

TIM MARSTON PRESENTS

HOW
TO SELL YOUR
★ ★ ACT

IF YOU ARE A PROFESSIONAL OR ASPIRING ENTERTAINER OR PERFORMING ARTIST THIS BOOK
WILL BE AN INVALUABLE TOOL TO HELP YOU GET BETTER WORK AND MAKE MORE MONEY

1. ABOUT THE AUTHOR	2
A brief history, telling the story of my career so far, and how my experience and knowledge will help you to sell your act.	
2. INTRODUCTION	5
An introduction to the book and the website.	
3. IT'S CALLED SHOW BUSINESS FOR A REASON	7
A brief chapter on getting your head around the business element of show business.	
4. SORT YOUR ACT OUT	10
Examine in detail, your act, its potential and the competition.	
5. RETURN ON INVESTMENT	16
An analysis of the efficiency of your marketing.	
6. POTENTIAL CLIENTS: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY	19
How to figure out who you do and do not want to work for.	
7. PUBLICITY MATERIAL	29
The various types of publicity material, how to create them and where to use them.	
8. TRADITIONAL FORMS OF MARKETING	47
Details of the more traditional ways acts have been marketed. Not to be ignored, there is a reason this stuff has been around for a long time.	
9. ENTERTAINMENT AGENTS	53
What are they? How to contact them? The long wait.....	
10. TV AND TV TALENT SHOWS	60
My take on the TV industry and how it can work for you and your act.	
11. INTERNET MARKETING: WEBSITES	66
The essential knowledge on websites.	
12. INTERNET MARKETING: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION	74
How to get your website into the Google rankings.	
13. INTERNET MARKETING: PAY PER CLICK AND HTML EMAILERS	99
Paid Google advertising, email newsletters and other useful web tools.	
14. SHOW'S OVER FOLKS	112
A final few words.	
15. THANK YOU	114



ABOUT THE AUTHOR ★



At the age of 16, I left school with very average exam results and started an apprenticeship as an electrician at the local steelworks. It was never a job I enjoyed, but I managed to scrape through my college courses and became a qualified tradesman. After a few years of moving from one electrical job to another (all that I hated), I decided to travel the world for a year. My hope was that I would find something more inspiring to do with my life.

Towards the end of a year of working, travelling and having fun in Australia, I found myself learning the art of fire staff spinning. I became addicted instantly and started training obsessively.

It was then that the dreams, doubts, thoughts, fears, and ambitions started racing around in my head...

- **Could I make money at this?**
- **Could I make a full time living, doing this thing I loved so much?**
- **Did other people make a living from fire spinning?**
- **If so how would I achieve all this?**
- **Was I capable of doing it?**
- **Would I have to run away with the circus?**
- **Would I be forced to dress up like a clown?**

(It's worth noting at this point I hate wearing fancy dress or costumes of any kind! This is a personal thing, I just don't like it...However I think most people look great in costumes).

When I got back to the England, I got another job (I didn't like) just so I could pay the bills. I also set about training myself up, to get the skills I would need to become a professional fire performer. It was then I met semi-professional juggler Jago Parfitt – who to this day is a friend, mentor and inspiration to me. Jago encouraged me to think about performing professionally.

As Jago's business grew I started to do some paid gigs (gigs is an English word for performances or bookings) for him. The first gig he booked me for was in front of a very famous supermodel and various other celebs, I did three minutes of fire juggling and got as much money as I earned in four days as an electrician. This was a pivotal moment for me, I did the maths and realised there was clearly a living to be made if I got my act together and worked hard.

With Jago's permission, I copied his business model of a collaborative group of performers. I employed a local web design firm to create a brand and a website for my company. Juggling Inferno was born and I was now on a mission to pay back the money I had borrowed (from my Mum), to fund the website, photos, videos and branding. The plan was to pay the debt off as soon possible, then to save up and



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

leave the job I hated. I was on a mission. All I focused on was living the dream and becoming a fulltime fire performer.

Once the website was launched, I realised I needed to get it out there where my potential customers would see it. I was cold calling hundreds of event organisers as well as handing out business cards etc. It seems crazy now but neither I, nor any other performers I knew, had given much thought to getting gigs from search engines (Google in particular). A chance meeting with a friend of a friend got me thinking about how to get gigs from Google... When I think back on this meeting and the fact that all it cost me was a full English breakfast, I realise it was another very significant, pivotal moment in my career (and a cheap one at that!). I applied the basic techniques that Lucy had taught me and then started the huge job of researching SEO (search engine optimisation – the process of getting up the Google rankings) and how I could use it to get myself more quality gigs.

What I now know was occurring, was the beginning of a long journey of figuring out the methods and mechanics of not just internet sales but marketing as a whole. Clearly it's a huge subject but I focused just on the techniques and methods that I hoped would work for my particular niche. I made lots of mistakes and spent a lot of money in the wrong places. However, these mistakes as well as the successes taught me enough to be able to give up my job. After which, I year on year increased the frequency, quality and fees of my bookings as a fulltime, professional fire performer. Not only that, I was also getting work for my peers, colleagues and friends. A personal highlight for me was getting work for Jago, returning the trust he had shown in me from day one. (Of course, the fact that I could make commission on getting my mates work didn't hurt much either!).

Today, I run one of the busiest fire performance companies in the UK. I have done hundreds and hundreds of well paid gigs and booked just as many for the regular crew of awesome performers who sub-contract for me. I charge (both for myself and my performer's) great fees and pick and choose the gigs I want to do.

My quality of life and my career have all been shaped massively by the marketing techniques I used to sell my act. I have now started to work as an internet marketing consultant, working for a company called The Creative Branch (who design and build all my websites). Jago is now a highly successful full time performer and I am advising him on how to get even more gigs, which is a nice role reversal.

The next chapter in this story is still open to possibilities... My main goal right now is to help as many people as possible make a living from doing what they love. I if can make a part of my income from doing this then I will be a happy man.



INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

This book has been designed to give you the tools you need to help you get a new or existing act to the next level of success. Everything I have written in this book has been tested time and time again by either me or one of my close colleagues. I have written the book in such a way that, even if you are a total beginner as a performer or a seller of acts, you will easily be able to start using these techniques as soon as you have read the book.

Some features of this book are:

- **Easy to read, no-nonsense approach to selling your act.**
- **Tim's Top Tips – Great pieces of advice to enhance the learning experience of the book. Very often these tips are the mistakes I made, (so you don't have to).**
- **On a shoe string ideas – A lot of artists and performers tend to have very little cash, so throughout the book you will find tips to reduce your costs whilst still being able to increase your earnings.**
- **Pros and Cons – Positive and negative points about the techniques. Allowing you to pick and choose which approach will work best for you and your act, depending on your goals and ambitions.**

As well as the book, I will, through www.howtosellyouract.com do my best to help and advise you in any way I can. If you have questions or need more information about anything in this book, please contact me through the website. I will answer all questions put to me through my blog, FAQ's page and the regular email newsletters that I send out to all my readers.

It's my job to help you succeed and the best way I can do that is by understanding your needs so please don't be shy, just hit me with those questions. I would also love to hear from you if you have any success stories of how the book has helped you sell your act. As you will see in this book, success stories or testimonials are a great way to sell products, so if you like the book or it has helped to improve your sales, let me know, so I can spread the word.



IT'S CALLED
SHOW ★ ★
BUSINESS
FOR A REASON



IT'S CALLED SHOW BUSINESS FOR A REASON

I hope, in this section (if you aren't already) to get you feeling much more comfortable with the "business" part of "show business". A lot of artists I have met haven't felt happy, comfortable or motivated with the marketing and selling of their acts. Sadly, this often resulted in them having to make lots of artistic or creative sacrifices in order to make a living and escape from the 9-5 lifestyle. In my own experience, the fact that I was both willing and motivated to take control of selling my act meant that I could generate enough money doing the gigs that I wanted to. So that very quickly, I could turn down the low paid, boring, or uninspiring gigs.

It's worth noting that a lot of amazing performers end up not performing the acts they want to. Often, the need to pay bills means that highly skilled circus performers end up tying balloons and amazing close up magicians do lots of kids parties, just to earn a living. Don't get me wrong; balloon tying and kids parties can be great career choices. However, if people make those choices in order to pay the bills, instead of fulfilling a dream or ambition then to me it's a waste of artistic talent and passion. If only these artists had focused more on selling their act in the right way, to the right audiences, then they would not have had to make so many sacrifices along the way.

This may seem counter intuitive as many performing artists think marketing and being commercially focused is almost guaranteed to restrict creativity. However in my observation, those who take full control of their own careers end up with many more choices about the work they do, and therefore about the way their acts evolve.

So, if you have some hesitation in becoming more business minded about performance, and more focused on marketing your act, think of it like this...

Entertaining, when done well is a gift. It makes people feel happy and gives them a welcome relief from the pressure of everyday life. People love to be entertained and to be an entertainer is to be a valuable part of society. We all have bills to pay, and expenses in running our businesses. If you believe in the quality of your act, why wouldn't you charge a decent fee for it and work hard to get as many gigs as you want? As long as you are honest and ethical you can make a positive difference in people's lives, whilst living a creatively satisfying life... In other words applying some marketing techniques can provide you and your potential clients with a win-win situation.

As you go through the process of selling your act you will find lots of challenges that pop up along the way. I'll be there to help online wherever I can, but even with research and help, you will always makes mistakes in the real world. Mistakes and rejection can, if taken to heart be damaging and knock you off track. However if you look at both mistakes and rejections as nothing more than an opportunity to learn and improve, then you will have gained a very valuable lesson in business.

Personally, I never went to college or did any courses in marketing; I learnt everything I have written in this book through experience and making lots of mistakes. I spent a

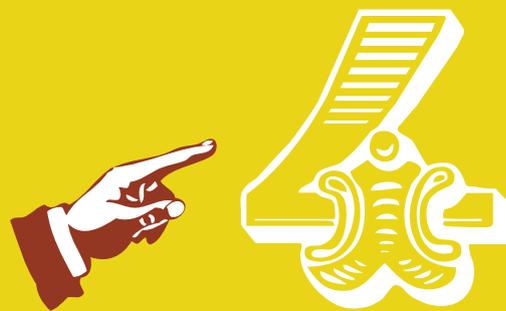


IT'S CALLED SHOW BUSINESS FOR A REASON

lot of time figuring it all out, and by reading this book you are getting the benefit of all the shortcuts I found along the way. What I realised is that marketing an act isn't that difficult (as long as you have the right tools). Our industry isn't that competitive (imagine trying to sell cars, property or music online!) and fortunately for you guys, most artists have zero motivation when it comes to selling. So the application of the techniques I teach you should get good results without years of hard work, study or a huge amount of financial investment.

IN SUMMARY...

If you have any doubts or motivational issues around becoming more business minded and marketing focused, ditch them now! Applying some marketing techniques and a more business minded approach to your act will improve the quality of not just your career, but also your life in general.



**SORT YOUR
ACT^{★ ★} OUT**



SORT YOUR ACT OUT

Before you start the process of selling your act, it is important to examine it closely in order to see where the most potential lies. You can then maximise that potential, alongside living your dreams or ambitions. Speaking of dreams and ambitions, it's worth taking some time to really clarify the goals you have for your career.

If you don't have some clear ideas of where you want to go and what you want to achieve, then it is easy to drift from one sales technique to another, without having the focus and drive you need to get great results.

For example do you want to...

1. **Escape from a 9–5 job that you hate?**
2. **Find new and exciting markets for an act you already earn some money from?**
3. **Become a celebrity, or achieve some level of fame?**
4. **Gain and maintain a high level of artistic freedom or self expression?**
5. **Make shed loads of cash?**
6. **Pay the bills, whilst still having lots of free time to spend with family and friends?**
7. **Perform at celebrity parties and taste the glamour of the high life?**
8. **Travel the world?**
9. **Just get a few paid gigs to supplement another income?**
10. **Some combination of the above?**

Take a minute or two to ponder on these questions, but be aware that the answers you have now will probably change over time. However, for the foreseeable future, having some idea of your goals will help you chose and focus on the techniques you wish to use. This will allow you to get the best from both this book and your act in general.

YOUR ACT

Whether you are a dancer or a ventriloquist, it will be a huge help to closely examine your act in as many ways as possible. One thing I have discovered is that the majority of clients like to have clearly defined products to choose from when they are booking performing artists. As a fire performer I figured out the big sellers were:

- **Solo fire shows.**
- **Group fire shows.**
- **Meet and greet fire performers.**
- **Freestyle or ambient fire performers.**



SORT YOUR ACT OUT

In fact most acts can be broken up into similar sections. Take break dancers as another example, I have seen breakers performing:

- **Solo and group freestyle performances.**
- **Choreographed group shows.**
- **Street performance style shows.**
- **Meet and greet or walkabout, freestyle dance performances.**

So, with almost every act, there is the opportunity to create lots of different ways to sell a very similar performance. The more of these categories you can think of, create and offer to the clients, the more opportunities your act will have to fit into an event organiser's vision of their upcoming occasion.

When a client approaches you with a vague idea such as “We would really like some break dancers but we're not sure what you guys do....It's an exclusive private party and the guest will be up for a good time”. You could offer them some freestyle interaction as the guests arrive and then a choreographed or freestyle show later on, before the dance floor fills up.

When you approach your selling like this, the client will appreciate your input and feel reassured that you have given this some thought well before they got in touch with you.

Of course, some customers will approach you with very specific requirements that you may not currently offer. It may be that you have to charge extra to create this package. Or, it may be that their idea is so good, that you can re-package it and sell it again in the future, in which case it's a win-win situation once again.

★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

Having clearly identifiable entertainment packages will help your agents a lot. If they get random enquiries from a client, it will be much easier for them to offer an “off the shelf” list of packages.

At this point some of you may be thinking there is nothing else you can offer. In response to that I would suggest double checking this assumption. Most acts have at least one or two new formats they can be sold as, even if the act is almost identical and it's just the surroundings, presentation or delivery that may vary slightly. If you truly can't find any fresh ways to package and sell your act, then you simply have to take that as a positive point. Use it to your advantage and carve out a strong niche, with highly targeted marketing campaigns.



★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

A great example of an act becoming flexible and therefore much more sell-able is the secret opera singers. Someone had the amazing idea of hiding opera singers as guests or members of staff at weddings or corporate events. At sometime during the dinner, the singers will suddenly burst into song, all the guests of course have no idea what is happening and the effect is highly entertaining. These acts do great business and I'm sure the singers enjoy the new way in which they get to perform.

THEMING OF YOUR ACT

A big part of many events is theming. Many events, weddings and parties are created around a general theme. The amount of effort put into maintaining a particular theme varies greatly, but what doesn't vary much are the themes themselves. Some of the all time classic themes are:

1. **Venetian Masquerade Ball.**
2. **Fire and Ice.**
3. **Burlesque.**
4. **Beach party.**
5. **Circus/Cirque.**
6. **Seasonal themes – Christmas, NYE, Winter Wonderland etc.**
7. **Black and white.**
8. **Heaven and Hell.**
9. **Mardis Gras.**
10. **Hollywood.**

The more of these themes you can tie your act into, the more events you will be suitable for. This can make the difference between one or two gigs a year to being constantly in work. Many performers create specific acts just to suit a certain theme and this may be something you want to do. However, as long as whilst examining both your act and your market you give themes some serious consideration, you should cover a lot of bases.

POTENTIAL MARKETS

It's now time to focus on the potential markets for your act. Whether you have some experience of selling, or if you are a total beginner it's worth thinking hard about all the traditional and more contemporary markets that you can target.



Most types of acts have a variety of very traditional sales routes that are well worth investigating. It is also, however, well worth spending some time trying to think outside the box on this one. If you can hit a market that has little competition from similar acts, you will find it much easier to sell and therefore you should be able to get lots more gigs whilst still charging good fees. I will go into this in much more detail later in the book, but for now just start thinking about both traditional and exciting new markets for your act.

Continuing with examining your act for a while, as well as looking at the potential markets for your act and the way you package it. It is also a good idea to look at your act as it exists currently to get a clear picture of where you are right now.

Ask yourself the questions below. If you like to write things down then make some notes of the answers. For me, as well as writing things down, I like to bounce thoughts around in my head for a while, making sure the answers are as accurate as possible. At the very least, spend a few minutes on each of these questions, I guarantee this will help you as you sell your act:

1. **How is your act defined? Does it fall under one or more genres? – Street theatre, circus, cabaret, stage, walkabout, etc.**
2. **Is it flexible in duration, presentation, number of performers, stage requirements, costumes, themes, music...?**
3. **Compared to similar acts, how does it equate quality wise? Are you world class, or just learning your trade? This is the time to be brutally honest with yourself! Of course you will always present your act in the best possible light, but being realistic is also very important. If you don't think your act is as good as a lot of the competition, then price yourself accordingly and work on improving it to increase you future fees.**
4. **Does your act have a lot of staging and technical requirements? Can these be reduced or altered to suit various venues, budgets and clients' needs.**
5. **Try describing your act in 1, 3, 5 and 15 lines without repetition, exaggeration or selling yourself short. This is a really useful exercise, over your career you will have to write act descriptions many times and the sooner you start practising the better. Maybe even ask a friend, who has seen your act, to come up with his or her own descriptions and then compare notes.**
6. **List as many strengths and weaknesses of the act as you can think of. Use the questions above to guide you, and once again be totally honest about this. Very often, you can turn weaknesses to your advantage, or at the very least minimize their effects, but to do this you must examine them in detail and move forward from there.**
7. **What name/names do you have for your act? Are they easy to pronounce and remember? Do they in some way symbolise the strengths of the performance and the value it will add to an event?**



SORT YOUR ACT OUT

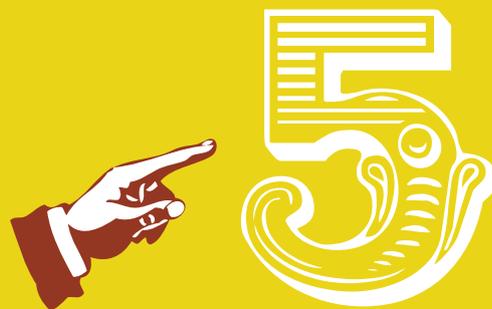
Give these questions a lot of thought. Some will be easy to answer. Others will hopefully be a little more challenging. What I want you to achieve through this process is a realistic and comprehensive view of your act relative to your clients and competition.

If you consider that you are potentially starting or improving a career that will last you for many many years to come, it will be of great value to examine yourself and what you are aiming for. The more conscious thought you put into your act now, the more likely you are to make the right decisions for yourself in the future.

1. **Why do you want to sell your act? This might at first glance seem like a no brainer, but in my experience our reasons for doing things are more complicated than would appear at first glance.**
2. **What specific goals do you have? Do you have some time frames for these goals?**
3. **How hard are you willing to work? What are you willing to invest and sacrifice in order to achieve these goals?**
4. **What are your personal, business and artistic boundaries? Are there any no go areas? Again, this might seem strange, but many performers chose not to fly to gigs for example. Others chose not to work for certain companies that don't fit in with their personal values.**
5. **Who can you look to for advice, help and mentoring along the way?**

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

Finding a more experienced performer who is willing to help and advise you along the way can be invaluable. I've been lucky enough to have some great advice and it made a huge difference to the speed in which my career improved. You may think it's a bit cheeky asking for help and advice but most people are happy to help. In fact, often people are flattered that you would ask. Of course, you now have me on your side, so keep in touch with your questions and queries.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

With any type of marketing there will always be an investment of some sort. Sometimes the investment is of your time, sometimes it will be mostly a financial investment and other times it will be a fairly even amount of both these resources. The results you create from these investments are known as return on investment (ROI).

