussion format during which every person has a chance to raise a question or to voice an opinion.

The second half of the clinic focuses on preparing the new member's introductory presentation. The emphasis is on building the new member's confidence and offering positive advice on offering the best possible experience for the new member and the club. All criticism is constructive and positive in nature and aimed at calming the new member's fears and concerns over their presentation before the club for full membership.

SIGs can also be a very effective recruiting tool. Ring members may work with the local magic shop, high schools, community colleges, or senior community centers to generate weekly magic lesson SIGs or workshops. Don't underestimate the attraction of Magic for Grandparents SIGs! Two or more members should team up to insure that adequate support is available for hands-on instruction. These SIGs can generate a steady flow of new members for the Ring.

SIGs held on separate nights from the general meeting make it possible for those who can't attend the general meeting to still participate in the club. Be careful that these SIGs do not devolve into cliques that abandon the club and discriminate against other members. SIGs must enhance the club experience, not replace it. Encourage SIG members to remain active and supportive of the general meetings.

**Abolish or Minimize Politics and Other Divisive Topics.** We must face this truth—Anyone who enjoys speaking or performing in front of any group is likely to have a strong ego. Strong egos often lead to strong differences in opinion, politics, and procedures.

When handled through open minds and free discussion, this may not be an issue. However, when disagreements become personal and divisive they can polarize a club and rip it apart. The most common Ring issues tend to revolve around leadership differences, the unauthorized use or duplication of a member's personal image, routine, or gear design, and uninvited criticism of a performance or presentation.

An impartial grievance committee or club mediators may be created to promptly hear and rule on divisive complaints or concerns. Don't wait until a divisive issue

reaches a level that members feel their only recourse is to abandon the club.

**Delegate Responsibility and Solicit Active Support.** There is a lot going on here. Managing a Ring and keeping the excitement level high takes a dedicated team. The Ring president must delegate various responsibilities as broadly as possible. Involved members are active members. Use positive invitations to recruit delegates rather than cold directives. Delegation of club tasks is a valuable means of bolstering a strong core membership.

**New Member Presentations.** We recommend that new members be required to demonstrate their preferred skill or experience before the club as soon as possible as a prelude to their entry into the fellowship. Such demonstrations break the ice, build confidence, and help the new member to establish a rapport with the other Ring members. It boosts them toward that first step to a higher skill level. It may also help them earn recognition and acceptance within their preferred Special Interest Group.

We prefer the term "presentation" over "performance" here because not every prospective member is a performer. The interests of collectors, builders, inventors, authors, and magic enthusiasts are as vital to a successful Ring as those of any performer. As such, they must be considered on a level equal to the performing magician.

A member with an interest in the history of magic, for example, may prefer to give a 10-minute discourse on some phase of conjuring history. A collector may offer a brief display of valued items from his collection. A magic assistant may offer his or her perspective on this vital role. A magic enthusiast may simply share the memory of the event that led him to learn more about magic.

Remember that to promote an active and interested membership, this should not be a test of skills. Rather, be flexible and celebrate the differences among your members.

**Maintain a Strong Core Membership.** Every club has a core of loyal steadfast members. These are the members we can count on to volunteer, be proactive, and do whatever it takes to help the club prosper. This core membership is the backbone of your Ring. Other members will sort of drift in and out on the periphery of your Ring. Every member should be treated as the valued constituent they are, but strong leaders will work to build and maintain a large, healthy core.

A Ring must have enough enthusiastic members at its core so that if one, two, or more of the most active members are missing from a meeting, everything that is supposed to happen still comes off without a hitch. The minimum critical number is two, but relying solely on those two leaves room for failure. Your dedicated core should work to infect as many other members as possible with enthusiasm for, excitement with, and commitment to the club's objectives and programs.

**Constantly Strive to Increase Membership.** How does a club build its membership? Refer back to the chapter on [recruiting new members](#). All of these techniques can increase your club's membership.

**Promote Pride in the Ring.** A member's pride in any club begins when he or she first steps into a meeting. Welcome each guest attending one of your meetings warmly and immediately introduce them to other members. If your club is considerably larger, introduce the guest to the officers and have the president welcome each guest by name at the start of each meeting.

Member and guest name badges are a good idea. This reinforces names and eases mingling. Member badges should include member specialties, offices, or special duties. Consider including club-centered award add-ons such as pins, stickers, or ribbons.

Have your secretary establish a Ring Guestbook. Encourage guests to sign in with their name, phone number, and email address. The Ring secretary adds the names to the prospective member list and adds the guest to the newsletter list. Also send the guest a welcome email from the Ring president promoting I.B.M. and Ring membership.

**Create Membership Incentives and Benefits.** A successful Ring promotes happy members by offering member exclusive benefits and privileges. Offer free admission for one or two lectures each year. Print tickets offering free or discounted admission to Ring members. Present them to each member at renewal. Guests and nonmembers pay full admission.

Arrange with lecturers to provide complimentary or discounted lecture notes or some other token gift to club members while guests and nonmembers pay full rate. If the club offers to pay for the printing or duplication of the notes, you may find lecturers happy to comply.

If your club or region has a number of magic dealers, lecturers, builders, or other

magic-related businesses, host an annual "Meet the Dealer" event. Offer free admission to members or restrict attendance to members only. Invite the business owners to present a 10-minute demonstration of their wares or services. Ask the dealers to present each member with a gift bearing their contact and website information or provide two or three quality items for an event door prize raffle. Each member receives a single complimentary raffle ticket upon entry. At the end of the event, invite dealers to sell their wares at the back of the room.

**Impress for Success.** If an organization and its program are important to us, we generally show it through our words, action, and dress. Gossip and harmful criticizing of the club or one of its members should never be condoned. This type of destructive behavior must be halted the second it appears.

Encourage the idea that, at least within the Ring setting, if something can't be addressed in a positive manner that it is better left outside of the gathering. Set this example through your personal action and involvement rather than difficult to enforce rules. Refuse to tolerate it from others, especially from those in positions of authority like Ring officers and committee leaders.

Keep Ring events active, fun, and energetic. Encourage members to take an active part in every meeting. Insure that business meetings are kept to an absolute minimum length.

Don't allow important parts of your program to fall through the crack because a member delegated to a specific task can't attend. Keep communications open and encourage delegate's to arrange for reliable substitutes if they can't attend.

Don't wait until the start of the meeting to gather the names of your evening's performers. Delegate a volunteer to call members at least a week before each meeting and actively invite them to perform.

The clothes you wear tell a great deal about your attitude toward not only yourself, but toward your Ring. Successful performers learn how to dress for their audiences. Ring officers and members should mirror this behavior when serving the Ring. Wearing attractive clothing to the meetings says to all that you consider this to be an important event worth preparing for.

**When Ring Members Drop Away.** Recognizing and celebrating a departing member is every bit as important as welcoming newcomers. Honoring a departing member sends the message that each club member is valued.

Appoint a Membership Committee. When a registered member misses a meeting, the committee chair should immediately reach out, advise the member that they were missed, and politely ask why. If the reason is a temporary one such as a conflicting work or personal obligation thank the member and let them know that you look forward to seeing them at the next gathering.

If the member missed the meeting due to illness or injury or a significant family event such as a wedding or anniversary, consider sending an appropriate greeting card or note.

If, however, the member intentionally avoided the meeting due to a personal conflict, loss of interest, or similar cause ask what the Ring can do to make the meetings worth attending. Report this feedback to the Ring president.

**Motivate Passive Members.** Most members join your club out of a passion for magic. They look forward to the interaction and sharing of magic ideas and skills. These members may be divided into one of two groups: Participants and Spectators. Spectators prefer to observe passively and are often slow to join in.

Participants are often happy to jump in and interact with others. Many are part or full time entertainers or individuals who enjoy learning, performing, and testing new effects within the confines of a supportive club. This division may become a leadership concern when the passive spectators begin to outnumber the active participants. Meetings can quickly become stale and repetitious when the same few members perform month after month.

Left on their own, these active and passive elements may split into independent cliques. True enthusiasm for the club's activities grows by supporting and practicing mutually beneficial objectives.

Strong leaders will identify and encourage - never force - the passive members to take a more active role in the club. Collectors may lecture on the history or significance of magic paraphernalia. Magic historians may present mini-lectures on the historic figures of magic. Magic enthusiasts may review their favorite performer, routine, or television special. All can participate as members of vital committees.

**Strong Bricks Build Great Meetings.** As your club grows it will develop wider and more diverse fields of interest among the members. To hold everyone's interest, the officers must create programs that encompass each of these specialized fields.

Creative leaders will find ways to appeal to the finger flinger, the mentalist, the illusionist, the clown, the collector, the escapologist, the spiritualist, the kidshow artist, and so on. The more involved they feel, the more likely that they will remain active and invite their friends.

How do we accomplish this?

First of all, get the routine business out of the way quickly. Start on time, make your required announcements, complete the necessary bits of business, and move on. When possible, keep the business portion of your meetings to fifteen minutes or less.

Empower your officers to make basic common sense decisions without requiring a member vote on each and every proposal. If you can't trust your officers to protect the interests of the club and its members in these matters, then they shouldn't be in that position.

Plan ahead and actively encourage several members from different specialties to perform at every meeting. There should never be a time when the president stands in front of the club and asks, "So, did anyone bring something to do tonight?" The performance list should be established before the first member walks into the room.

Seeing magic done well can be an enlightening experience. Watching a new member receive positive feedback and support will encourage others to step up.

When lining up performers, do not depend exclusively on volunteers. These same few may eventually come to believe that the burden of the club's program rests on their backs. Depending on the same few at every meeting also makes it easy for other members to sit back and take a passive role. Involve everyone. Invoke their personal pride and encourage everyone to contribute through a performance, mini-lecture, presentation, or product review. Remember that those who routinely contribute to the club strengthen that precious core membership.

Break your meetings into 10-to-15 minute blocks of interest. For example, begin with a brief business meeting, if necessary, to get it out of the way. Follow with a brief Collectors' Block, Historian Block, Review Block, and so on. Planning your meeting around these brief segments may spark a new interest in the different segments of magic.

Challenge your members to stretch their magical discovery!

Other potential blocks include, but are not limited to:

**Teach-A-Trick.** Enlist a skilled instructor to perform an effect of general interest then teach each step of the effect. Printed instructions are desirable. You may require the instructor to provide ample materials—at club expense—for each member present. The club may also provide the materials to members at cost plus a slight mark-up to benefit the Ring treasury.

Ensure that the instructor chooses an effect from his own creative work or from a public domain source. Respect the intellectual property rights of others. Do not allow instructors to expose commercial or proprietary magic effects unless each member present owns or agrees to purchase the effect.

If this source is the Tarbell or similar series, challenge the instructor to update the effect to fit modern standards. With proper planning and execution, this will become one of your most popular blocks. Dan Harlan's exceptional *Every Trick in the Book* video series is an ideal example of this.

**Theater Skills.** Demonstrate and teach a single performance skill such as blocking, movement, drawing the audience, the use of music or lighting, voice projection, stage make-up, and so on. Invite a trained choreographer or theater instructor to lecture on body language, movement, and such. A guest vocal instructor may address breathing, tone, projection, and annunciation.

**Creativity Challenges.** Collect a hodgepodge mixture of every day objects, common and not-so-common magic utilities, and various art supplies. Mix these items and randomly divide them into identical shoe boxes. Break members into small groups of 3-4 members and give each group a shoebox. Give each group 15 minutes to create as many magic effects as they can exclusively from the items in their box. Each group demonstrates their effects.

**Product Reviews.** If you are fortunate enough to have a magic shop, manufacturer, or dealer nearby, invite them to present a 10-to-15 minute

product review or new product demonstration towards the end of your meeting. You may also invite members to present a 5-minute demonstration and reviews of products, books, audio/video media, etc at each meeting.

Read through the Ring Reports published in *The Linking Ring* each month for additional ideas. Use the trial & error method to keep the blocks that your members enjoy and ditch those that create little interest or support. Maintaining a level of consistency with your agenda will help members know what to expect and promote anticipation for future meetings.

**Closed vs. Public Meetings.** The social and fellowship facets of your club are important. However, allowing open access to guests with a limited interest in magic can lead to a club's rapid decline. This includes personal friends and family members. Allowing lay persons to attend club meetings may deter the open discussion of magical techniques and secrets.

If your club has an open door policy, consider separating the business and social sessions of your club meetings. Encourage lay person attendance, but provide a purely social or instructional element in a separate room while club members are discussing business or magic instruction sessions. Welcome lay attendees to the performance portion of your meetings.

Plan at least two purely social events each year. Design these to entertain friends and families while giving members an opportunity to showcase their talents. This gives our friends and families a structured peek into the club without hindering member interests. Close all other club meetings to magicians only. This "air of mystery" may encourage lay members to become more involved in magic to gain admission.

**Maintaining Order & Discipline.** Even the best planned meetings will decay into chaos without a level of discipline. After all, discipline is simply an extension of respect for others. Every member is responsible for maintaining the focus and order of a meeting however, human nature causes us to overlook basic etiquette from time to time.

An attentive and tactful Sergeant-at-Arms is your discipline watchdog. When side conversations or distractions occur, the Sergeant-at-Arms should quietly and respectfully invite the participants to resume their discussion outside of the meeting room. If an argument spirals out of control, the Sergeant-at-Arms should



step in and guide the participants to a peaceful resolution or to a location away from the meeting.

**Keep Communication Flowing.** Involved members want to know what is happening in their Ring. A strong communication network is an absolute necessity.

The secretary must maintain a current membership roster with addresses, emails, and telephone numbers. Creating an interactive member database is child's play with today's electronic devices. Protect this information and make it available for the exclusive benefit of the club and its members.

Officers must be easy to reach. If privacy is a concern, establish position-based email addresses such as PresidentRing\_\_@gmail.com and SecretaryRing\_\_@gmail.com. Set these addresses to forward emails to each officer's personal email account. When officers change, reassign the addresses to the new officers' accounts and have them change their Gmail access password. Make sure that the Secretary keeps a confidential and protected record of officer email passwords - just in case.

Every Ring should maintain a website. Free websites are available. Check with the knowledgeable Internet users in your club or contact your local high school or community college IT department for guidance. Monthly newsletters are also a vital tool for Ring communication. Free and affordable email newsletter services like Mailchimp and VerticalResponse make it easy to design and send digital newsletters every month. Encourage your Ring President and T.V.P. to submit a brief monthly column for your newsletter, website, and social media pages.

Situations may arise that require reaching club members in a timely and efficient manner. Creating a Ring Telephone Tree can help. The Secretary can develop a list of members and their telephone numbers. Beginning with the President, each member on the list is assigned two or three numbers to call. The top tiers should consist of your strongest core members. If a member can't be reached, the member calling must skip that name and take responsibility for calling the next name on the list. Don't wait until an emergency or short notice event occurs to organize this valuable tool.

Parts of this chapter are based on a treatise titled "A Successful Magic Club" by Wilbur Kattner, Ren Clark Ring #15, Fort Worth, TX with modifications and additions from Roger "Skip" Way, Wallace Lee/Dick Snaveley Ring #199, Raleigh, NC.



"Art is magic... But how is it magic? In its metaphysical development? Or does some final transformation culminate in a magic reality? In truth, the latter is impossible without the former. If creation is not magic, the outcome cannot be magic."

Hans Hoffman

## KEEPING CURRENT & RELEVANT



The automobile made its debut shortly before the Twentieth Century. It was outrageously expensive, unreliable, and commonly viewed as a passing fad of the idle rich. In 1903, engineer and innovator Henry Ford began working with brothers John and Horace Dodge to create an affordable and reliable personal automobile for the average American. They began with the Model A and struggled through failure and disappointment in alphabetical order to the Model S. Finally, in 1908, Ford declared success with their affordable and mechanically sound little Model T.

Ford saw his car, affectionately called the Tin Lizzie, as the perfect machine and stubbornly resisted suggestions to improve on its design from 1908 to 1927. By 1920, half of all automobiles driven across the United States and Canada were Ford's remarkable Model T. This automobile carried the Ford Motor Company to the top of the competitive motor industry.

Meanwhile, businessman Alfred P. Sloan, Jr. gained control of Ford's top competitor General Motors in 1920. Sloan recognized that he could not compete with the simple quality and low pricing of Ford's Model T. He chose instead to focus on the rising demand for variety.

The Model T's chassis, mechanics, comfort level, and single color had remained virtually unchanged for over twelve years. General Motors and Walter Chrysler's Plymouth brand began offering consumers a wider choice of automobile colors, styles, comfort levels, engine sizes, price ranges, and other advanced options. Both companies offered luxury automobiles at upscale prices; an act that Ford derided as corporate suicide. Sloan took it a step further splitting GM into five divisions appealing to specific income levels. A young man might begin with the cheaper Chevrolet and, as his financial status improved, move up to a Pontiac, Buick, Oldsmobile and hopefully to the elite status of a Cadillac.

Ford's son, Edsel, as the figurehead president of the company, tried to convince the senior Ford to move on from the old reliable Model T. He tried unsuccessfully to push his father into accepting a competitive line of more stylish and costlier

automobiles. Henry Ford's engineer mind could not see past the utilitarian perfection of and emotional attachment to his once dominant little T. This shortsightedness drove the Ford Company into the bottom number three spot and killed the once popular Model T.

There is a lesson to this story. Growth and success are ongoing journeys rather than a destination. Ford believed that his Model T was the pinnacle of engineering perfection. He found comfort in that achievement and refused to push further. He allowed his meteoric success to block his view of the rapidly changing tastes and interests of his customers.

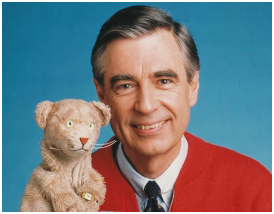
So it is with many of our clubs. Many of us are still pushing that one-model-fits-all magic club while prospective members are desperately searching for a hot new custom job. Club leaders believe that just because a program was well received over the past few years, it will certainly work again this year! Master Magician Roy Horn was fond of stating, "We're only as good as our next show." Our most sustainable clubs constantly seek new paths to engage, educate, entertain, and expand the horizons of their members. Keeping our programs fresh and competitive is especially vital when trying to attract young and novice magicians.

Consider that a magician looking for a club will have different expectations than a member who has been with a club for years. A beginning magician has different needs than a member with decades of experience. A younger magician emulating Blaine and Carbonaro may have different expectations than those of older members raised on Vernon and Slydini. The sustainable club continuously explores fresh ways of engaging each of these diverse groups.

The competitive club is powered by the knowledge and confidence of its members and their combined resources. A healthy club hosts frequent roundtable discussions, reviews, demonstrations, and direction for all members. They encourage skilled members to adopt and mentor lesser skilled magicians.

Whether our clubs trundle along with the stodgy reliability and utility of the Model T or roar across the entertainment byways with the style of a Tesla Model S is entirely up to us. Stubbornly doing the same things in the same way year after year is neither progress nor growth. Programs and concepts that pushed us forward five years ago may be holding us back today. Remember Edsel Ford's prophetic words: *Progress waits on no one*. Where will your decisions take you?

## ROLE MODELS



Many of us older magicians grew up with live children's television hosts. Fred Rogers, Bob Keeshan as *Captain Kangaroo*, Mark Wilson's *Magic Land of Alakazam* and *Magic Circus*, *Howdy Doody's* Buffalo Bob Smith, Mouseketeer host Jimmy Dodd, Sherry Lewis with Lamb Chop, Don Herbert as *Mister Wizard* and Will Lee as *Sesame Street's* Mr. Hooper are just a few that we remember fondly.

Then there were our local hosts. For me, it was Cleveland's Linn Sheldon as *Barnaby* and Ron Penfound as *Captain Penny*. You smiled as the names and faces of your favorite TV idols popped into your thoughts, didn't you?

These were living, breathing adults who appeared before us each day to share their humor, imagination and wisdom. They were touchable personalities that we could meet, talk to, and emulate on our own journey to adulthood. These gentle giants empowered our imagination, boosted our confidence, taught us basic social skills, and often shaped our personalities. They made us laugh. They made us think. They empowered our dreams.

I often share the story of being ten-years-old and sitting with two friends outside of the Cedar Point Ballroom stage door. We hoped to catch a glimpse of Cleveland kidshow host Linn Sheldon as he walked in for a live performance. We waited patiently in the summer sun and waved as a sharp black limousine pulled up to the door. Mr. Sheldon stepped out as *Barnaby* in his trademark straw boater hat, red and white striped jacket and white pressed slacks. He spotted us and walked over with his beaming smile to say hello. This important television star sat down next to us on the curb and spent the next five minutes chatting as though we were longtime friends.

Sixty years later, those precious five minutes still stand among the most memorable of my life. In fact, I credit my decades long career as a children's advocate and entertainer to the joy I felt during those few precious minutes.

This is the immense power of the positive role model. A role model is a person others emulate. Role models may be positive and constructive or, as we are well aware of today, present negative and hurtful habits. Children exposed to the

example set by positive adults are far better prepared to develop habits and character traits that promote a happier life.

We have a natural desire to see our children grow into healthy, happy and productive individuals who respect and care for those around them. Our early television idols modeled these very traits before and after school each day.

We can't simply teach these qualities like reading and writing. Children must experience them regularly for them to become ingrained into their character. Children need a source to emulate and assimilate these positive character-building traits. It is through such mimicry and adaptation that children find it easier to convert dreams into their own bright futures.

Yet, today's children and teens face a near total void of positive flesh-and-blood role models. The current top ten children's television role models are all animations and puppets. Daniel Tiger, Peppa Pig, and Big Bird are entertaining and educational, but they lack the real world connection of a positive adult role model. Can you name a single living adult on television today that inspires the same level of trust and self-confidence as our late 20th Century idols? Where can today's children actually meet and connect with a Fred Rogers or Shari Lewis?

Many outstanding teachers, youth ministers, police officers and others offer some hope, but these individuals are part of a child's daily life. They often lack the celebrity status that inspires a child's awe.

Our status as entertainers, mentors, and personalities provides a platform to reach out and provide positive reinforcement for a child's mental and social growth. We have the opportunity and, perhaps, the moral obligation to use our celebrity - small or great - to nurture shy youngsters into confident adults.

What does this mean to us? Many of us devote our skills in magic and humor towards entertaining and serving children and their families. We create laughter. We foster a sense of wonder. We celebrate reading, imagination and wonder. We employ showmanship and illusion to push beyond common limits and stretch imaginations. We deliver a powerful "Yes, we can" message to the children we meet.

Unlike Puerto Rico's magnificent TV personality *Shabum*, most of us lack the extended reach afforded to our childhood idols through television, but we can still touch the lives and hearts of children daily. We vanish a sponge rabbit. We

discover a colorful silk in a sleeve or hairbow. We deliver a smile or two. We make a difference.

The loving hearts and creativity of people like magicians Jozo Bozo and Christopher T, puppeteer Steve Petra, clowns Lee Andrews and Julie Varholdt, ventriloquist Mark Wade, and countless others continue a proud tradition of positive adult-to-child connections.

We serve as approachable adults willing to listen attentively to a child's stories. We smile supportively as another 8-year-old shares the twenty-one card trick he just learned. We take the time to sit and chat with our young audience members after a show. We offer a vital physical connection with today's children. Do you understand how incredibly powerful that is?

So, to those of you who take the time to drop everything and focus on the approaching child, who happily teach a child a simple feat of magic, who mentor, coach, or encourage a Scout, dancer, musical or magic youth, thank you and please keep doing what you do! Keep looking right, looking left, leaning down and conspiratorially whispering, "You're right, but it's our secret right?" to the know-it-all twelve-year-old. And to those who step out of a limousine and spend five glorious minutes building a memory that will live forever - Thank you.



"Never ever doubt in magic.  
The purest honest thoughts  
come from children, ask any  
child if they believe in magic  
and they will tell you the  
truth."

Scott Dixon

## CLUB DYNAMICS



Dynamics. The force which stimulates growth, development, or change within a system.

Just as a mountain stream is altered by a fallen boulder or a rise in the water level, our clubs change with the flow of member interaction. Change creeps in every time we gain a new member, lose a skilled member, modify a procedure, or form a clique. Understanding and adapting to these factors can mean the difference between a successful club and one that fades into obscurity.

For starters, social clubs are meant to be recreational and fun. The last thing our members want after a long day of work-related interaction is another unproductive meeting consuming their leisure time. Studies reveal that a large percentage of new members drop out within the first three years due to boring meetings, exclusive cliques, divisive club politics, and other disappointing returns on their emotional, intellectual, and physical investment.

These issues may be the direct result of the dynamic makeup and interaction of our members. Group dynamic studies identify four general types.

**Tier 1: Capable and Willing - The Superstars.** These are the club's superstars. They are commonly the most skilled, the most active and the strongest leaders. These members cheerfully accept greater responsibility and work hard to share their passion. They actively seek out ways to improve the club and their own skills. Empower these members! Delegate authority to this group. Give them the freedom to test their ideas. Include them in decision making. Careful though! Don't make the mistake of relying exclusively on these members causing them to burn out and drift into the next category.

**Tier 2: Capable and Unwilling - The Elites.** The club's self-appointed elite. They have the skills and the experience to contribute greatly but are more likely to watch events flitter by from the sidelines. These members often feel that they have contributed their "fair share" and have earned the right to kick back. Their passive approach can hinder a club's growth.

Offering new challenges or a starring role may pull them back. Motivate them! Explore their reasons for dropping out. Challenge them to coach members toward the next tier. Recognize their contributions. These experienced members may also be victims of intellectual property theft by other members. Their retreat into silence may be due to a very real fear of further loss of their hard work and creativity. Strictly enforcing intellectual property standards and openly removing members who violate them may pull your talented wallflowers back into Tier 1.

**Tier 3: Incapable and Willing - The Apprentices.** These are the members with the heart and desire to excel. These members may believe that they lack the necessary physical or mental ability, confidence or skill. Presenting powerful role models such as Richard Turner, who is sight-impaired, and Mahdi Gilbert, who performs incredible card sleights without hands, may inspire these members.

These members often fear failure or embarrassment. Guide them and watch for teachable moments. Delegate responsibility with one-on-one coaching. Provide a risk-free environment – even if it means working outside of the club. Recruit your Tier 2 members as one-on-one coaches and cheerleaders. Ignoring these members can push them into the next category.

**Tier 4: Incapable and Unwilling - The Outsiders.** These members may see themselves as outsiders. They may be intimidated by more skilled and experienced members or believe that they lack the physical or mental ability to learn the art. They may be battling a natural shyness or lack the drive or confidence needed to improve. However, the fact that they are attending club meetings expresses a deep desire to overcome these issues. Focus on that desire!

They may stubbornly resist efforts to work past their limits and offer infinite excuses for not trying. The negative response might be considering them to be "*Anchors*" as they tend to keep a club from moving forward.

Take a more positive approach. Rather than anchors, view them as sails waiting for a brisk breeze to help them blossom! Empower and direct these members! Explore the reasons behind their lack of skill or motivation. Set clear expectations. Offer frequent positive feedback. Enlist your Tier 2 members for persistent one-on-one coaching within a supportive, nurturing environment. If they simply refuse to cooperate, cut your losses and move on.

Each tier presents unique challenges. The Superstars constantly challenge the status quo with fresh ideas and open discussion. They generally dislike the



mundane administrative chores. An Apprentice member willing to learn may happily tackle these duties with supportive guidance. The self-appointed Elite members rarely contribute without being prodded – so, prod often. Likewise, our Outsiders contribute little beyond boosting the number of names on our rosters, but the right guidance may boost their confidence and motivate them to do and enjoy more. Managing a club’s dynamics requires a delicate blending of these disparate personalities.

Ask a couple of members to sit back and observe a series of meetings and activities. What is the general atmosphere of your meeting? Which members are most active? Which members are least active? Compare these notes and assign members to tiers.

Encourage Elites and Apprentices to lead mini-lectures, breakouts and performances. If Superstars and Elites form an exclusive breakout group, encourage them to include a few Apprentices and Outsiders.

Don’t allow comments, criticisms, and suggestions to become personal. Focus on member efforts and achievements and offer positive support where needed. Offer assignments and goals to your Apprentices and Outsiders that help them advance toward Superstar level. If an Apprentice or Outsider performs poorly in one area, quickly find a challenging and confidence-building position more in line with their abilities. Success is achieved through small steps.

Pay careful attention to attendance trends. Frequent absences are one of the first signs of a drop in member interest. Is your secretary tracking attendance to identify and reach out to chronically absent members? Call members who have missed two or more consecutive meetings to find out why. Personal calls show that each member is important.

We all want our clubs to prosper and grow. Politics, complaints and grievances between those who participate and those who do not will increase if Rings fail to manage and blend the various member types. Setting the example begins with the club leaders and superstars. Choose your officers carefully. Change officers every year or two to give apprentice members an opportunity to shine and grow. Tolerating or ignoring nonparticipation or anti-social behavior encourages others to take the easier path.

A chain is no stronger than its weakest link. Strengthen your chain!



“Magic speaks to the child in  
all of us. No matter how  
sophisticated we become, there's  
still a part of us who wants to  
believe in an alternative reality,  
where we can defy the laws of  
nature.”

Criss Angel

## RECOGNITION AWARDS & CERTIFICATES



A number of recognition and award devices are available to enhance the I.B.M. experience for Rings and I.B.M. members.

**CHARTER CERTIFICATE.** A recognition certificate is available from the I.B.M. Headquarters for newly chartered Rings. It is of high value to the T.V.P. to present this certificate to the new Ring at a special occasion recognizing the members' achievement in forming the Ring. The Charter Certificate is automatically sent to the Ring unless the responsible T.V.P. requests that it be sent to him or her for the presentation.

**RING ANNIVERSARY CERTIFICATE.** A recognition certificate signed by the International President with the I.B.M. gold seal and presentation folder is also available for anniversaries of a Ring Chartering. A Ring may ask for and will receive certificates in recognition of each decade of service (10th year, 20th year, etc) as well as it's 25th year and 75th year.

Either the Ring President or the T.V.P. may request this certificate. The requests may be made through the Ring Coordinator. Invite your T.V.P. to present this certificate at an appropriate ceremony or function.

**HONOR RING.** The International Brotherhood of Magicians recognizes Rings that excel in promoting the objectives of the I.B.M. Rings may qualify for the Honor Ring designation by having their charter in compliance with the By Laws of the International Brotherhood of Magicians. The standards and achievements for this program are high, with the main criteria being that all Ring members belong to the I.B.M..

Such designated Rings will be presented with a Presidential Citation at the Annual Executive Committee Business meeting held at the convention. The Ring may receive a check from the trustees of the Endowment and Development Fund to be used for educational purposes. An article, with photographs, highlighting the Ring's achievements will be published in The Linking Ring.

For additional information about this program contact the I.B.M. Ring Coordinator.

**STATE & CITY MAGIC PROCLAMATIONS.** Government officials love making proclamations! If your territory or a Ring within your territory hosts a special day, week or month of magic awareness, it is generally a very simple matter to have the date officially recognized by your local, state or province leader.

Create a carefully worded proclamation similar to the following sample and send it with a formal and polite request for the proclamation to the office of the governor or mayor. Allow 6-8 weeks advance notice and include a valid contact name and phone number for questions. There are nearly always questions.

In your letter, ask for confirmation of the proclamation so that you can arrange appropriate media coverage. Send a press release to local media outlets announcing that you are seeking the proclamation and laying out the anticipated receipt date. Follow this up with a press release announcing the presentation date, time and place once confirmation is received.

In time the Ring should receive a beautiful official document with your proclamation that will become a proud part of their historical documents.

**PRESIDENTIAL CITATION.** T.V.P.s may recommend a member or Ring within his or her territory for the distinction of receiving a Presidential Citation from the International President. Such honors are generally reserved for Rings or members who have served the art of magic and the I.B.M. in some exceptional manner worthy of recognition. If you feel that this recognition is due, contact the chair of the TVP Nomination/Ring Counselor Committee for additional assistance and guidance.

**ORDER OF MERLIN.** The I.B.M. created a special award in 1966 to recognize members who have given twenty-five or more uninterrupted years of service to the organization. This elite honor recognizes four tiers of service:

25 Consecutive Years—Order of Merlin

35 Consecutive Years - Order of Merlin Shield

50 Consecutive Years - Order of Merlin Excalibur

60 Consecutive Years - Order of Merlin Excelsior

The Order includes an exclusive Order of Merlin breakfast at the annual I.B.M. Convention with special guest speakers. Order of Merlin tier members are inducted at the Annual Executive Committee Business Meeting.

**PAST RING PRESIDENT MEDAL.** Past Ring President medals are available through



the I.B.M. for presentation to outgoing Ring presidents. This is an excellent way for Rings to thank the outgoing Ring President for his or her service. Medals are generally purchased by the Rings. The medals may be worn by past Ring Presidents on jacket lapels or dresses.

**PAST TERRITORIAL VICE PRESIDENT MEDAL.** Unlike the medals presented to past international and Ring presidents, the I.B.M. does not, at the time that this item is written, offer any form of recognition for those who have dedicated their personal time and resources as volunteer T.V.P.s. This is a severe oversight that must be corrected.



"My goal is to get people to really believe that the impossible is real, and not that I'm responsible for it. I want them to believe that they're having the most unusual, magical and bizarre days of their lives."

Michael Carbonaro

## RECOGNITION & MEMBER SATISFACTION

Magicians join clubs to mingle with like-minded peers, to share and improve their skills, and to receive peer acknowledgement of their efforts. Recognition of our personal creations, achievements, and improvement is a vital part of why we keep showing up. It is important to understand why members need this recognition and how we can provide it.



Recognition is a basic human need. A powerful craving for respect and appreciation drives most of us. Let's face it! Magic appeals to many of us as a means of standing out in a crowd. Aside from politicians, comedians and the occasional serial killer, who craves recognition more than the magician?

We struggled to earn our gold stars and approving parental smiles. A+ marks and 4.0 GPAs motivated our studies. We strive to earn Employee of the Month with all of the customary perks and we beam when a customer mentions us in a glowing 5-star review. Our military uniforms are mobile billboards displaying our entire career achievements thru medals, ribbons, hash marks, and insignia. Recognition is a vital element of daily life. How important is recognition in gaining and keeping club members involved?

Few clubs make any real effort to recognize important member milestones. A few may recognize longevity which is really little more than a participation trophy for hanging around for a few years. The successful club does much more to keep its members coming back.

There are two types of recognition. Awards that we can handle, touch and display are forms of tangible recognition. They may include letters, cash, gift cards, plaques, lapel pins, trophies, birthday and get-well cards, and certificates. These awards often take planning, so we generally present them for special achievements or exceptional service to the club.

Intangible awards have little or no physical substance and are generally spontaneous in nature. They may include compliments, public acknowledgement, an invitation to lecture, verbal or written praise, and the classic pat-on-the-back. Intangible recognition can be as simple as a warm greeting, kind word, or sincere

compliment, but each provides the greatest impact within our programs.

Recognition has a generational distinction. Tangible awards generally mean more to Baby Boomers while Millennials and Gen Z members crave more frequent intangible accolades. For example, longevity and loyalty awards are important to Baby Boomers who generally earned perfect attendance awards in school and spent their lives working for one or two employers. These awards mean little to Millennials and Gen Z in a culture that rarely honors such long-term commitments.

Younger members build their social relationships upon trust, commitment, goodwill and inclusion. They are driven by feelings. Their loyalty and level of participation is related to how valued they feel. Today's club incentive programs must offer more than a "Do this and get that" system.

**Be Specific and Relevant.** Recognition tied to specific achievements is more meaningful. Set aside time at each meeting to recognize member birthdays, anniversaries, and personal achievements.

**Be Timely.** Receiving recognition months after the fact diminishes its importance. Strike while the iron is hot.

**Little Things Go a Long Way.** It's crucial to recognize major accomplishments and milestones, but don't overlook the power of the everyday pat-on-the-back. Our Ring President regularly mails hand-written congratulatory and appreciation notes to our members. Unexpected notes and verbal shout-outs can boost the positive vibes among our members. And it's not just an officer's task. Members may find recognition more motivating when it comes from their peers.

**Make it Easy.** Provide members with an annual PDF or Outlook-friendly Recognition Calendar that offers suggestions for no- and low-cost, easy-to-implement ideas for recognizing fellow members. Include member joining, birth and anniversary dates. Establish a Who's Who of members' names, photos, non-magic accomplishments, and why each member stands out.

**Touch the Heart.** Seek out volunteer photographers to take candid photos and videos at meetings and events. Appoint a club historian to collect and catalog these photos by members' names, dates, and activities. The historian can compile photos of a member into a PDF book or PowerPoint for important milestone events (e.g., Five service years, turning 30 or 50, or a silver anniversary). Having

these photos with identifying information will be invaluable when planning a club's silver or golden anniversary celebration.

