



SPECIAL
REPORT

THE 7 BIGGEST MISTAKES

When Hiring Speakers
and Entertainers

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Show Productions

“The 7 Biggest Mistakes Event Planners Make When Hiring Speakers And Entertainers... And How To Avoid Them!”

It is very, very, very rare for a professional entertainer to write this kind of report. Many other entertainers and entertainment agencies do NOT want you know this information. Please take the time to read it carefully. In fact, if you are - as I hope - very interested in making sure that your company's events are successful, then

I urge you to get comfortable, ask not to be disturbed, and STUDY this report - it IS that important! It reveals vital information that you NEED to know!

Dear Friend,

It's shocking but true.

Every day, businesses hire entertainers that they should not be hiring. Entertainers and entertainment agencies often lie about their qualifications, charge you a LOT more than they should, end up turning your important event into an embarrassment and put your reputation on the line by presenting sub-par performances.

Organizing a corporate event is a DIFFICULT and STRESSFUL job. There are so many details that must be attended to. But here is the undeniable truth:

THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF YOUR EVENT HINGES ON YOU HIRING THE RIGHT ENTERTAINER


I realize that you might not believe that right now but think about it for a minute. When is the last time you remembered the dinner you had at a corporate event? Did the centerpieces make the event memorable and successful? When is the last time you attended a corporate event when the band or the DJ made it successful?

Probably never.

The speaker or entertainer is the “key” to a successful event, but here's the problem...

Hire the wrong person and your event will be a flop. Hire someone who offends members of your audience and it is your reputation on the line. Overpay for an entertainer who delivers a sub-par performance and all eyes will be looking at you. ,

This report is going to give you the inside-scoop on what some entertainers and agencies do to

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a grand, ornate theater interior. The theater has multiple levels of seating, with the foreground filled with rows of red seats. The walls and ceiling are highly decorated with gold accents, including columns, arches, and intricate carvings. The lighting is warm and focused on the stage area, creating a dramatic atmosphere.

unsuspecting event planners. You'll be armed with the knowledge you need so you won't be "taken" by these people.

In just a minute, I'm going to reveal what the 7 Biggest Mistakes are and how you can avoid them, but first let me answer a couple of questions that are probably on your mind:

Who Are You And Why Are You Revealing This Information?

My name is Rick Allen and I'm a corporate speaker and entertainer that has for the past 45 years offered my unique presentations of magic, mind-reading, hypnosis, motivation, comedy, and audience participation that has helped event planners at top companies including Miami University, State Auto Insurance, Loraine County Medical Association, Mail Sorts, Softbank, McDonald Corporation, Goodwill Industries, Ohio State University and many, many more as well as hundreds of public and private schools and thousands of private parties and events to help make their events unforgettable, successful and fun. This gives you the unique advantage of my many years of experience based on just about everything that could go wrong happening and hearing hundreds of horror stories from the person just not showing up for the event to them being so impaired they couldn't perform.

Let me just say I've seen the good, the bad and the downright ugly.

