

TAROSOPHY PAPERS
#1 Marketing for Tarot Professionals

TAROSOPHY®

Tarot in the Marketplace: Half your Market Thinks You Are Evil.
Marketing Considerations for Professional Tarot Readers

Marcus Katz
Last Revised October 1st 2009
v.1.0

©Tarot Professionals (2009)
For members only.
Not to be transmitted or reproduced in any medium.
Tarosophy® is a Registered Trademark.

Tarot in the Marketplace: Half your Market Thinks You Are Evil.

Marketing Considerations for Professional Tarot Readers

0. Introduction

This Tarosophy® Paper #1 presents various considerations for those looking to market their Tarot reading or work. It is based on my own experience over the last thirty years, international work, communications training and MBA material. If it appears commercial, it is. If it appears to represent a less than spiritual approach to Tarot, it isn't – it is merely looking at only the mundane matters of marketing. My work on spiritual and magical considerations of Tarot can be found elsewhere. As marketing is an art as well as science, these are my own personal opinions and you may discover your own in experience.

0.1 What is Marketing?

Marketing is not advertising, it is the science and art of considering four elements:

Fire:	You
Water:	The Market
Earth:	Your Product
Air:	Communication

We should add in the fifth element, Aether, which you might also consider:

Aether:	The Law
---------	---------

There are many concepts and tools to bind these elements together harmoniously. No text on the subject can be comprehensive, otherwise Marketing Directors, Consultants and Authors of Marketing books would be out of a job very quickly. We also have to consider Sales, and Advertising, which overlap into this area. And the rapidly changing nature of the internet. Most of what follows would not have been foreseen last year, and most will be obsolete within two years at most.

You need to know what the market wants, what you provide, and where best to provide it. You need to know how and when your clients buy, and what to charge to ensure you can run your business. You need to know what everyone else in your market is doing.

Is this important? If you are a professional Tarot reader, that is, you make some or all of your income from this, then it is! A friend of mine supplemented her income with Tarot readings. She'd built up a good client base and had excellent word-of-mouth recommendations. She is very good at what she does and has been doing it a long time. Last year, her car broke down and she realised she didn't have the money to fix it. This had never happened before.

She thought about it, and realised that she hadn't really seen many of her clients – and no new clients at all – for over eight months! I asked her to check our local bookstore. Sure enough, for eight months, a new Tarot reader had been putting

up a small card on the “New Age” section of the local bookstore, advertising her service. The card made a great play on “For a new approach in Tarot for You!”

Although my friend is a good Reader, she had forgotten her marketing. The other reader – and my friend couldn’t even believe another reader would have worked in the small town in which we live, never mind take her entire business – had worked out the market, targeted her clients, and advertised effectively, at low cost. This is why a little marketing in your mix is a good idea.

So let’s start with You.

1. You

Yes, you.

Many Tarot professionals seem uneasy about actively promoting or marketing their own craft. This is often also seen with therapists and counsellors, who sometimes refuse to sell themselves in a “business-manner”. The response is sometimes, “We’re healing people, we’re not selling widgets”. However, clients looking for Tarot readings should expect a professional service, and it is no use being an excellent Tarot reader if no-one knows about you!

1.1 You are your Brand

Your Sizzle should be your brand. That’s why **you** are the element of **Fire** in all this. Your enthusiasm, passion and love for Tarot should be evident – and this will sometimes compensate for a multitude of other sins! So ensure you have your smiling face on your site, cards or pamphlets. People are buying into **you**, whether you like it or not.

In the end, paradoxically, clients are not actually interested in you *as a person*. They don’t need to be Tweeted with your favourite biscuit of the day. They want to know what **you** can do for **them** – they are, after all, a customer of your services. As Tarot reading is an art as well as a science – and some might call it a performance also (the face-to-face reading in particular) – some customers will be right for you, and some customers will be right for someone else.

Also, your clients don’t really need to know if you understand the best historical analysis of the proto-sequence of the earliest Tarot decks, or the Kabbalistic correspondences of the Decans. Only if you are aiming to attract a small segment of the market who appreciate your skill-set. You can tell your clients on your website you have a large collection of Tarot cards, but **only in the context of what this means for them**, i.e. you’ll always have the right deck for **their** reading.

So you need to let the market know what you offer, and what you are – what sort of Tarot reader; do you take a purely intuitive approach, do you call on spirit guides, do you rely entirely on Kabbalistic knowledge of esoteric correspondences – or what? How would you describe yourself – or (much better) how would other people describe you?! Particularly your previous clients, if you have any.

Get your friends and relatives, colleagues and clients (where applicable) to help with your marketing description. Ask them to sum up you and your approach in a sentence or two. Don't be shy! Other Tarot readers aren't, they make up all sorts of sentences for themselves, and then wonder why they don't get repeat clients. If I go for a "totally honest, experienced reader" and find a totally vague beginner, I won't be going back – but if they'd have put "New Reader – Looking to Practice, Special Offer" I'd be a happy customer and possibly return later to check on your progress!

1.2 What else can you Sell?

How about authenticity (openness + honesty) and an experience? These are the most valuable commodities of the market because they are the hardest to manufacture. Disney isn't shy about offering a pretend world in which to indulge escapism. They are authentic about it! Coke also sells "the real thing", as we will see later. Don't put anything in your marketing material that really can't be verified or oversells you. If you can't live up to it, don't put it into the market.

There are now too many coaches and advisors selling their own Wow-factor, and charging you to advise you to do the same. Funny how they are always spending their time telling you about the "awesome" courses they have attended, and the "awesome" life they are leading – ever wonder why they need to do so, and have the time to do likewise?

Keep it simple, then. No long lists on your front page of how brilliant you are without telling me how much you cost. That's probably one of things I need to know first. That you don't know that tells me a little about you.

Sell an experience! A Tarot reading should be either a clinical, concise, accurate portrayal of my life leading to self-discovery and informed decision-making, or a magical mysterious whirlwind of portent and prophecy! What am I getting from you? How is it delivered?

A favourite site of mine which demonstrates this is Auset Gypsy:

<http://www.usetgypsy.com/>

James (Auset Gypsy) is congruent throughout the site. You get the overall flavour of his approach from every image, text, font, background, etc. but you certainly know that he offers a particular experience in his reading.

2. The Market

Is your market "skewed" in any particular way, and if so, have you taken that into consideration? I am here thinking of a simple fact – in recent surveys of two volunteer tarot organisations, one in the US and one in the UK, the exact same percentage figure turned up for membership.

Female: 82%, Male: 18%.

Check out most of the Tarot and Psychic websites, or the clientele of your local New Age shop. It is an incontrovertible fact that this percentage holds true. You are working in a mainly female market, as both reader and as a client. Without wishing to stereotype, if your marketing approach doesn't recognise this, or goes in the opposite direction, you'll be missing the market.

