

## **How to make the most of Wedding Fayres.**

By John Morton

Wedding fayres are your opportunity to sell yourself directly to a customer base that could, with a little persuasion, want your skills for their wedding.

The following points have all been tried and tested by me over the last 8 years and have proven to work. I have previously only ever shared this with close friends in the magic community and even then only if they are not in my area.

Following on from a conversation on this subject with Phil Taylor and Ian Thomas of the Magicians Advice podcast (highly recommended), I was encouraged to put all this into the format you are now reading.

I want to thank both Phil and Ian for their support and work on the podcast as a resource for magicians new and established in the world of magic.

So down to business.....

How do you make sure you are booked over all the other suppliers at a wedding fayre?

Let's look at it in stages:

## **Which is the best Wedding Fayre to attend?:**

The cheapest isn't always the best option; the best wedding fairs are the ones that more people attend: *More people = more chances to convert to bookers.*

You will find as you start to look for wedding fairs that there are loads of them out there.

### **Fayres run by venues.**

These tend to be low priced and small with about 20 - 30 stalls (a third of which will be photographers). These are often not very well promoted except to the venues brides and grooms that are already booked at the venue and maybe a banner at the entrance. Although these tend to be a little cheaper but the footfall isn't great. That's not to say you will always do rubbish at these fairs; because they are quiet you get more time to spend with people and let them get to know you and your performance style. These are also a good way to keep in with a venue that you work at regularly and hopefully become that venues recommended magician.

### **Fayres run by other suppliers.**

These tend to take place in leisure centres, sports halls or Auditoriums and are normally a lot bigger than the venue fayres with approximately 60 – 100 suppliers exhibiting and are more expensive to attend as you would expect. Because they are not tied down to one venue they will be attended by several venues who will in turn promote the fayre, meaning more footfall for you. At these fayres you may find you're up against another magician so the information provided later will hopefully help you get noticed more (assuming they haven't read these notes too).

### **Fayres run by papers, magazines, or radio.**

These are very much like the fayres run by other suppliers (above) and are sometimes a little bigger, however they are a lot more expensive as you are actually paying for an advert in the magazine and getting a pitch in the wedding fayre as part of the package, you do however get the added promotion of the fayre on the run up to it in the paper or radio (again more foot fall sometimes).

### **Fayres run by exhibition companies.**

These fayres are normally in big exhibition spaces and are the most expensive. You will be provided with either a space to put up your stand or have a square cubicle that has walls on each side other than the front. These fayres often charge the prospective brides and grooms an entry fee to the fayre also (this often removes the few that have just come for a look around but aren't even getting married). At these fayres the stands will pull out all the stops to make their stand look the best and most impressive (no 6ft long tables with just a white cloth over them and a few flyers here). The fayres are normally well attended by a lot of suppliers and customers and promoted very well; you just have to weigh up if you would get more business by doing around 5 other medium size fayres for the same cost.

## So you've booked into a fayre, now what?

### The Table.

In most cases the fayre organisers will provide you with a 6ft long table with a white table cloth on it.

I often see magicians dress the table with their flyers and business cards on the table in an attractive fan design and few props like cards and sponge balls along with a sprinkling of confetti in an attempt to fill the table. It might be that they've had a pop up banner made and space permitting that might go on the side, this depends on the fayre and if you have the space, most of the time your 6ft pitch is fully taken up with the table so it has to sit behind the table.



There are two main problems with this stand for our business.

1. It looks like every other stand that didn't go the extra mile to stand out, so it doesn't draw the customer in.
2. We are performers who perform strolling magic we don't need a big table for our products – we are our product.

The answer:

Get a smaller table!

The best bet is to take your own with you, how big depends on if you want to perform with a table. If you don't perform on a table at all just have a small table like the 40cm x 40cm table available from Spider-Evoflex this is a small table ideal to hold your flyers and business cards it is the correct height and packs small (I've put a link below).

<https://www.spider-evoflex.com/Ing/en/spider-tables/spider-tables/>



I personally have a half moon table that I made myself, it is still small enough to move around to draw people over to the stand but big enough to use like a card table it holds my flyers and an iPad with quotes and pictures from previous weddings.