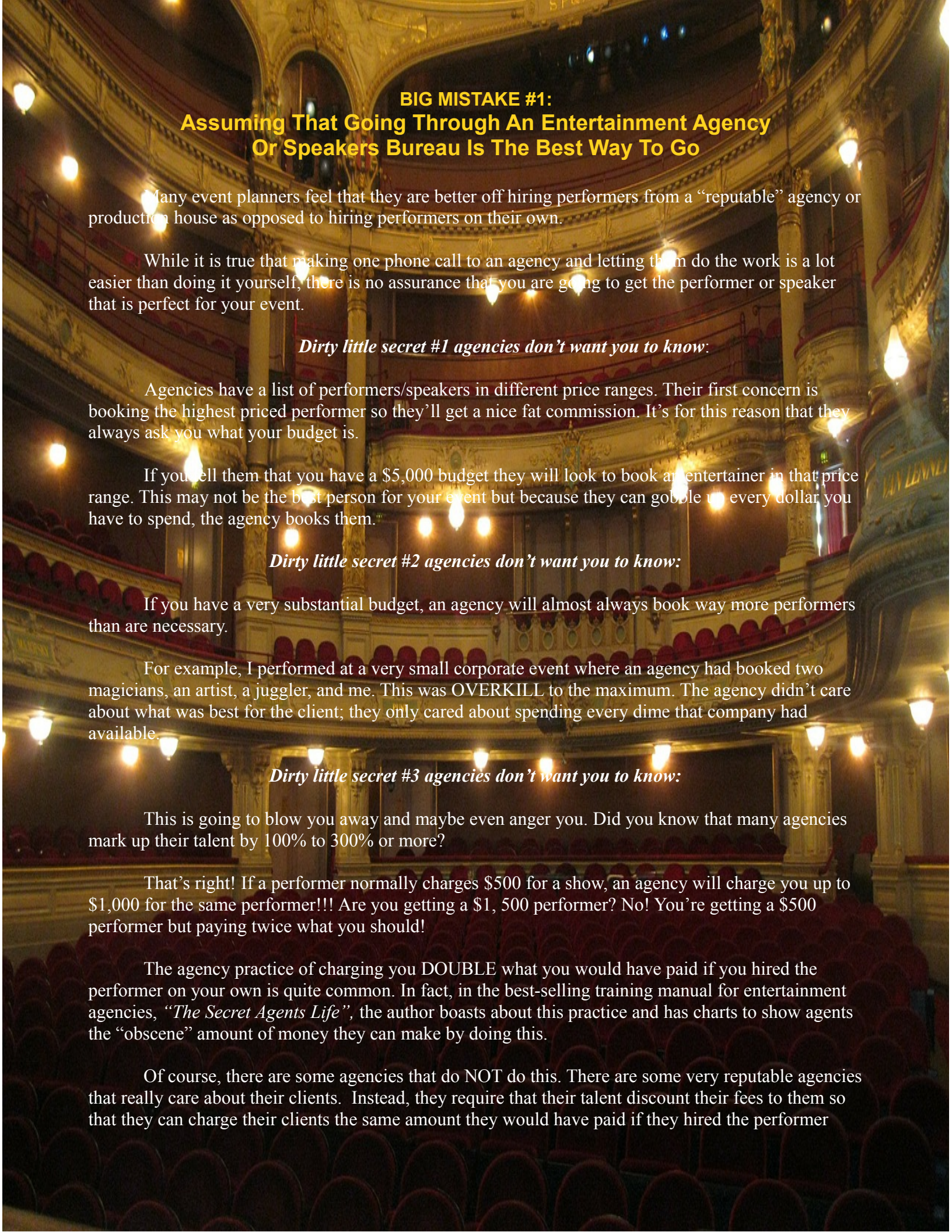
Over the years I have presented top notch entertainment and speaking and have one client that I have worked with annually for over 46 years and several others for 10 and 20 years or more. This is not an accident, it comes from being reliable and delivering what is promised.

So, why am I exposing this information that the entertainment industry doesn't want you to know mainly for two main reasons:

REASON #1: If you end up hiring a lousy entertainer or speaker, this closes the field not only to me but other competent professionals. Odds are, if the person you hire stinks, you'll be very reluctant to hire a similar type of performer in the future.

REASON #2: I HATE to see bad performers rip people off and make event planners look bad. It puts a back eye on my profession.

Okay, now that you know who I am and why I'm doing this, let's talk about the *7 Biggest Mistakes Event Planners Make When Hiring Entertainers and Speakers...And How To Avoid Them!*



BIG MISTAKE #1: Assuming That Going Through An Entertainment Agency Or Speakers Bureau Is The Best Way To Go

Many event planners feel that they are better off hiring performers from a “reputable” agency or production house as opposed to hiring performers on their own.

While it is true that making one phone call to an agency and letting them do the work is a lot easier than doing it yourself, there is no assurance that you are going to get the performer or speaker that is perfect for your event.

Dirty little secret #1 agencies don't want you to know:

Agencies have a list of performers/speakers in different price ranges. Their first concern is booking the highest priced performer so they'll get a nice fat commission. It's for this reason that they always ask you what your budget is.

If you tell them that you have a \$5,000 budget they will look to book an entertainer in that price range. This may not be the best person for your event but because they can gobble up every dollar you have to spend, the agency books them.

Dirty little secret #2 agencies don't want you to know:

If you have a very substantial budget, an agency will almost always book way more performers than are necessary.

For example, I performed at a very small corporate event where an agency had booked two magicians, an artist, a juggler, and me. This was OVERKILL to the maximum. The agency didn't care about what was best for the client; they only cared about spending every dime that company had available.

Dirty little secret #3 agencies don't want you to know:

This is going to blow you away and maybe even anger you. Did you know that many agencies mark up their talent by 100% to 300% or more?

