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CREATIVE

IN CONVERSATION

(V.2 condensed from ScareCON Main talk)



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(V.2 condensed from ScareCON Main talk)

HELPFUL TIPS & USEFUL REMINDERS

(FOR OWNERS/ORGANIZERS & ACTORS)

DESIGNING TIPS AND SAFETY OF ACTORS & GUESTS

(CASE STUDY EXAMPLES)

TIPS FOR ACTORS & SCARE ACTOR TRAINING

(If you would like the full unaltered version from our ScareCON talk please email screamfx-co@outlook.com)



DISCLAIMER

Whilst every effort has been made to include comprehensive information on health and safety procedures, we acknowledge that some details may be missing or less detailed than desired. It is important to note that practices can vary based on your region and specific venue. Therefore, this guide should be used as a reference only, and we strongly recommend seeking professional advice tailored to your local area

An icon showing two stylized human figures sitting at a table, one in blue and one in yellow, representing a conversation.

IN CONVERSATION

Pages 4 – 11 –Helpful tips and useful reminders.

Page 5 - Getting started.

Page 6 - Check list before planning.

Page 7 - Fire safety.

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Page 9 - Communications.

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Pages 12 – 13 –using your budget wisely.

Page 13 - Useful tips for saving budgets.

Pages 14- 20. Prop and set safety.

Page 15 – Examples and stop think act.

Page 16 & 17- Case study 1 photos.

Page 18 - Case one information.

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Page 21 – Stop, Think, Act.

Pages 22-23 – summery of context from page 4-21.

Pages 24- 27. Tips for actors.

Pages 25 & 26 – Useful tips.

Page 27 – The Scare booklet.

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HELPFUL TIPS

FOR FIRST TIMERS

&

USEFUL REMINDERS

FOR OTHERS

&

SOME DEFIANTLY DON'TS

TIPS FOR NEW ATTRACTIONS AND USEFUL REMINDERS

THERE IS LOTS TO LOOK AT AND PLAN OUT. IT'S NOT AS SIMPLE AS GET UP AND GO. MAKE SURE YOU DO YOUR RESEARCH

First-time operators might think it's simple to set up a haunted attraction with a barn, some props, and friends to scare people. This approach also applies to escape rooms, street theatre, theatrical show etc.. However, several factors must be considered to ensure a safe and successful attraction before you plan consider:

- **Location Suitability:** Is it accessible, with parking and public transport options?
- **Venue Suitability:** Is the venue appropriate for the event?
- **Permissions:** Are additional licenses or permissions from the council needed?
- **Residential Proximity:** Are there nearby residential areas that might be affected

**TIPS FOR NEW
ATTRACTIONS
AND USEFUL REMINDERS**



LET'S CHECK FOR THESE, IF ALL IS GOOD LET'S PLAN!

- **Parking/Transport:** Plan for sufficient parking and public transport options; consider bad weather scenarios.
- **Facilities:** Provide toilets and drinking water. Is the electricity supply sufficient
- **Food and Beverages:** Ensure vendors have hygiene ratings, food safety certificates, and insurance. Obtain necessary licenses for alcohol.
- **Pathways & Capacity:** Ensure accessible pathways and manage maximum capacity to prevent crowding and ensure profitability.
- **Insurance:** Ensure you have appropriate coverage.

TIPS FOR NEW ATTRACTIONS AND USEFUL REMINDERS



LET'S KNOW WHAT WE NEED FOR FIRE SAFETY

- **Emergency Lighting & Signage:** Ensure emergency exit signs and general H&S signage are in place and displayed correctly.
- **Fire Assembly Points & Evacuation Plans:** Establish clear assembly points and evacuation plans.
- **Fire Extinguishers:** Ensure appropriate extinguishers (CO2, water, foam, powder) are correctly placed and serviced annually.
- **Fire Call Points:** Install covers to prevent accidental activation.
- **Fire Exits:** Ensure exits open with one action (e.g., push bar), are not blocked, open to 90 degrees, and are easily accessible.
- **Fire Blankets:** Place fire blankets in kitchens and staff areas with microwaves/kettles.
- **Fire Risk Assessments:** Update fire risk assessments for each event, even if the venue has an existing one.