**Generate Member Support.** Organize a member visitation schedule for hospitalized and homebound members. List the affected member's favorite casserole or dessert. Celebrate the birth of a member's child or grandchild, their wedding, retirement, or other major family event.

**Make it Meaningful.** The much maligned participation award encourages younger members to keep showing up for meetings and events. While awarding participation keeps them active and involved with others, receiving tangible recognition for merely showing up may result in a lack of motivation to reach further. On the other hand, relying too heavily on achievement-driven recognition means that there will always be losers. Second place is never as soothing to our egos as that blue-ribbon First. Consistently missing top honors can lead to discouragement and loss of interest in the club. Find your club's balance.

**Create Recognizable Moments.** Schedule team-building and socialization events to build a familial bond and break up destructive cliques. Encourage members to assume ownership of pet projects they care about. Rotating leadership roles and committee chairs every year or two gives everyone a chance to participate and get involved. Demonstrate each member's value through simple things like these.

**Get the Word Out.** While internal recognition is invaluable, don't forget to spread the word. Let everyone know about the good work of our membership and about the fun we have. Invite your members to share these moments on their social media and blogs. Don't forget to include the content-hungry community news outlets with press releases.

Social recognition is absolutely essential whenever a group joins and works together. It doesn't need to be complicated or expensive. Start enhancing your club's recognition program today!



"When I first started doing my comedy act, I just desperately needed material. So I took literally everything I knew how to do on stage with me, which was juggling, magic and banjo and my little comedy routines. I always felt the audience sorta tolerated the serious musical parts while I was doing my comedy."

Steve Martin

## I.B.M. HONOR RING CHECKLIST



The Ring Quality Program has been replaced by the I.B.M. Honor Ring project. This Ring recognition program is funded and managed by the Trustees of the Endowment and Development Fund. Applying for the Honor Ring Program requires the submission of a Linking Ring feature article describing what you consider to be the outstanding features of your Ring and affirming that all Ring members belong to I.B.M.

The model for evaluating submissions is subjective. There is no specific list of criteria. The following broad categories are examples other Rings have addressed in their applications:

- A brief history of the Ring,
- Notable members present and past,
- Leadership development,
- Youth program,
- Community service and outreach, and
- Special Ring events or programs

You may wish to refer to the Honor Ring articles in the September 2014, February 2015, and May 2015 issues of The Linking Ring as samples and for submission ideas. You may also obtain ideas from the former Ring Quality Program checklists on the next few pages. This checklist may also be downloaded from the Ring Resources section at [www.Magician.org](http://www.Magician.org).

Your application must include a current list of members including I.B.M. membership numbers and written verification from the Ring officers that all Ring members are members of the I.B.M.. Rings that allow nonmembers to join and participate in Ring functions are not eligible for this recognition.

Check with the I.B.M. Ring Coordinator with questions and for current application details.

The trustees will contact you if there are questions. Once your article has been approved you will be informed of when your article will appear in The Linking Ring. At that time we will need a group photograph with names. The photograph does not have to include all members. A photo of Ring officers would also be appreciated. The photographs should be 300 dpi.

Honor Rings receive a check for \$1000 to be used for educational purposes once your Ring is selected as an Honor Ring and your article is published in The Linking Ring.

The former Quality Ring program offered a set of goals as an excellent way to monitor the growth and health of your Ring. The checklist is provided here for your review and use.

- Review Period includes the immediate past fiscal or calendar year of Ring operation. Give dates From and To.
- Ring Members: List the number of Ring members during this review period.
- I.B.M. Members: List the number of Ring members who are current I.B.M. members.
- New Members: List the number of new members who joined the Ring during the review period.
- Constitution and By-Laws: Does the Ring have its own Constitution and Bylaws?
- Induction Ceremony: Does the Ring Have a formal Induction Ceremony for new members?
- Policy and Programs Manual: Does the Ring have its own P&P Manual or a similar document which includes information on Ring operations and how to plan and run Ring programs and activities?
- Newsletter/Bulletin: Does the Ring have its own newsletter, website, or bulletin providing information to members on a regular basis through mail, email or Internet?
- Ring Reports: Has the Ring published a Ring Report in the Linking Ring each month during the review period.
- Ring History: Does the Ring have a dedicated Historian maintaining a scrapbook or history chest?

- Ring Library: Does the Ring have a magic library for member use?
- Working with the I.B.M.. Within the past year has the Ring submitted the mandatory reports to the I.B.M. Head Office including a current list of IBM members and names of Ring Officers?
- Working with TVP. How many times has the TVP visited the Ring during the review period? What is the name of Ring's Key Contact who liaises with its TVP?
- Annual Banquet. Does the Ring have an annual banquet to honor past presidents and Ring Officers, present awards, etc .?
- Public Shows or Displays. List Ring sponsored shows given for the general public during the review period.
- Planned Ring Activities for the Review Period. Does the Ring have an annual calendar of planned major activities?
- Planned Activities for Each Ring Meeting. Does the Ring give its members and advance list of planned activities for each Ring meeting?
- Lecturers. List lecturers who have come from outside the Ring during the review period.
- I.B.M. Youth: Does the Ring actively support an active Youth program?
- Benefit and Community Support. List Ring Activities in support of worthy causes such as Magic Therapy (Healing of Magic; Project Magic), hospital and senior care visits, children's homes, charity support, and other community support projects.
- Noteworthy Accomplishments: List any accomplishments during the review period of which the Ring is particularly proud.

After completion, the Ring executive committee should review the checklist results giving special attention to those areas considered most important for a successful and healthy Ring. Each negative response may indicate shortcomings in areas requiring attention.

The significance of membership numbers and number of reports submitted to The Linking Ring is subjective but does draw attention to areas where improvements might be made.



"One day, I saw a magic show, and I was like, 'I have to learn how to do this!' Every time I went to Las Vegas, I had to get at least two or three tricks from the magic shops."

Lilla Crawford

## FUNDRAISING



Are you looking for ways to boost your club treasury? Here are a few helpful ideas.

With our talented and creative members, our clubs are well suited to hosting fundraising workshops, lectures and performance showcases for useful cash infusions. Hosting a one day magic festival featuring magic workshops for grandfathers, first responders, teachers, medical and sales professionals and hospitality servers can fetch a healthy profit. Follow this with ticket sales for a public showcase and you have the recipe for a very profitable one-day event!

**Yard/Garage Sale or Flea Market.** are especially lucrative for clubs. Consider hosting the yard sale at a high-travel location or flea market. Ask for contributions from your members and the community. Draw buyers to your booth with magic and balloons. If you attract the children, the parents will follow! Include a selection of magic effects and kits with an entertaining pitch and demonstrations.

Don't forget to include those unwanted books that many of us have laying around the house! Ask members to solicit their neighbors for unwanted adult and children's books. Donate unsold books to your local library or thrift shop.

**Bake Sale.** Add a bake sale to your yard sale! Ask members to contribute home or commercial baked items for sale. For a fun twist, create treasure cupcakes! Place a bakeable sticker or mark a number on the inside bottom of the cupcake wrapper in a few cupcakes. Buyers redeem these wrappers for prizes. Choose magic-related prizes that will entice shoppers to buy your cupcakes such as tickets to upcoming events, magic kits, complimentary birthday or adult party entertainment, etc. Include a couple of donated grand prizes that will motivate your audience to pay a higher-than-usual price for the cupcakes.

**Family Game Night.** Boardgames of all kinds are enjoying a comeback. Many families welcome boardgame tournaments as a great way to spend quality time together and raise funds for a good cause! You can choose from word games, Bingo, and complex strategy and fantasy games. Don't forget fun prizes for the winners! Cap the evening with a boardgame-themed magic showcase.

**Poker Tournament.** Host a Texas Hold'em Poker tournament. You'll need two decks of cards per table per round, tables seating 8-10 players each, poker chips and a dealer button, poker timer to time rounds, snacks and prizes. Kick things off with an entertaining demonstration of gambling-related card and chip magic. The typical entry fee is twenty dollars to keep things fun and affordable. Check local laws.

**Parents' Night Out.** Offer an evening of childcare while their parents enjoy a quiet night out. To prepare, sign up your youth members and adult chaperones for the Red Cross Babysitting Course. The course is available in person or online. Use your school, church, or community center to host this fundraiser. Plan a variety of games, storytelling activities, crafts and, of course, a magic show to entertain the children for a few hours. Choose a flat rate for the evening or charge by the hour.

**Restaurant Fundraiser.** Partner with a local restaurant that is attractive to families and not always fully booked. Pick a night that works for your club and the restaurant and offer roaming table magic and a floor show with dinner. The restaurant returns a percentage of their profits to your club and your club promotes the event to bring in new customers and boost sales for the night. Your event may also demonstrate the drawing power of magic to the restaurant management opening a new performance venue for a club peer.

**Food Truck Rodeo.** Promote a similar arrangement with popular food trucks. This works best with trucks featuring a dessert specialty such as beignets, ice cream, shaved ice, empanadas and such. Provide roaming magic entertainment as families come out for a sweet evening treat!

**Magic in the Park Celebration.** Organize an evening "Magic in the Park" event. Find an outdoor venue suitable for ticketed picnic-style events. Invite local musicians or DJs to perform as club members roam through the crowd with magic. Provide various magical photo ops around the venue. Feature a magical showcase on a central stage capped off by a classic family-appropriate magic themed film. Invite food trucks to provide the evening's dining fare.

**Themed 5K.** Host a 5K race where people dress in costume to jazz up a classic endurance event. Whether it's zombies, wizards, literary heroes or video game characters, a costumed race allows donors to dig out their Halloween boxes and have some fun. Offer prizes for the most creative, silliest and best costumes along with race completion.



If you have a gently-flowing stream or river nearby, consider a classic rubber duck race. All you need is a moving water source. Purchase rubber ducks from a wholesale source and number each rubber duck with permanent ink. Offer each ducks for adoption at five dollars each. Stamp each duck with your club logo to avoid “cheaters” being introduced down stream. Arrange sponsors for the event for extra cash! When it comes time for the race, drop the ducks into the waterway. Award a portion of the raised funds or a shiny trophy to the first three ducks to cross the finish line.

Get the word out with social media posts promoting your fundraiser! It is not hard to do and can make an incredible impact to get your club’s message and fundraising out in the local, statewide, and national community!

A wide variety of businesses offer fundraising opportunities for nonprofit clubs including city parks, car washes, donut shops, restaurants, coffee shops, supermarkets and bookstores. Check with your Chamber of Commerce to find the options that best serve you and your club.



“This is magic we're talking about.  
It's supposed to go places science  
can't, defy logic, wink at  
technology, fill us all with the  
sensawunda that comes of gazing  
upon a fictional world and seeing  
something truly different from our  
own.”

N. K. Jemisin



## CLUB LEADERSHIP

### VOLUNTEERS, WHERE ART THOU?

You've made the plea at your club meetings. You've posted to the club website, newsletter, and social media pages. No one has come forward! What are we doing wrong? Understanding the motivation behind volunteerism is key to a successful volunteer recruitment and retention program.



Why do people volunteer? Studies boil it down to six key carrots. People volunteer:

- To make a difference,
- To support an organization or cause,
- To learn something new,
- To develop personally or professionally,
- To feel better about themselves, and
- To meet people.

Most club leaders tend to focus on the first two reasons. Our call generally addresses the need for volunteer leaders, committee chairs, instructors, and youth leaders interested in making a difference within our club and our community.

The truth is that most volunteers require a personal reason to get involved. While a few members may actively support the club, most will hold back unless they see some personal benefit. This may include developing new skills, enhancing self-esteem, earning some form of recognition, or expanding their social network.

To encourage members to get involved, explain how their service directly benefits them. Don't just say that, "We need people." Don't rely solely on altruistic goals like giving back to the magic community. Address the opportunity to learn new skills and awakening dormant talents. Another might be reigniting the passion that led them to pursue magic.

An Ohio State University study ran a controlled series of ads in the campus

newspaper seeking volunteers. One set of ads promoted volunteering as a good way to help the community. Another advanced volunteering as a good way to rediscover one's self and develop new skills. A third set simply stated that volunteers were needed. The ads that focused on the personal benefits of volunteering were the most effective in drawing people. Interviewed volunteers stated that their personal goals more closely matched those in the ad that inspired them to step up.

So, how do we make this knowledge work for us? First, promote the club's needs in ways that might match individual goals. Need someone to help develop lesson plans? This could lead to a future book for other clubs. It also offers control over the lesson content of future meetings. Need someone to plan and direct club performances and showcases? This could provide experience in event planning, direction, stage management, and tech gear. Need a person to manage fundraising projects? This could provide positive leadership experience for resumes and college applications.

When a volunteer calls, ask what he or she is hoping to gain, and then match the task to these motivations. For instance, if someone has an interest in fundraising, have that person plan and direct treasury building events rather than sort labels at home. It is helpful to revisit these goals with your volunteers periodically since motivations can change over time.

The number one reason that most volunteers step up is that someone asked them face-to-face. A single member directly asking another member is an important over-looked step. When you make a group plea or post a public request, you are essentially asking no one. It is so easy to justify shoving a blanket request aside with "I'm too busy," "They don't need me," or "Someone else will come forward."

A Gallup poll concluded that people are four times more likely to volunteer when asked in person. The same poll states that people are more likely to volunteer if they know the person asking. This connection lessens the perceived "social risk" people feel when joining a new group or project. Use current volunteers to reach out to members they know and cultivate connections with those they don't.

We must also examine why people don't volunteer. A major block for some is the feeling that they lack the skills, experience, or time for the position. To overcome this negative reaction, use your Club newsletter, website, and social media to highlight working members who help as they can rather than the volunteers who

are able to devote unlimited hours.

Another major block occurs when potential volunteers don't clearly understand what you are expected of them. People won't volunteer if it takes too much effort to find out what you need them to do. Members are more likely to step up if you break it down into time-specific tasks and goals that people can picture.

Once we have our volunteers, how do we keep them? The worst mistake a project leader can make is to leave a volunteer feeling useless with nothing to do. The harder volunteers work, the more likely they are to continue. Don't overwhelm them. Just keep them engaged and productive. This requires a delicate well-planned balance.

Assigning an experienced mentor to guide new volunteers with a reasonable goal driven workload works wonders. Offer limited or deadline-free volunteer activities for those with limited time. Provide virtual work-from-home projects for those who can't volunteer in person. Reach out beyond members for volunteers, and include spouses, parents, seniors, older youth, and people with disabilities.

Recognize that some members have likely had past negative volunteer experiences. You may need to help them recover their lost trust and reestablish a firm, reliable comfort zone before they will risk stepping up again. Ease these members into the program by encouraging them to serve in pleasant, limited roles for social events and showcases.

Avoid laying guilt trips onto volunteers that quit. They may return when their schedule permits if you provided a positive experience. Always show appreciation in some physical form such as a certificate, letter, or token gift for those who leave after contributing to your project.

The most important point in building a team of volunteers is to recognize that there are many reasons to get involved. As an active club volunteer yourself, you already know the many benefits of participation. Tap into the personal motivations of other members. Publicize how much they can gain from joining in, and your club volunteer corps will grow and thrive.



"Magic is something that happens  
that appears to be impossible.  
What I call 'illusion magic' uses laws  
of science and nature that are  
already known. Real magic uses  
laws that haven't yet been  
discovered."

Doug Henning

## WORKING WITH DISABILITIES



Club leaders are often presented with daunting challenges as our clubs continue to grow. One of these challenges is working with members struggling with learning and physical disabilities.

Let's be clear here. Learning disabilities may include ADHD, dyspraxia, autism, dyslexia, and more. Physical disabilities may include sight and hearing impairment, paralysis, chronic health concerns, and beyond. Flexible members with strong support groups find ways to adapt to these situations, but many may be left with

diminished self-esteem. They may tend to shy away from or feel alienated from mainstream social groups.

All members do better when more is expected of them. In an inclusive group, positive attention from peers serves to inspire members with disabilities to rise to higher expectations. Even modest accomplishments transform a defeatist "Can't" attitude into a powerful "Can Do!" belief in themselves. Modest achievements change the way they see themselves and provide a path for greater social acceptance among their peers.

Grand illusionists Kevin & Cindy Spencer created their incredible *Hocus Focus*™ magic curriculum to aid parents and teachers with children facing these challenges. Spencer describes *Hocus Focus*™ as a child-centered, play-based teaching method. The structured 11-week program uses magic lessons based on academic, functional, problem-solving and social objectives.

The Spencers also created their *Healing of Magic*™ program teaching physical therapists to transfer the mental and physical skills learned by performing magic tricks into activities for daily living. The program is a carefully designed, systematic approach to implementing and training therapists in this arts-integrated technique

The Spencers' website ([SpencersMagic.com](http://SpencersMagic.com)) offers their comprehensive *Hocus Focus*™ and *Healing of Magic*™ programs for any club, home, clinic, or classroom setting. These programs were developed in collaboration with national experts, teachers, speech and occupational therapists. The activities are fun, exciting and

engaging for students of all ages and levels. I strongly recommend listening to Spencer's inspirational interview with Scott Wells on *The Magic Word* Podcast titled *Kevin Spencer - The Healing of Magic*.

In 1981, David Copperfield and Julie DeJean introduced *Project Magic*™ as an innovative way to help individuals in therapy. *Project Magic*™ employs simple magic tricks combined with the talents of medical professionals to enhance therapeutic efforts by patients. *Project Magic*™ effects motivate a person with a disability to improve their physical dexterity, functional skills and cognitive skills. Copperfield's *Project Magic*™ website ([ProjectMagic.org](http://ProjectMagic.org)) offers a 290-page handbook outlining this remarkable program.

Even with these exceptional program guides, you may be wondering, with our lack of training, how can we best support members with disabilities? Grand illusionist Jim Passe continued to wow audiences with his powerful stage shows after a 1995 I.B.M. Convention accident left him paralyzed from the waist down. Richard Turner's sight began to fade at the age of nine, but his devotion to the art led Dai Vernon to describe him as the most skillful card technician in the world. North Carolina native Ricky Boone, subject of the book *The Four-Foot Giant and the Vanishing Wheelchair*, generates waves of astonishment and laughter everywhere he performs. Briton Dean Lahan is a world class card magician in spite of losing all of the fingers on one hand and two on the other as a toddler. C. P. Shihabuddin of India, born without hands, transformed his journey of magic mastery into a national program for other young magicians with disabilities. These are but a few of the hundreds of inspirational stories of magicians pushing past physical and mental blocks. Share this powerful level of motivation with every member!

Start by recognizing that each member is unique and that those who approach you truly want to learn. Look beyond the disability label and get to know the person. Identify their individual interests. Develop lessons that work with their situations and that motivate them to excel. Just as you do for all of your members, establish high—but realistic—expectations for those with disabilities.

Reexamine your personal beliefs and knowledge. Get in touch with your inner teacher. Honestly examine your beliefs about people then think deeply about your responsibility to keep your lessons—and the physical environment—engaging, developmentally appropriate and accessible for every member.

Determine what each member hopes to accomplish then develop the means for

them to reach that goal. Even if it means pulling your top creators together and brainstorming new and untried methods. Encourage them to be independent and reward each goal achieved. If necessary, break these activities into smaller, more manageable step-by-step tasks.

Students learn best in a program that offers them the support they need to participate alongside their fellow members. Plan activities that require more than one member's participation to accomplish a task. With teens and young adults, pair the student with classroom partners closer to his or her age. Encourage your more advanced members to work with members in need of an occasional helping hand. These interactions can develop into treasured bonds of friendship and a strong team mentality. Muscular dystrophy confined one of my dearest childhood friends to a wheelchair and stole her ability to speak, but this never stopped her from maintaining a 4.0 grade average, hitting the school dance floor, or cheering our teams at sporting events.

If a student relies on sign language or Braille cards include them in the lesson for all members to use. Including members without disabilities helps them to learn to accept and work alongside peers with disabilities. It also prepares our members for performing before audiences with these disabilities.

Whatever the needs of your members, learn to trust your instincts. Rely on your professional expertise and judgment. Never hesitate to seek help from others with valuable experience in these areas. These are important things you can do not just for your members with disabilities but for every magician in your club!



"I've done everything from cater,  
wait tables, pre-school teacher,  
painting, to being Cinderella, Elmo,  
a clown, nanny, selling hair... I  
would do kid's parties and  
entertain and do magic and paint  
faces and balloon animals. The  
highlight of my life."

Diora Baird

## COMMUNITY SERVICE & THE MAGIC CLUB



Our magic clubs comprise a small part of our communities. We seldom approach the size and impact of local community service clubs such as the Lions, Civitan and the Junior League. Might the difference between our clubs and theirs be the fact that our mission statements tend to point more inward?

Magic clubs seem to focus more on advancing the art of magic than on service to the community. However, our collective talents provide a strong platform for supporting local charity and education programs. If we were to focus these skills more on community service both club and members would benefit.

Club members gain just as much from service projects as the community. Linking our club with a local cause increases our social reach, visibility, and popularity. It promotes the club's brand and attracts new members. Joining with service agencies generates new network connections, leads to new friendships, and strengthens existing relationships. Members benefit from enhanced confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment. For the budget-conscious groups, a service organization may provide a rent-free meeting space for a strong supporting group.

Community service helps retired members stay active and maintain a sharper mental focus. Serving others releases dopamine, a chemical released in the brain that makes us feel good. It reduces stress as it increases positive and relaxed feelings. Reducing stress may decrease the risk of heart disease, stroke, depression, anxiety, and general illness. Senior volunteers providing more than one hundred hours each year are among the healthiest members in their age brackets.

Service provides benefits for younger members, as well! Many high schools require students to complete a set number of community service hours toward graduation. Hours spent in community service may also apply towards college application, internship, or a post-grad job search. Employers tend to prefer candidates with strong and diverse volunteer experience.

Clubs face several key considerations when developing a community service project. Total member support is the first of these. Consult with members who may have a better understanding of what your community truly needs. Failing to include your members in the decision-making process can lead to problems with implementation.

**Explore the needs of your community.** Giving back is especially important today and we have so many options to choose from. Select a cause then listen carefully to what they need. Present these needs to your members to determine the type and level of support your club can offer.

**Consider member experiences, connections, and backgrounds.** Members tend to gravitate toward service programs that provide personal satisfaction and relate to their own life experiences. Club members come from a wide variety of backgrounds and a few may not feel comfortable participating in certain projects. Avoid any potentially divisive project, even if your current membership fully supports it. Such projects may repel prospective members. Select a project or agency that your entire club can get behind.

**Consider your club's goals.** Community service programs should complement the club's primary mission with clearly defined goals. Selecting projects that encourage members to expand their magical and other unique talents is key. This will keep them engaged and committed to your club's service projects.

**Choose each project carefully.** There is no shortage of worthy causes in need of support. Select projects that best utilize the magic and other skills of your members. This approach aligns purpose with growth as members test new skills and sharpen older skills before grateful and undemanding audiences.

**Celebrate your service as a team!** Don't lose member support by failing to celebrate each successful project. Host a lunch, happy hour, or other social gathering to celebrate as a group. This is a terrific way to tie your service back to the club's values and bind members together as a team.

**Find ways to incentivize your members.** Perhaps allow members to pay club dues through volunteer hours. Offer discounted lecture fees. Host monthly drawings for gift cards with a ticket earned for each volunteer hour. Track and celebrate one hundred hours of volunteer service with a certificate or lapel pin (Baudville.com). Host a semi-annual luncheon or banquet to recognize top volunteers and invite representatives from the community agencies you support.



**Use these projects to cultivate new leaders.** Member enthusiasm for community service programs rapidly drops when club leaders either fail to lead by example or when they dominate the management process. Encourage club officers and committee chairs to lead the way and maintain team camaraderie. Mentor new leaders by delegating important tasks to younger members. Guide them toward future leadership roles.

**Build a strong service network.** Enlist and organize members, employers, sponsors, clients, suppliers, and other nonprofits to maximize your community visibility and support. Align with a community cause that draws on the passions of your network members. Be sure to keep the energy high by including your entire network in celebrations and recognition.

**Have fun and feel good.** Make these projects fun for all! Avoid perfectionism and battles over conflicting opinions. Focus on the excitement of doing something wonderful for your small corner of the world. Find a special niche for every member and keep the team energy high!

Our clubs attract those who share a strong interest in magic. Redirecting your club's mission toward community service may attract new members with a modest interest in magic and a driving devotion to your new service mission. That modest interest may strengthen over time. Regardless, diversity of thought and purpose are as important to club growth as mastering a pass, palm, or double lift.

Our clubs can make a significant difference with programs such as Toys for Tots, Coats for Kids and Santa for Seniors. Find a community service role that works for your club and make that difference today!



"I've always been an outsider. When I did magic, I was the only kid. When I worked with Johnny Cash, I was completely out of place in Nashville. And when I started Def Jam, I was the only white guy in the hip-hop world."

Rick Rubin



## **BUILDING FOR TOMORROW**



At their root, our Rings are service clubs similar in many ways to the Rotary, Kiwanis and Shriners. Membership in these clubs has steadily declined over the past ten years. Younger generations no longer want to join what many see as societal anachronisms. A quick short-term fix such as membership drives might offer a temporary reprieve, but our primary problem is attracting and

retaining youthful members. There's a very real reason for that!

**Case in point.** I recently attended a local veterans' organization. I am a Vietnam and Desert Storm veteran and I was one of the younger attendees. The members warmly greeted and welcomed me with a good meal and pleasant fellowship. Then the commander walked us through fifteen minutes of a drawn-out patriotic opening ceremony followed by two hours of mind-numbing business that included a solid forty-five minute discussion on ways to attract younger veterans.

These fine men and women, all of whom I deeply respect, are still running this chapter by 1960 standards that simply do not appeal to our younger vets. When I mentioned this observation to the commander, he told me quite curtly that 'This is the way we do it.' I frankly don't want to invite younger vets to a meeting just to have them fault me for less-than-enjoyable evening.

How many magic clubs share this 'This is the way we've always done it' mentality?

**Think Tribes.** According to author Seth Godin, the Internet and social media have replaced traditional community interaction with an ancient social unit called The Tribe. He defines Tribes as groups of people, unrestrained by locale, linked by shared ideas and values rather than a delimited community.

**Look at it this way.** As magic-centric clubs, we focus almost entirely on - Duh - performing magic. Yet, far more people with no desire to perform would simply love to experience and share their passion for this art. What if we reinvented our meetings to include these non-magician enthusiasts in a regular social setting along with our magicians? Those who enjoy the interaction will share us with their

friends. Their friends become our friends - Our Tribe. This is just one way of reimagining our club's image.

**The Value of Time.** Time is more prized today than talent or money. Our mission may hold little attraction to younger members. They want to know what we can offer in return for their investment of their precious time. What is your Ring's response?

**Informality.** The most powerful force in human nature is the status quo. That veterans' group I mentioned began their meeting with the traditional posting of the colors, a prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, reciting the organization's mission statement and several other drawn out rituals. Now, I'm not opposed to any of this, but it did strike me as quite archaic by modern standards. Do these rituals really carry the same impact on a twenty-something vet as they do for us much older members?

With online connectivity, we no longer need to invest our precious networking time to physical meetings. Our rising generations want physical meetings to be fundamentally social, conversational and less formal. We need to modify or remove the archaic and irrelevant practices that drive younger members away.

**Welcome the Family.** In case you've missed the point of this column, here it is in plain Carolinian English: The 'good ol' boy' era of social clubs is dead ya'll. A major trend of men taking a more active role in child rearing is matched by an increasing number of mothers working outside of the home. These parents are loath to sacrifice valuable family time for dry, good ol' boy meetings. Modern clubs embrace this new reality with programs that engage the entire family.

**A Brave New World.** TED talks are the gold standard among young professionals. These sessions arouse the viewer's imagination and stimulate their ability to identify and solve problems. The younger generations want to connect with others who awaken their curiosity, challenge creative thought and are open to new and inspiring ideas.

Rings can't always bring in top lecturers, but we can modify our meetings with in-house TED-style lectures by Ring members or reflective exercises that encourage innovation, creativity and critical thinking.

**ReThink.** Young recruits want to hear 'What do you want to do?' not 'Come do what we do!' Is your Ring an idea incubator encouraging young minds to develop

new and interesting changes to traditional standards? Or does your Ring enforce the club-killing 'This is the way it's always been done' mentality?

**Be Proactive.** Many of the newer generations share a common curse called instant gratification. They want to have an impact now and will not wait a year or two to see their ideas in action. If it's not happening today, they'll walk away.

**Farms or Rainforest.** Victor Hwang, author of *The Rainforest*, suggests that our older generations were trained to choose a crop, plant seeds in straight furrows, remove the weeds, and hope for a bountiful harvest. Our younger generations are more like the rainforests - a chaotic environment with all sorts of beneficial mutations that look like weeds. Hwang advocates in favor of *Rainforests*. That means that we older farmers must reexamine our sense of order. Not an easy task when we have decades of tradition driving us. Still, only by allowing younger leaders to reinvent our Rings can we hope to secure our survival.

Our younger generations have little use for clubs whose value, prestige and vitality are stuck in the past. Reinventing our Rings for the Twenty-First Century is imperative if we hope to still be around for the next. This requires passing the torch and allowing our emerging generation of leaders to ditch decades-old images and traditions and remodel our Rings according to their vision and needs. The alternative is most certainly irrelevance and dissolution.



"I just believe that the feeling of wonder is amazing. I am pushing myself as far as I can humanly push myself... I can only hope for the best and expect the worse."

David Blaine

## IS OUR RING ON LIFE SUPPORT?



Paging Dr. Howard, Dr. Fine, Dr. Howard! How do we know if our club is headed toward life support? The answer to this question is one that all club leaders should ask – especially those with healthy Rings. These twelve signs may indicate that your club has passed its peak and is rapidly careening downhill.

**Ring Leaders Display a Lack of Passion.** Passion is a rare and beautiful thing. The most enthusiastic leaders soar through the first year or two, but passion naturally tapers as leadership roles become rote and mundane.

The passion of club members will rarely exceed that of its leaders. Promote energetic officers with fresh ideas and great passion regularly.

**Members Shy Away from Innovation and Change.** Innovation and change are vital for the club that hopes to grow and remain relevant in our rapidly changing world. It's easy for stagnation to sneak in as clubs grow larger. Ignore this and our trendsetters will eventually grow bored and move to more energetic splinter groups that are open to experimentation. Should our members reach a point where they want to transform, they're stopped because all the top helmsmen have abandoned ship.

**Club Management is Replacing Club Leadership.** Mundane management replaces creative leadership as clubs grow. It's inevitable. Yes, records are important. Tracking attendance is necessary. The trap here is that we begin to simply manage what we've already built. The key is to keep management as a secondary objective following innovation and energy.

**Maintenance is More Important than the Club's Mission.** The leaders of dying clubs are often in maintenance mode. Maintaining the club's status quo takes precedence over advancing the club's mission. When a club hits this level, the leaders and members find themselves going through the motions in a fruitless effort to keep the dwindling club's shadow alive. A strong, current, and active mission statement empowers a healthy club.

**Our Club is Fixated on a Singular Personality, Talent, or Branch of Magic.** If we

base our entire club program on a few exceptional superstars, what happens when these gifted celebrities move on? A Ring uniquely focused on a specific branch or magic specialty repels prospective members from other disciplines. Maintaining a welcoming mission that promotes member equality and broad acceptance of others keeps us strong.

**Dismissing or Censoring Young Leaders.** Young leaders bring fresh ideas and strategies to our sessions. But youth is fleeting and after a decade or two, we often find ourselves surrounded by younger leaders with radical ideas. Rather than including them, established older leaders tend to resist, dismiss, and ridicule these progenitors. This is a critical error for any club hoping to remain relevant. Open minds open doors.

**Club Leaders and Volunteers are Burning Out.** A club that burns through new officers and volunteers at an alarming rate is at death's door. Like the old coal mine canary, a general reluctance of club members to step up warns of poor leadership issues reaching toxic levels. Hold volunteers in the highest esteem as they work on your behalf.

**Everyone in Our Club Looks and Thinks Just Like Us.** Take a hard look at the members attending your next meeting. Do they truly represent a cross-section of your magic and local communities? Or do they all fit neatly within the same racial, economic, age, talent, and cultural boxes? Clubs that lack diversity often struggle to connect with their communities and reach new people.

Club leaders often view a lack of magic culture diversity and respectful conflict as a positive. It means everyone in our club is aligned, right? Wrong. If it seems that everyone in the club thinks the same, nonconforming members are either self-censoring out of fear of ridicule or are silently bailing. Club unity is different from conformity.

**The Club's Social Media Presence Serves the Club, Not the Members.** Your club is failing if your social media focuses more on club concerns and promotions than the wider range of member interests. Inject a daily flow of local and national magic news, trivia, tips, humor, and member profiles into your social media to promote maximum member interest.

**Club Finances Are Always in or near the Red.** A club with poor financial control will not survive long. It matters little whether the club officers inherited the dismal fiscal situation, or it stems from their own malfeasance. Club members have an

absolute right and moral obligation to expect regular treasury reports, in-depth audits, and, if necessary, leadership change whenever fiscal concerns arise. Make that stand!

**Our Club has Zero Visibility in the Community.** If your club permanently shut down tomorrow would anyone in your local community notice? Ouch! Powerful magic clubs serve the local community as well as their members. Whether hosting showcases, food drives, senior center events, or service projects, a club's association with the local community must be notable and tangible. Exclusively utilizing club resources and energy internally disconnects us from our community. Be visible. Stay relevant to those around you.

**Keeping Club Members is More Important than Reaching New Members.** A dying club focuses more on keeping members from leaving than on attracting new members. This is a sad place for a club to be, but it happens more often than we may think. The goal simply becomes making the members as happy and comfortable as possible to prevent loss. Failing to attract new, young members is a fatal blow to any club.

How many of these trends have you observed in YOUR club? Allow these trends to run unattended long enough and things will eventually take a turn for the worse. Recognizing these signs early enough allows us to reverse the trend, regain our momentum, and roll with enthusiasm into a new season.



"The great thing about cake is it doesn't feel like work. You forget about work. Kids, adults, they all get the same look in their eye when they're decorating cakes... That's the magic right there."

Duff Goldman

## TOXIC MEMBERS



We've all dealt with them. At our meetings, as volunteers, in leadership roles, and as clients. Toxic people are, well, toxic. Their aggressive behavior twists our lives, leaves us feeling drained, and may create serious rifts in an otherwise healthy club. He or she is usually self-centered, manipulative, abusive, or lacking empathy. They may initially present as friendly and helpful, but this devolves quickly into playing the victim and paying little attention to personal

boundaries.

Toxic members infect our clubs just as viruses afflict the human body. Many are clear predators who surround themselves with enablers. They may manipulate others into taking their side. He may employ confederates – family members or mutual friends - to spy on others and pass along noxious messages. He is likely to troll other members on social media, forcing harsh arguments over innocuous observations. His internal maneuvering is far more likely to tear a club apart than support its growth.

So...how can we tell early on that the person we're dealing with might be toxic?

He is ego driven and tends to come on too strong right out of the gate. He wants his entry into a meeting or a special event to be headline news. He might offer his "expert experience" during his first meeting rather than waiting to understand the club's nature. Are there ways we can improve our clubs? Of course. Can we improve our skills and performance? Certainly! But a visitor or new member leading off with loads of "helpful" advice is a potential red flag.

We're all familiar with routine emotional highs and lows, good times and bad. It's human nature. However, the behavior of the toxic individual may appear extreme and erratic. He may be elated with you one minute and angrily write you off the next. He tends to follow his own path and rarely follows through with commitments or promises. We never know what he is going to do next.

**The toxic member thrives on drama.** Healthy club relationships are based on trust and a shared respect for personal and professional boundaries. The toxic member

often has little interest in long term relationships. He loves stirring the pot and pushing boundaries. This is especially true if it boosts his standing among his supporters.

**The toxic member tends to manipulate others to get what he wants.** This may mean lying, bending the truth, exaggerating, or leaving out details to bolster his personal image. He'll do whatever it takes, including disparaging or hurting others, to isolate their supporters and boost his influence. His nearly constant demands for attention, sympathy, or validation can siphon the enjoyment from club activities.

We all have opinions. Those in healthy human relationships generally reserve opinions about others until asked to share them. Healthy sharing occurs through a sincere desire to be helpful and supportive. The toxic member, however, is more likely to jump right in without permission and may present harsh judgment without humility, respect, or concern for the other person.

**The toxic member needs to be the center of attention.** He tends to hijack and dominate conversations. He may dive right in to fix a perceived problem before he has all the facts. To bolster his point of view, he may present an exaggerated history of amazing accomplishments. He may make broad claims such as "everyone knows" and "it's common knowledge" to draw upon his "invisible army" of supporters to prove a point. If he feels that we are withholding our adulation, he may turn sullen or combative.

