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ON THE JOB

INTERESTING, OFFBEAT AND UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS

Game-show host Bryan Quinn, shown at a Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce event, spends thousands of hours rehearsing so that lights, scores and other details work on cue.

Sacramento Bee/
Florence Low



Game-show host's stage is not a TV studio but real businesses

By Marcin Skomial

BEE STAFF WRITER

Game-show host Bryan Quinn wants to put your staff on Corporate Feud, his version of the popular TV game show that typically pits one family against another in a battle of wits.

Quinn will bring the set to you and tailor questions to your needs.

Recently, he said, a major cell phone company asked him to prepare a game show and include questions dealing with new technologies, phone plans and new product information.

"Whether the employees get it right or wrong, they never forget the right answer," he said. "Especially when they get beat out of an answer, it reinforces the training."

Quinn's repertoire also includes The Challenge, styled after "Jeopardy," and Spin to Win!, based upon "Wheel of Fortune." He ensures that his game shows don't infringe on copyrights by tweaking the rules and changing the names.

The complex games can take hours of planning, he said, so that details – such as changing scores on the podiums – happen at the right time.

"We rehearse for thousands

of hours to make sure the timing of every detail is right," he said.

Yet his stiffest competition comes from amateurs who pick up equipment from party rental companies.

"A high school student can host a game show," he said. "But practice makes one perfect, and it is hard for them to become as polished and experienced."

Quinn, 35, has been in the entertainment business for more than 20 years. Having started as a disc jockey, he hosted his first game show 13 years ago and bought game-show hosting equipment four years ago.

He is also a mentalist with a mind-reading skill he picked up

from watching videotapes and reading psychology textbooks.

Hosting game shows, however, is his primary focus. He uses an elaborate backdrop, podiums, buzzers and a computer system that coordinates the whole event for an authentic look.

(Wife Michelle, who works for The Bee's circulation department, handles the electronics.)

Quinn emceed The Challenge game show at an event sponsored Tuesday by the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. Harold Hendrix, a business marketing representative at Costco Wholesale, liked Quinn's performance enough to get his business card.

"The way he was acting was more like a real game-show host," Hendrix said. "He made jokes, he talked to the contestants and kept everyone motivated."

Quinn usually hosts about 25 game shows a year and about a dozen team-building events, but business suffered in the last four years as companies cut spending on entertainment.

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Know someone with an interesting, offbeat or unusual occupation? Let us know. Call (916) 321-1131 or send e-mail to sacbiz@sacbee.com.