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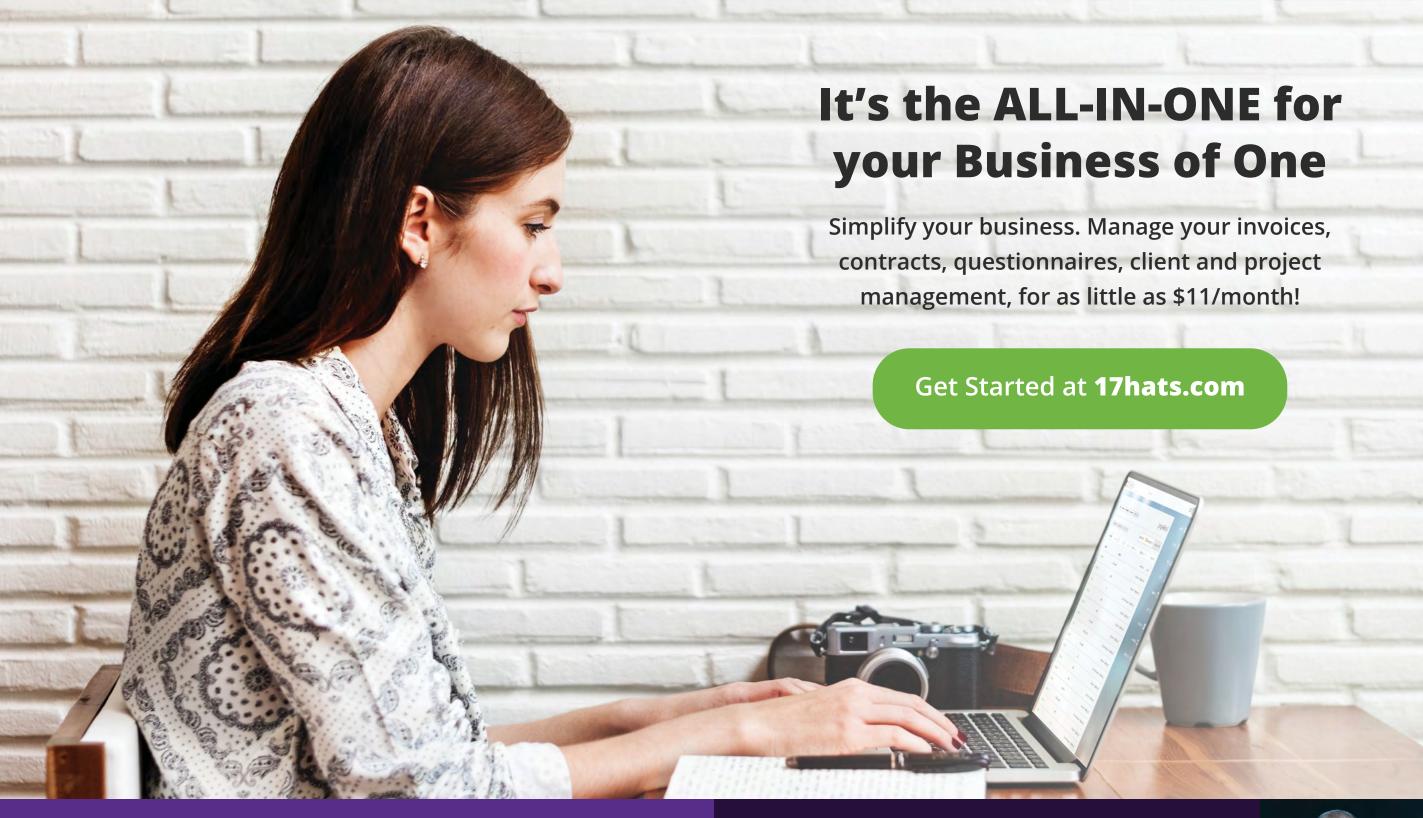




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"17hats has been a complete game-changer for our business. The ability to streamline and automate our workflows allows me to focus on shooting and the experience I provide for my clients while 17hats handles the rest." - Sal Cincotta



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- 12 | 5 Tips for Better Bridal Party Images Michael Anthony
- 28 | Tips for Finding Your Work-Life Balance Skip Cohen
- 36 | How to Keep Your Competition Guessing and Grab New Market Share Sal Cincotta
- 50 | Profoto A1 Product Review
- **52 | 5 Ways to Maximize Sales With Online Tools** Alissa Zimmerman
- **64 | How to Avoid Facebook Blackout** Phillip Blume
- 78 | Why Photographers Should Embrace Digital Retouching Nino Batista
- 94 | Instagram Growth: 5 Tips for Better Engagement Numbers Vanessa Joy
- 106 | Panasonic G9 Product Review
- 110 | Finding Your Fit: Lightroom Classic or Lightroom CC? Dustin Lucas
- **126 | The List** December 2017
- 128 | The Photographer's Copyright Filing Workflow Scott Detweiler
- 146 | 5 Social Media Marketing Tips for Better Sales Christine Yodsukar
- **158 | Inspirations** Our Readers
- 182 | Low-Powered Strobes, High-Powered Results Michael Corsentino
- 196 | Tamron 100-400 Lens Product Review
- 198 | The Easiest Photographer's Business Plan Ever Jonathan Tilley





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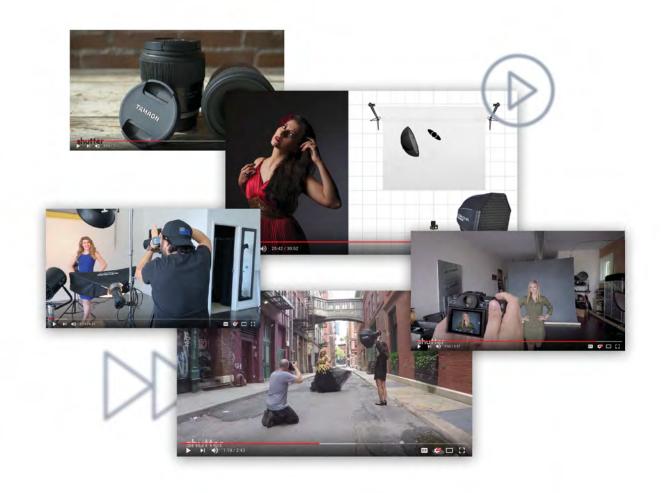
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MISSION STATEMENT

Shutter Magazine's focus is on photography education. Our goal is to provide current, insightful and in-depth educational content for today's professional wedding and portrait photographer. Shutter uses the latest technologies to deliver information in a way that is relevant to our audience. Our experienced contributors help us create a sense of community, and have established the magazine as one of the leading photography publications in the world.

Shutter Magazine: By photographers, for photographers.

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THE COVER

PHOTOGRAPHER: Sal Cincotta | salcincotta.com

CAMERA: Canon 1DX

LENS: Canon 85mm f/1.2

EXPOSURE: f3.2 @ 1/320, ISO 50

ABOUT THE IMAGE: This image was taken in St. Louis, MO in September 2015

SHUTTER MAGAZINE | BEHIND THE SHUTTER
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LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief







1. BREAK UP THE BRIDAL PARTY

We're all familiar with the obligatory lineup photos, with the bride on one side and the groom on the other. That's the way this type of photo has been taken for years. If you have read my articles over the last two years, you will know that I preach the need to differentiate yourself from the pack, and by that I mean take some chances on the wedding day and show that you are willing to think outside the box by breaking up the standard wedding photos that we are used to.

There is science behind this train of thought. By keeping bridesmaids on one side and groomsmen on the other, you are doing two things. You are keeping too much symmetry by aligning bridesmaids' dresses on one side and groomsmen's tuxedos on the other, and you are creating an off-balance image because the men are larger than the women. So by stacking them on opposing sides, your image is off balance.



You are also failing to showcase the connection with the bridal party. Here's how I pose bridal parties. First, I ask them to pair up with whomever they are walking down the aisle with. I take the maid of honor and the best man, break them up and place them next to the bride and groom, respectively. I pose each individual couple next to each other, alternating sides each time. If I have an uneven number of people, I break up the last pair based on the side that takes up more space to give the image a final bit of balance. From here, we can pose the group in a variety of ways. Which brings me to tip two.



A couple of things will happen. Extroverts in the group will naturally make the introverts come out of their shell, helping you get great expressions out of them. If you are not much of a people person, like me, this is a great way to get awesome candid shots of your bridal party.

I repeat this process with the bridesmaids, groomsmen and then the whole bridal party. I shoot this tight, middle, wide, horizontal and vertical. My second shooter is taking candid images from a 45-degree angle at the same time. This gives us a great variety of looks from our bride and groom.















3. HAVE SOME FUN

With my basic and posed shots out of the way, I want to have a bit of fun with our stationary group. I ask them to strike three poses. I instruct the whole group that we will do this three separate times, and here are the rules: Each time we need a new pose, and the only thing I ask is that bridesmaids don't hit anyone in the face with their bouquets (it's happened before). I count to three, three times and take one to two frames each time. It takes less than 10 seconds, and some of the images that we create with our groups give us amazing options to use in their album. This is an easy album spread if you present it to them as such during their design consultation when they choose their album images.

Another good idea is to ask each person in the bridal party to make a funny face. I know, it can sound cheesy, but when you finish all of them, you now have another bridal party spread you can sell in the wedding album. Get creative with the individual shots, and they will help you tell a story.



4. ADD MOTION

Last in our sequence, we add in some motion with our bridal party. One of the shots that I love doing with our groups is to have them all run toward the camera. I do this two times: once camera-aware and the second time just looking at each other. Make sure that your bride's dress stays clean during this time. I stay away from a couple of things because they are a bit cliché. I avoid groomsmen walking shots, which is overdone. I prefer energy in an image, with people running as opposed to walking. And now a word on jumping photos: Photographers, let's just stop with jumping photos.







I like to have the bride and groom run across a scene from left to right. Think about this as one page in the album. Next, I like to have the rest of the bridal party chasing them back the other way (next page in the album). This can add an awesome element to your story, which brings me to my final tip.







5. FOCUS ON INTERACTIONS

I often ask the bridal party (either the full party or members of it) to get in on the action of helping the bride and groom in their getting-ready tasks. This can include something as simple as buttoning up the dress or helping the groom with his jacket.

By adding in some of the typical parts of the story, we can create beautiful candid images or set ourselves up for great photojournalistic images.

Try using the bridal party to stack multiple stories together in a scene by using layering. For instance, maybe the bride is getting her dress ready while the other girls are helping each other get ready. My images like this are born from an actual photojournalistic moment, and clients always ask for them. Real life is the best source of inspiration for posed images.



nage © Michael





SUMMING UP

The bridal party is an essential part of the wedding day experience for your bride and groom. If you've been in a wedding party before, you know how important members of the party are to the bride and groom. All of the folks in my own party are important to me and my wife, Jen, and they played a vital role in the story of our wedding.

And let's not forget about the obvious here. A happy bridesmaid is also a future bride. I have lost count of how many bridesmaids' weddings we have photographed after meeting them on the wedding day. The trick to converting a bridesmaid into a future bride is to include them as part of the wedding day experience, even if they come up to you during the day of their friend's wedding with a Pinterest list of "amazing photos" you should take for her.

We all have been there, but it is important to accommodate everybody involved on the wedding day, while keeping your focus on your clients. That way, you can get amazing images and tell an unforgettable story.





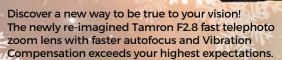
Michael Anthony is the owner of Michael Anthony Studios, a wedding photography studio based in Los Angeles. He has won multiple awards in international image competition for his creative use of light, storytelling and environmental portraiture. The five-member team at Michael Anthony Studios photographs around 60 weddings and over 200 portrait sessions a year.

michaelanthonyphotography.com

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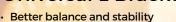


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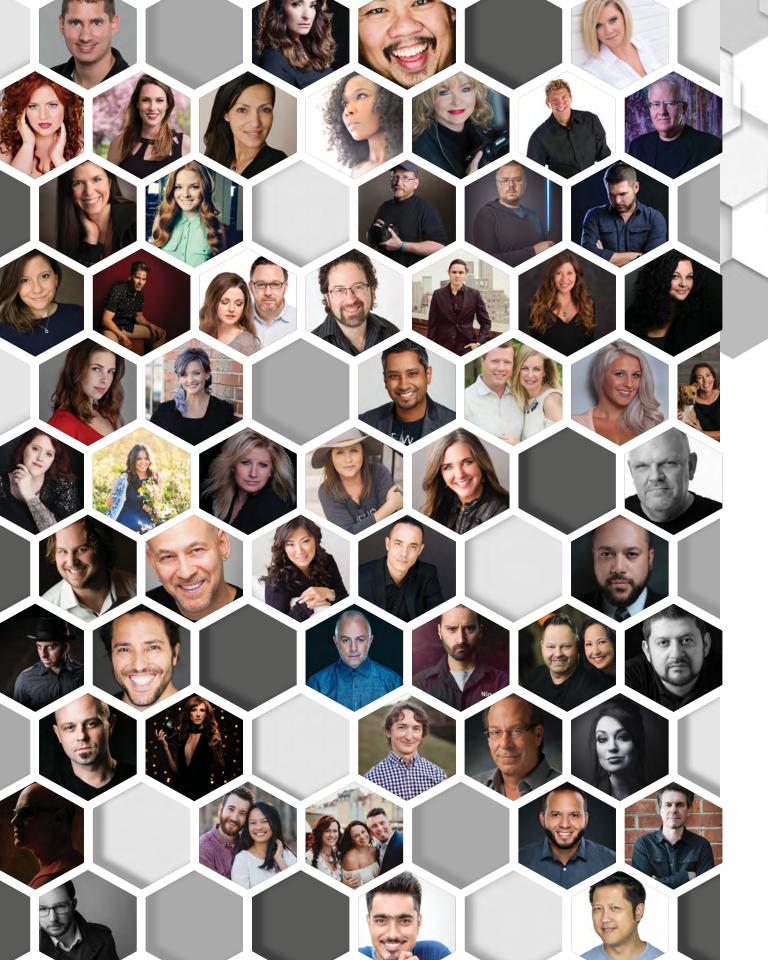
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BUILDING BLOCKS

TIPS FOR FINDING YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE

with **Skip Cohen**



As the year comes crashing to a close, I feel like I'm trapped in one of those old movies where the hands of the clock are spinning. And if you're like me, at some point you look back over the year and think about what you accomplished—the highlights and the low spots—and you start thinking about the year ahead.

I know it's one of the most abused words in our culture, but as December comes to a close, it's the perfect time to think about *balance*. I want to hit the concept of finding balance from a few different perspectives, and I'll admit right up front, it's not easy. I'm still a work in progress, but maybe you can learn from some of my mistakes so that you can make new ones of your own.

THE HATS YOU WEAR

I've touched on balance in just about every article I've written for *Shutter* over the past five years. When you wear so many different hats, balancing them all is a daily challenge.

The first hat is simply you—further defined to other people as a friend, spouse, lover, parent, sibling. Now throw in the hats you wear as an artist, business owner and member of your community. Within each, there are other hats related to organizations you're a part of, along with your full-time job (if you have one) aside from your photography business. Last are those surprises and interruptions that come along as one more hat on your already-crowded head.

I remember one of my very first presentations back in my Polaroid days. I was in my early thirties and had a full-blown panic attack trying to figure out how to put the presentation together. At the same time, my boss had given me two other projects to work on. I'd lost control. I thought I was going to crash and burn.

Sound familiar? A lot of you feel this way every December as the business, clients and your family pull you in different directions, creating back-to-back demands that you just don't seem to have.

How in the world do you find balance when you keep saying to yourself, in the words of my good buddy Nick Vedros, "What fresh hell is this?"

Let's start with you, your family and close friends. In most articles about business and marketing, everybody talks about the personal side last. But I think the personal should come first.

until it's **done.**





LET'S GET PERSONAL

If you lose yourself in your business, you'll eventually lose everything. You'll wake up one day and wonder what happened to all the things that made you smile every day. That's why it's important to prioritize your own well-being at the very top, to make that hat your most important one. As they warn us on commercial flights, in the event of loss of cabin pressure, put your mask on before helping others!

Make time for yourself and the people you love. There will always be crunch times when you have to put in some long hours, but they need to be the exception. You've got to isolate time every day-first for yourself and then for your family or the people most important to you.

Establish an end time for each day. My office is in my home, and it was really hard to simply walk away from my computer and the phone at the end of the day. It took me a long time to learn to stop working and "punch out." But the payback—private time with my wife—is incredible.

Don't take calls late in the evening. Of course, there are calls you're waiting for and clients you want to talk to. Set up a system so you don't have to take calls or emails whenever they come in. I do one last round of email checks just before I go to bed, and never stay at the computer longer than 15 minutes during that last check. There are exceptions, but they should be rare.