Strong leaders seek to serve rather than demanding service. Because our toxic member craves attention, he may try to push his way into a club leadership position shortly after joining. He may email or call the officers, invite them to lunch, and seek greater control over the club. Once admitted, he'll often quietly foment dissension and form divisive cliques to gain greater influence.

**Toxic people usually have a history of moving from club to club.** If you catch other signs, ask a question such as "What other clubs have you joined over the last few years?" If he is evasive, tells you about three or more clubs, or mentions a major schism that caused him to leave his last club, you've spotted a large red flag.

**Let's be clear.** Most of us may share two or three of these signs to some degree. It's all part of being human. But a person displaying four or more signs is likely a virus looking for a club to infect. And "she" can just as easily replace "he" in these



descriptions. How can we handle someone like this?

Of course, we all hope that these toxic members can change for the better. The good news is, they sometimes do. If someone seems unaware that his actions are hurting others, try the direct approach. Pull him aside and calmly discuss the problem without injecting judgement. If he refuses to listen, you may need to apply firmer limits. Privately call him out on any lies or inconsistencies. Make it clear you won't tolerate his overly dramatic or divisive behavior. Promptly and directly squelch all attempts at pushing untrue or unkind gossip and rumors.

Sadly, many rigorously resist change. If we delay or shy away from addressing his toxic nature, or worse, allow him to gain a position of influence within the club, his negativity can infect our entire organization. Sternly limit his control over the club until he either leaves or displays a real desire to change. Understand that tolerating or ignoring him are the worst things you can do.

If the above strategies don't work, or worse, result in even more abuse and dishonesty, it may be time to discuss the situation with your club and consider asking the individual to move on. Some people improve our lives through sharing. Others, by leaving.



"I don't think I should be telling you every 10 minutes what to think. I like to leave the audience alone with the magic. I tend to trust the material, or I don't do it."

Jack O'Brien



## CLUB MEETINGS

### MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

#### **Each Member Greet Every Prospective**

**Member.** Put the cliques and exclusiveness aside. Appoint a Welcome Committee, Give them the responsibility of watching for and greeting new faces as they enter your meeting space. Provide time for each and every Ring member attending to personally welcome all the newcomers. Muncie, Indiana's Ring 310 has had lots of success using name badges to help break the ice. Have every member, at some time during the meeting time, shake hands and introduce himself/herself to the prospect. Urge them to focus and listen to what the prospect says about magic, and their area(s) of special interests. This will make that initial and future conversations much easier.



**Secret Guest.** If your members are slow to react to new faces, using a “Secret Shopper” technique may help you to promote a friendlier environment. Secretly hand a friend or a visiting guest a \$10.00-\$25.00 gift card or token to your local magic shop, coffee shop, movie theater, etc. Instruct the guest to present to the first, third, or fifth (pick a number) person to greet and welcome him. Repeat this once every few meetings. Word will get around and your members will be a bit more alert to new faces walking through the door.

**Make People Feel Comfortable.** Because a magic club shares secrets, it is naturally exclusive. When any new person shows up, there is some psychology at work. It's a matter of trust. So, when a stranger tries to join any unknown group of people, it can be a daunting task. Put these new people at ease. Make an effort to relax that tension and invite prospective Ring members to join in during the meeting, give opinions, suggest an approach, and apply their skills and talents to an upcoming club task.

**Make Meetings Fun.** What makes a magic meeting fun? First, it's the magic itself! So emphasize the prime reason people attend these meetings: seeing, doing, learning, and talking about magic. Whatever the officers can do to provide more of that activity helps. Sometimes simple competitions among performers can do it. Sometimes, planning lots to do and pacing it helps.

Second, it's situations in which participants enjoy themselves and each other. Remember that the prospective Ring member attending your meeting for the first time tends to judge the whole group by what goes on during that first encounter. They are likely to come 11 back if the experience is a memorable and positive one. If they see it as anything else, you've lost them.

**Keep Business Brief.** Promise prospective members that the business portion of every meeting will be kept brief. Then, keep that promise. However, be sure to announce to all members what the next meetings are about. Keep personal clashes and bickering outside of the meeting. Remember that this first experience has to be fun.

**Teach, Learn, Show, and Talk Magic.** Magic clubs continue to exist and grow because they bring together persons who like seeing magic, doing magic, learning magic, and talking magic. Plan each regular Ring meeting to include opportunities for everyone attending to experience some of each. Too many clubs forget that Rings exist for members to see, do and learn magic.

Plan every meeting with structured activities offering each of these opportunities. Some Rings support an “Everyone performs” policy. This may make a good meeting motto and, if all members are willing, it helps promote a healthy dynamic within the group. However, keep in mind that magic clubs also attract magic historians, collectors, enthusiasts, and supporters who may have no real interest in performing. Requiring every member to perform could alienate those who are uncomfortable with the requirement. Unhappy members soon become former members.

**Consider instead a policy of “Everyone Contributes”.** Allow members to contribute to each meeting in their own manner. Some may perform while others share parts of their collections, offer a historical review of local magicians, teach a magic effect, or present mini-lectures on a specific topic of interest or expertise. Allow members to participate at their own pace and within their own sphere of interest.

If your Ring is one of those really big ones, you still need to involve prospective members in some way. Otherwise, they can easily get lost in the crowd and forgotten. Consider a “buddy” approach, which links the prospect with another member who is handling some specific responsibility at that meeting. The “extra hand” should be welcomed by everyone, and the prospective member gets

something important to do besides just sitting and watching.

**Before and After Meetings.** Do your Ring members and prospective members have fun before a meeting starts? If the answer is yes, you've introduced a vital element leading toward more successful, and enjoyable meetings. Look for pre-meeting activities to stimulate enthusiasm, excitement and enjoyment. Lots of ways exist to do this: drawings, demonstrations, showing a new videotape, or even simple games and devices that force people to meet and talk to each other. Meeting planners call these "ice breakers," and they can be used to establish an atmosphere of heightened excitement for the planned meeting.

And what happens after this meeting concludes? Is there time for simple, face-to-face chatting about the meeting itself? Do you provide opportunities just for one-on-one socialization? Do members and prospects stay around to talk among themselves? Do they go out together to a restaurant? All these after-meeting activities can add to the overall fun and enjoyment. Some Rings move to a late night diner or restaurant for an informal dinner and further sharing.

**Don't Forget the Families.** Plan at least one just-for-fun social event each quarter. Plan a Spring Auction to supplement the spring cleaning of our magic closets and rooms. Celebrate summer with a family barbecue in a local park along with live entertainment. Kick off the fall with a live showcase benefitting a local charity. Celebrate National Magic Week with a Halloween costume party including a live séance. Close the year with a semi-formal holiday party and banquet. Include fun social events like these for the entire family throughout the year and your members will stay happy and active.

**Follow-Up!** What happens later on, after the meeting is over, should be planned, also. Consider appointing an individual "member mentor" or Ring buddy to follow-up with each prospective member. Urge them to contact the prospect a day or two after the meeting for a "skull session" on the meeting itself. "Did you enjoy it?" "What did you like best?" What should we do to make it better next time?"

The prime purpose of a follow-up contact is to further demonstrate that this Ring and its members really are interested in the prospect. The intent is also to resolve any negative issues that have come to mind during and immediately following that first meeting.

**Explain the Benefits of Membership.** Potential members must realize what they can get from being in the Ring. Even longtime members need to be reminded of

the available benefits from time to time. Remind them that they are not only joining a local group, but as a member of the I.B.M. they become part of the largest magic organization in the world. That means access to ideas, to The Linking Ring magazine, the annual convention, and thousands of other people throughout the world sharing a common interest in magic.

Active membership in a local Ring also carries benefits. These are activities, friendships and learning opportunities. Regular meeting attendance serves as a stimulus, a motivation to do more, to learn more, and to become a more effective member of both the Ring and the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

**Make Prospects Feel Welcome.** Convince every prospective member that they are wanted. Show them that you and the officers want their input, need their insight and ideas, and relish their presence and participation at Ring meetings. Be sincere!

Ask what they want to do as a member. Are they interested in performing, or can they better serve backstage? Can they develop or provide a simple pre-meeting workshop or clinic? During the next meeting, can they talk about a book they're reading, or demonstrate an effect or move that's causing them trouble?

The purpose of this portion of the follow-up is to obtain a commitment to participate during the next meeting. This approach should convince them that their presence is important; they have something important to offer. Also, it commits the prospective member to attending your Ring's next meeting.

**Consider Recruiting Incentives.** Some Rings offer some extra incentives to new members. For example, Milwaukee's Ring 41 used an attractive offer to sign up new members. I.B.M. members who join the Ring in the year's fourth quarter do so at very special dues rate. Membership then runs to the end of this year and through the following year a total of 15 months. The Ring gains a new member right away, and that member joins and participates immediately.

Albany, Oregon's Ring 238 underwrites part of the Ring and National dues for junior members. This way, young people otherwise not able to get involved, may join both the Ring and I.B.M., and actively participate.

Don't forget our senior members. Many are living on a fixed income and paying annual dues can be burdensome. Create a Ring program that covers part or all of the national and local dues for these valued members, if needed.

**Add Prospects to the Contact & Newsletter Lists.** Whatever methods you normally use to inform members about the club's next meeting (newsletter, postcard or phone) add each prospective member's name to that list and include him or her as if they are members already. Treat them as regular Ring members plus that personal follow-up by your "mentor member" assigned to that member candidate.

This "member mentor" should call as the next meeting date approaches. The purpose is to continue affirming your Ring's interest in this prospective member, and to remind them about the forthcoming meeting's date, time and location. Be sure the potential member has a way to get to the meeting. Offer to drive them with you, if you think this would be helpful. 15

Following these steps continues to show a potential member that you and the Ring truly are interested in their continued participation in the club. This approach also tries to address any reasons or "excuses" that might interrupt continued and regular involvement in the Ring and its activities.

**Help Prospects Qualify for Membership.** Many Rings have a requirement that potential members qualify for regular membership through a presentation or regular attendance. So far, these notes address only the attendance portion of this membership expectation.

Members of Ring 2 in Youngstown, Ohio invite prospective members to begin their initiation process after attending three meetings. A sponsor is named to help each applicant along the way; a mentor is identified for each of them to help prepare for the performance portion of this process.

It's never easy to stand before peers to make a presentation. That experience may be the most difficult kind of performance. Recognizing this built-in hurdle, the prospect's "member mentor" can be helpful in dispelling these fears. They should explain the performance requirements in detail, and coach the prospective member as they prepare for this presentation. Emphasize the basic purpose of this requirement, and the length of performance expected.

Help your prospective member to do well, and to have a good time while making their presentation. Help to put them at ease and aid in making them feel comfortable during this entire process. Then acknowledge their achievement and provide positive reinforcement when they complete their presentation.

Remember that magicians are people too! Often the friendships developed helping those new magicians will be special ones that will last a lifetime and will be cherished by the giver and the receiver.

## BREAKING THE ICE



Icebreakers are one of the most effective ways to kick off a meeting or conference. They help attendees and presenters get to know one another opening the door to enhanced networking and fellowship. Event planners often view them as standard procedure to meet others and have some fun before the official program starts.

What ice do you want to break? Meeting and event ice comes in different flavors.

Bringing like-minded people together for the first time?

The ice represents the fact that most of the people in the room have not yet met.

Bringing people together from different clubs or social groups? The ice represents the different perceptions we hold of one another.

Bringing attendees and presenters together at a workshop or conference? The ice represents the question *“Why should I give you my attention?”*

**How do you plan an icebreaking session?** Begin by choosing the flavor of ice you’re hoping to break and the outcome that you want to achieve. Should attendees just get to know each other? Should people start collaborating more closely? Should the session build anticipation for the event’s presenters?

**Keep it simple.** Don’t complicate it. The simpler the activity, the easier to understand and engage in it. You’re supposed to warm up the audience and melt the ice, not to create a fan club.

**Be super sensitive.** Keep in mind that you’re to hoping to bring attendees with different stories and various perceptions of privacy together. Put yourself in the attendees’ shoes and try to think how you would feel if you had to participate in the activity you designed for them.

Here is the list of our favorite icebreaking activities.

**Storytelling.** After a brief introduction explaining the importance of storytelling, divide the audience into groups of five and give each attendee a pen and a couple sheets of paper. Invite each attendee to write a brief story about the most

innovative event he or she helped to organize and share it with the members of their group. Revealing, connecting, icebreaking!

**Human bingo.** Prepare 5X5 bingo cards with various statements that range from personal info such as “Visited more than 15 countries”, “Has a pet dog (cat, bird, fish, etc)”, and “Drives a Ford (Chevy, Honda, etc)” to specialized info such as “Performs dice magic”, “Street busker”, “Has performed at restaurants”, and “Has cut a person in half.” Invite attendees to interview one another and ask players to initial one box that applies to them. If your crowd is large enough, limit one box per person. The first person to complete the entire card wins.

**Question ball.** Use a sharpie to write “Ice Breaker” questions onto an inflated beach ball. Tell attendees that the index finger of the hand that they write with will determine the question that they must answer. Toss the ball to the first attendee. This person answers the question that his or her index finger lands on or is nearest to. He then tosses the ball to the next person and so on.

**Two truths and a lie.** This is an all-time favorite! Divide people into five person groups and provide pens and paper. Invite attendees to write down three things about themselves, two of which are true and one that is false. Group members take turns reading their notes. Group members may ask three questions before guessing which one is false. Set a reasonable time limit then invite members to break into different groups with all new members and repeat.

**Guess my job.** This works well with smaller events, such as meetings or small workshops. Most attendees will have held a day job unrelated to magic at some point in their lives. Invite the attendees to write the most interesting or difficult job they have ever had onto a slip of paper and place it into a bowl. Pull a slip, read it, and invite attendees to connect the job with the person.

**Penny.** Place a handful of pennies on every table. Instruct the attendees to randomly select one penny. Attendees introduce themselves by stating their name, day job, association with magic, and the year on the chosen penny. They then briefly explain an interesting thing that happened to them during the year marked on the penny. If the penny is older than the attendee holding it, invite the attendee to explain an interesting thing from a year of their choice. Quick, fun and informative!

**Nametag Tango.** If you’re hosting a large networking event, have attendees select and wear someone else’s nametag from a table. Attendees have to roam the

room looking for their nametag. Once found, they greet the individual, interview him or her, and swap nametags. Play continues until everyone has their own nametag. This game forces attendees to approach new people.

**Prepare the questions.** This ice breaker works well just before a schedule panel discussion. Divide attendees into groups of five and provide pen and paper. Invite each group to identify the top two or three questions or topics they would like the panel to address. This exercise invites attendees to interact with others and greatly improves the panel's Q&A session.

**Poll the audience.** Polling the audience is one of the most efficient ways to break the ice before a panel discussion or presentation as it draws the attention of your audience to the presenter. With Q&A and polling apps, you can engage countless attendees at the same time and gain valuable insights about what your participants expect from your meeting or event. Come up with a simple poll that pulls the participants into your presentation and also lets them get familiar with the tool for further Q&A session. For example:

*What do you consider the most important aspect of a magic performance?*

- a) Skill and dexterity*
- b) Personality*
- c) Humor*
- d) Stage presence*

You don't need to be a rock star to turn such polls into a wonderful ice-breaking introduction.

There you have some of our favorite ice breakers. They work well with meetings, workshops, lectures, conferences, and more. Try one at your next meeting and spark the fun!



"There's a magic that comes from playing entirely to who you are. I've got my specialist subject - in the Mastermind sense - and I wouldn't change it, or who I am."

Chris Ofili

## MEMBER PERFORMANCES



Since that first I.B.M. meeting a century past, thousands of magicians have benefited from the nurturing performance venues provided by our international clubs. Sadly, a surprising number of members fail to take advantage of this tremendous benefit! They prefer to passively observe others share and improve their magical skills.

Our club meetings provide one of the safest and most supportive environments for testing new material, improving diverse skills and seeking helpful feedback. Established members freely offer their knowledgeable and vital support as we explore and master the skills needed to become confident performers. Why do our spotlight shy peers avoid this opportunity for artistic growth?

**“I’ve been performing for years. I don’t need the practice.”** Comedian Ellen DeGeneres said, “You can’t see yourself clearly until you see yourself through the eyes of others.” As performers, we tend to view ourselves and our contributions to this art through glasses tinted in our favor. This bias keeps us blissfully unaware of tics, habits and actions that seem normal to us yet may be quite distracting or annoying to our audiences. We may be using outdated patter, staging or techniques in desperate need of change.

Testing material in front of our peers presents an opportunity to see ourselves through the eyes of our audience. Inviting and listening to honest feedback can help us enhance, update and improve. There is always something new to learn from or teach to one another.

**“I don’t need the coaching because I don’t perform in public.”** Not every member desires to become a seasoned entertainer. Many join for the sheer pleasure of learning all they can about the art. Yet even the least likely performer among us will probably share a trick or two with a friend, family member or business associate. Improving these skills within an encouraging environment builds confidence and better prepares us for that rare moment.

**“I’m not good enough. I’ll be embarrassed.”** At some point, everyone in this art -

including such superstars as Messrs. Burton and Copperfield - began this journey as a rank know-nothing novice. We’ve all struggled with the thought, time and effort needed to raise an effect to performance level. No one expects us to be anything more than what we are at that moment. If we fumble a routine, we are isn’t it better to do so before experienced peers who have stood in our shoes many times - often in front of live audiences - and survived to magish another day? Even the harshest failures, before trusted friends and peers, are valuable steps forward.

**“Other Ring members are really good or established magicians. I’d be nervous.”**

First, every magician in the room is rooting for you and is excited to see what you are about to share. Understand that even the most experienced magicians battle nervousness. The great Howard Thurston overcame his habitual pre-show jitters by chanting “I love my audience” as he waited in the wings. We may not eliminate our stage fright but performing before compassionate peers can teach us how to manage those center stage nerves.

**“I’m not really a magician. I just enjoy watching.”** I’m not really an artist, but I enjoy testing my admittedly shabby skills by painting along with the late Bob Ross’s *Joy of Painting* videos. I even have a few of these frightfully amateurish oil canvases hanging around the house. Actively engaging in an art, even if it is solely for our own personal enjoyment, enhances our understanding and appreciation for that art. We don’t need to perform outside of our inner circle but waving that wand or brush with valued friends helps us to further appreciate the skills involved.

**“My performance will be criticized.”** Every club should vigorously oppose negative or demeaning criticism. Within our art, one size does not fit all and there is no single right way of doing things. The key phrase here is ‘positive evaluation’ and members should only offer it when requested. We must offer only positive suggestions that the receiver is free to accept, file away, or ignore. Such peer nurturing helps us to build performance skill sets that will serve us throughout our lives.

**“That’s all well and good, but I’ve been ridiculed before.”** We hear ya! We’ve all been there and suffered through this. Ego-driven know-it-all perfectionist brutes exist everywhere, even in a nurturing fraternal organization such as ours. The simple truth is this. Fully improving our creative energies requires risk. We’ll never grow as artists while hiding from bullies. Tune out the petty voices bent on



belittling us and focus on those that strengthen our skills. If you overhear someone ridiculing another, step up and crush it on the spot. If this is an issue among your club members, perhaps the club needs someone like YOU to speak up and shout 'STOP!'

**"I don't want to share my hard-earned ideas with my competition."** Many of us have our signature pieces, our scripts honed over years of performances, and the fresh ideas that transform a tired old effect into a modern work of art. We need to remember that the seeds for many of these ideas came from others around us. Just as these magicians nurtured our growth, it is now our turn to cultivate others. This is the nature of a mentor/apprentice relationship in any art.

Still, it can be frustrating to see the fruits of our creative labor performed by another without permission. It is incumbent upon each of us to safeguard the intellectual and creative rights of our most fertile minds. Once a member compromises that trust, it can be difficult - if not impossible - to recover and our conduit for fresh imaginative ideas runs dry. A magic club functions on trust. Once that trust is lost, the club will dive into a death spiral. Protect this vital element. If you have a member who habitually purloins the intellectual ideas of others, handles the property of other members without permission, or openly reveals the secrets of proprietary effects, don't tip toe - boot him out!

**So, get up and out of your chairs!** Share a deeper slice of magical fellowship with our magical brothers and sisters! Pledge today to share a bit of your passion for this art at all future meetings!



"When I was 15, I had a crush on this guy who was really good at magic, and so I learned to juggle, thinking it would impress him. I spent hours and hours practicing, planning to show him. And then I never even saw him again. But at least I learned how to juggle."

Danica McKellar

## CLUB MEETINGS

### MEETING THEME SUGGESTIONS



Maintaining interesting meetings is essential to a Ring's success. Over time a Ring's meeting activities may fall into a rut. They become all too predictable from one year to the next. This is fine if most members find comfort in this familiarity, but most members, especially younger members, crave the excitement of exploring undiscovered paths.

Keeping meeting excitement and fun levels high will go a long way towards insuring maximum attendance. Add new meeting themes and fresh opportunities to keep anticipation high. Shake things up!

This chapter suggests vast areas of interest and activity for your meetings. Ideally, this list will never be complete as innovative Rings will always find new ways to keep meetings inviting and addictive. Space is provided for your own ideas. Be sure to share these new ideas with others through Online Ring 2100.

As you browse through the list below, allow your imagination to run with each suggestion. The ideas that came to the author's mind while compiling this list may differ wildly from yours. Some ideas may work well as a meeting or performance theme. Others may suggest a workshop, mini-lecture, roundtable discussion, TED Talk, or teach-in opportunity. You might even try combining multiple ideas into a single killer theme! That's okay! Go where your magic Muse carries you.

While planning, don't overlook the natural talent within your own ranks. When rank-&-file members are challenged to produce a special program, present a mini lecture, or lead a workshop they learn more. They discover personal strengths they may not know they had. You may well broaden their comfort zone and help them find a home on center stage. Who knows? Their unique perspective may provide insight not previously considered. Shake the apathy out of your members! Get them involved!

Ancient/Historical Magic  
Animal Magic (Real & otherwise)  
Animation Magic (Fitzkee)

Attraction Magic (Fitzkee)  
Audience Management/Crowd Control  
Audience Volunteers/Lay Volunteers  
Backdrops and Stage Decor  
Bags and Magic (Change bags, switch bags, force bags, Blendo bags...)  
Balloon Magic/Sculpting  
Bar Magic  
Birthday Party Magic  
Bizarre Magick  
Black Art Magic  
Blades in Magic (Knives, choppers, swords, scissors...)  
Book/Video Review  
Build-It-Yourself Magic  
Business Card Exchange or Critique  
Business Card Magic  
Business of Magic  
Busking/Working for Tips  
Candles, Canes, and Wands  
Card Magic  
Card Magic Gimmicks  
Card Magic No Sleights  
Card Magic on Stage  
Card Magic Teach-In  
Card Splitting  
Cardboard Box Illusions  
Charity & Benefit Gigs  
Children's Magic  
Chop Cups  
Close-Up Showcase  
Clown/Character Driven Magic  
Coin Magic  
Coin Magic Gimmicks  
Collectors' Corner  
Color Themed Magic  
Contests  
Convention Purchased Magic

Comedy Magic  
Comedy Scripting  
Comedy Workshop  
Comedy Delivery & Timing  
Community Volunteerism  
Computer/Electronic Device Magic  
Costumes, Wardrobe, and Accessories  
Critiques of Performances (Positive, constructive, helpful)  
Cups And Balls  
Dealer's Night (Product demonstrations and sales)  
Demonstration of Collectible/Rare Magic Items  
Deja Vu Magic - Members perform their personal version of the same effect  
Directing Magic (The importance of having a skilled director for your show)  
Do-As-I-Do Magic  
Do-It-Yourself Magic  
Dollar Store/Thrift Store/Hardware Store Magic  
Effect Spotlight (Ambitious Card, Oil & Water, Out of This World, Etc)  
Blades in Magic (Knives, choppers, swords, scissors...)  
Book/Video Review  
Build-It-Yourself Magic  
Business Card Exchange or Critique  
Business Card Magic  
Business of Magic  
Busking/Working for Tips  
Candles, Canes, and Wands  
Card Magic  
Card Magic Gimmicks  
Card Magic No Sleights  
Card Magic on Stage  
Card Magic Teach-In  
Card Splitting  
Cardboard Box Illusions  
Charity & Benefit Gigs  
Children's Magic  
Chop Cups  
Close-Up Showcase

Clown/Character Driven Magic  
Coin Magic  
Coin Magic Gimmicks  
Collectors' Corner  
Color Themed Magic  
Contests  
Convention Purchased Magic  
Comedy Magic  
Comedy Scripting  
Comedy Workshop  
Comedy Delivery & Timing  
Community Volunteerism  
Computer/Electronic Device Magic  
Costumes, Wardrobe, and Accessories  
Critiques of Performances (Positive, constructive, helpful)  
Cups And Balls  
Dealer's Night (Product demonstrations and sales)  
Demonstration of Collectible/Rare Magic Items  
Deja Vu Magic - Members perform their personal version of the same effect  
Directing Magic (The importance of having a skilled director for your show)  
Do-As-I-Do Magic  
Do-It-Yourself Magic  
Dollar Store/Thrift Store/Hardware Store Magic  
Specific Effect Spotlight (Ambitious Card, Oil & Water, Out of This World, Etc)  
Emcee Effects & Routines  
Magic Night And Performances By Specific Groups  
Magic of (Insert Famous Magician's Name Here)  
Magical Presentations That Need Help And Improvement  
Magic Performance Night With Specific Props  
Magic Performance Night With Specific Type Of Magical Effect  
Magic Tables & Stands  
Magic That Needs Help  
Magic with a Story  
Magic with a Message  
Magic with Everyday Objects  
Make-Up for Magicians

Marketing Magic  
Medicine Show Magic/Pitching  
Meeting Swap with other Ring/Club  
Mentalism Magic  
Mini Auction (Each member may sell one item to highest bidder)  
Mini Lectures by Members (30-minute Lectures)  
Money Magic  
Movie/TV Themed Magic  
Music & Sound Effects in Magic  
My Favorite Trick  
My Favorite (Tenyo/Abbott/Tannen/Tarbell/Linking Ring...) Effect  
Open House Showcase  
Optical Illusions in Magic  
Original or Adapted Magic Created by Members (Submit as a Linking Ring Parade Article!)  
Original Routines with Standard Props  
Outdoor Performances  
Pack Flat Play Big  
Paper Magic  
Past President Spotlight Evening  
Patriotic Magic  
Penetration Magic (Fitzkee)  
Performance or Teaching Themes For A Specific Audience  
Performing Surrounded  
Performer Swap with other Rings/Clubs  
Photo or Video Evening  
Physical Anomaly Magic (Fitzkee)  
Prediction Magic (Fitzkee)  
Press Releases  
Product Reviews  
Production Magic (Fitzkee)  
Professional Lectures  
Psychology of Magic  
Puppetry in Magic  
Putting the Extra in Ordinary  
Raffle/Door Prize

Reel or Thread Magic  
Restaurant Magic/Tablehopping  
Restoration Magic (Fitzkee)  
Rope, String, & Ribbon Magic  
Rubber Band Magic  
Safety/Law Enforcement Themed Magic  
Salesmanship with Magic  
Scripting Magic/Patter  
Showmanship/Presentation/Staging  
Silk/Handkerchief Gimmicks  
Silk/Handkerchief Magic  
Spanish for Magicians  
Spectator Failure (Fitzkee)  
Sponge Magic  
Spooky Magic/Séance  
Stage Card Magic  
Stage Craft And Theatrical Techniques  
Stage Tech for Magicians (Lighting, Sound, Stage Sets, Managing)  
Storing/Transporting/Caring for Equipment  
Storytelling Magic  
Street Magic  
Square/Round/Shaped Magic  
Sucker Tricks  
Suspensions/Levitations/Antigravity (Fitzkee)  
Sympathetic Magic (Fitzkee)  
Tag Team Magic (Member performs, tags next person who must perform or pay a fine)  
Taking the Sting out of Sucker Tricks  
Tarbell Magic  
Teach-a-Trick  
Teaching And Mentoring with Magic  
Techniques  
Teen Magic  
Television Magic  
“The Magic Trick You Rarely Do Because...”  
Time Period Magic

- Trade Show Magic
- Thimble Magic
- Thought Reading/Thought Transmission/ESP (Fitzkee)
- Thumb Tips and Tubes
- Transformation Magic (Fitzkee)
- Transposition Magic (Fitzkee)
- Unusual Magic Performance Night
- Using Confederates & Stooges
- Using Video Recording in Magic (Performance, Promotion, Testimonials...)
- Vanishes/Appearances (Fitzkee)
- Variety Arts Night
- Ventriloquism
- Wallet Magic
- What Is It? (Display obscure magic items—Contestants guess their purpose)
- When Things Go Wrong
- Who Am I? (Famous magician's name Card on Forehead Game)
- Worst Trick Ever Bought
- Youth Magic Club Showcase
- Zombie/Floating Effects

**ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS HERE!**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

"I love anything to do with ventriloquism and magic."

Illeana Douglas

## CREATIVE CHALLENGES FOR MEETINGS



Artistic growth is nurtured by creative challenges. Creativity means expressing ourselves, trying new things, and testing new ways with imagination and originality.

Many of our members join our clubs believing that only a few select individuals are gifted with creativity. They believe that one either is or isn't born with this unique talent. Helping our members to discover and exercise their creative power of self-expression rests at the very foundation of every

magic club.

London's Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood defines creativity as *"...the ability to challenge, question and explore. It involves taking risks, playing with ideas, keeping an open mind and making connections where none are obvious."*

In line with this definition, creativity has four major characteristics:

- The creative mind is influenced by the imagination in thought and behavior,
- The creative mind seeks a specific goal or purpose.
- The creative mind thrives on ideas that are new and original – to himself, if not to others.
- The creative mind generates something of value to himself and, perhaps, to others.

Many of our members may believe that creativity is all about the final product; the celebrity of an actor or great magician, the published book, or the charted song. The task for a magic club mastermind rests in demonstrating that creativity has more to do with the process than the resulting product. This process boosts confidence, develops valued relationships, uncovers hidden talents and strengths, and empowers positive emotions. The creative process helps us understand who we are, what we love, and what we can contribute to others.

Within the limited time that we share with our members, it helps to focus on the purpose and importance of the creative process rather than the outcome. Our goal in the process may be writing an original script to a routine, inventing a new gimmick, or applying a fresh routine for an ancient prop. The outcome of this project does not have to be of value to anyone else. The key is to create something of value to each individual member.

For example, we can challenge members to:

- Modernize and perform an outdated effect from the Tarbell series or other "ancient" text.
- Personalize an effect to match a fresh theme, such as Doctor Who, Super heroes, Harry Potter, sporting event, holidays, and so on. Challenge students to customize his or her character and wardrobe, all props, and actions to match the theme.
- Create a routine synchronized to royalty-free music or sound effects.
- Create as many magic effects as possible in five or ten minutes from the assorted magic and standard objects found in a paper bag or box. Invite members to donate items by cleaning out their magic, office, garage, and kitchen junk drawers. Consider dividing members into small teams with each team receiving a bag or box holding different items.
- Teach a new magic effect to other members after studying and practicing that effect for 30 minutes.
- Watch another magician perform a new magic effect without revealing the utility prop, gimmick, or secret then create his or her own way of accomplishing the same effect. Breaking the members into 2-or-3 member teams may make this challenge easier.
- Challenge members to take a prop from their shelves that has been gathering dust for years and create a totally new effect and story.
- Along this same line, ask members to bring their old unused props to the meeting and place them on a community table. (Labels with the owner's names under the base may prevent confusion later.) Invite members to choose a prop with which to create a totally new effect



and story.

- Teach the mechanics for a new magic effect then challenge members to practice and perform the effect using their own pattern or story.
- Produce a 60-second advertisement for your club including videography, royalty-free music, dialogue, and action. You may discover an incredible new ad for your website or Instagram page.
- Create the choreography or stage movements for a classic stage or parlor effect. You may also invite a professional stage director or theater choreographer to attend and offer advice on improving stage movement and audience interaction. Invite members to perform a favorite routine for tweaking.
- Write a five-minute stand-up or improv comedy piece around a designated or random theme. Invite a headlining comedian or improv artist to offer tips and improvements.
- Combine three or more standard props or effects into a single themed storyline. Decorate the props according to the theme.
- Challenge the members to purchase two or three items from the dollar store and incorporate them into a magic effect. This would make a fun field trip for a youth group.
- Set the scenario of a magician arriving in a strange city for an evening performance. His or her complete act is lost with their baggage. The mission? Explore the nearest WalMart, Target, thrift store, or dollar store and create a photo list of items that could be used to create a 30-minute parlor show. Compare lists and discuss.
- Perform a magic trick, improv comedy bit, or entertaining story piece with only the items currently in the room, on their person, or borrowed from others in the room. This may include jewelry, keys, pens or pencils, wallet, coins, etc.
- Gather items that one might routinely find in a restaurant setting: condiments, salt & pepper shakers, napkins, straws, menus, glass and table ware, coins, bottles, flatscreen TVs, windows, chairs, etc. Create a roundtable demonstration of impromptu feats one might

perform with these items.

- Each member selects a famous magician's name from a hat. Give them fifteen minutes to browse the Internet and create a ten-point bio without naming the magician. Appoint team captains and take turns dividing members into two teams. The bios are read to the opposing team. Teams gain a point if the opposing team cannot name the magician in three tries.
- Explore new skills such as lockpicking, picking pockets, watch stealing, origami, juggling, unicycle riding, stiltwalking, stand-up comedy, and so on.
- Create and perform a short routine in a specific literary author's style. For example, perform the cups & balls as if written by Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, Walter Gibson's *The Shadow*. Dr. Seuss, J.K. Rowling, Lewis Carroll, Shel Silverstein, or R.L. Stein. You may allow the member to choose their author or have the name randomly pulled from a hat.
- Perform an effect in the manner and voice of a fictional character, such as Elmer Fudd, Lord of the Rings' Gollum, Darth Vader, Hermione Granger, Charlie Brown, Mary Poppins, Mr. Bean, Shakespeare's Puck, Spongebob Squarepants, Bilbo Baggins, etc.
- Perform an effect in the manner and voice of an historical figure, such as Abraham Lincoln, Paul Revere, Gen. George S. Patton, Betsy Ross, Unsinkable Molly Brown, Theodore Roosevelt, Buffalo Bill Cody, etc.
- Challenge members to team up with another member to create and perform a two-person routine in the manner of such duos as Laurel & Hardy, Martin & Lewis, Abbott & Costello, the Three Stooges, The Marx Bros., and others.

Generate new challenges to keep the process flowing and the creativity of our members blossoming in the art of magic and creative thought! With a little effort, you can come up with many, many more. Share your most creative ideas in your Linking Ring Reports so that we can all work towards building the joy of this magical art!

## THE FAMILY RING

“Leaving money on the table” is a business idiom that means failing to ask for any extra cash in a deal that was there for the asking. To paraphrase from Michael Ammar’s *Negotiating Higher Performance Fees*, when we charge a client two hundred dollars for a performance for which they would have gladly paid five hundred dollars without blinking, we’ve left three hundred dollars on the table. The skilled professionals among us understand that this is no way to run a business.



Sadly, many of our magic clubs consistently leave money and prospective members on the table by ignoring younger families. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that the number of working parents with children under the age of eighteen rose from forty-one percent in 1965 to seventy-one percent in 2020. The report continues that the number of hours working mothers and fathers spend with their children has more than tripled from 1965 to 2020.

The point is that these modern parents most often choose quality time with their children over solo participation in a social or civic activity. This makes it difficult for clubs like ours to recruit and retain these younger members. Rather than leave this “money on the table” why are we not changing our focus and traditions to include these families - children and all?

Integrating families into our clubs is an outstanding way to grow membership and move our clubs in a fresh direction. It enriches and strengthens our clubs as it opens our doors to hard-to-reach demographics.

The infusion of an enthusiastic and responsive lay audience for meeting performances serves our members. Families benefit by sharing quality time in an entertaining, relaxed, and creative environment. A larger membership of diverse ages and talents helps us to meet community volunteer service needs. Finally, the legacy created through family-centered clubs serves the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

Now, before you light your torches and take to the streets with cries of

“Sacrilege!” at the thought of pushing aside our traditional clandestine fraternal gatherings, consider this. Keep your traditional club meetings. Simply set aside a separate night each month for family-focused entertainment and sharing.

Schedule these nights at a time that is convenient for family involvement and in a location that is appropriate for children. Arrange for the use of a banquet room at your favorite buffet and voila! An evening out with dinner, a show, fun activities, and at family-friendly prices and Bob’s your uncle!

