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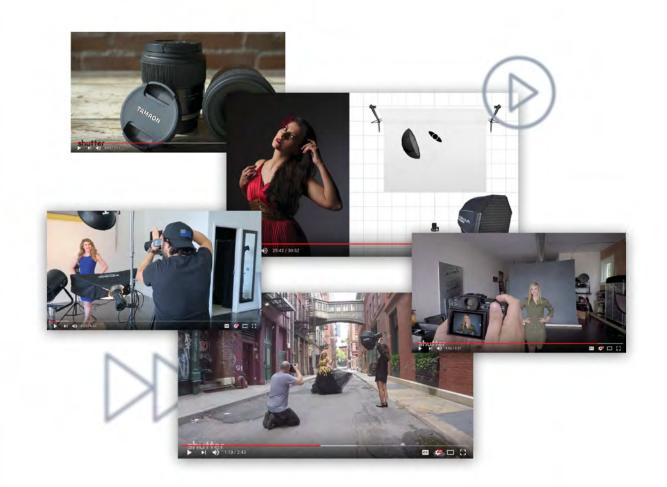
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MISSION STATEMENT

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.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / PUBLISHER Sal Cincotta

R CREATIVE DIRECTOR Alissa Zimmerman

LEAD DESIGNER Alicia Simpson

COPY EDITORACCOUNT SPECIALISTTom O'ConnellChristine Gill

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Vanessa Joy, Michael Anthony, Sal Cincotta,

Skip Cohen, Vicky Papas Vergara, Laurin Thienes, Scott Detweiler, Michael Corsentino, Nino Batista, Amber Jones, David Byrd, Alissa Zimmerman, Dustin Lucas and Phillip Blume



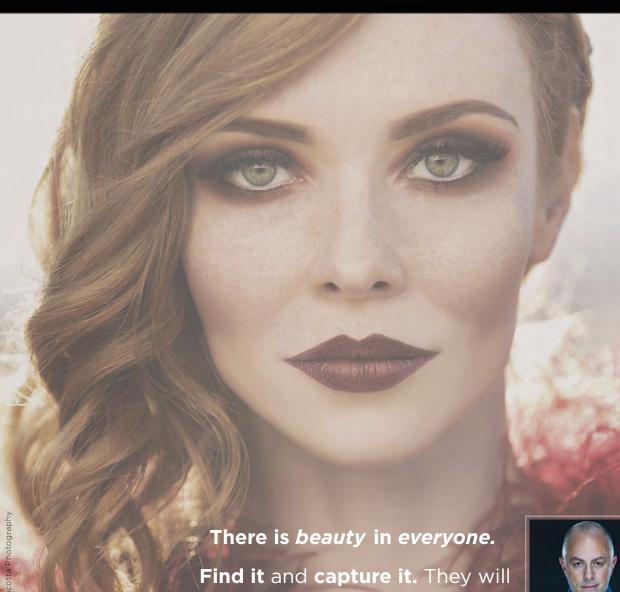
THE COVER

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LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief



cherish it forever! - Sal Cincotta



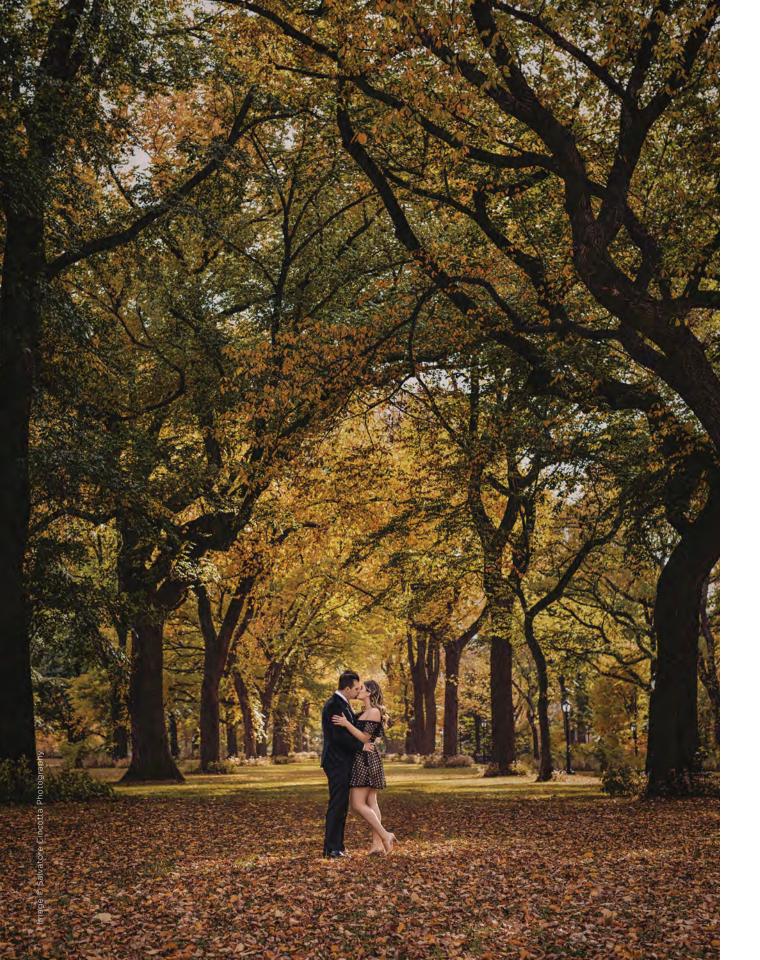
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"Why?" should be a simple question, shouldn't it? But "Why?" carries so much weight. There is no easy answer. It's probably one of the most complicated questions we can ask ourselves. We need to slow down for a second and ask ourselves a few simple questions to refocus our energy. What better time than now? Let's start the year off right, and understand the things that should be motivating us in the year ahead.

