

Fig 2.12

Another example of an eye-catching layout. In this instance, there are two sets of cheeky eyes that look back at a casual observer. That's good, because it keeps the inquirer fixed on the text that conveys the simple message.



<p>Good</p> <p>More is less!</p>	<p>Better!</p> <p>Less is more!</p>
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Fig 2.13 (left)

An example of 'less is more', and 'more is less'. It's always tempting to use the whole picture when just a close-up of the face effectively conveys the same meaning... but has much more impact.

Fig 2.14 (below)

Although the advertisement occupies a small space, it still manages to convey effectively three vital messages, i.e. i) Funny Magic, ii) I offer two types of shows, iii) a reassurance quote.

Less is More (mostly)!

Suppose you were, say, a clown and wanted to design an advertisement that pictorially described your services. It would be tempting to use a piece of artwork that depicted the whole body. However, the same message is conveyed but with much more impact if you used just a cropped head and shoulders close up. **Fig 2.13** shows the concept. Now look back at the dreadful advertisement display of **Fig 2.9** and you will instantly see how a small change in the size and format of the cartoon picture could dramatically improve the advertisement's layout (although it would still be far too wordy).

Fig 2.14 illustrates an example of using a cartoon animal. The first message conveys, 'Magic that is Funny'; the second message says that I offer two types of shows, the 1-hour or the 2¼-hour stress-free package; and finally there is the reassurance message quoted from an actual letter that I have on file. **Fig 2.15** shows a higher 1-column wide layout.

"John Breeds is undoubtedly the children's No 1 choice for a funny, exciting and magical extravaganza to remember!" 17 Pittsfield, Cricklade

FUNNY MAGIC
...for children

01793 750620
1-hour Package or 2¼ hour Stress-Free Package
www.magicboxcapers.com

**IT'S
MAGICAL
JIMMY BEAN**

**SPECIAL MAGIC TRICKS
GUITAR and SONGS
DISCO and GAMES
AMAZING BALLOON
MODELLING**

Children's Parties, Fêtes, Playgroups,
Schools, Christmas Shows and
Magic Walkabouts for Promotions

magicboxcapers.com
01793 750620

17 Pittsfield, Cricklade, Swindon

Fig 2.15 (above)

Another example of how the eye is drawn into the text. However, the risk with this column width is that the advert could be positioned next to the gutter (where opposite pages meet) and this reduces the visual impact.

Fig 2.16 (below)

Another example of a small size Yellow Pages advertisement. The talk balloon calls your attention to act. However, there is still the 'pot luck' risk that the advert will be next to the gutter.

JOHN BREEDS
www.magicboxcapers.com

17 Pittsfield, Cricklade

01793 750620

**"PLEASE CALL
NOW FOR A
FUN SHOW!"**

Entertains Children

- ✓ 45 mins or the whole Party!
- ✓ Sing-alongs with a guitar!
- ✓ Puppets, games and balloons!
- ✓ Marvellous magic!

Entertains Adults

- ✓ Superb close-up magic!
- ✓ Private functions!
- ✓ Corporate events!
- ✓ Walkabouts!

**MAGIC CIRCLE MAGICIAN!
SEE
WEB SITE!**

Some Silly Typo Errors

It seems that, so far, I have been extolling the virtues of advertising in Yellow Pages. So now let's look at the flip side. A limited budget may constrain you to a text-only advert. All you do is supply 'your' wording, and Yellow Pages will do the rest by way of layout, etc. However, what you get is usually what you supplied... including the spelling mistakes. So, demand a proof from them before publication. Get several friends to check for any spelling blunders. Often, you are too close to your own work to spot the typographical errors.

I am often convinced that some typesetters employed by these companies just cannot spell, nor do they have an ability to recognise errors that you have submitted. I believe it is their responsibility to help you, correct spelling errors and advise you of better wording, but mostly they don't! Here are some spelling errors extracted from directory adverts. The correct word is shown in brackets.

