



Top Ten Questions to Ask Before Hiring an Entertainer

- 1. Are you insured?** This is a must for anyone entering your home or business. What if furniture, walls, carpeting were to be damaged, the spin art machine goes wild, or a chocolate fountain turns into Old Faithful? It's a cost of doing business and all professionals should have it for their protection as well as yours.
- 2. Do you have references?** Good to know if they have ever done this before and were the clients satisfied? Don't call anyone whose name starts with "Auntie" or "Pop-Pop" as they might be a little too familiar with the entertainer you are looking to hire.
- 3. What brand of supplies do you use and are they approved for use on skin (primarily for face painters and tattoo artists)?** Cosmetic products are okay in most circumstances, but glitter and paint from Staples, the hardware store, the craft store, or the school art room, are not.
- 4. Are you certified for your specialty, by an industry organization?** Certification is designed to establish and maintain quality standards in an industry. NOTE: Hall of Fame Status is also good, as these individuals represent the best in their category.

Makeup artists, beauty consultants and hairstylists have to be educated and licensed. Are your guests' faces, any less valuable? If certification is not required, but is advantageous (such as for make-up, face painting, or balloon decorating) and the entertainer is not certified, why not? If the entertainer is unaware of certification, or has not "gotten around to it" this should serve as a red flag.

- 5. Do you smoke, have facial piercings or ear gauges or wear a Bluetooth while working?** Whatever your personal feelings are about smoking, if a performer needs to take smoking breaks, then you are getting less value for your money. If they are answering the phone while working, then they are not dedicated to you or your guests. And facial piercings and ear gauges: okay for rock concerts, but for your daughter's birthday party or your corporate picnic...not so much.
- 6. Is this your full-time job? In other words: is it a career or a job?** This is only important if you want someone dedicated to their craft, being the best that they can be. Those that entertain full-time are not any more expensive than those who do it for extra cash on the weekends, and they are undoubtedly more dependent on your personal recommendation to friends and family when the party is over.

7. How many hours a week do you spend “unpaid” in practice, instruction, or teaching others your service? Again, this speaks to the credibility of the performer and whether they are exceptional enough to be sharing with others, or well-known as teachers in their field. Like any other career, entertainers need to stay abreast of technology and new/better products.

8. When was the last time you attended a workshop or a convention? Would you hire a surgeon that hadn't been to a medical conference in 20 years? How about a dentist that did not read current literature, or use the latest in pain-free technology (this is especially important to me, as I am a dental “chicken”!)

How about an airline that writes your ticket by hand? A lot has changed, especially in the body art industry, regarding safe products and hygiene...and the entertainer should be “staying current” by attending continuing education. A magician constantly needs to be updating new tricks, to continue to wow their audiences. And DJs? Remember when they brought two turntables to each gig?

9. How many other jobs do you have on the day of my event? Do you want someone on their 4th or fifth, or even 8th or 9th job that day, or do you want a fresh performer who gives 120% to your party? Sloppy seconds, ewwww.

10. Do you have reliable transportation, and do you have backup if you are ill on the day of my event? Or put another way, how important am I as a client? Doctors have colleagues covering for them, lawyers have “on call” help, pilots have a co-pilot. Isn't your event important enough to have a backup plan? And while you are at it, who is responsible for the backup plan? Is it YOU, the party host?

Then you better make sure you have lots of silly string, a nephew who can twist balloons and lead 20-30 children in multiple songs...just in case. A professional, conscientious entertainer has back up to help them in an emergency or in case of illness, so you and your guests receive every bit of the service and talent that you contracted for. If the backup plan is that the entertainer calls Cousin Peg, Uncle Harry, or will send a giant ELMO, don't walk, RUN away (picture me waving my arms and shouting “WARNING, WARNING, WARNING Will Robinson”)

Most importantly: listen to your little voice, your instincts! If your entertainer is hard to reach, uncooperative, or does not have the “stuff” to convince you they are the best that you can afford, then keep looking! Entertainers exist for every budget, for every age group, and are paid to make your party the WOW event that your friends and family talk about for weeks after. Extremely low prices may mean less-than-professional status, use of poor or inappropriate products and/or no training.



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