Club members can use this opportunity to test and refine new routines before an supportive lay audience. Parents and kids may provide invaluable feedback and suggestions that jaded magicians miss. Challenge families to create their own routines and perform together. Recruit teens to coach younger children on effects and presentation. Encourage children and teens to perform to help build confidence and self-esteem.

Provide age appropriate teach-a-trick segments for children, teens and adults at each meeting. Include do-it-yourself projects that children and parents can work on together. Teach icebreaker and occupational tricks that parents can use in their professional lives. Offer coaching for children working on talent show acts or school projects. Find new ways to build a genuine rapport between parents, children, your members and the art of magic.

Plan family-friendly community service events such as David Copperfield’s powerful Project Magic senior home and hospital visits. Train family teens to serve as junior Ring officers and mentor assistants. You might even train your teen members to host magic-themed versions of Red Cross babysitting and Candy Striper certification clinics. These clinics provide a real community service, raise funds, and introduce outside teens to your youth program.

Add a Family Coordinator to your executive committee to support the family-friendly club concept. Add youth Teen Coordinators to help plan and manage youth programs. Task these volunteers with planning and scheduling family and teen events and volunteer services.

Adding children and teens to your Ring activities will increase your expenses. Plan for magic lesson materials, instruction sheets, color and game sheets, etc. Create a budget and offer a family membership fee that covers expenses.

Plan on appreciation and achievement certificates, coupons or gift cards for family

-friendly restaurants, special holiday banquets and gatherings, spontaneous notes of appreciation, holiday and celebration greeting cards and sporting event and movie tickets. Plan family outings such as field trips to the zoo, museums, amusement parks and sporting events. Arrange for group discounts on tickets to local magic shows and magic-themed films. If you choose to meet at a local buffet, raffle a family dinner gift card or two at each meeting.

A productive and engaging youth program increases the likelihood that younger members will develop a deep connection with our Ring. Youth members who grow within the club are far more likely to charter new clubs college campuses, military bases, and in their new hometowns. Start with easy beginner lessons for elementary age children and intermediate lessons for middle school students. Teach one fun and engaging effect per meeting to keep them coming back. Dan Harlan's *Every Trick in the Book* video series is an excellent resource.

Recruit high school students as apprentices and mentor assistants working with the younger children. If your club does not yet sponsor an I.B.M. Youth Link, this would be an excellent time to start one! As your family program grows, create and promote a family magic speakers' bureau. Send families to perform and speak about the magic of families at other community programs such as Civitan, Rotary Clubs, Jaycees, PTAs, Scouts, and churches.

Parents talk to other parents. Teens and adolescents share with one another. Word of mouth about a program that welcomes families, entertains, and teaches can draw a steady flow of new family members with little effort. Stop leaving these valuable members on the table!



"The nice thing about being  
a writer is that you can  
make magic happen without  
learning tricks."

Humphrey Carpenter

## MASTERMINDS AND SUBGROUPS



The people with whom we surround ourselves influence our moods and creative energies. Regular interaction with positive and motivated people kicks our inner success drive into high gear. One of the most powerful tools for accomplishing this is Napoleon Hill's *Mastermind*, introduced in his classic book *Think and Grow Rich*.

**What is a Mastermind?** Harry Houdini and Harry Kellar both employed Masterminds as do many of today's top magicians and entertainers. A Mastermind is simply a tight select network of like-minded people who meet regularly to share ideas, information, feedback, contacts, and resources.

The most productive Masterminds generally consist of five to eight members. Larger groups tend to hinder the creative process. Fewer reduces the level and quality of shared input. Mastermind members share honestly and openly to the benefit of all.

**Why form a Mastermind Group?** If two heads solve problems better than one, then how much more productive might five or six heads be? Each of our lives revolves within a limited sphere of experience. We simply can't know, do, or master all that life offers.

Now, imagine linking the spheres of a few similar minds into one single Mastermind. By doing this, our creativity now has access to the knowledge, experiences, resources, and skills of each of those minds. Masterminds excel in problem-solving, brainstorming, networking, encouraging, and motivating each member. The group holds each member firmly accountable for progressing towards stated goals.

The 2020 pandemic crushed the entertainment field. We all lost our venues and audiences. We sat at home planning and waiting for our shuttered curtains to rise again. Fortunately, I was part of a group of gifted entertainers with some knowledge of recorded and streaming video options. Together we managed to cobble together profitable virtual party, preschool, and workshop shows from our

homes. Our Mastermind helped us to recover a bit of normalcy during a very chaotic time. We've recently begun exploring the limitless benefits of 3D design and printing.

**How do we create a Mastermind?** Begin by establishing a common objective or purpose. This purpose will determine who we invite to join. We may arrange our Mastermind with people who share our specific passions or people from slightly different walks of life. What novel ideas might we find within a Mastermind composed of a magician, a musician, a choreographer, a mystery author, and a marketer?

Start by inviting two or three people who are comfortable enough with each other to be open, direct, and trustworthy. Trust and openness are vital factors in every Mastermind. The fear of intellectual property theft or disclosure outside of the group will crush a Mastermind in a second.

Seek out people who match or exceed your drive and passion and are functioning at your level or higher. If your goal is to fool Penn & Teller, it's silly to surround yourself with off-the-shelf or mediocre performers.

Gradually encourage members to nominate others to join. Be careful! Each addition to your group will dramatically change the dynamic. Invite each candidate to a few meetings to see what they offer and how well they fit. Require a unanimous vote to admit new members. A single self-serving ego will cause your members to disappear faster than a dollar in the dealers' room. Don't be shy about promptly removing counterproductive individuals from your group.

Cap membership at seven or eight. Don't be tempted to grow larger. Frankly, no one outside of your group should know that your group exists. Avoid hurt feelings of exclusion among peers by keeping everything about your group confidential - even its existence.

**How does a Mastermind Work?** Keep meetings informal, fun, and upbeat. Encourage every member to squelch any sign of negativity, gossip, or complaining as soon as it starts. Surprise one another with token gifts from time to time. These may be new magic effects, handmade items, special baked treats, or other small gifts of appreciation.

Ideally, start sessions with a teambuilding exercise or game to kickstart the creative juices. Then invite each member to share a positive occurrence or

breakthrough since the last meeting. Hold each member accountable. If a member had a problem last week with a script or using Zoom, ask for a progress report. If the member offers excuses in place of results, push him or her to show progress next week. A member who contributes little or consistently fails to advance as part of your group may be holding everyone back. Don't be afraid to remove them.

Next, open the floor to new problems, concerns, or ideas developed since the last session. Brainstorm one problem or concept at a time. Finally, recap the day's discussion and restate the goals for the week ahead.

Meet weekly either for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or online. Draw on the combined energy of your peers to brainstorm new scripts and performance ideas.

Once a year, plan a creative three-day retreat. Share the cost of a beach or mountain rental capable of housing members and their spouses. Spend each day locked in an intense, hands-on creative workshop exploring successes and problems. Spend the evenings in fellowship and socializing with spouses.

If a certain conference appeals to your entire group, attend as a group and plan your retreat for three days after the conference. Spend those three days discussing what each member learned at the conference and brainstorming new ways of using that knowledge. You'll be amazed at how much you'll look forward to these retreats and how energizing and productive they can be!

**Field Trips.** My Mastermind group plans regular field trips. One year we rented a mountain cabin and enjoyed an all-night tour of a local magician's fabulous magic mansion. A well-known illusion creator graciously invited us on a tour of his incredible workshop. Oy, the toys we bought! We attend touring magic shows, mystery dinners, and conferences as a group. We're currently planning an Amtrak tour of cities hosting top magic shops and performance venues.

Masterminds should support rather than replace our interest in the local magic club. They make us better magicians, a trait that we should encourage and share with other club members.

Surrounding ourselves with a select group of peers who will never let us settle for less than our best is the greatest gift we can give ourselves. Form your Mastermind today!



"Genius is another word for magic, and the whole point of magic is that it is inexplicable."

Margot Fonteyn

## CLUB MEETINGS

### BOOSTING ATTENDANCE

Nothing is more deflating than spending hours and dollars planning an event only to have a poor turnout. Empty chairs are the bane of every organizer's existence so, here are a few simple tactics for improving attendance at your meetings and events.

Note that some of these event attendance tips may not apply to every type of event. Some are better for meetings and others apply to social events. But these ideas may trigger your brainstorming efforts. We will use the term "attendees" to apply to members, guests, and community visitors.

Also, keep in mind that most people tend to put off sending their R.S.V.P. and registration to the last minute. Eventbrite shared a recent stat that half of event registrations or R.S.V.P.s are received within 2 weeks of the event cut-off date. With this in mind, you should make a conscious effort to push and reward early R.S.V.P. and registrations responses.

**Keep a Record.** Start and maintain a planning file for every event, including meetings. Include copies of committee meetings, planning checklists, proposed and completed actions, surveys, forms, contracts, tickets, etc. Preserve and identify photos and video testimonials of attendees. Record what worked and what could have been handled better. This file serves as the starting point for any similar future event plan helping planners avoid past errors and include beneficial ideas.

**Ask for input upfront and feedback afterwards.** Research is the first step in planning a successful event. Find out what your target audience wants and doesn't want. Survey your prospective attendees either in person orally or with a short email survey. After the event, follow up with attendees to find out what went wrong and what could have been handled better. Add these responses to your event file and make these tweaks to your next event.

**Choose a suitable and central location.** The best way to drive away attendees is to choose a venue that is too far away, too expensive, or offensive. Restaurant meeting rooms may be convenient, but vegan members may find the location



distasteful. If the majority of your attendees live North and East of the city, selecting a location in the far southwest corner of the city may not be a good idea. Select a location convenient for a majority of your attendees.

**Choose a date that works for the majority of your attendees.** The simple truth is that finding a day and time that serves every member is nearly impossible. A weekday evening is ideal for most members working a 9-to-5 job. It's not so great for those who work swing shifts or magicians working restaurant gigs. Setting a 7:00 PM start time generally works best allowing members to enjoy an early dinner, sometimes with other members, before rejoining at the event site.

Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays are often troublesome for working magicians who often schedule matinee and evening weekend gigs. Tuesdays and Thursdays traditionally make the best meeting nights. Several holidays roll over to Monday to create a three-day weekend which is ideal family get-a-way time, interfering with Monday meetings.

**Check for competing events.** I once booked a family party hosted at the University of North Carolina's faculty recreation facility in the heart of Chapel Hill. Unfortunately, the party was scheduled on the same day as the UNC/NC State football game—the hottest game of the year. The host family, guests, and I sat in bumper-to-bumper traffic for over two hours trying to reach the faculty club. Lesson learned. Check for major events near your event locations and along your traffic routes when planning your own events.

Also check for major events that may draw attendees away from your event. You wouldn't want to plan a club banquet on Super Bowl Sunday. The same is true of major fairs, festivals, and trade shows which employ many of our members in one way or another.

**Provide options for multiple demographics.** Our clubs and events attract a wide variety of attendees. Try to identify the chief segments and provide incentives or programming specifically that appeals to them. A workshop on card sleights may draw a third of your members. Adding material on humor and card effects targeting family and parlor shows may draw the rest.

**Send out save the dates early.** For social and educational events, such as lectures and workshops, get on people's calendars as soon as you can so they can set aside the day and time.



**Personalize your invitations and other mailed correspondence.** Mailed correspondence gets more attention these days due to the overwhelming flood of email. Anything handwritten and personalized gets even more notice. Consider enlisting your special event committee to mail hand addressed, if not handwritten card invitations to club members. This technique is especially effective in getting inactive club members to attend your next meeting.

**Simplify the registration / R.S.V.P. process.** If you are using online registration, make your forms as easy as possible to complete. Minimize the number of fields. Make it easy to combine multiple registrations should one person choose to reply for an entire family. For social events, workshops, and performances, consider bundled pricing for multiple registrations.

**Offer incentives for early registrations or arrivals.** Early-bird discounts are a must for priming early registrations for many social events, workshops, lectures, and performances. Consider giving away books, discount coupons, swag bags, or other value-adds to people who sign up early. Allow a cushion of time to allow you to extend your early-bird registration at the last minute giving bargain-hunters a last-minute push.

**Build your schedule/agenda early and communicate it to your attendees.** A clear and detailed agenda delivered to your attendees makes it easier for people to make an informed decision about attending. The earlier you provide this information, the more likely you are to receive early R.S.V.P.s and registrations. Make sure you include this in your communications.

**Once the agenda is set, try to avoid making changes.** Early registrants and attendees sitting on the fence may lose confidence in the event planners if agendas are frequently changed once posted.

**Build extracurricular fun time into the agenda and make events family friendly.** Any event that is longer than 2 hours needs breaks or down time built into the schedule. Multi-day events should have extracurricular fun time built into the schedule. Many attendees like to turn out-of-town conferences and meetings into family trips, so keep this in mind when proposing entertainment and dining options to your attendees.

**Express multiple value propositions in your promotional efforts.** One or two nebulous benefits aren't enough for most people to attend an event. Include in your invitations, emails, website, social media, and marketing materials the

valuable take-aways of the event. What will attendees take away from the meeting? What are the credentials of the keynote speakers, lecturers, or instructors? What entertainment is provided? What is the meeting or workshop agenda? Enhance your promotion with photos and testimonials of similar past events (remember your event file?).

**Use emails to both invite and remind.** Even if you mailed invitations, it still doesn't hurt to send an email invitation linking back to your event website. Regardless, it is critical to email timely countdown reminders to your invited participants and attendees. A good rule of thumb is sending reminders 14 days, 7 days, 3 days and 1 day prior to the event.

**Follow-up phone calls.** As your R.S.V.P. or registration deadline approaches, it's a good idea to have your event committee call your invited attendees and ask them if they are planning on attending your event. This works very well in bringing inactive club members back into the fold. Yes, this takes effort and can be time-consuming. How high do you rate meeting and event attendance?

**Optimize your event Web site for mobile devices.** Most clubs have a basic website design that is not mobile friendly. The bulk of attendee communication is handled on mobile phones and tablets these days. Ensuring that your event website is mobile friendly is an important step in attracting attendees. Especially if you're offering online registration, R.S.V.P.s, or enquiries. Check your website on your mobile phone now.

**Cross promote with other organizations.** Contact other organizations who may also reach out to your target audience and give them incentive to cross-promote your event to their lists. You could make them an in-kind sponsor and give them registration discounts or other spiffs for helping you.

**Ask attendees and speakers to help you promote the event.** Make it easy for invited attendees, speakers, lecturers, and entertainers to spread the word. Encourage them to reach out to their friends and peers via email and social media. Offer discounts for bringing friends. Encourage your speakers and event participants to promote the event to their networks.

**Use your social media accounts!** We won't go into detail on using your social media accounts for maximum benefit here. That's a whole other chapter! Just be aware that social media is one of your strongest tools. Use it!

## INCREASING ATTENDANCE WITH INCENTIVES



It is often difficult for any single program to recruit and hold our members' loyalty with so many community service, sport, and social programs competing for their attention. Adding creative and targeted incentives to your meetings offers one way to draw new members through your door while boosting participation and loyalty.

Incentives may include intangible activities such as magic show and theatrical backstage visits, recreational visits to local amusement centers, in-depth education projects, and targeted advancement. They may also take the form of tangible rewards such as magic shop gift certificates, magic books or DVDs, and magic props. Most incentives may be broken into a few select categories:

**Financial.** These incentives might include magic camp or convention scholarships, magic shop gift cards or discounts, complimentary lecture passes, paid internships, family ticket packets to local magic or live theatrical performances, and so on.

**Food.** Offering a selection of comfort foods and snacks at meetings can draw and retain all ages. You can provide simple snack foods like popcorn and chips or arrange for something more complex like pizza and subs. Bite size candy bars can be presented to members who successfully perform or review a previous lesson's topic or effect. Local restaurants, especially those featuring in-house magicians, may provide complimentary or discounted meal coupons for members and their families. The promise of a pizza party or ice cream social can motivate members toward achieving a particularly tough goal. An open house with a potluck buffet or an ice cream social theme can draw new and inactive members.

**Prizes.** Earnable prizes can motivate all age groups from youth to adult. Small toys, food, decorative pencils or pens, T-shirts, and tickets to local events may appeal to most members. Consider larger raffle prizes and tickets to sports events, touring magic shows, and local theatrical programs. Everyone enjoys receiving magic

books or DVDs, especially those that match their particular interests. Boxes of these books and DVDs can generally be purchased at magic auctions for around a dollar per book or less. Books and DVDs may also be donated by adult magicians interested in clearing out their cluttered rooms. Use these items as prizes for completing magic projects, challenges, and achievements.

Some programs hand out cards or other novel tokens for each meeting the member attends or each practiced skill the member teaches or demonstrates. Consider a club punch card. Punch the card for each meeting or session attended. Two punches if they actively participate with a performance, review, or presentation. The tokens and full punch cards may be redeemed for donated prizes. Create a hierarchy of token-earned prizes – the more tokens or punch cards collected, the better the prize.

**Achievement.** Awarding special pins, certificates, ribbons, or stickers for achieving a higher skill level or other specific goal builds pride in membership. Scouting does this through merit badges and rank advancements. Companies like Baudville.com offer a wide selection of stock and custom award pins that can be adapted to this purpose.

**Educational Field Trips.** Field trips may be a regular feature of your club program, however, reserving special field trips for members with high attendance or participation standing can serve a dual purpose. It rewards members for outstanding participation and it encourages other members to work harder. Trips to magic and theatrical exhibits in museums, backstage visits to touring shows, meet-&-greet with well-known star performers work well for all ages.

**Recreational Field Trips.** Sometimes, you just have to set the magic aside and have fun! Skating and bowling parties, attending a movie as a group, and spending the day at a nearby amusement park or beach helps to create bonds and pumps a fresh new energy into your program.

**Career Building.** Providing leadership opportunities, internships at your local magic shop or theater, and other career and hobby preparation activities may enhance a young member's interest in your program.

**Family.** As we focus on attracting members, don't overlook the value of engaging their families. Family friendly incentives might include discount family packages to touring shows, family meal discounts to restaurants featuring in-house magicians, and special family events such as a family picnic or open house. Consider offering

a “Magic for Grandparents” class for students’ grandparents.

**Choosing and using incentives.** Survey your members for ideas about incentives that they find motivating.

**Stay relevant!** Provide members with the rewards promptly as goals are reached, so that they draw a correlation between the desired behavior and the incentive.

**Establish a specific timeline for incentives.** Skills taught during today’s meeting or lesson should be practiced and presented at the next session. Members who show improvement receive their reward. Offer a narrow time window for new member recruiting or new routine development in order to focus member effort.

**Attract community support!** Community partnerships can help by contributing funds or providing special opportunities. Possible community partners might include local businesses, museums, theaters, performing art centers, or colleges. Poll your members for contacts and leads.

Match incentives that are on your “wish list” with community sponsors who can supply them. For example, if your program seeks gift cards for attracting members, then reach out to local banks, movie theatres, magic dealers, or stores for potential support.

Community organizations and businesses that believe in the mission of your program are more likely to support your club over several years. If potential funders are unfamiliar with your organization, be sure to introduce them to your program’s mission, successes, and future plans. Find ways to give back to sponsors that directly benefit their business.

**Use incentives sparingly!** If incentives are used too often or are too easy to obtain, members may begin to rely on incentives as their sole motivation for participating. It is important to use incentives primarily to pique and spur interest in participation during sluggish periods. Incentive use should diminish or be eliminated when the students’ natural enjoyment of the program is high and self-sustaining.

**Incentives are the bait, your program is the hook!** Incentives are a waste of time and effort without a strong and progressive program. For incentives to work, you must first have a program that holds the members’ attention. Without this foundation and follow-up to hold their interest, you are fishing with a gaping hole in the bottom of your net.

The benefits of a magic program to your club and your community cannot be achieved without regular member participation. Using incentives can help attract and retain members by making everyone feel invested your program.

## TRUST & INTELLECTUAL THEFT



Let's examine the ponderous pachyderm in our meeting space. We need our clubs to be sanctuaries for brainstorming, testing, and rehearsing new ideas. We need them to provide place to safely unveil novel creations for peer review and constructive guidance. Our creative members commit untold hours and cash into refining new props, routines and more. Watching our brainchild performed or marketed by a fellow club member without discussion or consent can be crushing.

Just as all piano music uses the same eighty-eight keys, all magic routines are generated from the same basic categories. The blending of these categories with creative method and presentation forms magic's base. We can all agree that mystifying our audiences relies heavily upon this creative foundation of principles, theories, gear, techniques, and routines. Magic clubs exist to strengthen and build upon this foundation.

Most magic clubs operate under a guild structure. That is, we generally rely on social pressure to protect our creative properties. Weak enforcement of this social contract may drive our most skilled innovators into seclusion or away from the club altogether. We need these experienced members to help us learn, grow, and resolve difficulties. Leadership indifference toward or tolerance of the unauthorized copying, sharing and use of personal intellectual property is one of the top reasons that skilled members cite for avoiding our clubs.

Many clubs turn a blind eye to members who jointly purchase one set of lecture notes to be copied and shared. They accept the rush of club members intent on purchasing an effect to replicate another member's highly entertaining presentation. They tolerate those members who display obvious knock-off products or recommend the vendors of pirated goods.

We all benefit through the protection of a high level of trust and confidence within our clubs. We all suffer when that trust is shattered and members sheepishly justify or ignore the behavior.

This concept is so important that it is addressed by two of the six I.B.M.-S.A.M. Joint Ethics Guidelines:

*Display ethical behavior in the presentation of magic to the public and in our conduct as magicians, including not interfering with or jeopardizing the performance of another magician either through personal intervention or the unauthorized use of another's creation.*

*Recognize and respect for rights of the creators, inventors, authors, and owners of magic concepts, presentations, effects and literature, and their rights to have exclusive use of, or to grant permission for the use by others of such creations.*

So, how do we overcome this creeping menace within our clubs? A good place to begin is firmly establishing and promoting a club intellectual property policy. Our Raleigh Ring displays a poster bearing this wording:

*Artistic creativity is the heart of this club. All creative content presented or discussed by any member of this club at any venue remains the sole and full intellectual property of its creator. Members are honor bound to protect the intellectual property rights of club peers and may not duplicate, adapt or use the creative work of another in any capacity without the express approval of its creator.*

*This policy includes but is not limited to original and modified prop design and decoration, effects, storyline and patter, scripting, performance styles, presentations, marketing materials and other creative properties generated or adapted by any peer or guest. Club members are strongly encouraged, when possible, to credit the source of all effects performed at any club meeting or work session.*

Once established, rigid enforcement is needed to keep this policy from devolving into mere words scribbled onto a sheet of paper. Promptly ban all illicit knock-off products from all meetings and performances. Politely, yet firmly, ask any member who brings an obvious knock-off product to remove it from the meeting site. Pull members who suggest duplicating and sharing one set of lecture notes, DVDs, or downloads aside for a private counsel.

This is especially important for youth members. Our young magicians are far more likely to work around tight budgets by purchasing knock-offs and pirated material. They are more likely to incorrectly assume fair use in incorporating part of another member's act into theirs. After all, magic is an art best learned through mimicry. Stand by your policy and use it as a teaching moment to explain the harm caused by these actions. Setting the standard for youth members makes it harder for adult role models to sidestep their obligations.

Extend your club protections to other areas of member interest. Protect the marketing concepts of others. Confront the member caught using images or wording from another performer's website, social media, or printed materials. Consider dismissing any member who consistently tries to poach another member's clients or heckles performances. Blacklist any magician caught posting negative reviews to a member's site or spreading harmful rumors.

Establish guidelines for an impartial review panel to mediate any complaint of intellectual property theft. Apply appropriate penalties, to include expulsion if warranted, for any member who perpetrates a direct theft or repeatedly ignores warnings.

Be careful not to carry your enforcement to frustrating extremes. Magic relies on the innovator's ability to quote, copy, and adapt earlier creative work. Magic, by its very nature, builds upon the work of others. Enforcing standards that are too strict may impede the creative growth needed for this art to prosper. Don't simply restrict. Educate your members on public domain resources and what is considered fair use within your club. Requiring recognition for the creative source of all effects performed at club functions is a great first step.

Another point to consider is accidental duplication. Simultaneous invention is the very real concept that two or more composers might chance upon the same style and rhythm combination of a piano's eighty-eight keys. Great minds think alike. It is possible for a series of thoughts in a lecture, discussion, or performance to inspire two creative minds in the same club. Avoid the lynch mob mindset and examine the facts before dividing your club.

Creativity is a vital component of any magic club. Draw your line and defend it.



"I've read up on magic, and I think it sets you free, and it gives you hope. You can explore worlds you didn't know existed. It stretches your imagination, and I like my own imagination to be stretched and also the children I'm telling the story to. It gives you a sense of wonder."

Jenny Nimmo

## A PLACE TO MEET



A club's search for a private, affordable and convenient meeting space can be difficult and discouraging. Where exactly does a magic club begin looking? Our communities offer a surprising wealth of support for non-profit, civic and social clubs, especially if they foresee a beneficial quid-pro-quo return on their generosity.

**MAGIC SHOPS.** Of course, the ideal meeting location is your friendly neighborhood magic shop. These cherished brick & mortar shops are slowly returning with a greater focus on service and performance over straight retail. Modern shops generally include a small performance stage which is ideal for club meetings. Pooling member resources may even make it possible for your club to open your own cooperative venue.

**LIBRARIES.** Most community libraries offer private rooms with free Wi-Fi, whiteboards and digital projectors. A valid library card is generally all that's needed to reserve a room. Inviting all club members to become active library patrons may improve regular access to this room. Certainly, volunteering to provide in-house services such as children's reading hours, special magic displays, lectures, performances and lessons creates a positive symbiotic relationship. The down side here is that, as public facilities, meeting rooms are often available only on a first-come-first-served basis and must be reserved at least a month ahead.

**COMMUNITY PARKS.** Larger community parks may offer indoor facilities with private meeting rooms. They are generally available to local residents on a first-come, first-served basis, so plan ahead. Rental fees may apply. Volunteer service to the facility may push your club to the top of their room reservation list.

**CHURCHES.** Church buildings are typically under-utilized during the week. Many offer open rooms with tables, chairs, whiteboards and projectors. Larger churches usually include a full stage auditorium. It is easier to reserve a room if a club member attends the church, but don't let that keep you from asking. Providing club support with fundraisers, youth and community outreach programs can

cement the deal. Many churches offer seasonal celebrations though the year. Knowing that your club is available for these events carries a lot of weight!

Understand that churches are extremely busy during certain holiday seasons such as Easter and Christmas. If you are fortunate enough to have a church sponsor, plan your activities to support the church during these periods.

**COFFEE and BOOK SHOPS.** Local mom-&-pop coffee or book shops, especially around college campuses, provide private meeting, performance and lecture spaces. Offering a complimentary close-up or parlor performance each month may just earn your club a space with privacy and fantastic coffee.

**RESTAURANTS, BUFFETS and STEAK HOUSES.** Many restaurants set aside private banquet rooms that are ideal for meetings. Encouraging members to start each meeting with a meal can usually reserve these rooms at no additional cost. Offering complimentary tableside entertainment for patrons can't hurt. Be sure to tip your servers generously to ensure that they look forward to your visits.

**CRAFT BREWERIES & TAPROOMS.** These small businesses are rapidly spreading throughout our towns. Most offer private side rooms with smart televisions, good acoustics and tasty refreshments. Negotiating complimentary weekly or monthly performances may open a new performance venue for your polished members and clinch a free meeting space.

**INDEPENDENT THEATERS & COMEDY CLUBS.** Most locally owned theaters sit empty throughout the day. They offer great acoustics, comfortable seating and a choice performance venue. Negotiating a semi-annual showcase in exchange for meeting & rehearsing space works well here. Add complimentary lobby and stage performances for special themed events such as Harry Potter marathon weekends.

**PERFORMING ART & COMMUNITY CENTERS.** Nearly every town has a community or performing art center. These facilities offer private meeting rooms at little to no charge for local residents. Many are publicly funded and operate on a first-come-first-served basis, so plan ahead. Rental fees may apply, however, negotiating complimentary performances, lessons or similar community support opportunities can keep your club's schedule at the top of their list.

**GRANGE, LODGE, & VETERAN FACILITIES.** Many rural and suburban civic clubs



maintain private clubhouses. This list includes the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, Ruritan, Elks Club, Junior League, Lion's Club and countless others. If a club member belongs to one of these clubs, meeting space may be easy to arrange. Offering your club's support in fundraising, member events and membership drives may help reduce or waive rental fees.

**NEIGHBORHOOD CLUBHOUSES.** Nearly all large neighborhoods maintain a clubhouse with ample meeting space. Any resident can request use of the facility. Pledging performance support for neighborhood events and celebrations might convince the Homeowners' Association to waive the usual rental fee.

**MUSEUMS and HISTORIC SITES.** Many local museums maintain conference and classroom spaces that are ideal for meetings. Imagine meeting in the wardroom of an historic battleship or in the heart of a former courthouse. Rental rates for nonprofits are generally pretty reasonable, especially at taxpayer-supported properties. Offering regular performances or presentations in accurate period dress and manner may convince the museum to waive rental fees. Children's museums may welcome clubs sponsoring a magic youth program or workshops.

**SCHOOL and COLLEGE CAMPUSES.** Small schools, especially private and charter schools, may make vacant classrooms available for nonprofit meetings during the evening hours. It helps if a club member works for or has a child registered with the school. It may also help if the club sponsors an extracurricular magic youth program or performances for the students.

Some schools restrict activities during the summer and after-hour sporting and PTA events may make meeting at schools difficult. College sport and street events may cause excessive traffic and parking headaches. Plan ahead.

**SENIOR INDEPENDENT LIVING FACILITIES.** These compounds often have multi-purpose rooms that are ideal for club meetings. These venues welcome programs that include and benefit their residents. Including elder magicians and offering lessons and performances for residents provides an enlightening experience for your members and may secure your meeting space for years to come.

**CORPORATE CONFERENCE ROOMS.** Most corporate conference rooms are vacant during evening hours. If one of your members works for a corporate entity, he may be able to obtain permission for your club to meet here during non-business hours.

**PRIVATE HOMES.** A member may graciously offer the use of a spacious living room, basement, bonus room, garage or barn for your meetings while searching for a more permanent home.

**WALK IN THEIR SHOES!** Always remember that "Free" is a subjective term as each of these locations must consider utility costs, cleaning expense, and liability concerns. They pay for your presence even if you don't. Some, especially libraries and churches, may be legally restricted from supporting for-profit ventures such as ticketed showcases and workshops. Returning their kindness and protecting their investment in you and your club must remain a top level concern.

Take a photo of the meeting room before each meeting. Ensure that your Sergeant-at-Arms and members return the room to the same condition and configuration after each meeting. Forbid any effect that uses glitter, confetti, water, or other messy materials unless you know you have the ability to remove every speck afterward.

Securing club liability insurance coverage for meetings and performances may help. These policies may be obtained for a few hundred dollars each year from local independent insurance brokers or entertainment-specific companies such as Specialty Insurance Agency.

## CLUB MEETINGS

### A PLACE OF OUR OWN

Our magic club is strong and growing. We routinely meet in the back of a local restaurant, pub, library, or other convenient location. But what if we could create a unique space of our own? Cue the harp and the wavey haze as we slowly drift from reality into a dream sequence.

The magic industry has experienced tremendous growth over the last ten years. Magic is no longer exclusive to the stage, street, and television. Today, content creators include magic in gaming, education, social media, therapy, and marketing. According to the financial site, IBISWorld, expanding applications, consumer interest, digitalization, and innovation are leading an expected 4% growth in the present \$400 million dollar a year industry. Can your club capitalize on this demand to create a dedicated non-profit meeting and performance venue?

It is true that online magic dealers have delivered a devastating blow to brick & mortar retail shops. Yet a club-supported hometown shop offers one thing that the online dealers can't: Hands-on Service. A shop offering 25% retail blended with 75% service has an excellent chance of succeeding today. Please note that I offer these thoughts as a spit-ball approach toward achieving a popular dream. Dollar amounts listed here are based on averages in my area. They will vary depending on your location and market.

**Facility.** The ideal start-up storefront is between 1000 to 1800 square feet (SF). This allows for a comfortable performance and lecture stage in the back of the store with a basic magic retail shop in the front. At a national average of \$30 per SF per year, a reasonable lease will run around \$2,500 to \$4,500 per month.

**Renovation.** Estimates for preparing an empty storefront for retail and performances generally run around \$30 to \$50 per SF. This includes permits, insurance, POS system, flooring, lighting, furniture, and signage. Using the volunteer labor of skilled members can help reduce this cost.

**Utilities.** Commercial utility costs usually run higher than residential. Review local



costs for water, sewage, electricity, natural gas, trash disposal, telephone, and Internet. In my area, these necessities average around \$800-\$1000 per month.

**Retail Inventory.** We need to face a fact here. Most advanced members, especially working pros, will continue to order their supplies from online vendors. It is my opinion that the bulk of a club-owned shop's inventory should appeal to the lay public. Beginner and self-working magic effects top that list. Shops may include common utility devices, magic lesson and workshop supplies, performance souvenir items, and a few popular pro resupply items.

**Labor.** As a non-profit club-owned operation, soliciting volunteer support from club members may reduce or eliminate your labor costs. Teen and college age demonstrators working on a wage/commission basis offers an opportunity to gain familiarity with new effects and polish their skills. Offer a reasonable fee split for skilled members offering workshops and performances. Reward your most skilled and active volunteers with priority referrals for bookings with a reasonable agent fee.

**Funding.** Private, state, and federal agencies offer a wide variety of grants for artists and performing art venues. A well-managed Kickstarter campaign may help you collect needed start-up funds. Consider soliciting private loans from founding members with repayment promised from future profits. Recognize these founders with a plaque or display in a prominent location. Organize showcases, auctions, dinner shows, and other fundraisers to score needed start-up cash. With proper management and promotion, the facility should begin to show a profit and start supporting itself within a few months. Consider setting your shop up as an educational or social 501 ( c ) nonprofit corporation.

**Partnerships.** Build partnerships with local performance venues and event planners as an additional source of outside income. These partnerships may include local theaters, restaurants, community centers, performing art centers, schools, daycares, and professional event planners. Partnering with various food trucks or a nearby pizzeria or pub on performance nights benefits everyone. Offer a UPS/USPS/FedEx package pick-up service to combat porch pirates. The cross-promotion will showcase your shop's talent, expand familiarity with your shop's services, and increase brand awareness.

**Operation.** Keep your shop busy! Every satisfied visitor passing through your door increases valuable word-of-mouth promotion. Invite kidshow performers to host

birthday parties, morning preschool “field trip” magic and puppet programs, and after-school or track-out workshops. Offer family matinee performances on the weekends and adult “Date Night” performances during the evenings. Host weekly open mics or cattle call auditions to attract new talent. These platforms provide a safe venue for budding performers to improve their skills and for accomplished performers to test and polish new acts.

**Don’t focus entirely on magic!** Invite comedians, musicians, puppeteers, and the like. Offer in-depth magic, comedy, performance open mic nights, and workshops. Make your performance space available for small business meetings and workshops. Promote custom workshops for teachers, police officers, medical professionals, grandparents, and sales professionals. Create a comfortable coffee corner for skilled and novice magicians to relax and share. Make your shop the “Go To” spot for all things magical and fill your performance space every day of the week!

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** According to the Financial Models Lab website, American magic shops report an average gross annual income of \$250,000 to \$500,000 per year. The site sets the average magic shop profit at \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year. Naturally, these figures will vary depending on location, size, competition, management, and marketing. The unique niche market of the products and services, the low overhead connected with service-focused businesses, and a traditionally loyal customer base all combine to work in your favor.

A club-owned magic home is possible with careful planning and organization. Such a shop may provide a permanent club facility, an income source, a community service and education center, and a professional performance venue. Is this idea right for you and your club? Explore your options!



“An idea can turn to dust or  
magic, depending on the talent  
that rubs against it.”

William Bernbach

## RITUAL AND CEREMONY

I have had the great honor of visiting magic clubs across three continents. One of the most memorable was a unique club in northern Italy that opened and closed each meeting with a colorful and solemn ritual.



A bell chimed three times as the chatting members and guests instantly fell silent and stood. The club officers, dressed in colorful robes, solemnly filed into the room. A beautiful chained medallion adorned the president's chest and shoulders. The robed officers stopped behind a small table in the front of the room with a deep burgundy cover.

One of the officers stepped forward and opened the decorative wood inlaid box he was carrying revealing a burgundy interior. The president carefully removed a magnificent ornate wand and presented it reverently with both hands to the assembled members. In Italian, he greeted the members and guests and explained the historic and symbolic importance of this wand. He invited everyone present to respect the club's honor code and to meet in magical fellowship. He then placed the wand onto a decorative holder on the small table as the bell chimed once.