Of course, one could go for a niche of this niche market, and concentrate on corporate readings for men. I know one member of Tarot Professionals who does so and is very successful. As I say, "Just because someone's cornered the market already doesn't mean I can't take the other three corners".

But do research the market – and target accordingly.

2.1 The Main Mistake with Tarot Marketing

The Main Marketing Mistake with Tarot Readers is very simple. They market to their competition. Who aren't really their competition because they are making the same mistake.

Most Tarot readers offer their services to people they are in touch with who support their Tarot interest. Other readers, students and enthusiasts. This is not your market! Your market are those people who want a Tarot reading, or might want a Tarot reading, or don't know that they want a Tarot reading but would if you told them about it ... and they are the general public! The lady in the bakery I will mention later – she is your market.

Now I know it can be difficult for a shy retiring Tarot reader to go face-to-face with people, but that's why we have the Internet! In the real world, when a Tarot Professionals project team simply went around trying to give a free Tarot reading to people just walking about in a town centre, the majority response was outright nervousness and refusal.

So it is difficult – you need a large mass of population (or good outreach on the Internet) and then you have to introduce people beyond their preconceived concerns and anxieties. We will see later that almost half your potential market think you are evil in some way.

So what are those "trade barriers" in the marketplace? We'll tackle those later, but the worries about the Death card, getting cursed, and the "evil" of the deck are surprisingly present, especially in the older demographic of the market.

You'll have to tackle those barriers up front or you'll waste a lot of energy wondering why no-one is coming to see you! A sales technique called "inoculation" is perhaps applicable here – knowing the concerns and resolving them quickly and up-front, without accidentally re-enforcing them! Chasing someone down the street with a deck of cards yelling "They're not evil, they're not evil!" is just going to make matters worse! There are too many sites already saying "Tarot is not evil". It's far better to say what it is!

A typical “inoculation” applied to Tarot, say on a website or in a pre-reading discussion, would be “I know that a lot of my clients have been concerned with the Death card, and I understand that if you think that the cards are literal, that would make sense – luckily, the card with the eight flying sticks doesn’t mean you should keep clear of scaffolding! The cards are symbols, and I will read them for you – and in fact, some of my clients start to look forward to the Death card as it means a change to their circumstances!”

You should have similar inoculations for the concerns that clients express. If you have already been reading for a little while or longer, you should be able to list these concerns by now and may have already noticed your own inoculations!

2.2 There’s always another Mistake

The Second Main Marketing Mistake is Pricing. That is to say, getting hung up on it in some way. Firstly, clients are not buying a Tarot reading. If they were, it would be cheaper for them to go and buy a deck of Amazon and read the cards themselves. They are buying your service to read Tarot cards.

Your service includes two main components – your time, and your ability. Your time is 30 minutes, 45 minutes, 1 hour in the reading itself. That’s the first thing to set price against, weighed against the market. Look at your competitors pricing. Set yours in line with those – in a free market, the market sets the prices, the prices are what the market will bear. You may offer specials, introduction rates, and so forth, but your standard price should be fixed.

Then, your ability. When you read the cards for a client, you are working from hours, days, weeks, months, even years of total study time and practice time. In each of those hours, days, weeks, months or years you could have been practising to be a doctor, earning money teaching piano, or cleaning a backyard for a few dollars. But you weren’t. You were learning to perform this service. So price accordingly. I personally charge a lot now, because I usually only read for clients who want a very serious reading by someone they know has thirty years experience and one of the largest Tarot libraries in the country. When I started, I offered £2.50 readings in a stall in a sheep-market for the summer, when I could have been backpacking or earning five times as much cleaning cars.

I charge £385 for a full Opening of the Key spread, as it takes three days minimum to do properly and I have thirty years training and experience behind me to do it darned well. Although this is not my best-seller, it does mean that people take my readings as seriously as I perform them.

2.3 Cross-Promoting (but don’t make me cross by promoting)

The market will always bear some cross-promoting. But don’t assume that because I want a Tarot reading I always want to buy your jewellery. I don’t, unless it’s very special jewellery, well-priced, and I need to buy jewellery on that day! Nor crystals nor Unicorn statues. I might, but don’t assume. I want a Tarot reading.

Useful cross-promotions may be the services of a friend (not yourself unless you are very talented and gifted in a range of fields) to offer a Natal Chart or Astrological Progression. I promote my friend Lyn Birkbeck because I know he is a good Astrologer, author of nine books, and I like his style – which reflects well with mine. Only cross-promote the people you believe in!

<http://www.lynbirkbeck.com/>

I think it good to cross-promote your writing if you do so. A few pamphlets or nicely produced photo-books or Beginners Guides to Tarot help inform your clients, promote your services and generally market your work. They can be produced cheaply and priced to sell as a small additional income.

Check out <http://www.lulu.com>

3. Your Product

The first question is very important. Do you know what coca-cola sells? A black fizzy drink? Nope! They sell nothing less than the “real thing”! And everyone wants the “real thing”! The fizzy drink is just the medium by which you get that “real thing”. I noticed an advert for the drink Malibu recently; they’re not selling coconut liquor, they’re selling “that island thang”. So are you trying to sell yourself as a shuffler of bits of cardboard, or something else?

So, the first question is:

What does my client want through the Reading?

The other two questions are:

What do I offer that is unique?

What can I offer a little extra, more than they expect?

As an example, I did a search for a tarot reader in a randomly selected American state, on Google. The first one I got (and therefore kudos for search engine optimisation – on which more later) had a whole paragraph about the reader, including such text as:

Tarot reader since 1979, known nationally ... providing psychic readings after pursuing my interest in palmistry ... higher senses of vision, touch, sound, an greater spiritual awareness ...
--

So far, as a 9-second browser of a web-page before flipping back to my Google results, I have no idea what this person actually does, or what I will get. I need to know so I know whether it matches what I want! And if I don’t really know, perhaps the seller should tell me what I’ll be getting anyway!

Although here the seller is obviously trying to establish their reputation as a marketing and selling technique, a better first paragraph might read something like:

Looking for Answers? Guidance? Or simply a new perspective?

Tarot reading can help you resolve questions and much more! My name is Joe Bloggs and I am this State's only Tarot Reader with a psychic parrot and ten years experience!

Have a reading with me and get a half-price follow-up reading within three months. Call now on 0187666222."

Notice the call to action. Although more in the Sales arena than the Marketing arena, many Tarot readers forget to tell the client what they are expecting them to do having read their incredible text, accounts of their abilities and testimonials! When the client has finished reading your marketing material, ask them to do something – contact you, subscribe to something, click a link, email you ... this is called the call to action and is often missing from Tarot marketing material.

4. Communication Tools

4.1 In the beginning was the Word.

Word of mouth. Simple as. I was in our local bakery when I overheard two of the shop assistants talking about a hen party which one of them had attended. She was talking about the Tarot reader. The other said she was organising a girls night out next week and could she have the details? That Tarot reader made twenty new clients, a party-booking, and probably several full-cost readings in the following weeks, whilst I was buying a pastry.