It is important, when deciding how to sell your act, to consider the ROI of any possible marketing that you do. If you have plenty of money to invest, then you need to spend it wisely to get the best benefit possible from the expense. If you are low on budget and planning to do most of the work yourself, you will need to spend your time as efficiently as possible. This will allow you to earn money quickly without having to spend too many hours on marketing.

I have put some tips on ROI throughout this book. However, in almost all cases it is very difficult for you as a performer to accurately calculate your ROI. You will have to use a combination of experience, research and guesswork to figure out where you might be able to get the best returns. One thing I will say is that from my own experience, the various forms of internet marketing covered in this book have provided me with the best returns in both time and money invested. So as well as getting some agents on board and trying some of the more traditional forms of selling your act, I strongly recommend you focus a lot of your time in this area.

As your marketing campaigns start to become more effective you will notice some patterns appearing. Clients and the types of enquiries you receive will fall into various obvious types and categories. Some clients for example (usually the general public) will be both excited and nervous about booking a performer directly. These enquiries at first may be a bit labour intensive. However once you get the hang of it, they can be great, as this type of client is usually very open to advice and suggestions from the performer.

Some clients will have experience of booking performers. This can either be a help or a hindrance, depending on whether they are trying to assist you with logistics, or haggle your price down!

You will also come across agents and event organisers that do almost nothing but book performers, usually they are great to work with regarding admin, logistics etc. However these guys are often very demanding when it comes to pricing, contractual details, etc.

My advice would be to watch out for the various types of customer and enquiry that crop up along the way. For email enquiries you can create draft emails to save time in responding. For phone or face to face to enquiries, the more you have thought through and prepared for all the varying demands of your clients, the more efficient it will be for all concerned.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

As you begin to sell more and more, you will realise this can be seen as an almost mechanical process. This can and should be refined, improved and simplified over time, to allow you to convert as many enquires as possible into sales. Whilst doing this, you must ensure that each client feels valued and important. Once you have a good system for handling enquiries along with some great marketing in place, then you will see why people get so focused on ROI. The benefits will go up and the amount of investment needed will go down and this is exactly what you should be aiming for.



**POTENTIAL
CLIENTS
THE GOOD, THE BAD
AND THE UGLY**



POTENTIAL CLIENTS: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

When starting a marketing campaign an obvious step is to think about what type of clients you would like to work for. However, before you go down that route, just spend a minute or two thinking about the type of clients you don't want to work for. Then, as you are searching for new potential customers, you can avoid the types of clients and gigs that you don't want.

The most obvious examples of un-wanted clients would be those that think it's acceptable to not pay artists for their work! Whilst it's difficult to spot these types without having done some business with them, there are some things you can do to protect yourself. Whenever you get an enquiry from a new client, always check out their website (if possible). Also I find it's a great idea to get a landline and postal address as well as an email or a mobile number. That way, if they do decide not to pay up, you have some way of tracking them down to start legal proceedings.

Some other clients you may want to avoid are:

- **Slow payers, sometimes it is more hassle chasing the money than the gig was worth in the first place.**
- **Companies or individuals who appear to have a different set of ethics to your own. There are lots of companies who behave badly and generally have a bad reputation within the industry. I recommend staying as far away from people like this as possible. It is very easy to be tarred with the same brush and life is far too short to waste time on these people.**
- **Companies who are looking for something that just isn't what you really care about.....For me, performing isn't just about just making money, it's about doing so whilst having fun and feeling creatively satisfied. So I have, on occasion turned down work simply because I haven't felt excited or passionate about the clients and the events they're putting on.**

The obvious exception here is one of necessity. When there are bills to pay and not many gigs coming in, you are much more likely to take any gig that is going and then deal with the potential pitfalls associated with the particular client or event.

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

At the risk of sounding like a stuck record, the more you focus on getting your marketing techniques right, the less of these dubious clients and gigs you will have to take on to pay the bills!

This quote sums up how I feel about dodgy clients fairly well... But if I'm honest the real reason it's in here is because I find it highly amusing.

Lady Nancy Astor – “Winston, if you were my husband, I'd poison your tea.”

Winston Churchill – “Nancy, if I were your husband, I'd drink it.”



POTENTIAL CLIENTS: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

So now, we have the negative side of things out the way, we can consider the more positive aspect of planning who you want to work for. Some of your choices will be very obvious. If your act is in an established genre there will be some very well trodden routes to success that you are advised to consider. If you are not sure of this then go and have a look at some similar acts. Have a good look at their websites and see if you can figure out who they have worked for in the past, and who their marketing is targeted towards.

It's worth noting at this point, that in no way shape or form do I suggest actively trying to steal clients from similar acts. If for example your competition has testimonials from a certain events company, don't contact the company and try to undercut your competitors. Whilst this may generate you some work in the short term, in the long term you will become known for being a bit dodgy. Many performers have great business relationships with their clients and if you try to steal their business the chances are they will get to hear about it. Of course, if they do, they might just start attacking you with equally dubious methods.

From a business point of view, regarding potential clients, there are some important points to consider. Firstly, it's worth trying to get your customer base built up from a variety of markets and different types of client. When the last big recession hit, there were lots of performers who relied heavily on corporate events for their income, as the corporate world shrunk dramatically so did their work levels. However if these performers had focused on a wider customer base then this loss of earnings would have had much less of an impact on their income. Another factor to consider is the fashion of an act within an industry. Certain markets and acts are very susceptible to the fashions of the day. Weddings are a classic example, most brides want something different and this means that what was massively popular one year, may not be the next.

★★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★★★

If you notice one area of your customer base isn't as busy as usual, then just increase your marketing to a new or existing market. This new market could be potentially more lucrative and may not be subject to that particular slump. International markets for instance may not be affected by a localised slow down in the economy.

Another great advantage of building up a wide range of clients is that this will provide you with variety in the type of gigs you do. Not only will this variety help to keep you interested, but it will also help you discover any other potential ways for selling your act and increasing your earnings.



POTENTIAL CLIENTS: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

As you are beginning your marketing campaigns I suggest trying to spread your net wide and get customers from a variety of different industries. It may be, however, that there is a specific industry or niche that you feel very suited to. If this is the case I recommend that within that specific niche you build a wide base of clients, rather than relying on just a handful. If for example you are very keen on doing lots of street theatre performance instead of relying on one agency to get all your work you could also:

- **Find other agents that specialise in street theatre.**
- **Try and generate work directly from street theatre festivals and local councils.**
- **Work on your SEO and PPC (both forms of Google advertising I cover later in the book) for keywords such as “Street theatre performers”.**

If you do this, you are less susceptible to falling out with an individual agent or losing touch with a regular client.

★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

Search engine optimisation (SEO) and pay per click marketing (PPC) are great ways to target specific industries. If for example you want to get more corporate work then it's just a matter of applying some internet marketing and the enquiries will start to come in...(These techniques are all covered in internet marketing chapters of this book).

Let's now look at the main markets and industries that regularly book acts in more detail...

CORPORATE EVENTS

Corporate events can be a great industry to get into with your act. Usually, you get well looked after and the money is generally higher up the scale. Corporate events also offer the opportunity to get in front of some big audiences, which may not be possible with other types of event. In the years that I have worked in the corporate sector, I am still amazed at the variety of acts that are booked for performances. From world famous stand-up comedians and hip-hop superstars to walkabout fortune tellers! If you have some slick publicity and make the right contacts, then whatever your act, there will definitely be corporate event organisers willing to book you on a regular basis.



Pros of Corporate Events

- This is a massive and lucrative part of the events industry.
- They often have huge budgets.
- While they do have seasonal peaks and troughs, corporate events run all year round, all over the world.
- Most corporate events have good stages, lighting and professional PA's.



Cons of Corporate Events

- They can often be boring or uninspiring to perform at.
- As they are usually organised by battle hardened event companies, they may haggle intensely on prices.
- Working with corporate clients and event organisers isn't everybody's idea of fun.
- It can be a very competitive market as most performers are keen to do more corporate work.

WEDDINGS

Weddings are often looked down upon by some performers as a bit cheesy or unglamorous. However, for me as a fire performer, weddings are my favourite type of events. Weddings are full of happy people having a day of celebration and most of the audiences are great fun to perform for. It's a competitive market for the traditional wedding acts such as bands, DJ's and magicians, but if you offer something different you can clean up here.



Pros of Weddings

- A huge industry in itself.
- Mostly seasonal, but people do get married all year round.
- As this is the biggest day in a lot of people's lives, they are often willing to spend a lot to get the right act.
- Weddings are usually great fun to do; the guests are typically very keen to be entertained.
- People plan weddings well in advance which means you can fill your diary up for a long time into the future.



Cons of Weddings

- Bride-zillas (scary brides to-be).
- A lot of wedding venues may not be suitable for some acts as they don't have stages etc.
- Performing at weddings can be weather dependant.
- Drunken people can be hard work to perform for. (In Britain there is a tradition of having plenty of drink to help celebrate the wedding).
- The excited couples don't always make it to the altar. (Last minute cancellations do happen).

PRIVATE PARTIES

Private parties can range from a tiny function with a small budget to huge events with celebrity performers and budgets that are big enough to buy a small country. The larger private parties are usually run by event organisers and often feel more like a corporate function than a private party.

Smaller private parties are most often organised by one of the party goers. The people at these small parties never cease to impress me with their investment and passion for booking acts at very personal events. These events and parties have been a very significant part of the fun I have had in my career.



Pros of Private Parties

- A wide range of acts do very well in this area.
- Private parties happen all year round, so there are less dips due to the seasons.
- They can be great to do. Some of the most fun gigs I've done have been doing fire shows for 20 people in someone's garden.



Cons of Private Parties

- If you are dealing with a client who has no experience of booking an act, it can be a little challenging at times.
- Some of the high budget events are pretty soulless and you may just be getting paid to be ignored (similar to some of the corporate gigs).



SHOPPING CENTRES

Shopping centres (malls) are a big booker of family friendly acts. Walkabout and seasonal acts are big in this sector, but large stage shows are not uncommon either. The idea is that if the shopping centre is fully of lively acts people will have a better time and therefore spend more money. I know many performers who create acts specifically for this type of work and do very well out of it. If you are looking for international bookings then there is a big market for this type of work in the Middle East. Places like Dubai survive on the retail and tourism sectors and there are many hundreds of performers shipped in from all over the world to promote the shopping centres and attractions.

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

International gigs. A lot of countries, the Middle East being a classic example, don't have a strong culture of professional performing artists. This means they have to look further afield when they want to book acts. The best way to target this area is through entertainment agents and internet marketing.



Pros of Shopping Centres

- Great for acts that have a seasonal theme.
- Potential for long runs of work in one location.
- Public areas can be great fun to work in.



Cons of Shopping Centres

- Working in shopping centres isn't everybody's idea of fun.
- Public areas can be a nightmare to work in.
- Health and safety can be challenging depending on your act.



PAID STREET THEATRE PERFORMANCE

Many local councils hire performers to entertain shoppers and tourists in their local town centre. This may be as part of a street theatre festival or it may be on random days throughout the year. Often this work is seasonal with Christmas and school holidays being the busiest times of the year. As with shopping centre work, the reason acts are hired is usually to encourage people to spend money within the town as either tourists or shoppers.



Pros of Street Theatre Performance

- Street performance is one of the oldest and finest forms of performing there is. If you are getting paid to do this it also avoids the challenges of making a living from busking.
- Working on the street can be great fun, people are often both surprised and very happy to be entertained.



Cons of Street Theatre Performance

- It's not much fun in bad weather.
- Working on the street can be horrendous, some people are too busy to be entertained and some are just too miserable to enjoy any live performance.
- The seasonality of this work can be either a pro or a con.

CABARET

In most big cities there is a cabaret scene of some sort, which exists by selling a wide variety of acts to paying audience members. Cabaret and variety clubs weave in and out of fashion and therefore shouldn't be relied on too heavily for income. However they are a great place to perform and definitely worth a bit of marketing consideration.



Pros of Cabaret

- Great audiences. People who go to cabaret shows are usually there to be amazed by people like you.
- Cabaret bookings can often turn into longer runs or even tours.
- Lighting, sound, staging, etc are always provided for you at cabaret clubs.
- The range of acts that perform at cabarets is huge.



Cons of Cabaret

- The average gig fee tends to be lower than for other markets.
- Cabaret thrives in big cities but if you live out in the sticks it's not much use.

OTHER POTENTIAL MARKETS FOR ACTS

It would take way too long for me to go into every potential market I can suggest. So the list below will hopefully get you thinking. All of the places on the list can be great opportunities or niches for entertainers and performers. Your task is to select a few of these niches and target your marketing accordingly.

1. Street theatre festivals.
2. Nightclubs.
3. Variety theatres.
4. Music/culture festivals.
5. Entertainment agents.
6. Tourist attractions.
7. TV/Film work.
8. Theme parks.
9. Music videos.
10. Corporate fun/training days.
11. Trade fairs.
12. Public speaking.
13. Teaching/workshops.
14. Schools/colleges/universities.
15. Prisons.
16. Cruise ships.
17. Touring circuses.
18. Local governments/councils.
19. International event companies/wedding organisers/agents/festivals.

Of course all of these potential markets will have their pros and cons. An old flame of mine works in prisons doing drama and workshops, she loves it and finds it very rewarding. However for many performers, prison would be one of the last places they would want to work. As your business grows you will find out where you feel most at home, and then you can focus on getting as much work in this area as possible.

A note on targeting certain markets – There can be some merit in targeting individual events, institutions or businesses, especially if you are really keen to work with them.



POTENTIAL CLIENTS: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

However I would not recommend this as a general policy because the ROI can be very poor. Instead I recommend targeting particular agents, event companies or using the power of internet marketing to get you work in the specific area. All these methods can put you in front of many clients within that niche section of the event industry and therefore increase your ROI. (I will go into this targeting in more detail later in the book).



PUBLICITY MATERIAL

In this chapter I will go through the various types of publicity material you will need to sell your act. I will also give you tips on how to create good publicity material and what, in my experience, works best for different markets. Publicity material is an evolving project, more so at the beginning of your career but even the old hands update and re-do their publicity every now and then. As your act changes and evolves, so will your publicity material. I recommend learning as much about this as you can, as this knowledge will come in handy for many years to come.

Obviously different acts will find more marketing power in one form of material than another. However all acts should make sure they have a wide range of publicity material to suit their clients' needs and the different types of market they are targeting.

Your publicity material should be easy for your clients to access and easy for you to distribute, even when away from the office. I recommend getting everything online somewhere where clients can download it. Sometimes clients are in a huge rush for the material, and if you are away from your office or a Wi-Fi connection it can be difficult to sort out quickly enough.

BRANDING AND LOGOS

Before you think about photos, videos, websites, etc you need to consider your branding. After all, most, if not all of your publicity material should include your branding and logo.

Wikipedia explains branding as:

A brand is the identity of a specific product, service, or business. A brand can take many forms, including a name, sign, symbol, colour combination or slogan. The word brand began simply as a way to tell one person's cattle from another by means of a hot iron stamp. A legally protected brand name is called a trademark. The word brand has continued to evolve to encompass identity – it affects the personality of a product, company or service.

(I don't know about anyone else but I hadn't made the connection to cattle branding until I read that.)

Branding is a very powerful technique for selling pretty much anything. As entertainers and performing artists the more conscious you are of building your brand the better.

When creating or refining your act's brand, the obvious place to start is with the name of your act. From my observation, it seems clear that any name will do when selling an act, if you get the marketing and quality of the act right.

If you take bands as an example. Very often once the band reaches a certain level of fame, the real meaning of the band's name often becomes blurred with the association



to the band. What this tells us is that the meaning and association of a word or name can be altered by experiencing the performance and marketing of an act. If you look at the examples of band names below:

- **ACDC.**
- **Iron Maiden.**
- **Joy Division.**
- **Eurhythmics.**
- **Genesis.**
- **The Divine Comedy.**
- **R.E.M.**
- **New Order.**

All of the above are often more recognisable as bands, rather than as the original meaning of the word or name, thus showing the power and influence of pop culture. (Do some research on Google if you don't know the original meaning of any of these band titles. Some of them are pretty dark!).

My instinct is, however, to at least have some suggestions or symbolism within your name that either makes a clear reference to your act, or suggests it more subtly. I came up with the name Juggling Inferno for my fire performance company by writing down all the words I could think of related to fire juggling and bouncing them around with a group of mates. I still really like the name and it often gets good comments from clients and audience members. Not only do clients like the name, it also has a clear suggestion of fire performance within its meaning.

An interesting point about the Juggling Inferno name is that it doesn't appear to translate well into the Latin languages. I have mentioned the name to a couple of Spanish speakers and they seem to translate it as Juggling Hell. It seems that the meaning of inferno is more slanted to hell than fire in Spanish. Clearly this isn't ideal. What can we learn from this?... If you want to do lots of international gigs, you should consider the potential impact of the names you select and the misunderstandings that could occur.

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

When thinking of a name for your act, make sure it is easy to pronounce, spell and remember. It should stick in people's head and the best way to do that is to have a strong bold name, rather going for something too subtle or cryptic.

If you don't have any suggestion of what your act involves in the name, then I would certainly consider this very strongly for the design of your logo. Whether you create the design yourself or have somebody else do it for you, your name and logo combined should definitely give some idea of what your act is about.

When it comes to creating a logo and the branding around it I would suggest, if possible, paying a professional graphic designer to do it. It is such an important job and not one easily done well by an amateur; this is definitely one place to splash out if you can.

If you refer to the Wikipedia definition at the start of this chapter, some of the main points to consider when either creating or commissioning a logo and brand design are:

- **The name of the act – Will the name appear in the logo or not?**
- **The colours or colour combinations of the brand/logo.**
- **The font size and graphic detailing of the logo.**
- **The non verbal message(s) you are trying to express.**

A word of warning, it's worth spending a lot of time and effort on getting this right, as once you have committed, changing your mind can be very expensive. You will be using this logo and branding for a long time, so it's really important you like it and feel it represents your act in the best way possible.

Once you have a brand design and logo, it is important this is used wherever your act is sold. The idea is to change what are basically just some words and graphics into a recognisable brand with your clients. The combination of the logo and branding along with great performances and a high quality of customer service should increase your reputation, the frequency of repeat bookings and the overall success of your act.

If you run through the process of a completed booking from a client's point of view, the quality of your service and then the association with your brand can be observed. Assuming that your admin, client communications and the performance itself are done well...

1. **The client finds your act via your website. The website has your act's name, logo, full branding and publicity material along with some well written copy (copy is marketing text).**
2. **As they make the enquiry and subsequent booking, all your emails, contracts and paperwork have the act's name and logo on them.**
3. **You arrive at the gig wearing branded clothing and in a branded vehicle (in an ideal world).**
4. **You do an amazing gig.**
5. **As you leave, (once again wearing your corporate clothing), you give the client your business cards and encourage them to keep in touch. Offering free help and advice as well as the opportunity of future bookings.**

6. Your “thank you for the work” email is sent later that week along with a branded invoice, links to your website etc.

The inescapable process that has occurred here is your client will associate the complete package of your act and it's branding along with excellent performance and customer service.

Imagine the additional power you have now given to a fully branded email/newsletter that lands in your client's inbox sometime in the next few months. This well written email, targeting your client with some great copy and a strong call to action (an instruction to carry out a task e.g. “contact us now”), is instantly associated with the great service and performances of the past. This is powerful stuff, and not to be ignored or underestimated if you truly want to take control of selling your act in the best way possible.