Everyone sat down as the officers removed their robes and a very enjoyable fellowship ensued. At the end of the evening, the bell rang thrice. The officers donned their robes as each member stood and received a symbolic shot of Sambucca with three coffee beans representing health, happiness, and prosperity. The president offered a toast to the club's founders and absent members to which everyone cheerfully responded and drank. The president thanked the members and guests, wished them a safe journey home, then ceremoniously returned the wand to its beautiful box. The officers filed out and the bell chimed once. We all gathered to chat in our own private groups.

A bit over the top for most clubs, I suppose, but it is a pleasant memory that has stayed with me for more than forty years. So, just how important are rituals today to our members, young and old? Are we harming ourselves by pulling away from the time-honored tradition of rites and ceremony?

It is my belief that a firm connection with our past strengthens our future growth. I believe that without ritual and ceremony, we tend to abandon all that delivered us to this point in time. We lose sight of our story and that which makes us whole. Rituals allow us to pause and reflect on our history, our founders, and our very purpose in gathering to share an ancient art.

Rituals mark a key point for our youth, as well. Our adolescents find themselves in a transitional flux between the "Me" stage of childhood and the "We" stage of adulthood. Ego-boosting ceremonies and rituals recognize and reward individual and team achievements. Rituals form an emotional and spiritual anchor that breeds loyalty and pride. They encourage our youth to seek beyond one's self and actively participate as an integral part of a team. Scouting accomplishes this with ceremonies awarding merit badges and rank advancement. We might do the same with lapel pins, medals, or ceremonial wands.

Recognition is a basic human need that is more meaningful when presented in front of peers, family and friends. Sadly, few clubs that I have visited appreciate this psychological foundation. Only two out of many have the most basic of new member induction ceremonies. Most simply invite the prospective member to perform a trick or two, pause for a symbolic vote, and the new member is applauded. The end. How utterly unmemorable!

Imagine the impact if each new member was ceremoniously inducted into the club before family and friends. The Magician's Code is recited, the Magician's Oath is pledged, and the new member is presented with a framed certificate and an inscribed display wand and stand. A club that values each new member so highly is sure to reap the benefit of pride and loyalty. Simultaneously, the ceremony reminds current members of their obligations to the magician's code and oath.

Ceremonies may recognize special accomplishments or rites of passage. They may convey a message, a lesson, or evoke an emotion. They may provide a commanding moment of peer interaction or inspire members to greater personal or organizational achievement. They may allow us to pause and remember old friends who have passed or announce that this moment in time is special and worthy of remembrance. They may create a sense of unity and acceptance by an ever expanding circle of acquaintances reinforcing club loyalty and identity or bridge the past and future for each member.

Dramatic effects enhance the impact of each ceremony. For the Italian club, the

chiming bell, the toast, and the single file procession of the robed officers set a mood. Effects like swelling music, lowering lights, lighting candles, and presenting a flag, banner, or wand may be used to capture the attention of the group. Each ceremony should have a significant moment of emotional impact near the end, such as the placing of the wand on a stand or returning the wand to its decorative casket.

Symbology plays an important role in any ceremony. You may refer to and explain the significance of the I.B.M. and club seals as their banners or flags are paraded in. You may incorporate expressive meanings to various objects associated with our art, such as wands, linking rings, cards, and coins. For example, your club (like ours) may be divided into card specialists, comedians, kidshow artists, escapologists, illusionists, and mentalists. Assigning a specialty to each Ring then symbolically linking them to start your meeting could demonstrate joining together for the common good. Is this not the same message so nobly delivered by the Olympic Rings? Use these images and narratives to nurture the connections that your club considers most important.

The I.B.M. offers prepared ceremonial scripts under Ring Resources at [www.magician.org](http://www.magician.org). Each Ring and Link is also free to create their own ceremonies and rituals.



"Because 'Gob' was a terrible magician,  
he was always, in great comedic  
moments, messing up his magic act. We  
used to have magicians come in to work  
on these tricks to actually get them  
wrong. But they still had to work. We  
had to bring magicians on to make  
magic not work."

Will Arnett

## CRITIQUES



Okay, this may sting a bit. Are you ready?

**You're not perfect.** Sure, you already know this, but it's still a bit painful to hear, right? The good news is that every time we identify and improve a fault or weakness, we move a tad bit closer. Doesn't this make the supportive guidance from skilled club peers one of a magic club's greatest benefits?

Let's begin with a couple of definitions. **Constructive Criticism** is helpful feedback supported by specific examples. It steers us towards creating an improved version of ourselves.

**Destructive Criticism** focuses on the giver, is rarely specific or goal-driven and selfishly boosts the giver's feeling of self-importance. Sadly, this is the most common form of personal and club critique.

Constructive criticism may be positive or negative, but we can offer either in a way that promotes an atmosphere of growth, openness and trust. Consider these tips.

Focus on the situation rather than the person. Constructive critiques begin with "I saw..." or "I noticed..." rather than "You said..." or "You did...". Try "Have you considered..." rather than "I would have...".

Constructive feedback works best with conversational give and take. Encourage questions. Create a two-way collaboration. Open conversations are easier to accept than one-way directives.

There is no right or wrong here. Your way may work better for you, but it may not fit the other person's model. Acknowledging the other person's perspective makes it easier to deliver and receive critical feedback.

Avoid cushioning the critique with superfluous compliments. Compliments viewed as insincere may damage the trust you're trying to build. Push the empty ego strokes to the side and stick to the facts.

That's not to suggest avoiding sincere and supportive praise altogether. Polishing strengths is just as important as identifying weaknesses. Just make it count.

Be specific. Stating "I think the audience reaction to your dancing cane routine might make it a better opener than a closer" is better than "Your closing effect was a bit weak."

Offer to brainstorm ideas and steps that directly address the weakness. Stating, "I noticed a flash as you slipped the ball under your middle cup. Can I help you with that?" is much better than "Your cups & balls routine needs work." Offering a critique with actionable solutions says, "I'm here to help."

Keep it private! The wisest and kindest criticism can be hard to swallow in front of others. Offer your advice in a friendly and private one-on-one discussion.

Timing is everything! Offering feedback relatively soon after the event ensures that the situation is fresh in both minds. The longer we wait, the less relevant our feedback becomes. Now, this advice comes with a caveat.

We want our feedback to be timely, but we need to give it a little thought. Consider how to offer your brilliant flash of inspiration in the most constructive, positive and unthreatening manner. Reflect on whether you should offer it at all. Will it help them improve? Does it fit their character or style? Do they need to hear this feedback? Does my experience support this advice? Am I open to helping them brainstorm solutions?

That covers the "offering helpful criticism" nutshell. What about the other side of this husk? It can be difficult to accept even the most benevolent criticism without engaging our emotional and intellectual defenses. We each have that rebellious inner teen who is reluctant to hear that we could have done something better. Send him to his room! Strive to be more receptive to helpful advice.

Most friends will begin their critique with, "May I offer some advice?" Don't be afraid to say no! Why invite a discussion that may drag us down from the natural high of a successful performance? You may be under a tight schedule or not quite ready to focus on the advice. If the friend is sincere, arrange to meet when you're ready to discuss their observations. If the individual is known for jumping in with unsolicited and self-inflating destructive criticism, politely decline and walk away. Who has time for that?

Once your conversation begins, resist your immediate fight-or-flight reaction to criticism. Take a deep breath and control the urge to react, respond or argue. Accept the critique as the observer's view toward improvement rather than a



personal attack. Remind yourself that a supportive peer offers this feedback with your best interest at heart.

Listen to understand—not to respond. Listen to feedback without formulating a reply or justification. Any “Yeah, but...” defensive response may create a mental wall blocking further conversation. Lock your lips and open your mind.

Ask for an honest critique. The best mentors often withhold their advice because it’s all too often ignored or they’ve already collided with one too many ego-fueled defenses. Ask a skilled peer for a sincere critique then lock your ego away and focus on the discussion.

It’s okay to ask questions and brainstorm solutions but try to do so without challenging their advice or raising your defenses. If you need time to process critical feedback, say so. Schedule a follow-up meeting over coffee, drinks, lunch or dinner.

Take notes! It shows your interest and these notes may help you recall the finer points of the discussion during your next rehearsal.

Thank the person offering the feedback. Deciding to share even the best constructive feedback is hard. The giver knows that offering advice may open him to criticism or rejection. Show your appreciation for their effort in sharing this kindness.

Constructive collaboration creates a nurturing mastermind connection between like-minded peers. Supportive critics may spot weaknesses we are unaware of, offer undiscovered paths of thought or provide knowledge that we lack. Simply reading to this point has opened your mind toward receiving constructive criticism. Put it to work!

It’s good to make a few waves now and then! Rock that boat! Those who fall out were never meant to be on your crew!



“Many years ago, in the throes of my struggles on the PGA Tour, I had difficulty even getting into pro-ams. I needed money, so I put together a 45-minute magic show I'd perform at corporate events surrounding the tournament.”

Gary McCord

## HITTING THE STREETS



Great clubs teach their members to overcome, or at least manage, stage fright. They teach members to think on their feet and face the unexpected head on.

We can best teach our members to manage stage fright by encouraging them to face situations where public failure is a constant threat. When their fear causes them to fail, it reinforces their feeling of dread and ruin. Preparing them to succeed, or at least survive, in high-risk situations strengthens their self-confidence and

professional pride. So, how can we help our members take that never-ending first step?

For a budding magician, one of the best places to hone both skills is on the street. An introduction to street performing, commonly known as Busking, can be a very challenging venue for members hesitant to step outside of their comfort zones.

Busking forces us to face our most primal fears without many of the common theatrical comfort zones. As buskers, we must attract and keep our audiences. There are no pre-sold tickets or supportive audiences waiting to see us. We must appeal to native curiosity and break through natural suspicions to connect with people rushing by on the street. In order to achieve our goal of a full tip jar or heavy hat, we must provide a unique and entertaining experience worthy of a buck or two.

Buskers are more common in big cities and around popular tourist destinations. However, their popularity is growing in smaller towns. Many large indoor/outdoor shopping malls and restored downtown areas provide a safe and welcoming venue for talented buskers. Younger magicians competing with more established older performers don't have a lot of venues bidding for their acts. Nearly anything that resembles a gig is a beneficial experience for younger members.

Know and follow your local laws. In general, case law across the U.S. holds that performing on publicly owned property is constitutionally protected as Free Speech. Buskers aren't beggars or panhandlers. They are skilled entertainers offering a lawful service in exchange for a cash gratuity. Still, challenging local laws

in court can be costly and damaging. Understand and comply with local licensing laws. Stick to approved busking venues and conform to established curfew hours.

Private property has an entirely different set of rules. Always obtain permission before performing on private property such as tourist venues and shopping malls. Ensure that your members understand and respect the difference between private and public property.

Thoroughly prepare your members for success with the busking experience. Help them refine and time their act for the best possible experience. Show them how to choose a safe and ideal pitch site and define their performance space. Teach respect and courtesy for other performers and businesses in the area. Explain the techniques for drawing and keeping a crowd. Stress interaction with the crowd and the benefits of audience participation on the street. Help them hone and memorize a humble yet driving tip line or "sales pitch" to close their act.

If your members pass the hat, record the amounts collected at each performance. Document and discuss the reasons for one performer receiving more than another. Use these figures to document growth over a series of busking field trips. Demonstrate ways of improving each performance to collect a heavier hat. You may choose to keep the tips collected to support the club or share them with the performer. You may also opt to let each member keep the tips they earn or pool and divide tips equally among the participants at the end of the day.

Make sure they understand that people can be incredibly rude on the street. Teach members, especially youth members, how to avoid taking such behavior personally and arm them with disarming heckler defenses. Posting banners or signs identifying the performers as students may help limit heckling, draw supportive spectators, and promote your program.

Stress the importance of caring for their health while outdoors. Teach members to stay out of the sun, take frequent short breaks, drink lots of water, eat healthy high energy snacks, and watch their backs. When they feel themselves tiring, it is better to close up shop and go home.

Explain that busking isn't just about the money. The audience can tell when a busker's sole interest is "a heavy hat." People walking by our pitch can tell when we have a genuine passion for our art and will often reward accordingly.

Help members focus on busking as a place to grow as performers. Work on new

material. Improvise. Teach them to have fun with their audiences! As buskers, we are not in the magic or performing art business. We are in the business of creating a pleasing afternoon diversion during a hectic day.

Teach members that busking is a community. Busking is, by nature, a social art form; and buskers generally support one another. There will always be those few who look out for themselves and develop a bad reputation within the community. They miss out on more opportunities than they gain. Buskers are constantly networking to find better pitches and paying gigs. We never know who has connections or will be a future collaborator.

The simple fact is that our busking audiences are comprised of strangers on the street. They've never met us and have no obligation to stop and watch. They may simply ignore us and keep walking. Many will. However, those who stop and share a smile can make all the difference for a budding performer. For our purposes, those smiles are worth more than the money in our hat.



"And where does magic come from? I think that magic's in the learning."

Dar Williams

## KEEP THE WONDER

In his landmark books, *The Art of Astonishment*, Paul Harris asserts, "*Astonishment is not an emotion that is created. It is an existing state that is revealed.*" Harris defines the role of the magician as an "*astonishment guide*" helping others experience that mind-bending moment that launched our own quest into this imaginative art. Are we guilty, as instructors and mentors, of systematically crushing this very state in the minds of our young and novice members?



Consider that we are in the comparable position of exposing the truth about Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy to impassioned children. Our novice members come to us hoping to recapture that initial moment of astonishment. Meanwhile, we steadily draw them away from this inspirational experience by revealing the gears and levers behind the curtain. The very nature of mastering this art seems to place the study of routine mechanics above euphoric wonder. But, does have to?

On the television program, *Fool Us*, Penn Jillette often mentions the exhilaration he and his silent partner Teller feel when another magician lifts them to that treasured pinnacle of astonishment. There must be a way to revive this state within our members as we expose the plodding nuts and bolts of our back-stage secrets.

The primary key is passion. In a January 2016 interview with *The Atlantic*, Teller defines the first job of a teacher as guiding the student to fall in love with the subject.

In the student's mind, the teacher is the direct representative of this subject. Teller suggests that each teacher has a duty to engage the student and to convert indifference into excitement. He explains that if a teacher does this job well, transference of enthusiasm from teacher to student takes place. As he put it, "*If you don't have both astonishment and content, you have either a technical exercise or you have a lecture.*"

We must approach teaching within our clubs as a performance art. Our members

mirror our tone, enthusiasm, and excitement; or lack thereof. Begin each class with a warm and heartfelt greeting. Let them know that you are as happy to be with them as you are having them here with you.

Enter your lesson with a well-rehearsed and animated performance of the offered effect. Use your skill to steer each student toward the maximum state of astonishment connected with the effect before dissecting it. Your members deserve the same skilled performance as your highest paying audience. "*Phoning it in*" and "*filling squares*" are unprofessional options.

Immediately open a discussion on what they liked most about the performance. Ask them to describe their moment of astonishment. What generated the feeling? What specific elements led up to their "Wow!" moment? How can they recreate that moment for their own audiences?

Only after exploring and identifying the emotional tags of the effect should we begin to dissect the mechanics of the routine. One must savor the delicate beauty of a rose before plucking the petals in the search for their source. There is no going back once the heart of the rose is exposed.

Next, we challenge our students' creativity. Open the floor to a discussion on how they believe we accomplished the effect. This insightful dialogue opens their minds and teaches them how to work through future performance ideas. This segment may present countless new routine and patter ideas. Pay attention, and welcome even the wildest explanation.

After this, we approach the step-by-step dissection of the effect. This includes the construction of the apparatus, the handling, the "secret" behind the effect, the steps for practice, the best method for rehearsing and perfecting the effect, and, finally, their original staging, scripting, and presentation. Keep the floor open for comments, suggestions, and questions on improving the effect or branching off into alternate routines. Keep the energy and passion high!

Finally, rekindle your own state of astonishment. Teller's occasional stunned look on *Fool Us* proves that this personal state of amazement is still present, even for this most imaginative and highly skilled magician. Watch the absolute look of disbelief on his face the next time he examines a deck of cards or a magician's prop to see what I mean. His face slowly transforms into a near euphoric state as he accepts the inevitable and admits astonishment. If he can feel it, I know there is hope for you and me.

In a 2015 Vanity Fair interview, Teller posits that this state remains, however it changes as we delve deeper into the art. He defines an initial stage where we think, *"Oh, it was just a thread!"* However, as we work with that thread for four years and transform it into something that is profound and entertaining, we achieve a different level of astonishment. We achieve the astonishment of knowledge. Teller expands, *"Its the amazement of the astronomer who has studied everything about the stars that is available, and who sees and understands the mechanisms that we know about, but is able to appreciate how mysterious it all is in the larger picture."* Rediscover your greater passion for deeper astonishment.

I am a sit-and-chat restaurant performer. I visit with the same families week after week. One of the greatest compliments I receive from my younger guests is *"I Googled that \_\_\_ trick."* My first question is, *"Can you do it?"* If they say yes, I hand them the item and say, *"Show me."* If they say no, I tell them to bring it up again when they can and brusquely move on. Like you, I want to use this tool of astonishment to inspire young - and a few not so young - minds to reach beyond their curiosity and discover new wonders.



"Like every art form, there are  
jealousies and angers and  
competitiveness in magic. But there's  
camaraderie among magicians,  
whether you perform it for a living or  
you're an enthusiast."

Ricky Jay



## CREATIVITY'S GREATEST FOE



Sherlock Holmes fought Professor Moriarty, Harry Potter struggled against He- Who-Shall-Not-Be-Named. Our members struggle daily against the villainy of conformity. This wily nemesis hides within societal pressure to honor tradition, fit in, follow the crowd, and run with the pack. Adherence to convention rarely leads to astonishment.

We run into this issue in many of our club meetings as we center club education around a solid foundation of magic history, theory, technique, and skill. We basically treat everyone the same with little concern for the members' primary interests. This curriculum creates members pressed into nice neat columns and rows. All too often within a near-empty room.

Clubs that expect members to conform to a legacy image of a structured magical arts education do so largely because, well, it's easier. Who has the time to customize lesson plans for divergent interests?

It was while contemplating our steady loss of members that I watched a scene in the film *The Social Network*. In the film, Jesse Eisenberg portraying Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook fame stands before a Harvard disciplinary committee. This committee expected him to conform to university ethics, but Zuckerberg threw them a curve ball stating that he did them a favor. He explained that innovation is squelched by conforming to the status quo. Creativity only occurs when a problem is approached from a totally unique angle.

That concept struck home! Every convenience that we enjoy today, from the wheel to the smartphone, is the result of one individual somewhere at some time pushing convention aside and thinking, *"Let's try a different path."*

Houdini ignored convention and refused to conform. He was insanely curious and stopped at nothing to find answers to his questions. He was unconcerned with the intense opposition pushing against his brash new ideas. He understood that blazing new paths often forced the explorer to do so alone. He pushed entertainment boundaries, quickly passing the intensely talented and competitive

Kellars and Thurstons of his day.

Through his brilliant Tarbell video series, Dan Harlan not only rocks the conformist's boat; he tips it over, sinks, rebuilds, and refloats it on the fly. Dan set the pace by drawing sound magic theories from a nearly 100-year-old magic course and showing us how to make them relevant and knock-out astonishing in today's world.

Isn't this what we should be teaching our members? Teens thrive on exploring all that is new. As mentors, we may want to adapt to this mindset and incorporate natural curiosity?

Understand that I am not labeling the conformist as a four-letter word. These defenders of the norm adhere to and enforce the standards and status quo that bind our society together. While nonconformity is vital for creativity, it must be tempered with the very real demands of our social groups, large and small. We still need to understand and appreciate the principles, theories, and histories behind our magic. I simply suggest that we need to do so in a way that keeps it fresh, current, and moving forward.

Who then are the minions of this innovation-blocking force? A common prejudice tops our list. Many look at the top names in our art and tend to believe that true creativity is rare. After all, who among us can hope to achieve the unrivaled popularity of a Copperfield or Teller? Are we to accept that those of us who may be less gifted are bound to live within certain boundaries while our more gifted idols lead the way?

Humbug! (I know, but my editor tends to frown on stronger language. Back to my point.) This prejudice is simply wrong! There is no creative genius gene held by one and lacked by another. Anyone willing to push beyond the status quo, put in the effort, and take the risks can achieve greatness. Virgin's Richard Branson started by selling music records from the trunk of his car. Starbucks' Howard Schultz and country star Dolly Parton were born into poverty. Harry and Bess Houdini boiled and ate their show rabbits while stuck between theater dates. Had any one of them surrendered to society's norms, we may never have heard of them. Creativity eclipses conformity.

Too many of us allow yesterday's successes to settle us into a deceptive comfort zone. We believe that something that worked for us yesterday will work just as well today and tomorrow. We push aside fresh ideas when planning meetings,



lesson plans, or projects. We fail to keep up with the constantly changing demands of our dynamic society, clubs, and classrooms.

How do we adapt? We begin by looking at each student and member as a productive source of innovative ideas. We drop our prejudices and recognize our members as the heart and soul of our clubs. We accept that our members are our future and their fresh ideas add life to our traditional beliefs.

Raleigh magician Michael Bloemeke pondered ways of performing the classic Cups & Balls hands-free. He decided to accomplish this using children's toy gripper claws. He's on Year 5 of this project and still fine-tuning his routine. The top competition trophies and standing ovations prove that he's on to something great! Michael not only stepped outside of his box. He crushed and totally reshaped it. It has been a real pleasure watching this talented and creative young man grow on this journey.



Allow members to be who they are. Encourage them to draw upon their own creativity to solve problems. Empower them with the power and freedom to challenge outdated traditions. Give serious weight to every contribution, no matter how trivial or outrageous. Hands-free Cups & Balls? Ridiculous! But, here we are!

Before implementing a lesson plan or program, discuss options with your members and involve them in the planning. The more involved they are in the design, the more enthusiastic they will be during implementation. Involving everyone demonstrates a club's commitment to continuous learning, development, and growth.

Boldly shove long-held legacy beliefs to the side. Traditions and long-winded ceremonies that were popular ten years ago may well be repulsive to younger and newer members. Legacy beliefs can be hard to abandon, but ideas and attitudes of the past carry many traps in our ever changing environment,

The future is up to you. Embrace the role of the nonconformist. Challenge the status quo. Don't just think outside of the box. Trash, slash, burn, and throw that box away! Tomorrow's reality is today's dream.



"We didn't have a whole lot of money when I was growing up either. I would always ask for magic books or magic tricks for my birthday or for Christmas and the rest of the year I either had to mow lawns or find part time jobs to help supplement the cost of doing magic."

Lance Burton

## INTRODUCING COMEDY



Humor has the power to attract and hold a spectator's attention. Humor can shield the bearer from the sting of failure and the frosty bite of a cold audience. Humor reduces stress and heals emotional and physical ills. All in all, a finely tuned sense of humor is a valuable tool in the entertainer's kit.

Our magic clubs are, or should be, safe havens that shield each member from judgement and ridicule. They are the ideal spot for learning, testing, and honing new skills. One such skill that

requires practice is polishing our natural (or not-so-natural) sense of humor.

Ideally, any magician with a sincere interest in entertaining others would enroll in a beginner stand-up comedy class through the local comedy club. But, it isn't really necessary to learn the intense skills of the professional comedian to add a little basic humor to our acts. At our level, learning the basic rules of comedy will usually suffice.

**Normal?** Ha! First, truly funny people are not quite normal. Normal people tend to hide their blemishes, insecurities, and failures. Funny people put themselves out there for the world to see. Normal people tend to shy away from stuffy and ignorant people. Funny people meet them head on. Normal people generally memorize and regurgitate someone else's jokes. Funny people look beyond the normal to spot the humor bouncing all around them.

**You can handle the truth!** Comedy reflects society's unwanted truths. This is the comedian's strongest tool. Comedy happens when the audience empathizes with the comedian and internalizes the comic irony of the story. Audiences laugh loudest when they can place themselves in the situation.

The greatest comedy teams such as Laurel & Hardy and Abbott & Costello rocked using this empathetic device. Men find the antics of the Three Stooges funnier than women because they can envision themselves experiencing and reacting to their comedic stunts.

**Comedy Loves Chaos!** Master comedian Mel Brooks said, "Tragedy is when I cut

my finger. Comedy is when you fall into an open sewer." Comic characters are either the agents or the victims of chaos. This is what makes the "Magician in Trouble" and the "Look, Don't See" premises so successful for kidshow performers. Comedy characters are more driven by what they don't want to happen than by what they want to happen. Failure creates the humor.

**Toss the Joke Books!** It is a common misconception that comedians tell jokes. The best comedians blend real-world observations, arguments, and opinions with a killer punchline. Great comedy bits have a set-up and a punchline. The set-up moves the audience's thoughts into one direction. The punchline jerks those thoughts into a totally different direction. Learn and use the structure of observational humor.

Comedy and magic share a trait here. Long set-ups demand powerful punchlines. Any magician who has graciously suffered through a child's presentation of the Twenty-One Card Trick has a clear understanding of this comedic and magic rule.

Comedians thrive on comedic paradoxes. This is any situation that is capable of being interpreted in two entirely different ways at the same time. While according to my wife, there is no question that my second example is far superior to the first, because it is obvious to her that a body like mine was designed by someone with a fine sense of humor.

Inversion is another common tool. This is the reversal of expected roles. For example, Mark Twain once said, "The more you explain it, the more I don't understand it." He reverses the thought in the first half of the phrase.

Repetition is the third brilliant element of a good comedic set. Comedians often refer to this as the "Callback." Telling a joke that refers back to an earlier punchline builds to bigger laughs. Closing your show with an hilarious callback can often guarantee a standing ovation.

**Dam Those Ideas!** Researchers estimate that the average human has more than fifty thousand thoughts every day. This flow generates a swift current capable of carrying many potentially brilliant ideas past our conscious mind and deep into the subconscious. Funny people carry a notebook or voice recorder everywhere they go to collect the best of those thoughts as they occur. Like logs in a flume, these ideas will smack us in the head at the oddest times and in the strangest places. The second we say to ourselves, "I'll write it down later," the thought is gone! Forever! Capture and record those ideas the second they present

themselves! If you use a voice recorder, set a time each day to copy them into a written journal. This makes them easier to review and act on.

**Take my Wife (pause) Please!** Timing is everything in comedy. It is the pace at which comic material is delivered. Timing is structured and controlled by the comedian as the material is delivered. In some cases, it can be as simple as when the audience starts laughing, stop talking. When the audience stops laughing, start talking. In others, it is a matter of pausing before delivering the punchline or point of astonishment, using vocal inflections, and controlling the speed of delivery. Learning timing takes practice and, maybe, strong coaching.

**The Rule of Three!** This is the most commonly violated rule in comedy and magic. The Rule of Three states simply that three is the perfect entertainment number. A magic or comedy routine must present at least two normal elements before introducing a third mind-blowing element. This third unexpected element is the one that sneaks in and whacks the spectator in the back of the head. Two elements are not enough to build anticipation. Four or more are too many and will drag the effect into the depths of boredom. Comedy, thy name is Brevity!

**Thou Shalt Not Steal!** The finest humor comes from within you. Using canned one-liners or jokes “borrowed” from another performer’s act loses that personal connection. Find the bits that work for you. Using lines from another performer’s routine, or worse, an entire routine or script – especially without permission - will mark you as someone not to be trusted. If you think that swiping full routines from YouTube and other performance videos is safe, think again. Somewhere in your future audiences, a knowledgeable magician will spot your theft and spread the word. Avoid the headache! Model, but never steal the work of another magician or comedian without permission.

**Comedy/Magic Buddies!** Creating new humor or magic routines works better when the ideas are shared with others. A partner may spot a flash or see a way to boost the comedic impact of a punchline. Encourage members to team up with a Buddy who either complements or challenges them. Uses this connection to brainstorm ideas, hone new routines, and fine tune your observational humor skills.



“I was lucky enough to have an older brother who shared the splatter flicks with me, and I had parents who were cool and involved enough in my life to allow me to see them. I think my folks appreciated that I looked at these movies as a creative outlet... almost like magic shows, if you will.”

Adam Green

## THE APPRENTICE

"How do I find a mentor?" This is a common question heard from young and novice magicians wishing to master the art. The truth is that few mentors worthy of the title actively seek out apprentices. The people we often want as advisers lead busy, productive lives. They have precious little time or patience for tag-along students unwilling to put in the work. It therefore falls to the student to seek out and attract the valued mentor. The question of "How do I find..." shifts to "How can I become a desirable apprentice?"



Apprenticeship is a track followed by everyone from Renaissance artists to the masterminds of Wall Street, NASA, and Silicon Valley. Throughout history, masters have acquired their education and risen to the top of their fields by working alongside known masters.

**Passion.** This is first trait of any worthy apprentice. The passion to learn reaches beyond mere interest or curiosity. It is a hunger that drives the apprentice to actively seek out every book, every performance, every morsel of knowledge obtainable.

The best magicians, and therefore the most desired mentors, pleaded with hometown librarians to seek out books on magic. Many hoarded pennies and dimes to buy cards, collect silver dollars, and see their idols perform live on stage. They placed great effort into learning and practicing their chosen skills. Each sought out a mentor who taught them a particular pass, steal, or stance. The belief that these magicians should openly share these hard earned skills with a mediocre student unlikely to match their efforts is ridiculous.

Take the case of this young newsboy in 1881. He paid three hard-earned dimes to watch the Great Alexander Herrmann's performance over three consecutive nights. He decided then and there that he wanted to perform on that stage. He memorized Professor Hoffman's *Modern Magic* and was seldom seen without a dirty deck of playing cards in his hand. As a sixteen-year-old boy, he hopped

freight trains seeking out any venue that would allow him to perform his magic for a few pennies. He studied and shared ideas with T. Nelson Downs, Billy Robinson, Dr. James Elliott, Servais Le Roy, and any other master he could impress. He eventually achieved his lofty goals, inherited Kellar's mantle, and Howard Thurston went on to inspire his own generation of future magicians.

Dedicated magicians like Thurston, Houdini, Burton, and Copperfield all share a consuming passion for this art that eclipses all other interests. They each share a common path governed by a basic law of human psychology that states our thoughts and lives tend to revolve around what we value most.

For example, if we value money and security above all else, we will seek out those opportunities that offer the fattest paycheck to the exclusion of all else. We may place the social and fiscal energies that best impress the "right people" ahead of acquiring genuine skills. Risk becomes a feared enemy rather than a pathway to greater knowledge.

Passion however draws the serious apprentice into an underpaid internship with a master magician. These internships allows us to demonstrate our passion, gain valuable experience, build lifelong network connections, and gain valuable new skills. In exchange for our cheap labor and eager spirit, our mentors may be inclined to divulge more than the usual trade secrets.

Many successful apprentices seek out "day jobs" that pay the bills yet allow time for a lucrative internship. We may also take menial jobs that offer fringe support at the start of our careers such as access to discounted lumber or workshops for illusions, casino training on handling playing cards, or the opportunity to build an appreciative and loyal audience in a bar or restaurant.

At the start of their careers, Hugh Jackman hired out as a party clown, Sean Connery polished coffins, Robin Williams bussed tables, and Brad Pitt worked the street in a chicken costume. After college, Albert Einstein turned down high paying and high demand engineering positions to work as a menial government patent clerk. The novelty of the position appealed to him and left ample time for his own projects, including his first theory of relativity.

Many students may be averse to the concept of working for nothing. A student who places a high monetary value to his labor may lack the insight to see the future benefit of this sacrifice. However, if we shift our perspective just a bit and look at the astronomical costs associated with a college degree, the value of a

hands-on internship under a true master suddenly becomes a bargain.

In the end, it is passion that energizes your mind, body, and spirit. A burning passion will strike a resonant chord with the right mentor's soul. Feed that passion.

**Expand your Horizons.** There is more to magic than magic. Mind blowing, right?

The most successful magicians draw heavily upon their knowledge of math, science, psychology, choreography, literature, history, animal behavior, and more!

Sir Arthur C. Clarke's Third Law states, "*Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.*" Magic scoundrel Pop Haydn adds, "...to the uninformed observer." The ideal magic apprentice strives to become both an informed observer and practitioner. To truly appreciate and grow within this art we must be open to studying the various disciplines upon which it is built.

Richard Potter is nearly unknown today, yet two hundred years ago, he was the most popular entertainer in America. He was, in fact, the first American-born showman to win true national and international fame. Working as a magician, hypnotist, and ventriloquist, he personified popular entertainment and established magic as an acceptable part of the American theater. His story is all the more remarkable considering that Richard Potter was the son of a black slave in a dominant white European society.

This was an era when few African Americans achieved success, much less fame. Potter's tale is one of professional celebrity counterbalanced by racial vulnerability in an increasingly hostile world. As the son of a slave, Potter's education, skill, and tenacity made all the difference. He read voraciously and nurtured a healthy curiosity about the community around him.

In his early teens, he earned passage to England as a ship's cabin boy and struck out on his own. Potter apprenticed as a juggler and tightrope dancer before joining Scottish magician John Rannie. He returned with Rannie to the United States around 1800. Following a ten-year run, Rannie returned to England leaving Potter behind with a wealth of knowledge on magic, juggling, tightrope walking, ventriloquism, and, most valuable of all, the mannerisms and presence of a British gentleman.

On November 3, 1811, Potter launched his career in Boston with his wife and assistant Sally. His early performances mostly featured ventriloquism, a new and

ground-breaking form of entertainment among the former colonies. Potter's ability to throw his voice and mimic common sounds drew the greatest praise. Potter's ventriloquism filled the hall with invisible birds, animals, and crying babies. He could make the plaintive voice of a small child speak from a man's pocket or a woman's hand warmer. Another child, its tiny voice muffled, might sound from behind a door, begging to be let in from the cold.

Magic acts featuring Asians and Africans were successful at this time due to the lingering belief in "real magic" from these mystical and exotic continents. Potter, the consummate showman, took advantage of these beliefs and gave his audiences what they wanted. Even with the country in depression, Potter was confident enough to increase his admission to a dollar at a time when unskilled laborers earned around fifty cents per day!

Despite frequent clashes with prejudice, Potter managed to earn \$4,800 (roughly \$100,000 today) during a 6-week tour of the Southern slave states. His genteel manner and educated demeanor overcame most racial objections from the Southern gentry.

Potter retired to his beautiful 175 acre farm in Andover, New Hampshire in 1831. Although the farm is gone, the modest graves of Potter and his wife, Sally, remain. The village of Potters Place, named in his honor, still thrives nearby. His headstone reads "*In Memory of Richard Potter, the celebrated Ventriloquist, Aged 52 years. Died Sept. 20, 1835.*"

Over the years, Potter studied and adapted the ways of powerful and important people of all races and creeds. He used this knowledge to great effect, charming business owners and community leaders to put the color of money above his own. It was his strategy to keep moving and expanding. He understood that his opportunities could quickly close in if he hesitated.

Richard Potter's story reveals the value of intellectual growth. Great mentors expect a level of initiative, self-motivation, and a quest for knowledge from prospective apprentices. Those who desire an apprenticeship and want to begin the climb to mastery must open these doors themselves.

Like Potter, we must struggle against perceived limitations and continually work to expand our horizons. By developing a healthy craving for knowledge, you will find it harder to remain satisfied with the status quo.



Continually reach outside of your personal circle. The people that we welcome into our expanding circle are worlds unto themselves. Cherish those positive few with stories and experiences that expand our horizons and strengthen our skills.

When we catch ourselves slipping into complacency, shake things up and actively seek new challenges. Steadily redefine your path and push beyond perceived limits.

**Set Aside your Superiority.** Daniel Everett's passion for experiencing cultures and learning languages led to a degree in Foreign Missions. He quickly proved his skill by mastering a difficult Mayan dialect. This early success led to a difficult assignment deep in the heart of the Amazon.

The *Piraha Tribe* are among the Amazon's oldest native inhabitants. In the early 18th Century, this indigenous tribe retreated deep into the jungle to escape the encroaching Portuguese colonists. They maintained their isolation well into the twentieth century. The *Piraha* developed no written language. Western missionaries tried and failed to decipher their spoken word. To complicate things, the villagers' spoken language employed an elaborate system of clicks and whistles while hunting. Everett happily accepted the mission to translate the Bible into the *Piraha* language.

Accompanied by his wife and two children, Elliott entered his first *Piraha* village in December of 1977. He repeatedly failed to break through the lingual brick wall during that first year. One day while accompanying a hunting party deep into the jungle, Everett realized that he had been living among these people as a scientist studying ants. He realized that he had subconsciously maintained a sense of superiority over the native tribesmen. He suddenly understood that he had to adjust his approach to the level of the youngest *Piraha* child.