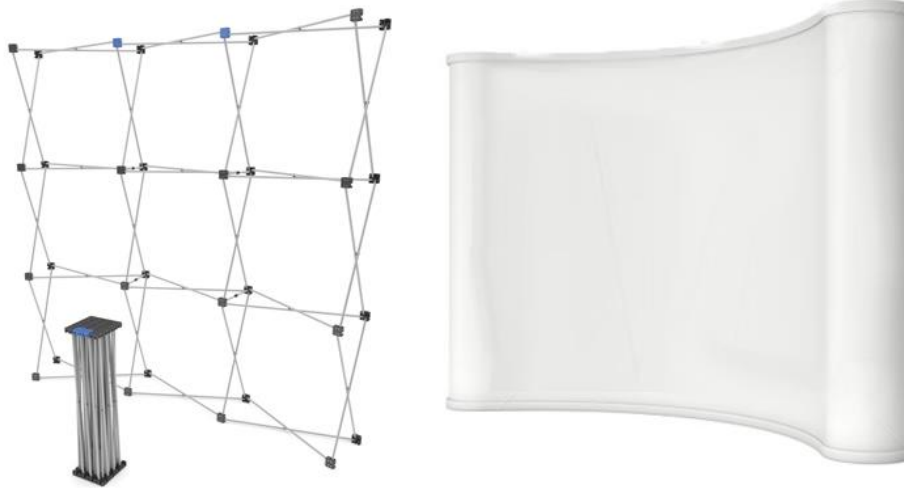
It has had several looks over the years as I keep improving on it, this picture shows one of its many looks.



### The Banner.

Pop up banners are great! They are small lightweight to carry and play big, coming in all different sizes and widths, the most common ones being between 80cm and 100cm wide and approximately 2 meters in height.

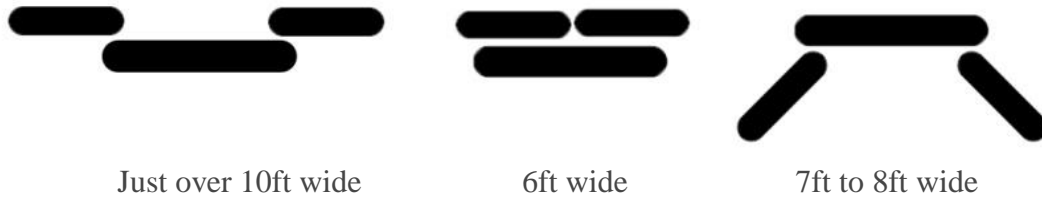
Another popular type is the big exhibition style that create a full backdrop and work a lot like the spider table mentioned earlier (the frame pops up and you fit panels to it using magnetic bars that lock onto the frame). These come in their own case which doubles up as your table.



The large back drops look great and with the correct artwork will make you stand out from the rest of the wedding fair, the only down side to them is they are expensive to first buy and set up and are heavy in their case (you will also need a good size car to get the case in), I have used these and they do look good.

The alternative is to use 3 of the smaller banners to create a backdrop. Having tried a few different sizes I have settled these days on a wide middle banner which is 150cm wide and two side banners that are each 80cm wide. This means I now have maximum flexibility when it comes to pitch space.

Example of different combinations for different pitch sizes.



For a 5ft stand just use the middle banner.

### The Art Work.

When it comes to the art work on your banner the most essential thing is your name and contact details are **at the top**. This should be high enough so if the people walking past didn't want to take a flyer or card they could take a picture on their phone and capture both you and your contact details, this is particularly handy if there is more than one magician at the fayre so they know which one was you when trying to remember when they get home.

Resist the temptation to put a big picture of yourself on the banner, you are right in front of them talking and performing. A better picture would be from a wedding you have attended that shows you performing and most important a great reaction from the guests.

If you are going to put any other text on a banner make it a great quote from either the press or a past client but don't overdo it, people will not stand and read a banner full of information, you are there to tell them any information they need or they will contact you later.



As you can see from this old picture on the left I tried a table and chairs for taking bookings at this fair, while it did work it wasn't necessary and I haven't done it since. This particular stand was 12ft wide and I used this particular back drop and performance table for several years. I chose to have my action shot on an easel with some quotes below it.

My new set up has a more vintage feel with battery powered Edison light bulbs and an improved frame and table as it suits my performance style and is a lot smaller to transport. Yours must represent your own personality and performance style.



