

# MAGICIAN WITH AN MBA

By BERNARD BARD

When a dog-food maker wanted to convince its salesmen to push a nutritious new brand of dog chow, it called on magician Bill Herz to help it make the point.

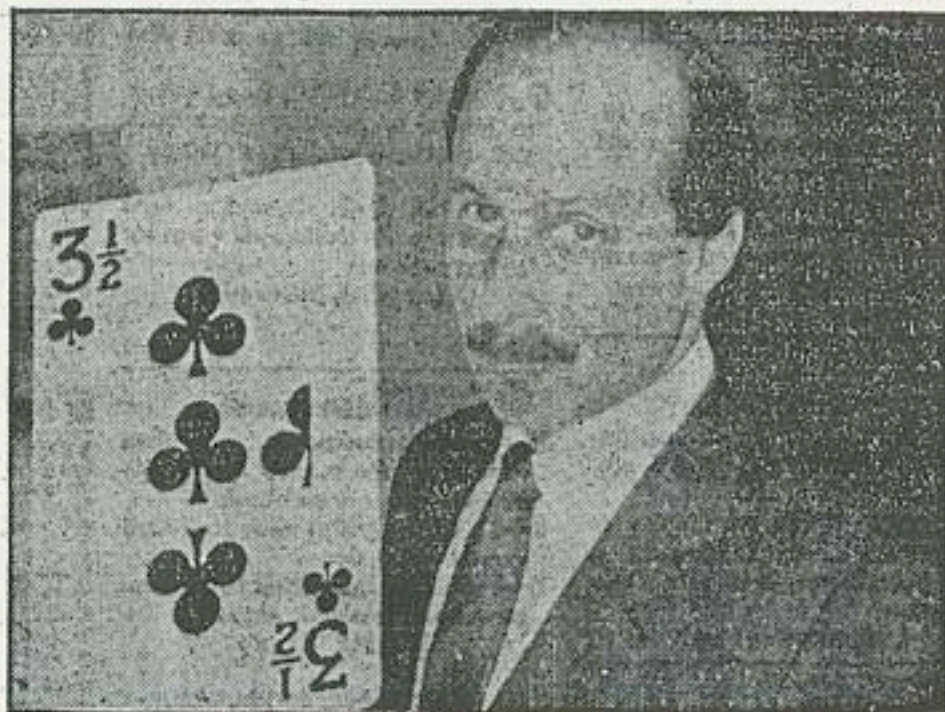
He placed two puppy sheep dogs in a glass house with a few bowls of the new product. Then he covered the dog house with a cloth, waved a wand, and — presto! — the puppies reappeared as fully-grown sheep dogs.

When an auto-maker wanted to persuade dealers to make an extra effort because customers can be stubborn, Herz produced a jackass right onstage.

Herz is a "magician with an MBA." He is hired by corporations to add pizzazz to corporate and sales meetings that otherwise might induce tedium. But he doesn't do magic just for the sake of magic. He makes points the company wants to make, but in a vivid, indelible way.

"The brighter the audience the easier they are to fool," said Herz, 33. "These guys are used to going from A, to B, to C, to D. I go from A to D. They go nuts."

His Magicorp Productions Inc., at 67 E. 11th St., grossed a half



**PRESTO!:** Companies bet on Bill Herz to to add pizzazz to their corporate and sales promotion meetings.

million dollars last year adding magic to corporate meetings by breaking from brain-deadening charts and pep talks.

What made Herz' business skyrocket was his willingness to

share his bag of tricks with corporate executives so they can take the stage and bring their meetings to life.

"It makes them the stars of their own meetings, helps hu-

manize them," Herz said. "We design the illusions, they do the tricks. We stand in the wings, They take the bows."

Herz and his pupils sign two-way secrecy agreements. He promises not to reveal confidential information about their new products and sales projections. They promise not to tell how they do his magic tricks.

He made a Georgia-Pacific vice president step out of a giant roll of a new brand of paper towels. He made the chairman of SONY magically appear in a giant Walkman.

A favorite, suited for all businesses, reminds salesman never to take their best customers for granted. To make the point, Herz puts the sales manager in a box and saws him in half. Assistants pick up the top half and walk offstage with it. The message: the competition will steal your best customers if you ignore them.

But the show's not over. Seconds later the legs hop off the table and walk offstage. Moral: Work at keeping those big customers, otherwise they'll take their business elsewhere.