

HOW TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS FOR YOUR READINGS

by Richard Webster

In the last few months, several people have asked me how they can promote their readings, especially in psychic fair situations. Over the last forty years I've seen people do all sorts of things to draw attention to their readings. A few years ago, I saw a man tearing phone books in half to attract attention to his palmistry booth. I haven't watched anyone escape from a straightjacket yet, but it's probably only a matter of time. It seems strange to be doing effects of this sort when you're working as a reader. In my experience, there's a much better way, and it doesn't involve stepping out of character.

If you're at a psychic fair, or any other event where there are plenty of people, try walking around with a deck of playing cards and ask people to select one. Once they have, tell them that you're giving readings and if they come to your booth at any time during the day, you'd be happy to interpret their card for them. Of course, if anyone shows immediate interest, take him or her back to your booth and give a sixty-second reading on the card they selected. Hopefully, this will encourage him or her to buy a longer, paid reading. Even if this person doesn't opt for a paid reading, his or her presence in your booth will encourage other people to come closer to see what's going on.

If no one shows immediate interest, ask about twenty people to choose a card, and then return to your booth. While there, ask people who pass by to choose a card and give them a sixty-second reading on the spot. If you're still quiet after fifteen minutes, go for another walk and hand out another twenty cards. By this time, at least forty people will know that you're giving readings at the fair, and you're bound to convert at least some of them. Even people who aren't interested in having a reading themselves are likely to mention you to others.

I don't hand out a large number of cards initially, as I'm hoping to be busy with paid readings, and it can be a nuisance giving free readings when you have customers willing to pay for their readings. All the same, I'm happy to do these free readings, as once these people see how popular you are, some will have a paid reading in addition to the quick free one. The free readings are only sixty seconds each, after all.

At the end of the reading I give the card back to the person while telling them it's their lucky card and they should keep it in their purse or wallet. Thirty years ago, I used to stick labels on the back of each card. These had my name and contact details on them, in addition to the services I offered. This is good advertising for private readings. You could still get your advertising out this way, especially as nowadays you can buy cheap decks of cards at dollar stores.

If I were doing this now, I'd experiment with labels on the back of each card. Once I'd proven to myself that the system works, I'd go online and order specially printed decks of cards with my advertising message printed on the back. If you Google "custom playing cards" you'll find a number of companies who can supply you with decks of cards for about a dollar a deck - less if you buy them in quantity.

Once you're armed with a supply of these cards, you can hand them out everywhere you go. They make great advertising material, look professional — and who's going to throw away a "lucky" card?

This is one of a series of occasional essays produced by Richard Webster, 8 Napa Court, Auckland 2016, New Zealand (www.richardwebster.co.nz).