TIPS FOR NEW ATTRACTIONS AND USEFUL REMINDERS



LET'S KNOW WHAT WE NEED IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES AND PREVENTIONS

- **Emergency Stops:** Ensure emergency stops are linked to your control system.
- **Control Systems:** Have emergency announcements ready to play.
- **First Aid:** Hire first aid trained staff or an external team like St John's Ambulance. Ensure some onsite staff are FAW trained for setup.
- **Event Security:** Required for potential incidents.
- **First Aid Kits:** Provide kits for staff and guests. Note: only first aid trained personnel should administer items like plasters.

TIPS FOR NEW ATTRACTIONS AND USEFUL REMINDERS



LET'S TALK COMMUNICATIONS

- **Mobile phone signal:** ensure service availability for communications and pdq machines; consider setting up wi-fi for reliable tills/ticketing.
- **Communication systems:** use radios with separate emergency, first aid/security, and attraction channels. Train staff in radio etiquette.
- **Signage:** display attraction safety rules and general signage at each entrance.
- **Pa systems:** use pa systems or megaphones for announcements.

TIPS FOR NEW ATTRACTIONS AND USEFUL REMINDERS



LET'S TALK STAFFING

We know you will need actors, hosts and general operational staff But what else?

- **Duty manager:** designate a duty manager for incidents and as an emergency services contact. Provide a dedicated phone and radio.
- **Technicians:** run and maintain the venue/attraction
- **Scenic construction:** maintain and keep all set/props safe for use.
- **Costume:** To supply, & maintain costumes, puppets ect,
- **MUAs:** to supply and apply special effects makeups remember to check in there licensed

REMEMBER NO MATTER HOW GOOD YOU ARE YOU CAN'T DO IT ALL YOURSELF!

TIPS FOR NEW ATTRACTIONS AND USEFUL REMINDERS



KEY POINT WHEN DESIGNING

- **Design for accessibility:** avoid steps and uneven ground or provide themed alternate routes.
- **Consider guests and your own experience:** research trends, but don't overly focus on them.
- **Ensure compliance with fire laws:** maintain evacuation routes and proper fire door placements.
- **Organize areas into zones/blocks:** aids storytelling and staff training.
- **Avoid intellectual property infringement (IPs):** obtain legal rights before use.
- **Consider actors:** design rat runs for efficient movement.
- **Consider the guest journey:** give them a reason for being there.

USING YOUR BUDGET WISELY

REMEMBER TO STAND OUT.

“YOU DON’T HAVE TO SPEND A FORTUNE.”
LESS IS SOMETIMES MORE.

TIPS FOR NEW ATTRACTIONS AND USEFUL REMINDERS



USING BUDGET WISELY

- **Costume & MUA:** If you must budget consider your options to keep an impact
- **Set and props:** They can be expensive now material costs have gone up and continue to rise. But look for ways to gather items
- **Audio:** online resources for royalty free tracks.
- **Helping each other out:** perhaps someone has something you need a skill or some props you need but you can't afford them can you make a deal?
- **Get the basics in first then budget the rest:** exactly what it says on the tin.

