

Starting up & managing a stand-up comedy career

Comedy Career Management

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**How to Start Up  
& Manage Your  
STAND-UP COMEDY  
Career**

By Barry Neal

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Venice, California

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ISBN: 1-882629-38-8

## Foreword

There has been no shortage of books written for aspiring stand-up comedians. Most of them are a series of interviews with successful comics, each giving some sage advice to the wannabees. Others just seem to fall into the self-aggrandizing category of “hear me toot my own horn, about how funny and popular I am.”

Unfortunately, we were not aware of any attempt to let the non-professionals in on that real inside information that every comedian must know: how to manage a career. This is the backstage stuff that can make or break a career, because unlike the rules concerning many other jobs, just ‘showing up’ and being funny don’t cut it. Those two are important, but they’re only the tip of the career management iceberg. Sure, people like Paris Hilton or Kevin Federline reportedly can earn \$25,000 just for showing up at a party, but a successful comedy career can last much longer if done correctly, and is much more immune to being destroyed by a few facial wrinkles or the passing of a 30<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Up to now, there has been no way to learn the ‘unwritten’ rules of professional conduct that a stand-up comedian should

follow: the only way to learn them was by trial and error – the ‘hard way.’

Barry Neal has been learning those rules for more than fifteen years now, and as a result of following what he considered to be the ‘right’ ones, his career has gotten off the ground quite nicely, leading him to appearances on the stages of comedy clubs throughout the country, appearing on the *Tonight Show*, and now a very busy career as a comedy coach, talent booker, and manager/rep for many other comedians and entertainers.

As owner of a production company, I became familiar with Barry’s popular routine as the ‘Counselor of Love,’ and was impressed by the way he turned a ‘clean’ act into a profitable business.

It wasn’t until meeting him that I discovered his reasoning. As he put it, the best way to get out of the comedy clubs and into the world of big-budget corporate gigs was to develop a routine that could be performed in front of executives and their families.

I also wasn’t aware of the jobs being made available at corporate functions, but soon learned that that’s where our former elected officials turn to make the big bucks after leaving office. Agencies like the Washington Speakers Bureau send out

former presidents, sports figures, TV personalities, and others, for fees that reach up to \$250,000, for a half-hour speech and a seat at the CEO's table... and if they can pay that much for the main speaker, they have no problem paying a measly five to ten grand for an opening act, like a 'clean' comedian.

If you have any intention of going into the entertainment profession by being a stand-up comedian or other performer in front of the public, you owe it to yourself to learn what Barry has found to be the 'rules' to follow.

We were fortunate enough to have caught Barry during a break in his busy schedule, when he had a few days off to sit down and put his thoughts into a 5-volume set of videos/DVDs containing over 100 areas of advice for the aspiring comedian: from the few basic elements of stand-up comedy, all the way to those all-important business aspects of booking jobs and getting paid.

He has allowed us to have those programs transcribed and presented in print, resulting in this book... the first of its kind, and the type that the most successful of them all, Jerry Seinfeld has often mentioned, as being needed.

Gene Grossman – Magic Lamp Press

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