So, if you are the shy, retiring type, head to the Internet section (but don't get your hopes up) but otherwise, start talking about what you do. My hairdresser knows I am a Tarot reader. He has mainly male clients, but they often have partners – wives, girlfriends, mistresses even, all of whom make up 80% or more of the marketplace. My friends know I am a Tarot reader – they ask me to bring my cards to their parties to freely entertain others and provide something to do in the quiet spaces. The people I do volunteer work with know I am a Tarot reader – they work with large groups and sometimes those groups need a speaker. And so on. Cards, brochures, pamphlets and flyers – all next section, but in the meantime, talk about what you do. Get used to it. Normalise it.

4.2 Written/Online Tools

Keep your message simple. I was recently advising an Astrologer on his three-fold pamphlets. On the front was an astrological motif – very good, shows what the pamphlet is about! Then a paragraph about him. Then a few bullet-points about his readings, and a testimonial. All on the front fold.

I wondered what he offered me. That's actually all I'm interested in at first.

So the re-draft of his pamphlet now has the motif, a photograph of him (so I meet him first), with a 1-line caption “Astrologer of 30 years, Author of 9 books” – that’s all I need to know just now – and a summary of the questions that Astrology will answer – mainly stated as “you will receive ...”, finished with a final one-line testimonial.

So prepare your “elevator pitch” or “mission statement”. You should be able to get down what it is your clients will get from you in less than four sentences. That’s the same text you’ll use just about everywhere.

I particularly like “LucyD”’s “Only Tarot” message – “No magic, no mumbo-jumbo, just the Tarot” <http://onlytarot.net/blog/> or the Fickle Finger of Fate’s, “The Fickle Finger of Fate is a collective of Old-Time fortune tellers. We are entertaining, elegant and accurate. No bullshit.”

<http://www.ficklefingeroffate.co.uk/>

Ginny Hunt goes for:

“I give honest and clear tarot readings. I lay out the cards, tap into my intuition and tell you what I see. If you want an honest, direct and intuitive reading, that’s what I do and do well.”

<http://78notes.blogspot.com/>

James Wells a more prosaic:

“Supporting your journey to full radiant personhood and the well-being of the Whole of Life through tarot, circle process, reiki, journal writing, and motivational listening.”

<http://jameswells.wordpress.com/>

Blogs

Firstly, Content is King. Before you start up your Blog, fuelled with the hype of internet gurus (who make their money advising others, not writing blogs) think on this – your Time is your Only Real Resource.

Your time is the raw capital of life. How much time will it take you to create content. And I mean – CREATE content. Not just copy it from someone else, retweeting their card of the day via Facebook into your Blog, so everyone can subscribe to a fourth-hand retelling of the “2 of Cups” as related to a quote by Osho or Rumi. That’s clever once, almost, but not again. And not when everyone is already doing it – I get almost 78 cards as “card of the day”, so what’s the point of that – I already own a Tarot deck.

So how long will it take **you** to create the level of content that people will read and return to, to nourish their Tarot interest. And how often will you have to spend that time.

And what happens when you don't? Simply, if you set up a Blog you will need to be on it **every week**. Every week. If you don't, **everyone** will know. That same day. So they may come back and visit, maybe in a week. Or they may not.

There are exceptions of course. Have a look at Ginny Hunt's *78 Notes to Self* which is updated maybe once a month or less.

<http://78notes.blogspot.com/>

Then ask yourself, have you got the insight, novel approach (and not copying Ginny's, she's already owned that!) and depth, and length, to produce that sort of copy? If so, you can afford to update your Blog every few months – I'll come back and check. I'll even have a paid reading from you – Ginny is the only person I've paid to have a reading from in the last ten years, that's how good her content and approach is, if I'm any measure at all.

Now have a look at Mary K. Greer's Blog.

<http://marygreer.wordpress.com/>

Have you got the research and writing skills to present something like this? Have you got several books and articles behind you? If so, you can afford to update your Blog irregularly – I'll come back and check. There's something else both Ginny and Mary both do – they make it easy to let you know they have new content, but its something that only works if you have good and original content.

I know one Blog that is merely a re-setting of Google news alerts on Tarot and other peoples Blogs. It seems quite successful, but it is disheartening that the content is easily accessible from the original sources. And there is no editorial.

This particular Blog repeated a "news item" about divination in South Korea. Not only did it then repeat the mistaken view that "divination is booming in hard times" (there's no evidence that it is, and my own brief polls have shown quite the opposite – Tarot readers live in the same economy as everyone else) but it repeated the "fact" that there are 400,000 diviners in South Korea. That seemed a handy round number so I checked – firstly, there is no evidence or source for that, and secondly, the population of South Korea is about 49 million, making the claim signify that almost 1 in every 100 member of the population, man, woman and child – and foreigners – are full-time diviners making a booming income!

My favourite Blogs are those already mentioned and clearly contemporary and well-informed Blogs such as:

Tarot Elements: <http://www.tarotelements.com/>

TarotEon: <http://taroteon.com/>

4.3 RSS Feed and Subscriptions.

If you have a Blog or Podcast (see later) then ensure that people can subscribe to it and it has a RSS feed. If you don't know what those are, think again about doing a Blog, as it will sit in the outer wastes and your voice will be a lost cry in the wilderness within a month – or you'll lose it entirely by having to keep shouting!

4.4 Newsletters (& Spam)

Some Tarot folk offer newsletters from their websites. A great example of this – which presents quite a consistent hard-sell in a friendly and open manner – is Tilly Tarot. Take a look at her site and subscribe to her newsletter:

<http://www.tillytarot.com/>

The newsletter is well-gearred to provide an overall theme, matching the site, competitions to encourage interaction and engagement, cross-promotion of her live reading services at Liveperson and Kasamba.

The newsletter is relatively light on content but that makes it easy to maintain, and consistent. It doesn't matter too much so long as the newsletter does the job that you have stated on your website - the Secret of a successful Tarot newsletter is to get the subject line sorted.

That is to say, if your newsletter is nothing more than a catalogue, no problem, just make it clear. The subject line should be “Latest Offerings from Bloggs Tarot”. If you can keep it going with content, then it should be “Bloggs Tarot Newsletter with latest articles”. If it's more of a newsletter where you update people with news and offers, then “Regular News Letter from Bloggs Tarot”.

It sounds simple, but an analysis by Mailchimp (more of them below) found that the biggest reason for unsubscription to a newsletter was that the subject line (and expectations of the reader) were at odds with the content.

The two recommended (by me and others) providers of newsletter services are:

Mailchimp: <http://www.mailchimp.com>

Constant Contact: <http://www.constantcontact.com>

We use Mailchimp at [Tarot Professionals](http://www.tarotprofessionals.com) and for our [Far Away Centre](#) mailings.

