**How to Be a Great Prop Master**

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The “property master”, often dubbed the prop master or mistress, is the person responsible for purchasing, acquiring, manufacturing, properly placing, and/or overseeing any props needed for a theatrical production. Sounds pretty straight-forward, right? Well, being a prop master is one of the most stressful yet rewarding jobs in theater. Prop professionals have a wide variety of skills and often are considered the “MacGyver” of the productions in that they have the ability to make a wide array of props out of seemingly nothing and on a limited budget. So how do these skillful professionals do it? Here are few hints on how to become a pro of the props.

* Become an Expert Shopper – Most prop masters know where to find the best props, be it from a Goodwill store, a warehouse, or a recent purchase. Knowing where to buy the items and at the best price is one sign of being a pro.
* Get Organized – Most prop masters are also professional organizers who know where to store each prop and how it can be accessed easily the next time it is needed. Create your own system of sorting and storing props, and you’ll be well on your way to becoming a true prop master.
* Know the Production – A great prop master knows the production inside and out, including the cues for each scenery change, and when each prop is needed on stage and from which side it should enter.
* Be Able to Roll-with-it – An expert prop master has to know, when things get crazy on stage or disasters happen, that they need to roll with the punches and think on the fly to come up with viable solutions. Prop masters know how to do this intuitively and are not thrown off by last minute changes.
* Be Aware of Safety – In many productions the props are so realistic that they may be dangerous. A good prop master is always aware of the safety measures needed to keep the actors and stage hands safe at all times. In such cases, it’s best practice to train the person(s) who will use the prop during the show.

Prop masters may often go overlooked, but their skill and talent are what make the production go off without a hitch.