Do you know why you do what you do? Have you ever stopped to reflect on this?

I wake up every day knowing that I get to work on my terms. For better or worse, this is my business. I control my destiny. Think about how empowering that is. Sure, it's also incredibly scary. If things go sideways, I own the failure too. I can't really blame my boss, can I?

Why do we love this incredible profession? I know exactly why. I have two roles: educator first and professional photographer second.

As a professional photographer, my job is to document the lives and moments of my clients through my eyes. They are hiring me to tell their story. I take tremendous pride in this task. I know that the images I create will be among the most cherished things in their lives and shared across generations.

Have you ever stopped to think about that? The images you create will be viewed by their great-great-grandchildren! Holy shit. That is an incredible responsibility cast upon us. I never take this for granted, never lose sight of the importance of what we do. I am more than just a photographer. I have an incredible job to do.

As an educator, I love when I see that lightbulb go off in another creative. I teach because I love sharing my knowledge and my experience as a business owner and a creative. There is no better feeling in the world. My reward is knowing that by helping other creatives reach their potential, I am impacting people around the world—their clients. I take pride in knowing the people I am helping perfect our craft will be providing their clients with images that will be shared and cherished for generations.

This is why I push myself and my team each and every day.

So ask yourself: Why? Why do you do what you do? Come up with your own answer. And by the way, there is no right or wrong answer here. We each have our own reasons. Knowing those reasons is what matters most.

How will this question help us in the months and years ahead?



There will always be ups and downs.

Life is filled with ups and downs. We all know this, but sometimes we lose sight of the obvious, that the sun will come up tomorrow and a new day will begin. We all burn out. We all forget to take a deep breath. Knowing the "why" behind things helps me when I am having a bad day. It reminds me why I love this job.

We have all had that nightmare client who makes us swear off everything we have ever loved, but we have to remember the good clients, the ones who make us feel good in our soul about what we do. When you have that bad day, remind yourself why you love what you do. Trust me, it will put a smile on your face and give you perspective.

Knowing your "why" gives clarity to your personal mission.

Understanding the "why" behind what I do helps define my mission, both in business and my personal life. Why would I do something that doesn't make me happy?

Use your "why" to better define your personal mission. We have decisions to make every single day about the things we want to work on. I don't enjoy working with children. It's just not my thing. It doesn't make me happy. I find it challenging without reward. So, you guessed it, I don't advertise or market children photography. Do I photograph children? Of course I do, but I get to be selective in the people I choose to work with. I always make damn sure I work on projects that I enjoy.

I love weddings and high school seniors. I love the results, I love the creative process, I love the challenge. I know exactly why I love it. So this is where I focus my time and effort.





Image © salvatore Cincotta Photograpi

Focus on what matters most.

Now, having clarity and doing something with it are two different things. Don't waste this valuable information. Do something with it. Everything you do should be focused around your "why." We must do what makes us happy. There is nothing worse for a creative than waking up every day and driving to a job they hate. Find your way.

Does that mean you should quit your job? Well, as a person who did quit his job to pursue a dream, I am inclined to say yes. But think long and hard before you turn in your resignation. What makes you happy? What is the one thing you can't stop thinking about? What is your passion? Whatever your passion is, whatever you love doing, I encourage you to chase that dream.

There is no greater tragedy than to go through your life doing something you dread day in and day out. My only regret is not figuring this out sooner. Figure out what it is you love and why you love it, and pursue it with every fiber in your body. The work will be hard, but the rewards will be many. Focus on what matters most to you.





Put your plan together.

If this article has resonated with you at all, then the time is now. Start putting your plan together to achieve your dreams in life and business. What will you do each and every day to get you closer to your final dreams and goals? Everything you do should be aimed at that goal, whatever it is.

Start by writing down what it is you love and why. From there, start a bulleted list of the things you need to do to get you closer to doing what you love. It's about the destination, but the journey is what matters most. Every day, I am focused on doing the work I love with the people I love doing it with. They are my partners in this life journey.

I know my "why," and I live it each and every day.





