

# **7 THINGS YOU MUST KNOW BEFORE HIRING AN ASSEMBLY PRESENTER**

1. Don't pay extra for everything
2. Don't base your decision primarily on the price
3. Get the correct kind of testimonial claims
4. Hire someone who is an expert on your topic
5. Get additional support materials and optional programs
6. Get 100% reassurance that the presentation is age appropriate
7. Get a money back guarantee



**I URGE YOU TO GET COMFORTABLE, ASK NOT TO BE DISTURBED, AND STUDY THIS REPORT - IT IS THAT IMPORTANT! IT REVEALS VITAL INFORMATION THAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!**

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

Hiring an in-school assembly presenter can be a DIFFICULT and STRESSFUL job. There are so many things to watch out for. Here is the undeniable truth:

**HIRING THE RIGHT ASSEMBLY PRESENTER IS CRITICAL TO CONTROLLING AN AUDIENCE OF SEVERAL HUNDRED CHILDREN!**

I realize that you might not believe that right now but think about it for a minute. When you have an assembly program in school, for most schools this involves a presenter who is in front of several hundred students. If you hire the wrong person (inexperienced, inappropriate, etc.), the kids can and will walk all over the person or waste you and your school's time with outdated or wrong information on the subject you want a presentation for!

This report is going to give you the inside-scoop on what some entertainers, presenters, and agencies do to unsuspecting event planners. You'll be armed with the knowledge you need so you won't be "taken" by these people.

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

**WHO ARE YOU AND WHY ARE YOU REVEALING THIS INFORMATION?**

My name is Cris Johnson and I'm a youth speaker and an expert on character education programs. For the past 15 years my unique presentations consisting of magic, mind reading, motivation, comedy and audience participation have helped elementary, middle and high schools all across the United States.

I'm revealing information that most school assembly presenters don't want you to know for two main reasons:

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

**REASON #2:  
I HATE TO SEE BAD PERFORMERS RIP PEOPLE OFF AND MAKE ASSEMBLY  
COORDINATORS LOOK BAD. IT PUTS A BLACK EYE ON MY PROFESSION.**

Okay, now that you know who I am and why I'm doing this, let's talk about the "7 Things You MUST Know Before Hiring An Assembly Presenter."

**CRITICAL TIP #1:  
DON'T PAY EXTRA FOR EVERYTHING!**

Watch out for presenters who start adding on extra charges for coming to your school. Most presenters today charge a reasonable fee for the program itself, but many shady ones then start adding on extra expenses to make more money and drain your budget.

They use the price of just the program to often "lure" you in and then start adding on extra for things like: travel, extra for having to sit in traffic, extra for a certain part of town, extra for toll booths, extra for bringing in a sound system, etc. etc. etc. Often times these extra charges can end up costing more than the actual program. To make matters worse, these presenters will often times want a check for the program on the date they are at the school and then they will hand you a bill for their expenses which will be due within 30 days after the program. This means you'll have to cut two separate checks... not to mention going over your budget.

When looking at presenters, call around and try to go with someone that quotes you a price for EVERYTHING. Make sure that there are no hidden surprises and that the fee they quote you includes their mileage and everything else. Make sure you get an invoice, performance agreement or contract in writing that states the full fee with no surprises.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Choose a presenter that will not break the bank by adding on extra charges. His/her fee should cover the program, their travel expenses and even a sound system – meaning if the presenter agrees to supply one, you should not be charged separately. You should not have to pay for anything extra!

**EXTRA TIP:**

Many good presenters will give you a price break for multiple programs. For example, if you need two back - to - back programs, and a presenter charges \$1000, the presenter should not charge you \$1000.00 PER PROGRAM. He/she should be willing to give you the second program at a discounted rate, since he or she is already in your school, already set up. It just

makes sense. Also, look for presenters who will not only give you a price break for more than one program but also those who will let you split the cost of multiple programs with other schools in your same area. This will help you to save some big money!

**CRITICAL TIP #2:  
DON'T BASE YOUR DECISION PRIMARILY ON PRICE**

Wow! This is a biggie.

Of course, price is a factor when hiring an assembly presenter. If you only have a \$100 budget, you're not going to be able to hire the top assembly presenters to come and motivate or educate your students! However, many assembly coordinators place too much emphasis on price and not enough emphasis on the overall impact the presenter will have on their event.