This humble subordinate role opened the rich *Piraha* language to Elliott. He soon achieved a level of fluency that had eluded every missionary before him. This revelation deep in the Amazon jungle led Elliott into a highly successful career in linguistics.

Daniel Everett stumbled upon a truth of great importance to every would be apprentice. Our preconceived concepts, beliefs, and prejudices raise formidable barriers to learning. The dark specter of admitting that we may lack what appears to be common knowledge strengthens these obstacles. We create unnecessary anxiety over appearing inferior to our peers and masters.

We often see a common form of this in teens and adults watching magicians perform. It is more important for them to prove how immune they are to "being fooled" than simply relaxing and enjoying the moment. This mindset forfeits the pleasing impact of astonishment, annoys those trying to enjoy the moment, and destroys any possible connection with the magician.

Just as a violinist enjoys watching a patron lose himself in the strains of her music, we magicians prefer to perform for spectators who appreciate the efforts that we place on mastering our art. We shy away from or totally ignore those who blindly challenge our every move. Should it surprise you, then, that the most qualified mentors share this same expectation of an apprentice hopeful?

One of my cherished mentors, a prominent magician, author, and I.B.M. Past International President, informed me that one of my students had asked for his help on several advanced skill sets. This gifted gentleman agreed and handed the boy his personal copy of Henning Nelms' *Magic and Showmanship* with instructions to read the first five chapters and return the following week.

The week passed and the two met. My mentor quizzed the young man on the book. It was immediately clear that the young man had not completed the assignment. The young magician boldly stated that he wasn't interested in the content of this antiquated book. He considered it irrelevant to what he wanted to study. My mentor shook his head and walked away retracting his offer to mentor the young man.

We are conditioned from childhood to believe that not knowing something renders us somehow inferior to those around us. When we feel our preeminence threatened, we naturally hide behind our prejudices and excuses and close our minds to other possibilities. This condemns us to lost opportunities to experience the prodigious knowledge and skills of others.

Apprentices throughout the ages generally began their careers by performing the most menial tasks around the guilds. The masters pounded their apprentices into demeaning subordinate roles so that, when the time came, they would approach their studies with open minds. Such celebrated artists as Michealangelo, da Vinci, and Rembrandt all started hauling trash and running errands for their teachers. Remember Daniel-san and Mr. Miyagi? Wax on! Wax off!

Understand this. Any time we embark on a new course of study, we commit ourselves to a new and unknown environment no different from Elliott's *Piraha*



culture. To succeed, we cannot approach this environment as its master. We must consciously acknowledge and accept the superiority of those who hold mastery over us. Only by yielding his or her own sense of superiority does the apprentice signal to the desired mentor and to himself that he is ready to absorb all that waits to be shared.

**Power Through Barriers.** John was fifteen when he and his three younger siblings were orphaned. As the eldest, John left school and enrolled as a surgeon's apprentice to support them. John had a love for literature and a deep passion for poetry. He tried his own hand at writing by modeling the greatest poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As a personal challenge, he set out to write an epic four-thousand-line poem based on the ancient Greek myth of Endymion. He fixed the arduous goal of writing fifty lines each day with a daunting deadline of seven months for a completed first draft.

Over the months, John came to thoroughly hate the poem. Still, with three thousand lines written he stubbornly refused to quit. Critics panned his work, and John expressed regret at starting it. Even so, he credited the effort with teaching him many invaluable lessons.

He discovered that by forcing himself to meet his daily goals, even when his spirit flagged, his writing skills steadily improved. He discovered methods for powering through writer's block and other creativity obstacles. Most importantly, he developed a personal writing style far different from the flowery prose of Endymion. This new style produced the graceful literary and inspirational images for which John Keats is known today.

Apothecary apprentice Heinrich was ten years old when he managed to blow a hole in the pharmacy floor with an errant chemical concoction. Fearing his father's wrath, he hopped a freight train and adopted the hard scrabble lifestyle of a young vagabond. He bounced across the countryside working at odd jobs until he was invited to apprentice under a compassionate upstate New York minister.

A traveling show featuring the Fakir of Ava changed young Heinrich's life forever. He became obsessed with magic, studying everything he could find on the art. He abandoned his guardian and the ministry, tracked down the Fakir, a dime museum magician named Isaiah Harris Hughes, and pleaded to be accepted as his apprentice.

Heinrich's lack of a formal education made life difficult, but he exhibited a natural

aptitude for the stage. He failed miserably with his debut act. A series of equally disastrous shows followed. He continued to disappoint audiences until he joined spiritualists William Fay and the Davenport Brothers. Heinrich studied, mastered, and improved on their acts, eventually breaking with the Davenports and touring with William Fay.

Heinrich and Fay toured successfully across South and Central America. Flush with success, the pair set sail for London just as a raging storm arose and scuttled their ship. Heinrich escaped with the clothes on his back and a diamond ring on his finger. The loss of the team's hard earned savings forced Fay to return to the Davenports.

On his own in London, Heinrich traded his precious ring for new show equipment. He studied the acts and apparatus of de Kolta, Maskelyne, and Cooke. Resurrecting his success, he eventually returned to the U.S. and opened his own Egyptian Hall theater patterned after Maskelyne and Cooke's London theater of the same name.

Over time, Heinrich became known as Harry. He changed his last name from Keller to Kellar. From humble beginnings, he powered through immense hardships to become the Dean of Magic, one of our most venerated and internationally known magicians of his time.

By nature, we tend to shrink from anything that seems potentially painful or overtly difficult. Weaker students focus on the simpler aspects of a new skill, concentrating on this easier element rather than attempting the more complex. As a result, their skill becomes one dimensional and common. The exceptional apprentice seeks out greater challenges and is never satisfied with the status quo.

We may subconsciously allow our passion for performing to drop during practice since we are under no pressure to perform. This leads to a level of detached attention. Professionals approach their practice and rehearsal with the same energy devoted to the actual event.

The best mentors understand that mastery of any skill requires a singular tenacity. Like Kellar and Keats, we must consciously force aside our natural tendency to seek the easier path. The apprentice seeking mastery must become his own severest critic and rigid master.

The ideal apprentice develops and maintains the same intense concentration

during practice that he displays for each live performance. We develop mental and physical exercises that push through our weaknesses to achieve our personal goals. Only in this manner can we recognize and address those elements within ourselves in need of the greatest improvement. Determine to make that sacrifice today in order to enjoy the fruit of your effort in the years ahead.

**Persistence.** Eight-year-old James first discovered magic at an Indianapolis theater matinee. On his way home, he bought a copy of Howard Thurston's *Fifty New Card Tricks* for twenty-five cents and, like so many before and since, James was hooked.

His family moved to Texas when James was thirteen. He eagerly talked his way into an early apprenticeship at Dallas' iconic *Douglas Magicland* magic shop. James sought out every opportunity to learn from the many professionals frequenting the shop. As his mastery of magic grew, his search for new performance venues expanded.

Step forward into the early 1950s. James noticed that a new entertainment medium called television showed little interest in magic. Aside from the rare appearance on the Ted Mack Amateur Hour or Ed Sullivan's variety show, magic and television were relative strangers with no serial magic-themed television shows. James set his sights on this new untapped market.

Television program directors balked at the idea. Sponsors saw no value in it. Older magicians told him it would never work. "*Everyone will think it's done with camera tricks,*" they warned! Undeterred, James pushed through one rejection after another. He made it his mission to deliver magic into American living rooms through the miracle of television.

He studied television production and marketing techniques. Armed with this knowledge, he convinced the Dallas Dr. Pepper bottling company to sponsor a single fifteen-minute pilot titled *Time for Magic*. At the beginning of the show, James announced that he allowed no camera trickery of any kind and that the home and studio audiences were seeing the same things at the same time. The program dominated the Dallas ratings and James' confidence was vindicated.

Dr. Pepper continued to sponsor James' fifteen-minute shows on Dallas TV. In return, James developed a promotion for his sponsor drawing over 300,000 responses; a record for mail received at the television station. His vision was a winner and a rich new market for magic created. Through vision, confidence, and

energetic persistence, James Mark Wilson blazed the trail for the televised magic performances that we enjoy today!

Young David and his pals wandered the railway tracks searching for playing cards that traveling gamblers tossed out of their speeding railcars. These discarded pasteboards fueled David's lifelong exploration of gambling and magic skills. His passion was kicked into overdrive when he found a copy of the mysterious S. W. Erdnase's *The Expert at the Card Table*, a book dedicated to the card skills common to professional gamblers and card cheats commonly called "mechanics." He memorized this book and often quoted chapter and verse in later years.

David meticulously sought out the country's top card mechanics, earned their trust, and convinced them to share their best cheats and flourishes. He began to hear ethereal rumors about a highly deceptive center deal; the mechanics' holy grail. A mechanic's strength lay in dealing select cards on demand from a stacked or glimpsed deck. The standard practice of cutting the deck before each deal significantly hindered the mechanic's ability to deal the buried cards. The fabled center deal, if real, meant that any cards cut to the center of the deck could be secretly dealt on demand. Finding and mastering this mythical center deal became David's elusive white whale.

David developed card skills that mechanics respected and copied. He spent years trying to develop a passable center deal and failed. Every grilled every mechanic he met until, decades later, he narrowed his search to an unnamed center-deal mechanic somewhere in the Midwest.

David followed the rumors into the heart of mob-controlled Kansas City. Mechanics there reluctantly directed him to Allen Kennedy in nearby Pleasant Hill. After twenty years of searching, David found his whale. He was enthralled by Kennedy's flawless delivery of named cards from the center of a cut deck. He convinced Kennedy to teach him his closely guarded center deal. With years of daily practice, David, or Dai, Vernon mastered his own version of this treasured center deal.

Great mentors recognize those strengthened by the flames of failure. We fail, we recover, and we try again with our new found knowledge. The persistent mind views failure as an extension of its education.

Identify your strongest wants and desires. Set your motivation and keep moving forward. Create a strong positive environment around you. Surround yourself with

strong positive role models. Develop or join Masterminds that share your passions and goals. Foster healthy disciplines and habits that support rather than hinder your professional growth. Consciously adopt the attitude that good enough is never good enough.

Your personal growth and success depend heavily upon your own frame of mind. Make it count!

**Dreams Only Work Through Action.** Six-year-old Douglas watched in awe as a magician on the Ed Sullivan Show floated his assistant in midair. Teenage Douglas spent years trying to recreate that moment of astonishment for his friends. He took a break to complete his degree in psychology, then returned to magic to earn money for medical school.

Douglas identified two prominent classes of magicians at the time: Children's acts and nightclub acts. The grand stage acts had mostly died out with Vaudeville. Still, he dreamt of restoring magic to the majesty of the big stage. Bureaucrats denied his government arts grant application claiming that magic was not a true performance art. Undeterred, Douglas pushed back, detailing the classic link among magic, dance, and the theater arts. The committee relented and awarded Douglas a \$4,000 study grant, the equivalent of \$50,000 today.

He studied mime under Adrian Peeknold, choreography with Charlene Painter, and eagerly sought a magic apprenticeship with Dai Vernon and Slydini. Detailing his dream and proving his drive to learn, both legendary magicians eventually welcomed him as their student.

Douglas raised \$70,000 from investors and opened *Spellbound*, a dramatic musical featuring his illusions. *Spellbound* was reimagined as his monster Broadway hit, *The Magic Show* in 1974, the eighth longest running musical on Broadway at that time.

Douglas didn't stop there. In 1975, he approached NBC with a proposal for a grand magic TV special - the first of its kind. Drawing on Mark Wilson's success, he insisted that the entire special be aired live with limited commercial interruptions and without camera tricks or editing. The network balked, arguing that viewers wouldn't tune in. Douglas again stood his ground and offered a live performance of Houdini's infamous Water Torture Cell. The network agreed, and the first dramatic televised magic special was created! Doug Henning is recognized today as the performer who brought the magic spectacular back into the public eye.

It was 1884 when 5-year-old Soren Sorensen's Danish family moved to New Jersey. He was the average kid of an alcoholic father with a basic grade school education and a wicked sense of humor. Soren, or as he preferred, Sam was the kind of kid who put salt in the sugar bowl, tied shoelaces together, and lit matches in the soles of his buddies' shoes.

With his limited education and the residual insecurities from an abusive parent, Sam wandered rather aimlessly through life. He worked for a newspaper, trolled pool halls, toured as a champion trap shooter, hawked picture frames, bought a half interest in a hotel, and pitched products for a German dye company. Through all of this one thing remained constant. He had a reputation for handing out lead cigars, exploding cigarettes, and homemade tin flies destined for soup bowls. Sam lived for the practical joke.

It was while working for the dye company that he noticed that the coal tar extract used in the dye caused everyone on the floor to sneeze. A lot! He spent weeks of trial and error extracting the fine sneeze inducing powder from the coal tar. Hitting on the ideal method, he began testing it on his friends. They sneezed. A lot! When they figured out that Sam was behind their marathon sneezing bouts, they couldn't get enough of the powder for their parties and friends.

Recognizing the commercial potential, Sam began selling packets of *Cachoo Sneeze Powder*. He sold his interest in the hotel for \$1,500 (about \$50,000 today) and began bottling *Cachoo* in his single room flat. Novelty dealers began ordering his bottles by the thousands and selling them for ten cents each. In his first year, Sam grossed \$15,000 in sales. The following year, that figure rose to \$150,000, roughly \$5,000,000 in current dollars. People across the country began sneezing and no one could figure out why! Editorials were written! Fights were fought! Concerts and a national political convention were disrupted! Disorder reigned and Sam laughed all the way to the bank.

The Sorensen Joke Company was born, but Sam believed that the name Sorensen was just too long for an American business. He legally changed his name to Soren Sorensen Adams. Sam went on to create exploding cigarette cases, itching powder, stink bombs, dribble glasses, foaming sugar tablets, peanut brittle spring snakes, exploding gum packs, and thousands of other practical joke products. The S.S. Adams Company has proudly worn his treasured King of Practical Jokes crown since.

Joanne wrote her first story about a rabbit when she was six years old. She wrote her first novel about seven cursed diamonds and the people who owned them when she was eleven. She studied French and classic literature in college.

While waiting for a delayed train in London, Joanne daydreamed a fascinating story. Not having a pen handy, she simply allowed the dream to play out before her mind's eye. When she returned home, she began to write.

Time passed. Her mother died, she accepted a job in Portugal teaching English, married, birthed her first daughter, divorced, and returned to live with her sister in Scotland. It took her five years sitting in the back of Edinburgh coffee shop with her daughter to finish her book. She never thought of the book as a potential best seller. It was just a fascinating tale that she thoroughly enjoyed writing. It took her a year to be accepted by a literary agent and another year to find a publisher willing to print and distribute the book. The story was on a slow train to nowhere.

The publisher insisted on using her initials rather than her name to make the book more appealing to boys. Finally, in 1997, she watched her book hit the shelves and become one of the most popular book series in modern history. Harry Potter and J.K. Rowling were soon household names.

All personal growth begins with a dream or desire to become more than we are. Once we accept our life path, it falls to us to master the skills needed to bring our dreams to life. Life will set barriers and detours in our path. How we plow through, climb over, tunnel under, or detour around these barriers define who we are and what we may become.

Changes in our societies have modified the apprenticeship model. While formal apprenticeships are largely outmoded, the concept of passing decades of hard earned knowledge and skill from master to apprentice remains strong. We achieve mastery by blending these lessons with our unique personality.

Mozart, da Vinci, Einstein, Christie, Thurston, Shelley, and many other great masters had their own apprenticeship phase. There are no shortcuts. To be the best, we must learn from the best. To learn from the best, we must push through the crowd and display our worthiness as motivated and dedicated students. That is up to you.

Enjoy the adventure.



"I passionately hate the idea of being with it; I think an artist has always to be out of step with his time."

Orson Welles

## CLUB LIBRARIES



Many club members may find money to be tight, especially our younger members and our senior fixed-income peers. To cut costs, our younger members may turn to dreadful YouTube videos or pirated products to boost their skills.

Meanwhile, most club members have professional books, DVDs, and magic apparatus gathering dust on cluttered shelves. Can we put these idle pieces to work serving the club without harming our stand on professional ethics?

**Book or Apparatus Exchange.** You've seen these mini Take-a-Book-Leave-a-Book library boxes on the street? A similar magic exchange program encourages members to invest in a few quality DVDs, books, or effects. Members bring in unwanted books, DVDs, or magic apparatus and display them either before or following a meeting. On an honor system, members take an item of interest and leave an item of equal or near equal value. The items they walk out with are theirs to keep or trade at a future meeting. The program helps members to expand their knowledge of the art without the prohibitive expense.

For members who can't afford to purchase items, consider creating a Ring-sponsored work-study program. The club may offer a selection of donated magical items in exchange for work done around members' houses or businesses. This works extremely well with youth members. Senior members may offer non-magic services such as woodworking, sewing, or craft skills.

**Club Lending Library.** A club lending library recycles donated and purchased books, DVDs, or magic apparatus. Members may borrow an item and carry it home to develop an original routine. Encourage members to present at least one routine from the borrowed item to qualify for a new loan. This test drive format encourages a strong familiarization with the various magic principles and products among youth members. It also helps youth members to find the best fit for their style and performance goals before investing in their own personal gear.

**Participation Incentives.** Raleigh Ring #199 offers a chest filled with donated

books, DVDs, and apparatus. Members who perform an effect during a meeting are invited to choose any item from the chest. Other donated items are offered through a meeting fundraising raffle.

**Gathering Donations.** Establishing your club as an educational 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization generates a tax deduction for donations to the club. Clubs may also qualify as social club 501(c)7 not-for-profits. Visit the IRS.gov website for the application and details.

Clubs may wish to form a three-person team to manage the club's exchange and library programs. This panel decides what the program will offer and how they will obtain and store the items. They may solicit contributions or use club funds to stock the library.

**Project storage.** Storing a club library takes planning. Ask if your meeting site will allow a locked storage cabinet in an unused corner. If not, consider placing lightweight padded shelves inside of wheeled storage trunks. Another option is posting your inventory list on your website. Students may request an item for the next meeting.

**Project Rules.** Your library team needs policies and procedures to keep it functioning smoothly. These rules may include who may check items out, how many items may be checked out at one time, how long the items may be kept, whether a signed liability waiver or deposit is needed for magic apparatus, what training may be required for certain apparatus, and how to account for apparatus parts, packing, and instructions.

**Library Inventory.** As you gather materials, mark them with the library's name and give each one a unique identification number. Books and DVDs can be identified with '*Property of*' bookplates on the inside cover. Place labels on magic apparatus out of sight on the bottom or inside of each item. Labels should include the date of acquisition, the current or replacement value, an inventory tracking number, and a contact name and phone number. The label may also list DVDs and other items included with a book or removable pieces of a magic prop.

Use a spreadsheet or library software program to keep track of your inventory and all lending. The Windows Office website offers several excellent Excel library management spreadsheets at [templates.office.com](http://templates.office.com).

**Management.** Your library team is responsible for tracking borrowed items and

keeping the inventory in good condition. Check items for damage when they go out and come back. Annotate damages and repairs on a master inventory list for future reference. Make prompt repairs to avoid additional damage.

**Intellectual Property Ethics.** Yes, I know. I am a strong advocate for the protection of intellectual property rights. In stark contrast, this column promotes the sharing and trading of commercial for-profit works among our members. A sizable ethics gap exists between artistic sacrilege and educational empowerment. Before consigning me to the rack, please consider this:

Most of us got our start in magic when someone somewhere shared a few magic secrets with us. We older members began our education with magic books found on the shelf of a friend, mentor, or the public library. Every magician I've ever met has improved his or her skills through sessions, another word for sharing, with other magicians in a club or private setting.

Our public libraries have access to a national network offering nearly every book and DVD published. A polite request to your local librarian to order a specific book or DVD will generally place these items into your hands within a week. My librarian identified available books from thirty-two modern magic authors.

Lending or exchanging a book or DVD may introduce our members to a heretofore unfamiliar author or manufacturer. I believe it's fair to state that we all follow certain authors and magicians and purchase their works after viewing pieces performed by fellow magicians.

On the other side of this coin, club libraries and exchanges must allow original products only. No knock-offs. Forbid DVD copies and photocopied books. If a member loves and wishes to keep a library item, the library team can assist with the purchase from the creator or other safe vendor.

Addressing the issues of sound ethics while promoting an educational environment is tough. We want our members to learn this art from reliable and professional sources, not from pathetic YouTube exposés or cheap pirated products. We also want them to recognize the intellectual property rights of others. In my opinion, making affordable and quality instructional tools available to our members accomplishes both objectives.



"When I was six years old, I fell in love with magic. For Christmas, I got a magic box and a very old book on card manipulation. Somehow, I was more interested in pure manipulation than in all the silly little tricks in the box."

Philippe Petit



## EMBRACE DIGITAL TRENDS OR DIE



Print books are rapidly falling out of favor under the onslaught of digital convenience. Are we on track with this trend?

A recent Harris Poll reports that Baby Boomers (1946 to 1964) and Gen X (1965 to 1980) still tend to value printed materials over electronic media. Millennials (1981 to 1996) and Gen Z (1997 to 2009) prefer a blend of the two mediums. Their selection generally depends on their immediate objectives. Gen Alpha (2010 to 2024) leans heavily toward the convenience and affordability of digital media over printed materials.

The poll reports that Gen Z prefers video instructions over printed. Gen Alpha prefers online and video lessons over in-person training, learning apps or games, and printed material. Eighty-five percent of responding teenagers and young adults said they visit YouTube daily. Thirty-two percent said they use the YouTube video-sharing platform more often than other social media platforms. Forty-seven percent claimed to spend three or more hours a day on YouTube.

Gen Z views themselves as digital natives; the first generation to grow up completely immersed in smartphone, tablet and e-reader technology. They are accustomed to finding answers at Internet speeds. All a student needs to do is type "crash course" followed by a subject's name and a variety of three-to-ten-minute videos instantly appear covering the topic. Try it with "crash course algebra" or "crash course magic"!

This new dependence is driving changes in our education and training methods. School districts around the world are establishing their own streaming and recorded video channels covering standard and extracurricular topics. Students can play, pause, and backtrack repeatedly without inconveniencing a teacher, peer, or parent. As a result, more and more teachers are using online video to complement and reinforce daily classwork.

Our younger members still rely on one-on-one interpersonal connection with mentors and teachers to physically and mentally guide them in pulling this

knowledge together. Over seventy-eight percent of Gen Z poll respondents stated that teachers remain very important to their learning and development.

Teachers, parents, and policymakers acknowledge the growing need for on-demand instruction. Students across the U.S. receive school-issued iPads and access to e-textbooks. A 2009 California law required that all college textbooks be available in electronic form by 2020. A 2011 Florida law requires public schools to convert their textbooks to digital form by the same year.

Are we, as international and local societies, adapting to this mandate or are we ignoring it at our peril? Our current youth and future adult members comprise this on-demand generation. Does your club maintain a dedicated You Tube or Vimeo channel? Do you regularly post short, simplified videos of importance to members? Does your club host a video vlog covering events, news, and points of unique interest? Do you still rely exclusively on outdated newsletters, emails, and text webpages?

**YouTube Channel.** As a minimum, clubs should consider creating a channel of dedicated informational and instructive magic videos. Consider replacing your outdated email newsletter with a video news report? Would our members find video product reviews and tips helpful?

**Media Production Team.** Has your club appointed a dedicated video-production team to record and post club meeting and performance videos to keep absent members informed and involved. Many high schools and community colleges offer video production classes. Youth members might earn extra credit for tackling this project for your club. This team might consider streaming meetings to allow absent members to participate.

**Teaser and Info Videos.** Post a video of each lesson or workshop to reinforce or refresh a member's understanding. These videos help members who miss a workshop session to stay current. Public "teaser" videos teaching public domain magic tricks may draw new members into your program.

**Entertaining Videos.** Post short and entertaining videos that add background knowledge to a lesson, lecture or workshop topic. For example, attach a short biographical video about an effect's creator or author. Video clips can help members mentally place these persons within the history and social structure of our art.

**Member Video Challenge.** Help your members create a humorous video demonstrating the right and wrong ways to perform a magic effect for friends. Create an energetic recruiting video for your website and social media pages. Record on-camera introductory interviews with club leaders and members to boost member connections.

**K.I.S.S.** The emphasis here is on short and direct! Embody your inner Ken Burns in seven minutes or less! Short videos hold attention. Keep your videos focused and action driven. Add royalty-free music and a few special effects. Lengthy boring verbal diatribes will drive members away.

Be selective. A short clip can have a big impact. Be clear on your purpose. Weed out any extraneous chit chat or actions. Highlight each specific lesson's objectives.

**Production Goals & Objectives.** Set a goal for your videos. For example, you might advise members, "As you watch, pay attention to ...." Setting a goal for each video will keep viewers accountable and attentive.

**Transcripts.** Use closed captioning. This encourages students to read along as they watch. The double impact helps sear the lesson into our memories. For content-packed video clips, consider including downloadable PDF transcripts.

TeacherTube and BrainPop offer great examples of effective instructional videos. Adobe Premiere Elements, CyberLink Power Director, and Apple iMovie are all affordable and easy-to-use movie editing software. Uploading to YouTube or Vimeo couldn't be easier. Vimeo and YouTube offer unlisted and invitation-only options for video protection. Vimeo offers pass-word protection for individual videos while YouTube currently does not. However, YouTube can be set as 'private' or 'unlisted' for a degree of privacy. Other affordable and easy video sites include Daily Motion, Jetpack, Wistia, and VidYard. Choose the service that best fits your budget, goals and needs.

Make your club more attractive to young members by embracing streaming and on-demand video services. Give it a try!



"Growing up, yeah, I had a magic kit with learn tricks and learn card tricks, but I was never... I used to watch whatever magic special was on as a kid, but then, it's not that I lost interest, but to be a magician, you really, it's really hard work. Learning lines is hard enough; learning sleight of hand, that's real practice."

Steve Buscemi

## SPEAKERS BUREAU



Does your club maintain and promote a Speakers Bureau? Creating a well-trained Speakers Bureau may raise public awareness of your programs, enhance your Ring's public image, provide positive role models, recruit new members, attract positive press coverage and raise needed funds.

Speakers bureaus generally rely on skilled volunteers making them inexpensive to run. Begin by compiling a list of potential speakers who are qualified to present your Ring and the art of performance magic to the public. Members with significant life experiences related to your Ring's mission or are knowledgeable about magic make

the best candidates. Extra points if they are active members of Toastmasters - and frankly, in my opinion, every magician who hopes to be entertaining and effective should be an active member of Toastmasters.

Recruit and train members who are knowledgeable, articulate and appealing when talking about the art of magic. The best speakers are passionate about our art and enjoy sharing this passion with others.

Don't overlook the talent among our youth members. If available, enroll them in your local Toastmaster's Youth Leadership Program. This workshop consists of eight two-hour sessions teaching communication and leadership skills through practical experience after school or on weekends. If this program isn't available in your area, work with your local Toastmasters to form one or create your own within your Ring. Adding youth speakers to your speakers bureau will definitely enhance the reach and effectiveness of your program.

Once you have identified your speakers, train them on the key points of writing and presenting their speeches. Your audiences are giving you their time and attention. Make sure you're not wasting it with a speech that has no clear purpose. View every speech as a conversation connecting the speaker and your program with each unique audience.

**Choose the right tone.** Presentations that challenge, entertain, motivate, or

inform all require a unique tone and style. Plan every presentation with your speakers as carefully as you would an important magic performance.

**People react to true personal stories-Even if they aren't.** Use personal stories within your speeches to draw your audiences in. You can use stories to open your speech, create a setting or to illustrate points and appeal to the emotions of your audience.

**Inject Humor.** Adding humor to a speech can help your audience relax and form a connection with your speaker. Your humor should simplify and compliment the points of your speech. By adding humor that highlights the principal points of your speech, you make it easier for your listener to grasp your key points. Be careful, though. Inappropriate or off-topic humor can quickly turn your audience against you.

**Match your speakers to your target audiences.** A highly educated audience may connect with your ivy league speaker, but he'll likely put a blue collar audience to sleep. Carefully consider the impression and response you want your speakers to leave with each audience.

**Include a Little Magic.** Your audiences will certainly expect a demonstration of your prestidigitator skills during your speech. (Whew! Say that three times real fast!) Carefully choose effects that demonstrate or emphasize the main points of your speech. Don't insert effects just for grins and giggles and don't overdo it. You're speaking about the art of magic, not performing a full show.

**Leave your audience wanting more.** That Vaudevillian adage works here, as well. Too many speakers never seem to know when to quit. You want to leave your audience with questions and a desire to learn more. Keep the presentations a bit on the shorter side.

**Peer Review.** Assemble a panel of skilled club members to preview each presentation and offer constructive feedback. In addition to the speech itself, pay close attention to facial and body language, gestures, vocal clarity and visual aids. The power behind sincere peer direction can make the difference between a head-nodder and a standing ovation.

**Offer Discussion Panels.** Speaking of panels, train speaker teams as well as single speakers. Panels work better with broader or more general topics requiring a wider range of experience. Single speakers work best for shorter, in-depth

presentations. For example, you may create a panel featuring a professional performer, a hobbyist and an enthusiast or a close-up artist, a parlor performer, a mentalist and a stage illusionist to offer differing insight.

**Make the Pitch!** Pitch your bureau's service to local civic groups like the Rotary Club and the Chamber of Commerce, service clubs such as the Kiwanis or Lions Clubs, church groups, first responder units such as your local police or fire departments, high school and college campus clubs, local businesses, retail outlets and more. Check with your local chamber of commerce and tourism offices for scheduled conventions, conferences and events that may welcome a unique speaker. Be creative in writing presentations that connect your club's mission with each group's specific needs.

Find the name of each group's contact person and create a phone and mailing list to send out information about your bureau. Follow each mailing with a phone call a week later. Track and monitor these contacts in a dedicated database or spreadsheet.

**Communicate!** When you schedule an engagement, send a brief confirmation letter listing the speaker's name with the time, date, topic, location, duration of the event, and so on. Provide a job sheet with these details to your speakers.

Present your hosts with a simple feedback form. Asking for feedback from your audiences helps you and your speakers to plan for future improvement.

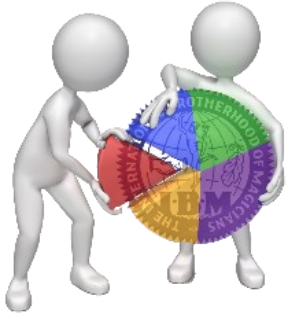
We should never miss an opportunity to educate our communities on the existence and value of our performance art. A professional quality speakers bureau provides a powerful tool. If your Ring has yet to create a speakers bureau, consider taking that first step today!



"I thoroughly enjoyed learning the magic I performed as Poirot for *The Disappearance of Mr. Davenheim*. Those were my hands in the close shots. The effects were marvelous."

David Suchet

## RING REPORTS AND COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE



Do you read the Ring Reports in the Linking Ring? Each month, these pages deliver brilliant tips covering leadership, meeting management, fundraising ideas, social activities, member benefits and strengthening our collective knowledge.

**Collective knowledge?** Our clubs are vast storehouses of magical knowledge. No surprise there, right? Many experienced and innovative minds pass through our doors each month. They may include our strongest cardicians, popular kidshow artists or star comedians. But what about the accomplished and hidden maestros of sound tech, music, programming, graphic design, woodwork, theater direction, script writing, marketing and other undervalued skills that often pass untapped.

Such diverse knowledge is without question the magic club's greatest treasure. But, as with any commodity, the value of knowledge plummets when hoarded and soars only when shared! Sharing is our superpower! With proper management, this wide assortment of skills, experiences and perspectives can energize a fresh new generation of novel designs and solutions.

**Knowledge vs. Information.** To begin, let's clarify the difference between knowledge and information. Information provides the bare facts surrounding a skill. Observing a unique skill rarely results in the ability to duplicate it. Imagine watching a skilled bartender create a complicated cocktail. Attempting to duplicate the process without the mixologist's guidance will likely result in a series of messy trials and tasteless errors. However, we are far more likely to pour a palatable beverage if we invite the mixologist to guide us past his own novice blunders. It is the mixologist's shared experience and practice that transforms bare information into functional knowledge.

**Novel vs. Useful.** So, are our clubs overlooking this vital educational tool? Let's look at one common weakness exposed by our Ring Reports. Many Rings promote a wide array of seasonal and imaginative themes such as "Holiday Magic" and "Tarbell Tricks." These themes encourage members to stretch their creativity by rescripting or combining common effects. They may challenge the novice

magician's creativity and, occasionally, entertain us, but do they actually expand the collective knowledge of our clubs?

What if we replaced generic themes such as "Ghostly Gems" or "Turkey Tricks" with skill-specific themes such as "Practical Branding" or "Comedy Duos"? For example, a "Sound Tech" theme may encourage members to display their varied sound gear, explain how to balance a PA system, discuss battery vs. AC-powered systems and demonstrate proper and creative mic handling. A "Handling Volunteers" theme might invite in-depth discussions on volunteer selection, handling volunteer "dead time," getting the best possible entertainment value from volunteers and positioning volunteers for optimum effect.

A 2012 study found that ninety-four percent of members prefer clubs that offer hands-on learning opportunities. This rings particularly true for Gen Z and Millennials. Members sincerely interested in advancing the art of magic are far more likely to return to meetings that are productive and beneficial than those that are merely entertaining or social. Is this not the type of member we are hoping to attract and retain?

Kick things off with a mini lecture presented by a club expert. If you lack an inhouse authority, ask a couple of members to research and report on the topic, open with an instructional video or seek an outside lecturer. Challenge members to contribute to the discussion or demonstrate the featured skill. If willing, invite presenters to teach their specific technique or skill variation. Follow this with a hands-on workshop or group discussion on various adaptations of the targeted skill. Encourage members to cite their sources, recommend retailers and suggest further study options.

This line of thinking offers additional benefits! Collaboration supports personal recognition. Those who share their knowledge become valued assets. Club members get a warm fuzzy feeling from sharing their experiences and benefiting from those of others.

**Sharing vs. Teaching.** Expanding our expertise into multiple areas ensures that this knowledge remains with the club. When a quiet or shy member leaves, their unshared knowledge goes with them.

Sharing encourages questions and adaptation of old ideas. For example, many younger (and not-so-young) members are unaware of the gold hiding within many of our old books. They may have no idea how to mine and refine these precious



nuggets! Steadily expanding our club's knowledge base provides the needed maps and tools.

The improvement in our members' confidence and competence will show and improve our image within the community. Our international network benefits as practiced members carry this knowledge to other clubs.

**Trust vs. Tolerance.** Collective knowledge requires more than just putting our heads together. Our clubs must provide a sanctuary for artistic growth. I hear you! Some of you are thinking about your hesitance to share due to a lack of trust in certain members. It's sadly true. Nearly every club has individuals who will, let's say this plainly, steal, undercut or expose the intellectual labor of others. Then there are those who are happy to sit back and absorb this knowledge and contribute nothing in return. Clubs tolerate these members to keep membership numbers high, to avoid hurting someone's feelings or to keep some semblance of peace. STOP!

In my opinion, creating a safe haven for the open distribution of our hard-earned knowledge is more important than sparing a disruptive member's feelings. If your club is dead set against confronting these individuals, for whatever reason, then consider forming a dedicated subgroup within the club. Yes, cliques within a club can be destructive, but without a protected safe sharing space, our clubs will never grow beyond the "club that sort of does things" level.

The saying goes, "If you're the smartest person in the room, then you're in the wrong room." If you think about it, that implies that one person is always in the wrong room! If that person leaves, then the next smartest person is in the wrong room! That's nuts! The energy behind this quote is that we should strive to surround ourselves with those who push us to greater heights. Frankly, the wiser statement might be, "If you're the smartest person in the room, share!"



"My interest was magic, believe it or not. I became an amateur magician and did something like 400 magic shows through my teen years."

David Pogue



## MAGIC AS A PERFORMING ART



Merriam-Webster defines performance art as a nontraditional art form that typically features a live presentation to an audience or onlookers and draws on such arts as acting, poetry, music, dance, or painting. Magic fits neatly within this definition and yet, critics and art councils continue to treat magic as a mere hobby. It's time that we introduced these councils to a few unexplored truths.

**Magic is theater.** Magic employs many theatrical components including action, plot, character development, scripting, music and spectacle. Magicians engage tragedy, comedy, and melodrama. Magicians build their performances around common dramatic structure including point of attack, exposition, rising action, crisis and resolution. Magicians draw heavily from the actor's toolbox of voice, body, mind and imagination.

**Magic is universal.** Producers routinely incorporate magic theories and techniques into dance, musicals, dramatic plays and cinematic films. Magicians readily stand alongside noted musicians, actors and dancers as the most recognized global celebrities.

