



Module 1: Your Introduction to Becoming a Balloon Modeller

- About the balloon modelling industry
- What it takes to make it in this line of work
- Why you must be able to separate your personal problems from your public performance
- Why setting up your own business is the only way to make it as a balloon modeller

In this module you will learn:

- Setting up your own business is the only way to make it as a balloon modeller
- You will need to make sure that you have what it takes before you start out
- Setting up a balloon modelling business is not expensive but does require great organisational skills
- Excellent balloon modelling skills are not enough to make it in the business on their own
- Why you must be able to separate your personal problems from your public performance

1.1: Introduction



Working as a balloon modeller can be an extremely rewarding career choice.

The aim of this course is to turn you in to a full competent balloon modeller. The lessons taught will enable you to establish your own successful business.

At the end of the course there is a short assessment in the form of a multiple choice test. Once you have completed this you will receive the Balloon Modelling Academy Diploma Award.

Balloon Modelling Theory

The course consists of 25 modules. The first 11 (including this one) cover the theoretical aspects of the career guiding you through a range of topics and issues from the equipment you need to how to perform health and safety and risk assessments.

Balloon Modelling Practical

The next 14 modules are more practical in nature. In these modules we will show you have to make some of the most commonly requested balloon models. These will include a variety of animals in addition to models such as hats, fairy wings and swords.

The practical modules will guide you through each model with both pictorial and video instructions. Once you have studied these you will be asked to practice the techniques yourself. For this you will need to have the basic tools of the trade (these are covered in greater detail in module 3).

You will have lifetime access to the course so any time you feel the need you can come back and revisit any of the lessons.

You will have the opportunities to meet new people from all different walks of life and to see places that you have never seen before. If you have decided that you would like to make balloon modelling your next career move, this also means setting up your own business and going it alone.

FACT



Balloon modelling or balloon twisting is the shaping of special modelling balloons into almost any given shape, often a balloon animal.

1.2: Establishing Your Own Business



As a balloon modeller you will have the opportunities to meet new people from all different walks of life and to see places that you have never seen before.

If you have decided that you would like to make balloon modelling your next career move, this also means setting up your own business and going it alone.

Unfortunately, there are no umbrella companies out there who hire balloon modellers on an agency-type basis.

Setting up your own balloon modelling business will mean that you work as your own boss and that you don't have to answer to anyone but yourself. This can be incredibly liberating as it means that you will have the freedom to take time off whenever you want and work only part-time if it suits you better.

Of course, the hours you work will depend to a great extent on your clients, as there is not much demand for a balloon modeller at 3am on a Wednesday night, but Saturday afternoons might be much more popular.

If you want to start working as a balloon modeller, then you will need to have the right skills set. A good balloon modeller will have a very extensive repertoire of balloon models that he or she can make whenever they are required to. You cannot start a life as a professional balloon modeller if you can only make a handful of different shapes. You need to be able to respond to requests and dazzle your customers if you are to pick up any repeat business, or if customers are to tell their friends and family to hire you for their events.

You should spend a lot of time practicing and building up your modelling skills before you start looking for work or accept any bookings. You will also need to be a good performer.

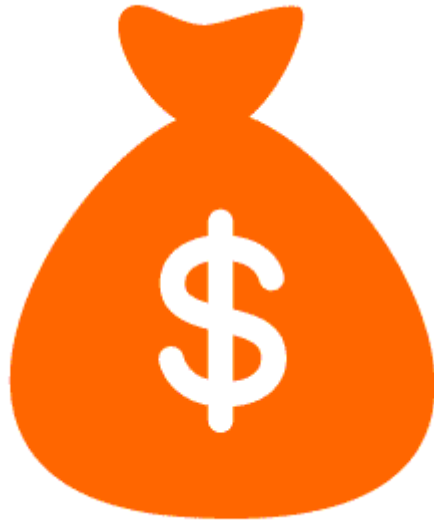
Balloon modelling is an impressive skill, but it is not entertaining for long periods of time, unless you can combine it with comedy, wit and storytelling. If you are not comfortable performing in public, then this is definitely not the career for you.

As your own boss, it will be your own responsibility to take and manage bookings. You will have to be extremely organised in order to manage your own diary and to make sure that you have enough time to travel between bookings and that you never forget about a party or a commercial event and miss it altogether. Not turning up to an event that you have been booked for without giving plenty of prior warning is probably one of the biggest mistakes that you could make in your career as a balloon modeller. If you are not seen to be reliable then nobody will recommend you to others and you will struggle to drum up business.

Setting up your own business will give you the chance of having a fresh start.

Going it alone will mean that you will have complete control over every aspect of the company, and you will have the authority to make all decisions by yourself. Although the idea of starting your own company may sound financially daunting, setting up a balloon modelling business does not require much capital. You will not need to draw on many years' worth of savings in order to buy the equipment you need to start working and taking bookings; so if you made the decision today, you could start looking for work in a very short space of time, provided that you already have the right qualifications.

FACT



The average parent spends £214 on their child's birthday party

Source: DailyMail 2013

1.3: Obtaining a Full CRB Check



If you intend to work with children then you will need a full CRB check and it is a good idea to take out public liability insurance as well.

