

# Zach Waldman



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*The Easiest Entertainer You Will Ever Work With... Guaranteed!*

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## How to Hire a Magician

If you're interested in [hiring a magician](#) for your next event but have never hired one before, you probably have a lot of questions.

For example, you may be wondering about the types of shows commonly offered, how much they usually cost, and how to get the most entertainment value for your budget. This guide answers those questions, and many more!

**Question:** Aren't magicians for kids? Don't magicians wear goofy outfits? Will a magician make my guests feel stupid? I have a friend who hates magic, should I hire a magician anyway?

**Answer:** Although those are actually a bunch of questions, they all have the same answer, which is that every performer is different.

Some magicians specialize in entertaining children, while others only entertain adults. Some magicians wear costumes, others wear suits. If you have a friend that says he hates magic, that's like saying he hates music. There's no way he's seen THAT many magicians.

Truthfully, a lot of people state their opinions on things they don't have much experience with.

If you match the right performer to your event, you'll hear comments such as, "I usually don't like magic, but I really enjoyed the performer you hired." Or, "I had no idea what a professional magician could do!"

**Question:** What shows are commonly offered by professional magicians?

**Answer:** There are four types of shows most magicians offer.

First, is a [formal close-up show](#). This type of show employs sleight-of-hand using everyday objects such as cards and coins. A formal close-up show is good for audiences with fewer than 30 people in attendance.

Second, is what magicians call [strolling or walk-around magic](#). In this case, the magician strolls through the crowd at your event, introduces himself to people, and shows them magic right where they're standing.

Alternatively, the magician can stay in one place and gather small groups of people to entertain. This is called [stationary close-up magic](#), and is similar to strolling magic, but is almost always a better option. It's better because the magician isn't interrupting your guests to force entertainment on them. Also, by having a table to work on, the magician can perform a larger variety of magic than if he's just walking around.

Strolling close-up magic and stationary close-up magic are great when you have 40 or more people attending your event and want

something exciting going on while people are socializing. For example, it's common to see strolling close-up magic during the cocktail hour of a party.

The third type of show most magicians have is what is called a [parlor or stand-up show](#). This is a medium sized show that's highly interactive and may incorporate sleight-of-hand, but usually involves larger props. This type of show is a good fit when you have an audience of about 50 people. You can even get away without having a stage or riser if the seating is done correctly.

Lastly, the fourth type of show commonly offered is a [stage show](#). A stage show is good for large audiences, and the type of magic performed varies greatly depending on the performer. For instance, some stage magicians specialize in large scale illusions while others focus on comedy-magic.

Of course, there are variations of all of the above-mentioned shows, and a professional magician will work with you to decide which one is right for you.

**Question:** How much do magicians charge?

**Answer:** Magicians charge anywhere from zero to millions of dollars. Seriously, you can find a hobbyist that will perform at your event for free. You can also find out who David Copperfield's agent is and hire him for a million dollars or so.

Since fees vary so widely, how do you know what you should be paying? It's a tough spot a lot of people find themselves in if they've never hired professional entertainment. Here are some guidelines, and things to consider.

First, ask yourself how much you're spending on a per-person basis on food and drinks. If you're spending \$30/person and you're expecting 100 guests, that's \$3,000. Yes, food is a requirement for a party, but nobody is going to remember what they ate a few months after the event.

On the other hand, if you have great (or horrible) entertainment, people will remember that for a very long time to come. Thinking in terms of cost-per-person for entertainment will mean that the quality of the performer will be in line with the quality of your entire event. Spending \$30/person on food and only wanting to spend \$10/person on entertainment is like wearing flip-flops with a suit. You get what you pay for when it comes to entertainment.

With that said, here's what you can usually expect to pay a working, professional magician who will make your event memorable.

**Strolling/Stationary Close-Up-Magic - \$800 - \$1,500 per hour**

**Formal Close-Up Magic Show - \$1,500 - \$3,500**

**Parlor/Stand-Up Show - \$1,500 - \$3,500**

**Stage Show - \$3,500 - \$15,000**

**Question:** How do you get the most value when hiring a magician?

**Answer:** This is a way better question than asking what magicians charge. You may find yourself trying to decide between three magicians you like. If their prices, reputation, and demo videos are equal, how do you decide? Choose the one that offers the most value. Value can take many forms.

For example, will the magician do a special trick for the guest of honor? Or teach your guests a trick? Will he do a trick that matches the theme of your event? Basically, if you have special requests, the magician who is most accommodating may be the right choice for you.