Both offer services to create and distribute your newsletter, provide signup forms for your website, and a database of subscribers. They both offer services to analyse how many subscribers open the newsletter, and even which links they click – which helps assess whether your content is relevant and the interest in particular offers or promotions.

The most important thing about using a service rather than your own email list is that they help you avoid becoming a spammer. That's really the last thing you want! There are now laws in place for such mailings, and you need to be aware of them – for example, having your full name and address on a mass-mailing. These services will help you avoid those traps and getting blacklisted.

Do make your newsletter original in some way, though. Take time to take photographs that are unique to you, or use images that no-one else is using. A newsletter comprised of standard stock images is not really engaging.

Also expect Feedback and be prepared to adjust your marketing campaign in response. Make time ahead to do so. One recent Tarot newsletter was advertised on Aeclectic, received gushing support, and when the first one came out, it was full of inaccuracies. As they had explicitly requested feedback throughout the whole process, Tarot Professionals sent a courteous email detailing the problems, which was met with a “I can't do anything about that” response. Well, a factual corrective paragraph could have been included in the next newsletter – as one would expect from a professional newspaper or other informative newsletter.

If you decide to use Mailchimp, do let us know at Tarot Professionals (enquiries@tarotprofessionals.com) **before** signing-up as we can ‘refer you’ and we'll both get extra free credits for our mailings!

4.5 Twitter

Have we mentioned content? Twitter allows you 140 characters, so for content that has to be somewhat precise. Tweeting a card-of-the-day may seem like fun, but if everyone else is already doing so, you can bet I'll be blocking you pretty soon. Tweeting about your penchant for a particular pop-star may be entertaining to your friends, but isn't what I want to read if I subscribed to you as representing a Tarot group or website. You can bet I'll block you.

And I'll eventually join the estimated 40% who leave Twitter within a month of joining. Read that again.

<http://www.twitter.com>

Here's what Twitter *might* be good for – and its early days yet, so feel free to update me by Tweeting me @TheTarosophist the moment these things change.

1. News. Related news to Tarot. Twitter was originally seen as an SMS social network – a cloud of people collecting into common interests (now #tags) instantly communicating by text messages. Keep that idea in mind and you'll keep close to what Twitter is actually designed and useful for – real-time distribution of simple messages of relevance to interested people. No, that does not include a minute-by-minute Tweeting of what you are seeing in the same TV program I am watching. If you were that much of a friend, you'd be on the couch with me watching the same screen.

2. Links. I think that's about it. But not a link to your Blog. Or Facebook site or anything else that I am likely to have found elsewhere if you have marketed properly. I don't need to be reminded every day that you have a Blog. I'll just block you. So I am interested if you find a link you think is relevant and needs to get told quickly – a special offer, a breaking news item (that day or day after only) and so forth. If you keep doing that, I'll follow you – you're my kind of Tarot person!

So if you intend to Tweet, ensure you have time, time and plenty of time, and a nose for news, research and more. And are enthusiastic about it. And can make real friends and network easily in real-life. And have a life.

4.6 Yahoo Groups

Although an original mainstay of the Tarot community, there are only a few regular groups left, including Tarot-L, Comptarot, TarotPsych and Professional-Tarot-Readers. When I took over management of the latter recently, I discovered that although it had been running for 9 years, no-one had ever cleaned out the bouncing e-mails nor analysed how many people had flagged themselves not to receive e-mails. This meant that a group perceived to be comprised of 300 people was actually closer to 200 (when the bouncing addresses had been removed) of whom only about 78 received direct e-mails. Out of which only about 4-5 would be actively participating in discussion.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/professional-tarot-readers/>

Looking at those ratios, you can see that a Tarot Yahoo group is not a great idea.

4.7 NING Spaces

A personal-version of Facebook, you can set up a Ningspace, as has Magicka School, or the Book of English Magic.

<http://magickaspace.ning.com/>

<http://englishmagic.ning.com>

These are heavy-maintenance affairs and require a good team of volunteers, mentors and fans to keep them alive. Don't do it unless you have a lot of trusted friends and a big fan-base to begin with! In fact, you should wait until one of your fans sets one up for you – don't set one up yourself and expect the market to come flooding through the door – it won't happen.

4.8 Facebook/Fan Pages

There are a number of "Fan Pages" for Tarot readers on Facebook, but like NING, they are probably more effective once you have built up a client-base who then wish an immediate method of being informed about your activities. You can also pay for advertising on Facebook, as does Tarot Professionals.

Facebook advertising is effective in that it targets specific interest groups, but carries a cost in that the audience expect everything to be free. That means that you may attract a mass audience, following, or market, but this will cost you a fortune and very little of those will convert. A recent example suffices, when we ran the first Tarosophy® conference.

We paid for Facebook advertising, and generated **hundreds** of interested contacts. Many of these required e-mails about venue, accommodation, costs, transport and so forth. Many didn't read the website before contacting us, and we spent many hours replying. By two weeks prior to the conference, we had about 12 people "definitely" coming on the Facebook page for the event, and 48 of the 84 "maybes" had been in touch to say they "might" be coming. I was forced to tell the venue we had between 20-80 people coming!

In the end, **NONE** of these people paid nor attended! **Not one of them.** In the final analysis, the marketing on Facebook failed because people seem to believe they can participate by clicking on things, not actually engaging, travelling or certainly not paying. But you will pay, so ensure that you take this into account!

We find it works well to market an offer, a very financially appealing one, and drive people to that offer via the Facebook group, and to the Facebook group via limited paid advertising. There's a very low break-even point, and you will have to find it quickly for yourself to avoid losing all your advertising budget!

So be brutally realistic. Just because you have a thousand "friends" on Facebook, unless you have met some of them, they are not really friends! Which also goes for "harvesting" contacts by "friending" someone with a good range of contacts and then "friending" all their friends. What some people fail to realise, for example, is that most of the friends on the Tarot Professionals list are actually real friends whom we have met, and had long relationships with, either in person or online. We haven't just clicked on them because they may be a useful "contact" in our "intensive networking". Again, you can waste a lot of time building a list which isn't really that useful or what it appears to be – friends are built by time and shared experience, not clicks.

4.9 SEO and Google Advertising

Having spent a lifetime in the internet, almost literally in some cases, buried in cables, or designing sites, I guess I could write a book about Search Engine Optimisation or advertising online. There's again only the hard obvious facts:

1. Content. You need good content relevant to the market. Original articles, easily navigated, on Tarot, will be excellent. Keywords, repeating the word Tarot, etc, may get you dropped down the Google list faster than you think, so stick to good content. What do people search for? "Tarot reading"? Look at how many sites are listed! You'll have an impossible job to get to the first fifty pages of that!

