



# Want to **Wow** at **Work?**

## *3 Secrets From The Business Magician*

*By Kostya Kimlat*

Have you ever done something difficult at work, but made it look easy? Solved a problem, helped a client or negotiated a deal in a way that astounded your colleagues? Felt amazing, right? Inspiring delight and wonder is powerful, even addictive. It's what drives magicians to do what they do and why people love them for it.

What most people don't realize about magic shows, though, is that it's not all props and performance. To truly surprise and delight, a seasoned magician uses his or her mind. And you don't have to run away with the circus, or even learn a single magic trick, to apply magical thinking to your business or career.

I've been a magician for over 20 years, specializing in teaching businesses the secrets of magic and how those insights can improve communication, sales and client relationships. As a speaker, trainer and facilitator, I teach that magic is a rich source of thinking tools. Those tools apply to any organization and any industry, but they also apply to individuals. You can make magic work for you, at work.

To prove it, I'm going to share a few magicians' secrets that can help you improve your career in the following areas:

- Innovation and lateral thinking
- Perception management
- Social intelligence

### **INNOVATION AND LATERAL THINKING**

Magicians have always had to work backwards: They come up with a surprising effect and then devise a means to accomplish it. They must consider all mental, visual and physical tools available. That's why magicians were the first to employ mirrors, magnets, and electromagnets, and why they are often a decade or two ahead of the mainstream in using new technologies or scientific principles to surprise their audiences.

And to continue astonishing people, a magician can't stick with the same tactics. Their tricks must constantly evolve, but - here's the key - their approach to developing new material stays the same: Magicians start the creative process by acting as if anything is possible. They don't limit themselves.

To be creative and innovative, you have to be able to see existing resources as more than they are, you have to seek methods and technologies unknown to you (and maybe to others). You can't do any of those things when you decide preemptively that any end goal - a new product, service, client or corporate structure - is outside the range of what's possible.

Magicians start the creative process by expanding that range to include anything and everything. That mindset is the takeaway that you can apply in the workplace, whether you directly manage 30 people or write code for a living.

## PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT

However creative, no magician's trick is complete with only physical tools and technologies. To fool someone, a magician has to do something the other person doesn't know, recognize or perceive. Knowing and managing an audience's perceptions are what make the trick.

Similarly, to be the most magical person in your office, it's not enough to just be creative. You must also accurately understand what people around you perceive - what they believe and expect.

If you're going to communicate better, produce better, manage better or sell better, you need to know what others see. How? The Fortune 500 companies I consult with might perform surveys of thousands, but you can collect this information easily (and much more quickly) if you're OK with informal feedback.

Before an important meeting with a client, your boss or employees, perform your own survey. Do some digging on what your investors believe about your company before you present. Find out what delighted or disappointed at the last board meeting - and why.

Simply taking the time to do this will put you ahead. Do the work beforehand to more deeply understand what others believe they know, how they see you and what they are looking for, and you'll be able to deliver and even dazzle by going beyond expectations.

## SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Really successful magicians aren't just good at tricks. They're great entertainers. They pull people in. They enchant. Why? They read people in a way others don't. They take our second secret a step further. Perception management - the ability to understand how people perceive you and what you do - is a skill that can be learned, developed and refined. Practice taking others' perspective long enough and you'll develop a powerful tool: social intelligence.

Magicians influence imaginations and suspend reality, but influencers of all types practice the kind of empathy that rises to the level of social intelligence. Being a great thinker doesn't just mean having great thoughts; it's understanding and anticipating the thoughts of others. It's knowing how they think and feel and making informed guesses on how they will react. It's about being ready instead of reacting in panic. And you can do the same thing at the office.

Constantly assess what those above, below and beside you are perceiving, what they expect and how they feel. Do this not just during crucial moments, but at every point of interaction. Do it well enough and it will be what sets you apart. It will become your magic, your own wow factor.

## WHAT BEING MAGICAL AT WORK REALLY MEANS

Now, I realize magicians are known for fooling people. That's part of the performance and the fascination. A magician is, as Carl Germain wrote, the only one honest about his lying. But magic is not just a matter of technical, mechanical or visual trickery. Magicians see people differently. That's my core message: Learning to Think Like a Magician™ can help you avoid misperceptions and miscommunication by more deeply considering others.

Being more magical at work isn't about deception or manipulation; its about being better at how you communicate and collaborate. And you don't need any cards or wands to create magical experiences.

With these three magician's secrets, you can amaze your co-workers by bringing innovation and lateral thinking to your job, wow them by anticipating what they're going to think or say at the next meeting and astonish them with your masterful ability to connect and communicate with anyone you meet.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

*Kostya Kimlat is a keynote speaker and corporate magician who fooled Penn & Teller on their hit TV show, "Fool Us". Kostya speaks to businesses about how to Think Like A Magician™ to improve sales and customer service. For more information about Kostya Kimlat, please visit [www.KostyaKimlat.com](http://www.KostyaKimlat.com)*