Keep a date night. While it seems to have started as a concept to help Mom get time away from the kids, every relationship needs it. I used to be convinced that the younger you were, the more important it was—with or without kids. When Sheila and I go out after a long stretch of no date nights, we seem to pick up right where we left off when we were still dating. Life gets in the way, and you often don't realize how much time has flown by since the last time you had quality time with your significant other.

Share your dreams. When you share your dreams of life, business and family with a spouse or best friend, they become more achievable. I love these lines by John Lennon: "A dream you dream alone is only a dream / A dream you dream together is reality."

AVOIDING BUSINESS OVERLOAD

Burn, but don't crash and burn. You know your limits. Shakespeare's line "To thine own self be true" couldn't be more true. When you're approaching burnout, walk away from the business. Do something that helps you get energized. Everyone has something they love to do, a way to relax and clear their head. Learn to recognize those moments when you're feeling overwhelmed, and step away to recharge and then come back to the challenge.

Know your costs, margins and profitability. You can't take off your business hat if you don't know how your business is doing. Keep track of your expenses and revenue all year long. Meet with your accountant once a quarter. If you don't have an accountant, load in QuickBooks or other software so you know where you stand month to month. I'm always amazed by how many photographers don't know if they've made any money for the year until tax time in April.

Know your business. December comes the same time every year, yet so many of you are surprised and overwhelmed when you find yourself buried in holiday orders. I've seen a few of you in a pure state of panic thinking about turning down business because your plate's full. You get in a rut, and believe you can't take on any more business.

But don't forget: "It always seems impossible until it's done," as Nelson Mandela once said.

Pay attention to your calendar. Whether it's following up with clients, attending meetings or just being involved in your community, nothing will interrupt your quest to find balance in your life more than forgetting things. Your calendar is a critical component, the only way to keep your schedule from becoming complete chaos.

Outsource, or "right-source." The expression right-source comes from Jeff Jochum. It's essential to running a successful business. You can't do it all, for two reasons: You don't have the skillset for everything and you don't have the time. Pay attention to tasks on your plate you don't do well or just hate doing, and right-source them out.

Get help with management and workflow. There are two companies that can give you a hand getting organized, freeing you up and helping you find more balance: Sprout Studio (GetSproutStudio.com) and 17 Hats (17Hats. com). Their business software helps maintain your calendar, sales, bookkeeping-the list goes on and on. You got into this career because you loved photography, not because you wanted to run a business. Most of you have little to no staff to help run things, and you need all the help you can get. Look at what each company offers and how they can help you get back on track.



Hopefully there's at least one idea here to help you think through what you need to fine-tune your life and your business. In the end, you've got one easy-to-understand goal: Wake up smiling every morning.

We're here to help. I'm just an email address away, at skip@mei500.com. Enjoy the holiday season.





Skip Cohen is president and founder of Marketing Essentials International, a consulting firm specializing in projects dedicated to photographic education, marketing and social media support across a variety of marketing and business platforms. He founded SkipCohenUniversity.com in January 2013. He's been actively involved in the photo industry his entire career, and previously served as president of Rangefinder/WPPI and Hasselblad USA. He has coauthored six books on photography and is involved in several popular podcasts, including *Weekend Wisdom*.

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As we sit here at the end of the year, I am focused on dominating in 2018. What are you focused on? If you are like many other businesses, you are about to miss the entire first quarter of the year because you have procrastinated yet again. Now is the time to start thinking about the year ahead and putting together a plan of attack so that you are not scrambling the entire year to hit your goals.

You do have goals, don't you?

Let's take a quick look at some of the things you can do now to set yourself up for success in 2018 and keep your competitors off balance as they try to keep up with you and your explosive business.

It's time to get back to basics and reset some of the things your business is doing or not doing correctly. For businesses that have been focused on growth, it's easy to lose sight of the basic tenets of our business as we look forward and forget to peek in the mirror to look at the parts that should be our core strengths. This is the easiest place for our competitors to close ground on us and start stealing market share.

Let's put an end to it now.

Referrals are the key to growth.

Be unique. If your work looks the same as every other photographer's, why would I pay you a premium for your services? It makes no damn sense. You make these buying decisions every day at the grocery store, the car lot, hotels and restaurants.

Consumer behavior is the same regardless of the category. Think like a consumer. I can't tell you how to be unique, but I can say it's about making your work stand out. Are you a photojournalist? Are you a studio photographer? Whatever your style is, make sure it stands out.

Love or hate my style, but one thing is for sure: It's unique and recognizable. This gives me incredible recognition in the wedding and senior communities. That is empowering to me and my business. Invest the time to create a unique body of work, and you will start to see people come to you for your vision. When that happens, they won't be haggling with you over \$500. I guarantee it.



What I have found after 10 years of doing this is that the most important place for me to spend my time is in the marketing of my business and the photography. Everything else can be offloaded or outsourced. Editing, accounting and legal are all tasks that can be let go from your direct oversight. I am not saying you shouldn't check in or even oversee at some level, but if you are directly responsible for these tasks, it'll hurt your growth and survivability.

Your energy will be in the wrong place. Get focused and let go of the rest.













ages © Salvatore Cinc

Work on your customer service.

It's crazy that I have to list this one, but we can all improve our customer service. Understand that customer service is not just returning phone calls or being nice on the phone. It requires you to look at everything you do that touches your customers.

For example, we can make a huge immediate impact just by attacking the one thing we all struggle with: turnaround times of our images. That is the number-one complaint from customers. So whittle down your turnaround times—not only for images, but for product delivery as well. It doesn't matter how busy you are. Your clients don't care. They just want to enjoy their images. That is the quickest way to improve customer service. Outsource if you need to, but you have got to improve response times.

Return emails promptly. We respond to clients within four hours no matter where we are in the world. Speedy response is one of the most important factors for customers.

Returning phone calls and emails promptly and speedy turnaround of products and services, just being attentive to your clients' needs, goes a long way to helping you dominate your market.

40

Refresh your sample lineup.

While certain products will always be staples, we have to look to the future and the hottest trends in the marketplace. This is what clients demand. They are seeing these products being offered online and in magazines, so why in the world wouldn't we offer them to our clients?

Of course, prints and canvas will always serve as our core products, while metals, acrylics and modern albums have helped us win new clients who are willing to spend big money on high quality.

Almost every lab offers some sort of sample discount program, allowing you to refresh your sample lineup. If you don't find one that does, visit a trade show like ShutterFest, where there are tons of vendors showing off their best new products. This is an incredible way for you to get some hands-on time with new products to determine if your clients would be willing to spend money on them.

We like to have a sample of every single product we offer in our studio so our clients can see and touch them. It goes a long way to getting them to spend money.

Reboot your brand.

Does your brand, marketing, website, imagery and editing style all need a refresh? Most businesses put this task on the backburner, but modernizing your brand is crucial to remaining relevant to your customer base. Your brand attracts the type of client you want. Your brand can also deter clients who see a mom and pop brand that doesn't look like a serious business.

Take a hard and honest look at your brand and the various items that represent it. Here is what you should evaluate

- · Logo. When was the last time this was tweaked? Does it look professional or amateur?
- · Brand color scheme. Is it dated?
- · Website. Is it modernized and SEO- and mobile-friendly?
- Packaging. How are you delivering products to your clients? Does it look and feel high-end?
- · Imagery. Has your style evolved over the years? Does today's client identify with your imagery? Or is it dated?
- Editing. Does the way you edit and present your images match the style and presentation of what you see in magazines and movies?





I hope this helps give you a sense of what you should be focused on this month. And trust me, I know as a business owner myself that this is just scratching the surface of the plethora of responsibilities we all have day to day. Stop making excuses and start making real changes to your business and your life.





Sal Cincotta is an international award-winning photographer, educator, author and the publisher of *Shutter Magazine*. Sal's success is directly tied to the education he received in business school. He graduated from Binghamton University, a Top 20 business school, and has worked for Fortune 50 companies like Procter & Gamble and Microsoft. After spending 10 years in corporate America, Sal left to pursue a career in photography and has never looked back.

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The ability to leverage online tools for product sales can make or break your final sale. There is an endless array of services and programs that will leave you feeling hopeless as you get started implementing them into your





















ONLINE GALLERIES

This seems like a no-brainer, but an online gallery can be so much more than just a place where you post your clients' images. We use N-Vu online galleries for multiple purposes at Salvatore Cincotta Photography.

We offer online galleries in our top and middle packages as pull-through to get clients out of à la carte and our bottom package. Online galleries represent a soft cost to the business. Typically, you pay for an online gallery for a one-time annual fee, so it's not a hard cost to our business when we assemble our packages.

Next, online galleries offer a great way for clients to share their images with friends and family. This generates the best form of advertising for your business—word-of-mouth referrals. The key is to make your display image as impactful as possible. Don't clutter them with your logo or watermarks or anything that will distract the viewer from enjoying your imagery.

On the practical side, we like to use online galleries as a way to allow our clients to go home after an inperson sales session to make their decisions on what gift sizes and images they want in their album. In person, we like to lock in their images for their large wall prints and album cover details so we are able to give feedback and suggestions for what we think will look best on what products. From there, clients are exhausted and have no desire to sit in the preview room for another hour or longer selecting images to fill the rest of their package. Providing an online gallery for 30 days allows them to go through the images on their own time and not feel rushed into making decisions on the spot.

Not only do we use online galleries as a way to host client images, but we create folders within the galleries dedicated to product images to remind clients about the products we walked them through in person. Clients are often so overwhelmed at the number of images and amount of information being presented at the inperson sales session that they forget what each product is once they get home. This is a nice way to show them exactly what they are selecting images for.

I am a visual person, and am pretty good at helping clients decorate their walls. They need a little extra help to visualize the way certain images will look in various sizes.

Have you ever heard the objection, "I don't need anything larger than an 8x10" from your clients? It's a common objection that photographers face during in-person sales, and something that most don't have the confidence or tools to overcome. Room-Vu has become part of our IPS workflow that has increased our sales tremendously since we implemented it a few months ago.

After the session, I send an email out via 17hats to the client to schedule their preview session. Once the date and time are confirmed, I ask them to take pictures of their wall space (either empty walls or walls with images they are looking to replace) with an 8.5x11-inch sheet of paper taped to them. I use these during their preview to help them visualize what their images will look like in their home. I send them the step-by-step instructions, and tell them to take the pictures on their phone and simply text the images to me. Once I have the images from their home, I mock up a variety of suggested images and clusters. I have these ready to show clients as soon as we get through the selection process at the viewing session.

When clients can visualize the way these images will look on the walls of their home, the sale is a done deal.









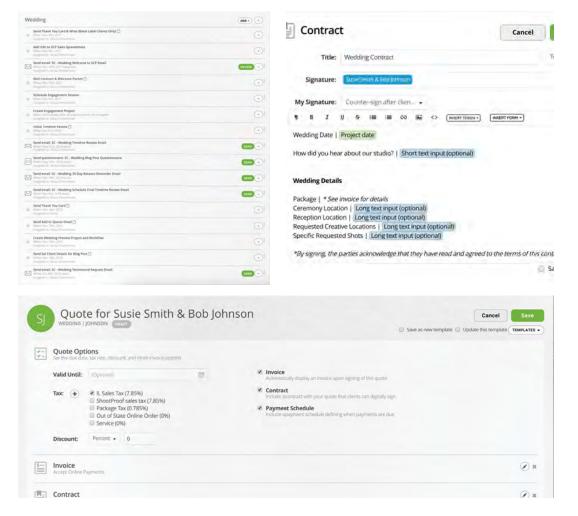


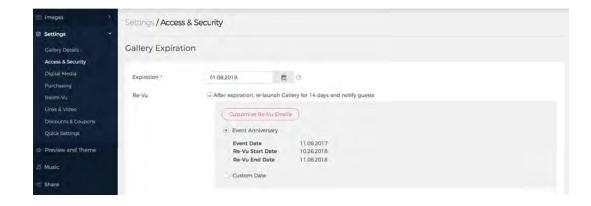
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We have created an automated client journey with 17hats. We can add the client as a contact from initial inquiry and setup, and send a quote workflow automatically. Once the client accepts the quote, an invoice and contract are automatically generated.

The booking process then relies heavily on email communication. It is so important to set up as many email templates as possible to save yourself time and energy throughout each client's experience with your studio. This ensures you're responding in a timely matter and not letting anything fall into a black hole.

17hats can be daunting and overwhelming at first glance. Where do you begin? Luckily, 17hats now offers templates from a variety of photographers (including our studio) that you can add to your account to customize your internal processes. Check out the 17hats Marketplace for more information.





RE-VU

R-Vu is another tool brought to you by the powerful N-Vu platform that makes all photographers' eyes light up when they hear about it.

Re-Vu allows you, with one click of a button inside your gallery setup, to select a custom date. The system automatically relaunches your client's gallery and sends out customizable emails to anyone who has visited their site. Imagine this time of year sending an email to all of those people saying, "Send Bob and Susie the gift of artwork for the holiday season." Or set the Re-Vu date to send out the emails on their wedding date, encouraging their visitors to purchase pictures for them to celebrate their anniversary.

Another way to use Re-Vu is a little more hands-on. When photographing an event, have you ever had a guest or family member pull you to the side to take a quick snap of them and their friends/family? Do you think those people ever actually get to see that image you took? We leave it up to the bride and groom to share their online gallery with all of their friends and family, and I guarantee nine out of 10 times it simply never happens.

We have started working on a landing page to be displayed on an iPad at wedding receptions. We will encourage guests to enter their email address to receive a notification once the images from the wedding are available to view online. Not only is this great for additional online sales potential, but it increases your list of email addresses to which you can send the Re-Vu email reminders multiple times throughout the year.

SKYPE

Sometimes in-person previews and sales sessions just aren't possible. We lean on the convenience of Skype more and more as we continue to increase our destination client base. Skype previews are similar to inperson sales, but are not exactly the same. You have to be strategic and to the point at these types of sessions.

We send our clients their gallery links 72 hours before their scheduled Skype session. This allows them plenty of time to sit down together to view all of the images, select their favorites, share with friends and family, etc. Before getting on a Skype call, go over their package options. If you do not give your clients enough time to soak in all of their images before getting on a call, you are setting yourself up for a zero sale.

On the call with your clients, start the conversation by asking them about their favorite images. Tell them to heart their favorite images inside the gallery so you have easy access to talking points while on the call. From here, you can talk about what products would be best for the images they love the most.

After the initial chitchat, walk your clients through each product in your packages, starting at the top package. Show them the product details while on the Skype call as best as possible. Have that gallery folder of products available inside their image gallery so they can reference each product image easily as you walk through the options.

This is another opportunity to use those wall images your clients took in their home for Room-Vu mockups you can create and have ready for the Skype call.

Online sales tools can be your best friend or your worst nightmare. It's all about how you leverage them and taking the time to set everything up properly from the beginning.



Alissa Zimmerman graduated with a degree in television production and has been a part of the Salvatore Cincotta team since 2011. Today she is behind the camera regularly as Sal's second shooter and as the executive producer and camera operator for Salvatore Cincotta Films, Behind the Shutter and Sal Cincotta's School of Photography. Alissa is the creative director for Shutter Magazine and serves as Sal's right hand, managing daily operations within the family of Salvatore Cincotta brands.

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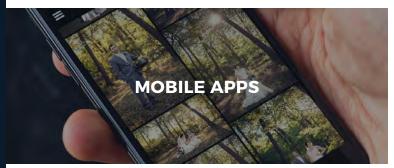
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We should have known better.

As Milton Friedman pointed out a century ago, "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch." Now Facebook is reaffirming the famous economist's theory with a new pay-to-play policy that's sending shockwaves through many industries—including ours.

This month, Facebook is testing a plan to move all nonpaid Page posts away from the newsfeed. *The Guardian* reported that tests by Facebook (in six countries outside the U.S.) caused a devastating 60 to 80 percent fall in user engagement on business Pages. A story on Medium.com described the change as "death to small businesses." It certainly could be . . . if you don't know how to adapt.

Here's everything you need to know to avoid the impending blackout before it hits your business.















BRANCH OUT TO NEW SOCIAL PLATFORMS

The information in this article has nothing to do with loopholes or "hacking Facebook." Advice like that would probably be outdated by the time this article hits newsstands, since Facebook and other companies are constantly making changes and clamping down on workarounds.

Technically, you could set up your business on Facebook as a personal profile. We have colleagues who've tried this. But it goes against the site's terms of service, and we've seen profiles like that (and all the content on them) get shut down. Even if it escapes Big Brother's watchful eye, a personal profile won't give you the few useful tools being developed for businesses.

My advice: Play by the rules, but think outside the box.

You can share posts from your business Page via your personal Facebook profile. But do so with care. Though Facebook allows it, sharing too much can fatigue your friends. (Just think how many of your friends' profiles you muted when they became essential-oils sales channels.) Still, this might be the only way you'll be able to make posts show up in a newsfeed at all now. There's speculation that even personal tagging won't work, which has been the best way for photographers to organically spread page posts up to now.