A word about quality. The previous example works on the assumption that your admin and performances are great. Of course in reality, we can't always get everything right. I think as long as the client is happy with the overall service, the odd mistake or slip-up won't be of any significant harm to your brand or future bookings. That said, I would definitely encourage you to create the habit of constant improvement in these areas. In every aspect your work, if you are always looking for areas of development, this will be a great way to strengthen your brand in the eyes of your clients. Any time you become aware that your service or performance doesn't come up to scratch, examine the mistakes closely and decide what you can do to improve the service in the future.

PHOTOS

Photos are a vitally important part of any act's marketing tool box. A good photo can express a huge amount of information, effectively and powerfully in the blink of an eye. You need to make it one of your missions in life to collect and then improve on the quality of your photographs from day one and then throughout your career. Your photos will be one the most frequent ways people make snap judgements about whether or not to book your act. They will be used in pretty much all the marketing you do. As such it's clear they need to be of the best quality possible.

For any act you are selling, it is essential to have one lead photo that represents your act in the best way possible. This one photo will be the first glance by many agents, clients and visitors to your site. We all know how important first impressions are, so take the time to get a great lead image.

Alongside the lead photo it is useful to have a variety of different photos that make your act look at it's best. The trick here is to have various types of photos so that you

can use different ones for different sorts of markets. For example, a great photo of you entertaining a live crowd at a muddy festival will work well for targeting other festivals and exciting events. However if you want to reach high end corporate clients a live photo of you in a swanky venue would be much more appropriate.

If you have a good browse around entertainers and agent's websites, you will notice that photos usually fall into a variety of categories:

- **Live photos – Live photos can be the most powerful of all, the problem is getting good ones isn't always that easy.**
- **Studio shots (in action) – You performing but in a studio situation, rather than in front of an audience. These shots can also be very useful, but the trick here is to not look to staged or set up.**
- **Studio shots (posing/aka catalogue shots) – Photos of you just looking good in front of the camera. Very easy to shoot, but for most acts not as powerful as an action shot....Unless of course like me, you are so sexy you stop traffic, in which case these are a great selling tool..!**

To get one, or more, good live shots can be a complicated process. For fire performers as an example, it's difficult because you are very often performing at night. Still they are an essential element of your marketing campaign, so you must have them. The two basic routes to go down are either:

- A) Bringing a professional photographer to a gig with you.**
- B) Asking event photographers or clients if you can have copies of any photos that are taken on gigs.**

The first example is much more likely to get you some great shots, as you have your own dedicated camera man. However, not all clients will be happy for you to turn up on a gig with a photographer. (Always ask permission first).

If you don't have many gigs or your clients aren't keen to allow a photographer on-site, then you could consider doing a free gig at an event and use the opportunity to do a live photo shoot. There are many events that would be very happy to have a free performance. As well as getting your shots, it may also be a great opportunity to do some networking and build up some new clients. (Another example of a potential win-win situation).

Studio shots of either you in action or you doing your best catalogue poses should be much easier to create. Whether you are paying for the photographer or not, I recommend discussing the images you are looking for before the day of the shoot. This is where the research will kick in. You should have a good idea of the type of shots you want to achieve from the shoot and email some good examples of these to the photographer before the day itself.



PUBLICITY MATERIAL

Once again, I would just like to point out it's not only more ethical, but also much better for you in the long run, if you use other acts and their publicity material as an inspiration for your own unique take on things. This, rather than blatantly copying what seems to work, is in my eyes a much better approach to marketing, performing and business in general.

For all types of images that you collect, where possible, keep them in at least two or possibly three sizes of compression.

- **For print, you need them in the biggest file size that you have.**
- **For emailing them to clients, you need them compressed to a reasonable size.**
- **For websites and HTML emailers (email newsletters), they should be as small as possible, without ruining the image.**

If you are paying a professional photographer they will compress them for you. If you are getting the shots for free, it may be that you just get them in the largest file size possible and then you play around with the compression yourself. (If you don't know how to do this, then learn. Just Google it, be aware that most computers have a free compression program so there is no need to spend cash on this, unless it becomes a big passion).

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

If you have a low budget, try contacting local photography clubs or colleges that teach the subject. Ask them if they would be interested in taking some photos of you. If you explain you have no budget, but are happy to credit them for the photos you should get a favourable response. The images they take will be good for their portfolio and, in my experience, if there is one thing photographers love its taking pictures of new and interesting subjects.



Pros of Photos

- A phenomenally powerful marketing tool.
- Very easy to distribute (web, emails, print, etc.).
- Comparatively cheap and easy to create.
- Huge potential ROI in both time and money invested.



Cons of Photos

- Some photos can actually make an act look better than it is. This may not be the end of the world but if the photo looks dramatically better than the reality, you need to either improve your act or review your photos.
- Photos are only any use if you can get them in front of your potential clients.
- Photos can look outdated pretty quickly.

VIDEOS

Videos, or show reels as they are often called within the industry, are another vital part of your marketing tool kit. A good video can be a deal closer, and whilst slightly less flexible than photos, they can be more much powerful when used correctly. Similar to photos, videos will have some common traits that you will find on most of the promos out there:

- **Live footage of an act being performed – Once again this footage can be very difficult to get, especially with both the quality requirements and the amount needed for editing.**
- **Studio footage of an act being performed – Much easier to get but often lacking the selling power of a good piece of live footage.**
- **A combination of both live and studio footage – This can often be a great middle ground, you have the ease of a studio shoot along with the power of some live footage.**

As with photos, live footage of a decent quality can be difficult to get due to the circumstances and conditions of a booking. Once again a great way round this is to do a free gig or two, where you get to film the performance in return for your work.

The other option is to try and get hold of footage from previous gigs you have done. Whilst this is a great idea in theory, the reality is that this is difficult with photos and nigh-on impossible with footage. Most of your clients will focus on one event and then the next. No matter how many times they promise to give you a copy of the footage, it almost never materialises. Event organisers are busy people and sorting you out with some footage will always get pushed to the bottom of their to-do list. Still, I recommend trying this course of action, with both video and photos but don't keep your hopes up, as even if you do get the footage, the chances of it being use-able are pretty slim.

Studio footage on the other hand, should deliver a much higher quality, relatively easily. Once again an examination of other performers' promo show reels for

inspiration is a great idea. Also speaking to your cameraman about the shots you want beforehand will give him or her time to prepare. It may be that you will need props, staging or lighting to get the footage you want. The more time and thought you put into this, the less stress you will have when doing the actual filming.

Once you have your studio footage it can then be edited. If you also have some good quality live footage you can edit the different footage together giving you the feel of a live show combined with the quality footage shot in a studio setting.

★ ★ ★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★ ★ ★

Organising and being the star of a film shoot can be a stressful job. If you can either employ or ask people for favours to fill the rolls of stage hand and director, this will help you with concentrating on looking your best for the footage.

As mentioned previously, if you are struggling for cash, try the local college, camera clubs, etc to see if they would be willing to do the filming or editing for free. You could also consider doing some of the work yourself. Whilst filming yourself is almost always ill advised, looking after your own editing is much more realistic. If you are technically minded and have access to a decent computer and editing software, then as a cheaper option, editing your own promo could make sense.

Whether doing it yourself or getting someone else to do it, during the editing process some points to think about are:

- **Length of the video – Don't fall into the trap of making an overly long promo. The idea of your promo video is to give the client a taste of your act and nothing more. I recommend three minutes as an absolute maximum length. (Think about movie trailers and TV commercials).**
- **Full show reels – As your promo will be quite short, it's worth considering a show reel of your whole act in case some clients ask for it.**
- **Contact details – It's worth having at least two versions of the promo. One with your contact details and one with no contact details, so agents can show your video to their clients without fear of the client contacting you directly and gazumping them out of their commission. If you have one or two very regular agents, it may be worth having a version of the video cut with their contact details on them. This will not only help you get gigs through that agent, but also cement the relationship that you have with them.**
- **Over editing – There is no need whatsoever to get too complicated with the amount of editing on a show reel. Whilst you do want your act to look good, too**



much editing can spoil the video and risks putting potential clients off.

- Put yourself in the client's shoes – This is a great one, for all the publicity and marketing that you do. If possible try and step away from both your ego and your insider knowledge of the industry and see things from your customers eyes. This is impossible to do completely, but hopefully it will give you another perspective on creating videos and other materials.
- Use of music – If the music used is copyrighted, then it might get taken down from YouTube. Don't use heavy metal because you happen to like it. Think reasonably inoffensive, although obviously this depends on the act to some extent.



Pros of Videos

- Extremely powerful marketing tool.
- If you get lucky, videos can go viral (explode over the web) via YouTube etc.
- Video has the potential for a huge ROI in both time and financial investment.
- As technology moves forward it is becoming increasingly easy to distribute videos.



Cons of Videos

- If your act is constantly improving, video footage can feel dated quite quickly.
- Video is only any use if you can get it in front of your potential clients.
- It's not as easy to distribute as photos, although this is becoming less and less of an issue.

MARKETING COPY

(Marketing copy is any text used to sell or promote your act.)

Marketing copy has been undervalued by many parts of the performing and entertainment industry. I have observed that many performers pay scrupulous attention to their photos and videos, only to then put these materials next to some badly written copy.

I want to be clear on this one; copy writing is a very important and very powerful part of your marketing toolbox. Not only is it powerful in itself, it will also help you to stand out from the competition if done well.

★ ★ ★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★ ★ ★

As well as copywriting being great for converting enquiries into sales, it's also a big part of driving visitors to your website through search engines....More on this later in the book.

The most common error people make when writing copy is to talk about themselves rather than addressing the client. If you take the title of this book as an example “How to Sell Your Act”. This title is clearly talking straight to any of my potential customers. Not only is it doing so, it is also offering to solve a problem that they may have.

From a performance or entertainment aspect, we could say:

“Looking for unique entertainers?”

This line will instantly feel much more welcoming than:

“We offer unique entertainers”

The difference may appear quite subtle, but there is no doubt it is a powerful one. As I mentioned before, another powerful technique is offering to solve a client's problem, whilst communicating with them. If you were a self employed plumber (to think outside the box for a second), you could use lines or web-page headers such as:

Got a leak? Looking for an emergency plumber?

This problem is very simple to identify and then selling a solution can follow very naturally.

For us, as entertainers, it's not so simple. Most of our clients don't have such serious or easily identifiable problems when they are looking for acts. One exception is when they have been let down by another performer and are in a huge and frantic rush to find a replacement. However, as general rule the only problem they have is finding good quality performers at a price they are willing to pay.

The reason we are looking to identify a potential client's problems is that the solution (to their problems) could be booking your act. Once you have asked a question, such as ‘looking for unique entertainers?’ you can then offer one or more solutions to their problem. Typically a variety of acts that you sell, packaged in a way that will instantly appeal to them. If you hit the nail on the head with the copy, you have made a big step towards a sale. Thinking in terms of “problems” and “solutions” is a useful method for approaching writing copy.

Another good way to think about writing sales copy is to focus on benefits you can offer a client, rather than the features of your act. When first writing sales copy, it is perfectly natural to create a of list features you have to offer. However, from the



customer's point of view this isn't very attention grabbing. What they want to hear is what benefits you can offer to them and whatever it is they are planning. So when writing your copy, speak directly to the client, offer solutions to their problems and highlight the benefits you can bring to their event.

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

When writing copy, use the words "you" and "yours" more, and the words "we," "us," and "ours," less.

Once you have hit them with some well written copy, you can then direct them towards some more publicity material, such as image galleries, videos, testimonials, etc, or you can keep the momentum going with a strong call to action (CTA).

A good call to action is a hugely powerful copywriting technique that can instantly turn a browser into an enquiry and then hopefully a converted sale. What is a call to action? It is a paragraph, phrase or sentence that directs the potential client to carry out a certain action. Typically this includes buying or enquiring about a product on offer. I guarantee you this, if you have bought anything online you will have experienced, probably without noticing it, the power of CTA's. Some of these are so glaringly obvious that they just slip right under the radar:

Proceed to checkout...

Buy now...

Contact us now...

Get in touch...

It's worth noting at this point that CTA's don't always nudge you towards making a purchase or an enquiry. They can often be directing you to take an action, which somewhere further down the line, will lead to a more direct CTA, calling you to purchase or enquire. For example, CTA's are often used to get you to sign up for HTML newsletters (see the internet marketing chapter).

E.g. Fill in your details below to receive our newsletter.....

Even directing your customers to watch a video or browse your galleries is a CTA. So, whilst it's clear that CTA's can be used directly to drive a sale or enquiry, they can also be used to drive a client towards some more publicity material that will then nudge them to a sale.

If they are reading your business card or flier you can use a CTA to send them to your website, as an indirect CTA. Or you can direct them to call you for a chat about bookings etc.



I strongly recommend having CTA's on all your print publicity plus your websites and videos. If you want more information on CTA's, then subscribe to my blog and news letter.....I hope you all noticed what I did there??????

The final topic within copywriting that I want to touch on is testimonials. Whilst not strictly speaking copywriting (as they will be written by other people), this is the most logical place to discuss them. As with CTA's, testimonials, when used correctly, are a great way to maximise the sales from your fliers, posters, websites etc. The reason testimonials are so powerful is because they create similar feelings of trust as a word of mouth referral, also known as social proof.

At this point, I want to bring ethics and good business sense into play once again. I don't recommend making up testimonials just to get sales. Making up testimonials is ethically very dubious. Fake testimonials also have the potential to look suspect to your customers. This can mean that your attempt to build trust will actually undermine it.

I recommend asking anyone before you use their comments as a testimonial. A performer I have worked with writes down whatever the client has said at the end of the gig and uses it as a testimonial. This doesn't sit right with me and I certainly wouldn't do it myself.

As discussed, testimonials can create similar feelings of trust to those experienced by a customer who has been referred to you by word of mouth. For most performers this is a big bonus as word of mouth is restricted when you are performing over a wide area.

You can use testimonials in a variety of ways and I suggest you consider them all:

- **Putting a testimonial on every page of your website.**
- **Having a page of testimonials on your site.**
- **Putting testimonials on your fliers and print publicity.**
- **Putting one or two testimonials on your email signature.**
- **As you collect new testimonials, you can use them on your HTML newsletters.**

In my experience, testimonials work very well if they are close to a direct CTA, this way just as the client has read about a happy customer, you encourage them to book your act.

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

If you can, either get your client to put some keywords in the testimonial or tweak it a little yourself, so it will help you achieve great rankings in Google. (See internet marketing chapters for more info).



Lists of previous clients are another kind of publicity material which is sometimes made use of. I have seen quite a few acts use these lists on their websites. Whilst I can see some value in this, previous client lists often leave me less than impressed. The lists can look a bit desperate sometimes, if a client has some insider knowledge this is even more so. I have often, for example, seen performers put having performed at Glastonbury Festival on their lists. To someone with little knowledge this may seem like a huge and impressive booking, putting them up there with some of the biggest bands in the world. However anyone who knows much about the entertainment and performance industry will be aware that festivals are happy to book performers in exchange for free tickets...Not exactly the VIP gig the act might be hoping to suggest.

I much prefer testimonials to previous clients lists, however not everyone agrees, so if you are going to use one then:

- **Make sure it is honest. If you have worked through an agency or a different entertainment company, they may not be too happy with you using what is actually their previous client not yours.**
- **Avoid looking like you are trying too hard to impress. A list of hundreds of clients is both pointless and a bit too much in my eyes.**
- **Make use of the big name clients, maybe just select a few and give short case studies of what you did for them instead of long bland lists.**



Pros of Marketing Copy

- Very powerful selling technique.
- Very often overlooked by other performers which can give your act the edge.
- If you do it yourself it costs nothing.
- Great potential ROI.



Cons of Marketing Copy

- There are none...Just study it and use it for great results!

BUSINESS CARDS AND FLIERS

Business cards

Business cards and fliers used to be the bread and butter of selling entertainment acts. However, as time and technology move on, they are becoming less significant in the overall scheme of things.

The first thing I would say about business cards is that they are most definitely a numbers game. When I first started in the industry, I assumed that almost every card I handed out would get me a gig, or at the very least an enquiry. From years of experience, I now know that this is far from true.

In reality, business cards are often more useful in maintaining contact with existing clients, work colleagues, etc. The cards are a great way of swapping contact details, especially if you are in a rush, but very rarely seem to generate gigs. Me and the guys that work for me have handed out thousands of business cards over the years. Whilst it's difficult to accurately monitor the ROI, what I can say is that it's very rare that someone contacts me saying they have my business card and want to make a booking.

That said having well designed business cards with your full contact details, maybe a nice photo and your act name, branding and logo, is a vital tool in the box. I always have them on me and hand them out at the slightest hint of interest in my act.

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

Unless the person you are dealing with asks for a few cards **JUST GIVE THEM ONE CARD!!!!**...Lots of performers have approached me for work and then given me a small handful of cards. It seems like they have ordered too many and just want to get rid of them. When I get home and open my wallet, I look at all the cards and very often they all go in the recycling bin.....It feels desperate and needy so don't do it!

Fliers

When it comes to fliers, the approach is slightly different. When most people express an interest in my act I would usually give them a business card, as it fits neatly into a wallet, purse or pocket with little effort. There are some exceptions to this however. At trade fairs for example, people are expecting to receive lots of publicity material and therefore will happily take a flier and a business card as well.

Another great way to make use of fliers is in places where your potential clients may be lingering. If for example you are a podium dancer or break dancer, you could try

and get your fliers in a record shop. That way DJ's and promoters might just pick up a flier and give you a call. Another option would be to get some fliers in venues that you have a good relationship with. If you have done some good work at a party or event venue for example. Why not see if the in-house event organiser will give your fliers out to some of his or her clients?

I would like to point out at this stage that whilst all of the print marketing techniques are worth considering, there are much more powerful techniques that will reap you a much better ROI. The thing you need to do is decide which methods are best suited for your act and budget, before fully committing yourself.

BANNERS AND POSTERS

Banners and posters can be a great way to promote yourself, but it definitely depends on what type of act you have and what type of venues you perform in. A lot of bands and singers use banners when they are doing live gigs for example, however a walkabout magician wouldn't have much use for a banner whilst performing.

Another good place to use banners is trade fairs, you can get horizontal and vertical banners designed and printed fairly cheaply online. So if you are thinking about trade fairs they are definitely worth investing in.

A good example of where to use posters – In the UK, anyone wanting to get married, has to go to a registry office to arrange licenses etc. I went around these offices, in my area, putting out fliers and posters specifically targeted at wedding entertainment. Whilst this did take up a lot of time, it was definitely worth the effort. You could try this yourself if you want to target weddings, or think of similar places for other types of event. Maybe your local council's event department deals with lots of production companies (as they apply for their event license) and you could ask them if they would put up a poster or two.

Whilst I certainly wouldn't recommend using posters and banners as the crux of any act's marketing campaign, I would suggest you at least consider using them. Get creative, you might stumble across some clever idea that no-one else has thought of, and then you're in a very strong position.



Pros of Printed Publicity

- Relatively low financial investment.
- Easy to distribute face to face.



Cons of Printed Publicity

- Printed publicity material doesn't offer the best ROI.
- Print publicity is becoming more and more out of date as technology moves on.
- It's a numbers game; you have to give out a lot of fliers or cards to generate any work.

WEBSITES

Websites are an area that I am very fond of and also the area where I have the most amount of skill, knowledge and experience. I have written much more on internet marketing further in the book. I go in depth into websites and the marketing advantages they have. For now, all I want to say is if you don't have a website, you need one. If you do have one, it's likely that you need to promote it more.

What is vital for you to understand is that internet marketing (through websites) is a hugely important part of your campaign. I can't emphasise this strongly enough; a well designed, well promoted website will be the most powerful single piece of equipment in your marketing tool box.

(I think I like the tool box metaphors so much because I was an electrician for many years. Whilst I didn't really like the job, I did, and still do, love having a good tool box).