You will also need to be an extremely proficient balloon modeller, and learning this skill can take time. There are plenty of books out there which will teach you the basics and give you ideas, but experimenting with your own designs can be the best way to really get to know the art. There are plenty of Youtube videos out there too which can speed up the process of learning to make exciting and impressive balloon models.

Running your own business can be tiring. You will not be able to delegate any of the tasks which need to be done, so after a long day modelling balloons, you might find yourself sitting at a desk and updating your accounts, filing a tax return or ordering more equipment.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that the balloon modelling itself will take up all of your time. Manage your bookings carefully so that you leave yourself with enough time to keep on top of everything else.

If you take most of your bookings in children's entertainment then you will find that your Saturdays and Sundays become extremely busy, but that you have much more time within the week.

1.4: The Perks of Working for Yourself



If you are working for yourself then there will be no one else around to pick up the slack if you cannot keep on top of everything at once.

You will need to be comfortable with basic finance and accounting so that you can make sure that you are earning more money than you are spending and that your business is profitable and sustainable in the long run. If you are your only employee, this makes all of the calculations easier. Any money which you are paid which more than covers your costs, you will be able to keep (once you have paid your tax, of course).

Being a balloon modeller is not a job which revolves around routine. You will take bookings at a huge variety of different locations, settings and events which will keep your job fresh, exciting and fun.

If you are somebody who likes to be constantly on the move and relishes the challenge of change then this will suit you perfectly. There are not that many balloon modellers out there, which means that many events will require you to travel substantial distances in order to attend. This means that you will get to see loads of new and interesting places, but you won't always be close to home. Having your own reliable transport is therefore an absolute must if you are embarking on a new career as a balloon modeller. You will, of course, need to factor your transport costs into the amount that you charge for an event.

There won't be anyone out there to take your bookings for you, or to ring around and try to arrange new bookings on your behalf. In the early stages, you will have to be very pro-active in your search for bookings.

It might be a good idea to start out selling balloon models in the town or city centre.

If you get your name and your face out there, then people will start to recognise you and those who wouldn't have previously considered balloon modelling as an entertainment possibility will see you and perhaps think twice.

1.5: Really Getting Your Name Out There



You should also set up a website and social media accounts so that you can be easily found when someone is searching in your area for a balloon modeller.

Make it as easy as possible for people to contact you if they are interested and you will find that bookings will become much more regular. As soon as you start to build up a good reputation amongst families and circles of friends, you will find that word of mouth does a lot of the hard work for you. People will contact you because they got your number from a friend and you will have to do increasingly less legwork trying to find your next gig.

Do your homework and make sure that you get your prices right. Find out what it costs to hire a similar entertainer for a children's party or a corporate event and make sure that you price your own time competitively. If you are just starting off in the business, charging too much for your services could mean that your new business never has the chance to get off the ground.

1.6: Leaving Your Troubles Back at Home



You will need to be very good at leaving your troubles behind before you set off for work.

No one will want to buy models from or be entertained by a balloon modeller who looks upset or

deflated.

In order to make it in the world of entertainment, you will have to make sure that you are able to keep up the appearance of always having a sunny disposition, even if you are having a bad day.

If you create a particular routine, then it can become tiring and repetitive to perform the same show and to make the same models three or four times a day. You will have to be able to keep smiling and look like you are enjoying yourself throughout the performance, even if you are tired. If you really enjoy working as a balloon modeller, then this shouldn't be too hard. It is easy to make it look like you are enjoying something if you genuinely are having a good time.

If you enjoy working with children then this role is a fantastic way to see them at their best.

The opportunity to stand up in front of a group of children and make them laugh day after day is one of the most attractive aspects of the job. But what people often forget is that you also need to be good at dealing with adults. It is not the children who will be booking you to be at their next birthday party, but their parents. It will be the parents who recommend you to their friends and family and who judge you on how well you manage to keep the children quiet and entertained.

The key thing to remember when you are starting out on your journey to becoming a professional balloon modeller is that you need to look after your reputation.

Most of your bookings will come as a result of people spreading the word about your services. Relying so heavily on word of mouth to generate new business does mean that you will have to do everything in your power to make sure that you always do a good job. Bad news travels more quickly than good news, so if at any point you do upset or disappoint a client, their friends and family will be the first to know and you will lose a whole circle of potential new customers.

Keep your wits about you, think one step ahead and try to correct any mistakes before they happen. If clients do complain or are unhappy about something, try to appease them by offering them discounts or deals for repeat business or for family members. Always try to resolve the problem so that the lasting impression that they have of you is a good one.

Module Summary

Lessons Learned:

Balloon modelling as a career can be very rewarding, but comes with its own challenges.

You'll have to start your own business, so excellent organisation, basic accounting skills, flexibility, and initiative are prerequisites. In order to sell yourself, you'll need to have good communication skills and be personable and professional, as well as engaging, interesting and upbeat when you perform, never letting your personal issues affect your disposition.

You need to have excellent balloon modelling skills that you can showcase in any environment, and

be prepared to travel to engagements and be flexible about your working hours. You should price your services based on the cost of your competition for maximum business growth.

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