- i) We no how to entertain you. (know)
- ii) Proffessional Magic at it's best. (Professional/its)
- iii) Childrens entertainment. (Children's)
- iv) Magic for all occassions. (occasions)
- v) We can acommodate you. (accommodate)
- vi) Summer Fates included. (Fêtes)
- vii) No job to small. (too)
- viii) Complete with liarable insurance. (liability)
- ix) Complete partys are speciality. (parties/our)
- x) Freindly service. (Friendly)
- xi) Competative rates. (competitive)
- xii) Your better off with us! (You're)
- xiii) Staring our magic Rabbit, Whiskers. (Starring)
- xiv) Can also perform Adult magic. (the phrase 'Adult magic' often conveys blue or pornographic material – 'magic for adults' is clearer – or better still: Entertains Adults, see Fig 2.16).

Don't Waste Money – Be Cost Effective!

It costs more money to use large spaces for adverts in Yellow Pages or Thomson Local – the larger the advert, the more it costs. Mostly, these adverts are *not* as cost effective as a web site! So, use this type of advert to guide an inquirer to your fabulous web site! Remember, if there are fewer monetary outgoings on advertising, then your net profits dramatically increase. Use as small a space as possible in these directories to lead inquirers to your more cost effective web site. Fig 2.17 shows an example.

JOHN'S MAGICBOX

How to Make Your Child's Party
Unforgettable! - 01793 750620
www.magicboxcapers.com

Fig 2.17

The main purpose of this ad is to get clients to look at your web site.

Advertising Copywriting

Sometimes, it's necessary to write text, as opposed to including pictures, to sell your services.

Obviously, it's an advantage to have a reasonable knowledge on how to write effective advertising copy. You could hire a professional copywriter to help you (at great expense), but it's a skill that you could easily learn, even if it's just the basics, see **Fig 2.20**. There are hundreds of books about advertising and copywriting. But here are a few guidelines that may help you.

- i) No matter what your advertising medium, drive your message home by making it personal. No mum wants to deal with someone who sounds stuffy and unfriendly.
- ii) Commas everywhere really distract the reader's eye. And the message gets lost because the reader is trying to make sense of the sentence. Keep your sentences short enough to avoid lots of commas. Inexperienced writers often make sentences too long. Cut long sentences into smaller pieces. But don't make them too short, as it will have an irritating staccato effect.
- iii) It's perfectly okay to use And, But and Because to begin a sentence, so long as that sentence takes over from the previous sentence. This makes your written word flow and ease of readability increases.
- iv) The most important word in direct mail copy (aside from 'free', of course) is not 'you,' as many of the textbooks would have it, but the personal pronoun 'I'. Use a sensible balance of 'you' and 'I'. Avoid battering the reader to death with a never-ending attack of 'you'.
- v) A big tip... try to visualize your customer and talk directly to him/her as if you were on the telephone. Just record your own voice. Keep in mind that you are selling, and that you're substituting the written word for the spoken word. Then write down exactly what you have said. You'll be amazed at the result!
- vi) A well-known technique in *illustrated* advertisements is to make use of 'white space'. However, for written-text type advertisements nobody can read a message of just white space! So, use the space for your message.
- vii) Write about features and benefits. Start strongly and put a big benefit in your main headline on the front. Develop a big benefit immediately and use the first sentences to summarize what

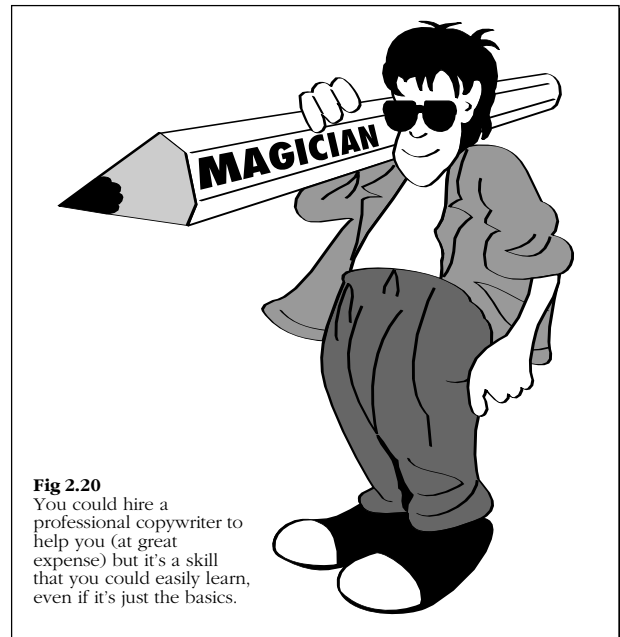


Fig 2.20
You could hire a professional copywriter to help you (at great expense) but it's a skill that you could easily learn, even if it's just the basics.