I'll touch on worthwhile paid advertising ideas in a moment. But for now, just remember that Facebook's new hardline policies don't seem to apply to Instagram, which it also owns. So make sure you're on Instagram. It's an amazing platform that younger people use more than Facebook, which now caters to an older demographic.

Even without your own Instagram account, you can create and run Instagram ads from your Facebook business account. So it may be worth something after all.





ages © Blume Photo

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR WEBSITE

It's not about the Page. Remember when business Pages were new? Your marketing posts reached your fans organically. You appeared in the newsfeed right alongside friends' selfies and artfully captured lattes. It made sense. Those people liked your Page because they wanted to hear from you, right? But giving away free access to the world's most powerful advertising platform was never Facebook's endgame.

Have you pinned too much of your marketing strategy (and your survival) on the empty hope that social sites won't change? With the birth of Pages, my wife Eileen and I saw waves of photographers enter the online space for the first time. We heard chatter from countless newbies about "efficient" new businesses they'd started with zero entry cost. They were not interested in "wasting time" on SEO. Many even swore off personal websites, with their "unfair" hosting and design expenses.

Never build a business on that kind of risk. You need to actually own the foundational parts of your business.

No matter what changes with social media, your online face will remain under your control. But what good is that face if it's hard to find? Next, let's focus on making our sites just as magnetic as social media's good ol' days.

SEO IS NOT A FOUR-LETTER WORD

To make your site magnetic, it needs strong SEO. There are libraries of books written on the topic, and I didn't write any of them. I'm not a tech wizard. But I do practice the basic SEO hygiene any photographer can do. It makes a real difference.

First, invest in a reputable website design and host. Make sure both are optimized for modern SEO—the behind-the-scenes coding that Google cares about but that makes my brain feel squishy. A lot of photographers still use WordPress blog sites, as we did for the last seven years. WordPress has lots of functionality and good SEO potential. But it isn't designed specifically for photographers, and even pricier WordPress add-ons (like ProPhoto templates) aren't as beautiful or original as we'd like.

Last month, we finally moved our site to the new Showit5 platform. Though we looked at other easy dragand-drop site builders like Wix and SquareSpace, their templates were just too rigid compared to Showit's fluid interface, which is built with creativity in mind just for photographers and artists. Not only is Showit on the cutting edge of HTML5 and SEO integration, but it also hosts our site. So we dropped our HostMonster subscription and saved on design by easily customizing our own website with no coding involved. Now we are finally standing out on mobile, too (where 60 percent of web traffic travels).

Next, make it a habit to rename your photos for keyword searches. Web crawlers weigh images heavily, but only if they're descriptive. When exporting images to your blog, you can create a Lightroom preset to default to a filename like "best athens ga wedding photographer," which I tweak as needed. From there, if you use a popular rapid-blogging tool like BlogStomp, go into its settings and deselect any file renaming defaults that will undo all your hard work. Then you're able to post the same images to your Facebook Page without actually going online; they may never show in the newsfeed, but at least Google has a chance to find them.

Another pro tip: Use original descriptive blog post titles (avoiding repetitious phrases, which earn penalties).

To go really deep on SEO, I highly recommend FuelYourPhotos.com. The articles are smart and accessible—even for a novice like me.

BLOG RIGHT

Great. You have a gorgeous SEO-optimized website. Now use it more strategically. For one, that means blogging better. Ouch—I know, most of us aren't writers, right? But don't let this weigh you down.

We keep blogging simple and effective by remembering the 80/20 rule. Eighty percent of our good results come from just 20 percent of the work most people do. So why not focus all your effort on just the things that work? When our clients book a wedding or portrait session, they receive a survey from us along with their contract. It asks them about their love story, asks them to describe their family, where they work, what their hobbies are.

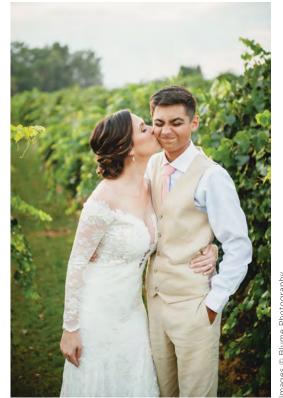
Now, instead of grappling with writer's block every time I have to pen an unoriginal wedding blog, I just copy-and-paste the text my clients wrote for me into each blog. Their friends are much more interested in reading the juicy details of real-life stories than they are about my useless descriptions of a beautiful photo shoot of the cutest couple ever.

Our survey also asks wedding couples for their vendors' websites. So we can paste the full list plus backlinks into each post with minimal effort. It's great for both SEO and vendor relationships.









ADVERTISE STRATEGICALLY

It may hurt to say so, but planning a Facebook advertising budget may be a wise idea for your studio now. I'm optimistic about the potential changes to Facebook. It's hard to appreciate the impact that Facebook has had on our industry over the last few years. I believe it is even more responsible than the digital photography revolution for the influx of inexperienced photographers into the market.

Facebook gives you unprecedented demographic information and access to audiences built just by you. It's kind of Orwellian. And it's totally worth the money. Just don't squander your budget.

To make your dollars go far, remember one thing: Small photo businesses have to advertise differently than other retailers. Brand awareness is less important than brand trust. Sound confusing? That simply means that billboards and omnipresent logos might matter to brands like Coca-Cola, but they won't help you. An ad alone isn't enough. You need to link your ad to a landing page that helps guide every interested onlooker to book you immediately for the one service marketed in your ad. Software like StickyFolios helps you do this economically, is user-friendly and offers education to make the strategy of it all make sense.



As Facebook's changes come online, they will only make it more difficult for low-budget part-time photographers -anyone who can't afford to advertising -to compete. Does that encourage you? Or does it scare you?

If you're a young upcoming photographer, it probably scares you. But it shouldn't.

This is going to help you in the long run. Eileen and I have succeeded as full-time photographers for nearly a decade. We've watched throngs of photographers use their millennial tech know-how to build businesses fast; then we've watched almost 80 percent of them fail in less than five years.

Yes, Facebook's changes might force you to focus on time-tested business strategies, real-life networking and building mentor relationships. But that's good. Those are the tools that made us a fastest-growing business and helped create every thriving friend we have in this industry.

If you're ready to put on your big-boy or big-girl pants and get involved in that kind of process, we invite you to join our community at TheBlumes.co.

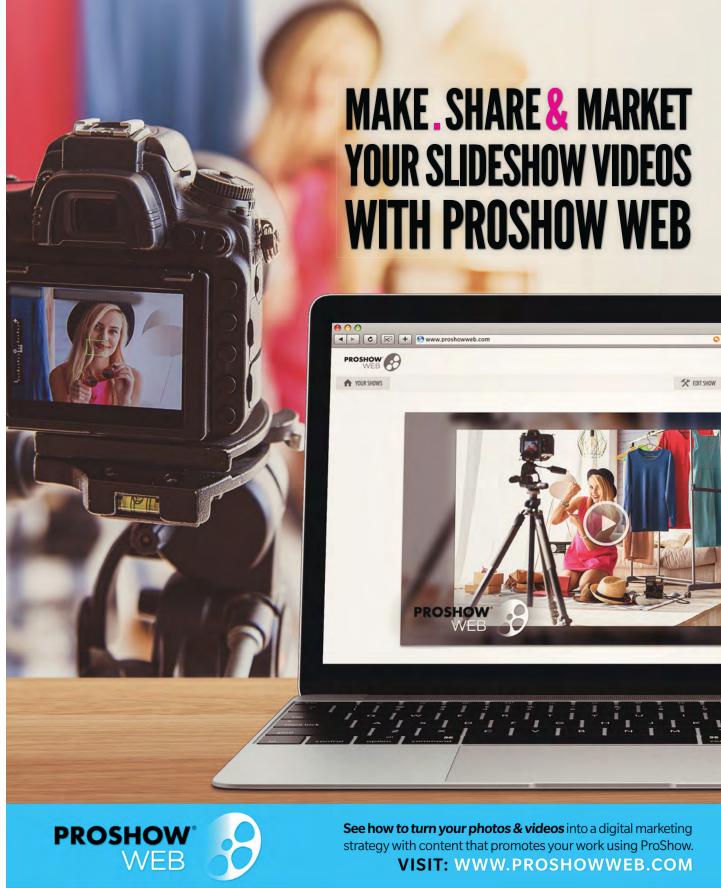
For now, don't panic. This is not the end for you. A new year is coming. This is only the beginning.



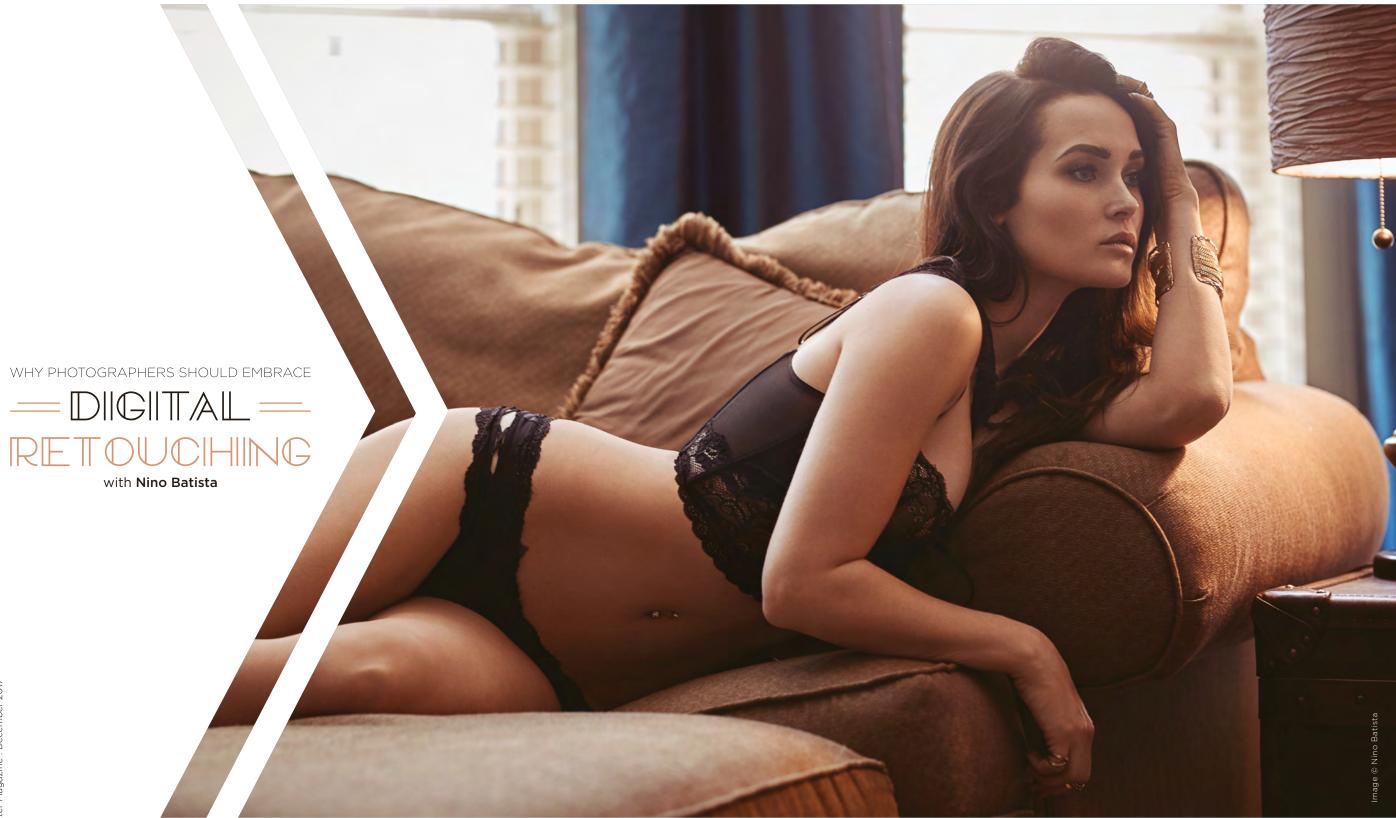


Phillip and Eileen Blume are award-winning photographers just crazy enough to believe art can change the world. Having transformed their small-town home studio into a top brand, they now work with clients worldwide. The Blumes specialize in wedding and fashion photography, and continue to focus on what matters most to them: charitable projects that include adoption advocacy and documentary filmmaking to benefit children living in extreme poverty. Phillip is a monthly contributor to Shutter Magazine, and together the Blumes speak at numerous top industry events, have appeared on CreativeLIVE and have shared their inspiring vision of more meaningful photography from the TEDx stage. They are owners of three photography brands, including a newborn studio, and are the proud founders of ComeUnity Workshops for photographers who seek balance. They live with their children in rural Georgia.

theblumes.co







Let me say this right up front: If you overlook or downplay the significance, nay, importance, of digital retouching, you are making a critical mistake. And I am going to be a bit direct, if not harsh, in this article, but I hope you take from it what you need to refocus your digital strategies in a direction I bet you hadn't considered.

RETOUCHING HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE ALMOST DAY ONE

Almost as soon as photography was invented, people were trying to find ways to manipulate the images they processed (which came to be known as "post-processing," of course) for many reasons. From fixing technical gaffs to enhancing various elements in the image, photographers sought new and better ways to edit their work.

An warntouched Hurrill portrait of Joan Crauford made for
Hurry Beaumont's Laughing Sinners.

This is the stone portrait, after James Sharp spent six hours
retouching it.

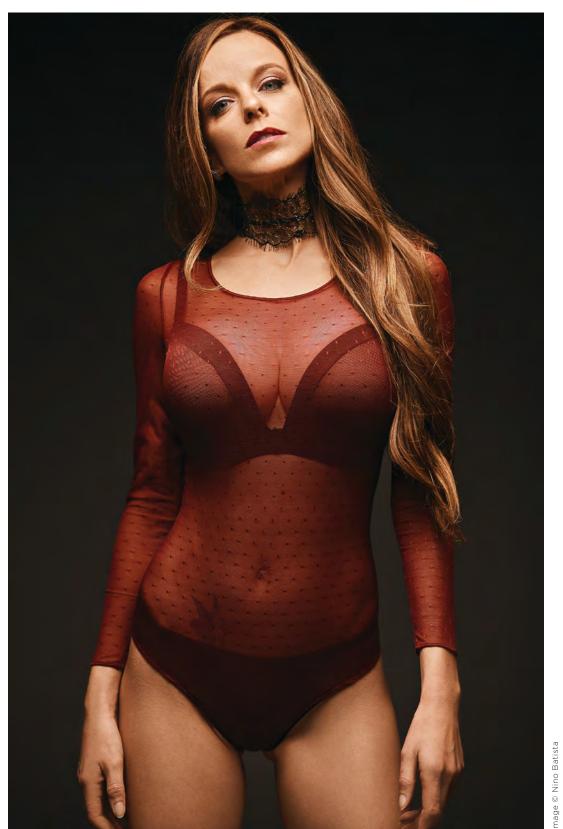
The timeframe I am talking about here is the past 100 years.

Simple post-processing techniques to brighten and darken ("dodge" and "burn." respectively) were staples in the dark room process for decades, and for good reason—they worked well. Blemish removal, brightening eyes, color shifts, skin smoothing and compositing are techniques that have also been done with great success over many decades, well before the Knoll brothers conceived of Photoshop.

What photographer hasn't captured the perfect moment, but then saw in the final image that their subject's face was a big darker than they would like? While the modern-day photographer's solution is a quick and simple fix in editing, similar post-processing has been a part of professional photography since at least the early 20th century. Every subsequent era produced new and better post-processing techniques, ultimately leading us to the endless possibilities that modern digital retouching affords us today.

Google the history of retouching. I promise you'll be amazed at what you discover. That said, perhaps your grandfather may not have done any advanced retouching on the vacation photos inside that old album in your closet (or maybe he did?)—but rest assured that almost all commercial photographs from any era have had some manner of retouching, editing or manipulation. If well-done retouching has been a staple in professional photography for more than a century, why would you downplay it as some necessary evil or annoyance?

Digital retouching should not be seen as a modern bastardization of a beloved century-old art form, but instead as a mission-critical element in the professional image-making process that continues to evolve.





PRECEDENCE, AESTHETICS AND MORALITY

If your immediate response is, "Wait, I should focus on more retouching simply because that's just what has always been done?", then I urge you to reconsider. Retouching, like photography, is not a static thing. It evolves as technology and methodology evolve, and every single photographic artist approaches post-production differently, thus making the concept more of a general approach and not a hard and fast procedure. Best practices notwithstanding, we all see our editing differently because we are artists with different visions.

"I don't believe in Photoshopping my pictures" is the legendary war cry of the uninitiated amateur retoucher who makes excuses for not seeing the photography process all the way through to post-production.