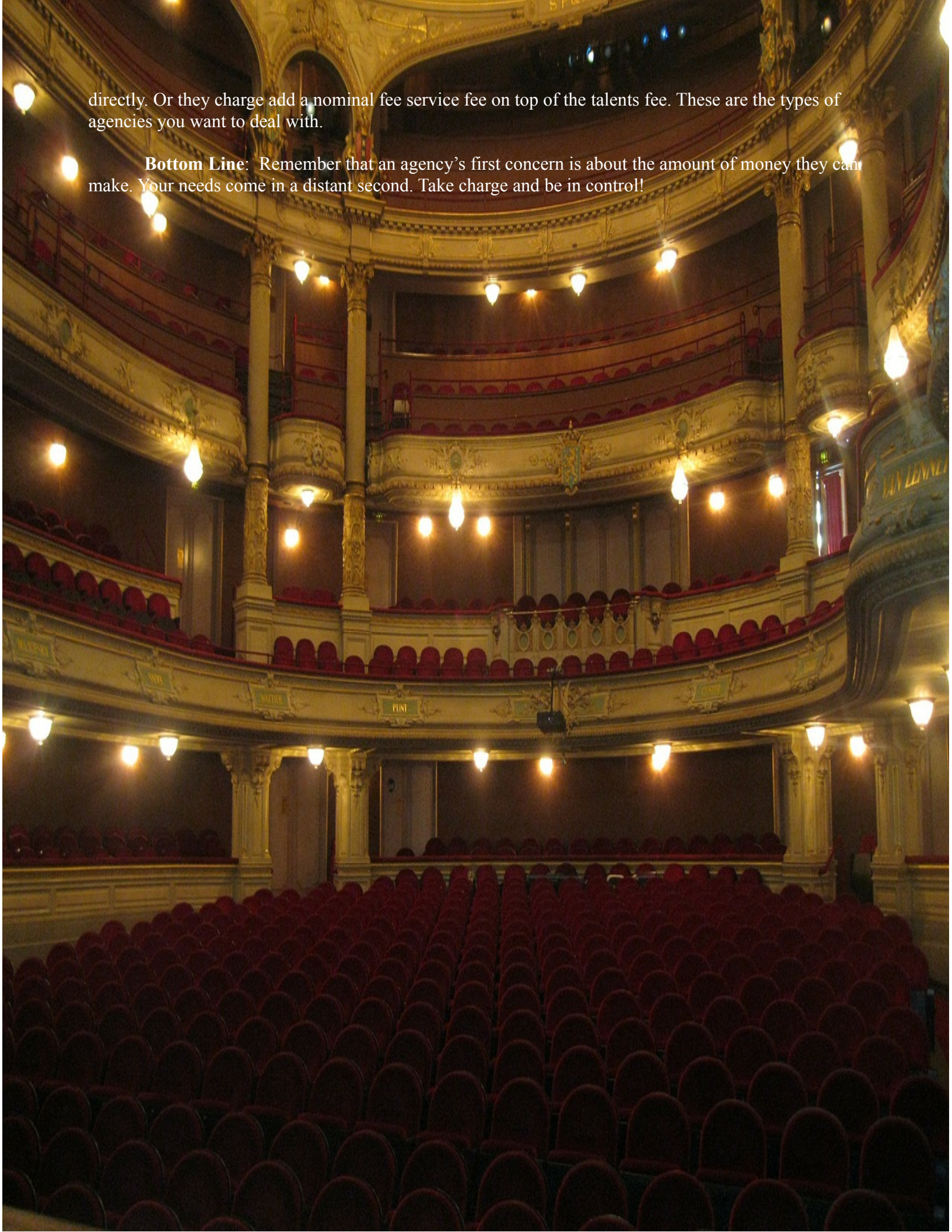
That's right! If a performer normally charges \$500 for a show, an agency will charge you up to \$1,000 for the same performer!!! Are you getting a \$1,500 performer? No! You're getting a \$500 performer but paying twice what you should!

The agency practice of charging you DOUBLE what you would have paid if you hired the performer on your own is quite common. In fact, in the best-selling training manual for entertainment agencies, “*The Secret Agents Life*”, the author boasts about this practice and has charts to show agents the “obscene” amount of money they can make by doing this.

Of course, there are some agencies that do NOT do this. There are some very reputable agencies that really care about their clients. Instead, they require that their talent discount their fees to them so that they can charge their clients the same amount they would have paid if they hired the performer

directly. Or they charge add a nominal fee service fee on top of the talents fee. These are the types of agencies you want to deal with.

