

# Hiring A Professional Thief....

IT COULD BE JUST WHAT YOUR CLIENT NEEDS!

Bob Arno is a professional thief. With a unique background that includes a multi-faceted aspect that serves him particularly well in a corporate entertainment environment, Bob has experience in law enforcement, comedy, business, marketing and special events production.

His experience has taken him everywhere, as he is regularly pulled overseas for reasons ranging from his anti-crime seminars to interrogating suspects of identity theft and cyber crimes across the globe.

He is probably the only professional thief you would hire to impart a message to your employees or audience. To be more precise, Bob is a professional pickpocket and aside from showing major companies how to keep from getting scammed, he also gives advice in his presentations that individuals can use to keep themselves safe in everyday life.

But, what Bob really offers in the economic climate of today is the 'WOW!' factor for those who want an experience with performer with media credentials while maintaining a budget that reflects a responsible event holder. Making regular appearances on major networks and many cable outlets, Bob represents an unprecedented value in an affordable entertainment, education and motivational experiences for clients.



What's perhaps most impressive is his diversity of skill; he seems to display his skills equally well whether the audience is law enforcement officers, evening theatergoers or corporate event clientele. Two recent examples tell the tale; his comedic skills are such that he did very well at the 2008 Just For Laughs comedy festival and his corporate event acumen is sufficient for presentations done for IBM.

In Bob's own words, he combines reality and crime with comedy. "I know it sounds like a hard-fought goal to combine the two, but I feel the world is filled with cons, scams and shams in one way or another and I prick holes in the balloons of ego and people who proclaim to be one thing but are not. I use some skills that some mask as psychic but are commonly known as cold reading. It is really about seeing people for what they truly are."

Bob's show (where he derives most of his income) encapsulates these skills in a way that allows all of the audience to benefit from his ability to get to know people quickly. "We teach the crowd how to quickly establish rapport with each other when they sell a message. I do that by using a lot of audience participation that generally centers around pick pocketing. Those are my main skills, but I am also a good communicator as a keynote speaker as well."

While Bob can effectively impart a variety of messages to audiences, his primary use is in a purely entertainment-driven form. "I would say people usually hire me because they want to laugh and have fun. In the last ten years, there has been a lot of areas where the client wants to hire someone for entertainment, but also seek say, 20% of a message embedded within that.

"There are people who are great motivational speakers who can combine humor with a message and there are many ways of doing just that. "I do it by essentially showing how gullible we all can be and how we can certainly learn how not to be gullible. I use pick pocketing and diversion techniques (magicians call it misdirection) to call attention away from whatever I am doing. Misdirection is of course used in politics, sales and throughout the course of my show."

One aspect that makes Bob such a great candidate to work with (and one that becomes immediately apparent upon speaking with him) is that he is intimately familiar with this market, what it requires and what the unique challenges of its pro-

fessionals are. This gives him the insight it takes to work with nearly any client in coming up with an apt performance for their purposes. However, one point Bob readily acknowledges is that his services can be somewhat hard to quantify for the uninitiated. "I wouldn't say it is exactly a piece of cake to sell," he laughs. "Meaning a producer who is calling up an investment bank or insurance company or other major corporation and says 'I have this great pick pocket you have to hire!' may need to put into context exactly how my services will fit their theme. The event planner will wonder, 'Why would I hire a thief to come and have fun with my client? Won't that cast a dubious message?' So, the first task is to relay that there is nothing dangerous or subversive about this show; in actual fact it teaches everyone how to be alert, aware and to read people better."

Working with Bob leads to a veritable trove of his miscellaneous gems of planning wisdom. "I think where we most fail is in understanding perception. We may come with a message where we are trying to sell a property, good or service and all we think about is the sale and staying on point.



We have these bullet points from management we are trying to push, when in actual fact we need to listen to and read the opponent or person with whom we deal. What I do in my show is teach how we can learn to read micro expressions. This could be a forehead that suddenly has more of a wrinkle relaying the receipt of a confusing message or someone who lowers their eyes that may not be paying attention. At all times, when it comes time to try either to sell, market or communicate in any other way, you need to be able to listen and look at the other person and either hold back or move forward based on how receptive they are."

Bob is all too well aware of how different factors, both geographically and culturally, can affect the climate of any meeting. "These observations can

help to develop a language that is politically correct with the party you are negotiating with. If you are dealing with the Asian people there are subtleties if they are Chinese or Thai. If you are working with Europeans you deal with Germans in one way and the English another. Jump continents to South America and there is an entirely different commonly accepted practice. I am not pretending my show is all about international language, but more a core of understanding the people your working with and how to more intuitively read their reactions to your moves."