Do you know what appropriate retouching, and editing in general, even looks like? Is it merely wonderfully perfected skin on a human subject? Is it beautiful, rich color grading? Or maybe some other advanced special effects involving compositing? Perhaps there is no one way to define what good retouching is in a simple statement. It's far more abstract than we give it credit for.

But the general precedence was set long ago. Professional photos get edited, they get retouched—you're going to have to accept this. Society's general idea of what makes for a good commercial photograph hasn't changed much. And while there is always something enticing about going against the grain and eschewing any societal standard, totally ignoring standards (and not learning from them) is a guaranteed way to limit your images' potential.

You have to know the rules before you can break them.

Don't let yourself get too wrapped up in the idea that retouching photos is somehow immoral or wrong. That is an overly politicized stance on the subject, and is as naive as declaring wine to be evil and wrong because someone can choose to get drunk on it, drive home and kill themselves by driving off a cliff. Retouching is a power that should not be taken lightly. But more importantly, retouching should not be assumed to be a static process or a predictable act that just happens to occur after a photo is captured. Retouching and editing can take images in any number of directions, both good and bad. What directions you choose, and whether or not those directions are aesthetically pleasing, tasteful, decent or even moral, is up to you.

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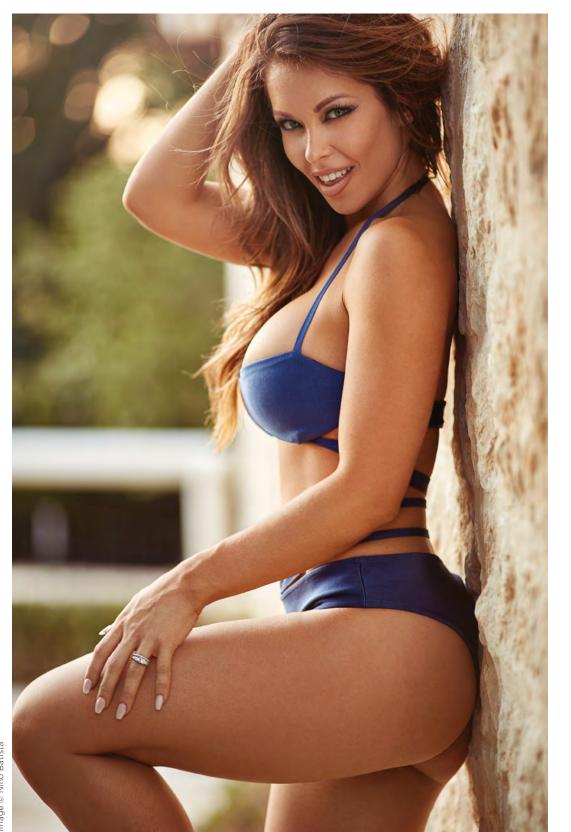
See your photos through,

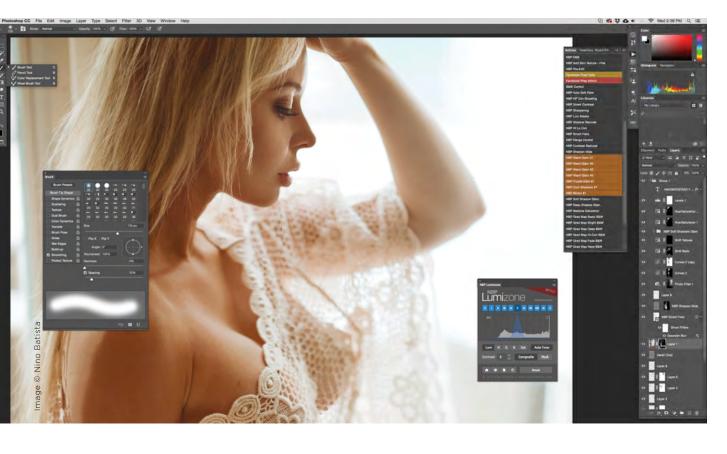
from start to finish, at the *utmost level of* professionalism, artistry, vision and aesthetics.

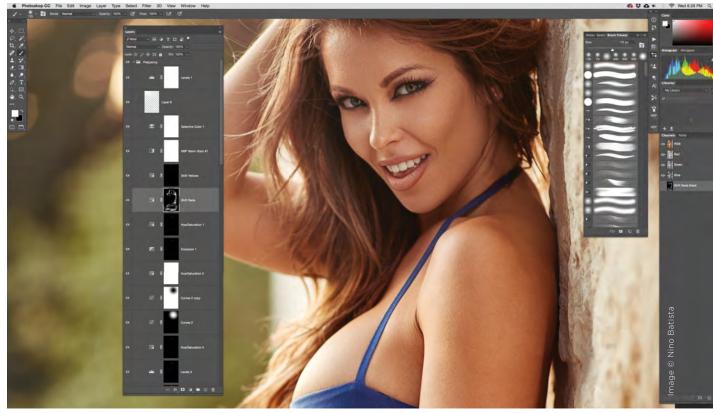
WITH POWER COMES RESPONSIBILITY

A highly successful plastic surgeon once sternly told me, when I made a critical statement about her industry, "You only notice the badly done, or tasteless, procedures." I had no comeback for that, and I realized she was totally correct. The same goes for retouching, in that society tends to notice it only when it's done badly. "Photoshop disasters" is a popular Internet search term, and in an industry flooded with more current digital photographers than in the cumulative history of film photography, it is statistically guaranteed that there is plenty of bad retouching out there.

You have to stand out from all of that carelessly done work by making your retouching seamless, or invisible, as it were, so your images are more associated with the commercial-grade photography that society sees on a daily basis. Like it or not, you're being compared to other work. And if you want to be paid to be a photographer, people need to be impressed with your work enough to invest in it.







BUT HOW DO YOU GET BETTER AT RETOUCHING?

One of my favorite ways to learn more about retouching is to do as many tutorial processes as I can find online. Even if you never use a certain tutorial's method, you may end up learning something new about editing in general that you can then apply to your own workflow. It doesn't matter what it is—if it's the genre of photography you're doing, go through the tutorial. Go through dozens. Take the time to do the processes being shown, even if you don't like the results. Watch and learn from multiple videos that are supposedly showing the same process. You'd be surprised how many variations there are of one approach.

Retouching can get technical, especially when you're starting out. Before you can master oil painting, you need to understand how the brushes work, how the paint reacts to the brushes, how the canvas reacts. The base-level functions of Photoshop, Lightroom, Capture One Pro or any other digital retouching application are often difficult to understand when you start out. You don't stand much of a chance of producing an industrial-grade edit if you haven't taken the time to absorb the basics—which can take a while.





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But before any of that, you need to accept that your retouching needs to improve. You need to realize where your challenges lie and work on them so you grow and evolve in your skills, knowledge and vision. Recognizing that you need to improve is the most important step.

I cannot think of a more fundamental strategy for business success than this: See your photos through, from start to finish, at the utmost level of professionalism, artistry, vision and aesthetics.

You wouldn't skimp on your lighting and lens knowledge and then assume you can succeed anyway, would you? View your retouching the same way, and embrace it. ■



Nino Batista is a commercial glamour and exotic automotive photographer based in Texas. His work is regularly published in lifestyle and men's publications all over the world, and he is regarded as one of the premier glamour photography and retouching educators in the United States. Nino is a senior writer at FStoppers.com.

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Depending on your genre of photography, you may not feel that your audience is on Instagram, and that's ok. Regardless of which platform your audience uses, eventually they'll migrate to Instagram, especially as that platform's core demographic ages and older social media users start dipping their toes in different waters.

Success with social media depends on your presence there. People decide whether or not to use your photographic services based on what you're doing on social media. Do I have statistics to confirm that? Not exactly. But I've observed that failing photography businesses often have a subpar social media presence. Look for yourself.

Check out my Instagram profile at www.instagram.com/vanessajoy. Sixteen thousand followers isn't bad, and I have an average engagement rate for that following number. According to Gary Vaynerchuk's digital media powerhouse VaynerMedia, I'm doing quite well, above average.

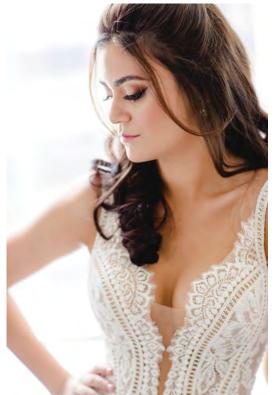
I'll let you in on some of my secrets.







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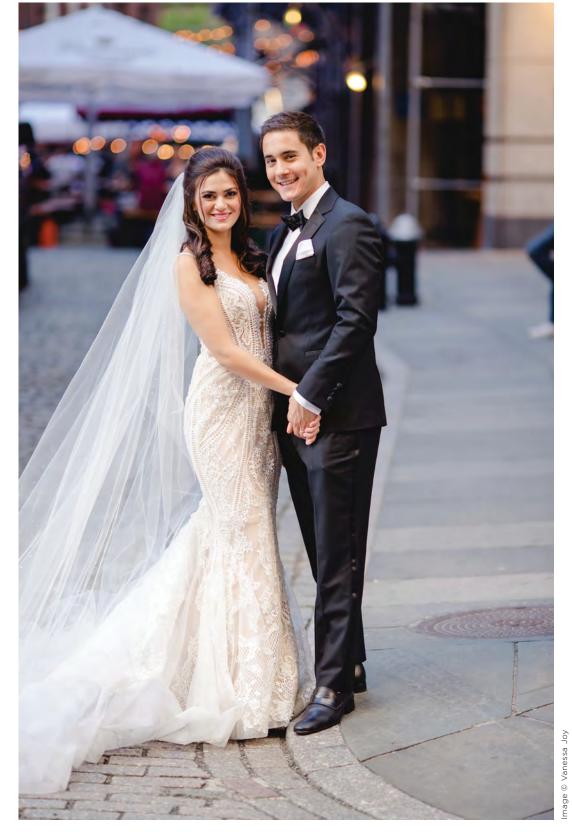






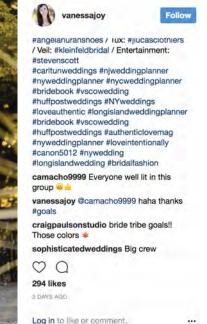
Another plus is that bigger brands and blogs will see your photo because you tagged them, and will feature you on their account. I've started seeing accounts actually request to be tagged in exchange for consideration of reposting or publishing a photographer's work, with credit. Anytime you can get your work featured on another account in front of someone else's hard-earned audience, it's a win.





A successful hashtag is one that gets noticed. When you use a hashtag like #wedding, you're just throwing your image into a garbage can full of a billion other images. Use hashtags that give your picture a longer shelf life than 1/250th of a second. Your exposure shouldn't match your shutter speed.





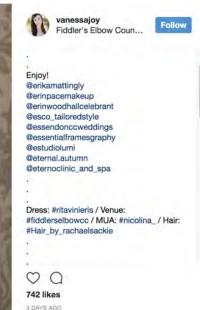
TIP 3: DESCRIPTION TAGS

These are not to be confused with photo tags. These are the @ tags you write in the description or comment field of a photo. In a way, it's like notifying an account that you've mentioned them in a post. This is a great way to credit other people in the photo, and also a way to ask for interaction.

Sometimes when I use @ tags in my description, I tag people I think will find the photo interesting in hopes that they engage with it by liking or commenting on the photo. Any engagement is good because it boosts the algorithm on your post to your audience. Engagement is public, and other people can see that your post is being engaged with through top posts on hashtags, as well as the Discover and Following tabs. Again, be choosy. Trying to get @JimmyChoo's attention might not work out when there are a million other people doing the same thing.







TIP 4: INTERACTION

As with all social media, it can't always be about you. It has to be social, which means it needs to be about other people too. Everyone wants their ego stroked. No one wants to feel like they're just being spammed for their engagement. Interact genuinely with other people.

Don't copy and paste comments, especially emojis, onto as many pictures as you can. For one, Instagram will catch on to this and block you from using the feature - or, worse, disable your account. Secondly, people smell fishy a smile away. Be fresh in your comments and make sure they actually have something to do with the picture you're commenting on.

Keep your target audience in mind. If you're a newborn photographer, there's no point interacting with a mom who has teenagers. Find new moms (using hashtags) and interact with them. A good way to make sure your interactions are noticed by the account holder is to like and follow five photos and comment on one photo, all within a minute or so. This way you'll pop up on their feed and they'll hopefully check out your profile.

Don't do too much more than this, or you'll just look like an Insta-stalker.

TIP 5: "CHEATING"

There are plenty of ways to "cheat" Instagram growth. Some are completely unethical, others are borderline and some are legit. As social media continues to become more relevant to business, there will be services like Social Growth Factory and Social Envy popping up to help you outsource your social media presence.

I love outsourcing, but with social media, it needs to be done correctly, or the only genuineness you'll claim is looking like a genuine idiot. Buying followers, for one, is a no-no. Not only will you end up with a ton of followers who aren't your target market (marketing dollars gone down the drain), but your engagement won't match up with your follower numbers.

Whenever I see someone with 20K-plus followers but only around 40 likes per post, I know they've paid for followers. That's just plain dumb. The same goes for buying likes. It just won't bring more business through the door.















There is so much more to this topic, and it's constantly changing. I go more in depth in my webinar, here: http://bit.ly/2vJtQBy.

Instagram growth takes time and effort. Don't be discouraged if you don't get the interaction you want right away. Lay the foundation by posting and interacting consistently. Keep it up, and over time you will see a difference in your numbers.



Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry (LearnPhotoVideo.com). Vanessa has been recognized for her talent and business sense at the renowned industry events CreativeLIVE, Clickin' Moms, WPPI and ShutterFest. Her peers love ner informative, open-book style of teaching.

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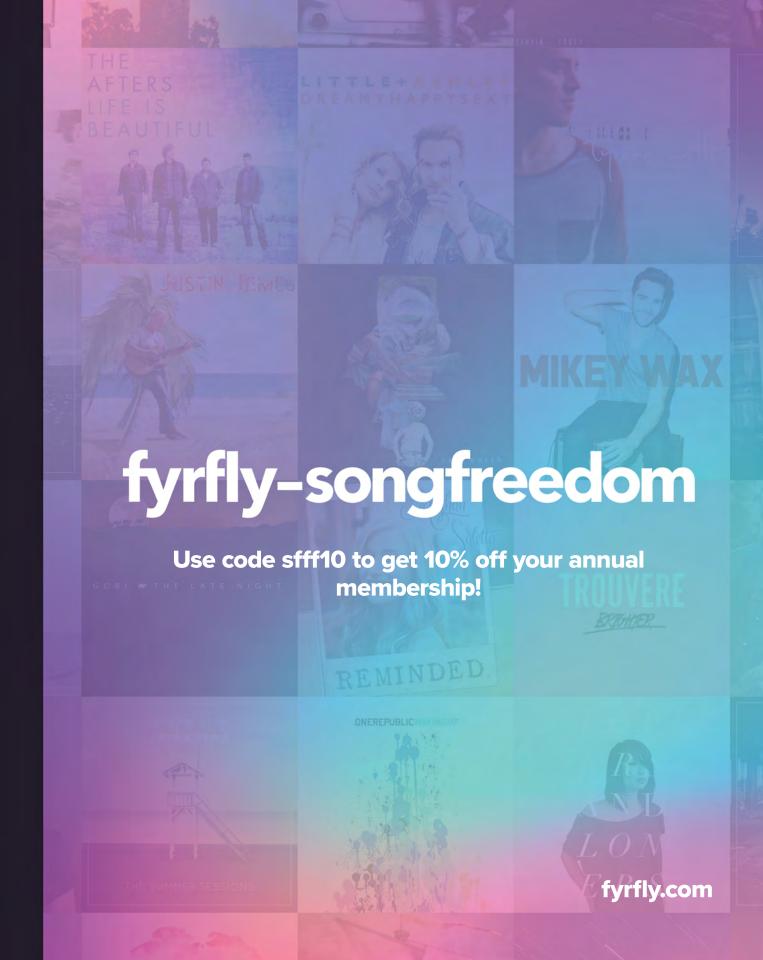
For more information, visit shop.panasonic.com