**Magic is an art.** Art councils around the world recognize dance, music and theater as powerful vehicles for enhancing youth self-esteem within a safe, educational environment. These councils support strong performing art programs for their positive collaborative benefit to artists, mentors, community, youth and family. Clearly, the magic arts fit this criteria for recognition as a traditional performing art. Yet, we continue to hit brick walls when applying for artistic grants, trying to enter into artist-in-residence programs and gaining community recognition as a true multicultural art form. Young magicians gain valuable life skills no less important than those taught to dance, thespian and music students

**Magicians think on their feet!** The ability to stay calm and carry on is what keeps a small mistake from mushrooming into a major one. As no performance is ever perfect, magic students learn to improvise when something goes wrong. There is real skill in learning to minimize errors and stay on track. Helping students define

success as a level reached through trial and error removes the fear of facing new challenges.

**Magicians face their fears.** We all get nervous as we prepare to speak in front of peers and strangers alike. Teaching our teens how to cope with performance jitters gives them a leg up when faced with future big life moments. Magic students learn that it is perfectly natural to feel nervous before a performance. It may not quiet the nerves, but it helps students to know that they're not alone.

**Magicians manage stress.** Magic students learn to work through their fears by recalling past fearful or anxious memories that turned out well. We teach students that four or five long, deep breaths slowly inhaled through the mouth and exhaled through the nose and slowly counting backward from seven forces their minds to focus on something other than their nerves. Even the great magician Howard Thurston began every show by quietly and firmly chanting "I love this audience" just before each performance.

**Magicians self-actualize.** Hearing an auditorium break into loud laughter or applause is an incredible and humbling feeling. Such instant positive feedback creates a pleasing emotional high. Young magicians will carry this memory forward to their next performance as proof that they can successfully perform under pressure.

**Magicians dissect reality.** One of the most wonderful things about theater is that for a short period of time our students get to step outside of themselves and become someone else. Assuming an alter ego is a very safe way for teens to test and adapt certain feelings. Many actors, magicians and comedians are, in fact, hard core introverts who blossom on stage and express themselves in ways they aren't otherwise comfortable doing.

**Magicians develop empathy.** Assuming an alter ego also teaches teens how to look at situations from someone else's perspective; to step into someone else's shoes. This skill helps young magicians read an audience and modify the course of their performance, presentation or interaction.

**Magicians connect.** Mentors, teachers and parents can also use a teen's performance character to launch a discussion about sensitive issues. We teach nervous students to think back to the first time they learned a particularly difficult effect. How did their stage persona handle it? What steps did they take to master that effect? How did it feel to finally present the polished and rehearsed effect to

a spectator?

**Magicians share a unique perspective.** Performing arts, especially magic and comedy, teach teens to look at the world around them through a slightly altered lens. A trained magician may see an exciting device with magic potential or a uniquely humorous tale where an average person sees a commonplace item or situation. The magic student views conventional encounters with a creative *“What if?”* rather than a *“So what.”*

**Magic requires teamwork.** Magic introduces our teens to the concept of the ensemble. They discover responsibility for a team counting on them to do their part toward the group’s success. That weight of personal responsibility is rare in a teen’s world. Successfully delivering lines or hitting the right spot on stage at the right time carries greater weight because of what’s at stake.

**Magicians understand effort.** Each successful performance is the culmination of weeks or months of preparation. It only takes a few potentially ego-shattering failures to teach them that success requires effort. It also teaches that success is a level reached through courageous trial and error.

The skills learned in dance, theater and magic are not as important as the experience gained through performing. Teaching any performing art to teens is more about preparing kids for other areas of life. The art councils understand and appreciate that these performances boost teen creativity and confidence. Our teens may never apply the skills learned through magic to a math equation, but their experiences with a new way of thinking will follow them through life. That alone makes magic an art worthy of any community.



“One of the things that Teller and I are obsessed with, one of the reasons that we're in magic, is the difference between fantasy and reality.”

Penn Jillette

## MAGICIAN.ORG & THE LINKING RING



The I.B.M. Website at [Magician.org](http://Magician.org) is one of your greatest I.B.M. support resources. This informative portal includes member access:

**History of the I.B.M..** From its humble beginnings as a letter-writing exchange between three young men who shared a common interest to one of the world's largest member-driven magic organizations, the site covers it all.

**A List of I.B.M. Rings around the World!** The site boasts a complete global list of chartered I.B.M. Rings. Find the Rings closest to you! Find a welcoming embrace visiting other Rings as you travel the world! Use this list to invite nearby club members to lectures or club leaders to one-day or weekend leadership conferences and workshops.

**Member Benefits and Discounts.** The site provides a complete list of I.B.M. member benefits, discounts, access to affordable performer liability insurance, I.B.M. branded merchandise, and member support available through the I.B.M. Endowment & Development Fund. You can even download a courtesy copy of Robert Giobbi's incredible book, *Introduction to Card Magic*!

**Member Support.** Access complete lists and contact information for all I.B.M. officers and trustees, territorial vice presidents, and individual members!

**The Linking Ring!** Download and read the latest issue of The I.B.M.'s amazing journal, The Linking Ring. Each issue contains over 160 pages of fascinating performer profiles, historical features, and magic for all skill levels, from beginner to advanced performer. The famous "Hocus Pocus Parade" features in-depth explanations with wonderful artwork by Tony Dunn, one of the best illustrators in magic. Plus, read the reviews of the latest releases of magic books, tricks, and videos. To top it off, each issue includes information on the monthly meetings of I.B.M. Rings around the world.

Want more? *The Linking Ring Archive* can also be accessed through this website, along with over 100 searchable back issues. That's more than 17,000 pages of the best information in magic at your fingertips!

As an added bonus, the website offers a quick one-stop method for submitting your monthly Ring Reports!

**I.B.M. Magic JAMS.** Magic JAMs are one day magic events filled with magic and fun around the world and they're all FREE to I.B.M. members. All I.B.M. JAMs are for I.B.M. members only (must bring your membership card) and feature many of the I.B.M.'s top performing artists presenting lectures and shows during the course of the day. Bring along your own magic to perform and share. Any Ring may host a Magic JAM. Check the website for details.

**Ring 2100.** The website promotes the universal online Ring 2100. I.B.M. members may join this Ring through the Ring 2100 Facebook page. The online Ring offers magic instruction, fellowship, video workshops, and a powerful idea exchange. The online Ring provides a vital meeting and social hub for those remote members lacking a local club. It provides convenient access to magic peers for the rest of us. To join, [click here](#) and ask to be added to the group. Be sure to message **Kip Sherry** on Facebook with your I.B.M. membership number.

**Ring Resources.** The site provides just about everything a Ring and its members need to find success. Ring forms, ceremony scripts, recruiting brochures, sample bylaws, program manuals and officer guides, logo graphics, and much more!

**Annual Conventions!** The site includes up-to-the-minute details, discounts, and offers regarding the current and future I.B.M. conventions. Need to register? Looking for a hotel roommate? Need a revised schedule? Seeking a list of lectures and performers? Have a question? Find your answer here!

This chapter barely scratches the surface of the information and member benefits provided by this remarkable website. Visit the site yourself at [Magician.org](http://Magician.org) and explore the wonder of an I.B.M. membership.

## NEWSLETTERS



Before the Internet, newsletters were one or two mimeographed pages filled with bits of information our members needed to know. The new social media has all but forced this newsletter concept into extinction.

In truth, members generally glance at about a fifth of the content - if they bother to open the newsletter at all. People read newsletters about the same way that they read this antiquated thing called a newspaper. Some readers run straight to the meeting schedule, some browse the club news looking for their name, and others briefly scan the teach-a-trick section.

So, has the once useful newsletter run its course? No! Communication is a vital key to growing an active, prosperous club and the newsletter still serves that goal.

Consider this. Many clubs use Facebook, X, and Instagram to reach members. Very few members use all three. A few may prefer some other obscure platform. Ready for another shocking fact? Quite a few members, especially our older peers, don't use social media at all. You're losing the members you can't reach!

Admittedly, email lists can be a royal pain to manage. Members change their email addresses, their email provider may block group emails, emails wind up in the recipient's spam folder for the oddest reasons, and some members simply don't bother to open them. Yet, sending a monthly newsletter through email is easier than individually updating the growing number of social platforms.

Here are ten things you should include in your club newsletter.

**Dates and Activities.** This is the biggie, right? Members want to know who, what, where, what time, and how much. Knowing the details of planned events in advance avoids cranky, confused, and frustrated members. Announce planned events with all of the pertinent info as soon as the details are known. Send reminders the day before and the day of the event. Retreats, banquets, or anything that require deposits should be announced at least a month (if not two months) ahead of time with an occasional reminder.

**Articles and Columns.** Invite club members to submit feature articles and regular columns. Keep them light, short, and interesting. Include interviews with club leaders and members. Include features about magic-related news, popular performers, and local performances.

**Quotations.** Add quotations related to the various aspects of magic, entertainment, humor, and more.

**Polls and Surveys.** Post a monthly poll or survey related to the club, local performances, member preferences, and interest in future events.

**Editorials.** Keep your articles and columns laser focused on the facts regarding the art of magic and entertainment. Columns that strongly address matters of opinion should be labeled as editorials or "opinion pieces".

**Games, Puzzles, and Challenges.** Include a monthly game, puzzle, or challenge that will appeal to the majority of members.

**Reviews and Product Advice.** Invite members to submit product, book, and film reviews. We have all made regrettable purchases because we lacked information. Rave reviews can boost a products popularity. Negative reviews can save fellow members a buck or two.

**Humor.** Add a little humor to your newsletter. Add magic-themed jokes, comic strips, and stories. Invite artistic members to submit original comic panels and jokes.

**Pictures and Videos.** Always include pics or video after a club event. Let the members who couldn't attend see what they missed. If you make it sound super fun and exciting, they'll be less likely to miss the next one!

**Magic Performance Instruction and Tips.** Great column ideas include tips and suggestions for performing, teach-a-trick, reviews and performance ideas for hot new tech gadgets, a source list for magic supplies and costumes, etc.

**Files and Forms.** Your email newsletter can include links to club files and forms posted to your website or Google. Post PDF copies of your newsletter to a special website archive page.

**Newsletter Challenge Contests.** Encourage people to read your newsletter by providing an incentive. In each issue, present a magic challenge question. For example, you might ask, "What month and year was our club founded?" Provide

instructions for submitting answers and offer prizes for the first person to submit the correct answer. Set aside a separate space near the question section to highlight the prior issue's winners.

You can also encourage closer scrutiny of your newsletter by embedding a secret word or miniature image somewhere within. For example, announce that the Magic Word is “banana.” Insert the word into one of the articles, columns, or features. You can also insert a tiny letter-size image of a rabbit in a top hat, a magic wand, or a wizard’s hat somewhere in the newsletter. Provide instructions for submitting word or image’s location and offer prizes for the first person to submit the correct answer. Set aside a separate space near the Magic Word section to highlight the prior issue's winners.

**Member Spotlights.** Choose a member to spotlight in each issue. You can select spotlights randomly, have a drawing for each issue's featured members, or you might choose to recognize a member who recently provided an exceptional service to the club or community. Draw out members with unique interests, hobbies, or professions outside of magic. For example, my daughters and I travel the U.S. and Europe to hunt ghosts! Keeping your spotlights entertaining and fun will ensure that the features are shared with others and that can mean new members!

**Giveaways.** People love to get something for free. Routinely include information in your newsletter on how to obtain something for nothing and you’re sure to increase interest. The giveaways don't need to be costly. Popular chains like McDonald’s and Wendy’s will often provide a few courtesy gift cards for the asking. Just explain to the manager who you represent and what you’re doing. Post the gift cards in your newsletter and offer them to the first ten members who respond.



“The tricks of magic follow the archetypes of narrative fiction - there are tales of creation and loss, death and resurrection, and obstacles that must be overcome.”

Marco Tempest



## WRITE ON - HANDWRITTEN NOTES vs EMAIL

Technology. For many, our mobile devices are our regular go-to option for communicating. Emails, texts, and digital services have reduced the cost, time spent, and general inconvenience of interpersonal communication to near zero. But, at what cost to our clubs?

Many of us rely on Facebook, Instagram, and X to remind us of people's birthdays. We fire off a short obligatory "Happy Birthday" post or tweet and move on. That's that. Sadly, the recipient will likely forget your brief one-of-many "Happy Birthday" post just as quickly.

Now, a handwritten greeting stands out! Nearly everyone enjoys finding a personal card among the daily piles of sale circulars, political ads, and bills. Our spirit is boosted by the thought that someone made that extra effort to write, seal, address, and mail a special thought just for us. Handwritten notes extend an emotional buzz that click-and-done texts can never hope to match.

Handwritten greeting cards are gifts begging to be torn open to reveal the card within. Each glance of their displayed cards reminds the recipient that someone cared.

Not surprising, very few clubs extend this expression of respect and appreciation to their members. Excuses vary from "It's too expensive" to "No one has the time". That's a shame. Maintaining this intimate connection with club members can reinforce club loyalty, boost group morale, and restore that lost spirit of brotherhood.

When a member achieves a significant milestone in his or her life, there really is no excuse for not spending five minutes and a couple of dollars to acknowledge it. At a minimum, a Club should recognize each member's birthday and immediate family births, illnesses, and losses. Anything less simply cries "We don't care."

Tracking these special events is as easy as punching dates into a spreadsheet or club calendar. Appointing a club Membership Committee to record and follow up on these dates can lift the burden from your secretary and president. The savvy



Membership Committee may include wedding anniversaries and special congratulatory notes to that list. Consider adding the anniversary of each member's joining date as a way of saying "We're so glad you're one of us!"

We don't really need a special occasion to send a personal note. Reaching out to absent members or someone in need of a bit of cheer speaks volumes. You may have stumbled upon a card, article, or photo that reminded you of a particular member and decided to share it. My insurance agent has hundreds of clients, and yet he found the time to send me a handwritten card congratulating me on a recent television appearance. I don't believe I'll be changing agents any time soon!

**Make It Stand Out!** It is easier than ever to produce full color greeting cards sporting a custom design and your club's logo. Internet companies like Vistaprint and Gotprint offer custom greeting cards and envelopes at very reasonable prices. If your club has a budding or skilled artist, here is an opportunity to shine! If you need help with a design consider the many fine graphic artists on *Fiverr.com*. A single basic notecard design with a handwritten sentiment can be used for every occasion.

**Stamp It!** Use a postage stamp in place of a metered print. Metered mail lacks that personal touch. Purchase themed Forever stamps to match the occasion or the recipient. In the past, the postal service has issued special stamps honoring Houdini, playing card designs, the *Art of Magic* and more. Such designs are limited and sell out quickly. Stay alert and order in bulk from the annual USPS Philatelic Catalog. It is free for the asking online at *USPS.gov* or by sending your name, address, phone number, and email address to *Information Fulfillment, Dept. 5270, US Postal Service, P.O. Box 219014, Kansas City, MO 64131-7103*.

**Seal It!** For an added touch, you might seal the envelope with a custom foil or wax seal. Custom foil seals bearing the I.B.M. or your club logo are available online at around six cents per seal. Custom wax seals are a bit more costly but offer an added elegance to hand-delivered cards and letters. A forty-dollar embossing tool will press the I.B.M. or club logo directly onto the back flap of the envelope.

**K.I.S.S.!** Generally, refrain from writing on the inside of the card's front cover. You're sending a heartfelt thought, not a novel. Leave room for signatures. The Membership Committee may wish to have a few cards pre-signed by the key officers to expedite mailings.



Black or blue ink is ideal. The person who writes the inserted card or letter should also address the envelope. Adhesive return address labels carry the same impersonal connotation as a metered stamp so avoid them.

**Accuracy & Spelling Count!** Address the recipient by his or her first name in the card's message. Make sure not to misspell the recipient's name. Doing so will immediately undo any positive feelings connected to your card or letter.

**Make Each Card a Priority!** Timeliness is equally important. Thank-you, congratulatory, get well and condolence cards should be sent as quickly as possible. Considering mail delivery times, it's a good idea to send these within 24 hours of notification. Allow a one-week buffer for birthday and holiday cards. Due to the increase in mail traffic over the winter holidays, these cards should be sent shortly after the first of December.

Your club might consider mailed cards a pricey extravagance. Your Club budget may not cover the expense or members may choose to spend these funds elsewhere. Let your creativity shine and find a way to make it happen. Can you name one other morale boosting project that delivers such a positive impact for roughly five dollars per year per member?

Write on!



"I always wanted to go to the Chavez school but I could never afford it when I was growing up so a lot of my learning came from magic books and watching other magicians. I was also very lucky that I had a couple of really good magic teachers."

Lance Burton

## INVESTING IN SOCIAL MEDIA



To post or not to post! Whether you love or hate social media, it is a vital and often overlooked communication link with our members, young and old alike. The term "social media" covers a wide array of online networking sites, each with its own unique characteristics and target audience. The most popular sites include:

**Facebook.** This is the largest and most powerful social network with 1.55 billion active users. Every club should maintain a strong and current Facebook presence.

**X (Formerly Twitter).** This in-the-moment platform boasts 255 million active users. The K.I.S.S. (Keep It Short & Simple) format common to X makes it a great online marketing and member support tool.

**Instagram and Snapchat.** These visual platforms allow members to post, share, comment, and engage through digital imagery. A picture is worth a thousand words.

**LinkedIn.** This professional networking site supports productive business-to-business connections.

How important is the investment of time and effort needed to maintain a growth presence on these sites? According to Science Daily, ninety percent of young adults ages eighteen to twenty-nine use social media daily. Of these young adults, over eighty percent have networking profiles on three or more of the sites listed above. Science Daily goes on to report that today's Millennials spend an average of thirty-seven hours each week on social media. Generation X spends an average of twenty-seven hours each week. Middle age and senior adults spend around twenty hours each week on social media.

The bottom line: If you aren't using social media, you aren't connecting with your members. These tips will help you master this vital digital social scene.

**Don't Do It All.** Don't try to maintain a presence on every social platform. Run a member survey to identify their the top three sites. Create a social media team, and divide responsibility for maintaining these top sites. Rotate site assignments

every month or so to avoid repetitive burnout. Share creative content ideas and feedback. Don't try to do it all yourself.

**Be Consistent.** Let's face it. We're trying to create a following and build a brand here. Hit-or-miss posts every week or so simply won't work. Posting to each media account at least once each day is ideal, however two to three times a week may suffice. The major sites allow you to create multiple posts ahead and schedule them to post on a specific day and time.

**Be Relevant.** Use posts that are informative, supportive, and entertaining. The only thing worse than seeing a single mediocre post every few weeks is seeing a recurring post focused on a single topic. Seek out and systematically post news, reminders, reviews, alerts, and bits of trivia that hold a genuine interest for your members. Your posts should engage and hold their interest!

**Gather the Right Tools.** *Typorama* and *Word Swag* are affordable iOS and Android apps that simplify adding creative text to images. You can build eye-catching announcements and trivia graphics in minutes for Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat.

*Write Behind* is an easy-to-use iOS app that allows you to place text behind people or objects in your photos. The effect makes your images look like professionally designed magazine covers. After you open the photo in the *Write Behind* app, you select a font and type your text. Then use your finger to tell that app what parts of the photo should appear in the foreground.

Square videos are better suited to most social media and smartphone formats. Apple recently released *Clips*, a stripped down version of iMovies ideal for creating short videos. You can record and edit video, add filters and music, insert speech bubbles, and more. You can even add closed captioning to allow the video to run with the sound off.

*TextExpander* allows you to create frequently used boilerplate text content. You can instantly insert this content using a simple shorthand code. For example, by writing "*I.B.M.*," your feed will automatically insert "*International Brotherhood of Magicians.*" You can use *TextExpander* to insert common answers to frequently asked questions such as meeting times and locations, membership requirements, and professional member referrals.

These are just a few of the incredible programs and blogs that can help you

simplify your social media campaign. Find those that work best for you and your goals.

New artificial intelligence programs offer considerable assistance in creating current and creative social media content. Recommended programs include:

- *FeedHive* for content recycling and conditional posting
- *Vista Social* for connecting lots of social media channels together
- *Buffer* for tailoring posts to each channel
- *Flick* for turning content ideas into multiple posts
- *Audiense* for intelligent social listening on X/Twitter
- *Ocoya* for writing captions and hashtags
- *Predis.ai* for generating carousels and videos
- *Publer* for generating post text and images
- *ContentStudio* for staying on top of your content topics
- *Taplio* for growing a personal brand on LinkedIn
- *Tweet Hunter* for keeping up with and participating in X/Twitter
- *Hootsuite* for AI post prompt variety

Examine these programs to find the AI program that may work best for you.

**Connect with Hashtags.** Hashtags (#) add a searchable keyword to any post. This can be extremely helpful when trying to promote a Ring or Link event. Posting a hashtag such as #IBMRing123 or #Magic-YouthRaleigh at the end of each post makes it easy for members to join the conversation.

**Cross Promotion Good, Cross Posting Bad.** It may be tempting to post the same content to each of your three sites. This can cause members following on all three to lose interest and bypass important posts. Try to vary each post slightly to draw and hold attention. This requires a little extra effort, but the result is worth it. A creative social media team will make this so much easier!

**Text Messaging.** Texting has moved steadily into the social media arena. Do you have a plan for sending out mass texts to Ring and Link members? With over two trillion text messages sent in 2016, it's clear that people prefer this expedient method of reaching out. A mass text can deliver time sensitive meeting reminders, weather cancellations, special alerts, and more.

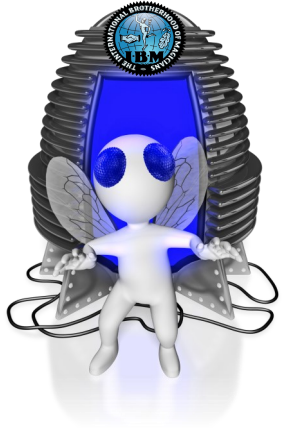
Join the twenty-first century! Put your social networks to work today!



"One thing changes every evening: It's the audience, and I'm working my magic. I'm always learning from it."

Eli Wallach

## COMMON SOCIAL MEDIA MISTAKES



For today's magic club, social media plays a vital role in decision making, brand awareness, new member recruiting, retention, and community relationships. Unfortunately, many clubs view social media as more of a bothersome obligation than a glittering opportunity. Properly managed, social media is a gift to our members, our community, and to our club. Club media volunteers often struggle over the frequency of posts, the type of content to share, and what platforms to use. Successful clubs plan for, capture, and communicate through a range of social media experiences. They avoid these common mistakes to

build a steady engagement stream with members and the lay community.

**Operating Without a Plan.** Supportive innovation relies on a procession of steps. We often jump straight from idea to execution without proper validation or testing. Step-by-step procedures keep us focused rather than running wide open with every potential idea. David Farmer, the vice president for Restaurant Experience at Chick-fil-A, uses this formula for his company's innovation process.

**Understand:** Perform the necessary research to understand your target audience.

**Imagine.** Brainstorm diverse ideas targeting a specific problem or concern. Ask yourself, "What problem am I trying to solve?"

**Prototype.** Take the best ideas and develop test versions. Not every prototype will be a winner, but this gives you a safe way to test out your ideas.

**Validate.** Do your members love it? Is it attracting interest from your lay community? Are inactive members returning to your club? Are you seeing an increase in two-way communication?

**Launch.** This is when you go all out! Align your team behind it and move forward with the best, and most proven ideas.

**Focus on Two or Three Platforms.** Many clubs have a wide range of member age demographics. Each age group tends to gravitate towards one or two preferred

platforms. Our younger members lean toward Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram. Middle aged members prefer LinkedIn, X/Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram. Our older members tend to rely on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Pinterest. It isn't necessary to target all platforms, but it is a good idea to be present and active on at least one from each preferred age group to reach the widest possible audience.

**Boring and Meaningless Content.** Contrary to what many believe, we can find inviting content everywhere! Think about the extended concerns and needs of our members and lay community. Routine meeting and activity posts are fine but include frequent posts that will get people talking, sharing, and learning about you and your club! Users will quickly ditch our pages if we relentlessly post pushy sales or business items. Classic performance videos, trivia pieces, and reviews invite discussion and sharing. Who could produce better viral videos than a creative group of magicians, comedians, and skilled entertainers?

**Not Responding to Comments and Threads.** People want to be heard. Social media invites members to speak out and leaders to listen. This free tool opens dialogue and may gain valued feedback from questions, requests, complaints, and reviews. It allows more people to engage with us than ever before. Leverage this two-way communication with more than a digital newsletter or routine posts. Encourage conversation. When readers respond, acknowledge them! Chat! Ask questions! Show genuine interest in your audience. Appoint a member to review and reply to each comment in a timely manner.

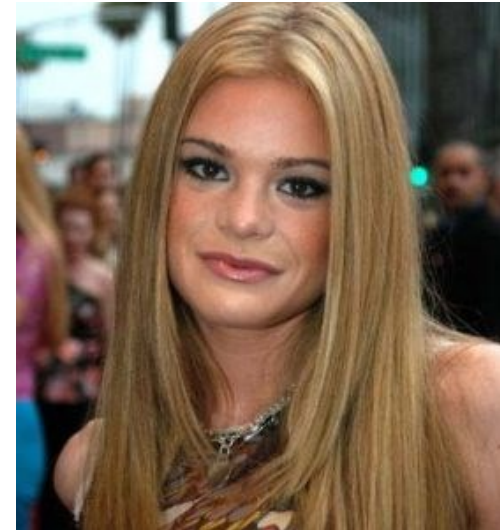
**Not Using Technology and Data to Measure Online Interactions.** We hear treasurer and attendance reports at our club executive meetings. Has anyone ever presented a social media engagement report? Current technology offers a wealth of data pertaining to our online community. Overlooking this feedback prevents leaders from recognizing areas desperately in need of their focus and attention. Evaluate the overall feedback and apply it toward the next productive step.

**Confusion Between Our Interests and Those of Others.** The most common mistake made with online engagement stems from confusion over what is interesting, relevant, and helpful for our audience. Our personal image of what will appeal to others is not always consistent with reality. Focusing our social media efforts around our personal preferences fails to consider the preferences and interests of others. A successful campaign reaches beyond our preferences and offers a connection with real people in multiple ways. It provides a powerful bridge for the professional, amateur, enthusiast, and lay audiences with an

authentic and enticing experience within the art of magic.

**Shying Away from Native Content.** It's natural to want to link content back to your website. However, social media algorithms favor native content; posts that don't take users away from that channel. Native content may include videos, photos, and prompts for engagement. Advertising revenue drives this preference for native content. The longer a user stays on Facebook, the more likely they are to click a Facebook ad. The same purpose holds true for our clubs. Native content engages the visitor without pushing them from our social page. The longer users remain on our page, the more likely they are to like, share, and invite friends.

There are no shortcuts to social media success. It hinges on our ability to connect our social media presence to our core mission and values. Notifications ripple through the social network each time a club or community member interacts with our club's social media presence. This ripple effect tells everyone they know that they spent their precious time talking to us. That vote of interest and confidence can be all it takes to bring in new members, retain our current members, and attract vital community interest in our clubs.



"Ever since I was a little kid, whenever my parents would have company over, I would put on shows, whether they would be magic shows, singing shows, dancing shows, little skits."

Ellen Muth



## SUBMISSIONS TO THE LINKING RING



*The Linking Ring* journal is the principal news source for I.B.M. members worldwide. The Ring reports, event articles, Parades features, obituaries, and sick & convalescent notices published in this remarkable journal enhance communication between our global Rings and members.

This chapter will demonstrate the importance of these *Linking Ring* sections and help you submit reports that are beneficial for all. By following the guidelines listed here, you will help *The Linking Ring's* extraordinary editorial staff to better serve you and your Ring.

**THE RING REPORT.** Every Ring should submit a monthly Ring Report. Too many Rings never send one or submit only a scattered few each year. These Rings and their members are missing the opportunity of being an integral part of the growth and education of the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

Ring Reports are a vital source of information to our worldwide members. Each report becomes a vital and documented part of a Ring's history. It is also a wonderful way of keeping in touch with members and friends from other parts of the world. New and established Rings often turn to these Ring Reports for meeting ideas and novel ways to improve their own Ring events. Reports offering reviews on visiting lecturers can help Rings see who is touring and decide whether to book them. They also give Ring members an opportunity to receive public recognition for their active support of the Ring.

Monthly Ring Reports are generally assigned to a volunteer Scribe or Reporter. This individual reports to the Ring secretary and responsibilities generally cover supervision of all items sent to *The Linking Ring* including the Ring Report, photographs, special event articles, Parades, obituaries, and more.

### Ring Report Format Requirements and Tips

- Review Ring Reports in a current issue of *The Linking Ring* for examples of report format, content, and structure.
- Reports must not exceed 450 words. No more than two (2) double-spaced pages.

- Always include your Ring number, location, name of the Ring, if any, Ring meeting day and location, the name of the Ring Contact Person (usually the president or secretary), and a contact telephone number and/or email.
- Keep a Left Alignment on your copy. Do not Right Align or Justify your copy.

### Capitalization

- Do not use all capital letters.
- Always capitalize Ring and the name of the Ring.
- Capitalize the names of tricks, as: Professor's Nightmare, Zombie, and Linking Rings.
- Capitalize the suits of cards (Clubs, Hearts, Spades, Diamonds), the names of all court cards (Jack, Queen, King), the Joker and Ace.
- Capitalize the titles of Ring Officers and I.B.M.-related items such as Membership Certificates, Pins and Cards.

### Other Tips

- Use Bold font for the names of members and guests mentioned in your report.
- Always use periods when abbreviating the name of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, as I.B.M. . This helps us to stand apart from "that other IBM."
- Use short and frequent paragraphs to separate subjects and to break up long stretches of type. Short paragraphs are easier to read, especially when the copy is broken up into narrow columns. See for yourself in any issue of *The Linking Ring*.
- Be brief! Two double-spaced pages are the maximum allowed. Longer pieces will be cut down. A well-written one-page report is usually best!
- Write in the Past Tense about everything, except of course for a future event.
- Always ask at least one other party to proofread your Ring Report for spelling, grammar, and content before submitting.
- Photographs cannot be included in Ring Reports. Please do not submit photos.

**REPORT CONTENT.** Members are always excited to see what happened at the meeting they missed or to see their name in print. It is important to answer the



Who, What, and When questions of sound reporting. Here are a few specifics:

- Include the month of the meeting in the first paragraph, for example, "...at our May meeting..." The specific date is not needed.
- Stay positive and amusing. Do not discuss conflicts between Ring members.
- List all Ring officers when they are elected and sworn in.
- Focus on the positive activities of Ring members, guests, lecturers, and performers.
- Avoid business issues. Do not include such things as treasurer's reports, motions and items related to the administration of the Ring. Ring Reports are not intended to be the minutes of a Ring meeting.
- Describe effects briefly, using well-known titles if possible. Credit the effect's creator when known.
- Inject some humor but don't overdo it and keep it in good taste. Keep it light.
- Be encouraging rather than critical of members' efforts.
- Comment on the type and quality of a lecture. It can be of great help to other Rings thinking of booking the same lecturer. Report on the lecture but do not go overboard reviewing it.
- Recognize those who significantly helped with meeting arrangements but may not have performed.
- Check and double check your facts. Insure that names are spelled correctly. Don't exaggerate the details.
- If you announce future events, do so well in advance. It takes roughly two months for your Ring Report to be published in *The Linking Ring*. For example, reports received by the 15th of October will usually appear in the December issue. To be safe, you should promote Ring events at least three months ahead.
- Include your name as secretary, submitter, or scribe at the bottom of the report.
- Information on submitting your Ring report can always be found on the masthead of *The Linking Ring*.
- Email is the preferred method for submitting your report.
- Submit your report as soon as possible after a meeting or function. It must arrive by the 15th of the month to be published in the issue two months ahead.

- Do not send the same material to both the Ring Reports Editor as a Ring Report and to the Executive Editor (with or without photos) to be run as a Ring Event. The duplicate Ring event article will most likely be dropped.

The following is a sample report.

*RING No. 183 VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA*

*Victoria Magic Circle - The Ernie Crockford Ring*

*Meets 1st Tue (except Jul. & Aug.), 7:00 PM, at the Langford Fire Hall, 2625 Peatt Rd, Langford, BC. MICHAEL DOE, Secretary, Phone: (250)555-5555, Email: mike@fakedomain.com Thirty-two members attended the Johnny Bar lecture on restaurant magic at our March meeting and enjoyed his outstanding presentation. Using a mixed bag of bills, coins, cards, and cutlery, Johnny showed and clearly explained some great table-hopping tricks and attention grabbers. We particularly enjoyed his amazing cash from bread roll production! Johnny provided true value for every skill level. If Johnny Bar comes your way, book him! You won't be disappointed.*

*Before the lecture, Tony Eng thrilled us with a beautiful cups & balls routine finishing with three live chicks—Wow! Eric Bedard, our own restaurant magician, followed with some slick card work based on Dai Vernon's "Twisting the Aces." Shayne King produced a surprising number of paper flowers from his fingertips that changed instantly into a brilliant bouquet. Ron Bell wowed us by naming cards from any position in a borrowed and well-shuffled deck held behind his back.*

*We closed the evening with a sumptuous buffet spread provided by the President Hope's wife, Mary Hope. Thank you, Mary!*

*We are all looking forward to our annual Mirth and Magic Showcase on Saturday, June 20th. We have a great line-up of performers and the show will feature our signature Wansborough Trophy Comedy Competition. Tickets are available at Tony's Trick and Joke Shop or contact the Ron Bell, Ring Secretary.*

*Submitted by Ron Bell*

**SPECIAL EVENT REPORTS.** Reports on special Ring events such as banquets, public shows, charity events can be submitted in addition to the Ring Reports. These reports follow the same basic guidelines as the Ring Reports. Emphasize the journalist's Five W's—Who, What, When, Where and Why in your article.

All articles and photos should be submitted promptly. Ring articles and photographs of Ring Events should be sent directly to the Executive Editor. See a current issue of *The Linking Ring* for the mail/email address. Be sure to title the report with the name of the event, for example, "Ring 183 Mirth and Magic Show a Howling Success."

Look at the Ring Events section in recent copies of *The Linking Ring* to obtain ideas on the most effective and entertaining way to write your piece.

**PROTOCOLS FOR QUALITY PHOTOGRAPHS.** Provide high quality event photos. Photos can add so much to a Ring Event article. Basic standards apply to all submitted photographs:

#### **BASIC PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS**

- Follow your camera's manual instructions for the best results.
- Take lots of photos! Select and send only the best.
- Focus! Focus! Focus! Many photos arrive out of focus.
- Do not send photos with a date or other information superimposed or imprinted over the image.

#### **Use a Safe Background**

- Don't lose your subject against cluttered, unattractive backgrounds.
- Be aware of windows and mirrored walls when using a flash.
- Always shoot with the sun or very bright lights behind you.

#### **Framing Your Subject**

- Get as close to your subjects as you can.
- Generally shoot above the waist.
- If you get the whole person in your viewfinder you are too far away.
- If the face on a 3" x 5" photo is not as large as the tip of your thumb, it is too small.

#### **Flash & Lighting Control**

- A head-on flash photo will cause red eyes in a photo. Deflect your flash, if possible.
- Avoid the heavy black shadow that forms around subjects without adequate back lighting.
- When shooting any performance or event, shoot from different sides and angles for variety.
- Action photos are the most interesting as they tell a story. However,

magic is difficult to photograph. Careless photographs of levitations and some apparatus magic (Zig-Zag, sawings, Snowstorm, penetrations) can reveal the secret. Use your knowledge of the sequence and climaxes of tricks to take photos at the right time.

- **GROUP PHOTO TIPS**
- Limit group shots, if possible, to ten people and no more than two rows.
- Photos with more than two rows of people can cause focus issues.

If you must shoot a group with three rows:

- Have your subjects stand close together, angle their shoulders diagonally to take up less side-to-side space, and shoot them above the waist.
- Gather performers into small groups in costume before a show. This will result in calm posed photos in which each individual is recognizable and before they face the wear & tear of the stage.
- Take posed group shots of award winners lined up and facing the presenter rather than individual shots of each individual award presentation.

#### **Identify Your Photos!**

- Carefully list the name of each person shown from Back-to-Front and Left-to-Right.
- Verify the correct spelling of each individual in your photos. The Linking Ring will not print photos showing unidentified persons.
- Clearly identify the event in the email subject: i.e., "Ring 2 Event Photos" or "Ring 129 12 Event Report & Photos."
- If you write a suggested captions for photos, identify each photo by a number and clearly tag each caption to the photo number.