Pros of Websites

- The single most powerful marketing tool available to you.
- Huge potential ROI.
- As the reach and power of the web increases so will the power of good websites.
- Allows you to target event organisers directly.
- Very easy to target specific niche markets.



Cons of Websites

- High potential start up costs.
- To use websites to their full effect takes a lot of time or cash investment.



A FINAL NOTE – DON'T STRESS THE DETAILS (PERFECTIONISM!)

If you tend to be a perfectionist, now is the time to try and let go of that habit. It is too easy to stress over tiny details whilst getting very little done. Perfectionism is an admirable trait whilst crafting an act. When you are selling an act however, it is much more valuable to get good publicity material to lots of people, than to create perfect publicity material which very few people get to see.

In most cases, marketing is a numbers game, the more people that become aware of you, the more times you will get booked. It also important to remember that whilst you may be stressing over one tiny piece of copywriting, your competition could be having a nice chat with an agent and building up a good long term working relationship.

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

Note to the slackers amongst you....Avoiding perfectionism is not an excuse for doing a bad job, like all things in life there is balance to be struck here.

A good example of this is in the video below. I sent the link to one of my web guys and he suggested adding it to the signature of my emails. Because it wasn't a great quality video and had only a very limited amount of juggling in it I wasn't sure. He advised me to use the anchor text below (anchor text is the words used to describe a link) to ease my concerns:

[A teaser YouTube video to warm you up.](#)

This way, clients got the idea it was just an informal clip and the response has been great. People love the video and it has definitely increased my sales. If I had been too much of a perfectionist about this, it wouldn't have ever been seen by my clients and I would have definitely lost out on work.



TRADITIONAL FORMS OF SELLING ACTS



Before the explosion of internet marketing, there was for a long time some traditional and very successful types of marketing for performers. A lot of these methods are still relevant and can be of great use today....

TRADE FAIRS

Trade fairs can be a great opportunity for acts to meet lots of highly targeted potential clients. The most commonly known example is wedding fairs, but there are a wide variety of other event fairs. Take a good look around Google and you will find some local events to go and investigate.

My personal recommendation would be to visit a few of the fairs as a guest, before you even think about paying to have a stall at one. There will be lots of old hands at these events who make a great living from them and it's well worth picking up a few tips from the pros before you jump in feet first.

It is also well worth the effort of researching which events have the most potential for you and your act. To maximise the ROI of trade fairs, it's vital you make sure the fairs are as close to your target market as possible. The quality of trade fairs varies dramatically and the size of the fee is not always a clear indicator of this. For a trade fair to be of any use to you, the organisers need to be highly motivated at getting lots of highly targeted potential customers to the event.

★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

To see if a particular fair will be suitable for you, have a good look at their website. Often, organisers will announce who is selling at the event. You might be able to contact some of these other advertisers for their opinions. I have found that vendors in the same industry who aren't direct competitors can be a great source of help, advice and win-win marketing opportunities.

Once you have found some suitable events it's time to get your kit together. As a minimum I would suggest:

- **At least one laptop with your promo DVD.**
- **Plenty of fliers and business cards, preferably in nice looking holders.**
- **Some sort of freebie to get the guests attention....Chocolates are always popular.**
- **The venue should provide tables and chairs, but I recommend making sure of this beforehand.**



TRADITIONAL FORMS OF SELLING ACTS

- Banners and posters to put up around your stall.
- A registration of interest form – make sure you get the contact details and email addresses of anyone willing to provide them.

You could also think about:

- Corporate clothing with your act's name and logo.
- A plasma screen to watch your promo show reel on.
- Some sort of special offer if they sign up there and then.

If you start to do well from trade fairs, there are many purpose built displays with customised branding, etc to really help you stand out from the crowd. However, at the beginning, as long as you look respectable and well organised, I think the customers don't expect too much more. The main thing is to remain enthusiastic and approachable throughout the event. (This is a lot harder than it may sound!). The biggest asset you have, as a performer at these events, is your passion for what you do and the ability to get that across to the customers.

Second to that of course is the ability to haggle and negotiate a good deal for both yourself and your prospective client. I recommend asking all the people who enquire to mention that particular trade fair in future communications (possibly in return for a small discount). This is a very effective way of figuring out if this particular fair was worth the investment in time and money.



Pros of Trade Fairs

- A great way to have face to face conversations with lots of highly targeted clients.
- If you get it right, the ROI can be very reasonable (if a little time heavy).
- A great place to network with other people in your industry.
- Great if you are a good people person.



Cons of Trade Fairs

- It can take up a lot of your free time.
- The start up costs whilst not prohibitive may be a bit restrictive if you are on a low budget.
- Not great if you aren't a good people person.



★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

If you are on a tight budget, offer to perform throughout the event in return for free advertising. You need to make sure you have someone there to hand out fliers whilst you are doing your stuff, but it has the potential to be a win-win situation for you and the event organiser.

PRINT MARKETING

Magazine and newspaper advertising

At one stage in my career I really wanted to decrease the amount of miles I was travelling to and from gigs. I did some experimentation, and one of the things I tried was to advertise in a local wedding magazine. I picked a good quality magazine with a wide spread of readers over my local region. Next I stumped up a small fortune for a well designed full page ad with great photos and copy. Finally I put a special offer in the ad. I did this for two reasons....

1. **To entice as many readers as possible to get on the phone and book a show.**
2. **So I could track the effectiveness of the ad. For the readers to take advantage of the special offer, they had to mention the magazine ad. This would give me a great idea of how it was working from an ROI perspective.**

Anyway, to cut a long story short, I got one enquiry and no work from it whatsoever! I don't look at the money as being wasted, I do however look at this as a very expensive lesson that I clearly needed to learn. I did everything right, weddings were my absolute speciality niche and still I lost a lot of money. If I had invested that same amount of cash in PPC (pay per click, internet marketing), I know from my stats that I would have generated a huge amount of work.



Pros of Trade Fairs

- If you can find a way to make this work, it does have the potential to help you target a great niche market.



Cons of Trade Fairs

- The ROI rates have the potential to be horrendous.
- It can take a lot of time, as well as money to get this even close to be financially rewarding.

HAGGLING AND PRICING AS MARKETING TOOLS

Free or heavily discounted gigs

In my experience whenever you get potential clients (usually charities), asking for free or heavily discounted performances, they will make some sort of offer in return. They often explain that the local or national press and radio will be there. The truth of the matter is, that even if you get your name and photo in a newspaper, or are interviewed by a local Radio station, the chance of this leading to a paid gig is almost zero. The only time I agree to do a free or heavily discounted gig is if I really believe in the work a charity is doing, or if I have a new act or show that I want to try out.

If you are doing either a free or very cheap gig, then I would strongly suggest trying to get as many of the requirements on the list below verbally agreed or if possible contracted into the booking.

- **Free and unlimited access to use to any footage of your act and the event in general.**
- **Free high-res copies of any good photos. (You could even negotiate a short on-site photo shoot from the client's photographers as part of the contract/fee).**
- **All food, travel and accommodation expenses paid.**
- **One or more testimonials from the highest profile member of your client's teams.**
- **The opportunity to hand out your business card, fliers, etc where appropriate.**
- **The option of using banners, posters and fliers to help promote your act.**

If an event organiser is looking for a good deal and is also willing to help you out in return, a win-win situation is a great potential outcome.

A quick note on win-win decision making and outcomes

An occasional part of marketing and selling your act will involve negotiating with your clients and doing the odd deal. If you remain as assertive as possible through these negotiations then a win-win outcome is always possible. It's a great feeling when you have sold the customer a good deal and both parties come away feeling satisfied with their side of the bargain.

Haggling is a classic example of this. It is well worth putting a bit of room for manoeuvre into the prices that you charge. Lots of people love the process of getting a bargain, and often the person you are dealing with doesn't control the budget. If the person making the enquiry can tell the person with the money, that they have managed to haggle you down a bit on price and you get a booking at a fee you are happy with, you have just successfully negotiated a win-win deal.



TRADITIONAL FORMS OF SELLING ACTS

★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

Always bear in mind that for a lot of customers the fact that they feel like they got a good deal is more important than the actual size of the fee itself!! This is a weird one to get your head round. I think lots of people are more interested in their egos than their budgets when it comes to haggling.

The flip side of this one is that some acts prefer not to haggle. They are trying to make the statement that they are so busy (due to the quality of their act) that they don't need to haggle, thus creating more desirability with the potential client. I am very wary of this angle! While it may work for some very successful acts, I have dealt with some very exclusive event organisers and they are often the most keen to get a reduction in price.

My take on haggling and negotiations is that when used sparingly and with an assertive win-win approach they can be a great way to sell your act, and often beat the competition to sealing the deal.



Pros of Haggling

- Very powerful technique, especially on the phone or in face to face negotiations.
- If you are in a competitive market, the ability to haggle well is a vital part of surviving and thriving.
- Helps your client to think they are getting a special deal and that you are the type of act that likes to cooperate.



Cons of Haggling

- If you get pushed too hard you may end up doing a gig for less money than you would want.
- If you don't get it right, you can look a bit desperate for work, which is never a good thing as it suggests you are no good! People can also expect a cheap booking every time.

★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

If you do ever drop your price ALWAYS tell the client what you are doing and then give them a reason why you are doing so. E.g. – to build up a good relationship with the client, it's a quiet time of year, etc. (Big thanks to Jem Famous for that one!).



ENTERTAINMENT AGENTS



Entertainment agents of various types have historically been the main way for many performing artists and entertainers to get their work. As the power of internet marketing grows this is changing slightly as more performers sell their act directly to their customers. However, this change isn't huge and getting one or more regular agents on your side, who are frequently getting you good quality gigs and handling a lot of your bookings, should definitely be a long term goal for you and your act.

Entertainment agents fall into two main categories, booking agents and sole representation agents. Different industries usually favour one of the two categories. As this book is about taking responsibility for your own marketing, I will focus on booking agents. However, it is well worth having a good look at both types of agent, as once you get really busy, a good agent handling all your bookings is worth their weight in gold.

The main difference between the two is that when you are on the books with an agent as sole representation, any work that you do must go through this agent. Typically in this type of relationship the agent will be actively trying to get you gigs, sending you to auditions and taking responsibility for most of your marketing and publicity.

With booking agents, they get you gigs, as and when they can, there is no obligation on either part, and both parties can work with other performers and agents. If they like you they will hopefully push you hard to their clients, but the majority of your marketing will still fall into your own hands.

Note – Booking agents is a generic term that I've used to describe this type of agent, but they may be referred to in a variety of other ways. The main point is that they sell acts in a non-exclusive format. It's also worth noting that some agents fall into both categories as they have some acts on exclusive contracts and some on non exclusive contracts.

BOOKING AGENTS

A quick look on Google will reveal just how many entertainment booking agents that there are. My guess is you will be surprised at how many there are out there and how varied their business models are. Many offer anything that falls under the entertainment and event industry umbrella – From sound and lighting rigs to belly dancers and camel handlers!

Others focus on a niche type of market or entertainment type. For example some agencies focus purely on circus performers and others focus just on weddings or corporate events. In my experience the niche agencies are much easier to get work from, but don't rule out the bigger all encompassing agencies as they will have a huge customer base.



It can be very difficult to get an agent even slightly interested in looking at your act, let alone getting you lots of well paid gigs. One reason for this is almost every agent under the sun gets bombarded with hundreds of acts looking for work. Typically, the agent will have a regular group of acts that they like, trust and have worked with in the past. Becoming a part of this select few is quite tricky and can often be down to nothing more than good luck and obstinate persistence, also known as the “Long Wait”! More on this later....

As you start looking for agents to sell your act, there are two initial questions you need to ask yourself:

- 1. Is a particular agent suitable for you and your act?**
- 2. Is your act suitable for that particular agent?**

Both of these questions can then be broken down into smaller sections. The reason I would encourage you to ask these questions is due to the level of difficulty in getting agents to sell your act. Focusing on agents that you think are a good match for your act will help you be as efficient as possible, thus increasing the ROI of your efforts.

Is the agent suitable for you and your act?

The first thing to consider here is, as with all clients, do they look trustworthy? Whilst most agents work to a high level of ethics, there are sadly others who use dubious and downright dodgy tactics in order to make a living.

Unfortunately it is very tricky to figure out if an agent is trustworthy, but some good points to consider would be:

- **Does the agent’s website have a landline and postal address?**
- **Does the site look professional and well established – Do you get the feeling they are in this for the long term?**
- **Does the site have lots of testimonials from happy customers?**
- **Do you know or recognise any of the acts on their books?**
- **Can you speak to some other performers and see if they know anything about them?**
- **Are they a member of a professional body?**
- **Try Googling the agent’s company name and seeing if anyone has written anything good or bad about them online.**

All of the above, plus a healthy dose of gut instinct should keep you away from the sharks as much as possible. Please don’t stress this point too much, as most agents are a great addition to your business. Just be aware of the dodgy ones and if you ever get treated badly make sure you spread the word to your fellow performers.



The next question to ask yourself is what markets do they appear to be targeting, or operating in? Earlier on we discussed the various markets and how it's valuable to know where you want to aim for. So if an agent is targeting one or more of the areas you want to work in, then this is clearly a good sign.

Does this particular agent sell the same or similar types of acts? – This is a funny one. Sometimes an agent that sells acts similar to yours will always be keen to have more of the same, as they have plenty of opportunities to sell these acts. Other agents may have lots of similar acts on their website (often to make it look good) but then only regularly use one or two of these acts. As you start looking at and then contacting agents you will get a feel for this, so once again don't stress it, just be aware of it.

If the agent you are interested in has nothing like your act, this can be a great opportunity for you. Even if the reason for this is that they never get asked for such an act, it's well worth getting in touch with them. If you impress them enough, they may just take you on and start trying to either hit new markets for their agency, or convince their existing clients that your act would be a great, new and exciting entertainment option to consider.

Is your act suitable for that particular agent?

The first question I would consider is one of quality. To answer this question, you need to be honest with yourself about the current quality of your act. There is no point wasting your time contacting agents who won't be interested in your act. Have a good look at the type and quality of acts on their website. If you feel you would fit in well with their business model and customer base then add them to your list.

It's worth bearing in mind that this quality issue works both ways; some agencies may feel your act isn't of a high enough quality for their clients. On the other hand, if you have a high class, expensive act, some agents won't have the right type of customers and whilst they may use your publicity on their site, the chances of them getting you a gig are almost zero.

Another good point to consider is what areas do they work and sell in. Some agencies specialise in selling local entertainers. If you are trying to reduce your travel times, these can be a great way forward. Other agencies will work nationwide and internationally, so try to figure this out from their website before you decide to contact them.

As you are doing your research, I suggest building up a list of agents that you think are suitable for your act. Due to the difficult task ahead, I recommend making the list fairly long and comprehensive. The way I did this was to create folders for different types of agent in my internet favourites, but you may want to create a document with notes on the pros & cons of each agency. It's advisable to try different types of agency,

specialist agents as well as the larger agencies. As you contact the different types of agents, patterns of behaviour and success levels should emerge. You can use these patterns to further refine your approach for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

CONTACTING AGENTS

Now you have a list of various types of agents it's time to get in touch with them. Many agents have artist's registration web-pages, with either a dedicated email address or a registration form. If they do, you should use these, as this is a clear indication that they don't want their enquiries inbox filling up with performers details.

Whether you are filling in a registration form, or emailing an agent, I recommend being brief and to the point. Not only are most agents too busy to read long emails, it will also save you time, as the chances are you will be repeating this process many times. Always try to put yourself in the mind of the clients you are contacting, agents are usually working under pressure and get way more artist applications than they need. This, like most types of marketing, is a numbers game, so get straight to the point. You can at a later date send them some additional information, with more details of your act etc. However initially, all they will want is a quick act description, a couple of photos and a video link.

With all copy writing, as previously discussed, it's important to show benefits to your potential clients. With agents this can include:

- A good quality act.
- A high standard of professionalism.
- A high level of integrity. (Agents often feel in a vulnerable position as it's easy for performers to try to steal their contacts).
- A flexible and efficient approach to working alongside the agent.

At this point, I just want to mention a list of things that almost all agents definitely don't want. Having been contacted by many performers myself I've seen this stuff first hand and it is often an instant turn off.

- A long, rambling, badly constructed email.
- A large number and variety of photos.
- Anyone who approaches with the attitude of "I am the best thing since sliced bread and you are obliged to give me work....You should also bask in my general awesome-ness".
- A video of you in a car park, wearing jogging bottoms, torso on display, spinning a fire staff very badly whilst being filmed on a mobile phone by your young and wobbly handed girl friend....I kid you not, and yes this guy also fell into the mistake directly above...Bless!



What can we learn from these misguided attempts at generating work for yourself?... There is a very clear line between selling yourself (preferably through the means of adding potential benefit) and boasting. Try to avoid this at all costs, especially with agents, as they have seen it all before.

Also it is vitally important that you get the quality of your publicity up to (at the very least) an acceptable level for the type of agents you are contacting.

Face to face meetings and contact over the phone

Contacting agents via email or through an online application form can work. However, a face to face meeting or a phone call can be a much more powerful way to contact an agent. The plus side of this is you get the chance to build a more personal relationship with the client; you can easily and quickly answer any questions they may have. Also you are much more difficult to ignore or put to the bottom of the “to do list”. The down side to this approach is you may catch an agent at a bad time, or just get told to send in an email instead.

My suggestion would be to try all three techniques and see which works best for you. If you find some agents that feel suitable to you then why not try contacting a few and asking if you can pop in for a chat. Try phoning some others up, asking if they have time for a brief conversation and see how you get on. In almost all cases, whether you have contacted them by phone, enquiry form, email or a direct meeting, I would use a follow up email asking if there is anything else you can do to help them sell your act.

THE LONG WAIT...

One thing I have learnt over the years of contacting hundreds of agents is to be patient. Very often you are waiting for a lucky moment when one of their regular acts isn't available, or one of their clients asks for something new. If you are lucky the agent will remember your email and get in touch. This may sound like a long shot but up to two years after I have contacted agents they have got back to me and offered some work!

A great way of keeping yourself fresh in an agents mind is to save their email addresses and put them on your mailing list. Then when you send out your HTML emailers (also known as newsletters), you are increasing your chance of getting lucky or being remembered. I have had agents thank me for keeping in touch in this way and after a few mail-outs they have found time to get back in touch and discuss getting me work.



WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU GET A GOOD RESPONSE?

If you get a good response from an agent it's really important to strike while the iron is hot. As previously discussed it can be really difficult to get good agents on board so now is not the time to get slack. All agents will really appreciate you being very easy to get hold of and having easily distributed, agent friendly, publicity. I will often give an agent a special one off price to seal the deal. As long as you let them know you are doing this as a favour so they can experience working with you, it is then totally cool to raise your price for future gigs.

★★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★★★

When you do get a good agent on board, it is important to not only behave ethically, but also to be seen as doing so. Most agents will keep an eye on their new acts and some even use colleagues or clients in the business to test them and see how they behave (if they give out their own cards etc). A good agent is worth their weight in gold, so irrespective of the ethics, it just makes good business sense to be honest and fair.



Pros of Entertainment Agents

- A great way to get regular gigs relatively easily.
- An easy way to target a specific part of the industry.
- Agents handle the dealings with the clients which in theory will free up your time.
- Lots of clients prefer dealing with an agency.



Cons of Entertainment Agents

- Getting agents on-board is rarely easy.
- Relying too much on a certain agent can be risky. If they stop using you for whatever reason, your gigs can disappear overnight.
- Lots of clients prefer to deal with performers directly.