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

Well, it certainly won't be just "perception" if you hire someone who charges you hundreds of dollars for a show that is, in reality, only worth a few dollars and they "bomb!" On the other hand, hiring the least expensive entertainer is not always the best way to go either.

Magicians, motivational speakers, and other performers are perceived as a dime a dozen - a commodity - by many assembly coordinators, and because of this they try to find the lowest priced performer. The fact is that each performer is unique and, like in any other profession, there are entertainers who are great, some who are good, some mediocre, and some who should never be allowed on stage!

You need to base your decision on the presenter who will best fulfill your needs and help you to achieve your desired outcomes, whether it's for a program to coincide with Red Ribbon Week near the beginning of the school year, or a character education campaign kick-off, or anything during the year.

One way you can know whether a presenter is going to meet your needs is by whether or not he or she asks you what your needs are and what outcomes you want to achieve with your event, your age groups, and so on. When you call

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

## **BEWARE!**

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

On another topic, be **EXTREMELY** careful if you decide to work with a local entertainment "agency." Many of these "agencies" claim they specialize in childrens' entertainment but they also provide entertainment for stag parties, bachelor parties and other adults-only events. Not only do these so-called kids' performers represented by these agencies typically offer inappropriate content, but they also are part time amateurs with neither the experience nor the training to offer value for you. It's a free country, but I personally would not feel comfortable bringing in an entertainer represented by an agency that deals with X-rated material. Before you decide to work with such an agent, research them and find out what kind of clients they solicit...you'll be glad you did.

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

## **CRITICAL TIP #3: GET THE CORRECT KIND OF TESTIMONIAL CLAIMS**

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

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

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

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

Another scam that entertainers pull on unsuspecting assembly coordinators is to offer testimonials that have no relation to presenting assemblies in schools. They’ll offer a testimonial from Mrs. Smith for little Johnny’s birthday party. I hate to say this, but just because the person was a big hit at little Johnny’s party in front of 15 kids, it doesn’t mean this person has any right to get up in front of 500 students and waste a school’s valuable time and PTA/PTO funds!

Discovering the truth is very easy. Ask the performer to give you SEVERAL testimonials from schools and ONLY schools, and even testimonials for whatever specific topic that you’re asking about. If the entertainer/performer can’t produce SEVERAL testimonials WITH the names of school administrators as well as the names and cities of the schools, you’ve caught them!

**EXTRA TIP #1:** Ask your prospective assembly presenter(s) for their “testimonial booklet.” This is simply a large collection of testimonial letters from school administrators, Performance Evaluation sheets, and other such material from past school clients. Most won’t have one. Of those that do, most will only be a few pages long, which reveals that they either: A) can’t get testimonials or B) they haven’t been working long enough to build a collection.

**EXTRA TIP #2:** Knowing how some schools have been “burned” by sub-par assembly programs, the very rare, dedicated, professional assembly presenter will even supply you with an audio CD of school administrators giving their thoughts about the programs. This is VERY valuable because it will allow you to hear, straight from the source, honest feedback about the presenter.

**BOTTOM LINE:** You should put a lot weight on performer’s testimonials when making your decision. Just make sure you are dealing with someone who is honest and ethical...and has a LOT of experience presenting school assembly programs.

## **CRITICAL TIP #4: HIRING SOMEONE WHO IS AN EXPERT ON YOUR TOPIC**

One big problem with many assembly presenters is that they start offering what they call an “educational” or “motivational” assembly program that has no educational value!

I’ve heard horror stories over the years from principals and PTA heads about so-called “presenters” who claim that they have a killer “Say No To Drugs” show and they’ll come in and do an amusing act, whether it’s a magic, juggling, or puppet act and then at the end say, “Kids, don’t do drugs!” And that’s it.

That’s the extent of their material for an anti-drug presentation.

This is, or should be, a crime! You need to ask questions about someone’s credentials when you’re trying to decide what kind of presenter to bring in. If the person is truly well versed, not only will they be able to give you a detailed description of what they do during their program but also specific examples of how their particular skill “ties in” directly with the program that you’re considering.

For instance, in my own work, I use a lot of magic to hold students’ attention, but everything I do on stage has a reason for being there—it also ties in and visually accentuates what messages I’m trying to get across to the children. In fact, many of my presentations were developed with the assistance of New York elementary schools.

