

Advisor's hobby is the magic ingredient to his business success

VANCOUVER

Since he was a child, insurance advisor **Rod Chow** has been entertaining people with his magic. And after many years of honing his skills he has added some amazing credits to his belt, including *Pacific Coast Association of Magicians* gold medalist and a finalist in the *International Brotherhood of Magicians*. And while his profession is as the president of **Jack W. Chow Insurance Services**, there seems to be a blurred line between where the magic stops and the insurance begins and visa versa.

Whoever said visiting your insurance advisor had to be boring? When clients visit Mr. Chow they not only expect excellent insurance advice, they also want to be amazed and bewildered and astonished. While Mr. Chow uses his discretion when deciding which clients would appreciate his slight of hand, he often finds magic can greatly enhance an interview. Whether it's as an icebreaker for new clients or filling a lull while a client fills in a form, he is always keen to entertain his clients. It's to the point where some clients expect a magic trick every time they visit. Mr. Chow has also been known to perform at insurance industry and client appreciation events.

It's fitting that his award-winning act revolves around money: while on stage he can make money ap-



Rod Chow

pear from nowhere; he can make money multiply before your very eyes; ask him nicely and he'll even produce a diamond ring from the sky. Who wouldn't want to go to an insurance broker who can do that?

Over the years, Mr. Chow has found the combination of magic and insurance to provide some

terrific direct and indirect benefits. Turning an otherwise dry insurance interview into something fun and exciting is one of the great pluses. He likes to think that his magic adds "some joy, laughter and astonishment" to his audience's day.

Another benefit of his unusual talent is the indirect marketing it

provides. On numerous occasions he has discovered his clients spreading the word about their magical insurance advisor.

The journey

Establishing his reputation as both an insurance advisor and as a magician did not happen overnight. Both accomplishments have been a life long journey. For the insurance side it was a case of following in his father, Jack Chow's footsteps. Jack Chow started the business back in the early 1960s, so his son Rod grew up surrounded by insurance. "I was born into insurance and I grew up in insurance," he says. As a child he would hang around the office after school and considered it a natural progression when he finished school. Believe it or not, he first started selling insurance when he was only sixteen-years-old. His father had to arrange for him to get a special clearance to do so.

Family affair

Mr. Chow is not the only one of his siblings to join the family business. In fact, all of them, his brother, Reg, and two sisters, Barbara and Debra, and also Rod's wife, Sylvia, are involved. Maintaining the close family approach is considered very important to the Chow family and something Rod hopes will continue into the future.

Potentially, the next in line are his two sons, Jack and Nicholas, aged 11 and 8 respectively. Already they have followed in their father's footsteps with regards to magic. Young Jack is a six-time Pacific Coast Magic Champion and four-time Vancouver Magic Champion and Nicholas, when he was 5, was the youngest ever Pacific Coast Magic Champion. It's too early to tell whether they too will become insurance advisors, but Rod Chow was quick to joke that Jack, with the same name as his grandfather, already has an established brand-name.

Advice for other brokers

For those insurance advisors reading this article and considering incorporating magic into your practice, Mr. Chow's advice is simple: "Hire a professional... A professional magician is dedicated to the art of magic, and through experience, countless hours of practice and study, not only knows the intricacies and timing of the effects performed, but also how to handle people, when to perform, who to perform to and what is appropriate for a certain audience."

Red Bolton



Rod Chow's unique office

ANOTHER INTERESTING POINT:

It's not just his magic that gets people talking about Rod Chow and his business. For the last twenty years or so, Jack W. Chow Insurance Services has been located in the Sam Kee Building at 8 West Pender Street, Vancouver, said to be the narrowest commercial building in the world. Being located in this building has also brought the business significant media attention.