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.

salcincotta.com

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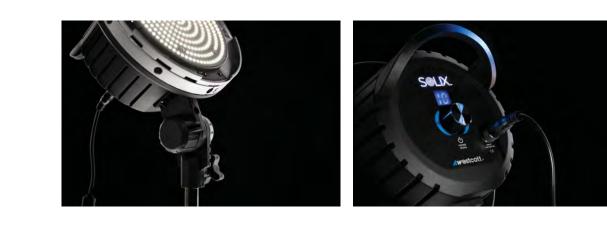




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Why Westcott Solix?

Construction quality is the first thing that jumped out at me as I unboxed the new Solix light from Westcott. It's lightweight but incredibly well built. For me, equipment has to be durable. I travel a lot and am rough on my gear. It has to hold up.

Westcott has done an amazing job designing this light. Continuous light is another option in my toolbox. It's about having the right tool for the job. Here, the tool is incredibly well thought out. A magnetic mounting system makes it quick and easy to add and remove accessories like the included barn doors and diffusion cap. Best of all, it's got a built-in speedring for attaching softboxes. Brilliant!

It's both AC- and DC-operable, allowing you incredible versatility both on location or in the field.

Watch the video to see it in action.

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- \cdot Hassle-free design with magnetic mounting system and integrated speedring
- \cdot Impressive light quality with high color accuracy
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- \cdot Portable monolight is compact, lightweight and AC/DC-operable
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2018: Setting Realistic Goals for the New Year

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FOVER CHRISTIAN RIZZO DRUM, DAVID MOSS

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O FORUM: FRANCICUEIROVICI BEAUROURGLA-REINE: COMPAGNIE DU ZERE BRUITS DE BOUCHE: DAVID MOSS

It's a new year, which means it's time to sit down and evaluate your goals for the year ahead. It's easy to get caught up in the "new year, new you" mindset and get overwhelmed setting unrealistic goals for yourself and your business. When that happens, nothing happens. Nothing productive, at least. The goals are too big and your ability to execute any of them too daunting, so you don't meet them. And so you feel like a failure by the end of the first quarter.

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State?



WORK/LIFE BALANCE

This unicorn really is possible. It's all about finding what works for you. I stumble across so many blog posts and articles about finding work/life balance and practicing self-care. What the social media world expects you to do with your life is a bunch of crap, and let's be honest: No one actually does all of these things these blogs and articles tell you to do (at least no real business owner trying to build an empire).

With that, I repeat, *find what works for you*. This concept of work/life balance was never meant to be dictated by someone else. Your balance is just that: yours. So why let someone else tell you how to live your life or tell you what should or should not make you happy?

I find balance in keeping a cleared inbox and a short to-do list. That takes a little work. But it's all part of the ebb and flow of life: Some days are exhausting, some days are slower. And on those slower days, I make time for myself in some fashion. Work/life balance is a mindset, an understanding of what sacrifices need to be made to get yourself to a balanced life.

DREAM BIG

This is your life. You are a business owner and have the luxury of building the life of your dreams. How badly do you want this? What are you willing to do to reach financial freedom, to wake up every day and love what you do? This is priceless to me.

An opportunity is what you make of it, and is really only an opportunity if you see it as one. It all comes back to your state of mind. Are you ready to see every open door as an opportunity to better yourself and your business? Or are your fears stopping you from seeing opportunities that are smacking you in the face?

Now is your chance to get your back of house in order so you can start seizing every new opportunity in front of you. There's no reason to let fear get in the way. It's a waste of time. What's the worst that could happen? You fail? Who cares?

To quote the infamous Aaliyah: "If at first you don't succeed, dust yourself off and try again." Life is too short to be anything less than extraordinary, so stop worrying about what could go wrong in life and just do what makes you happy.

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SET YOUR FLAGS

Goals that you set personally and professionally have to be actionable. Do not set goals without putting together a plan for executing them. That means you have to set realistic expectations. Do you have a team of people to help you execute these items, or are you doing this by yourself? Are you working with tight deadlines on any of the items on your list?

When putting your goals together, it's best to assign deadlines and estimated times of completion so you're not setting yourself up for failure. Do a giant brain dump at first. List every big goal—think big picture here, not minutia. What is something you want to achieve in 2018? Put that item on your list.

Once you have all of your goals listed, determine what needs to be done to accomplish them. Start assigning tasks to yourself (and/or your team) to begin executing them. Assign tasks by quarter, and make sure they are appropriate to the time of year they are assigned to. For example: If you want to rework your client experience or back-of-house workflows, don't assign it to yourself in the second or third quarter, the busiest times of the year.

Once you have your flags set, it's time to get to work.

WEIGH YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

Not all opportunities need to be acted on. At a certain point, you need to weigh your options and determine what is worthy of your efforts and what is just not viable at that moment.

