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Title: What Makes a Con Man

**Introduction**

According to Webster, the con man or a con artist is the person who tricks pothers to get their money. Con artist or con men is known for deceiving others to get their money; it can be said that their skill of making money is deception. Con men generally fool others and cheat them to grab their money; general tricks involve making them believe in easy money, some fake deal or use their weakness. Con men are also said to have a lack of conscience; though it is part of their job and their way of making money (Bhattacharjee). The skills of deception have been used by many business persons and investors, who are known as famous con men. They generally defraud a person after gaining their trust and then play on weak human characteristics such as greed, lust, compassion, irresponsibility, and credibility. The term con man is generally associated with the men, however, anybody can be a con man. This paper seeks to highlight famous con men and what takes to be a con man covering all the skills that enable one to deceive others.

**Famous Con Artists**

Statistics reveal that about more than 30 million US citizens have been victims of financial frauds; let it be a financial fraud or an online fraudulent scheme. The number of incidents is rising as well (Blanton). Con artists are generally referred to as confidence artists; they gain others 'confidence to get hands-on their money. They can generally work out their plans unless the next person starts losing their trust in them. That is why con artists tend to play their tricks unless one knows about them. One of the famous con men of the 19th century is George Appo (1856-1930), he is known for his involvement in green goods scams (Gilfoyle and Appo). This scheme became very popular in the 19th century in the US that claimed to offer "genuine" counterfeit currency for sale. George Appo is known for his influential speaking skills that enabled him to play such a big fraud in the country. C. L. Blood (1835–1908) is known as the famous fraudster and blackmailer owing to the patent medicine. He was proved to be the blackmailer and got public attention in May 1884. He was involved in many fraudulent activities that involved deceiving businessmen and government as well.

In the 20th century, Bernie Cornfeld (1927–1995) got fame as a con man for his Investors Overseas Service, which proved to be fraudulent at the end (Florian). The American TV pitchman Don Lapre (1964–2011) is also known for his various get-rich-quick schemes. These schemes describe shady investments to deceive people to invest their money that results in equal to no profit but loss at the end of the day. Gaston Means (1879–1938) is associated with the Ohio gang that was involved in numerous financial scandals. These scandals also included the famous Teapot Dome scandal of the US. Charles Ponzi (1882–1949) was also a very famous con man of the 20th century in the US, his fraudulent scheme became so popular that it is now denoted as “Ponzi Scheme”. Investors had to bear huge losses because of his fraudulent scheme (*Nature and History of Ponzi Schemes*). The same scheme was later used by William F. Miller, a Brooklyn bookkeeper in 1899. Founder of an attorney firm, Marc Dreier, is famous for selling the fictitious promissory notes worth $700 million.

American history has witnessed a number of con men who used their skills of deceiving others and made a huge corrosive impact on the economy of the US as well (Trahan et al.). Another example is Victor Lustig who is famous as the *Man who Sold the Eiffel Tower* (Bush)*.*

**What Makes a Con Man?**

Being a con man one needs to have prominent communication skills, social skills, innovative and quick, and of course, as the cherry on top, they also need a special charm. As a con man, one is able to instantly realize that the large majority of urban populations, people want to be noticed, they want to be praised and placed on top of everyone, their all pathological liars. Conning as more an art rather than any other classification. Every con man is subjected to their own desires and reasoning, and we separate ourselves based on our ways of going about the common everyday con. They generally learn about each individual person or the group to incorporate their weaknesses to not only integrate into their next con but to improve me. Conning in itself is a branch of learning, whether being sociology, human behavior, communications, innovation, one is able to become a more well-rounded individual if they were to perform correctly.