By taking people up on stage and performing his various pick pocket demonstrations, Bob parallels the ways in which keen observation and astute communication can not only keep one safe from thieves, but lend an effective edge in all forms of communication. "I get people up on stage and point out their mode of dress, their pace, the way they lean, the grip of their handshake and how they hold their general posture. These are all small details that on paper may be hard to define, but when you have someone standing in front of you can be instantly summarized for your benefit."

This allows the sort of snap judgments not previously practical, as was touted in the popular book, *Link* a couple of years ago where quick decisions based on intuition are explained as the most effective. This is derived from the notion that our subconscious minds make up the greater part of our intelligence and that tapping into that is the real key to our success."

Bob points out an example of this sort of non-verbal cueing that we can all understand and relate to in the familiar cadence and characteristics of our president-elect's recent campaigning. "You would be amazed at

the success or failure of politicians based on people's snap judgments of them. Take Obama for example, his speeches around the country seemed to make up people's minds about him rather early based on his voice pitch, mannerisms, dress mode and open clarity and face. People make that determination within the first 20 seconds or so."

The finer points of cold reading are not something that can be taught by anyone in one session. But Bob says he can instill some basic tenets of the technique in the limited time he has with his audiences. "You cannot make an expert out of everyone, but you can rattle them. I can tell people that where we have failed here in the United States in the last 5 to 10 years (or certainly since 9/11) is in taking so many things for

granted. For example, young people don't read newspapers anymore and there are no longer network hour-long daily news programs, everything is scaled back to 30 minutes. This is all indicative of our society seeming to have lost its attention for anything with depth, clarity and an intellectual basis. What I am saying is that we have become lackadaisical and what I am trying to do is show in my presentation how we can be more careful. How heavily that message is focused depends on the client and their particular needs. A client has the right to swing the pendulum of content from one extreme to the other. Some may say 'Give me only 10% content and 90% Ra-Ra and hilarity' for a relaxed dinner show. Other will find themselves with a daytime luncheon keynote with 50% content and 50% fun. I always sit down with the client and find out what the common denominator among their audience will be. Then we can decide how much of the reality they can handle."

Bob not only is willing to work on an individual basis with his clients, he is adamant about it. "I insist with my speaker bureaus who book me and even in my contract that there has to be a decent level of communication between the client and I before the show commences. That usually takes around 30 minutes and generally consists of a conversation that involves the clients and speaker's bureau representatives and myself."

In this call, clients find themselves on the business end of what Bob does best (in only a positive way of course). "During this I do what I would call a very light interrogation in which I ask 'what are the goals of the client? What have been the hardships of the last six months? What are they hoping to accomplish with the event itself?' If a company is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on airfare, hotel costs, food, entertainment, speakers and the like, you better have some very clear ideas of what that event will accomplish."

Bob has an array of interesting and unique traits for buyers to consider. Aside from the obvious qualifications he closes with a few examples of how inviting him in to entertain or inform your audience can be a good move. "One of the things I have found is that I am essentially booked in 3 different ways. The first is because all or part of the audience is international, meaning there could be a portion of Americans with worldwide representatives scattered in the audience or there could be a company with a home office in another country." What you dear reader's can't read in the quotes here or see in the photos is that Bob himself is European and still carries a recognizable but not too thick Scandinavian lilt in his voice and has an international perception of the world. "A lot of companies want to make sure they have an entertainer that will amuse their

American audience but still not be perceived as a Midwest stand-up from a comedy club. This allows for a certain consideration with international audiences who may not be as familiar with our customs."

The second reason is that Bob is able to quickly impart communication skills to attendees. "Many times clients are concerned with a large group of new representatives they would like to communicate with as quickly as possible after the event. This breaks down barriers and forms the glue that helps them chat with each other and work together. My show's audience participation helps to do this in a tasteful way."

The final scenario is for the events that simply want to be remembered. "When clients want that 'WOW' factor my show can provide a way for everyone to be enthusiastic. They may have seen me take off their CEO's tie or steal his watch without his noticing or they may have been fooled themselves, but either way no one will forget it. It is very important to find better and different shows for their audiences and I believe I can provide a real value and different approach for event planners and producers."

**BOOK IT!** For more information on bringing Bob Arno to your next event, contact him at (702) 870-0013 or [bookinginfo@bobarno.com](mailto:bookinginfo@bobarno.com)