Now Google "Tarot Professionals" ... you'll see we own not just the first result, but virtually the **first three pages**. Now Google "Tarosophy" and you'll see that owns **all** the results. In both cases they are reasonably a unique phrase and a

unique (and trademark registered) word. This is where branding becomes important – you need to market your brand so people will look for that, which is unique. Then you can be assured they will find you quickly.

You are not going to be found as a “Tarot reader” or by someone randomly searching for a “Tarot reading” - so don’t market yourself on that alone. Market yourself, set up your domain, and content, as “TillyTarot” or “Auset Gypsy Tarot” and then sell and advertise that brand.

A final thing with SEO is that it is the **quality of the links to your site** that also count highly. The Far Away Centre website which offers Tarot courses and more went from page 40 on Google Search to page 1 for “Tarot Courses” within a week of the link being featured on the New Statesman site. This was as the result of writing an article for the online Faith column of the New Statesman.

<http://www.farawaycentre.com>

So look at the highest ranking sites – not necessarily Tarot-related – and work out how you might get them to feature your site and link to it.

4.10 WebPage Design (Marketing)

Again, many books can be – and have been – written about webpage design and internet marketing via your website. There are a couple of specific considerations for Tarot professionals:

1. You need images of Tarot cards on your site. Images are copyright. You need permission of the copyright holders. So you can decide to go for commonly used decks, which are more likely to be instantly recognised, and contact the publisher for permission, or choose several lesser-known decks, and contact smaller designers and publishers. Choose a deck that reflects your image – there’s a big difference between having a Goddess Oracle deck and the Deviant Moon deck on your site – don’t just choose one because it’s the first one you purchased yourself!
2. Disclaimers – more on the legal side, so see our separate paper on Tarot legalities – but these give a marketing message also. You actually do not need disclaimers in the UK and Europe – this is the most common myth in the Tarot and psychic profession. You need a clear statement of what you offer, clear pricing and a t&c policy at least dealing with refunds.

4.11 Forums

Research is a most important prelude and part and parcel of marketing. There’s several forums you **must** be a part of to be connected to current debate, discussion – and more importantly, to be able to review the last ten years of such. There’s nothing as bad as entering a market without any research. You’ll never recover. So before you announce your latest deck, book, site or discovery, you must check and do your research. These forums are the places to ask and discover. You may find that although you think your “Christian Tarot” deck is a novel idea, it was first done in the 1700’s and there’s been a few books since on that very subject.

Join the forums and ensure you know before you fall on your face in the open market!

The current main tarot forum is definitely Aeclectic:

<http://www.tarotforum.net/>

Although this is free, to actually advertise you will have to buy a professional subscription, which is very worthwhile - for a six month minimum, it presently costs \$20 AUD. This also gives you access to a subject thread for professionals.

Our Tarot Professionals forum is quite focused on innovative and new Tarot, so achieves a slightly-lesser rate of activity. It is too easy to replicate Aeclectic and provide a thread for “your favourite deck” or “Worst card” and so on, but that’s not really progressing Tarot, merely treading water.

4.12 Skype

Skype is an essential component in online readings, and offers teleconferencing facilities also if you are running a Tarot class. Although there are other packages for larger training systems, such as those used by Tarot Professionals, with whiteboards, videorecording, Flash and Powerpoint integration, a basic system can be found within Skype using just teleconferencing and screen-sharing.

One such online system is <http://www.wiziq.com>

You will need a good headset to avoid feedback and improve quality.

In terms of marketing, having a Skype contact shows that you are easily accessible, and this also encourages international audiences. Just be aware of the time-zone differences if you are marketing overseas!

4.13 Press Releases

If you have the skill to write a professional press-release, or the budget to hire someone to do so, you may consider using a PR engine. The one used by Tarot Professionals is <http://www.prweb.com> and there are many others. You might also consider (at half the price) <http://www.seopressreleases.com>.

If you take this route, ensure that your PR is accurate, factual, straightforward and not self-aggrandising too much! Also ensure that – as anywhere else – you are not libellous or offensive in any way – this PR will go out very wide and far. If you are uncertain, consider taking advice. One PR from Tarot Professionals attracted the ire of fundamentalist Tarot Card Players for not making clear the distinction between Tarot cards as a trick-playing game, and Tarot cards for divination and self-discovery.

4.14 Youtube/Videos

A video clip is an interesting way to promote your material, and give an overall snapshot of your style. It should obviously fit with the rest of your theme, even more importantly as it may include music and graphics which produce an emotional response – this must be congruent with your overall theme - or deliberately opposite for shock or amusement value.

Again, you must observe copyright with use of images and music. It is far better to use your own images and music – perhaps one of your friends can provide such for cross-promotion of their work – rather than stock images and sounds that have been seen elsewhere. This is particularly important when working in a niche market like Tarot; if everyone is using the “gypsy with shawl” image, your impact will be absolutely minimal.

Animoto produces excellent video segments from your still images, photographs and brief snippets of text. It now even includes short video clips (about 10 seconds) within the overall montage. Professional members of Tarot Professionals get a free video utilising their images, etc. but you can try a short and Animoto-branded version for yourself.

<http://www.animoto.com>

Producing good video for Youtube is another method of promoting yourself. You should consider providing an example reading, or teaching segment, for such marketing. However, consider that peoples expectations are quite high, and a shoddy recording of you mumbling into a webcam will do irreparable damage to your image! Perhaps you can contact your local college which runs a media course, and ask if they have some students who would film a segment for their portfolios?

4.15 Conferences/Talks

In terms of marketing, Tarot requires a great deal of educative marketing. As we will see, almost half your potential market thinks you are evil! A little bit of education into the marketplace can work wonders! An opportunity for this is giving talks and lectures – one person I know gave a talk to their local W.I. (Women’s Institute) which gained them almost twenty new paying clients within the following two weeks! So have a think of where you might offer a talk and expand the market a little.

Tarot Professionals can help if you need material or a checklist of facts and ideas.

Another marketing opportunity and an important part of marketing research is to attend Tarot conferences. Here you will network with other professionals, get news of current and forthcoming events, and much more.

There are several well-established conferences and a number of new ones, including our own Tarosophy® Conference.

The main Tarot conferences are presently:

- The Readers Studio (New York, USA)
- The Tarot Conference (London, UK)
- BATS: Bay Area Tarot Symposium (San Francisco, USA)
- LATS: Los Angeles Tarot Symposium (L.A., USA)
- Tarosophy Conference (Lake District, England)
- Tarotverband Conference (Hamburg, Germany)

There is also a large one planned for 2012 in Marseilles, France.

There are also many other meet-up groups and irregular gatherings of Tarot workshops, talks, presentations and more. Although only attended by relatively small numbers, those attending will represent the more engaged Tarot audience and are therefore a good sample of your market in terms of other readers and Tarot enthusiasts.