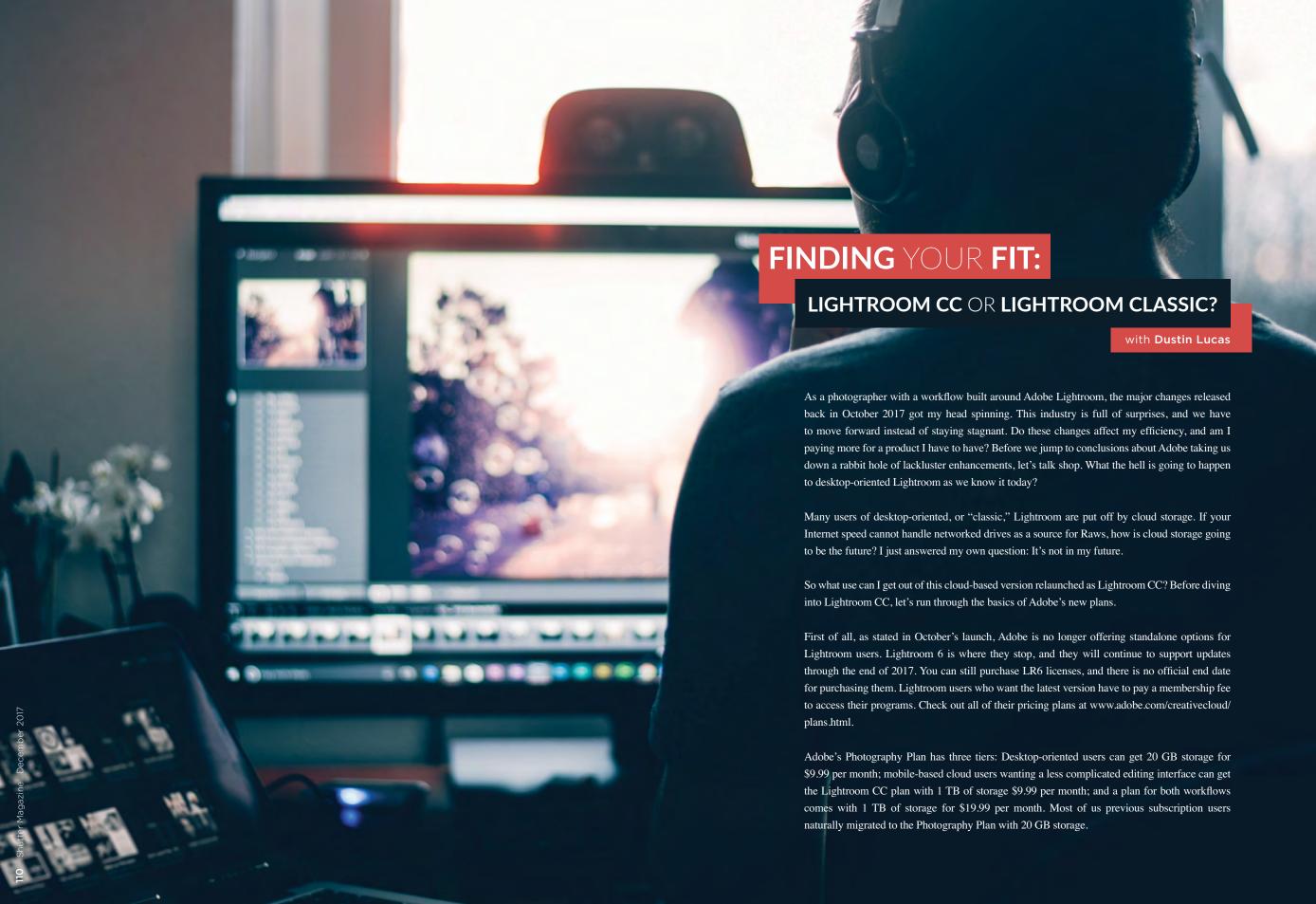


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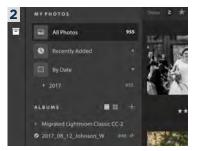




Let's open it up and review the workflow.

After opening the desktop Lightroom CC, you see a clean and simple interface. (1)

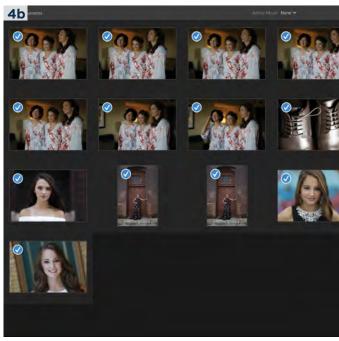






The simplistic design of ON1's Photo RAW application comes to mind. We no longer have Lightroom modules; instead, we have a simple workspace with a panel on the left for adding and browsing images (2), a panel on the right for editing (3), a search field at the top and options to sort and apply attributes at the bottom. Think of Lightroom CC as a master catalog where everything you choose to import lives. Yes, you still need to import images into Lightroom CC to store your files on the cloud. (4ab)





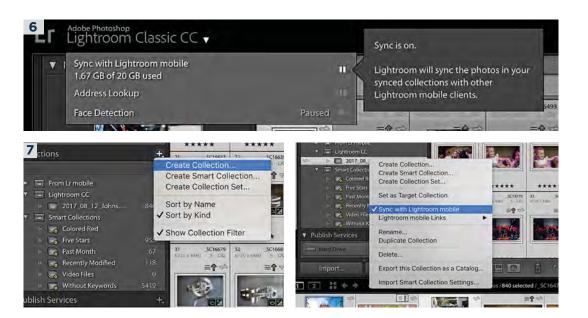
In my first attempt to import over 5,000 Raws in Lightroom CC, it froze while attempting to review images for import. A few tests later revealed that 1,000 Raws from a Canon 5d Mark IV took no less than two minutes to prepare. The next step would be to import these Raws, but I do not want them living only in my cloud storage. Not to worry: You can access Lightroom CC preferences, choose the Local Storage tab and check the box next to Store a Copy of ALL Originals Locally. (5) This is useful if you are downloading from a memory card or haven't assigned a primary destination for your files. I do not recommend going from memory cards directly to the cloud—why risk your data?

Let's move into a real-world scenario for most current Lightroom users.

STORAGE STRATEGY Increase the amount of local storage to let Lightroom CC retain more content on your computer ("Macintosh HD"). Decrease the amount if you prefer to save disk space by downloading content when you need it. Target Available Disk Space Usage 100% Your Lightroom CC Files & ADVANCED Learn More & Originals are currently stored in a custom location: Change Location "Macintosh HD"/Users/...johnson wedding 2017 Use Default Location © Store a copy of ALL originals locally Changes take effect after restarting Lightroom CC.

INTEGRATE WITH LIGHTROOM CLASSIC

Instead of culling in Lightroom CC, treat it as a secondary editing tool for when you are on the go or want shareability between multiple devices. Here's how to sync the kept images automatically into Lightroom CC, which is the same process for syncing to Lightroom mobile. Turn on the sync setting. (6) Click the Lightroom logo and click Start. Filter to your final selection, add to a new Collection and choose to sync with Lightroom CC. (7ab) It's really simple.



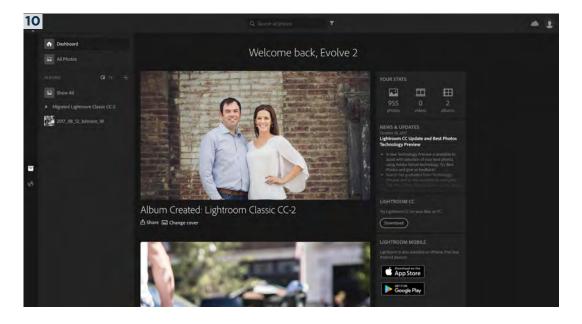
This allows me to make adjustments inside Lightroom Classic, and it syncs to my Lightroom CC app instantly. (8ab)





This is just a small workflow insight into a more mobile and sharable editing capability. A step further in mobility is opening our newly synced images directly into Lightroom Web. (9) I recommend using Google Chrome, which seems to be universally accepted between Macs and PCs. (10) I tried Mozilla Firefox, and it was quite slow to sync slider adjustments to my images. Beware that you have limited editing features in Lightroom CC and Lightroom Web.







This was standard for Lightroom desktop-oriented applications. In Lightroom CC, the panel on the right has six categories to choose from: Edit, Crop & Rotate, Healing Brush, Brush, Linear Gradient and Radial Gradient. The Edit panel has some tools we're used to in Lightroom, but they are categorized and ordered differently: Light, Color, Effects, Detail, Optics and Geometry. (12)



Light consists of the exact same tools under Tone in the Basic Panel of Lightroom: Exposure, Contrast, Highlights, Shadows, White and Black point. (13) You should start your post-processing in this order, then move to the Color panel, where White Balance is broken down into Temp, Tint, Vibrance and Saturation. (14) This panel includes a White Balance Selector tool, B&W conversion and HSL. (15ab)



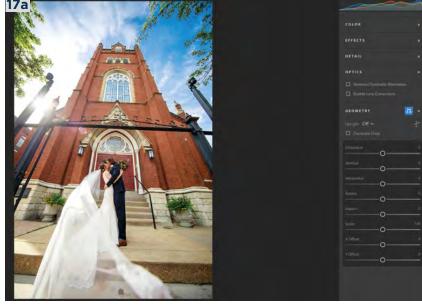


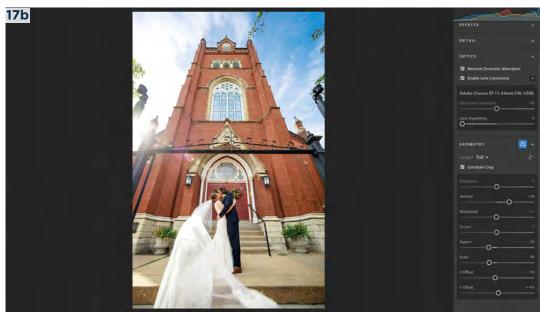




Dropping down to the Effects panel, we have our Presence sliders like Clarity, and Effects sliders like Dehaze and Vignette. The highly regarded Details panel packs a lot of editing options for Sharpening, Noise Reduction and adding Grain. (16) Optics has our Chromatic Aberration as a single checkbox, and Lens Correction has customizable distortion and lens vignetting adjustability. Last but not least is the Geometry tool, or better known as Transform in Lightroom (17ab).







I love that the Auto Mask feature was brought into Lightroom CC from Lightroom Classic. This makes workflow faster. (18) Another major plus is the fact that local adjustment pins sync between images edited in Lightroom Classic and vise versa. (19ab) Why is all this syncability important if I am going to just run with Lightroom Classic? That is a great question, and hopefully I can better clarify how to navigate the new Lightroom ecosystem.







WHERE DO I FIT, AND WHAT'S MY BEST WORKFLOW?

Now that I have given a general overview for how to start using Lightroom CC, what about all of your old Lightroom catalogs? No problem—you can migrate Catalogs into Lightroom CC easily. Just open Lightroom CC, choose File in the menu bar and click on Migrate Lightroom Catalog. (20) Before migrating catalogs, be aware that you can only migrate a catalog once and sync capabilities will be turned off for previous versions of Lightroom—i.e., LR CC (2015), LR6, LR5, etc. Upgrade those catalogs first if you plan to still work in them across the Lightroom ecosystem. (21)



Another major consideration when migrating catalogs is to be sure you have the original files connected; otherwise, you will get migration scan errors. I tried a catalog with smart previews, and these were unable to migrate altogether. (22)





It makes sense because Lightroom CC has to work from an image source versus previews. Once the catalog is fully migrated, your images automatically become synced to your cloud storage. This becomes problematic because I have only 20 GB of storage total. (23)



A better option for Lightroom Classic users is to sync your Collections in the Master Catalog versus migrating it into Lightroom CC. Doing so doesn't require the images to be uploaded to cloud storage. In fact, this way, Lightroom CC treats the source files similar to adding files in Lightroom Classic. (24) No extra hard-drive space is taken up by having to copy them. Once they are loaded, you can access your Lightroom files from anywhere with Lightroom Web. It's simple to do: Just select the cloud icon in the upper right corner and click Lightroom Web. (25)





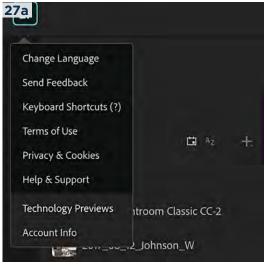
You'll notice that Lightroom Web seems to be geared toward browsing images and making slideshows. That is a big part of Lightroom Web, but you can still edit and rate images. It's simple to do: Click one of the photos, and you can cycle image to image, changing your star ratings or adding flags. Strike the D key to enter the editing module. There are major limitations to editing because you can edit just one image at a time and must save in order for the changes to sync across the Lightroom ecosystem.

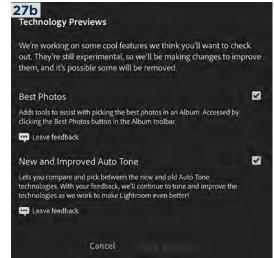
Looking at the same image edited in Lightroom Classic and Lightroom CC, Lightroom Web is different. This could be tied to the fact that Lightroom Web's editing panel is limited to Light, Color, Effects and Split Toning. This gives you the flexibility of a glorified Basic Panel with Black and White conversion, HSL and Split Toning. You have presets that I find to be less useful than the supplied presets with Lightroom CC and cropping capabilities. All in all, I would stick to editing in the Lightroom Classic or at least in Lightroom CC for full editing capabilities. At the end of the day, Lightroom Classic hails as a full-functioning Raw processor.

I am interested in the search features introduced in Lightroom CC and Web. This seems to be a continuation of the Facial Recognition software from Lightroom 6. With this new search option, instead of searching metadata, keywords, files names, etc., I can search by content—and the new Adobe Sensei Technology finds my images rather quickly. Type in "bride," "groom," "church," "sky" or "arch," and you get a decent selection of images. (26)

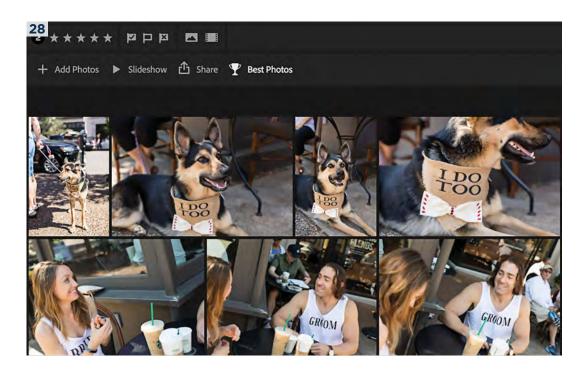


Another new technology is the Best Photos search option in Lightroom Web. To turn on the feature, click the Lightroom icon in the upper left corner, choose Technology Previews and check the box for Best Photos. (27ab)





To activate this feature, select your album and click the Best Photos button above the grid of images, which has a trophy icon next to it. (28)



Once it finishes analyzing images, you enter a new sorting screen. (29) Your images are selected at default in the middle of the Fewer and More range. One hundred twenty images were automatically selected out of 840 total. I can change the total by sliding the bar to the left for fewer or right for more. I can also click the minus button on each photo to manually remove it from my selection. Overall, it's not a bad automated level of selection, and it may be useful for a blog or album design.



WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE FUTURE

With change, there will always be disgruntled users, but I do not fear the future for Adobe Lightroom. Like for many other users, Lightroom is key to my photo workflow. Lightroom Classic is here to stay, and I hope to see the many improvements to performance Adobe has promised, as well as the Raw processing engine. Lightroom CC will get better and be better equipped to handle a real-world all-Raw workflow, but it just isn't there today.

Mobile workflows are not for everyone, but from what I can tell, this a major market to tap into for Adobe. I roll my eyes when I see people editing on an iPad, but that may be all they need. There will always be a need for heavier lifting in post-processing, and Lightroom Classic's new masking features prove that Lightroom Classic is a real competitor in the Raw processor market.





Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his master of fine arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin continues to expand his influence on art and business throughout the industry.

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Like many of us, I have had my images stolen, copied or used without my permission. It makes us all angry and left with a feeling of helplessness, but I have learned how to protect myself from thieves. I'll show you how you can protect yourself as part of your workflow—and even how to get paid for such infractions.

Let me be perfectly clear that I am not a lawyer, and what I am going to talk about is based on my experiences. Please keep that in mind as you read this. You should also consult with someone in a sharp suit if you need further clarification and lots of dry lingo you can toss around at parties.