Bottom Line: Remember that an agency's first concern is about the amount of money they can make. Your needs come in a distant second. Take charge and be in control!





BIG MISTAKE #2: BASING YOUR DECISION PRIMARILY ON PRICE

Wow! This is a biggie. Of course, price *is* a factor when hiring a performer. If you only have a \$250 budget, you're not going to be able to hire a major star to come and entertain your group! However, many event planners place too much emphasis on price and not enough emphasis on the overall impact the entertainer will have on their event.

Is the highest priced performer always the best? Absolutely not! In fact, in a marketing course put out for entertainers, the author tells his readers to dramatically raise their fees because a lot of event planners equate the value of a performer by how much they charge. He says that it is all "perception".

Well, it certainly won't be just "perception" if you hire someone who charges you thousands of dollars for a show that is, in reality, only worth a few hundred dollars and they "bomb"!

On the other hand, hiring the least expensive entertainer is not always the best way to go either.

Magicians, motivational speakers, and other performers are perceived as a dime a dozen- a commodity- by many event planners, and because of this they try to find the lowest priced performer.

The fact is that each performer is unique and, like in any other profession, there are entertainers who are great, some who are good, some mediocre, and some who should never be allowed on stage!

You need to base your decision on the performer who will best fulfill your needs and help you to achieve your desired outcomes.

One way you can know whether an entertainer is going to meet your needs is by whether or not he or she asks you what your needs are and what outcomes you want to achieve with your event. When you call them, do they just tell you how great their show is without finding out what you want and need?

How would you feel if you went to a doctor because you weren't feeling well and the doctor instantly prescribed some medicine without first finding out what was wrong with you? It's the same with entertainers. They should find out what you want and need first and see if they have a program that can fulfill those needs.

BEWARE!

Many performers are so desperate for work that they will say anything to get hired. They will tell you that they do things that they don't, won't, or can't do. We'll be talking about how to spot out these phonies and avoid 'em like the plague in just a few minutes.

Decide what your budget *range* is, check out a number of performers in that budget range, and choose the best person regardless of price. If your budget is so small that you cannot find an excellent performer, **DO NOT HIRE ANYONE**. It is far, far better to have no entertainer than it is to hire someone who is not good. Save your money and wait until you can afford someone who is outstanding.



BIG MISTAKE #3: BELIEVING TESTIMONIAL CLAIMS

Testimonials are of the utmost importance when hiring any entertainer/speaker. In fact, they are of paramount importance. If a performer does not have a TON of great testimonials it means one of two things.

First, the performer is inexperienced and hasn't worked professionally long enough to get testimonials. Second, the performer isn't very good and can't *get* any testimonials from his customers. In either case, this is a performer you probably don't want to hire.

Yes, testimonials are critical. In fact, I have an arsenal that I use in my marketing. What people say about a performer is infinitely more important than what a performer says about him or herself.

The sad fact is that many entertainers and speakers make up their testimonials and totally lie about their credentials. In fact, in a best-selling videotape program for entertainers a budding performer asks the "expert" what to do if you don't have any testimonials. The answer was, "Oh, just make them up. Do what ever it takes." As disgusting as this sounds, it is unfortunately common practice.

Another scam that entertainers pull on unsuspecting event planners is to claim that they have performed for people and places they never really have. For example, one sleazy entertainer, who will remain anonymous, claims on his website that he has performed on the Tonight Show and The Late Show With David Letterman. He then shows a picture of himself *outside* the Tonight Show Studio and one of him inside the Letterman studio. Please note that David Letterman and Jay Leno are nowhere to be seen!

Discovering the truth is very easy. Ask the performer to give you copies of some of the actual testimonial letters they received and not just the quotes from these letters. (I have a whole book of them that I send to my prospects upon request.) If the entertainer/performer can't produce at least some of the actual letters, you've caught 'em! If a performer claims to have performed on a well-known television program, simply ask for a copy of the tape. If they don't have it...well, you know.

Bottom Line: You should put a lot weight on performer's testimonials when making your decision. Just make sure you are dealing with someone who is honest and ethical.

BIG MISTAKE #4: RELYING SOLELY ON A DEMO VIDEO

A performer's testimonials are more important than their demo video, much more important. The problem with basing your decision solely on someone's demo video is the fact that anyone can make themselves look good on video through editing and retake after retake.

It is better to base your choice on reputation and what others say about the entertainer or speaker rather than just on their promotional kit or website.