However, keep in mind that asking a magician to do too much customization can take away from the show. The reason is that the magician spent several years perfecting highly entertaining, audience-tested routines. If you ask him to do something too outside of the ordinary, it may hurt the overall show.

**Question:** What do magicians require in terms of space, staging, etc.?

**Answer:** This depends on the type of show. Close-up magic may require nothing on your part, whereas a stage show may require special seating, lighting, and sound. This is something to think about when deciding on the type of show you want.

**Question:** How do I find a magician for my event?

**Answer:** There are three main ways of finding a magician for your event. You can:

1. Go through an agency.
2. Hire an event planner.
3. Use a bidding service such as [GigMasters](#), [GigSalad](#), [Thumbtack](#), etc.
4. Contact the performer directly.

The absolute best option is to contact the performer directly. This is a big SECRET. If you go through an event planner or agent, you will pay more than if you contact the performer directly. You're essentially paying the event planner hundreds of dollars to do simple research.

If you use GigMasters, or those other bidding services, you'll be inundated by everything from amateurs to pros and will find yourself overwhelmed. This is also true if you do a Google search for magicians in your area. Incidentally, you may not want to narrow your search to performers in your area. More on this later.

However, if you do a Google search and know what you're looking for, then you can hone your search to a manageable level. Once you do this, you can talk to two or three magicians, ask questions, and make your decision.

**Question:** How do I know what to look for after doing a Google search to narrow down my choices?

**Answer:** First, think about your event. Are you having a private party or a corporate event?

All [corporate magicians](#) do private parties, but not all private party magicians have experience with corporate events such as trade shows, hospitality suites, and product launches. If you need a corporate magician, enter "Corporate Magician" when you search in Google. Doing that immediately narrows down the field. Obviously, if you're looking for a magician specifically for a wedding, you would search for "Wedding Magician." The mistake most people make is to search for something like, "Magician for hire." When you do that, you're going to get everything from clowns to David Blaine.

Next, watch the magician's demo video. If he doesn't have one, he's not a professional. Keep searching. Assuming he has a demo reel, how much of it shows the performer performing? In other words, do you get a sense of his personality or is the video all flash without any substance? How recent is it? How well produced is it?

Once you've narrowed your search to magicians who match your event and have good demos, you can then check for the following.

1. Direct phone number for booking and/or questions
2. [Testimonials](#) from satisfied clients
3. Online reviews. The more places you check for reviews, the better picture you'll get. Check [Google plus](#), Yelp, and GigMasters. If the reviews seem consistent across all three sites, they're a good indication of what you can expect.
4. Does the magician offer a money-back guarantee? All pros do.
5. Is the magician insured? All pros are.

Earlier I mentioned that you may not want to limit yourself to searching for magicians in your area. Most of the best magicians in the United States live in New York City or Los Angeles. If you don't live in one of those cities, you may want to consider hiring a magician that's based in one of them. Remember the money you saved by not paying an agent or event planner? That can easily pay for the cost of travel for a top-notch entertainer.

Incidentally, if you decide to hire a [Los Angeles based magician](#), ask if he's a performing member of [The Magic Castle](#). The Magic Castle is a private club and only the best magicians in the world perform there. Make sure he isn't just a member of the club, but an actual paid performer that works one of the three major showrooms.

**Question:** Can you sum all of this up for me?

**Answer:** Certainly! Here's your step-by-step guide to hiring a magician for your next private party or corporate event.

1. Decide if you want close-up magic, a stage show, or a combination of the two. For example, you may want close-up magic during cocktails, followed by a stage show after dinner. The number of people at your event and the space available will dictate some of these options.
2. Do a google search for the right type of magician, i.e. corporate magician, wedding magician, private party magician. If you want the best options, search for [magicians based in Los Angeles](#) that are performing members of The Magic Castle.
3. When looking at a magician's website, look for a demo video, testimonials, reviews, and a money-back guarantee.
4. Contact the magician directly and discuss your event. Assuming you feel good about this person, book him!

I hope you enjoyed this report. I'll be adding more info to it as I receive feedback.

Speaking of which, if you have questions I didn't answer, call me at 310-935-3684 or email me at [zach@zachwaldman.com](mailto:zach@zachwaldman.com). I'm happy to help in any way I can.

Of course, if you need a magician for your next event, visit [www.ZachWaldman.com](http://www.ZachWaldman.com). Once there, you'll be able to see my work and learn all about me.