Learning how to say no is one of the best skills I have learned. Saying no to another person or opportunity can be hard. It doesn't have to be. Keep your answer short and simple, direct and to the point. You never want to be rude, but you need to know when to draw the line. Drawing up a list of pros and cons comes in handy. It allows you to visually weigh your options.

It is also important to not feel guilty about your decision to say no. It is human nature to feel obligated to say yes to another person to avoid confrontation. Being able to say no when something just isn't the right fit for you shows you are in control of your life. Always do what's right for you, and always trust your instincts. Nothing is worse than committing to something and then backing out later. Your name and reputation matter, and maintaining integrity is the most important piece of the puzzle.





Even if you miss, you'll land

among the stars.

- W. Clement Stone

WORK HARD, PLAY HARDER

Now for the fun part. The new year offers a chance for you to get out there and kick some serious ass. Work hard. Push yourself to limits you didn't think possible. When you feel like giving up, push harder. You'll be amazed at the things you can accomplish when you stay focused and on track with your goals and flags throughout the year.

My biggest piece of advice: Don't forget to celebrate and enjoy the benefits of all your hard work. When you have a win, celebrate, but then get right back to business. Lingering on a celebration can delay your mission. Stay focused, but have fun along the way and always enjoy the life you've built.



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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BUILDING BLOCKS

SET UP YOUR BUSINESS FOR SUCCESS IN 2018

IMPROVING YOUR SKILL SET AND WEBSITE

with Skip Cohen

Procrastination makes easy things hard and hard things harder.

- Mason Cooley

This month marks the slow time of the year for most of us, the first quarter, but it doesn't have to be. Many of us think that because the revenue stream slows down, so should the work.

I love the quote I kicked off this month's article with because perfectly describes what so many of you are putting yourself through.

It should have been easy to clean up your website months ago, but you held off, and the problems on your site didn't go away. So, you limped through the last few months knowing full well you weren't showing your best work, hating your About page and knowing your Contact page needed to be more complete.

Being successful in business today is tough enough without the unnecessary challenges so many of you create for yourself. We all do it, me included. We have great ideas, things we want to change or try, and we put them on the backburner with one excuse after another. We ponder and ponder and ponder until we've missed the opportunity we were excited about in the first place.

So, let's look at two of the critical areas slowing your growth and come up with a few solutions to set 2018 up for your best year yet. Let's knock off the to-do list so when new challenges come up in the year ahead, you can take action without worrying about those issues that should just be ongoing maintenance.

Think of it the same way you would care about your car before driving across the country. You'd check the tires, change the oil and get a tune-up. You'd fix any problems and plan your route with the stops along the way. You wouldn't just hit the road with zero preparation.

YOUR SKILL SET

When business is good, everybody thinks they've found the right combination of techniques. It's not until work slows down and drops off that people take the time to fix things they should have resolved months or even years earlier.

LIGHTING

If you're telling people you're a natural-light specialist, give it a rest. You might be fooling them, but the rest of us know you haven't taken the time to learn lighting. Look, we all love working with natural light, and there are some incredible artists who have captured some of the most stunning images this way, but if you look at their skill set, you'll find they're never limited by any type of light.

During the next few months, you're going to have so many opportunities to learn lighting, both online and handson, at various conventions. Get yourself into lighting workshops that are outside your comfort zone. Search YouTube for experts in lighting like Sue Bryce, Bobbi Lane, Tony Corbell, Sal Cincotta and Jared Platt, just to name a few. Wander over to the websites of the lighting manufacturers. ProPhoto's site is loaded with videos and inspirational stories to help you think outside the box.

"I'LL FIX IT LATER!"

If you're spending too much time in post-production cleaning up your images, it's another sign that you don't possess a decent skill set. Stop wasting your time behind the computer that could be better spent marketing yourself and your business.

Bad images are bad images, and taking a shortcut on an image is what got you into this mess. If it's a really bad image, sometimes your time will be better spent not wasting it using every tool in Photoshop to try to clean it up. After all, one of my most favorite lines is:

KNOW YOUR GEAR!

Photography is one of the only businesses where people think if they have the right equipment, they've earned the right to call themselves a professional. If you bought a fully loaded Porsche, would it make you a racecar driver?

Practice, practice! Get to know your gear so well that you understand every feature. For years, I've said photographers shouldn't be allowed to own a high-end digital SLR until they've shot a case of chrome. I'm dating myself, but shooting chrome (transparency film) wasn't forgiving. If you screwed up the shot, the lab couldn't bail you out. You owned it and had to go back and learn exposure.

You need to understand how every lens you have performs. Shoot in every mode, from "P" to "M." The same goes for flash versus available light and understanding the impact that changing your ISO setting will have on each image. Then there are so many features in today's cameras for in-camera editing—all of which you need to know.

A great little exercise Roberto Valenzuela talks about is to look at an image from a wedding, for example, and see how many other images you might have captured instead. It's a great way to test your composition and cropping skills.



