



## **Module 2 : The Types of Work/Jobs Balloon Modellers Do**

- Why children's parties are the most common types of work for a balloon modeller
- About adult entertainment at both formal and informal occasions
- How to make sure that you are up-to-date with the latest crazes and trends to keep yourself competitive
- About the different ways you sell your services

### **In this module you will learn:**

- Why children's parties are the most common types of work for a balloon modeller
- About adult entertainment at both formal and informal occasions
- Why you shouldn't limit yourself to just one type of job
- How to make sure that you are up-to-date with the latest crazes and trends to keep yourself competitive
- About the different ways you sell your services

## 2:1 Introduction

**Working as a balloon modeller can be fun and rewarding.**

If you play your cards right, in a typical week you will work in a variety of different locations, meeting groups of new and interesting people at various types of events.

### **Keeping the Kids' Attention Throughout**

Most of a balloon modeller's staple work will come from entertaining children at birthday parties. Kids love to see the balloons being transformed, as if by magic, into forms that they love and recognise. But children are unlikely to be entertained for very long unless you can make a show out of what you are doing. You could be the world's most talented balloon modeller, but if you are not able to keep the children's attention with jokes, games, competitions and stories, then you won't last very long and are unlikely to be recommended amongst groups of friends.

In order to keep receiving business on a regular basis you need to make sure that your skills move with the times. If there is a new children's film out in the cinemas, and kids are obsessed with this latest craze, then they will be extremely disappointed if you cannot model at least one of the characters. Being up to date with all the latest trends and fashions in children's entertainment won't rule you out of being hired for themed parties either.

More and more children are choosing to have a birthday party centred on one film, game, television programme or character. Keep practicing new models so that you can take requests from children fixated on the latest craze, and make sure that you have all of the balloons necessary to make them with you, even if you have already rehearsed something different. Be ready to entertain at a Frozen party one day and a superhero themed party the next.

## 2:2 The Power of Kids Over Their Parents



**Children have great power over their parents when it comes to their birthday parties.**

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Don't just focus on the birthday boy/girl because every other child in the room will have a birthday coming up at some point. If they like what you do, then they will go home and beg their mum or dad to hire you for their birthday party. This is an essential way of bringing in steady business; letting people spread your name by word of mouth.

Children may be the classic target market for a balloon modeller, but they are by no means the only one. Large corporate functions and formal dinners often hire entertainment for during or after the event.

This is your moment to show people what you can do. Working at a corporate function is very different to working at a children's party. You will not be in the spotlight, and people will not come up to you. Instead, it will be your job to circulate amongst the guests, providing them with models on an ad hoc basis.

## 2:3 Adults are Much Harder to Please



**Adults can be trickier customers than children.**

They might try and catch you out by asking for bizarre and near-impossible models, especially if there is alcohol involved and they think that they are being clever. If you can't make a model of whatever they have asked for, try asking similar or related instead. It might be wise to have a standard rebuttal up your sleeve which you can use for anyone who requests anything completely impossible. Perhaps just giving them a round balloon with a picture of what they asked for drawn on in marker pen might be a way of shifting the focus onto them.

At corporate functions, remember that these can be very formal events. The entertainment afterwards will be much more relaxed, but the guests will probably still be dressed in black tie and could be very high up in their respective firms.

You are there to entertain, but you do need to keep an air of professionalism to your act. Again, word of mouth from guests at these events could be the key to taking your next booking, so being polite and professional with everyone you meet is a must. But don't forget to wow them with your amazing modelling skills and your sharp wit too. For adult clients, one of the most powerful tools you have to impress them with will be nostalgia. Conjure up a character from their childhood, be careful to guess their age right though or you could end up offending someone!

Make sure that you speak to the person organising the event so that they know your full capabilities. Make suggestions about how you could do more at the event, such as making balloon model centrepieces which feature the company logo or one of their products. This could be a fantastic way to inflate your fee for the night, especially if you charge per centrepiece.

## 2:4 Branching Out to All Sorts of Events



**As a balloon modeller, you will have the novelty factor on your side.**

This will make you an attractive form of entertainment at a whole host of different events and occasions. You may find that you are booked for hen nights or stag dos, and it is essential that you have something appropriate planned for such events. Using your balloons to create mini models of the bride and groom, phallic symbols, handcuffs etc. will make you an instant comedy hit in these circles. If you make sure that you have the wit and the jokes to match your models.