the rest of the brochure will detail. Give prospects a variety of convenient, no-hassle ways to respond. You'll lift your overall response just by offering choices.

The Passive Voice

Avoid 'passive' verbs. When you can, replace them with 'active' ones. A verb describes the action part of a sentence. Active verbs not only 'lift' the text and make it livelier but also shorten the sentence length. Here are some common examples used by magicians in their advertisements and brochures, and how to turn the passive voice into an active one:-

Examples of 'Passive' and 'Active' verbs

- i) Adults may also be *entertained* by Uncle Whizzo.
Uncle Whizzo also entertains adults.
- ii) A Gift is *given* to the birthday child by Uncle Whizzo.
Uncle Whizzo gives a gift to the birthday child.
- iii) *Presented* by Uncle Whizzo.
Uncle Whizzo presents...
- iv) All functions *catered* for by us.
We cater for all functions.
- v) Uncle Whizzo may be *contacted* on 45321.
Contact Uncle Whizzo on 45321.

Have a colourful page link on your web site where the client can print off their own Birthday Invitations, see **Fig 2.25**. Of course, the printing here in black and white hardly conveys how attractive and exciting the finished invitation is when printed in colour. This personalised invitation serves two purposes:- firstly, the client effectively advertises you and therefore endorses you to every parent whose child is coming to the party. And secondly, you are obtaining permission to video the birthday children (read the small print on the reply part). If you video or take photographs of a child without the parent's consent then you leave yourself wide open for prosecution, as it is a very serious offence in the UK. The PC brigade in Britain has gone completely overboard!

Promotional Material

There are many other forms of printed material to advertise your wares. The whole point is to find a cost-effective way to get a potential booker to keep your name and telephone number and respond accordingly. The simpler it is for a booker, the better! As already stated, much of this depends on your budget.

Whenever and wherever possible, your name and telephone number should be printed on any item that you sell or give away. Some of these include balloons, hats, pens and pencils, badges, food boxes, simple tricks, magnetic credit cards, colouring books, party bags, party invitations, etc. However, I personally have not found these forms of promotional advertising to be very cost effective. It can be quite complicated to try to build these costs into your fee, and I found that the extra time and effort wasn't worth it.

Billboard Advertising

Advertising on a Billboard is too expensive. But what about using your own car as a mobile Billboard! **Fig 2.26** shows an example of how effective large magnetic transfers can be. Coloured customised transfers are expensive, so it pays to shop around specialist companies. Approach the Marketing Director of a New Car Dealer. Sell him the idea of putting the Dealer's name on your car as the official sponsor. They will particularly like the idea if you are going to purchase a new car from them!

On your days off, leave the car near the front entrance of a supermarket. Thousands of mums will see your details.

Let Children Advertise for You

Another approach is to get a child to 'sell' you and your act to their mummy. I actually incorporate a mini commercial near the end of my act. Basically, I get a few "Yes" responses from the children – the gist of it is:-

Me: "Did you like the magic?"
 Children: "Yes."
 Me: "Did you like the funny tricks?"
 Children: "Yes."
 Me: "Would you like to see some more?"
 Children: "Yes."
 Me: "Well, tell mummy all about me and I could pop around to your house on your birthday!"

This gets a few laughs from the adults in the audience... but it usually results in an inquiry!



Fig 2.26
 An example of how effective large magnetic transfers can be. The transfers are not permanent as with sign writing, so when you decide to sell the car just peel them off. Get your local New Car Dealer to sponsor you to cover the cost. Leave the car near the entrance of a supermarket.