PRACTICE DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES

Just because your core specialty doesn't require something doesn't mean you shouldn't learn every skill your camera gear allows you to engage. Macro, landscape, night photography, dragging the shutter, shooting wide open and focus stacking are all techniques that help you become more well-rounded.

HOW ARE YOUR VIDEO SKILLS?

I'm betting I just lost a few of you, but hear me out. The line between still photographers and videographers is blurred. Most of you have gear that allows you to capture video, but the skills needed are entirely different from clicking the shutter.

Video slideshows aren't new to you, but they are to so many of your clients. If you have the skill set to combine video with still images and great music, you can seriously enhance your product line. You can do video thankyou notes, engagement announcements and holiday cards—the list goes on and on.

It's time to stop being a one-trick pony and expand your skill set to a level that allows you to take on more jobs with the confidence you need to build a stronger brand.

HOW'S YOUR WEBSITE LOOK?

Switch gears and create a list of things you need to do to your website. A few of you have turned procrastination into an art form.

Your website is your most important piece of property, the equivalent of a bricks-and-mortar location 20 years ago. Yet you treat it with almost complete indifference. It's as if you built a new studio but bought everything you needed at the Salvation Army, and now you're the proud owner of a lot of outdated equipment. Sure, it works, but it's not showing your abilities in the light they deserve.

Bad fonts, terrible layouts, confusing text and unappealing site design are just a few of the pitfalls. There is only a handful of you who have the expertise in graphic design to create a great website. Just keep one thing in the back of your mind at all times: It's not about what you like, but what appeals to your target audience. For most of you, that target is "Mom."

YOUR TABS

A few of you will argue this point, but I firmly believe your first tab should be your Galleries. The second tab is your About page. The third can be general information, followed by your Contact page. Hook your audience with your images first, then make it easy for them to get to know you with a strong About page.

YOUR GALLERIES

Let's stop sharing mediocre images. If it's not a "wow" image, don't share it. A "wow" image is so good that it's the only one you'd need to show to get hired. Also, stop posting dozens of photographs. You need only six to 10 in any category, not hundreds like so many of you keep doing.

WHAT YOU SHOW IS WHAT YOU'LL SELL!

So many artists show everything they've ever photographed. They want to demonstrate they know how to shoot a wedding, yet the images they share aren't any better than what Uncle Harry would show. Concentrate on your core specialty, and, as your skill set gets stronger, add the appropriate components to your business.

YOUR ABOUT PAGE

I've written so much about this over the years. Your audience doesn't care what awards you've won in print competition, what camera gear you shoot with, how you got started or what your favorite movie is. What they care about is whether or not you can be trusted to understand what's important to them. They want to know why you love being a photographer. This is where you get to be a romantic and share your love for the craft and start establishing trust with your clients.

INFORMATION

Share helpful information and stop posting contract restrictions that would scare an IRS auditor! I understand the fear of being taken advantage of by a client, but many of you have cancelation clauses, copyright statements and restriction policies on your website. You need all of them, but don't hit your audience with that information on the first date. Save it for the contract discussion when you're face to face with them and working to fulfill their need for a professional photographer.

CONTACT PAGE

It's my number-one pet peeve with photographers. You put in terrific effort at building your website, then you limit your contact information to an email template without a phone number. Even worse, you don't answer your emails quickly, and people have to wait to hear back from you.

Think about how much you appreciate a company that gives you access to a live body instead of email. You feel like they care about you. You get instant replies to questions or concerns.

There's no such thing as too much contact information. I understand if you work out of your home and don't want to list a physical address. But share everything else, including a phone number and email address. Get back to them as quickly as possible. Any delay is an opportunity to hand over business to your competitors.

CREATE AN EXPERIENCE

You have a choice to make. Your website can look like everybody else's, or it can be an experience for your visitors. Make sure it's a great place to visit. It should be so special that clients share it with their friends and your reach grows each time another person looks at your website.

Next month, we're going to work on cleaning up that blog, your marketing, community involvement and a list of ideas to help you make the new year your best one yet.



Remember, your website is about what you sell, and your blog is about what's in your heart. I kicked off 2018 talking about your skill set because it's the foundation for everything you put into your website and business.

You know where your weaknesses are, but the great thing about being a photographer is that virtually everything is fixable. Just stop procrastinating. Let's work on what you need to be a better artist and business owner.





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.

skipcohenuniversity.com



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THE BEST CLIENT YOU ALREADY HAVE

with Laurin Thienes

Like many of you, I fell into the world of entrepreneurship by default. I didn't have an MBA or any business classes under my belt. I started out not really knowing what I was doing at all. Fast-forward almost 20 years, and the most valuable thing I've learned after those rough-and-tumble two decades is this: It is easier to work with the same client multiple times than it is to find new clients. Think two words: *client retention*.

THE BASICS

Business experts generally agree that it is cheaper by a ratio of five to one to sell to an existing client than it is to find a new one. Existing clients know your policies, pricing structure and processes, and you don't have to do a hard sell. No one likes being hard sold, except maybe masochists who get their kicks dropping by used car lots for abuse.