A con man requires confidence and tricks to gain the trust of people. A con man is often referred to as a person with confidence. A con artist has skills and gestures to capture the attention of the audience. They are really good at adopting skills that can easily get admiration form people. To become a good con artist, it is important to get expertise in confidence and self-assurance. It is essentially important to follow some steps to become a confident con man. They need to work on the foundation that includes the advancement in the action and they usually require training to progress in the field. The con artist is good at understanding human psychology as they have to amuse them therefor, they understand their customers and audience. Understanding how people will react and what they want from a con artist is essentially important and accordingly, they have to make decisions during their tricks. Experience is also important for the con persons as it added confidence in their acts. A con person has to wear a metaphoric mask to hide their emotions and feelings from people. They have to represent themselves as a character what people want to see to gain admiration.

To become a con man, the first factor that plays a role in understanding who can be the victim of their schemes or frauds (Konnikova). What are their needs and what can be done to create a sense of empathy? Besides, con men know that they have to build an emotional foundation and after that, they play to the trick of logic and persuasion so that the scheme works in their benefit.

*Confidence Trick*

A con artist needs courage, leadership, confidence, and vision to stand in front of the public to perform an act or fulfill a character. The approach to motivate people is truly based on their experience and with time they learn how to sketch a character in the eyes of people to get their trust build (“Con Artists and Their Marks”). They not only give people the business to view but also deliver life in a character to attract customers. Con man requires to pay attention to connect the emotions of people in the business to create a connection of signals to the imagination. Without connection, a business is useless to display as it does not attract people. It also does not attract people with pleasure if the vision of imagination is lost.

*Skills of Persuasion*

It is critical for defrauding customers with a game of words to them according to the mid of people (Henderson). It needs compassion, responsibility, vision and exchange of thoughts for the perpetrator to display a confident operation. In case of failures, they have to remain consistent with the action to continue the trick confidently. A con person is actually deceiving people in terms of fooling them to attract their attention to earn money. However, a great con person needs to pay attention to build his character like a con artist to display false emotions and feeling in front of people. They actually work by deceiving and cheating others. A great com man needs to continue his trick till people become suspicious. They fool people by means of different tricks achieved through confidence.

*Appearance*

A con artist wears snappy suits and displays fake smiles in a way that it actually looks real (“How Con Artists Work”). Skills to persuade people include understating people's psychology, nature, and features that attract the audience in their tracks. Prompt decisions and hook the attention of people in their tracks. To promote reputation, it is important for a con man to develop their character that can effortlessly engage the minds of people. A great technique to persuade people is a fake mask that a con man wears to sketch a character to perform an action (Martin). For example, to gain the trust of people it is important to divert the attention of people from their situation to the trick to make them enjoy their role.

Individuals good in understanding the gestures and emotions of people are able to persuade people easily from their tricks. To become a good con artist, persons need to develop skills that can fuse feelings and emotions with tricks. For instance, Samuel Thomson was a man famous as a confidence man and he was a clumsy swindler of the 1800 century. His tricks represent that he used his victims to express confidence by giving him money so his victims express their amusement and attention by giving him money and people trust him. His wiles involve people to understand his tricks by providing confidence. Confidence is often interrupted by greed, opportunism, and credulity. There is no specific profile for a con man to develop his proficiency and confidence. Con man learns from his tricks however, common skills required are understanding nature and expressions of gestures that can divert the attention of the audience. A trick of a con artist requires a corroboration step for those who used tricks that are not commonly used. Different studies have identified that there are different con artists such as some involved tricks and involve elder people.

*Conclusion*

The skills needed by a man to become a con man reveals that it is not easy to become one as it requires a set of skills. My reasoning and perception stem from the research and analysis that people who become a con man have no worry and fear of an insecure financial future, and they are without the doubts of freedom. These con men take short-cuts to the top whilst laughing at those who publicly and frankly fail at creating a false gold path built of pathetic lies and rich heritage. It can be witnessed that throughout history these con men have caused havoc through a range of schemes that manipulate people. They are either in the form of convincing “investors” or repeated businessmen. The only way to put to stop these people from deceiving us is to learn from the masterminds, as discussed in the paper (Trahan et al.).

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