PROP & SET SAFETY

PROP & SET SAFETY



STOP

THINK

ACT

EXAMPLES

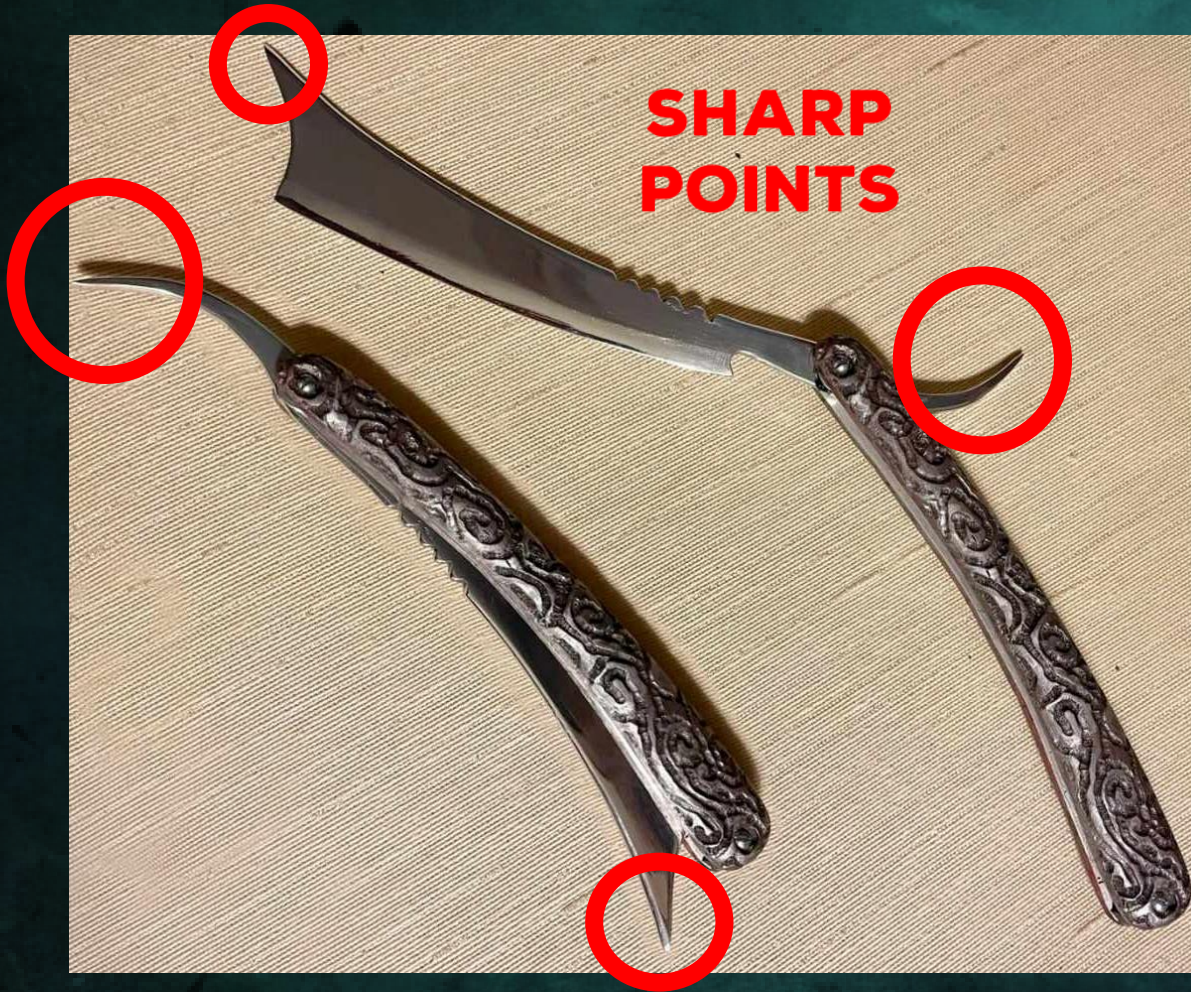
- **Jumping from heights:** have you been trained? How high? Risk?
- **Noncompliant props (case 1) :** A razor not fit for stage
- **Drop downs:** Great impact but what if its not built correctly?
- **Chain saw gate:** Oh no not a box of shame.
- **The time I said no as it's Unsafe for all (Case 2):** working with unexperienced who won't listen to advise,

CASE 1



CAN YOU SPOT WHAT'S WRONG?

CASE 1



**SHARP
POINTS**



**TAPERED
EDGE**

CAN YOU SPOT WHAT'S WRONG?

PROP & SET SAFETY



Worth noting:

Blades used for combat style must be 4mm thick with no tapered edge, and any props on stage or screen that can be utilized as a weapon or is a weapon **MUST** be kept in a lockable box under the supervision of an armorer. Accidents happen when we get too familiar and relaxed by what we are doing. Just because you have experience doesn't mean it still can't go wrong!

CASE 1 ACCIDENT WAITING TO HAPPEN

- **Use factor:** Sweeny Todd on stage used up-close to “slit” throats
- **Direct approach:** Commended them on a beautiful prop however advised against its use on stage due to potential issues.
- **Ignored:** Creator ignored my concerns continued to argue its safe.
- **Told:** they know better because they have been doing it a long time with NO issues.