Your new client doesn't know anything about you up front, which takes time (and money) to explain. Until you start working with them, you might repeat this process over and over with multiple people until you earn a penny. Client retention, on the other hand, skips the initial part of the sales cycle because it has already happened. And in photography, a client's comfort level with you in front of the camera is equally important and almost always improves as the relationship matures.

A second and equally important term that goes hand in hand with retention is *churn*. Churn is the rate at which you lose clients. While there are a million models telling you which rate is right for your business, you have to determine what rate you are ok with. This article focuses on retention, but I urge you to research the connection between retention and churn rates.

SHOOT & BURN - A ZERO SUM GAME

The quickest way to lose repeat business is by not offering prints or products, and just handing over everything you shot to your client. Maybe they come back to be photographed again (taking up more of your valuable time), but aside from the funds you captured up front, your job is done. And so is your revenue stream from that client. If your goal with your photography business is to not make a living, keep on operating as a shoot-and-burn photographer.

There are shoot-and-burners who do just fine, I won't argue that point. But think about the value of your time, the importance of maintaining your client base and, ultimately, the effect that shoot and burn has on your retention and churn rates.

RETENTION AS POLICY

As your business matures, so should your retention efforts. *Shutter Magazine*, and every other trade publication, is flooded with articles discussing the importance of maintaining a social media presence. And that is imperative to your retention policy. Your constant engagement with your existing client base can be naturally and organically cultivated through your social media channels. The presence of your brand in front of your clients is among the most important advertising you can do without explicitly trying to sell something. Constant personal engagement is also a major added bonus. You can take that retention policy further by advertising special deals and referral bonuses exclusive to existing clients.



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE RULES ALL

The differences in quality between luxury brands and their generic equivalent are often negligible. Maybe you can't tell the difference between a Rolex and a knockoff. But the Rolex salesperson treats sales differently. The experience is followed up with a handwritten thank-you card. A birthday card. A phone call a few weeks later to make sure you are 100 percent satisfied.

Everyone likes to be treated as if they are the only people who exist when they are spending a lot of money. Each touch point you make with your client matters. If you forget about them, they are much more likely to forget about you. The little bit of money you spend on whatever touch point you make will be the best advertising dollar you spend. The power of a hand-delivered bottle of wine around the holidays to your top clients, for example, goes a long way.

TRACKING & REPORTING

So you've implemented everything you possibly can for client retention and to reduce your churn rate. Is it working? You'll need to track everything you have done. To guide your tracking, ask yourself these questions: What percentage of past clients come back each year? Can you make changes to make that percentage higher? If quantifiable, what method of client engagement helped increase your retention rate? How much did it cost?

Identifying the metrics that are important to you is imperative to the success of your business and your retention efforts.



Sound business principles

will save you when other things **fail.**

- START 2018 OFF RIGHT -



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This article started with concepts and closed with tracking the implementation of those concepts. This has been said a million times, and it bears repeating: It is better to be awesome at business than it is to be the best at your craft. Sound business principles will save you when other things fail. Solid business practices will always be your backbone.

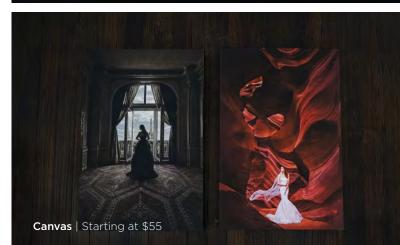
As you begin the new year, make client retention a top focus. With motivation and focus, you'll find that your retention efforts will be the most important use of your time.

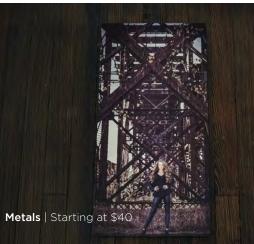


Laurin Thienes is the cofounder and director of operations for Evolve Edits, the leading post-production house for wedding and portrait photographers in the U.S. He studied photography at the Brooks Institute of Photography, and has been photographing weddings for 15 years. The native of Portland, Oregon, currently lives in O'Fallon, Illinois, with his wife, Melissa, son Lukas and redheaded daughter Sophia.

evolveedits.com







GLAMOUR EDITION

– Featuring

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5 POSING TIPS FOR GLAMOUR IMAGES WITH

IMPACT

with **Vicky P<mark>a</mark>pas Vergara**

Every photo session is as unique as the women I photograph. There are so many aspects to each shoot that I need to consider when I create. Here are five things you can add to your skillset in photographing women.