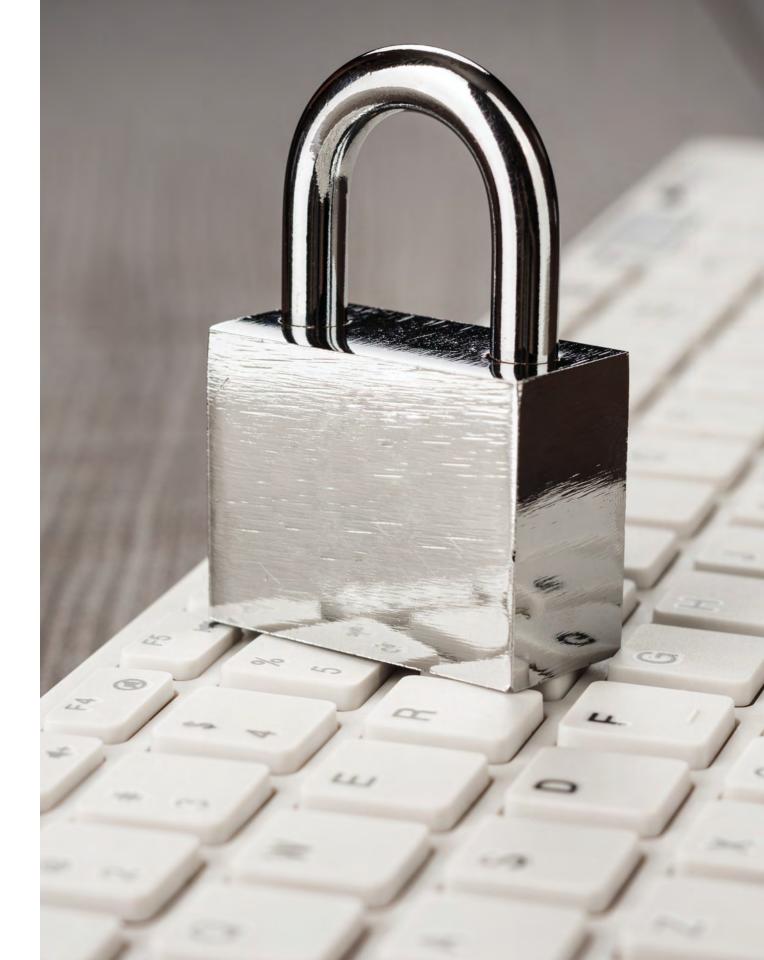
You might have read a few weeks ago about a huge settlement where a gym owner had used a photograph he found on the Internet and ended up getting sued by the photographer for a gigantic pile of cash. I remember a similar story about a yearbook image of a young man who had just gotten engaged to Britney Spears that was being used by news outlets without permission. That photographer also ended up with some additional zeros being tacked onto his annual profit. Getting a bounty like this for our stolen work seems like a pipe dream when most of us can't seem to get a takedown notice to stick. In both of these cases, it wasn't the fame, having a best friend who's a lawyer or massive cash reserved for legal battles—it was that they both had taken the proper steps to protect their images.

Let's define a few a terms to clear up any muddy water that might be created as we stir this pot. First of all, the photographer owns the copyright to any photo taken the moment the shutter clicks. Most of us know that already. This ownership can be taken away only with an explicit sale of the copyright or a specified passage of time after the death of the creator.

When clients purchase a digital file or print, they are not buying the copyright. I often hear clients and even some photographers using this term incorrectly, i.e., "Does your CD come with the copyrights to the photos?" This is wrong, and should never be the words you use in negotiations, on your website or in client contracts.

You should offer "rights to print and reproduce," but the copyright is potentially quite valuable and gives the owner the ability to do literally anything they want. This includes selling that image to third parties and collecting future usage fees, or even selling it as a stock photo and making money from your work.

In short, don't sell the copyright or use terms that lead one to believe that what they are buying is the copyright to your work, unless you really mean it. If you do sell the copyright, be sure you are charging the maximum total potential value of that image over its lifetime. In general, works published after 1977 will not fall into the public domain until 70 years after the death of the author; or, for corporate, anonymous or works for hire, 95 years from the date of publication or 120 years from the date of creation, whichever is shorter.

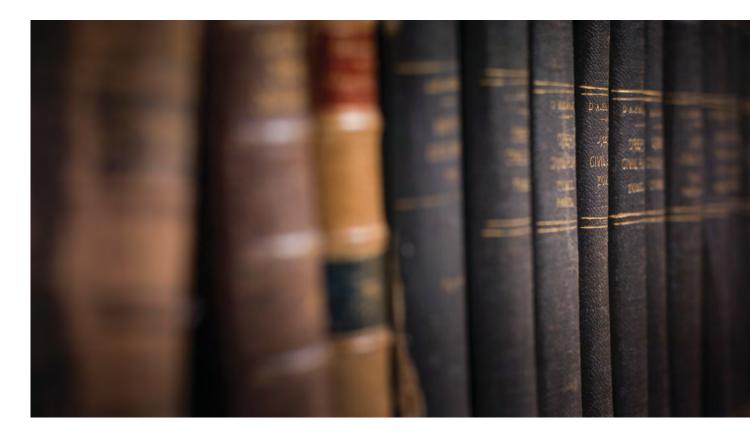


The second thing you need to be clear about is that adding a copyright mark to the image isn't mandatory for copyright protection. It does add a potential cash bonus for you if it is removed from the photo, but otherwise it isn't needed. To repeat, because this is an urban legend that needs to die, from a legal standpoint, you do not need to add a copyright mark to the image for it to be protected by copyright law.

To be protected under the full extent of the law, you need to file your images with the U.S. Copyright Office. Most of you are probably hearing about this for the first time. Thankfully, it isn't hard to do. You upload images you want to protect to the Library of Congress website (eco.copyright.gov). There is a filing fee of \$55, and you can upload a pile of photos compressed into a zip file for one fee. This allows you to protect quite a few images for the cost of your monthly (or weekly) Starbucks budget.

Once you file images with the Copyright Office, a few new doors open up for you:

- · They will send you a lovely certificate that contains your case number and other information. Keep these legal documents safe. I have had to produce mine on occasion.
- · You can now sue in federal court to collect the fair market value of the work from the thief. Usage fees are not a ton of money, but consider what larger stock companies like Getty charge for a typical "rights managed image," and you would be in the ballpark. Fees are typically applied based on the duration of use of the image. Its location on a website, number of items in print, location in a publication, etc., are all taken into consideration for the rate. Have a page on your website explaining your "fees for use," and put that URL into the metadata of all your images. There are places specifically built for these options in the IPTC areas of the metadata you can access from Lightroom, Capture One and Adobe Bridge, to name a few.
- · There is an additional penalty if the thief removes your brand or watermark, and that penalty gets much larger if they replace it with their own copyright mark.
- · This entire process is compounded if the site bears copyright language that is typically in the footer of the site. Doing so makes your legal team chitter with excitement.
- · Most of the time, you can also get legal fees included in the penalty, and there are even services that will handle the complications for a percentage of the settlement.
- · Last but not least, you can collect punitive damages for use of the photo without permission. This is where those huge dollar judgements with lots of zeros come into play. If you didn't file your images with the copyright office, then you don't get to enter the bonus round to collect this. When you register your image with the U.S. Copyright Office, you can be awarded up to \$150,000 per image for a willful infringement, plus legal costs.



There is one minor complication: You need to file your images within 90 days of them being published. The complicated legal mumbo-jumbo has been updated to include posting on social media as "publishing." If you don't file during that window, you will need to document the date and publication of each image's release date. You can then upload all that documentation in a handy spreadsheet cross-referenced by image name. Yuck!

If you discover a violation on an unfiled image, you have a fixed number of days to file the image and make a claim. Typically, late filing costs you a lot of the rewards you get from registering prior to the violation, such as the statutory damages and legal fees. This is actually what the photographer of Britney Spears's fiance had to do once he found the image was being used without permission. He ended up walking the document into the Copyright Office in person to be sure it was filed on time.

Photographer Andrew Paul Leonard sued a health supplement company that was using 92 of his images, and ended up with an award of \$1,600,000 plus \$400,000 in interest. These might be extreme examples of filing after the violation was discovered, and I have no experience with this type of situation outside of what I have read. I advise you to file your images within the grace period; it isn't hard to do.

- 1. Every 90 days, I create a zip file of my recent work and file all of those photos for the \$55 case filing fee at eco.copyright.gov.
- 2. In lightroom, Capture One and Bridge, I color-code all of my completed images purple, so a simple filter shows the images that need to be submitted.
- 3. I keep an expanded copy of the zip file on my hard drive with a folder renamed the same as the case number. This is so I can easily access all the images if Lightroom isn't available.
- 4. Once the case number is created, I add that as a keyword to those images for ease of reference. I have a master Lightroom keyword of "Copyright Filings," and children of that keyword are the actual case numbers (e.g., "Copyright Filings > 1-5616570000"). This keeps things clean and simple from an organizational standpoint; I know all purple images with that keyword are filed.

As a side note, those submitted images don't need to be full resolution; in fact, I advise against that. Export them large enough to be able to clearly be identified if presented in federal court and compared to the potential violation. I normally run with something around 2,400 pixels on the long edge. I use the basic watermarking in Lightroom to add text along the bottom of the photo, such as "Copyright 2017 - Scott E. Detweiler - All Rights Reserved." I include the text because images that are filed with the Library of Congress are also potentially available in the public domain, and therefore accessible under certain circumstances.



Shutter Magazine . December 2017

Keeping yourself organized by filing every 90 days is the simplest way to handle things, and pretty easy to do online at eco.copyright.gov. Be sure the site you are using is the official government site and not one that offers to do filings for a higher fee.

To summarize, here are the most important things to keep in mind:

- · File all new images every 90 days.
- · Keep the certificate in a safe place; you might need it later.
- · Keyword images with their filed case number.
- · Don't upload full-resolution images to the copyright office.
- · Add your copyright line to the bottom of your images.
- · Have a page on your site explaining usage fees.
- · Keep the zip file and rename it to the case filing number. Back these up.

Groups like the PPA are looking to make it much easier to pursue claims, but until they are successful, this is your best bet. Again, this has been my experience, and you should always talk with a lawyer friend before acting. And remember, all of your legal battles will happen in federal court, as copyright is a federal law. Several services will do the battle for you for a portion of the proceeds.

So, now you know how to file and protect yourself. Now go and create that repeating calendar item to remind yourself to file those images.



Scott is a conceptual portrait photographer based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Along with his original approach to portraiture, he excels at fashion, boudoir and occasionally weddings. When he's not shooting, Scott turns his studio into a classroom where he holds workshops on subjects like lighting, conceptual work and boudoir.

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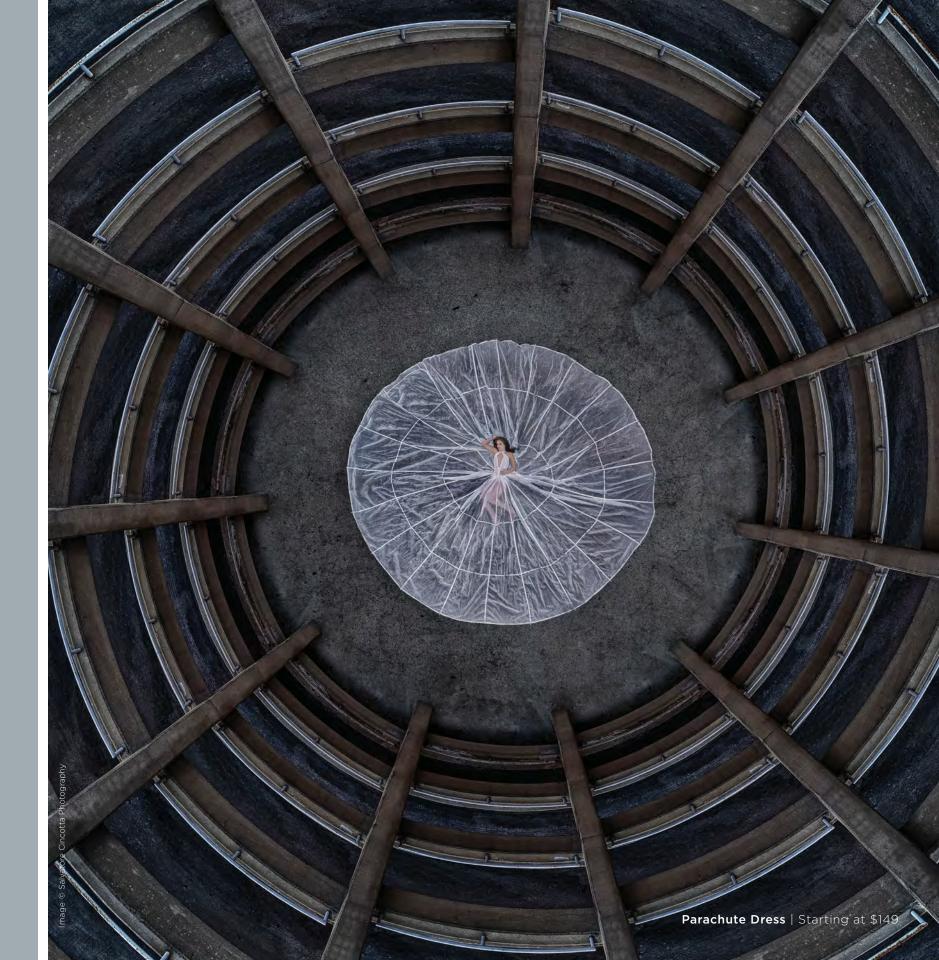




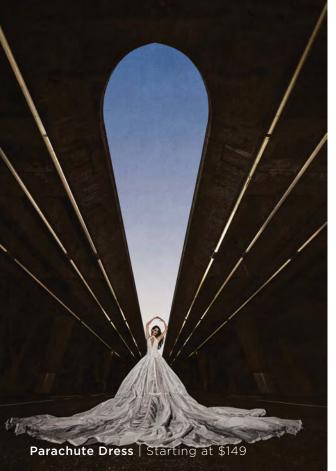
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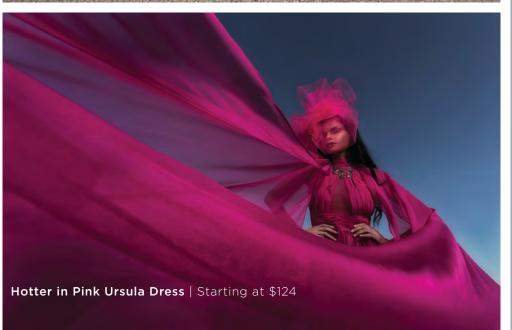












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One of the most powerful reasons customers decide to spend money is because they find enough value in a product. The reverse is true for a customer who does not find enough value in a product, and therefore will not spend money. The perceived value of a purchase needs to be equal to if not more than the dollar value spent. This is why two photographers can sell the same product from the same lab at prices thousands of dollars apart. Creating value for a client can come in many forms, and when it comes to the value in the artwork we provide them, we must begin creating that value before their first phone call or email. This happens via social media.

1. SHOWCASE YOUR PRODUCTS

The very first interaction a prospective client has with your brand is via your social media, and if you want clients coming to you who want artwork, you have to show them your products.

Every time you get in a new sample or a new client order, photograph it, take video of it and share it on your Facebook and Instagram pages. Make a section on your website showcasing your stunning products and why they are so special. If you love the smell of the leather of your hand-crafted albums, write a Facebook post about that and share it along with a photo of your favorite leather option. If the shine of your metal prints blows you away, make sure your fans hear about it and can see what you mean.

A wedding client of mine showed up to her design consultation asking about double-volume wedding albums. She had just seen me post another client's double-volume album on my Facebook the day before, and immediately wanted it.

You can never share enough content. Take multiple photos and videos of your products from different angles and share them as often as you upload single images. The more your prospective clients see the products, the more they will want them. The more they want them, the more they will pay for them.















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2. HIGHLIGHT HAPPY CLIENTS

The features of your products are certainly important, and we want everyone to know that we provide only the best, but the stories behind the products you offer are even more powerful. Every time a client orders products from you, document their experience. Take photos and video of them picking up their artwork with a huge smile, ready to take it home and proudly display it on their wall.

Once it is hanging in their home, ask them to take a photo and send it to you, and then share that on social media. Tell their story alongside these photos. If you photographed a woman empowered by her boudoir experience, write about it. Other women want to be empowered and celebrate themselves, and they will be inspired by seeing someone just like them doing it.

So unbelievable!!! You are a goddess, Christine! Thank you for capturing the beautiful moments of our family so perfectly! We love you so much! Thank you!!!! — with Arya Koenig.



For every happy client you have, there is another just like them waiting for the perfect post to pop up in their news feed telling them how to get what they want. Make that perfect post yours, not someone else's. The artwork we provide clients is powerful. Harness this power by sharing the stories of happy clients and their artwork.

One of my longtime clients recently posted a photo on her Facebook page of her daughter standing next to their brand-new artwork from our session. I shared her photo on my page, and all of that client's friends have liked and commented on the photo because the story is valuable and important to them. The power is in the story.







3. DOCUMENT YOUR SPECIAL TOUCH

There should be something special you do that sets you apart. Some people package their artwork with branded bows and bags, and that is their special touch. Others include white gloves with artwork delivery so clients can hold their photographs all day long and not worry about fingerprints and damage.

Whatever it is you do behind the scenes before your clients receive their artwork, highlight it. Video is especially powerful here. It gives your fans a raw and real look behind the curtain at how much work and care you put into their experience. Upload a video and let them watch you cut the ribbon and wrap up a big order for a client. Talk about what you are doing and why it is important for you to do it. The more value you infuse into the artwork that you deliver, the more clients are willing to invest in it because they can't get it anywhere else.











4. USE FACEBOOK LIVE

Facebook Live is a powerful tool that allows our clients to be a part of our experience, and the more they are a part of our experience, the more they will be invested in us and what we do. If you have a client coming in to pick up their artwork, do a Facebook Live video of that experience.