**TV AND TV
TALENT ★ ★
SHOWS**



TV TALENT SHOWS

The most obvious example of TV talent shows are the “Some-where’s got Talent” productions, created by Simon Cowell and now screened in most countries worldwide. These shows are huge all over the world and thousands of acts have applied and appeared on them over the last few years. There are also many similar programs, with the same format of a panel of judges and a live audience. Often with the TV audience voting to decide who wins in the latter stages of the show.

For me personally there a lot of things that are wrong with these shows, and I don’t for one minute recommend the majority of acts puts more than a fraction of their overall marketing energies into this type of show. Firstly, if I go through all the reasons why I don’t like these shows, then I can more easily explain the exceptions where I think it may be worthwhile entering.

My first issue with this type of show is an ethical one. I just find it distasteful that multi-millionaires see fit to use cruel verbal attacks to destroy the dreams of the contestants. This attacking is often done simply to further their own celebrity status and provide cheap entertainment. It is, in my opinion, very close to bullying and something I have no desire to be involved with. The excuse (often put forward) that it is just a part of the show and no harm is meant doesn’t wash with me. I have no doubt that many of the contestants leave the show feeling totally crushed by the experience.

I also have qualms about the fact that these shows sell, promote and encourage to the contestants and viewers, the dream of a celebrity lifestyle as some sort of realistic, achievable and worthwhile goal. Whilst in fact, only a tiny fraction of the contestants will get anywhere near this level of success. Even if they do, I would be willing to bet, that it’s not the Shangri-La experience they hoped for, when they queued up for the initial auditions. It’s mainly for these reasons, that whenever these shows contact me to ask if I would like to audition, I turn them down.

★★★ TIM’S TOP TIPS ★★★

It’s worth noting that if you get your marketing and publicity right, then these shows may well contact you rather than the other way round. If they do contact you directly, this means they want your act for a reason, which gives you some bargaining power to avoid queues, cheesy montages, family sob stories, etc.

So, rant over regarding my personal opinions on the ethics of these shows!.....Let’s look at this from a cool calm business angle. What potential do they offer you and at what cost?



TV AND TV TALENT SHOWS

The best potential you could hope for is to win, if this happens you will probably be swept up by a huge entertainment company and do very well for yourself. So, if you think your act is that good and you are willing to change it dramatically along the way to make it fit the formula dictated to you, then go for it. I wish you all the luck in the world. If you do win one of these shows, please let me know your experiences so I can pass them on to all my readers.

A much more realistic goal would be to get into the finals, semi finals or quarter finals. This will definitely be a great learning experience, and once you get to this level “As seen on some-where’s got talent” will be a powerful piece of publicity material. You may also get some great viral publicity via the likes of YouTube, Facebook, etc. However even to get to this stage of a TV talent show requires a large amount of unpaid time, luck and dedication. My advice would be to study very carefully the type and quality of acts that get to this stage before committing a large amount of time to this goal.

Remember, if you choose not to go down this route, you will have a lot more available time and energy to apply to the marketing tools in this book. They may not offer a glittery, dream-like existence at the end of them. However they do come with a proven track record of results. They also offer worthwhile goals such as artistic integrity, well paid gigs and the freedom of being your own boss.

What are the possible pitfalls of entering the TV talent shows? Most obviously is the fact that the majority of acts get nowhere in the competition. In fact they don’t even make it onto the TV and therefore from a marketing point of view it’s a complete waste of time.

Another obvious pitfall is that if, for whatever reason, you have a bad day, (maybe the judges are in a bad mood, you aren’t at your best, etc) and your act gets verbally assaulted on TV in front of millions of people... Needless to say, this could ruin your act for ever.



Pros of TV Talent Shows

- These shows have the potential to push an act to the highest levels of superstardom possible.
- Can create some viral buzz around an act.
- You may be able to use some of the footage for your publicity.
- If you do well on the show, it will help your marketing and publicity campaigns.
- If you are a singer, these shows offer much more potential.



Cons of TV Talent Shows

- If you are lucky enough to progress past the first or second stages, they will expect you to dramatically alter your act to give it more of the usual, lowest common denominator “WOW” factor.
- If you have a bad day on your audition, it could seriously damage the reputation of you and your act through no fault of your own. Let’s face it we all have off days!
- Entering these shows has the potential to be a huge waste of time and at worst cause you lots of pain and embarrassment.
- Being associated with one of these shows can put certain clients off due to their mainstream nature.

TV APPEARANCES

I have, over the years, had many enquiries from TV companies wanting fire performers, for a variety of reasons. Often I get enquires from reality TV shows looking for “interesting “ or “alternative” types to appear on their show. The other sort of enquiry I get is from TV producers wanting fire performers as part of the grand finale to end a show or series.

My advice would be to look at these enquires as nothing more than another paid gig. Colleagues of mine did a live fire performance on a prime time celebrity reality show, on one of the biggest terrestrial channels in the UK. Not only did they not get any work from it, they also didn’t generate a single new enquiry.

So if TV companies and producers try to get you to reduce your fee in return for great publicity, then in my opinion the best thing to do is hold firm on your pricing. In fact, due to the nature of TV and the likelihood that a TV booking will take up a lot more time than a normal gig, I would strongly suggest that you consider increasing your prices to make up for the extra hassle.



Pros of TV Appearances

- Potential for huge exposure. This potential is no-where near as guaranteed as you may think (and TV producers would like you to believe), however you would be foolish not to at least consider a TV gig for this one point alone.

Continued...



Pros of TV Appearances

- Possibility of some great footage for a promo video or to use for viral promotion on YouTube.
- A testimonial from a TV company or having worked for one can open doors. Many potential clients will be blinded by the bright lights of television (just as many acts are) and whilst not a sign of quality, TV work can give the impression of being a world class act....In other words it looks good on the CV.
- A TV gig could be a nice interesting well paid gig.



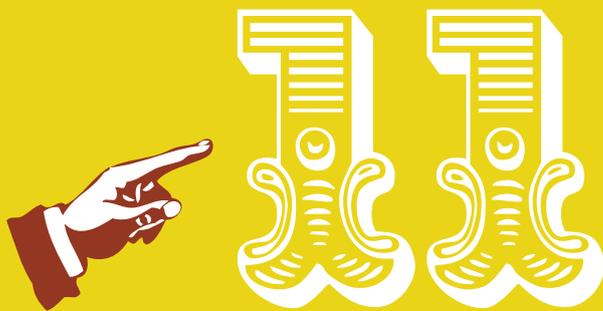
Cons of TV Appearances

- Very often TV producers work last minute; they expect you to drop everything for auditions or rehearsals.
- They will always tell you it's good publicity (often as they try to reduce your fee, re-negotiate a deal or get you to do lots more work for no more money). In both my experience and observation TV work rarely leads to more gigs.
- TV companies will very often haggle harder than almost anyone else you come across. They are also more likely to lead you on than other clients, letting you think you have been given the gig when in reality you are on a reserve-list behind two or three other acts. Remember TV companies have lots of very low paid members of staff, very keen to move up the ladder and willing to work very hard just to get what the company/boss wants!
- Another really annoying and time wasting thing that TV people like to do is get everyone on-site way before they need to, and then think they are really nice by offering you cups of tea! In TV land everything revolves around making sure the people at the top are very well looked after, which means that the people at the bottom have to suffer to facilitate this.
- I have noticed that TV companies will resist signing contracts for as long as possible, whilst continually moving the goalposts until they are happy with what they want. Most clients are willing to sign a contract and then negotiate on the smaller details at a later date, but this seems to almost never happen with TV companies.



A FINAL POINT ABOUT ALL OF THE ABOVE

Whilst I realise that it may look like I am very anti TV people and the TV industry in general, I should say that I am sure there are reasons for their behaviour. TV production is very competitive industry, and I'm sure that most people work really hard. However, for me personally, the dynamics and ethics of the TV world are not why I got into performing, so I usually either dramatically increase my fee for a TV enquiry or more often than not, I pass it on to a colleague who wants the work. I certainly don't want to scare any acts away from TV work as it has the potential to make you huge, just please be aware of the pitfalls, so you can protect yourself.



**INTERNET
MARKETING
★ ★ WEBSITES**



★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

As you start carrying out internet campaigns, people selling marketing services may start to contact you. They often use technical terms and slick patter to try and lure you into buying some overpriced service with promises of untold success. Very, very, rarely in my opinion do these guys ever have something worthwhile and fair priced on offer. My advice would be to listen hard to what they are offering and how much it costs, with no intention of signing up to anything. Just use the experience to learn about marketing and if you think it's a worthwhile deal ask them to email details for consideration.

WEBSITES

Websites are definitely one the most important and powerful publicity tools available to you as performers and entertainers looking to get more work. Not only are they a useful resource when contacting agents, they are also great for generating direct enquires from event organisers, TV companies, agents, and the general public. In this day and age not only are websites essential, but also promoting them effectively is vitally important.

The classic mistake I have observed time and time again, by many performers, is having a website built and then doing little or no marketing on the site. The simple assumption that if you build a website it will get you work magically from nowhere, is just plain wrong.

Over the past five years I have seen more and more entertainers and agents becoming aware of the huge power of internet marketing. As this has happened, it has become increasingly difficult to get good results from SEO. It has also become more expensive to get good results from PPC advertising. However don't worry about this because I will teach you some great techniques and as long as you apply yourself, you will be well ahead of the majority of your competition.

Take this as a warning though, if you don't start seriously thinking about internet marketing as a large and vitally important part of your marketing strategy, you will make life much harder for yourself. If your direct competitors or an agent (who you don't work for) gets some nice juicy Google rankings then the longer you leave it, the harder it will be for you to catch them up. So, I strongly recommend that you apply some serious thought, effort and time to internet marketing or you could lose lots of potential work.....You have been warned!

Note – Internet marketing and SEO in particular can seem pretty intimidating if you are not very technically minded. Don't let this put you off. The basics are all you need to start with, and you can always find a geeky type like me to advise you. Throughout

the three internet marketing chapters I will put some basic tips for the non-techs amongst my readers. I am also happy to help with the most basic of questions via my website. For the technical obsessive's who are reading this, get stuck in and please try to challenge me with tricky tech queries, I will do my best to answer them in detail.

Reviewing an existing website

Before you start the process of internet marketing, you need to either have a website built or evaluate the quality and effectiveness of your existing site. If you already have a website you need to give it a review including:

- **Is it content managed? – I.e. do you have control over the images, meta-tags, pages, linking and copy within the site? (Content managed sites have a login, from which the site's owner can make alterations without writing complicated code).**
- **Is it performing well in Google? If it is then that's great. I would use the next section of this book to find areas where you can improve on your website's success. If it isn't performing well in Google, why not? (See below for more on this).**
- **Does the site look modern, professional and represent your act in a way you are happy with?**
- **Is this site set up to convert as many searchers as possible into clients and gigs? – Do you have great publicity material, CTA's, testimonials, easy to find contact details? Does this site flow well from a user's perspective?**

If the answer to many of these questions is no, then you need to either update your site or get a new one. I will detail below the process of having a new site built, but for now let's concentrate on existing ones.

If your site isn't content managed, it's not the end of the world, it just means that as you upgrade and improve your site you will have to pay your web developer to carry this out. Speak to them, and ask them for the likely cost implications of this. Find out if it would be more economic to convert this site so it is content managed, allowing you to carry out future alterations yourself.

Is the site performing well in Google? In fact is it performing in Google at all? Some sites are so badly built that Google just doesn't rank them. The first thing to do is to Google the .com of your site; if it doesn't come in number one you probably need a new website. Next, Google the name of the site without the .com. Your site should appear as the number one ranking unless there is a site with an almost identical name but a different .com. As long as you are in the top few rankings it's cool. If not, once again, you need to get a new site or give your web developers a kick up the butt about this. If your site passes both these tests, then from an SEO point of view, in basic terms, it has the potential to rank for other keywords.

Does your site look and feel good? Does it have good copy, CTA's, etc? It is hugely important that your website is of a good enough quality to convert traffic into sales. If your site is ugly and hard to use then all the rankings in the world won't be of much use. You need to keep your visitors engaged and impressed from the minute they hit your site to the minute they email or call you to book your act. If your site looks old and is slow or awkward to use, you need to weigh up the price of upgrading it, against the cost of a new website.

In all cases you will either need to have a new site built or to improve the site you already have (there is always room for improvement). In either case the next sections of this book will go into how you do this in more detail. As you are building or upgrading your site, you can focus on improving the SEO potential of the site, and then when it's fully online you can start building links and generating traffic (traffic is just another term for visitors to your site).

Getting a website built

For those of you getting a new site built or those of you improving on your old site you need to consider who is going to do the work? The two options for doing this are doing it yourself or paying someone else to do it.

If you are going to do the work on the site yourself, I suggest you do a lot of research before you start. Unless you are a trained and experienced web developer, there a lot of potential pitfalls you could fall into, from both a usability and an SEO perspective. If this is all your budget will allow, then it is worth putting in the hours to figure out which is the best platform to use to build the site and how to get the best possible results. This subject is worthy of a book itself and I won't go into details here. I would recommend "Create a Successful Website" by Paula Wynne and "Web Design All in One for Dummies" by Sue Jenkins as good possible starting points.

If you decide to outsource your web development, it is well worth looking around for both a good deal and a quality service. My personal recommendation would be to use a local service rather than an online option. It is really important to get your requirements across face to face with the web developers and even if it costs slightly more it's well worth the extra expense.

I would make appointments at three local web designer's offices; ask them for price ranges, additional work prices, their SEO and branding expertise, etc. Also have a good look at their portfolio, ask if they have any clients you can contact directly. Once you have spoken to all three, decide which you like the best and use the other two as bargaining tools to try and get the best price possible.



★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

Websites are a hugely important and potentially very lucrative part of your business. If possible, this is one area where I would suggest investing heavily. When I started out Juggling Inferno I was offered sites from £400 to £4000. On the incredibly valuable advice from an old fire spinning friend (thanks Sue) who was also a web designer I went for the most expensive option. It paid off, years later it is one of the best performing sites in my niche, it gets great compliments and more importantly lots of sales conversions on a very regular basis. The same company also built the “How to Sell Your Act” website and I would not use any other web developer.....Dig deep guys it will be worth the money!

Once you know who is going to build your site, you need to figure out the layout, how it will be constructed and so on. Your web guys should help you with this, and that combined with online research, will give you a good idea of what you want from your website.

Content management

Content management is a way of building websites that allows the site's owner rather than the web developers to tweak the site. If you have a content managed site you can add and delete pages, alter the copy, change the videos and images etc. There may be an extra cost implication of getting a content managed site, however, in the long run this type of site will save you a lot of money in fees for alterations and upgrades.

Coding

For your site to be SEO friendly, the coding needs to be of a high quality with a low code to text ratio. This is way too technical for this book; just make sure you or your web designers are working to the highest standards of coding and compliance.

Individual pages

Every site and act will have slightly different web page requirements, so I will discuss the ones that have been of use to me, but feel free to add to, or ignore certain pages on this list:

Home page

The homepage should be the strongest page on your site. As with the entire site, it should be fully branded. Almost all of your visitors will look at this page, so it should be both graphically and textually the most impressive. This page will be optimised for some of your most powerful KWP's (keyword phrases, these are the search terms you will target in Google) and will be one of your most prominent landing pages.

Contact page

The contact page should be very easy to find, and you should be easily contactable by as many means as possible. I recommend having a landline phone number and postal address as well as mobile number, email, an enquiry form, a newsletter sign-up and possibly Facebook and Twitter “add” buttons. By putting all these details on the page, you are not only very easy to find but you are also showing very high levels of contact-ability. This will help reassure clients who may be wary of booking performers without face to face contact.

Image gallery

Personally I like to have image galleries as well as images embedded into the individual pages on the site. Analysing my own site's stats tells me that my various images galleries get a lot of hits, and images are a very powerful tool for selling entertainment acts. If you do decide to have image galleries, it is really important to find the most user-friendly gallery you can. I'm sure you will agree there is nothing more irritating than having a gallery with terrible usability; it often leads me to just visit another site.

Videos

The cheaper option here is to just embed videos from YouTube or a similar site. Whilst this is a great low budget option, it can lead your potential customers to watching competitor's videos, or they can just end-up messing around on YouTube instead of your site! If you have the budget I suggest having an in-built video player with the option of downloading the videos. Downloads are great, as your clients can have copies of the videos without you having to send out download links or even worse DVDs.

Individual acts page

You will give your clients the hard sell from here. This page should have great act specific images, more detailed copy about the site and a very strong CTA to seal the

deal. This page should be optimised for some of your act specific KWP's to help with targeted traffic generation (getting the right people to visit your site).

FAQ's

The FAQ's page serves a variety of purposes. From the client's point of view, it should answer their concerns and help you start building up trust and rapport. From your point of view, this is a great place to pre-answer the daft and the not so daft (but frequent) questions you will otherwise get asked via phone or email. If you get this set up right, it should increase enquires and decrease the time spent on converting these enquires into sales (which is a good thing, especially when you get busy). Finally, from an SEO perspective, the FAQ's page is a great place to fit in some keyword rich content, thus increasing the relevancy of your site (for those keywords) in the eyes of the search engines.

Entertainment related landing pages

(A landing page is a web-page that people will "land" on from a search engine or link).

If you think back to the section related to which types of client and areas of entertainment you would like to target, this is where the power of websites and internet marketing really comes into play.

The best way to explain this is through an example. If we imagine Dave the magician, Dave has decided he wants to increase his gig fees. He feels that doing more corporate work will help him achieve this goal, as corporate clients tend to have more cash to spend. If Dave added a page specifically dedicated to corporate entertainment, not only would this page have great SEO and PPC potential, it would also indicate very clearly to his corporate clients that he is experienced and comfortable working in this area.

As you are building or up-grading your site, I would seriously think about putting in some pages specific to a certain type of event or client that you want to target. It will help you drive traffic and generate enquires in the areas that you are aiming to develop.

Links pages

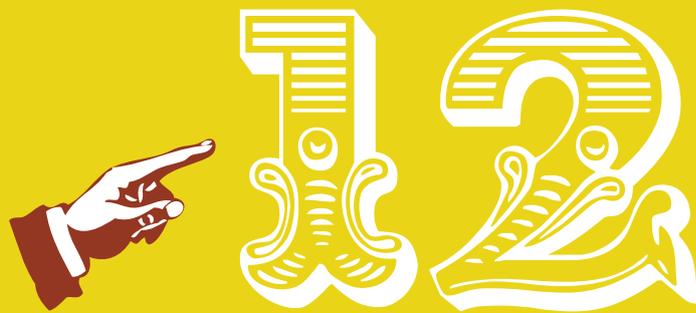
Traditionally, links pages were used to help websites perform well in search engines through the process of swapping links with other sites. However, the benefit of link swapping for search engines is now very small.



Link swaps can still be a useful driver of traffic and can also be used as a bargaining tool. If there is someone filming or taking photos at one of your gigs, you can offer them a link swap in return for some free images or footage. From the point of view of traffic generation, if you have a link on a site in a similar sector to you then it may send some potential clients to your site. Adding a links page isn't essential, but it should be considered as long as the cost isn't prohibitive.

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

Make sure you check your website and any upgrades you do to it, in lots of different browsers to verify that it works well in all of them. (Mozilla, Safari, IE7, IE8, IE9, Chrome etc).



**INTERNET
MARKETING
★ ★ SEARCH
ENGINE OPTIMISATION**

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

Search engine optimisation, also known as SEO, is the process of getting your website to appear in the organic results in Google or other search engines. The organic results are the main results provided by the search engine. There are usually ten of them per page and they appear under and alongside the sponsored results (PPC ads) that website marketers are paying for. Google generates these organic rankings using a very complicated algorithm and software programs called spiders (known as spiders because they crawl the web).