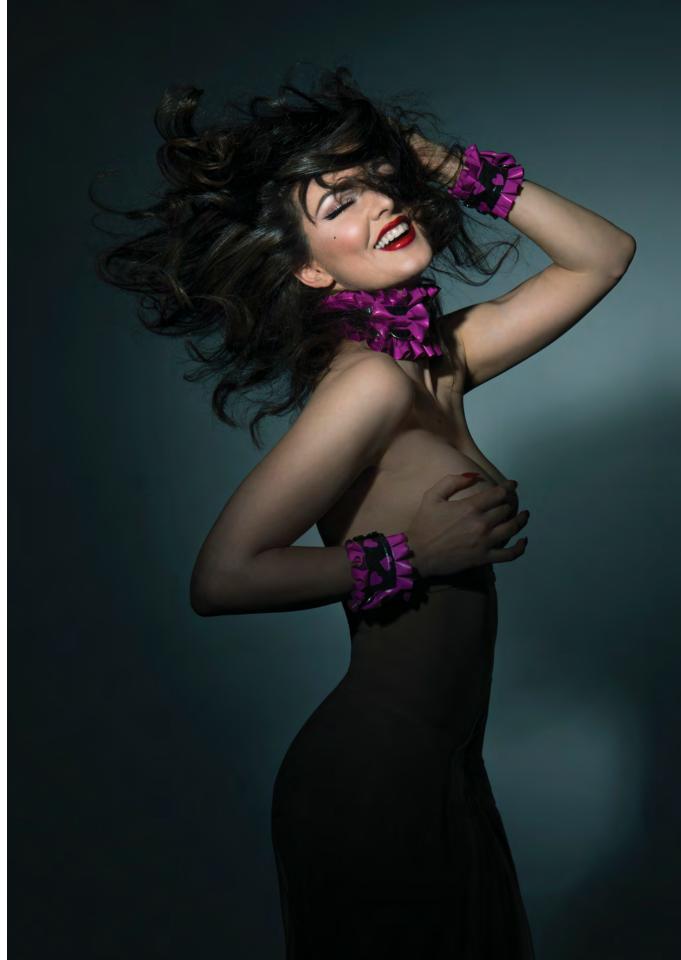
POSING HANDS

I draw a great deal of inspiration from watching ballet dancers. The way they create expression with their hands is amazing. What I want to achieve with the shoot—feminine goddess or powerful warrior—influences how I direct the model to pose. We discuss our goals before the session.

If I want a delicate look, I ask her to relax her fingers and palms. I shoot the hands from the side for a more delicate look. The fingers should be curled slightly and relaxed. I enjoy working with dancers and art models who are in tune with their bodies.

I avoid the claw and flat palms to camera, which looks awkward and chunky. But there are times when a soft cupping of a breast looks great, like in my photo of sassy Sina King, with her sexy, fun expression!

I always shoot loads of photos, experiment a lot, constantly review my results-and from there I just keep improving.







BODY SHAPES AND THE S-CURVE

My love of painting the female form has helped me understand the magic of the feminine curve. When posing models, I emphasize the dynamic S-curve. All I need to do is look at my fabulous Grecian ancestors, who had it tied up. The beautiful statue of Venus de Milo is all about the S-curve.

If the model is in a fitted garment, I push out her hips, tilt the shoulder, incline the head and bend a knee to create the curves. I direct her to work through the different movements to give me options. If I want more drama, I exaggerate the tilts and bends, which changes the dynamics of the overall image. Every body is unique. I work with the potential of the model, always exploring what works best for the outfit, lighting and overall look.



SHOOTING HEIGHT

I love to create a sense of elevation, elongation and grandeur in my models. To achieve this, I work at mid-height or below waist level to the subject. One of my favorite posing props is a pedestal that I get the models to stand on. This takes the elongation to the next level, giving us the illusion that the model is 7 feet tall. It adds drama and makes the model look powerful and statuesque.

I celebrate women by literally putting them on pedestals!







maaco @ Wicky Doorse Words

POSING & STYLING GO HAND-IN-HAND

My sessions revolve around the garments and wearable art I create. The styling plays a huge role in how I pose my model.

I use the body to dramatize and enhance the model's clothes. I want the model to take on the personality of the garment to help her get into character.

If you are going for a Renaissance feel, with flowing soft fabrics, the posing needs to reflect that. You want S-curves and classic posing. More funky, fun clothing may work for more abstract and distorted poses.

COACHING FOR GREAT EXPRESSIONS

Creating great rapport with my models comes first. I get to know them, and have fun learning about who they are and what their story is. I plan my shoots with their input to get them excited. It's so important to communicate exactly what I want to achieve. Then, as a team, we bounce ideas off each other and create together. It's a partnership.