Talk to your audience and let them know why this is important both to you and to your clients. If they ask questions on the live video, answer them. Engaging with them is important. It makes them feel seen, heard and validated. I recently had a portrait client who is also a photographer purchase a large canvas after she saw me showing them off during a Facebook Live studio tour. Because she is a photographer, she knew where I purchased the canvases and their cost, but still paid my rates. She knew she wanted a canvas from her portrait session before we even shot it, because she saw how passionate I was about it on my Facebook Live.





Shirter Madazina Dacambar 201

5. SHARE YOUR 'WHY'

Who you are, your life experiences, and your wants and needs are totally unique to you. Together, these aspects of you create your "why," or the reason you do what you do the way you do it. Figuring out your own personal why is imperative to business and life. You will quickly and easily get lost if you are not allowing your why to guide you.

The reason I do what I do is because I want to inspire people to live their happiest life possible. I do this two ways: by living my own life the happiest way possible, and by encouraging other people to live their own best life, even if the route there is a rough one. If I hadn't known this, I might have said yes to things that weren't worth it, I might have strayed from the path I needed to stay on, and my business intentions might have been way off.

Your why informs your intention, and clients sense that. If your motives are pure, everything you do for your clients will be good for them and they will appreciate that. If your intentions are wrong, like working only to make lots of money, your clients will sense that, and they won't purchase as much.

Your clients want to reward you for giving them an experience whose value far exceeds the monetary amount. A client rewards a business with money. So if we want our business to be successful, our clients must see our good intentions. Find your why and infuse it into everything you do. If you're having trouble with this, read *Find Your Why* by Simon Sinek.

Clients buy what they see. If all you show on social media and your website are images, then that's all they will come to expect when hiring your studio: digital images. Showing the products you wish to sell informs your clients what products are available, but also shows how much you value the products—which means your clients will value them too.



Christine hails from Boston and currently splits her live/work/play time between Los Angeles, Portland, Oregon, and the rest of the world. Along with her husband and business partner, she took her wedding business from \$100 weddings to a six-figure income in three years. She's passionate about sharing her knowledge and can be seen frequently on WeTV as a wedding photography expert.

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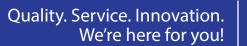




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INSPIRATIONS

Inspiration can come when you least expect it. As photographers, we are visual artists. We express ourselves through our camera and the images we create. Inspirations represents a sampling of our industry and the vision of professional photographers from around the world.

Congratulations to all our featured artists. Be inspired and create something that is *you*.

Sal Cincotta, Editor-in-chief



Inspirations | Our Readers













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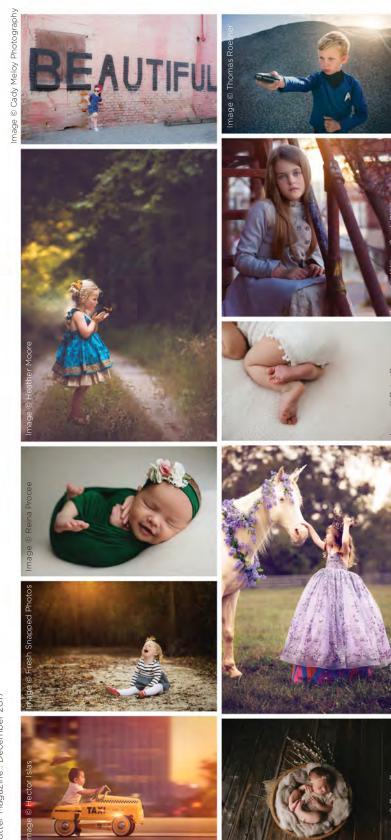


















Inspirations | Our Readers













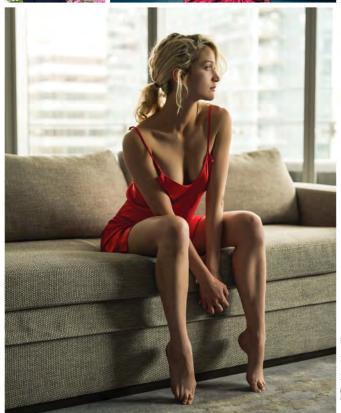


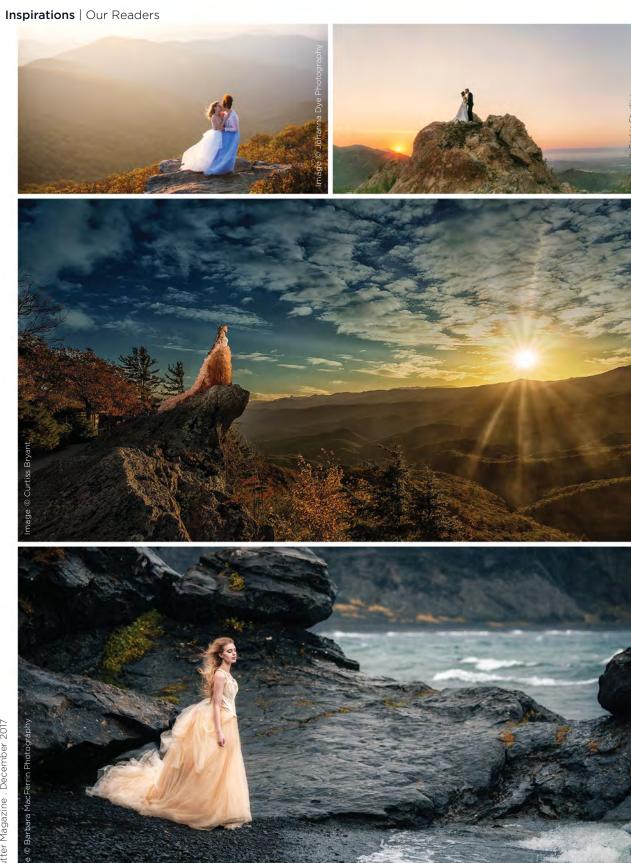








Image © Douglas James Studio









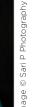














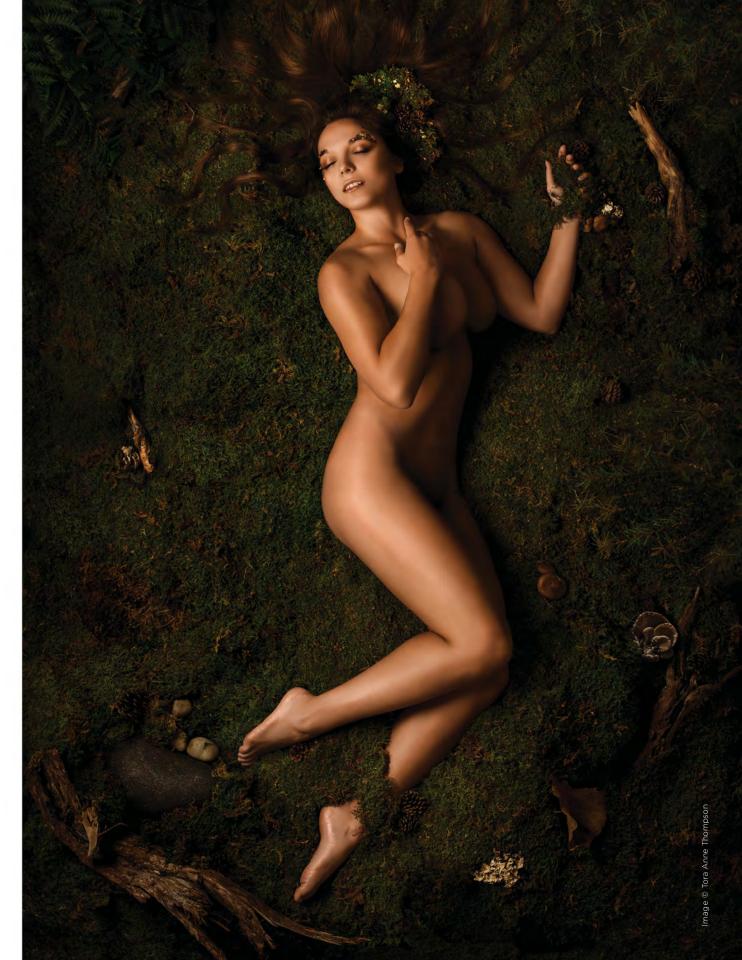






























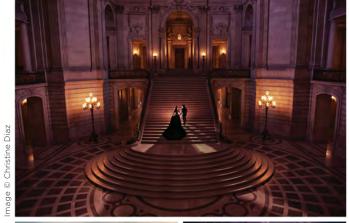








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LOW-POWERED STROBES HIGH-POWERED RESULTS

with Michael Corsentino

It's easy to fall into the trap of using strobes the same way every time without ever stepping back and asking yourself why. I know because I've been guilty of this. Does what you're doing need to be done that way? Are there alternative routes that just might lead to far superior results? If you haven't asked yourself these questions, you may be operating on autopilot like I was.

Despite the wide variety of effects I'm able to create in the studio and on location with various modifiers, lighting patterns and other tools, I've been in what I'll refer to as an f16 rut. Until very recently, whenever I'd use strobe in the studio, I'd always meter my keylight for f16. That means I'd adjust the power on the strobe so that it generated enough light to allow me to shoot with an aperture setting of f16.

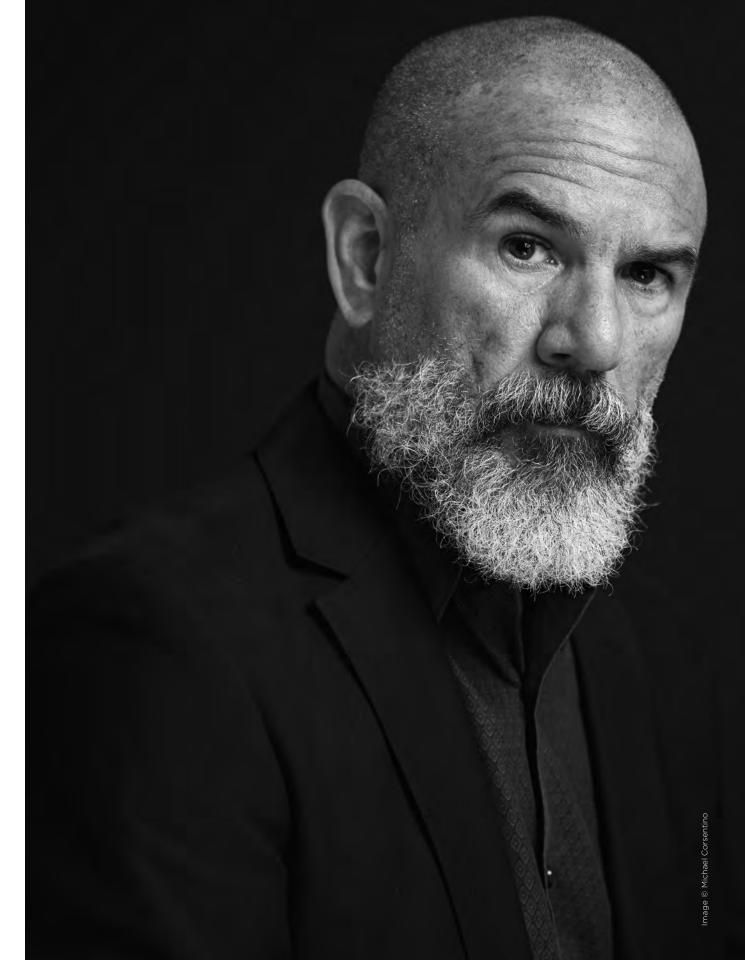
There's nothing wrong with f16 or even f22. These narrow apertures are perfect for capturing fashion, catalog work, product photography, anything where detail is required. And detail is great. I've learned how to do it well. But it starts to get old and feel stale. If everything is always super sharp and detailed, there starts to become a sameness and lack of subtlety. We should always be evolving and exploring new ways of seeing. Creating something new is part of the joy of making art.

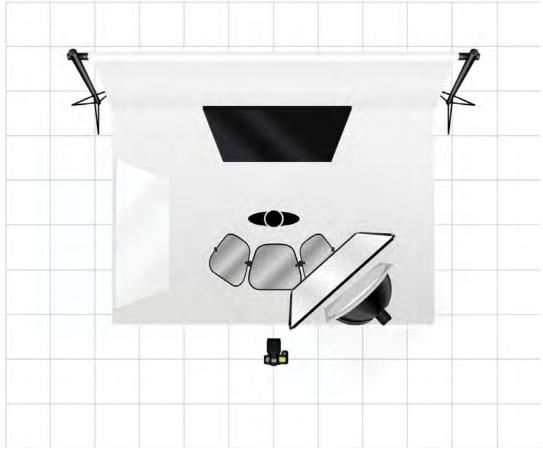
In this case, old is new again. Lately I've been thinking a lot about tintypes, daguerréotypes and other early 19th century portrait techniques. The photographs from this period have one thing in common: low light or no light. Photographers used natural light or low-powered powder-based flashes to illuminate subjects. This required wide apertures, which resulted in images with gorgeous focus fall-off from the shallow depth of field. Subjects also had to remain very still during exposures due to the slow shutter speeds. This is why the portraits look so stiff.

In today's studio, the use of less light is kind of counterintuitive given the way we typically think about using strobes, where we're adding light. The impulse is to throw as much light at subjects as we can, because we can. The pitfall is we tend to overdo it. The focus on creating enough light to achieve maximum sharpness becomes the driving factor and can end up turning everything we do into hyperfocused pictures with a strong digital feeling. Or at least that's what I've been doing, and in the process leaving a lot on the table in terms of subtlety.

There's something beautiful about the rapid transition from sharpness to softness (from eye to ear) in those old portraits. If everything is sharp from front to back, how do our eyes put it into a three-dimensional context? This is the beauty of wide apertures and depth of field: Objects closest to the camera appear shaper and those farther away appear softer. The wider your aperture, the more pronounced this becomes. The differences in sharpness and softness naturally instruct the viewer where to focus their attention.

These two portrait sessions were all about breaking my f16 habit in studio, going in the opposite direction and using extremely low-powered strobe and wide apertures to recapture some of that vintage portrait magic. I used the widest aperture available, f3.5, on my Schneider Kreuznach 150mm LS lens. On a medium-format DSLR, this is equivalent to approximately f1.4. Both subjects were photographed using the same two lighting setups, one with strobe only and one with strobe and constant lights. In each case, the strobe served as the keylight.



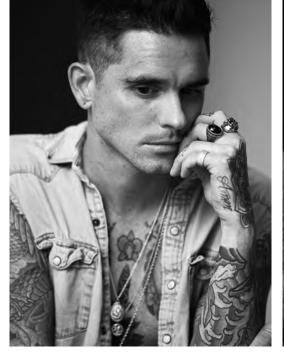


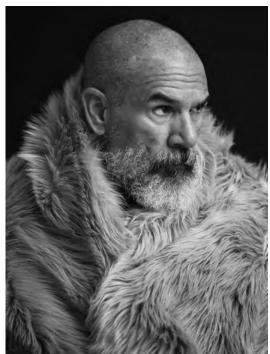
Strobe only - setup 1

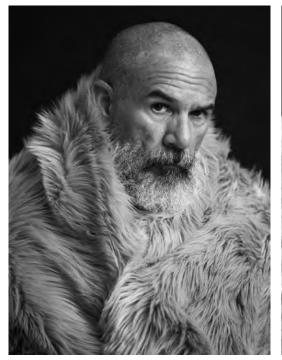
STROBE ONLY

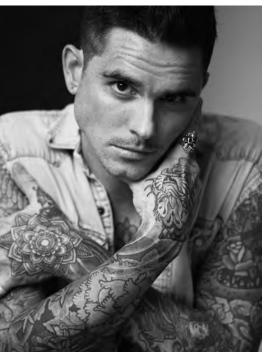
The strobe-only setup was designed to create a series of classic black-and-white portraits with an eye toward vintage photographs—plenty of depth of field and oodles of focus fall-off. The strobe and constant light setup was designed to introduce color and motion through the use of two daylight LED Fresnel lights, gels and long shutter speeds. Here, the strobe's job was to freeze the subject momentarily, providing sharpness and detail. Then the constant lights and gels took over, creating color and motion as the shutter remained open.

In order to achieve an f3.5 meter reading, I needed to power down my Profoto 7B pack and head flash system to its lowest possible setting, approximately 30 watt seconds. In front of the beauty dish, I also had a Lastolite Joe McNally 3x3 Diffusion Panel to further soften, broaden and knock down the light. Even then, I was still metering f4. Granted, my keylight, a Mola Softlights Demi beauty dish, was close to the subject, so this made sense. I still needed less light, but I was as low as I could go on the strobe's power. I could either move the keylight back or stop down the lens, neither of which I wanted to do. Instead, I opted for a sheet of -1/2 stop neutral-density filter gel placed in front of the beauty dish, and I was in business with f3.5. I also used two fill reflectors, one below each subject and one to the right or left, depending on the keylight orientation (refer to the lighting diagram for Setup 1).