Here are just some quick stories that make our point:

HORROR STORY # 1

Recently a major company CEO related this to me. They hired a comedian to add a break in a two day training event for their sales reps. "The comedians demo video was very good, he was funny and said nothing on the video that would be questionable for the very mixed group. He started off fine, but a couple jokes fell flat, the next thing we knew he went into a tirade of material that would make a sailor blush. I had a lot of explaining to do the CEO said."

HORROR STORY # 2

Our office had gotten a call from a prospect and when the fee was discussed the event chair decided to go with a lower fee entertainers. On the day of the event we got a panic call from the chair asking if we could still do the program. It seemed that the entertainer that they hired for the lessor fee canceled at the last minute say they were sick. It was latter discovered that in actually they had been offered a higher paying show and took it instead, leaving the event chair stranded.

HORROR STORY #3:

A Fortune 500 client related to me that last year for the annual holiday party they hired a well known hypnotist as the featured after dinner entertainment. The hypnotist who has been on TV many times arrived early and found the open bar, by show time he was totally drunk and unable to finish his show.

So what should you look out for in a demo video? If the video is over-produced and too slick, beware. The performer may be trying to hide behind special effects. The video should give you a feel for what the performer does, how he interacts with the audience, and what the audience response is. (The audience's response to the performer is in reality more important than what the performer actually does.) Ideally, the video should consist of clips from more than one show.

Bottom line: A demo video can be a useful tool in helping you decide whether a performer is right for you but it should only be one the factors that contributes to your decision.



BIG MISTAKE #5 Booking Too Long Of A Presentation

Scheduling too long of a program is a mistake many event planners make. It's important to remember that it is not like people are going to a theater or to the movies and want to see a two-hour program. In many cases, attendees will have been in meetings all day and will be tired.

Even if your event is "dinner only", your guests will have been sitting for at least 45 minutes before the show starts. If you add a cocktail hour, an awards presentation, and/or a speech from the company president, the length of the event increases dramatically.

Bottom line: The ideal length for the entertainment portion of your program is 35-minutes with a maximum of 45 minutes. This will keep your event moving along at a nice pace and keep everyone energized.

BIG MISTAKE #6: Not Getting 100% Reassurance That The Presentation Is Squeaky Clean

This is sooooo important especially in today's day and age when people are offended by the least little thing. It is vital that you make sure that the performer's material is absolutely clean or trouble brews for you on the horizon.

I recently did a program for a Fortune 500 company who had also hired a comedian. The comedian was hilarious and the audience loved him but then he let a few *very minor* swear words slip out. In fact, I didn't even catch them... but the wife of one of the company's bigwig dealers did. She stormed out of the program and dragged her husband with her. The executive shot an extremely upset look at the poor event planner.

The event planner came up to me and said, "Oh great, now I have to spend tomorrow smoothing all this out. That's just what I need." He had asked the comedian if his material was clean and the comedian told him that it was. It wasn't.

Bottom line: You need to not only ask whether the performer's material is clean, you have to *insist* and *emphasize* that it **MUST** be clean. If possible, get some type of proof, in the form of a testimonial letter that the material is clean.

**BIG MISTAKE #7:
Not Getting A Solid 100% Satisfaction Guarantee**

In most cases, you can avoid falling prey to a bad speaker, entertainer, or entertainment agency by insisting that they give you a 100% money back guarantee if you are not satisfied with their presentation.

This is the ultimate test as to whether someone really believes in what they are offering or if they are just full of hot air. If a performer really believes in the quality of their program, they shouldn't hesitate to guarantee it.

Bottom line: Some performers may argue that people will take advantage of them if they offer a guarantee. This is a bunch of bunk.

In the nearly fifty years that I have offered a guarantee on our services and over the thousands of performances, no one has EVER requested their money back. In fact many companies have me back year after year as was mentioned previously.

If the performer you're considering for your event won't back up their presentation with a solid 100% guarantee...WATCH OUT!

Well, there you have it the 7 biggest mistakes that are made hiring entertainers and speakers. Obviously, if you're a seasoned event planner you may have already known some of the secrets revealed in this report if your new or just a person who had the luck of the draw and never hired entertainment or a speaker before it is hoped you are a bit wiser. Regardless It is hoped that you found a few gems that you can use to ensure that your next event turns out exactly as you want it so you get the applause, accolades, and acknowledgment that you so richly deserve.

Of course the idea of this is to make you better informed in hiring entertainers and speakers. If we can help you in your entertainment and speaker needs, if you have questions, would like to talk about your needs please call or email me. I'm here to help make your job easy.

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