4.16 Podcasts

Although Tarot is primarily a visual medium – Tarot readers like nothing more than to see and hold both new and old decks – there are some good Podcasts about which are useful marketing tools. You may wish to offer your own, but of course, research what is available already! As with video, you need to ensure that the recording and production quality is high, you have a good voice for audio, and that the content can be maintained regularly.

The best Podcast in my opinion is the Tarot-to-Go Podcast at Tarot Pathways:

<http://tarotpathways.com/>

Now on its 35th Podcast, Anastasia interviews a wide range of Tarot luminaries and provides a good sounding-board for opinion and debate.

5. The Law

Whilst we have provided elsewhere our guidance on trade law for Tarot Professionals (see Members area and issue 1 of Tarosophist International) in the UK and Europe, in this paper we offer considered guidance on marketing law, particularly as it relates to advertising in print and broadcast media – which are covered by separate regulatory bodies. This should not be taken as specific legal advice, which should be sought from a legal professional.

This guidance is provided by Tarot Professionals with the assistance of the UK-based Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP). It is essential for any practitioner in the UK (and we offer these guidelines as good practice elsewhere in the world whilst we collate specific regional information) to be at least aware of the laws and regulations applying to their trade. Ignorance would be no defence should a complaint be made against you.

Having said that, despite somewhat hysterical claims in certain quarters of the psychic world, we have found that the relevant bodies are friendly, free to consult, and able to offer clear impartial advice on the relevant issues. They also have a sympathetic understanding of the vagaries enshrined in law, and a sense of humour when it comes to some of the ensuing discussions - as when recently talking about the difference between psychic and non-psychic charms ...!

5.1 Non-Broadcast (Print) Media Marketing Law

So, we present here first marketing advice for the non-broadcast world. This advice applies to magazines, leaflets, business cards, pamphlets, and any other print media. The CAP copy-writing team here in the UK are a **free** service to advise you if you remain unsure after reading this article whether specific text in your material may contravene these guidelines.

We'll begin by presenting a real case of an advert, complaint and adjudication against a Tarot Reader recently in the UK. We are hoping that "Sister Charlotte" is not a member of Tarot Professionals! Here's the original advert, which received one complaint - which we should notice is enough to invoke the CAP and a legal team.

TO ALL BELIEVERS PSYCHIC READER SPIRITUAL HEALER ...
SISTER CHARLOTTE CAN DO MANY GREAT THINGS FOR YOU!

I am a palm tarotcard crystalball reader and spiritual healer with 25 years experience. I specialize with 100% success rate in removing: Bad Luck Sorrow Depression Curses Body Sickness Headaches Jealousy Witchcraft Evil or Negative Energies around you or your home Remember no matter how big you think your problems are, they are not impossible to solve! I can find solutions for you in:

Love Relationships Marriage Job Business Family Money Finance Studies Exams Immigration ...

Have a moment to look through that wonderful advert - and we couldn't have made up an example as bad as this one, of course! Notice how many things you might find to complain about in the text, how many inaccuracies you might notice, or where you simply disagree with the wording, spelling, or grammar. Once you have done so, we can turn to the actual complaint and the official adjudication of the ASA advertising body.

Adjudication of the ASA Council (Non-broadcast)

Issue

1. The complainant challenged whether Sister Charlotte could prove that she had a 100% success rate in removing bad luck, sorrow, depression, curses, body sickness, headaches, jealousy, witchcraft, evil and negative energies.

The ASA challenged whether Sister Charlotte could substantiate:

2. the claim that she had 25 years' experience, and
3. the claim that she could find solutions to people's problems in love, relationships, marriage, jobs, business, family, money, finance, studies, exams and immigration.

The CAP Code: 3.1;7.1

Response

Sister Charlotte said she had withdrawn the leaflet and her future advertising would not contain claims identical or similar to those challenged. She said she would refer to the CAP Code before drafting new marketing materials.

1. Sister Charlotte stated that she had received no complaints or negative feedback from clients. However, she had no proof of her success.
2. Sister Charlotte asserted that she had 25 years' experience as a palm, tarot card and crystal ball reader and as a spiritual healer. She said she had been continuously involved in the provision of psychic and spiritual services since childhood to the present date, both in the UK and Canada. However, she had no documentary evidence to prove her level of experience.
3. Sister Charlotte said she would avoid claiming she could find solutions to people's problems in future, and would instead explain that she was able to provide support and advice in relation to certain problems.

Assessment

1., 2. & 3. Upheld

The ASA noted Sister Charlotte was unable to send documentary evidence to prove she had a 100% success rate in removing the afflictions listed in the ad or to demonstrate her length of experience. In addition, she was unable to send evidence to show that she had found solutions to people's problems in any areas of life. We considered claims that marketers could successfully solve all problems, break curses, banish evil spirits, improve the health, wealth, love life, happiness or other circumstances of readers should be avoided because they were likely to be impossible to prove. We concluded that Sister Charlotte's claims were unsubstantiated and were likely to mislead.

We welcomed Sister Charlotte's assurance that the claims would not re-appear and that she would have regard to the CAP Code in future. However, we were concerned that she had taken six weeks to respond in writing to us, despite having received several reminders to contact us, and had not honoured any of the deadlines we set. We told her to respond to our enquiries promptly in future.

On points 1, 2 & 3, the ad breached CAP Code clauses 3.1 (Substantiation) and 7.1 (Truthfulness).

Action

The ad must not appear again in its current form. We advised Sister Charlotte to contact the CAP Copy Advice team before advertising in future.

This ends the actual adjudication from the CAP.

5.2 The CAP Help Sheet

Having read through that real case, we can see that in all cases we must be appropriate with our wording, our claims, and be able to provide documentary evidence where we make any claim at all. We must also demonstrate to some extent that we have taken steps to substantiate our skill or take appropriate advice - which is where an organisation such as Tarot Professionals can assist. Notice that this area of law is on **marketing** only - such considerations as insurance are covered by the new European Fair Trading regulations as we discuss elsewhere.

We are pleased - with permission - to present the entire text of the “Help Note” which has been drawn up by the CAP specifically for the marketing of Spiritual and Psychic Services. I am guessing most professional Tarot Readers in this country have ever heard that this exists, and yet it is essential reading! It was recently updated, in the last few months, so also see their website for the latest version at any time after the publication of this magazine - a link is provided at the end of this article and for members of Tarot Professionals in the Legal area of the Members site.

Committee of Advertising Practice (Non-broadcast)

Help Note on the Marketing of Spiritual and Psychic Services, Astrologers and Lucky Charms

CAP Help Notes offer guidance for non-broadcast marketing communications under the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotions and Direct Marketing (the CAP Code). For advice on the rules for TV or radio commercials, contact Clearcast www.clearcast.co.uk for TV ads or the RACC www.racc.co.uk for radio ads.

1. Background

These guidelines, drawn up by CAP, are intended to help marketers and their agencies interpret the rules in the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing (the CAP Code). The “Key points” are intended to guide media ad departments. The Help Note is based on past ASA decisions. It neither constitutes new rules nor binds the ASA Council in the event of a complaint about a marketing communication that follows it.