SEO is a very powerful marketing technique and it played a huge part in helping me generate hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of gigs for me and my performers. (I say this not to boast, but to inspire you into action). It's worth mentioning at this point that I will focus this whole section on performing well in Google and will do this for two main reasons. Firstly, worldwide Google is responsible for around 60-70% of internet searches. So if we are focusing our efforts on one area, it makes sense to do this where the most people are searching.

Secondly, if you work on optimising your site for Google then it will also perform well in the other major search engines. I would suggest as you begin the process of SEO that you keep an eye on Yahoo and Bing as well as Google. As your rankings improve in Google, they should also rise in the other two major search engines.

There are three very clear aspects of SEO, and the best way to approach them is one at a time and in order. Don't worry, if you have already have a website or have done some SEO work. All of the work can be done in a different order to the one I suggest (if necessary). If you have an existing web designer or you have built your own website, you can implement the necessary changes and still see great results fairly quickly. A new website, however, is a great opportunity to start from scratch with good quality, ethical, SEO basics which will set you up for many years of good quality marketing and sales.

The three major aspects of SEO are keyword research, on-site optimisation and off-site optimisation. Keyword research is usually done first, and for performing artists it is often a fairly easy and simple task.

On-site optimisation can be done to both a brand new site as it is being built, or as an update to an existing site. Again it is usually a fairly simple task and once done correctly it will rarely need more than some slight tweaks.

Off-site SEO should only be done to existing sites or brand new sites that have been built and are fully online. Off-site SEO (more commonly known as link building) should be an ongoing effort. As you start with your SEO strategy, you will need to put a large concentrated effort into link building. However, after a while this process will require a much lower level of work, just enough to maintain existing rankings and improve on those you already have.



★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

Be wary of SEO companies if they offer you their services. The huge majority of them charge extortionate prices for very little in return. Also many of them use dodgy black-hat SEO techniques like the buying and selling of links (more on this later).

A note about SEO – Google uses a highly secret algorithm to deliver its organic search results. Whilst Google releases some details of how to do SEO and some of the updates to its algorithm have to be released as part of the patent protection process, there are still a lot of unknowns. The advice I will give you includes the best practises within the industry and has got great results for myself and the websites I have worked on as an internet marketing consultant. However, there are no guarantees with SEO, and Google also reserves the right to move the goal posts at any time. I don't want you to worry about any of this, if you follow the advice in this book you will do well and if any new techniques come up I will let you know via my blog and newsletters. I do, however, want you to understand that SEO isn't an exact science and you need to be flexible in both your studies and your approach to this type of marketing.

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

If you have a number two ranking and the number one is Wikipedia, don't worry about it, it won't affect your business and Wikipedia can be very hard to beat.

KEYWORD RESEARCH

Keyword research is the process of deciding which keywords and KWP's (keyword phrases) you would like to rank for in the serps (Google search results). It is really important to give this a lot of thought and work, before making your decisions. Getting your keywords right can make a huge difference to the amount of enquires you generate through Google.

Firstly, you need to make a list of all the various names and descriptions you and your customers use for your act. The longer the list the better, even some slightly random names and phrases can be of use here.

Secondly you need to think about what potential phrases your clients are likely to use in order to find you on Google. Often, when you are in the industry, you will use the more accurate but less well known terminology for an act. A good example of this



happened to me as I improved my SEO skills. Over the years I realised I was getting lots of email or phone enquiries for “fire eaters”. I also noticed that even when people had seen my show they would still refer to me as a fire eater, even if I hadn’t done any fire eating in the show!

At first I was a bit stubborn about this. I wanted people to describe me as a fire performer or a fire juggler. I felt this sounded more skilful and impressive (what an idiot!). However, I soon got over myself and realised that if I started optimising my website for “fire eaters” I had the potential to get myself lots more work. I tweaked my on-site SEO, went out and got some new links – Hey presto, shed loads more enquires came in and I started making more money than ever before. So, whatever your act, if you can find words that don’t fit the identity you would like to project, but are commonly used by the general public, I strongly recommend you target at least a few of these phrases in your campaign.

★★★★ **TIM’S TOP TIPS** ★★★★★

As you are so immersed in your own act it can be difficult to think from a client’s perspective. Practise doing this and also keep an eye and an ear out for the terms the general public uses to describe your act.

I should mention at this point that a lot of the clients, who find you through the internet, will come from within the industry and as such will use the more accurate search terms. So to cover all bases, it is always worth optimising for the most popular common language as well as the more technically correct KWP’s used to describe what you do.

Another great place to start thinking about potential KWP’s is the broader terms used to describe the industry or area you would like to break into. A classic example of this could be “Corporate Entertainment”. I have seen a huge variety of acts that regularly get work at corporate events. To expand the example, if you are promoting a group of break dancers and want to start doing corporate gigs, you could optimise for “break dancers for hire” and “corporate entertainment”. As you start to get some good rankings for both of these terms, you will soon start to notice potential customers checking out your website, videos etc.

I should point out at this stage that the more generic the search term is, the more difficult it will be to get good rankings. If we go back to the break dancing example, there will be a lot more people trying to get good results for “corporate entertainment” than for “break dancers for hire”. Once again I suggest aiming for a variety of the different types of search terms to spread the effectiveness of your



campaign. The easier to target KWP's will start paying off first, and as you build more and more links, the more competitive KWP's will also start ranking and paying off. (In most but not all cases competitive search terms are the most profitable. So it's worth the long haul to get good rankings).

One of the great strengths of SEO, with particular relevance to keyword research, is the ability to pick and choose which customers approach you. If you do or don't want to work in a certain sector of the industry a few tweaks of your SEO strategy can help make this desire a reality. Words like budget, cheap, exclusive or high-class are often used to set the tone of the services offered, when using SEO.

Well targeted keyword research also gives you the opportunity to crack new markets that your competition may never have thought of. This is a great way to really clean up as it will be much less competitive. If you think back to the "Sort Your Act Out" chapter and the list of potential markets and clients that you made, you also should remember examining your competition and the markets they seemed to be successful in. This information is now highly relevant and should give you some inspiration for great KWP's.

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

Be creative....You guys are performers and creative geniuses, so use your natural talent to find new and unique ways to sell your act. Don't just go for the obvious and highly competitive KWP's but try and find new and less competitive ones which will be much easier to both rank for and convert into sales.

Another great benefit of SEO and keyword research is the ability to aim at a certain geographical area. If you want to get lots of work in the area where you live, for example, you can do this very easily. It also, makes the job of SEO easier, as longer search terms (also known as long tail keywords) are always less competitive and therefore easier to rank for.

Continuing with the break dancers as our example; it would be much easier to rank well with "break dancers for hire in London" than it would for "break dancers for hire". This specific point is very powerful for getting you gigs in the area you are targeting. It also has an added bonus. If you optimised for "break dancers for hire in London" it would also help your optimisation efforts for "break dancers for hire". It also, clearly has a very good chance of getting break dancing gigs in the London area. So, if you would like to work in a particular geographical area, make sure that the name of this location appears within your on-site optimisation.



If we take one final look at this example, you will notice that I have mentioned “break dancers for hire”. This will be much easier to target than “break dancers” and also has the chance of providing a much better ROI. The reason for this better rate of ROI is simple. A lot of people entering the search term “break dancers” won’t be looking to book an act. They could be searching for a variety of reasons but my guess is the majority would be looking for video or image results. People searching for the term “break dancers for hire” are very likely to be looking to book some dancers for an event. So if your site was to appear high in the Google rankings and your publicity material was good enough, this should be a fairly easy conversion.

Some other good keywords, which can help refine the quality of searchers who find your site, are:

- **Find** – *Find* break dancers for hire.
- **Hire** – *Hire* break dancers.
- **Book** – *Book* break dancers
- **Contact** – *Contact* break dancers for hire.

★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

If you want to keep keyword research very simple, just write a list of phrases you would like to appear for in the Google search results. This isn't an ideal solution but it's definitely a step in the right direction. In this list put some technical terms for your act plus the more generic and slightly less accurate terms used by the general public and people outside the industry.

Finally I want to state very clearly at the end of this section exactly why SEO is so powerful. There are many millions of users Googling millions of different search terms every hour of every day worldwide. A percentage of these users will be specifically looking for your type of act. If you get your SEO and your publicity material right, a steady stream of customers will search for you, find your website and then contact you. There will also be a steady stream of potential customers searching for some, as yet undecided, type of entertainment. Once again if your SEO and publicity material hits the mark, you will convince them your act is what they are looking for and they will contact you for more info.

If you get this right, apart from a little maintenance, your marketing campaigns will be dramatically reduced in effort and your ROI will increase on a steady basis over the months and years to come.



★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

A number one organic ranking in Google is estimated to get around 35% of the hits, whilst a number two ranking only gets 15%. Clearly the number one spot is worth aiming for.

Keyword research tools

This is the second part of keyword research. Once you have created a list from the process detailed above, you can verify (to a certain extent) the potential of these keywords, by using keyword research tools. There are a variety of keyword research tools online that can help you with your task. Some are free, some you have to pay for and they all have varying degrees of quality. Certainly none I have found are anywhere near perfect. However, for this book I am just going to talk about the Google keywords tool. I'm doing this as it is generally considered one of the best free keywords research tools and it is very user friendly.

With the Google keywords tool and other versions, the format is always very similar. You put one of your targeted KWP's into the search box and it tells you how many people have searched for that particular term. They will often suggest lots of other potential KWP's that you may not have considered.

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

You should be aware of the biggest limitation of the Google keywords tool. As it is designed to be used for paid Google advertising (PPC aka Google adwords) the tool is very probably biased towards the more profitable KWP's. So instead of suggesting all the best possible KWP's for your business, it will suggest phrases that are good for the Google revenue. It's still a great tool though, just as long as you bear this in mind.

(To find the tool just do a Google search, but make sure you get on to the genuine page and not some dodgy imitation).

To get the best out of this tool I suggest having a good play around with it. Check out the help sections and maybe even have a look at some tutorials on YouTube. Another nice tip is to hover over the question marks on this page. Useful bites of information will pop up which can be very helpful as you figure out the tool and its functions.

Features of the Google Keywords Tool

I suggest you open up the tool in your web browser now and have a look at it as I go through the most important features. (You will also need to sign in with a Google account to access the entire tool).

The main features of the tool are:

1. **The word or phrase box** – This is where you put in potential KWP's.
2. **Advanced options** – Some nice search tweaks for those of you who get really into the process. This includes language/location variations which can have great potential if you want to target an international market or specific location.
3. **Include/Exclude terms** – A great tool to help refine your results for much more targeted KWP suggestions. A good example would be excluding the words “safety” and “legislation” from a search for “fire acts” to avoid getting results for “fire safety legislation acts”.
4. **Only show closely related search terms tick box** – Try searching with this ticked and un-ticked you never know what might pop up.

Results

When you have entered some KWP's into the tool, a variety of results will appear – The main features of the results are:

(To access all these features you may have to open the columns link and activate them using a tick box).

1. **The KWP's** – The tool will throw up the results for your specific search term and also similar or vaguely related terms depending on whether or not you ticked the closely related search terms box. A great factor of this tool is that it will suggest many other related search terms that you may not have thought of yourself.
2. **The competition** – A block graph showing the level of competition for that particular phrase. This is very useful; any term that has a high level of competition will be much harder to get good rankings for. Incidentally it will also be a more expensive phrase for PPC marketing but more on that later. Don't rule these terms out, they are highly sought after for a reason, just be aware it will be a long haul to rank well with them.
3. **Global & local monthly searches** – This is where the tool really becomes useful. Google tells you approximately how many people have searched for the particular phrase over the last year, in your country and worldwide.
4. **Search trends** – A graph showing you how popular each search term is at a particular time of year. Again, this is a great little piece of information. You can use it to predict, prepare and market for seasonal trends. Most SEO is an all year round effort, as it is a relatively slow process and the results are permanent.



However PPC and HTML emailers (I go into these in more detail later) are a great way to maximise this seasonal demand for certain acts or types of entertainment. It is also a really useful way of predicting when you will receive the most enquiries, allowing you to get your admin and sales systems prepared in plenty of time.

5. **Download** – You can download all these results to a spread sheet. This is great for building up a list of KWP's over time.

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

If you can find a highly relevant search term for your act that has a high number of searches and a low level of competition you are in with a great opportunity. Optimising for this phrase will be both relatively easy and potentially very lucrative.

To conclude this section, whilst I do suggest putting a lot of time and thought into this process before you start optimising your site, it is also worth remembering that you can change or add to your targeted KWP's in the future. Also, as you learn more about SEO and selling your act, you will find new KWP's to chase in search of new and exciting bookings.

So get out a pen and paper and start brainstorming, speak to friends, family and existing clients to see if they can think of any good KWP's. Have a good look at these terms on the keyword tool and see what looks best.

ON-SITE OPTIMISATION

By now you should have a long list of potential KWP's, and my apologies to break this to you, but you won't need all of them straight away. When you are carrying out an SEO strategy on a new or existing site, it is important to focus on a few KWP's for each landing page. (Landing pages are pages which you intend your clients to find via Google). For each landing page of your website, you need to create a document with all the relevant details needed to optimise the page. This will include fitting in (wherever possible) the 2-3 KWP's that you have decided you want to optimise this page for. As you become successful with these KWP's, you can then go back to the list and start optimising for some more.

There are a number of significant factors on each page that play a part in the effectiveness of the on-site optimisation. I will deal with each one in the approximate order of this effectiveness.

If we go back to Dave the charismatic magician, he has decided he wants to target phrases similar to “magicians for hire”. Dave decides that the keyword phrases to be targeted in order of importance are:

1. **Magicians for hire.**
2. **Hire corporate magicians.**
3. **Book close up magicians.**

As well as directly targeting these phrases, the on and off-site optimisation will also automatically work for variations such as:

1. **Hire magicians.**
2. **Book corporate magicians.**
3. **Close up magicians for hire.**

This secondary list could go on much further, but as I mentioned before we need to focus on the selected phrases and allow the others to gain results automatically.

BLACK HAT ON-SITE SEO

Before I tell you about the ethical white hat SEO techniques, I just want to explain about the un-ethical black hat techniques for on-site SEO. These techniques may get you some rankings, but Google does not like them at all. If it catches you using any of them, it will give you a spanking in the form of a drop in rankings, or worst case scenario, your site disappearing from Google completely. The simple answer to this is to not use any of them, you may have to work a little harder to get your rankings but the rankings you get will be much safer in the long term. Basically black hat techniques are unethical methods of gaming the Google algorithm to your advantage, they include:

- **Keyword stuffing** – Long lists of keywords stuffed into your site.
- **Hidden content** – Hiding lots of keywords on your site by making them invisible to users but still visible to Google’s spiders.
- **Automatically created content** – Using automatically created content or poor quality content to get rankings for keywords.
- **Cloaking** – Delivering different content to the search engines spiders than that seen by the user.

WHITE HAT ON-SITE SEO

URL

Getting one of your keywords into the URL of your page is a great way to start your on-site SEO. If you don't yet own a .com it may be worth trying to buy one with your keyword phrases in it. In our example www.magiciansforhire.com or www.magicians-for-hire.com would be ideal for Dave. Note that the second example has hyphens in it, this makes it much more readable but potentially less memorable. If you already have a .com for your site, don't worry too much about this. The main URL doesn't have to be keyword rich and, in some cases it's much better not to be. If your act has a strong name or brand, it can make more sense to have that as the .com and find other places in the URL to position your KWP's. Another reason for keeping an old .com is that Google loves old domains. From Google's point of view age is a good thing as it suggests reliability and a good reputation.

For deep landing pages (deep pages are any pages on your site that aren't your home page) you can add the KWP's to the URL. I'm going to stick with Dave on this, as I'm starting to like him....His website might be:

www.davethemagician.com

He could then have a deep page with the URL:

www.davethemagician.com/magicians-for-hire

This is a great way to put his most important phrase in his URL and therefore giving a significant effect in his on-site SEO.

Meta title

The meta title of a site is another very important SEO factor. You will, when browsing Google, have seen many of these titles before. If you do a Google search for anything that comes into your mind, you will see the search results for individual sites. The first line of an individual result is the Meta title. The font will be larger than the description underneath and will be underlined and in blue. It is also the link from the Google page to the site of that particular result.

Once again if we go back to our buddy Dave the magician.....Meta titles should be a maximum of 65 characters long (not including spaces). The reason for this is Google will not display anymore characters than that and an incomplete title is not good for CTR's (click through rates – the number of clicks you get to your landing page from Google searches).

A good Meta title for Dave could be:

Quality wedding and close up magicians for hire at your next event.

Some points to notice about the above suggestion are:

- It covers a good range of the three targeted KWP's on the list we created for Dave in the keyword research section.
- The copy is written directly at the potential customer.
- It is under 65 characters long.
- It isn't a spammy list of keywords just designed to game the system as much as possible.
- It's generic enough to appeal to a wide range of searchers.
- It starts off strongly, who doesn't like quality?
- It doesn't contain Dave's name. There is no need to as it is in his .com which will be visible in the results. Also this space in the Google results is far too valuable for stroking Dave's ego.

Meta Description

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

If the search term isn't relevant to the meta description but it is to the web-page shown in the serps, Google may take a snippet from the copy of the page which bears more relevance than the meta description and show this in the search results. This isn't a major issue, unless you think this search term may be a good convertor in which case you may want to change the meta description to include the particular KWP.

Again meta descriptions are an important part of your on-site SEO strategy. In most cases, they will be the descriptions in the Google results under the meta title. These descriptions can be long enough to get some more keywords in and some nice copy to further entice a searcher to visit your site.

Our new best friend, Dave the magician, could make great use of a meta description such as:

Professional close-up and wedding magicians for hire to entertain the guests at your event. Visit the site now to book a high class magician for hire.

Again some points of interest would be:

- The description is less than the maximum Google will display. This maximum is 150 characters and as with the meta-title, anymore than this will simply reduce click through rates (CTR's).
- It's not a spammy list of KWP's.

- The targeted KWP's along with some variations are all in there.
- If you notice, even though Dave is a one man band I have optimised for the plural of magicians etc. The reason for this is that in my experience when it comes to acts people are much more likely to search for the plural than the singular.
- Another significant element of Dave's description is that it contains a strong call to action. Having "Visit the site now to book" is definitely a powerful tool to use in a meta description.

★ ★ ★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★ ★ ★

Both meta titles and meta descriptions should be seen as adverts as well as for SEO purposes. So when writing these tags make sure you make them readable and attractive, (as well as being keyword rich). They should also be unique for every page on your site.

Meta Keywords

Meta keywords are almost irrelevant these days. Google has gone on record stating that it pays virtually no attention to them in its ranking process. Some other search engines may use them, so I suggest putting 6-8 relevant keywords for each page and then move onto more important jobs very quickly.

The copy

The copy on your landing page should be keyword rich but without making it unreadable. The copy should in fact be targeted towards converting a browser into a customer, and to do this you need well written sales copy. However, there will still be plenty of opportunities to squeeze in some KWP's as having these phrases within the copy is a significant part of on-site SEO.

Incidentally, every page of your website should be keyword rich wherever possible. Google likes sites that are very relevant to the search terms, so even the non-landing pages should be optimised to a high degree of relevancy.

Image Alt Tags

An Image alt tag's main purpose is for accessibility. It is for users who for some reason can't view images in their browser. If this is the case, the Alt tag will be visible to describe the image to the user.

However, we can use these tags to our advantage. If whilst describing the image in a user friendly manner you can fit in one or two (max) KWP's, into the tag, this will help your SEO efforts as well as usability.

H Tags

H1-H7 tags are used to denote headings within the body of copy on a webpage. Their SEO significance lessens as the number increases and they are often not all used. To keep it simple, make sure your headings and subheadings are keyword rich and make sure you or your web guys uses H tags where relevant.