PROP & SET SAFETY

CASE 2 GIVEN A BRIEF AS A CONSULTANT.

Our team was approached via Facebook direct messages to consult and secure a contract for building a new maze for a potential client, who had been absent from the industry for a few years. Following this initial contact, we moved to email communications and received the first draft of the attraction. It's important to note that no NDAs (Non-Disclosure Agreements) were signed at this point.

The brief described that guests would enter a shed-like building with a stable door that would swing open into the guest area. An actor, riding another actor like a horse, would burst through the door to startle the guests. However, no room drawings were provided, and the initial notes lacked basic stage directions and technical specifications. It was clear that the client had done very little research into what they wanted.

We reviewed the plans and raised concerns, primarily about actor safety. It's unrealistic to expect anyone to be ridden like a horse for over four hours a day, every 45 seconds.

Regarding guest safety, there was no budget for essential safety features like CCTV. The door was to be made of timber, but we advised against this due to potential fatigue of the hardware points, which could lead to issues with exposed screws and nails, or even total structural collapse. We recommended steel fabrication as the best and only viable option, along with preventive measures inside the room to maximize safety. We made it clear that this was a deal-breaker if these conditions were not met.

Unfortunately, the client would not adjust their budget, making the project unviable. Consequently, we decided to walk away.

PROP & SET SAFETY



CASE 2 UNEXPERIENCED REFUSAL TO LISTEN

- **Show scene:** Poorly written explanation with no visual plans/sketches.
- **Direct approach:** Direct emails back and forth to assess what they need
- **Concerns raised :** Unsafe acts and conditions. Alterations and safety measures added into design changing approach to scene to still have the impact
- **Told:** they know better they don't need the alterations.
- **Ultimatum:** we walked away from the project as we were not satisfied that the rest of the safety standards would be met.

**PROTECT YOURSELF BOTH AS BUILDERS AND ACTORS.
IF IT FEELS UNSAFE QUESTION IT,**

STOP

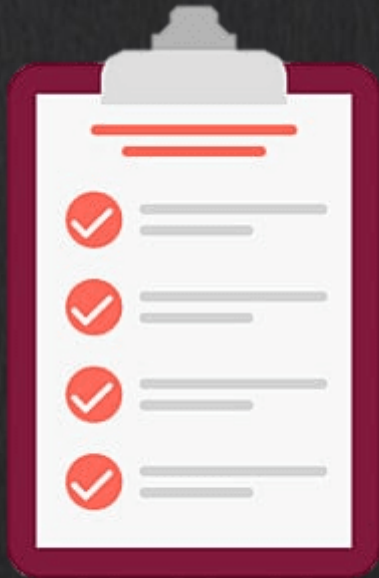
THINK

ACT

**IF SOMETHING DOESN'T SEEM
RIGHT, STOP AND ASSESS THE
SITUATION, THINK ABOUT THE
AFFECTS NOW ACT ON IT,**

**LET'S WORK TOGETHER
TO KEEP EVENTS SAFE**

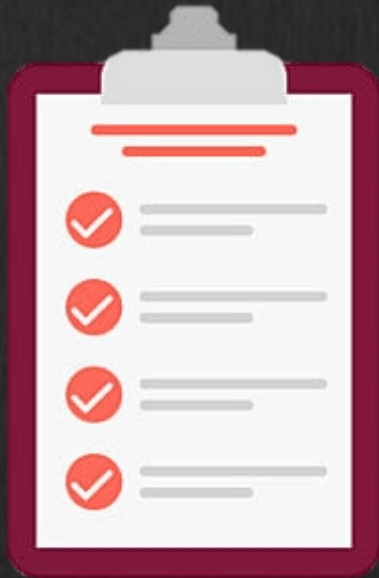
TIPS FOR NEW ATTRACTIONS AND USEFUL REMINDERS



TO SUMMARIZE

- **Meet Minimum Requirements:** Ensure compliance with laws and regulations and gain correct permissions.
- **Engage Authorities:** Inform local police, fire services, Saint John's Ambulance, and the council about your plans to ensure adherence to guidelines and regulations.
- **Seek Expertise:** Consult a specialist if unsure; many offer free consultations to assess compatibility.
- **Operating Procedures:** Develop and train staff on operating procedures, emergency evacuation procedures, and individual risk assessments for each maze. Maintain a training matrix and completed paperwork copies
- **Ensure you have the right staff:** Core operations team. Hosts ect.