#### **Submitting Paper or Printed Photos**

- Do not write on the back of photos.
- Modern scanners are so sensitive they can pick up writing on the back of photos.
- Ink will often smear onto the next photo in a stack.
- If you must, write or type on self-adhesive stickers or paper which you can cellophane tape on the back of the photos.
- Do not paperclip notes onto photos.

#### **Submitting Digital Photos**

- Send digital Photos as they come from the camera.
- Do not modify, crop, or try to improve them.
- Our editor can handle modifications for magazine use best.
- Send digital photos in JPEG or PDF format.
- Minimum dpi (dots per inch) must be 300 or higher.
- If you can't scan them in known dpi, send them as they come from the camera.
- Send color or grayscale (if B&W) photos in their actual size.

#### **Sending Photos**

- Photos may be mailed or emailed.
- Photos may be sent separately from the event article as long as the event, its sponsors, and the people in the photos are properly identified.
- If emailed, do not embed photos in the email. Send them as individual or zipped attachments.
- Send all photos to the Executive Editor's address or email as shown on the masthead of *The Linking Ring*.
- If photos and reports are received by the 15th of the month, they should appear in the second following month's issue, i.e., reports received on or before July 15 should appear in the issue September issue.

**THE HOCUS POCUS PARADE.** Hocus Pocus Parade is a regular feature of *The Linking Ring* offering in-depth explanation of original effects, props, and routines with detailed artwork by Tony Dunn. This very popular column may feature the work of an individual magician or a compilation submitted by a Ring. Every I.B.M. member is encouraged to submit their original creative work.

Sharing your original magic in the Hocus Pocus Parade builds your reputation, establishes your contributions to the art, and adds value to *The Linking Ring*. Getting published also means your work will be considered for a *Linking Ring* award. Names of winners are announced at the Annual I.B.M. Convention and published in *The Linking Ring*. Submit your Parade or individual tricks to the Executive Editor at the address listed on *The Linking Ring* masthead.

**BROKEN WAND NOTICES.** It is the Ring secretary's responsibility to promptly notify Headquarters' Office and the Executive Editor of *The Linking Ring* of an I.B.M. member's death. This notification should extend to present and past I.B.M. members who may live in your area but may not be a member of your Ring. Ring

Secretaries must periodically remind members to pass on the names of any magician who has died, whether he/she is a current I.B.M. member or not. Every I.B.M. member is important to us.

The secretary is responsible for immediately designating who should write the *Linking Ring* obituary. The author should be the secretary, scribe, or a friend of the deceased. The secretary must promptly send the obituary along with the official published obituary notice and a quality 300 dpi or better photo to the Executive Editor.

Review the Broken Wand notices in *The Linking Ring* for ideas of what to write and how best to write it. The best obituaries are often short and not elaborate.

**SICK AND CONVALESCENT MEMBERS.** The Ring secretary is responsible for promptly submitting information on members who are sick or convalescing to the chair of the I.B.M. Sick & Convalescent Committee. Include the member's I.B.M. number, if possible, complete mailing address, the nature of the illness, and how long the member may be expected to be incapacitated. Let the committee chair know when the member can be removed from *The Linking Ring's* sick & convalescent list. The committee chair's name and contact information can be found on the masthead of *The Linking Ring*.

## TEENS & MAGIC



Just how important is a club-sponsored youth program? Forget about grooming future members. Overlook the boost to community visibility for your club. Not only to the preteens and teens we teach, but to the adults they will become! Magic and illusion live within the heart of countless careers and arts.

We find magic and illusion in the theater, in films and television, in novels, in sculptures and paintings, in architecture and in dance. Over the centuries and across cultures, poets, yogis and teachers have celebrated this tool of the mind. Military, intelligence, law enforcement professionals around the globe employ the art of magic. Studying magic strengthens our imagination, a word uniquely akin to the word magic!

The word imagination derives from the Persian *magush*, the Greek *magos*, and the Latin *magi*. In each language, the word referred to one's ability to manipulate reality. Imagination allows us to manipulate reality within our thoughts. It is the bridge between nothing and something granting access to our greatest dreams and fears. What we imagine we become.

Imagination gives form to the formless, substance to spirit, matter to musings. Bold, loving, playful imagination is the superpower that empowers our deep driving desires. A child who announces that he has seen fairies in his garden is treated with amused indulgence and praised for being imaginative: an adult doing the same thing is assumed to be a liar, or more likely, mentally ill.

Parents and teachers encourage children to strengthen their imagination. We read them fairy stories. We tell them little fictions about Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy. We encourage them to engage in role playing games, in which they assume the identities of princesses, superheroes, and animals. We allow them to believe that rats can be master chefs, turtles can be ninjas, and frogs can play banjos. These things are all designed to develop the imagination. Then follows adulthood and the conflicting message we should put aside childish things and concentrate

on an entirely harsh and new reality.

Adulthood demands that we focus on that which can be proved through logic. Logic is the enemy of dreams and wishful thinking. Adulthood is the age at which intelligence is valued more highly than its dream potential.

Yet, without dreams adulthood would be a bleak and dismal time filled with responsibilities, obligations and drudgery. The greatest achievements of Mankind have come from that part of our brains that looks beyond those things deemed impossible and draws them into our sphere of reality. Without imagination, there would be no automobiles, no airplanes, no ships sailing the seas. We would have no Tom Hanks films, no books from Dickens or Shakespeare, no graceful dances by Baryshnikov. We would have no Santa Claus, no Tooth Fairy, no Peter Pan or Winnie the Pooh. We would live in a world devoid of magic.

Imagination is not about escaping from reality. Imagination is the exploration of new possibilities. It teaches curiosity and flexibility of thought. Both are essential mindtools for the process of scientific discovery and artistic creation. Imagination empowers us to look beyond what-if fiction to reveal the truth concealed within. Picasso said that anything that can be imagined is real. Thus, fictional worlds, even the most fantastic, are merely reflections of our own world, glimpsed through imagination's lens.

A study, conducted by Rebecca Godfrey, Dr Sarah Woods, and Professor Richard Wiseman from the University of Hertfordshire, involved assessing the effect of teaching secondary school children some seemingly impossible illusions, including how to magically restore a rope that has been cut in half, and read another person's mind.

They determined that learning magic encourages children to employ their imaginations to interact with their friends and family. Magic skills enhance self-confidence and personal pride. Our students constantly recount new tales of adults asking to see their latest effect and peers granting new levels of respect. It helps encourages them to shine in the eyes of others and, more importantly, in their own.

Studying magic requires physical effort that tears teens away from their TVs and digital screens. Magic engages the imagination and hands, promoting a healthier interaction with the real world. It promotes healthy face-to-face relationships with others. It teaches us that failure is inevitable, and with a positive frame of mind

and a little forethought, recovery is as simple as finding a way out and pushing on.

As a hobby, magic can be easy on the pocketbook. All we really need is a deck of cards, a few common coins, and a mix of common items found in most homes. The Internet abounds with easy-to-follow lessons that will keep a budding magician busy for years.

Magic is somewhat of a niche hobby. But, unlike, bowling or soccer, you don't need to be in a specific place to practice or perform. If you can have a deck of cards and a few coins in your pocket, you're good to go.

Magic develops memory, logic, and critical thinking. An important part of magic is learning the difference between method and effect. Our audiences perceive a different reality than that which is actually happening. This offers important life lessons as students work through the process of learning and performing magic. It forces students to think about the difference between illusion and reality. It inspires them to analyze things and to think deeply beyond what is presented on the surface. Such critical thinking skills will hold them in good stead later on in life.

Magic is a time-tested art-form. Magic is not a passing fad, like fidget spinners. Being introduced to card magic immerses students into an art-form that is centuries old. It's a classic performing art. It's enriching to a child's education and personal growth. It can be a fun stepping stone into performance arts.

Magic is fun! It shares the pure joy of discovering new things and of figuring out how things work. There's the satisfaction of learning new techniques and presenting them to entertain others. It is something inherently rewarding -- and really, what other reason do you need?!

Magic incorporates mentoring, intelligence, and imagination. Mentoring is the vehicle. Intelligence is the fuel. Imagination is the road. Where it leads is up to you.

Enjoy the journey.



"I liked the idea of having actual magic performed as stage magic, so you could assume that it was just a trick, that something is all smoke and mirrors, but there's that, like, feeling at the back of your mind: What if it's not?"

Erin Morgenstern

## CHALLENGING TEENS IN YOUR YOUTH LINK



Magic holds a special allure for teenagers and yet, today's fast-paced digital world makes it difficult to keep teens engaged. Magic clubs that hope to reach and attract younger members need to adapt effective strategies to ignite teen curiosity, foster a sense of wonder, and hold their interest.

Understanding that teen interests and learning styles differ from most adults is vital. The magicians seen on *America's Got Talent* and Penn & Teller's *Fool Us*, their peers, and the countless amateur YouTube channels inspire most teen interest in magic. The flash and appeal of card magic seems to hold a magnetic allure for teens just starting out.

Tailoring magic lessons around these preferences may significantly increase engagement. Yet, it remains the obligation of each club to expand teen exposure to the wider magic spectrum. Under the right guidance, a teen with a beginner's interest in card magic may discover a new and deeper passion for mentalism, close-up, or stage illusions. Mentors face a delicate balance between supporting their primary interest and pushing them to explore new fields.

Surrounding teens with a supportive magic community as they explore and experiment is vital. Refusing teen members the privilege of attending adult meetings, workshops and lectures isolates them and unfairly blocks them from the inherent fellowship of magic. This isolation may be a death knell to a club's future growth.

This doesn't mean that we must turn our adult meetings into adolescent day camps. Start the teen sessions an hour or two before the adult meeting. Invite the teens to perform and participate in the first hour of the adult session. Take a short break during which the teens head home and continue with the adult portion of your evening. If your teen members feel unwelcome or slighted, they will seek acceptance elsewhere. Create a formal bridging ceremony inducting youth members into the adult club on their eighteenth birthday. Make it something special, an honorable goal worthy of anticipation.

Too many adult clubs leave youth activities to a couple of select volunteer

members. While two or more adults may oversee the day-to-day management of the teen club, it is important for every adult club member to step up and show an active interest in the youth program.

Consider hosting special quarterly teen workshops supported by all adult club members. Select a Saturday every three months during which adult and youth members learn together. Break the teens into rotating groups for hands-on instruction, card handling, close-up, parlor, stage direction, prop creation and modification, script writing and presentation, and more. Encouraging teens to meet and learn from supportive and skilled adults is highly motivating. Encouraging collaboration and mentorship between experienced magicians and teens may build a lasting bond between the two groups.

Encourage your teens to form after-school magic clubs in their schools. Suggest that they approach drama or psychology teachers to serve as program monitors. Arrange a schedule for adult members to visit these clubs as mentors.

Provide opportunities for teens to showcase their creativity. Encourage them to modify existing routines and invent new effects to foster a sense of ownership and pride in their magical journey. Host semi-annual magic shows within the community to give teens a platform to showcase their skills and build their confidence. Dedicate these semi-annual showcases to support the youth program, a top charity, or a school fundraiser.

Host regular youth competitions sponsored and judged by the adult club to maintain interest. Remember to recognize improvement and innovation as the teens' skills grow.

Demonstrate various practical outlets for employing our magic skills beyond the realm of tricks. Encourage teens to perform magic for family and friends during social gatherings or community events. This develops their presentation skills and boosts their self-esteem. Incorporating magic into their school projects or public speaking engagements allows them to see the practical applications of their magical abilities. Schedule occasional visits to senior recreation facilities or hospital wards. Provide a theater lobby performance during the opening of a new magic film. Host a "Magic in the Park" event open to the public with roaming and stage performances.

Ensure that learning magic is accessible to all teens, regardless of their socioeconomic background. If your youth club charges for lessons and materials,



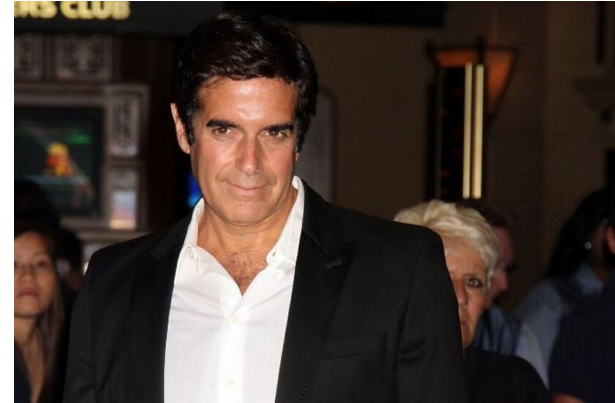
consider making magic classes and workshops more inclusive by offering scholarships or discounted rates. Providing free online tutorials and donating beginner magic books to local libraries can give teens from all walks of life the opportunity to explore and learn magic.

Incorporating technology into magic instruction can be a game-changer for teens. Dedicated online platforms featuring interactive magic tutorials and virtual magic communities may attract teens and boost their connection with fellow enthusiasts. The rising popularity of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies offer immersive, hands-on learning experiences allowing teens to explore, practice, and perform magic in the privacy of their homes. True VR production costs are still a bit pricey, but costs are rapidly dropping as technology introduces new innovations. Streaming interactive VR workshops deserve consideration.

Keeping our teens actively engaged in learning magic requires a multifaceted approach that combines technology, personalization, community-building, real-world integration, and accessibility. A successful youth program requires the active support of the entire magic community, not just one or two youth-focused adults.

As with all things associated with our magical teens, be careful to incorporate and actively enforce youth protection and safety protocols during all adult and teen interaction. Nothing will destroy a magic club – youth or adult – faster than the blast of scandal. Insist on common sense adherence to standard practices.

By embracing these strategies, we can unleash the power of wonder and inspire the next generation of magicians. Nurture their curiosity, fuel their passion, and cheer as they create moments of astonishment that will leave a lasting impact on your club, themselves, and their audiences.



"In magic, it takes two or three years for me to create a 5-minute illusion for me to get it to the level I want."

David Copperfield

## **INVOLVING TEENS IN YOUR ADULT CLUB**



The club was at a loss. After a year of planning and offering a variety of youth-centered programs, they had hosted more than forty teen visitors. By the year's end, however, only four teens had remained active. The youth director reached out to past visitors and members in search of a solution.

One prominent concern was the lack of youth input into club activities and events. Our magic youth felt that club activities were focused exclusively on adult endeavors. They felt that youth interests were often pushed to the side and treated as insignificant. Many felt like outsiders, simply tolerated despite their genuine passion for the art of magic. They felt pushed from the club by the lack of focus on youth concerns.

The club's executive committee was forced to admit that they'd failed to consider the youth members' interests. Mentoring our youth members doesn't begin and end with magic. It includes teaching them how to become a strong supportive club member, an active volunteer, and a productive leader. Including them in the club's leadership process gives our youth members a valued voice in member affairs and helps adults recognize them as fellow, if younger, artists.

When youth are not responding to a program aimed at them, they may see it as an effort by adults to force them into modes of behavior that are outdated or simply don't fit their vision. Giving them a role in the club's governing process helps them build lifelong bonds within the organization.

This club agreed to explore the idea of offering youth members more control over their programs along with a leadership role and a seat on the executive committee. But, which youth? And what would they do?

We start by watching our youth members for specific leadership potential. For the purposes of this topic, the "youth" we refer to are twelve-to-seventeen-year-olds. In most cases, it's wise to set a flexible target of fifteen to seventeen years of age for executive committee membership. Younger teens don't generally have a level of maturity or the experience to handle an advanced leadership role. There are exceptions to this rule, so leave your guidelines fluid so as not to exclude a par-

ticularly gifted younger member.

We have several suggestions for adding youth members to your Ring's executive committee as full members. The position of Sergeant-at-Arms is not an official I.B.M. leadership position. However, most club's include this office to help set up and tear down meeting rooms, maintain order during meetings and sessions, greet and orient visitors, and so on. Since this position is unofficial, it has neither an age or a specific membership level requirement. Why not appoint a youth member to this role?

Youth members may also elect their own Link president and vice president. Invite these young officers to join your club executive committee as full, voting members and representatives of the youth members.

If your club has yet to form a Youth Link, invite the youth members to elect one or two of their own to serve as their full and voting representatives on your committee.

Youth members admitted to the executive committee should enjoy the same general rights and privileges as their adult counterparts. This includes the right to offer suggestions, present motions, offer the youth viewpoint during discussions, and vote on all issues. They must understand that they bear the same level of responsibility as adult officers and committee members. Allow them to volunteer for and serve on select committees involving club and youth activities. Most importantly, they must be treated as leadership equals and full committee members in every way.

We understand that this is a bold step.

You may need to review your by-laws for anything that may impede this effort. You may need to amend your by-laws to allow for youth leadership roles within your club. This is especially important if your Ring is a 503c or otherwise incorporated nonprofit.

If your club's adult membership or legal status simply won't allow youth members to serve in a leadership or voting role, consider including them in an advisory capacity. A non-voting committee representative role allows these youth to serve as board members and are treated as equals except in the matter of voting.

Limiting participation may lead to complaints of tokenism or using a youth member simply as a symbol of how broad-minded your adult members and its

leadership are. This is disrespectful not only of the youth appointees, but of the young people they represent. This attitude devalues their opinions and abilities and deprives the club of their energy and new ideas. Worse, it displays the adult membership as hypocritical, contemptuous, and even fearful of the ideas that youth members might express. It would be better not to invite youth to participate at all than to insult them with senseless restrictions.

Your club should seriously discuss the issue of youth membership and commit to welcoming youth before you decide to invite youth members to join. Only then will you and they both get the full benefit of their participation.

Youth leaders will need training on your committee's structure, meeting style, confidentiality issues, and more. Appoint a mentor or youth director to guide youth members through the process and to help them to grow into valued, productive leaders.

Committee involvement offers youth a chance to learn and share responsibility, leadership, and the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the club. Their club! It empowers them with an unprecedented sense of ownership and unity.. Incorporating youth members in club leadership roles is a win-win situation.



“When I was a little kid - and even still - I loved magic tricks. When I saw how movies got made - at least had a glimpse when I went on the Universal Studios tour with my grandfather, I remember feeling like this was another means by which I could do magic.”

J.J. Abrams

## WHY TEENS QUIT



On paper, Magic Youth Raleigh has a booming program with a roster listing more than sixty students. However, a quick reality check reveals that nearly fifty of these students joined, attended a few classes, and then vanished faster than Copperfield's Lady Liberty. This led us to wonder whether this was normal



hectic teen schedule attrition or if there were other reasons. We reached out to these teens with a brief exit interview, and here is what we learned.

**"The classes stopped being fun."** This was the prime reason teens gave for moving on. While they enjoyed learning new effects and sharing with magicians their own age, many felt that the lessons were boring. A few blamed lessons that were either too simple or too advanced for their current skill level. Others were solely interested in one branch of magic, as in cards, coins, or illusions and had little interest in the broader scope of our lessons.

**Solution:** We need to work at keeping the fun in our magic classes. Our prepared lessons must consistently challenge and motivate our students. Assigning students to beginner, intermediate and advanced level classes helps keep them on track. Consider assigning advanced students or those stubbornly interested in a single field of magic to a dedicated one-on-one mentor.

**"I was afraid to make a mistake."** Teens said that they were afraid of making mistakes in front of their skilled mentors. Not because of ridicule or impatience from the mentors, but out of fear of appearing unskilled to their talented instructors. This is a common concern among adult members who resist performing in front of fellow club members. A few teens said that the mentors made their skills look so easy that they felt they could never achieve that level of expertise.

**Solution:** Healthy adults prosper in environments where we are encouraged to try and fail. A mentor who demonstrates a new effect, fails and finds a solution in

front of his students models the reality that failure is a necessary part of the learning process. Embrace failure and risk taking as a valued part of your lesson plan. Praise what each student does immediately after a mistake. Do they restack dropped cards and try again? Do they keep trying to improve that coin roll? Do they continue their performance as if they anticipated a glitch? Praise the reaction to failure and create an environment where failure is part of learning and not something to fear.

**"Mentors won't let us do things our way."** Several teens said that they were not interested being scrutinized and micromanaged by adults. They want the autonomy to try new things, develop their own style, and make their own mistakes. We see this in the common teen behavior of playing video games six to eight hours a day. No one is standing over his or her shoulder analyzing every move. They learn to master the game by making and correcting their own mistakes.

**Solution:** Teach the students the time-tested methods and moves, then encourage them to adapt these to suit their hands, style and personality. Avoid teaching routines or patter. Guide the students in developing their own effect story lines and structures. Help each student retain full ownership of each personal magic experience.

**"All we ever did was practice."** Our program meets on the second and fourth Saturday of each month. This basically gave us twenty-four lessons to teach theory, history and a variety of effects. We overlooked the importance of hosting a semiannual showcase or recital. The teens spoke and we listened.

**Solution:** Dance, music and drama clubs host public recitals for a reason. We all crave, openly or secretly, the chance to show off our newest skills. Help your student to find, prepare for, and cherish their spotlight moments.

**"We lost track of classes."** Students and parents were not receiving our monthly newsletter or email lesson reminders. Parents became frustrated trying to keep the schedule straight. Students were annoyed when classes were cancelled or rescheduled due to holidays, competing club events, or mentor unavailability.

**Solution:** Consistency and communication are key aspects of any program. Cancel or reschedule classes only as an absolute last resort. Mentors who can't attend a scheduled session should make every effort to secure a replacement and keep the class schedule intact. Keep your members and their parents well informed on

schedule changes. A regularly scheduled newsletter publishing date with well scheduled email reminders keeps every-one on track.

**"The adults treated us like outsiders."** Students attending meetings, lectures, and other club events complained of being talked down to, assigned demeaning tasks, overlooked for performances, or, worst of all, totally ignored.

Solution: It is up to your Ring whether youth members are invited to attend. I personally believe that allowing this access generates a vital sense of loyalty to our fraternal network. If your Ring is open to their presence, ensure that each adult member greets and treats the youth as welcome and valued members.

It is up to us to create a positive learning and social environment for every serious student. Ask your students what they want from the experience, then form your program around these goals. Impress among the adult parents, mentors and Ring members that they all share the responsibility of creating an environment that serves the needs, values and priorities of these kids. Every teen that quits our program for one of the reasons listed marks a failure on our part. Their future in magic is in your hands.



"Magic provides a way of still having room  
for possibilities, an unlimited sense of  
what the world offers. Magic is always  
there when science is found wanting."

Deborah Harkness



## SEXUAL PREDATORS



It's an ugly topic that few rational adults want to think about. Sadly, this is a topic that haunts our art and one of which every Ring member should be aware. The mere rumor of a predatory incident between an adult or older teen and a child can seriously damage, if not destroy, the image and reputation of our magic clubs and members.

Sexual predators are adults, teens or older adolescents who engage in forced or willing sexual activity, intimate contact, indecent exposure or other carnal exploitation with a younger child or teen. These incidents often cause irreversible psychological and physiological harm to the young victims. They can result in costly and highly publicized civil lawsuits charging your officers and members with failing to adequately screen staff, failing to enforce procedures to prevent the incident and failing to respond to an allegation in a responsible and timely manner. Even a false allegation against the club can cost thousands of dollars in legal fees and settlements.

The attraction of curiosity and wonder makes magic the ideal lair for sexual predators targeting children and teens. A quick Internet search reveals more than a few celebrated magic entertainers accused of using their talents to gain access to victims. Awareness and prevention remain our strongest defenses.

Sexual predators may be male or female at nearly any age. They be family members, teachers, police officers, medical professionals, or just about any profession or identity that might draw a child's trust. Research exposes one-in-four predators as a teenager under the age of 18. Nearly one third of known predators committed their first assault during their adolescent years.

Predators commonly spend more time with children than adults, or have an unusual interest in children's activities. Some predators display a level of discomfort or shyness around adults.

Predators generally fall into two categories: grabbers and groomers. The most common pattern among youth clubs involves grooming which is easily disguised as

innocent behavior. Groomers systematically gain the youth's trust and loyalty with praise, "innocent" touches, doting attention and lavish gifts.

They are very adept at locating the troubled and lonely children of single or busy parents and will lavish these children with affection and playfulness. They will often engage in playful physical contact such as hugging, tickling, or wrestling. They generally disregard a child's discomfort and attempts to avoid this physical contact and accuse the child of being "over sensitive."

Researchers peg roughly ninety percent of groomers as trusted family members, friends, teachers or other authority figures who finesse their way into the confidence of parents and program managers.

Groomers may use manipulative language, such as insulting or mocking a child's appearance, behavior, or friends. They may also lie or twist information to make the child feel at fault. This behavior is intended to isolate a child from their family, friends, and activities. They may convince the child that their family doesn't understand them, and that he or she does.

Groomers rely on the power of "the secret" viewed by children as a sacred trust. They employ an aura of shame leading the child to believe that they are somehow to blame for their treatment. They often twist a child's misplaced affection and loyalty causing the victim to assume a protective role for their abuser. If these tools fail, the predator may invoke threats of violence towards the child or someone they care about should the secret come out casting their victim into an emotional pit of fear, self-loathing and helplessness.

Groomers often rely on social media messaging to target children outside of a parent's or mentor's protective sphere. They may pretend to share similar interests to gain trust, or gain access to kids online by pretending to be someone they aren't.

Victims may either lose their appetite or eat excessively believing that obesity will make them a less desirable target. Many suffer from insomnia due to fears of vulnerability or recurring nightmares. Victims may turn to self-mutilation or drug and alcohol use. They tend to isolate themselves and lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed. Predators care nothing for the harm their tactics cause so long as their needs are met and their dark secrets are kept.

There are also the willing victims; those who profess to a close emotional bond



with their abusers. They may display an unnatural flirtatious or possessive bond with their presumed “benefactor.” They may often be seen whispering to one another or spending time alone.

The best defense for our clubs and potential victims is strict adherence to documented procedures designed to remove the predator’s one-on-one access. Club officers have a moral obligation to adopt and enforce these policies. Periodically reviewing these policies with members keeps them fresh in everyone’s minds and removes the predator’s welcome mat.

I recommend an annual criminal background check for all youth volunteers. Sites like *CriminalWatchdog.com* and *DirectScreening.com* offer nationwide checks for around twenty dollars. I personally believe that officers should check every club member’s name against the National Sex Offender Registry (*NSOPW.gov*). Harboring a convicted predator as a member is simply too great of a risk. The I.B.M. specifically prohibits membership for any individual appearing on this registry.

Parents offer our strongest line of defense. Welcome parents at all youth activities and consider granting them free entry to lectures and workshops when escorting their child. Enlist parents as volunteers and chaperones for all youth activities.

Maintain a zero tolerance policy toward any club adult or older teen spending time alone with youth members for any reason. Watch for adults or older teens who wander away from activities with younger members, for signs of fear or aversion directed by a student toward an older member, and for any sign of overt favoritism or flirtatious behavior between a student and an older member.

Insist that members promptly and confidentially report any observations of suspected predatory grooming to a designated club officer. Investigate every report and, if necessary, take appropriate action. Loose gossip harms everyone in this case. Maintaining strict confidentiality reduces accusations of slander if the accusation or suspicion turns out to be false.

Should the accusation advance beyond mere suspicion, the club president must promptly remove the suspected predator from all contact with youth members and notify the parents. Your state or region may legally obligate youth volunteers to promptly report suspected signs of abuse or neglect of a child to the appropriate authorities. Failure to act in a timely manner increases the club’s legal culpability. An officer’s failure to report a suspected offense may void your club’s

liability insurance.

I spent eighteen years as a criminal investigator covering crimes against children. It has been my distinct pleasure to rescue victimized children and send countless sexual predators to iron bar resorts. This is a topic I know far too well and many of those memories still haunt me.

I have compiled a simple guide for protecting our youth members and young magic fans. The guide is available as a free download from [www.magician.org/resources/ring-resources](http://www.magician.org/resources/ring-resources). Every Ring officer should read this guide, even those with no plan of forming a youth program. Club members should review it semiannually. I sincerely ask for your help in preventing such future tragedies.

Suspected predators will often have well practiced and tested rationalizations and excuses handy if they are caught. The most common ploy is to blame the child or to accuse the child of “setting them up.” Be sure of your facts before taking formal action, but separate the suspected predator from all interaction with your program kids and notify the parents to be alert for any further attempts to contact the child. Never take chances with the welfare of a child under your care.

## FUNDING YOUR YOUTH PROGRAM



Dedicated mentors want to provide magic students with rich and diverse learning experiences. The ideal program introduces young beginners to a broad range of magic knowledge and skills.

Bad news. The more diverse and intense the program, the more it costs.

Good news. Such a program is well within your reach without breaking your treasury or emptying Dad's wallet!

The students themselves ought to be the principle source of funding. After all, the perceived value of an item generally relates to how much we personally invest or sacrifice. In addition, building the student's sense of confidence and self-reliance are guiding objectives of magic instruction. Therefore, program funding, whenever possible, ought to come from the students themselves.

Programs like *Habitat for Humanity* define this concept as "*sweat equity*." Habitat recipients are required to help build their own houses as well as those of others. This practice establishes a sense of ownership and pride as it teaches the skills needed to maintain each house. Providing magic students with the means to pay their own expenses works the same way.

Traditional fundraisers such as the Saturday car wash, bake sale, and the communal yard sale are fun and profitable ways for each young magician to earn substantial sweat equity in their tutoring.

Youth members may provide a refreshment table featuring various beverages, baked goods, and light snacks for the adult club meetings and lectures. Certain well known sandwich and pizza franchises in my area prefer barter over cash for weekly family night entertainers. While area pros may sidestep these opportunities, they may be ideal prospects for magic and balloon skilled teens to barter time for snack table items.

Your local magic shop may arrange profit sharing for the back-of-room sale of common accessories and consumables at club meetings. Our local shop donates a

twenty-five-dollar gift certificate as a raffle prize for each monthly Ring meeting.

Ask club members to donate unused magic effects, books, DVDs, and other items to your annual club's auction or magic flea market to benefit the youth program. Employ your youth members as auction runners, allowing your adult members to sit back and enjoy the evening.

Clubs may apply for a nonprofit space at local fairs, festivals, and malls. Skilled students may perform street magic or a stand-up showcase to attract crowds for the post-show pitch of beginner magic kits, Svengali decks, posters, and more. This is also a great way to recruit new youth and adult members.

Street busking with adult supervision can raise funds through tips and donations while promoting the youth program and drawing new members.

Area schools, churches, and community centers host annual fundraising family fairs and carnivals. Many of these organizations lack the budget to hire your professional members. However, they may have the budget for an attractive donation to your club in exchange for a few hours of roaming amateur magic or a stand-up platform show. Charity event organizers may be willing to barter a beginner magic sales booth for a few hours of roaming amateur magic or an introductory magic class.

Hosting a public showcase featuring skilled adult and youth members will bring in a few dollars. The teens can sell tickets to their families, friends, and teachers. This would be a great time for a concession bake sale and back-of-room magic sales, as well.

Consider dividing the proceeds from these activities. Keep half of the profits for the youth treasury. Assign the remaining half to an in-house savings account for each student participating in the fundrais-ing event. Never give the students cash. Instead, apply each student's savings toward lesson fees, supplies, textbooks, auction bids, club dues, I.B.M. youth membership, gift certificates to the local magic shop, field trips, and other club expenses.

Plan a Parents' Night Out event! Adult and youth members work together to provide an inexpensive drop-off sitting service giving the parents a date night out. Plan fun magic performances, lessons, crafts and more to occupy the children for 3 to 4 hours. A quick Internet search will reveal tons of ideas and plans.

Finding creative ways for your students to invest in their magic education supports

the entrepreneurial spirit of our art. It reinforces each student's independence and team spirit while maintaining strong parental support. Help your students and your Ring create a hand up rather than a hand out.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meet Roger "Skip" Way. Like many from his generation, Roger was introduced to the world of entertainment through Mark Wilson's *Magic Land of Alakazam*, Disney's original *Mickey Mouse Club*, and the antics of Dr. Paul Winchell's Jerry Mahoney, Shari Lewis' Lambchop.

As a teen, his sense of humor appealed to older students and teachers. His ability to generate laughter and awe with his magic converted bullies into guardians. He discovered an affinity for connecting with younger children through magic and laughter and carried this talent into a career in U.S. Air Force law enforcement and criminal investigation. His gentle humor and magic helped him to comfort and gain the trust of horribly frightened and victimized children.

Through his military assignments, he created youth magic clubs and Law Enforcement Explorer Posts in Greece, Italy, Germany and across the U.S.. He served as comedy emcee for three USO European holiday tours and for the USAFE Glen Miller Legacy Band in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Following military retirement, Roger left law enforcement and began touring with *Stand-Up Underground*, a comedy troupe based out Raleigh, NC. Names are a comedian's stock in trade and this troupe had three Rogers. One went by Roger, the other by Rog, leaving our Roger out in the cold. As one of the group's leaders, the troupe members began calling him "*Skipper*" after the *Gilligan's Island* captain. The name stuck and "Skip" became his stand-up moniker.

In 2007, Skip and his cherished friend and mentor, Phil Willmarth, created *Magic Youth Raleigh*, a program dedicated to sharing the art of magic with the area's young magicians. Over the years, Skip has served as the I.B.M. Youth Committee Chair, Ring Coordinator, Territorial Vice President Nominations/Ring Counselor Committee Chair, and Executive Committee Member. During these years, he



wrote a New Ring Guide, TVP Leadership Manual, and Youth Protection Guide which are available as free PDF downloads from the I.B.M. website.

Inspired by friends and mentors David Bartlett and Samuel Patrick Smith, Skip began contributing kidshow columns and feature articles to Bob Gibbons' *Laughmakers*, Mark Daniels' *KIDabra Journal*, and Sammy Smith's *The Funny Paper*. Skip currently contributes columns to *The Linking Ring* and *Clowns of America International The New Calliope*. Skip received The *Linking Ring Award of Excellence* in 2020 for a feature interview titled *Bev Bergeron: Renaissance Funny Man*. Mr. Bergeron told Sammy Smith that it was one of his favorite interviews.

Skip is a full time magic and comedy entertainer. Like many of us, he grew up watching and connecting with live children's hosts such as Mister Rogers, Captain Kangaroo, and Cleveland personalities Barnaby (Linn Sheldon) and Captain Penny (Ron Penfound). When he retired from the military, he was concerned that modern children's programming featured all animated figures in place of inspirational flesh-&-blood adult role models.

To counter this, Skip developed his *Happy Dan the Magic Man* kidshow persona along the lines of the early TV idols mentioned above. He describes Happy Dan as "that slightly zany favorite uncle that every kid loves." He's more than an entertainer. Happy Dan encourages, teaches, shares, protects, and bonds with the children he meets. Skip's character has become one of North Carolina's favorite kidshow personalities.

These days he is slowly drifting toward retirement, but continues to write, perform his kidshows, and wow adults across the Southwest with his stand-up comedy and close-up magic skills.

Skip and his two adult daughters travel across the U.S. and Europe exploring haunted venues as the Wayward Spirits paranormal investigation team. Skip is the complete skeptic, his younger daughter is a true believer, and the older daughter falls somewhere in between. The ideal ghost hunting team! He was excited to learn that his grandson has asked to join the team!

Skip continues to serve as TVP/North Carolina, Director of Magic Youth Raleigh, and as an executive committee member for the Raleigh Magic Club (Combined I.B.M. Ring #199/S.A.M. Assembly #199.). Skip is also a registered member of North Carolina I.B.M. Rings 392 (Blowing Rock), 341 (Fayetteville), 375 (Goldsboro), 340 (Greensboro), and 248 (Wilmington).

**MAGIC CLUB RULES**

**SMILE** **SHARE**

**TRY NEW** **THINGS**

**CREATE** **INVENT**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME**

**PLAY FAIR** **HONOR YOUR MEMBERS**

**SUPPORT YOUR OFFICERS** **HELP ONE ANOTHER**

**RESPECT OTHERS**

**EMPOWER YOUR IMAGINATION**

**DREAM BIG** **ENCOURAGE** **ETHICS** **HONESTY** **INTEGRITY**

**MENTOR** **IMPROVE**

**SHOW YOUR I.B.M. PRIDE**

**MAKE MAGIC** **BUILD MEMORIES**

**HAVE FUN!**



ARTISTIC CREATIVITY IS THE HEART OF THIS CLUB. ALL CREATIVE CONTENT PRESENTED OR DISCUSSED BY ANY MEMBER OF THIS CLUB AT ANY VENUE REMAINS THE SOLE AND FULL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF ITS CREATOR. MEMBERS ARE HONOR BOUND TO PROTECT THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS OF CLUB PEERS AND MAY NOT DUPLICATE, ADAPT, OR USE THE CREATIVE WORK OF ANOTHER IN ANY CAPACITY WITHOUT THE EXPRESS APPROVAL OF ITS CREATOR.

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