2. Key points for media ad departments

Marketers should hold documentary evidence to prove any claims that are capable of objective substantiation (Section 4).

Marketers should not mislead or exploit vulnerable people (Section 5).

Claims about successfully solving problems or improving health etc should be avoided because they are likely to be impossible to prove (Section 5).

Claims of ‘help offered’ should be replaced with ‘advice’ (Section 5).

References to healing should refer to spiritual rather than physical healing (Section 5).

Direct marketers should not imply that they have personal knowledge about recipients (Section 5).

Claims relating to the accuracy of readings or guaranteed results should not be made unless they are backed up by appropriate evidence (Section 5).

Claims about being a personal advisor to stars, the wealthy etc and claims such as ‘...as featured on TV’ should be backed up by appropriate evidence (Section 5).

Claims relating to the length of time that a marketer has been established should be backed up by evidence (Section 5).

Money-back guarantees should be clear and genuine (Section 5).

Any testimonials used should be genuine (Section 5).

Marketers should not imply that a lucky charm can directly affect a user's circumstances (Section 6).

Claims that a lucky charm can act as a confidence prop are acceptable if emphasis is placed on a user's state of mind (Section 6).

Unproven beliefs that do not relate to the effect of a lucky charm may be acceptable if expressed as a matter of opinion (Section 6).

Marketers offering premium rate fortune telling services should adhere to the ICSTIS Code of Practice (Section 7).

3. The Law

Marketers should seek legal advice or contact their Trading Standards Authority to ensure that their claims comply with the law. As a result of the repeal of the Fraudulent Mediums Act 1951 psychics, mediums and spiritualists are now subject to the 2008 Consumer Protection Regulations. [See our previous article & guidance in Tarosophist International Issue.1. Ed].

These regulations make it the marketers' responsibility to prove that they did not mislead or coerce the average consumer and thereby cause them to purchase a product or service they would not have taken otherwise. The average consumer is deemed to be either a member of the group to whom the marketing communication was targeted at or consumers who are particularly vulnerable to unfair commercial practices.

4. The CAP Code

Marketers should comply with the CAP Code and, in particular, with these rules:

4.1 General rules

“Before distributing or submitting a marketing communication for publication, marketers must hold documentary evidence to prove all claims, whether direct or implied, that are capable of objective substantiation (clause 3.1); “Marketers should not exploit the credulity, lack of knowledge or inexperience of consumers” (clause 6.1); and “Testimonials alone do not constitute substantiation and the opinions expressed in them must be supported, where necessary, with independent evidence of their accuracy. Any claims based on a testimonial must conform with the Code” (clause 14.3).

5. Additional guidance

5.1 Marketing by spiritualists, clairvoyants, psychics, fortune tellers, astrologers etc

Marketers of services that involve the prediction of the future, or the promise to make specific dreams come true, should advertise their services in a way that is neither misleading nor likely to exploit vulnerable people. Claims that marketers

will successfully solve all problems, break curses, banish evil spirits, improve the health, wealth, love life, happiness or other circumstances of readers should be avoided because they are likely to be impossible to prove;

5.1.2 Claims of 'help offered' should be replaced with 'advice' and the emphasis should be on the individual helping him or herself rather than events or changes happening to them as a result of some external force;

5.1.3 Psychics, mediums and religious organisations may be able to make some claims about healing only if it is clear that they are referring to spiritual, not physical, healing;

5.1.4 Marketers should not state or imply that they have personal information or knowledge about recipients of direct marketing e.g. "I see a major change or a move for you and possibly someone close to you". They should not imply that they send personalised readings to recipients if the same, or a substantially similar report is sent to everyone who requests a reading;

5.1.5 Marketers should not make claims relating to the accuracy of their readings or claim that results are 'guaranteed' unless they are able to provide evidence to prove the claims;

5.1.6 Claims that a marketer is a personal adviser to royalty, the police, celebrities or wealthy business people or that he or she has been featured on television, radio or in newspapers or magazines should be backed up by adequate and relevant evidence;

5.1.7 Claims that a marketer has been 'established in the UK since...', '...nobody has been established longer...', or similar, should be backed up by evidence;

5.1.8 Marketers should ensure that the terms of any money-back guarantee are clear and that the guarantee is genuine; and

5.1.9 Testimonials used in marketing communications should be genuine. Testimonials and newspaper articles alone are not sufficient to substantiate claims (see clause 14.3 of the CAP Code).

6 The marketing of lucky charms (formerly the Help Note on the Marketing of Lucky Charms, August 1996)

6.1 Marketing communications for lucky charms or other products with unproven supernatural properties should not imply that these products can directly affect the user's circumstances.

Examples:

"Could the Lucky Charm make you popular?" - Unacceptable.

"I bought the Lucky Charm and got promoted at work" - Unacceptable.

6.2 Claims that they could act as a confidence prop are acceptable if the emphasis is on the user's state of mind and not the product's effect. Examples:

"When you're feeling lonely clasp the Lucky Charm and tell yourself you're an attractive person with lots to offer" - Acceptable.

"I used the Lucky Charm as a focus for positive thinking and got promoted at work" - Acceptable.

6.3 Unproven beliefs that do not relate to the effect of the product may be acceptable provided they are expressed as matters of opinion.

Example:

"Some Himalayan tribesmen believe the Lucky Charm vibrates with cosmic energy" - Acceptable.

7 Premium rate fortune telling services

7.1 Premium rate fortune telling services may either be live (where a caller speaks to a live operator) or recorded (where they listen to a prerecorded message). As well as complying with these guidelines, the following special provisions that apply to promotional material for live premium rate services are contained in the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards in Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) Code of Practice (9th edition):

- i) Unless the live service is available 24 hours a day or permission not to provide such information has been granted by ICSTIS, hours of operation must be stated on the promotional material
- ii) Unless ICSTIS has granted permission to do so, no promotion may be directed primarily at persons under 18 years of age or encourage such persons to call the service
- iii) Marketing communications must clearly state that conversations are being constantly recorded where there is such a requirement.

Marketers should contact ICSTIS for further advice or visit their website at:

<http://www.icstis.org.uk>.

Advice on specific marketing communications is available from the Copy Advice team by telephone on 020 7492 2100, by fax on 020 7404 3404 or by email on copyadvice@cap.org.uk. The CAP website at <http://www.cap.org.uk> contains a full list of Help Notes as well as access to the AdviceOnline database, which has links through to relevant Code rules and ASA adjudications.

February 2004 Revised: January 2009

5.3 Summary of Guidance

So this is the official guidance and help on the legalities of marketing our profession here in the UK. There are no other laws, regulations, or loopholes on “Tarot” or “Psychic Services” or “Astrology” anywhere other than this guidance and the CAP standards to which it refers, which are more about general issues of ‘substantiation’, ‘guarantees’ and the “exploitation of vulnerable people” which apply to any trading.