TIPS FOR NEW ATTRACTIONS AND USEFUL REMINDERS



TO SUMMARIZE

- **Design to stand out:** create something unique and push boundaries.
- **Avoid IP's:** If you don't own it don't use it.
- **Spend wisely:** If your budget is low or been reduce find create ways to keep the event fresh without spending big.
- **Don't forget what your designing:** you will need to remember what fire precautions you need to add into the design what tech is needed and ease of maintenance etc.
- **Remember guest and actor safety:** Avoid using props or set that are constructed poorly or not fit for purpose.
- **No body known it all:** everyday is a learning day open your mid to different possibilities remember accidents happen when we get too relaxed with what we are doing,

HELPFUL TIPS FOR ACTORS

TIPS FOR ACTORS



THE ACTORS TOOL KIT

- Snacks
- Warm food
- Drinks (sugar and water)
- Refillable water bottle with cover
- Body/hand warmers
- Boxes for snacks and personal items (check venue policy)
- Physical & Vocal Warmups
- Wrap up
- Follow your training
- Look after your physical and mental health and look out for each other,

TIPS FOR ACTORS



Hide me!

AND REMEMBER

STOP

THINK

ACT

REMINDERS

- Don't let a bad interaction ruin your night – follow training!
- Make sure to hide your water bottles and any sweets and make sure you clean them up at the end of the night
- Look after your costume make sure it's hung up properly and use Febreze if you can!
- Make sure you have deodorant with you and use it often!
- Breath mints! (Don't have bad breath)

TIPS FOR ACTORS

The SCARE BOOKLET

COMING SOON!



Exciting New Booklet Coming Soon to Help You Get Through the Scare Season!

Jam-packed with fun, games, useful hints, and tips to get you through the season, including a helpful breakdown guide of scare tactics, and making the most of your space/room. It also includes advice on what to do if your voice is suffering and so much more!

Plus, there are sections for cast photos, selfies, and a journal to record all the funny things people have said to you, so you can look back on them in years to come.

And that's not all! Keep your eyes peeled for the launch of a free lite PDF version of the booklet and a full print-on-demand service!

SCARE SCHOOL

SCARE ACTOR TRAINING

TAKE YOUR SCARES TO THE NEXT LEVEL



SCAN ME!

At Scream Effects Co, we believe in high standards, high energy, and passionately driven performers who can deliver quality, story-driven scares.

We set the bar high for scare acting, and our Scare School is the result of our commitment to excellence, energy, and passion in performance. Designed to impart our creative expertise in the art of scare acting, these classes cater to beginners and seasoned performers alike. Led by veteran scare actors with over a decade of experience, our classes cover all aspects and techniques necessary to deliver top-notch scares that prioritize safety and ensure a thrilling experience for both guests and actors. With various class structures available, we offer a free 30-minute, no-obligation consultation to tailor our offerings to your specific needs.



“Very friendly + professional industry expertise shows” - 10/10

SCARE SCHOOL

REVIEWS

“Lovely guy, appreciate the language used being gender neutral and inclusive ” – 10/ 10



“Energetic, fun, skillful teacher great day, learnt a lot had a lot of fun” - 10/10

“very engaging and interesting, Fun but also learned a lot. Absolute legend, thank you for a friendly and funny session, Cured my anxiety! – 9/10

“Easy to follow made it easy to act Infront of others with extra exercises” – 10/10

“Super fun and informative, very valuable, comfortable environment, very technical without being overwhelming!” - 9/10



“Explained everything very well Very experienced” - 10/10



SCARE SCHOOL

BOOK TODAY



SCAN ME!

Q&A

- If you have any question regarding this presentation or the full talk
- Please direct emails to Screamfx-co@outlook.com with the heading :Questions RE Talk 24.
- Thank you.

WAYS TO REACH US!



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