On the flip side, you also need to be assured that whoever you bring in is not only a competent expert on whatever subject you’re searching for (whether it’s an anti-drug presentation, a bullying prevention program, reading assembly or what have you), but the presenter also has to be competent in whatever skill they use to enhance their program AND can effectively control a large audience of several hundred students, otherwise the children will become very bored and/or rebellious and tune the person out.

Three quick, true stories that will graphically illustrate what can happen when a sub-par presenter is brought to a school:

### **HORROR STORY # 1**

I recently did a program for a school in Western New York. It was for an “end-of-the-year” celebration. In addition to my act (it was the THIRD TIME in just six months that this school has brought me in), the event coordinators brought in a juggler. This gentleman told me after his show that the principal was NOT happy with his performance because he was hired to do a 45-minute presentation and he came up 20 minutes short! “I guess I should’ve timed myself, because this was the first time I’ve done a show for a school,” this person told me.

### **HORROR STORY # 2**

An assembly presenter from the mid-west and I had a recent conversation on the telephone (I also train other presenters and provide school assembly performance material to other presenters across the country). He explained that his competition’s program for self-esteem consisted of a 35-minute magic act that bored the children to tears because it was all skill magic with NO audience participation and NO humor at all. At the end of the show, this presenter explained that self-esteem was important because “without a good self-esteem he wouldn’t have become such a great magician.” And that was the “educational” part of his program!

### **HORROR STORY #3:**

I recently had the opportunity to visit another school to watch a show being presented by another magician/presenter. I always enjoy a good presentation, so I try to catch the best ones in areas around my home state. This person had a good, solid show, entertained the students and adults, was very clean with any humor, and captivated the audience...until the very end. At the end of the show, just before he turned things back over to the principal, he said, "Okay, before you go back to your classes, it's important that you be very quiet and listen to your teachers...and this is your last chance to yell and scream before you leave!!"

Oh my goodness, that was SO wrong! All of the good work and great feelings he cultivated for the majority of the assembly were wiped out by that last comment, which resulted in chaos and a very upset handful of teachers who had to herd a "mob" of children back to their classrooms. It doesn't matter how qualified a presenter is in his/her field, if the presenter doesn't understand or have the ability to effectively control large groups of children, then it's best to AVOID the presenter. Assemblies are a very specialized field and not everyone can do them effectively.

I myself use positive reinforcement, vocal inflection, non-verbal communication, and the establishment of proper behavior right at the beginning of the presentation through the use of a "control opening." At the end of the show, I use some highly effective techniques to bring the energy level of even the biggest groups way, way down before I turn things over to the principal and/or teachers.

**BOTTOM LINE:** You need to get assurances above and beyond the call of duty that the person you hire is not only a competent professional experienced in presenting assemblies for your age groups, but is also an expert on the subject you want the assembly to be about!

### **CRITICAL TIP #5**

#### **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS & OPTIONAL PROGRAMS**

Students will enjoy an effective in-school assembly presentation if it's presented well, but that's not enough! Most assemblies run about 45-minutes. That's the right length for a couple of reasons: Schools are very short on time and after the 45-minute mark, kids of almost any age begin to get restless

For that reason, for an assembly to have a LASTING effect on kids' lives, it's necessary that your presenter provide you with some simple follow-up materials. In my own work, I provide two or three pages of classroom discussion/project ideas that teachers can easily and instantly use to follow-up with the program the kids attended.



In an ideal situation, this type of approach “extends the life” of the assembly, ensuring that the program has lasting effects far beyond the original 45-minute presentation. The professional who understands this and provides you with such follow-up material is obviously more concerned with the positive effects of the subject as opposed to just doing their show and showing off! The experienced character education expert will also have additional reports and white paper with additional ideas and resources. Look for the professional who offers educational material on the warning signs of bullying, risk factors of drug abuse and other critical information.

**EXTRA TIP:** The very rare professional, knowing that continued education and support is necessary to ensure exacting positive change in students, will offer special programs for teachers and school administrators. These optional programs can offer diverse topics such as motivational messages, topic-specific data on character education concerns, learning tools, stress management tools and much more.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Not many presenters put that much focus on follow-up materials. If you can find the rare presenter in your area that does this, then you can usually be assured that this person cares deeply about the subject as well as the well being of those he/she presents to.