There are no secret government agendas to target Psychics, Astrologers and Tarot Readers that can be inferred from these laws, neither are they constraining to any who practice an ethical, considered approach to Tarot Reading and who state this clearly. We should welcome, consider and even work to develop such regulation, to avoid the Sister Charlotte’s of this world keeping us in the 15th century.

We will now turn to the even stranger regulations governing the broadcast media. In this country (UK) we are surrounded by regulatory bodies, making regulations and rulings that seem almost perversely random - did you know that on Psychic TV, a satellite channel devoted to on-line psychic and Tarot readings, you cannot say the word Tarot?!

5.2 Broadcast Media Marketing Law

There are going to be specific laws in your area for the broadcast media marketing of Tarot. These are likely to be antiquated, vague, contradictory, or downright bizarre. One of the aims of Tarot Professionals is to survey these laws and start to campaign for their updating, particularly where they are prejudicial or inaccurate.

The following piece is primarily for UK broadcast media but may give an indication for the likely legislations, ordinances or guidance in your area.

The first important point – and this is little-known in the Tarot community- is that the whole of the UK guidance on mass media legislation for Tarot is based on the ill-informed opinions of less than 3,000 people! That’s about 0.004% of the UK who have helped decide what you can and can’t say or do with regard to Tarot on TV.

This is because the current guidelines are based on one of the few quantitative surveys to incorporate a mass audience perception of Tarot which was conducted in November of 2001 when some 3,000 people in the United Kingdom were surveyed for the Independent Television Commission (ITC) and the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC). The aim of this survey, which was called "Beyond Entertainment," was to assess whether certain types of alternative belief, or psychic, and occult phenomena would cause offence if demonstrated or explicitly discussed on television—an offence suggested by a prevailing view as being likely.

The survey has certain constraints, and is not comprehensive in its geographical selection of population, which was limited to London and Manchester. It also only included in the "expert" category of the sample, an "energy Healer, Diocese Exorcist, Alternative Medicine Practitioner, Para-Psychologist Academic, two

Psychiatric Social Workers, and a medium." It did not include any Tarot Readers or practitioners or academic students engaged with Tarot or any other purportedly "esoteric" subjects.

The survey is couched in terms which demonstrate implicit bias, such as referring to Tarot as part of the "unregulated fringe practices" which list includes Astrology and Palmistry, as might be expected, but also Satanism and Yoga! So it is no surprise that the recommendations are mostly negative and at best cautious.

The statements include assessments that some psychic material is considered unacceptable on mainstream television and a recognition that some types of psychic material has the potential to be harmful. Whilst lumping together occult practice, mediumship, spiritualism and Tarot, the guidance included:

"Respondents suggested that 'supposed contact with the dead' should be considered 'occult' only when it involved the purported invocation of unknown spirits or negative forces. In other circumstances, clairaudience and clairvoyance were usually seen as relatively harmless, though respondents felt certain restrictions should still be applied."

So if you go on mainstream television to do a Tarot reading, ensure that you do not use the Golden Dawn prayer "I invoke thee, HRU ..." before doing so!

The confusion in the research was astonishing, as reflecting a wider confusion in the public perception. Here is a section on the difference between psychic and occult:

Psychic

... many psychic practices such as horoscopes, reading auras, chakra healing and crystals were seen as relatively harmless. Most thought much of it, for example, horoscopes, palmistry etc was about the acquisition of positive, comforting information and generic advice. Clairaudience – the claimed ability to hear things beyond the range of the power of hearing, e.g. voices or messages from the dead, and clairvoyance – the claimed ability to see things beyond the range of the power of vision e.g. the future, fell into an area of uncertainty. For many, these practices were acceptable because they involved supposedly, communing with dead loved ones, rather than unknown spirits. But others felt uncomfortable about them, and felt that they could be detrimental.

Occult

Respondents clearly identified things of the occult, for example, black magic, ouija, satanism, spells and voodoo as having a negative quality. The occult was not just considered supposed contact with the dead but to be about invoking dark forces (potentially) with evil intent. Respondents felt occult practices were about influence, rather than personal enlightenment.

5.3 Half Your Market Thinks You Are Evil

Tarot was seen by 44% of the respondents as Occult. That means that if this survey is anything to go by, almost half the population of the UK views Tarot as associated with something entirely negative.

The main reasons given by this appalling small sample of people from London and Manchester for the negativity of Tarot? The Death card, and Tarot “messing with your mind”. So those are the main two concerns you have to face with this as a product on the market.

The main reason Astrology wasn't seen as veering into the occult and associated with negativity? “It's in the newspapers” so it must be normal and alright in some way – a bit “of a laugh”. That's possibly the best we can ever hope for with Tarot, to move it from occult tampering with the dark forces to a jokey parlour game.

5.4 Teaching Tarot on TV?

So in summary, the report states that, and quoting the ITC Programme Code:

Horoscopes, palmistry and similar ‘psychic’ practices are only acceptable where they are presented as entertainment or are the subject of legitimate investigation.

They should not include specific advice to particular contributors or viewers about health or medical matters or about personal finance. They should not be included at times when large numbers of children are expected to be watching.

Fiction programmes containing ‘psychic’ phenomena should not normally be scheduled before the watershed, although a fantasy setting, for example, may justify such scheduling.

There was widespread agreement that ‘how to’ demonstrations on the occult were unacceptable and that programme content featuring practices such as horoscopes, palmistry and psychic practices should not be shown when children might be watching.

Which means that you couldn't teach Tarot before 9:00pm on television, and then only on a niche channel. Which is ironic when you go onto Youtube and type in “Tarot” and get 28,000 videos, the first of which is “Tarot Card Reading Guide (2007)”.

6. Conclusion

There are many pitfalls in marketing, even for experts. In such a niche market as Tarot, which is furthermore surrounded by barriers of misunderstanding, it is essential to understand marketing and research clearly. You must also factor in an educational project with your marketing, to better inform the market as to the nature of Tarot reading. We are not well-served by Tarot groups and readers who play upon the gypsy and crystal-ball stereotype which roots Tarot in something occult and hence evil or harmful in public perception.

There are many choices and channels of marketing available and it is easy to be overwhelmed or overly-ambitious. The producer of a newsletter should know how much time it will take, and the level of conversion (subscribers to purchasers) required to operate the newsletter. Otherwise they will add to the low expectations when they have to stop the newsletter after seven months or continually run it with copying other people's content.

Content. Content. Content. And the Time to Produce it. Then go to Market!

Further Reading for Marketing

The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing, Al Ries & Jack Trout (London: Profile Books, 1994)

How to Become a Rainmaker: *The Rules for Getting & Keeping Customers and Clients*, Jeffrey J. Fox (London: Vermillion, 2000)