Internal links

As well as being important for usability, conversions, etc, you can also use internal links for SEO purposes. If the anchor text of a link, pointing at a certain page, is keyword rich this will benefit the page it links to. Anchor text is the text used as a hyperlink to instruct a browser where that link might lead to.

E.g. – www.google.com with anchor text would be [Google search engine](#)

It certainly wouldn't affect usability by putting lots of keyword rich anchor text links into your site just for SEO. However, if you can find an opportunity to use keyword rich internal links without affecting the user, then go for it.

Content – Some general thoughts and ideas

When building or improving your site, it's worth bearing in mind that Google loves unique, high quality, relevant content (basically content is good quality copy). As long as it's not spammy lists of keywords, or duplicate content from somewhere else on your site (or even worse content you have copied from someone else's site) – GOOGLE LOVES CONTENT. Google loves content even more, if as well as being unique and relevant, it is also new.

Blogs are a great way to add lots of new, relevant content. The advantage of blogs is that they can add lots of content without messing up the navigation of your main site. Blogs aren't the only way to add content however. If you are trying to target a new KWP or improve the ranking of existing ones, then adding a few pages of good content will definitely help.



Some classic example of this are:

- **Articles** – Write some articles relevant to your niche and put them in your site.
- **FAQ's** – Write these as both a useful resource and SEO tool.
- **Glossary** – Once again a useful resource for less knowledgeable clients, plus great for adding relevant content.

★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

To keep on-site SEO simple, make sure you have your targeted KWP's wherever possible within your site, (without having long spammy lists). If you are getting someone to build your site, they will handle this very easily. If you are keen to get the best advantage from every page and word on your site however, you need to pay close attention to all of the above, and use it to your advantage for great SEO benefits.

The balance here as so often with on-site SEO is to create a site that is very user friendly, conversion driven and still powerful from an SEO point of view.

OFF-SITE SEO

Off-site SEO is basically the process of getting as many good quality links to your homepage and deeper pages as you possibly can. This process is infinite and on-going, but don't let this put you off. There are lots of small easy steps to get you started and you will learn more about the process as you become involved in it.

The reason links are important in SEO, is that Google sees a link as a recommendation that the particular site is worth visiting. Google in particular likes it if the two sites are closely related and it judges this by the content and on-site SEO as detailed above.

As with internal linking, Google will accord more significance and relevance to external links that carry relevant keywords in their anchor text. They will also give more ranking weight if this link with anchor text falls naturally within in some highly relevant copy.

Finally, if the site has a high page rank (one of the tools Google uses to evaluate a site's authority) this will also be a very significant in how Google values a link from this site.

Taking into consideration the above points, it's clear that the best link from an SEO perspective would be:

- **From a closely related site.**
- **With keyword rich anchor text.**
- **Within highly relevant copy.**
- **From a site with a high page rank.**

Whilst these types of links are ideal, it's often easier and more practical to get links that may not have all the elements above. As long as they aren't from dubious linking techniques (see below), any link has the potential to give SEO benefit of varying degrees. My advice is to get as many links as possible from a wide variety of sources; as long as you don't fall into any black hat techniques, you will see improvements in your rankings.

Whilst thinking about linking strategies there is an important point that needs to be made. Links will give you authority in Google's eyes and thus help you achieve better rankings. It's also equally important for you realise that the links you create can generate direct traffic themselves. Internet directories, blogs, social bookmarking sites for example can all generate direct traffic. So whilst starting and continuing your link building campaign, you need to consider both the SEO benefits and the direct traffic generation possibilities from potential links.

Page Rank (PR)

Page Rank is a term used by Google to give an idea of the authority of any individual page on the web. The ranking goes from 1–9 with nine being the best level of PR possible. The easiest way to check the PR on a page of your site (or elsewhere) is to install the Google toolbar and then “allow” the PR checker. Whenever you are on a webpage the PR will be displayed in a bar chart, if you hover over this it will give you the page rank in numerical form.

PR is just one factor of many in your on-site SEO so don't get obsessed about trying to increase it. Also, there is no 100% accurate measure of PR, so just use the tool bar PR checker as a rough guide.

PR is basically an assessment by Google of both the quantity and quality of the links to a particular page. So in essence, to increase the PR of your site you need to get more good quality links. If some of those links are from sites with a high PR, this will be of more value. Getting SEO benefit from the PR of another site is often referred to as link juice or link love. The main point to bear in mind about link love is that a link from a site with high PR will pass on much more link love, this extra link love will be highly beneficial in your off-site SEO efforts.

Black hat or spammy linking techniques

Just as with on-site SEO, there are lots of black hat off-site SEO techniques. Google does not like these and if it either catches you doing them, or gets a report from a web user that you are using black hat techniques, you may well get a spanking. As with on-site black hat, this could involve your site's ranking dropping dramatically or even being removed from the rankings all together. My advice is simple, just don't do it! It's not worth the short term gain as the potential for long term pain is very real and very significant.

The main black hat linking techniques are:

- **Buying links.** This is the process of paying to have your links on another website. If these links aren't no-follows (no-follow links are created to not pass link love) then they are passing link love in a manipulative manner. This seems to be Google's number one hated technique and if you do this (or sell links from your site to another) you will get penalised. This is not to be confused with paid advertising, where you can put a link on a site to generate traffic to your site. As long as this link is a no-follow, Google has no issues with you paying for links on other sites. The issue only arises when you are trying to game the organic results by buying links. (So what you mustn't do is pay random sites to put a link back to your website to gain SEO benefits).
- **Link farms.** Link farms and other automated linking systems create hundreds or even thousands of links from various sites back to your site. Once again, Google does not like this at all.
- **Anchor text keyword stuffing.** When you are building links, there is no need to stuff lots of keywords into the anchor text, it's of no benefit and looks ugly.

Follow and no-follow links

There are two types of backlinks (backlinks are one-way links pointing towards a webpage) to be considered from a link building point of view

- **Do follow links.**
- **No follow links.**

Do follow links – these allow link love to be passed from one webpage to another. As they can also be a direct source of traffic, these are great for both SEO and direct marketing of your site.

No follow links – these don't allow link love to pass through them. This means they are no good for SEO but are still good for generating traffic. (No follow links will look exactly the same as any other link but the coding is different and this is what stops the link love from passing).

Wherever possible, try to get do-follow links, but if you can place a no-follow link on a high traffic, relevant webpage, it could help get you traffic and ultimately sales.

Reciprocal links

Reciprocal links, sometimes known as link swaps, are when two sites link to each other. The SEO benefits basically cancel each other out, but they can be a good source of traffic. If you can link with sites in your niche, then it's a good idea to do so. What I don't recommend is swapping links with internet directories as this is a pointless exercise, in almost all cases.

Web directories

Web directories are your first port of call when starting the process of link building. Web directories are sites intended to drive traffic to your site, in a similar way to phone directories directing people to your phone number. However in reality, a lot of web directories are only of any real use as another site to get an SEO friendly link from. The web contains many thousands of these directories with new ones appearing on a daily basis. I will deal with some of the bigger ones individually, and then the rest as a section on its own.

DMOZ (Also known as the Open Directory Project)

The first job I advise anyone to do once their website is online and completed is to submit to DMOZ. Google holds a link from DMOZ in high regard and it has the potential to drive traffic to your site as well its SEO benefits. Another great benefit of DMOZ is that it is totally free to add your site.

DMOZ is run completely by volunteers and this means the application process is a slow one. They also take no prisoners, so be sure to pay careful attention to their submission guidelines before adding your URL to this site. The main points to consider when submitting to DMOZ are:

1. **Run a check to make sure your site isn't already listed.**
2. **Read and follow the submission guidelines very carefully.**
3. **Don't use any promotional copy in your title or description.**
4. **Don't repeatedly submit your site.**
5. **Make sure you submit to the most relevant category.**

★ ★ ★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★ ★ ★

When you have submitted to DMOZ, I suggest making a note for three and six months ahead in your diary. At these times check to see if your site is now included in the directory. If after six months your site hasn't been included, I recommend re-reading the guidelines and then re-submitting the site all over again.

Yahoo directory

The Yahoo directory is one for bigger budgets. It currently costs \$299 per year to have your site listed. However it is generally considered one of the best web directories on the internet for both SEO and direct traffic, so if you have the budget I would certainly give it a look. (To find it go to the yahoo search engine).

Best of the Web (BOTW)

The Best of the Web directory is another highly regarded website. It is great for both SEO and direct traffic purposes, however it is also expensive. The current cost for submission is \$149 per year. Or a one off lifetime fee of \$399.95.

Once again, if you have the budget I would certainly consider submitting to BOTW, it's a powerful site and should provide a good level of ROI as long as your keywords and on-site optimisation are on the mark.

[Best of the Web Submission Page](#)

Jayde

A free directory, Jayde has the potential to pass both SEO and direct traffic to your site. Well worth submitting to, but be warned you will receive lots of junk of emails from them.

Directories of directories

Believe it or not, there are many directories of directories. These are often great places to look as they have long lists of different types of directories. These lists will contain great information about whether the directories are free not or, whether they are niche specific, etc. It will be well worth finding some good lists on Google and

then deciding which directories will be most suitable for your site. I suggest trying to submit your website to:

- **Any free directory you can possibly find.** As long as it has a category relevant to your niche (usually entertainment, small business or performing arts). There are many thousands of these free directories, all you have to do is find them and then submit your site.
- **Any free local directories for your area.** If you have a look on Google you will find plenty of these for any area and these types of directory are usually very keen for new sites.
- **Any niche related directories that are within budget.** There are lots of entertainment and industry specific (e.g. corporate event suppliers, weddings, etc) web directories. As long as they guarantee SEO friendly do follow links and the cost isn't crazy then go for it.
- **Any paid directory that you think will provide some quality traffic to your website;** this could be anything from an online version of the yellow pages (Yell.com) to a very specific niche directory. The trick here is weigh up the ROI; does the directory look and feel like it will get you some well targeted direct traffic? What's the fee? If it feels good, give it a go and see how you get on. You can monitor how much traffic it gives you using Google analytics (more on this later).

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

Directory submission is definitely a numbers game. In an ideal world your site would have listings on hundreds of different directories. Try to find some good lists of directories and submit to five or ten a day for a month or two. This will give your website a great start in the rankings. Here's one to get you started: www.directorycritic.com/

Social bookmarking sites

Social bookmarking sites are an online version of the favourites option in your web browser. The idea is that, if you find a site you like, you can bookmark and keep it for future reference. You can use these sites to build links to your web pages by adding them, as bookmarks, to your account. Social bookmarking sites have varying degrees of tolerance for self promotion, so the most sensible way to do this is to actually add value to the site you are using to bookmark. If you use the site just to bookmark your own pages, you may get your account deleted. If instead you use the site



proactively sharing interesting links with other sites etc, then you can also do some self promotion, without fear of any issues.

There are many social bookmarking sites out there and a quick look in Google will find not only these sites but also the ones that offer do-follow links.

★ ★ ★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★ ★ ★

Most of the social bookmarking sites have a button you can install on Mozilla Firefox that will allow you to bookmark pages at one click of a button. This is a very efficient way of building links!

Article submissions

Article submission is a great way to build links as the opportunity to place anchor text links either in or near highly relevant content is present. The basic idea is that you write (or employ someone to write) an article in your niche. You then submit that article to a number of article directories and they will, upon approval, publish your article. You can either put a link in the article itself or in the author's section next to the article. There are hundreds of article directories and once again a quick Google search will deliver the best ones for SEO purposes. (Try Googling "SEO friendly article directories" for example).

The tip here is to try to write interesting, informative or opinionated articles. This will then create lots of interest around the article. If the article is worth reading, people are likely to link to it, or syndicate it to another article site (with your link still present).

To get the best from this, you will need to get as many articles out there as you can. Try writing and publishing one article a week. Make sure you put your keyword rich anchor text link in with the submission and this will drive both traffic and link love to your site.

★ ★ ★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★ ★ ★

When you have submitted an article and it is published, you can bookmark it using one or more of your social bookmarking accounts. This passes link love from the bookmarking site to the article and from the article to your webpage.

Blogs

Google loves blogs; it also loves links from blogs, so this is a great area to focus on. If you have your own blog you can link from it to pages on your site. You can also write guest blog posts for other bloggers and ask for a link in return. In both cases you should put the link in the copy and it should have keyword rich anchor text.

To get some guest blogging opportunities you need to build good relationships with some bloggers in your target niche or a related niche. Try posting comments on their blogs, contacting them directly or following them on blogs, Facebook and Twitter etc. Then make them an offer... You write one or more high quality blog posts in return for some do-follow links to your website. As most bloggers have some SEO motivation in their blog, they are often looking for unique, good quality content and as you get a link in return this is our old favourite, the win-win situation.

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

If you don't have a blog you can set one up very easily. Wordpress is one of the most popular tools for blogging; it's free, has lots of useful plug-ins and is very SEO friendly. Just create an account, read their guidelines and get blogging.

Press releases

Press releases are very similar to articles, so basically just repeat the same process as detailed above. The main difference is that you need to try to find a hook that makes the release a newsworthy document. By doing this it may spread around the web a little. In most cases press releases will just give you some SEO benefits from the backlinks you have within them. However sometimes if the hook is good enough, the release will go viral and this can generate lots of direct traffic to your site as well as many more backlinks.

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

Press releases are more powerful when used at the right time. If for example you are doing some high profile gigs or making a TV appearance, maximise the leverage by putting out press releases to raise awareness and backlinks to your site.

YouTube and other video portals

Whilst YouTube and other video portal sites always give out no-follow links, they are still a great place to get traffic and raise your overall brand awareness. I recommend building a good YouTube channel and then putting up as many good quality videos as you have. In the description section of each video put a link to your website and a strong call to action.

Web 2.0 sites

These are another great resource for free SEO friendly links or traffic generation. Web 2.0 sites allow users to manage their own content and interact with other users. Facebook, Hubpages and Squidoo are all example of this, clearly there are thousands more of these types of site.

For now, if we put sites like Facebook and Twitter to one side and concentrate on Squidoo. Squidoo allows you to build lenses (similar to a Facebook profile or a MySpace page), from which you can put a keyword rich SEO friendly backlink to your website. The lenses are made up of a variety of modules which you can select to use, depending on your requirements. These can include images, copy, YouTube videos, customer surveys, etc. The idea here is to make the Squidoo page highly relevant to the page you are linking to. Make sure the image titles, the copy and all the headings are keyword rich for maximum SEO benefit.

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

With all off-site link building it is important to create content of good quality. Not only will this add to the web as a whole but it will also drive more traffic and in the long term provide much more SEO benefits.

Social media marketing

The four most important social media sites are Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and MySpace. Whilst all four will only provide you with no-follow links, they can, if used correctly be a great way to drive traffic to your site. The key with all these sites is to add something of value, whether it is humour, informed opinion or interesting links, this is the best way to build up a following of friends and contacts.

As you post interesting stuff online related to your niche, or life in general, people will take notice and keep an eye out for your posts. If you then slip the occasional link to



a website or YouTube video of yours, they are much more likely to click on it than if you just bombard them with self promotion on a regular basis.

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

As with articles, you should bookmark any content you put on the web. This will help it to get crawled quicker and will also pass link love through the content to your website. So bookmark any articles, press releases, Squidoo pages, YouTube videos, etc, that you create.

LINK BUILDING – A FINAL FEW WORDS

With all the different techniques for link building, there are many thousands of possible sites to use. I don't want to overload you with huge lists of sites in this book, so keep an eye out on my newsletters and my blog posts for specific lists and tips for link building opportunities.

The most important thing is to constantly work on increasing the number of links pointing to your site. With a new site this should be an intense and concentrated effort. Once you are getting good rankings you can just use link building to maintain existing rankings and to target new KWP's by using different varieties of anchor text.

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

Don't think that if you get a number one ranking that the job is done. Always drive a few more links to it, to ensure it's a good solid ranking for the long term. Sometimes Google fluctuates results and also your competition may realise you have taken their spot and immediately go and get some more links of their own.



Pros of SEO

- It is one of the most powerful marketing techniques there is.
- As your websites rankings improve organically, so will the number of enquiries. This means your business will grow at a steadier and controlled rate, allowing you to ensure you have solid foundations to build from.

Continued...



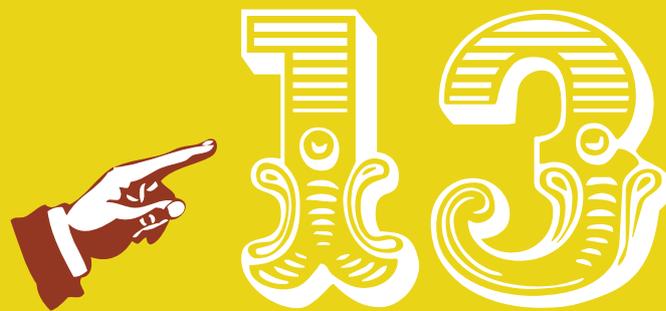
Pros of SEO

- Once you get good rankings, your ROI of both cash and time will increase steadily over the years.
- Without the knowledge in this book, it is becoming increasingly difficult to rank by accident, so as long as you apply yourself, you have a big advantage over your less motivated or less informed competitors.



Cons of SEO

- You need a website.
- It can be a slow start.
- It can be labour intensive.
- It requires some technical know-how from you or your web designer.



**INTERNET
MARKETING
★ ★ PAY PER
CLICK AND HTML
EMAILERS**

PAY PER CLICK MARKETING (PPC)

There are a variety of different services offering PPC marketing opportunities, but once again I will focus on the Google service (Google Adwords), as it has the lion's share of the search market.

The basic process of PPC is as follows:

1. **The searcher enters a search term into Google.**
2. **As well as the organic results, Google also displays a number of sponsored results above and alongside the organic links.**
3. **If the user clicks on any of the sponsored results, the advertiser pays a one off fee for the click. Hence the term pay per click. (It doesn't matter how many times the ad is displayed, Google only charges if the click is made).**

Whilst this process seems simple enough, in reality PPC can be highly complex and expensive (if you let it). Fortunately for us, you can keep it very simple and still generate lots of great traffic to your site at a relatively low cost per click.

As with all Google tools, but more specifically with this one, I strongly recommend you put some time aside to work your way through all the help sections, tutorials etc. For now, I will cover the basics which are enough to get you started and generate some extra gigs.

The main factors in how effective your campaign will be are:

- **Targeting the correct keywords.**
- **Creating well written ads.**
- **Effective bidding and price control.**
- **Monitoring conversion rates.**
- **Accurate analysis and reaction to the stats.**
- **Having ad campaigns with a good quality score from Google.**

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

It's worth noting that when you start a campaign you may get a sudden spike of clicks, I'm pretty convinced this is either your competition having a look at your site or possibly people trying to scare you off with fraudulent clicks, but don't worry this spike is always temporary.

Targeting the correct keywords and KWP's

The keyword research section earlier in the book will come into play again here. However the benefit of PPC is that you can see very quickly if you are heading in the right direction with your keywords, as Google adwords will give you stats that are updated regularly and quickly. Whilst with SEO you have to wait for a while before a particular keyword generates traffic, as soon as you created a PPC ad, it will instantly start to work. This means you can quickly get a feel for if this is a good phrase to drive convertible traffic.

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

You can use your PPC account as a great addition to your SEO keyword research. If you have a number of phrases you might want to target using SEO you can run low cost PPC campaigns and see which ones drive the most traffic and offer the best conversions rates.

Creating well written effective ads

One of the draw backs about Google Adwords is the relatively small amount of text you can place in an ad. As the space is limited you need to be very efficient in what you say. The ads should be highly relevant to the search terms; they should stand out in searches, and if possible will have a CTA action driving people to your site.