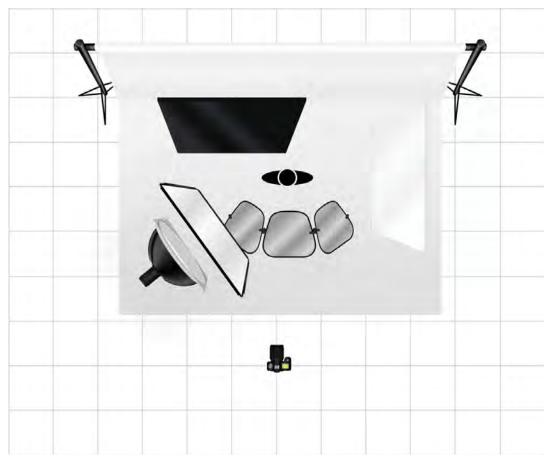












Strobe only - setup 2

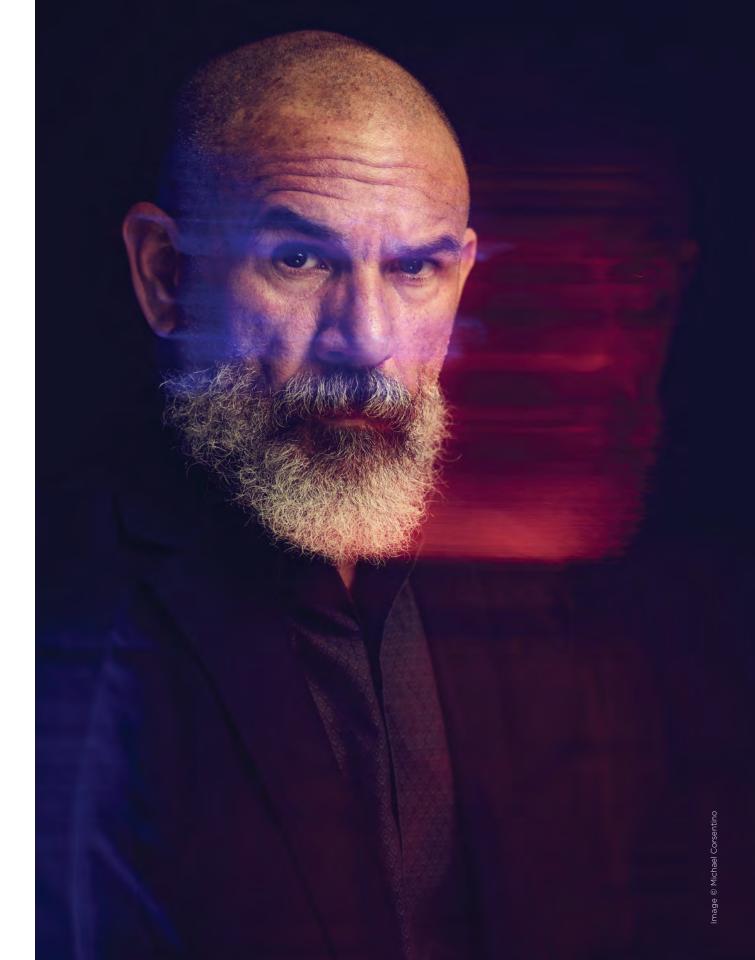
As you can see, using an extremely low-powered strobe and a wide aperture allowed me to create a beautiful series of images with deep depth of field and maximum focus fall-off. Keep in mind when you're working this way that the part of the image that is in focus versus out of focus is extremely close, so be slow and deliberate. Focus may prove difficult at times, but when you nail it, you'll see magic.

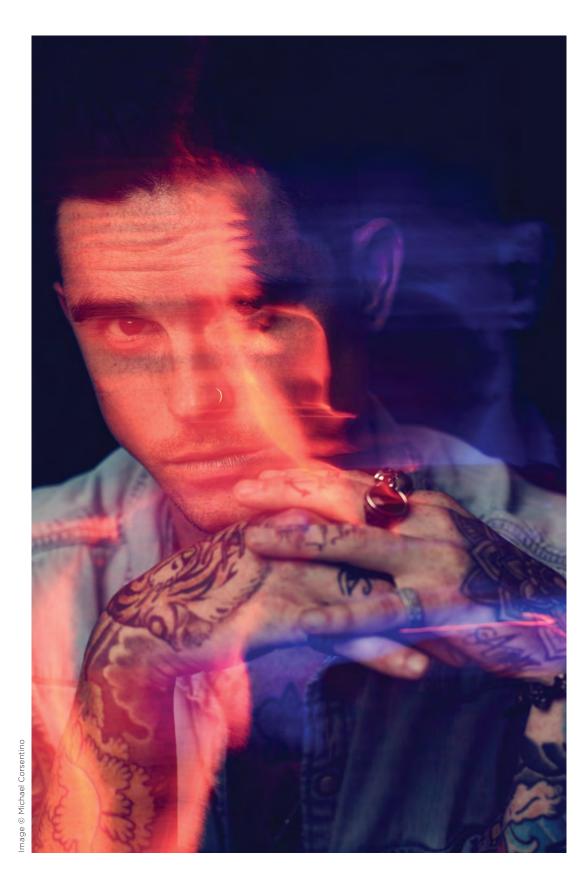


Strobe & constant light - setup 1

STROBE & CONSTANT LIGHT

The second setup incorporated constant lights, in this case two Lupolux 650 watt Daylight LED Fresnels, in addition to the strobe used for the keylight, which we covered with Roscoe 12x12 gels to add color. Along with a much longer shutter speed, .6 seconds, we were able to capture motion. We employed the exact same aperture, ISO and flash power from the first setup. Only the shutter speed was lengthened considerably to capture motion via the constant lights and camera movement. The LEDs were each set at approximately half power. This was done because lower light output yields more color saturation with gels, another benefit of low-power light.





Because the shutter remains open for an extended period of time, you'll need to work in a completely dark room. The only lights you want are those intended to contribute to the exposure. Here, again, focusing can be challenging. In most cases, the gelled constant lights, typically oriented as accent lights on either side of the subject, won't provide enough light to accurately focus. You'll want to use a flashlight to grab focus, shut it off and then make your exposure or have someone operate the overhead light switch when you need it. You'll also likely need to flag or block the constant lights from spilling into the camera's lens or onto the background. In the lighting diagram for Setup 2, you can see I've flagged for both. Black pieces of foamcore or even painted cardboard works perfectly. Without the flags, you'll get a much more desaturated effect and possibly experience lens flare.

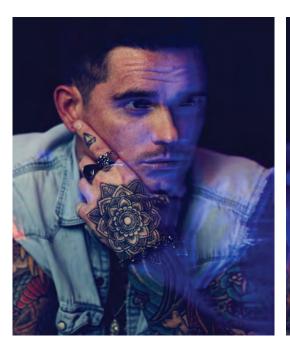
This technique requires patience. You'll get more misses than hits, but when you nail it, you'll be glad you persevered.

A note about creating the motion: Through a considerable amount of trial and error, I've discovered that moving the camera produces a far more dramatic motion effect compared to asking the subject to move. For these images, my camera was mounted on a studio stand with a pan and tilt head. I panned the camera to the right to create motion streaks on the left. You move the camera in the opposite direction of where you want the motion effect to appear.



Strobe & constant light - setup 2







NO EXCUSES!

These techniques can be accomplished with minimal expensive gear. Use a speedlight for the keylight (you need a tiny amount of light), an inexpensive beauty dish or octabank, a shower curtain or pop-up diffuser to cut and broaden the keylight, black-and-white reversible foamcore to reflect and subtract light, a couple of incandescent flood lights (or, better yet, daylight-balanced LED lights) and a set of color and neutral-density gels, and you're in business.

The big takeaway is less light and wider apertures in the studio. Get in there and experiment, have fun, swing for the fences. I can't wait to see what you come up with. Be sure to post images on social media and tag me.

See you next month!





Michael Corsentino is an Orlando, Florida-based editorial fashion and portrait photographer. In addition to his busy shooting schedule, Michael is a passionate educator, teaching workshops domestically and internationally. He is an author of two books, writes a monthly lighting column for Shutter Magazine and is a regular contributor to Photoshop User magazine and JointheBreed.com.

michaelcorsentino.com



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THE EASIEST PHOTOGRAPHER'S BUSINESS PLAN

EVER

with Jonathan Tilley



You'd rather be out shooting something awesome and getting paid a ridiculous amount of money for it so you can retire by the end of next week than read an article about a boring business plan for photographers. So would I. That's why I turned a boring business plan into something fun and easy that will ignite sparks under your ass to take control of your business and make your annoying Uncle Arnie finally stop bugging you about going out and getting a "real" job.

The number-one reason you're probably cringing right now is because you have the wrong idea of what a photographer's business plan really is. So let's define it.

As a personal brand strategist who works exclusively with creative people, I see a lot of creatives calling themselves entrepreneurs. This makes my eyes roll so hard they do a full 360-degree rotation in my skull. Here's why.

THE FREELANCER VS. ENTREPRENEUR'S BUSINESS MODEL

A business plan is basically a strategy for your business. That sounds easy enough. Let's move on.

When you create an entrepreneurial business plan, it's to build a business that you could sell at a later date. Examples include Instagram being bought out by Facebook; Starbucks coffee going from a single coffee shop in Seattle to a worldwide franchise chain; and a mom-and-pop hardware store that gets bought out by a national franchise chain.

These three businesses are still running even after the original owner has sold their company and walked away.

Now here's where the aha moment happens for us creatives.

FREELANCER'S BUSINESS PLAN

Do any of these examples sound familiar?

A photographer charges a package price for their client's wedding day photos. A graphic designer charges \$50 an hour for logo updates. A Broadway actor signs a one-year contract for the run of a show. A singer charges \$500 for a Saturday-evening gala.

These four businesses cannot run if the photographer/graphic designer/actor/singer is not there to do the work. Not there equals not paid.

As a freelancer, you exchange time for money. That's the creative freelancer's business plan. That's it. No pie charts separated into X, Y and Z. No colorful graphs of things moving upward. No algorithm that makes your head hurt.

The photographer's business plan is this: You exchange time for money. Period.

So now all you need to do is find dream clients who want to exchange their money for your time. Are you starting to cringe again?

No worries. I've got you covered. Keep on reading.

Now that you know the ridiculously simple photographer's business plan of exchanging time for money, how about figuring out how to make a great first impression with your dream clients so you can exchange more time for more of their money?

I want your photography business to be thriving so much that you can pay your bills from your artistry, save money for the villa in Spain and also silence Uncle Arnie when he goes off on a tangent saying photography isn't a "real" job. So let me show you how to make a stellar introduction with anyone you meet.

Correctly introduce yourself so you don't look like an asshat when meeting dream clients.

I go to a lot of conferences where creative people are networking and marketing themselves so hard that it's borderline abusive behavior. The worst case was in L.A. in 2014, where a creative was running down the hallway with his business card in his hand chasing an agent screaming, "Take my card! Please! TAKE IT!"

Obviously that networking encounter didn't go well. And I most definitely don't want you to have such an experience. So let's regroup, reframe and reconsider how you put yourself out there in the world without looking like an asshat.

The main problem I see is that creatives think "networking" and "marketing" deserve "quotation marks." But what if we replaced "networking" and "marketing" with saying hi to someone or simply making a new friend? That feels much more authentic, natural, unforced. And just between you and me, that's all networking and marketing is: being authentic to people who could hire you.

But how do you string together the right sentences that sound like the real you without getting sweaty palms and an uncontrollable case of the hiccups? Let me answer that question with another question: Do you like to play MadLibs?

Answer the following eight questions honestly, and then we'll string them together into a stellar introduction:

- 1. What's your name?
- 2. Where are you from?
- 3. At what age did you pick up your first camera?
- 4. What type of photography do you do?
- 5. Who are your dream clients?
- 6. What is your dream client's benefit from working with you? What do you help them with?
- 7. List three of your top clients (even if they aren't well known).
- 8. Write down one thing you love about what you do.

Let's use the example of a wedding photographer.

Hi, my name is Tracy. I'm from Boston. I picked up my first camera at age nine and haven't been able to put it down. I work regularly as a wedding photographer with engaged couples on their special day. I help them capture a milestone in their lives that they can look back on in 60 years and still feel the love between each other. Some of my favorite clients are Rose and David Davenport, Sal and Jenny Germinotta, and my sister Lucy and her husband, Jeff Gaultier. The one thing I love about what I do is being a fly on the wall on a day celebrating love between two people and being able to capture unique moments during that one day that will live on forever.

Now let me ask you this: Anywhere in that stellar introduction, did it feel like Tracy the wedding photographer was "networking" or "marketing"? Hell no! Did it feel authentic? Hell yes!





At the end of the day, you can relax a bit knowing that all you really need to do is exchange your time for your dream client's money. And to get the ball rolling, use the stellar introduction exercise above. What you do in between is what you do best: shooting something awesome to be paid a ridiculous amount of money so you can retire by the end of next week...or maybe in a few decades.



Jonathan is a personal-brand strategist who helps creative people shine online and share their talent with the world at JonathanTilley.com. His TEDx Talk "What Creativity Is Trying to Tell You" has inspired hundreds of thousands of creatives to turn thoughts into things, and his online courses have helped creatives build six-figure businesses. Jonathan believes there is far too little art in the world because creatives aren't taught how to promote their careers without feeling like a starving artist. That's why he enjoys traveling the world sharing his knowledge with the creative community at conferences, events and workshops.

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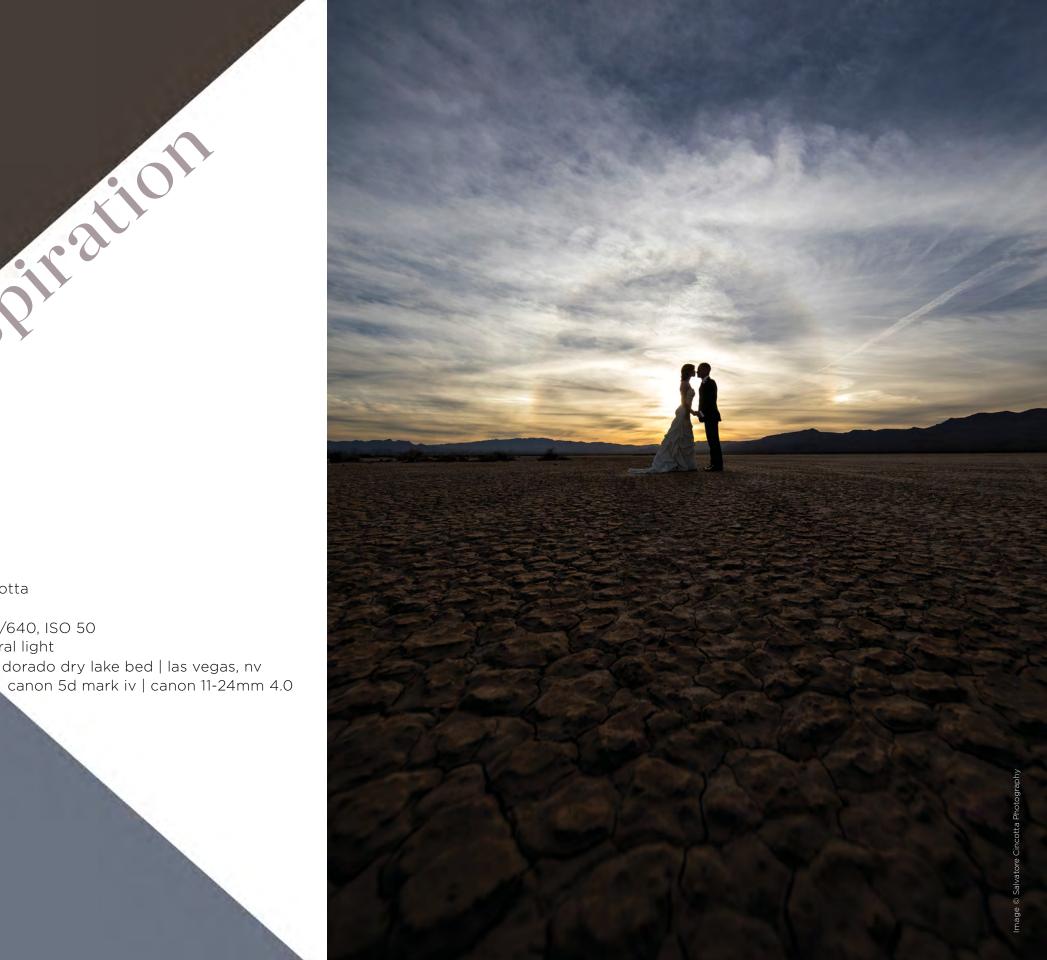
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