**CRITICAL TIP #6:  
GET 100% REASSURANCE THAT THE PRESENTATION  
IS SQUEAKY CLEAN AND APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR AGE GROUPS**

This is sooooo important especially in today’s day and age when part-time “presenters” think it’s funny or amusing to throw in a few subtle jokes or off-color remarks to try and appeal to the adults in the audience. It is vital that you make sure that the performer’s material is absolutely clean or trouble brews for you on the horizon. This holds true for school assemblies for any age. I recently heard a horror story from another presenter somewhere in New England. It seems that there is a clown performer/presenter running around in that area doing shows using all kinds of double-entendre humor, but the worst thing is his “skit” involving a ladies’ undergarment... which is by itself in extreme poor taste, but this “entertainer” also does it on small children!! I’ve heard of other such disgusting displays in my own area as well and it burns me up.

**BOTTOM LINE:** You need to not only ask whether the performer’s material is clean, you have to insist and emphasize that it **MUST** be clean **AND** appropriate for the age ranges you’re targeting. If the presenter’s material is too juvenile, the older kids will tune the presenter out. Of course, the reverse is true, too.

Also, and this is REALLY important, the best presenters will be able to offer different programs for different age groups on the same topic. Many schools have found it to be very beneficial to have a presenter do two programs back-to-back in one day so that the different age groups will get the quality kind of presentation they need and deserve.

For instance, in my own work, I offer a “Just Say No” program. For the younger kids, the emphasis is on some harmful effects of drugs as well as some critical segments that deal with what people will say or do to trick you and even some role-playing so students understand exactly what to do if approached, while the programs for older grades include more of an emphasis on the harmful effects of drugs and WHY kids need to say no for older kids. School administrators and students alike will appreciate the differences.

### **CRITICAL TIP #7: GET A MONEY BACK GUARANTEE**

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

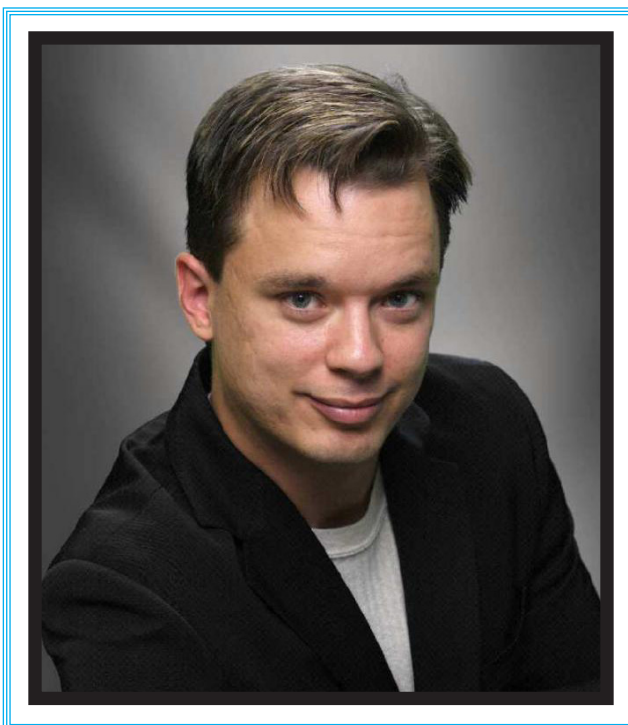
This is the ultimate test as to whether someone really believes in what they are offering or if they are just full of hot air. If a performer really believes in the quality of their program, they shouldn't hesitate to guarantee it.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Some performers may argue that people will take advantage of them if they offer a guarantee. This is a bunch of bunk. I have ALWAYS offered a rock-solid, no-questions-asked 100% guarantee and in the 15 years that I have offered a guarantee and over the thousands of performances, no one has EVER requested their money back. In fact many schools have me back year after year. This past year, for example, one school hired me THREE times in a six-month period!

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

Well, there you have it. Obviously, if you're a seasoned assembly coordinator you may have already known some of the secrets revealed in this report. But I hope you found a few gems that you can use to ensure that your next event turns out exactly as you want it so you get the quality programming that you and your students so richly deserve.

If I can help you or if you want to contact me, please call **(716) 940-8963**



Best,  
**CRIS JOHNSON MAGICIAN & MOTIVATOR**

P.S. For more details about my programs, visit my website, [www.ElementarySchoolAssemblies.com](http://www.ElementarySchoolAssemblies.com) You may e-mail a request to: [crisjohnsoninfo@verizon.net](mailto:crisjohnsoninfo@verizon.net), or you may call me direct at **(716) 940-8963**

P.S.#2. Be sure to request my FREE booklet, "9 Secret Sources Of Funding For Assembly Presentations."