Effective bidding and price control

As you create various ad groups and campaigns, you have the option of setting both your bid per click and the amount you spend per day on each ad. I recommend you leave the bid per click amount on automatic at first. The way the system is set up, Google won't rip you off and getting your bidding wrong can reduce the effectiveness of your ads. (The actual cost of a click will always be less than that set by either you or automatically by Google).

As you start setting up ads I would set up a daily limit of no more than a few clicks per ad, per day. The reason for this is if you don't start off very carefully, you can waste a lot of money on useless traffic very, very quickly. Once you get a feel for how it all works, and whether the traffic you are sending is generating new leads, then you can slowly increase the limit per day, on the ads and see if the number of enquires also increases. If it does then you have got the system working as it should, you can now work out a weekly or monthly budget and just monitor the ads for any sudden changes. If the number of enquires doesn't increase with the amount of cash you

spend, then it's time to look again at the targeting of your ads to see if they are driving the right sort of traffic.

Monitoring conversion rates

Google adwords allows you set up a system so you can monitor the conversions from your PPC traffic. If you were an online retailer, for example, you would set the tool up to record how many of your PPC site visitors bought an item. As performers we can't be that precise as in almost all cases sales aren't handled directly through the site. This means we can't analyse how many bookings we take directly from PPC. However we can set up the conversion tracker to see how many PPC visitors go to our contact page. Whilst not as accurate as tracking sales, it will give you some hints as to the ROI of your ads.

Accurate analysis and reaction to the stats

Your Google adwords and analytics accounts (more on this later in the chapter) will provide you with a wealth of data to help you assess your ROI. The trick here is to start off very slowly building up data with only limited financial exposure. Once you have analysed the data you can increase your exposure, but once again do this slowly or it could cost you a lot in wasted clicks.

Quality score of your ad

Once you have created an ad, Google will give it a quality score from 1–10 with ten being the best score possible. A combination of your score and the level of your maximum bid, dictates where, in the sponsored results, your ad will appear. If you get this combination right it's not that hard to get the number one sponsored ranking for a KWP on a fairly steady basis. The idea behind this is to stop advertisers from buying the best positions in the sponsored results, without paying attention to the quality and relevancy of their ads.

The score is based on:

- **CTR – Click Through Rate. The more clicks your ad gets, the higher its score will be.**
- **Relevance of your selected keywords to the ad.**
- **Relevance of the selected keywords to the search query.**
- **Landing page quality and relevancy.**

To keep this short and simple, try to make your ads and ad groups highly targeted and relevant. Also, always try to find room for a CTA. These two things together will give you relevancy and a good CTR; this in turn should give your ad a good quality score.



★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

The quality score is frustratingly hard to find..... Go into one of your individual campaigns and find the keywords tab. Hover over the little flags in the status columns and your score will appear in a temporary window.



Pros of PPC Marketing

- Instantaneous affect.
- Very precise targeting is possible.
- Powerful analytics to help evaluate ROI.
- Great potential ROI.
- Ideal for testing out and targeting new markets.



Cons of PPC Marketing

- Can be very expensive.
- Is complicated to use at first.
- Possibilities of some click fraud. (Google has measures to prevent the majority of this though).

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

PPC in three words the key to success is TEST, TEST, TEST. The more time you spend on testing your ads the better the ROI will be.

HTML EMAILERS (NEWSLETTERS)

HTML emailers are often known as email newsletters. They are a very powerful way to reach new clients and also to keep in touch with existing ones. The chances are you have received many of these in the past without paying too much attention to them. They typically come in two formats:

1. **A text only HTML email, it looks like a standard email but has some clever trickery going on in the back ground.**
2. **An image based HTML email typically with the same branding as the company website (and also with the clever trickery going on in the back ground).**

Both types of email will usually have:

1. **Sales copy, soft sell or hard sell, to drive you via one or more links to a sales webpage. (Soft or hard sell refers to how much you push the customer into buying a product).**
2. **Call to actions, these maybe there to drive a direct sale or they maybe there to drive you to a soft sell webpage etc.**
3. **An unsubscribe button. Usually at the bottom of the email so you have to scroll past all the juicy sales techniques before you can hit the button.**

★ ★ ★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★ ★ ★

Have a look in your inbox and keep any eye out for these emails. Try and spot the sales copy, the linking strategy and the CTA's. The more you observe this stuff the more you will realise its huge power to motivate buyers.

What you, as the recipient of these emails, often don't realise, is the huge amount of information that can be gathered from the sending of these emails for marketing purposes. These emails will sent be using either a specific HTML email provider or a piece of software. These sites and tools are often known as auto-responders. I will go into the backend data provided by these services in more detail, but first I want to explain how you go about setting one up.

There are many sites offering this service, but I would recommend using Aweber (www.aweber.com), it's the site I use for How to Sell Your Act, and it offers a month's trial for \$1. They also have great customer service and the technical capability of their site is by far the best that I have used so far.



Once you have signed up with either Aweber or a similar site you will have access to email templates, sign up forms, subscription management, email creation, subscriber segmentation and performance tracking.

- **Email templates** – These are the basis of your emails. You can alter them to display your branding etc. I would only ever consider using the full HTML emails with your branding in them, rather than the text only versions. For some purposes text only emails are preferable, however, for your act, brand awareness is the priority.
- **Sign-up forms** – Used to allow your customers and browsers to sign up for the newsletters. These can be on individual web pages or installed directly into your site. Typically, they ask for a name and an email address.
- **Subscription management** – Tools to manage your subscribers. This facility will allow you to keep track of every subscriber and what actions they do or don't take.
- **Email creation** – This is where you fit your content (copy and images) into a template. You will also put the weblinks back to your site in the emailer here.
- **Subscriber segmentation** – One of the more advanced tools, used to separate different types of customer, often based on actions they have taken. This allows you to target your emails to specific customers.
- **Performance tracking** – This section shows you who opened your email, who clicked on a link (if so, which link they hit), who unsubscribed and much more great backend information to help you assess the ROI of your emails. (I love this bit!)

★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

Whilst these emailers are often called newsletters, in almost all cases they are a just another marketing tool dressed up as a newsletter. Some interesting news about your business is a nice hook for an email, but don't forget this is about sales first and foremost.

List building

Once you have set up an account and a template email or two, you now need to create a list of email addresses. It's important to note at this point, if you make a mistake and send emails to the wrong people, you will be considered a spammer. This will not only hurt your brand reputation, but the sites that provide these email services are very likely to close your account if they think you are spamming people.

To get a good quality, non-spammy list, you can firstly encourage any visitors to your site to subscribe to your newsletter. Do this at the very least on your contact page



and make sure you do it with a strong CTA. You should also clearly put your privacy policy and the option of unsubscribing at any time here to build trust (which will help increase subscriptions).

If you already have an email address book full of your regular contacts, it is simple to export these contacts from your email account and then import them into your HTML emailer account. Each site and email account is slightly different but there will be very easy to follow guidelines on this, in the help sections.

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

The sooner you start list building the better. If you are in the process of having a website built make sure you put up a "coming soon" page and have a CTA along with a subscription form. A lot of personal email accounts can be set up so that every email address you contact can be automatically saved to your address book. All you have to do is export this list to your HTML email provider to keep your list up to date with new targeted contacts.

Email creation – Once again, we are back to good copywriting skills. Well written text, testimonials and multiple, strong call to actions should all be used in your emailers. You should be speaking directly to the recipients and offering them strong benefits from you and your company. You also need to link from the emailer to the most relevant pages of your site in order to make the customers browsing and buying experience as easy as possible. I also recommend using some really strong images in your email and using the images as links to your site.

Another powerful factor at this stage is the title of your email. The title should be eye catching and compelling. Ideally you want to ask a question, offer a solution or solve a problem, for example:

- **Looking for entertainers? Read on for more info....**
- **Need high quality entertainment? We have the answer...**

Professional marketers often carry out huge amounts of testing when they send out email campaigns. They try various different formats and see which ones provide the best responses in the performance tracking. Whilst I wouldn't suggest you get that involved, it could be well worthwhile sending half your list an email with one title and the other half the same email with a different title. You can then compare the two titles and see which gives the best opening and click through rates.

Sending out the emails – Once you have a list and an email ready to go, you need to set up the date and times you are going to start the campaign. You can set the emails to go out whenever you want, however you should always consider:



- School, national and religious holidays. You don't want to send the email to people when they are not in the office.
- Time of day and week. Mid week is often the best time as people are typically fairly productive. Try not to send it late in the working day when people are sometimes not at their best.
- Seasonal offers. At certain times of the year certain clients will be more active and certain acts will be more in demand. You can double check this using the Google keywords research tool to see when people search for which terms etc. However common sense and good instinct should go a long way here.
- In an ideal world, your email will drop into the inbox of an existing or new client, just as they are thinking about booking an act or planning an event. Whilst this does happen, the other more realistic, but still great potential outcome is you will remind your client of your act, company and branding. Hopefully if you keep reminding them, when they are looking for an act, you will pop straight into their mind. This factor can be particularly useful if you are suffering the "long wait" after contacting agents.

★★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★★★

When you have built up a large list, you will find that you get lots of enquires, bounce backs and out of office replies. It is well worth making sure you have plenty of free time to deal with all these on the day the email goes out.

Analysing the data

Once your campaign has been sent, the data in the performance tracking section will appear. For me personally I think this is where the real power of HTML emails lies. If you keep a close eye on your list stats and the stats for each campaign you send out, you can really see where the best ROI will be on the emails.

- **Opens** – This tells you how many times your emails were opened, how many of these opens were unique opens. (Bear in mind a lot these emails will just get deleted without being opened). If you get a unique open rate of 25% or more you are doing very well. If you get much below this you need to review the title of the email, the time you sent it and the quality of your list.
- **Recipient activity** – You can see exactly which subscribers opened, followed specific links, un-subscribed, etc. When you are looking at recipient activity you should be able to discover some great new leads for further marketing. If a particular subscriber has clicked on a few links it may be worth contacting them directly and seeing if there is anything you can help them with.



- **Link activity** – This shows which links created the most traffic to which pages on your site. Once you have sent out a few campaigns you can compare these links and see which ones drove the most traffic. This will then help you in creating more successful emailers in the future.
- **Bounce summary** – Often a proportion of your emails will show up as a bounce. There are a few different types of bounce and also a variety of reasons for these bounces. Hard bounces are the worst as this means the email didn't get delivered. Usually this is due to the email address no longer being valid. Most good HTML email accounts will automatically clean these addresses out of your list so that you don't waste emails.

Different email services will offer slightly different stats, but the above are pretty standard and are also the key stats that will help you make the most of emailing. As you send out more and more newsletters you will have more data to compare. The main focus should be on increasing both open and click through rates, as ultimately you want clients to look at your website where the good publicity material, testimonials and CTR's will kick into action.

★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

Don't be annoying. Clients don't need a newsletter every week, I send around four Juggling Inferno newsletters a year and if I need to drum up some work last minute I may send one or two more out in quiet periods.



Pros of HTML Emailers

- Very powerful marketing tool.
- Very flexible –can be used quickly and easily at any time of the year.
- Comparatively cheap to use.
- Great analytics to asses ROI.
- A good method of brand building.



Cons of HTML Emailers

- You need a website for it to be effective.
- A good list is needed to get any positive effects.

MORE USEFUL STUFF FROM GOOGLE

Google Analytics

Google analytics is an immensely powerful tool, if you don't have it on your site, get an account immediately. The sooner you do this the more invaluable data Google will start to provide for you. To get an account sign into Google Analytics with a Google account. You will then need to add your site to the system. You do this by generating a piece of code and having it installed on your site. I won't go into specific details, the Google help resources are great and it is all very easy.

I do want to discuss some of the main benefits of the analytics so you can use them for your SEO and marketing campaigns.

- **Dashboard** – This will give you an overview of the visits to your site plus an insight into what other information you can gain from the tool. You will notice a chart of your visits at the top of the page; you can tweak the dates on this to get results over the past weeks, month or years. This is very useful to see how and when your traffic has increased as your internet marketing kicks in.
- **Visitors overview** – Gives more detailed information about the number of visitors to your site. How many of them were repeat visitors, what browsers they used, how long they stayed on the site etc. Dig deep into this data, as it will give you some great clues to the quality of traffic being sent to your site.
- **Map overlay** – This shows you from where in the world you are getting your traffic. This tool is particularly useful if you are trying to hit international markets.
- **Traffic sources overview** – This one of my favourite elements of the tool. The overview tells you exactly where all your traffic came from. It breaks it down into which search engines, PPC adverts, referral sites, etc. So as well as being a great way to see if your SEO and PPC campaigns are on the mark, it's also very useful to see how much traffic is coming from paid directories, YouTube videos, Web 2.0 sites, etc. Not only that, but it also tells you all the KWP's that sent traffic to your site. This information is clearly very important. You can examine this in detail and you will see which KWP's are bringing high quality traffic from the search engine to your web pages. You might be surprised by which keywords are driving traffic to your website and once you know this you can tweak both your SEO and your PPC click campaigns to increase your overall internet marketing ROI.
- **Content overview** – Shows how each individual page is performing, with a wide variety of data and display formats. This tells you exactly which pages your visitors are looking at, and for how long – great info for evaluating the flow of your site.
- **Goals overview** – You can set up goals for your website. An example of this could be clicking from the home page to the contact page. Once you have set up the



goals, the tool will track them for you. This is a slightly more advanced feature for geeks and tech lovers.

★★★ TIM'S TOP TIPS ★★★

Google analytics offers a wealth of information that, if analysed correctly, will be a great benefit to your online marketing. The most important thing to do is make sure your account is set up and the tool is gathering stats. Once you have a good amount of stats you can use them to tweak your marketing to maximum effectiveness. Note – The brief pointers above are just a way in, to get the full benefit of the analysis you really need to have a good play around and explore the results in all the various formats provided.

Google Webmasters Tools

Google webmasters tools combined with Google analytics is a really great way to monitor your SEO and internet marketing efforts. As with analytics, you will need to generate and install a piece of HTML code into your site once you have set up an account (this is very easy to do). The webmasters tools provide some additional information about traffic sources as well as giving information on links to your site and the internal performance. A brief run through of the main features includes:

- **Dashboard** – An overview of the webmasters tools and links to all the more detailed information you will need. (The webmaster dashboard is a lot less complicated than the analytics dashboard which can be a bit overwhelming at first).
- **Search queries** – This shows you how many users searched for a certain term and then how your site performed for that term, it includes CTR, number of clicks and average position in the serps. This is great stuff and gives you clues as to which search terms are converting for you and how your rankings are doing.
- **Crawl errors** -Another techie tool, don't worry about this too much, if there are errors point them out to your web designer.
- **Keywords** – This feature shows which keywords appear the most in the content of your site. Use this as a rough guide to see if your on-site SEO is headed in the right direction. If this tool doesn't show your site as being relevant to your targeted KWP's then you need to tweak your copy accordingly.
- **Sitemaps** – Either you or your web designer needs to create a sitemap and then submit it here. It will make sure that Google crawls and ranks all the pages you want it to.



★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

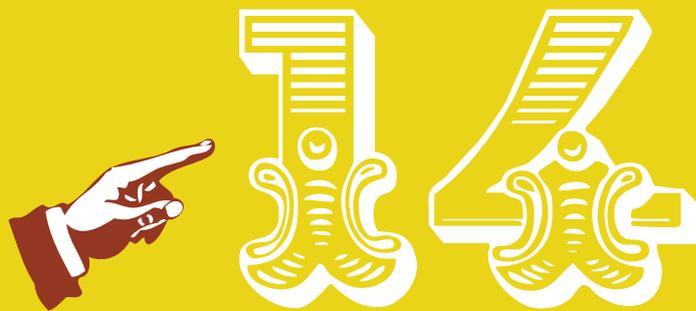
For the non-techs amongst my readers, just get your web guys to install both analytics and webmasters tools, it will definitely be of use to either you or your tech guys in the future. For the more technically advanced of you; Google analytics and webmasters tools can be linked together to provide additional data. You can also link your Google PPC click account to your analytics for further tracking benefits.

Google alerts

Google alerts are a great way to keep an eye on all your web marketing and link building campaigns. Just sign into your Google account and then go to Google alerts. You can set up alerts for any keywords you like and when Google comes across these keywords it will send you an email with a link to the relevant web page. You need to set up alerts for your act name, your company name and your .com. As you start marketing your site, you will see where and when Google is taking notice of your efforts. Whilst this tool is far from comprehensive, it does give you an idea of what is going on in the web. It also lets you know when other people are writing about you or your company online. Considering it takes a few minutes to set up it's well worth the effort.

★★★ **TIM'S TOP TIPS** ★★★

If you are getting lots of irrelevant alerts you can use negative tweaking to filter your results.



SHOW'S OVER FOLKS



So there we have it, that's pretty much it. Just in case you have any doubts about the power of the techniques I have just taught you, I would ask you to think back to when you bought this book. You may or may not have noticed, but, in selling this book I use the same techniques as I recommend you use to sell your act. Anyone who has bought this book will have experienced a combination of marketing techniques including (in no particular order):

- **SEO.**
- **PPC.**
- **Branding.**
- **HTML emailers.**
- **CTA's.**
- **Testimonials.**
- **Marketing copy.**
- **Video marketing.**
- **Along with some hard work and investment of time and money from myself.**

So if it worked for you guys why wouldn't it work on your potential clients? Just use the techniques that suit you and your act the most. Apply some time, hard work and a little money and I guarantee that you will get some good results. Good luck with it all and don't forget to hit me up online with questions, success stories and anything else of interest.

PS....One last thought. We, as entertainers, are paid to make people feel good. This position is a privilege in a world where many people are much less fortunate. I think it's worth trying to remember that as you sell and perform your act.



**THANK
YOU ★ ★**

MY APPRECIATION GOES OUT TO...

Everyone who has read this book, I genuinely hope in some small way it helps you get wherever it is in life that you want to go.

Also thanks to all my proof readers, this book is much better for your input!

The Creative Branch, for being the best web company in the world.

Thanks to all the folks on Facebook who helped me with the double meanings of band names and other random pieces of research.

Stewart Pemberton, for giving me no-nonsense straight talking Northern wisdom, which dramatically changed my path as a performer and a juggler.

Big thanks to Jago Parffitt and Jem Famous, for both employing me and advising me from day one. You two made a huge difference in my career.

Lucy Cox thanks for giving me a head start on SEO, and rubbing cream into my sore bits!

Thanks and respect to Flame-Oz for being amazing and setting the gold standard whilst still managing to party hard and travel the world.

Ozzie Rachel thanks for pushing me early on and putting a smile on my face after one of the most painful gigs of my career.

A massive thanks to anyone that has worked for me over the years, a huge thanks to all the Bristol crew and the J.I. regulars you guys rock!

Gwen thanks for being totally awesome as a colleague and an ex.

Finally thanks to my Mum and Dad for being great parents.

LEGAL NOTICE

TO THE BAD GUYS...!

This e-book is protected by international copyright laws. You do not have the legal right to re-sell, distribute or auction this e-book or a printed version. If you do so you are breaking international copyright laws and may be subject to fines and imprisonment.

Unique tracking codes are installed in every e-book and these codes can be used to track down illegal distribution of the book in any digital format. If you are caught sharing or stealing this book, you will be prosecuted.

TO THE GOOD GUYS...

You have permission (and it is strongly advised) to back-up this e-book to a cd or external hard drive. You also have permission to print a copy of the book for future reference.

TO ALL OF YOU....

A huge amount of time and money has gone into the creating of this book and website. www.howtosellyouract.com is not a big publishing company or record label, it is a small company owned by me and me only. Your agreement with the above will allow me to create more products to help people make a living from doing what they love.

Many thanks
Tim Marston