My set up above has been made so the panels are a dark wood finish but completely blank of pictures and text. (the picture frame on the right is velcro'd to the banner and the middle sign magnetizes to the middle banner). These panels can be used to create a blank backdrop in private houses when I am booked for the mystery room type of party (for more information on the mystery room contact me directly).

I hope that this has inspired you to create something different, for more inspiration google the best wedding fayre stands and take a look.

## **The stand is ready now its time to show what you can do.**

So the stand is ready and looking eye catching, you've chosen effects to perform that really blow people away every time but there is more you can do to offer extra value to your package.

I'm about to tip what I do and the benefits to the bride and groom for each point, please don't underestimate the value of explaining the features and benefits to the couple, this will get you more bookings than another magician at the same fayre who is just showing tricks.

This is now I explain why they should book me, (Note: I perform at two weddings a day the photos part and the evening party).

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I perform during the photos in the afternoon at weddings as you would expect however I also do the following:

I will perform around the wedding keeping people entertained during the photos; this will stop people being bored while waiting to have their photo taken and also stop people wandering off when they could be needed for a photo, this helps ensure the photographer captures the special day.

I will during the time I am there perform a private performance just for the bride and groom; this is because they don't get to see a lot as they are in every photo (*while all magicians perform for the top table or Bride and Groom you need to make it sound special*).

Once everyone is seated and the bride and groom have been announced and sat down, just before the food or speeches start I perform a short trick in front of every one with the best man. *This trick should be a funny trick that looks like it might be at the best man's expense, it is however important that the trick you choose just be a bit of fun and work out ok in the end.* This has four key benefits and will definitely increase your bookings,

1. It is a funny trick and gets everyone laughing.
2. Because they are laughing it breaks the ice on the tables were people don't know each other.
3. Every single groom wants to wind up his best man.
4. *If you didn't get round everyone at least they all get to see this trick.*



I will carry an extra pack of cards which I will get your guests to put messages on the back for you the bride and groom as a fun keep sake (I use red bicycle cards).

*This little extra thing can get you an extra half an hour paid performance time if you want to charge for it. All you have to do is explain that people take a while to write messages on the cards so it takes longer to get round everyone. Don't underestimate this extra it works! and all you have to do is at the end of your set leave a sharpie and the cards at the table and ask everyone to put some messages to the bride and groom as a keep sake on the cards then go to the next table and collected it after then repeat it.*

Personally I use a new deck of cards at each gig so I use the old decks to make up a new deck (that's only been used once) and that is the deck I get signed and give away.

All the above I also do on the evening time slot, I do the best man trick just before the first dance and the private bride and groom trick at the end of the night just before I leave.

## So let's look at our 2 magicians:

<p>Magician One:</p> 	<p>You:</p>  <p>Remember your stand will not look like mine but represent your own style.</p>
<p>Performs around the groups and tables</p>	<p>Perform around the groups and tables.</p> <p>Help the photographer by ensuring no one wanders off during the photos.</p> <p>Do a private performance for the Bride and Groom.</p> <p>Performs a cabaret style trick with the best man in front of everyone.</p> <p>Get a special pack of cards signed by their guests as you go round performing which they can keep as a fun reminder of everyone at their wedding.</p>

Clearly you have the edge over magician one.



## **Final tips:**

Take someone with you to hand out flyers and talk to people about what you do. Remember they are a representative of you and as such should look as professional as you do. This person can also book people in for you freeing you up to continue performing (you always want to be seen to be entertaining people throughout the day – a busy stand is more interesting than a quiet one to people walking past).

Build into one of the tricks you are performing the time to ask them casually when they are getting married, once they tell you comment on how their month is a busy one and you will check after this to see if you are still free (do this even if your diary is blank).

Mention that if they did want to book you are taking details of bookings today and you will confirm the details by email and send your bank details for them to pay a deposit.

If they are really not sure you can always get their email or phone number to contact after the fayre if they want.

Your stand should in some way resemble your website to ensure continuity of branding and identity.

**The only other detail to remember is it's your personality as you perform and interact that will ultimately be the reason people book you.**

I hope these tips help with the creation of your wedding fayre set up and the features and benefits give you the extra value needed to close the sale and the edge over the competition.

John