If you impress at the hen night or stag do, then you might even be invited to entertain the guests at the wedding reception. Wedding bookings can work in one of two ways. They can operate on a similar model to that of the corporate event. You are paid a flat fee to circulate amongst the guests at the reception and entertain them individually or in small groups. Or, you will be hired as a children's entertainer to keep the kids occupied whilst the adults have fun. This will usually involve you being given a particular section of the room, and you will be asked to put on a show for the children, just like a booking for a children's birthday party.

If you are contacted about doing this at a wedding, it is a good idea to mention that you do also cater for adults. Let the bride and groom know that after the children have gone to bed, you could also provide adult entertainment by making models for small groups of people at a time. This could be a great way to secure a few hours of extra business.

Christenings are another popular event for balloon modellers. There are usually a lot of children present who will need to be kept busy whilst the adults mingle and chat to people they haven't seen in ages.

You will probably be asked to set up in a particular location at the party after the christening and will be hired for an hour or two to provide entertainment for bored children. It is less important to respect the theme at these sorts of events; there is no need to provide each child with a christening-related model. Instead, try and find out if there is a consensus of something which they all like and

base your show around that theme.

Unlike a children's birthday party, the groups of children at christenings and weddings will be of various different ages. This can make pitching the tone of your show a bit trickier, as they might all like different things. Try to establish some common ground from the beginning and it should be plain sailing from there.

### **The different types of events you may get booking for**

- Birthday parties
- Leaving parties
- Religious Events (Christening / Baptism / bar mitzvah etc..)
- School fetes
- Community fetes / fairs / carnivals
- Weddings
- End of term parties
- Corporate events ? shop openings
- As entertainment at adult parties
- Local authority run activities

## 2:5 Publicise Accordingly



**Each of the above events is a publicity opportunity.**

Be prepared to answer questions from the parents of children who are attending one of their friends' birthday parties or from someone at a corporate event who is looking to organise something similar somewhere else. Make sure that you always have some business cards on you to give out to anyone who enquires about future bookings so that they can get in touch easily.

At all of the events listed above, you will be hired on a flat rate for a certain period of time. All of the balloon models which you create within that time will be covered by this rate and you should not charge for them separately. Another way of making money as a balloon modeller is by selling your individual balloon models separately.

Just because you haven't taken any bookings for one day doesn't mean that you can't go out and use your balloon modelling skills to bring in some extra money. On a busy day in the town or city centre, you could make a fair amount of money by making models for people who pass by.

Target children, asking them if they would like a balloon model. Dress as brightly as you can so that you can be seen from far away. Make yourself a hat out of your balloons and wear it on your own head as advertising, so that people who pass by see it and want one too.

Make sure that you get your pricing right so that people are not put off by how much it costs but that you are still making money from your models.

## 2.6: Summer Fetes and School Fairs



**Summer fetes and school fairs are a great way of advertising your skills to a wide range of people in one sitting.**

These fetes and fairs are run differently in different parts of the country, but there are several different ways in which you can earn money by attending them. Firstly, you could hire a stall for a small fee and set up a station selling balloon models. If you are sure that there will be lots of children present, then this could be a great way of earning some money.

Secondly, some fetes have a budget to invest in entertainment and decorations to get people coming through the gates to spend lots of money. Here there is the possibility that you could be hired on an hourly basis by the organisers to give out free balloon models and to increase the experience of everyone at the fair. If you see a fair or a fete advertised near you, make sure that you find a way to contact the organisers, don't wait for them to come to you. Get in touch with them and ask what it would cost to hire a stall for the day, or if there was the possibility that they could hire you for the event. The worst thing that can happen is that they could say no.

If you do end up working at a fete or a school fair, make sure that the name of your act is in big letters and easily visible on your stall. Bring lots of business cards with you and leave some on the stall in front of you so that people know that they can take one if they are at all interested in hiring you for something else.

Whatever the event you are asked to work at, make sure that you are fully prepared. Tailor each of your routines and models to the particular setting and you will find that the bookings will keep coming in. Don't ever think that there is an event which you cannot do, if you keep an open mind then others will too.

## **Module Summary**

### **Lessons learned**

A large proportion of the work for balloon modellers is in children's parties, so it's important to keep up with the latest trends, learning new models regularly for characters in popular films or games.

You'll have opportunities to work in other settings such as weddings, christenings, stag and hen dos, and corporate parties, so make sure your modelling skills don't limit your potential to entertain different audiences, gauging the tone of your setting to get the best response. Take advantage of summer fetes or school fairs to advertise your services, and always carry business cards. On quiet days, take to the streets to sell your models individually and publicise yourself.

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