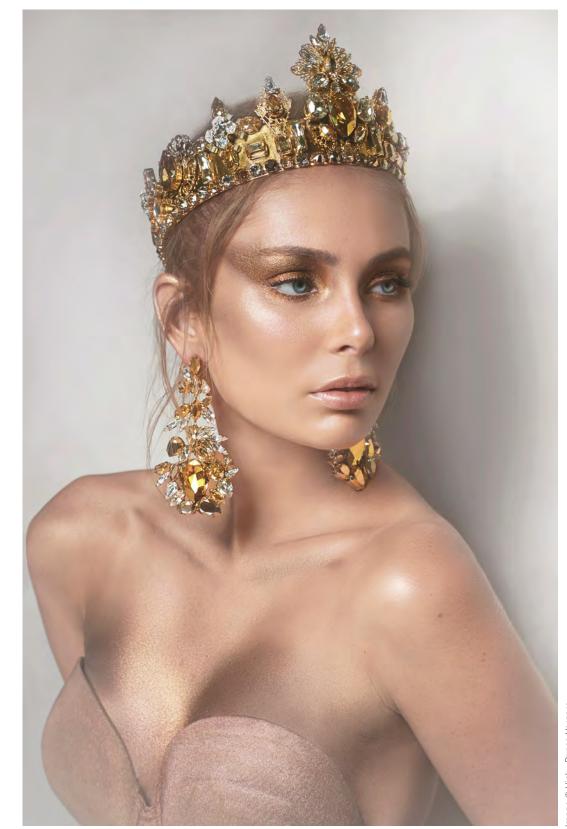
I direct them not just physically but also emotionally to get that perfect expression I want. I avoid awkward, stagnant poses and expressions. Keep it real and genuine.

I coach for an emotion and an expression that works best for the garment.

Get your model into character to make that connection with the viewer all the more real. Communication is key. It's a powerful partnership.



ages © Vickv Papas Verg





mages © vicky Papas vergara

I need to gain trust and create comfort to get them in the mood. If it's dramatic and thoughtful, then it's up to me to create the trust so they can surrender their emotions to create the feel I'm after.

Navigate them into an expression. Is it dreamy, joyful, fierce, proud, sexy, defiant, sensual or melancholic? It's like being a theater director. The models are your actors. Together, you create amazing images from a place of trust, understanding and, most importantly, fun.



International award-winning photographer and couture artist Vicky Papas is the creative brainchild behind the brand Vergara. Her innovative approach to photography, fashion, couture creation and styling is a hallmark of her brand. Vicky says her ability to connect with her subjects helps her create intimate images that pull viewers into her visual storytelling.

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I began to smile as the breeze swept across my hot brow. But my expression fell with a crash. All at once, shattering glass broke the quiet calm in the elegantly decorated garden. I spun around where I stood photographing a floral arrangement and regained my balance just in time to watch the dramatic domino effect—rows of precariously erected posts strung with delicate light bulbs, pulling each other down onto the stone terrace.

The starry ceiling that had floated above the reception patio crashed to the earth and now lay like a sea of sharp diamonds shining along the white-linen shores of draped tables. An electrical technician stood like a statue in the midst of the wreckage, fingers still clutching the last few unbroken bulbs—*literally* at the end of his rope, he let out a string of profanities that was even longer and then stormed off.

Having photographed hundreds of weddings over almost a decade-long career, I can say that *weddings are not glamorous*. They're supposed to be, right? But they just aren't. In fact, weddings are more often marked by behind-schedule makeup artists, self-important "church ladies," overbearing mothers, insensitive toast-makers, impatient guests, inconsiderate Uncle Bobs and clumsy electrical technicians.

Notice a pattern here? If you answered, "Human beings are a hot mess," congratulations, you win the Observant Photographer Award! But it's not all bad news. If people's general *negativity* can spoil a wedding day, it's equally true that our professional *positivity* can profoundly change the atmosphere. Put another way, if I'm doing my job right, I know I can make even a stressful wedding look and feel glamorous—at least for the people who matter most, the bride and groom. My job is to protect them from the storm. It's their wedding, after all.

Here are three steps you can take before, during and after every wedding this year to give your couples a more glamorous experience.





2018

Begin with them.

Early in their careers, many photographers make the same big mistake. Some never learn. We wrongly begin conversations with potential clients by making it all about us. It's often a natural reaction that, although it seems like conceit, is actually the result of lack of confidence. I'm going to assume you are not arrogant or cocky. But you may not realize how it sounds to a client when you drone on about your experience, style, awards or yourself.

It's a tricky balance to strike. Yes, if you're more introverted and tend to avoid talking about yourself at all, you need to learn to self-promote and communicate credibility. This can still be a challenge for my wife, Eileen, my introverted counterpart at Blume Photography. Even after she's won awards and taught photographers around the world for years, she still has to fight for the confidence to call herself a true photographer. She has told people, "Yeah, I'm into photography" as if it were a new hobby.

I love my wife for her humility, but her communication style wasn't the best for business when she humbly told corporate clients that the brand-new state-of-the-art studio on our property was "just a little home studio." It's worth repeating: If you don't talk highly about your own business when it deserves praise, it will become very hard for other people to do so.

Still, the less you talk in general, the less desperate you sound – and the more freedom you give your clients to introduce themselves to you. List your most important credentials in just a few strategic places (on your About page, in your email signature, on a handout bio), but become more obsessed with your potential wedding couples and their story.







When we reply to a wedding inquiry, our emails and phone calls don't focus on a list of pricing and other information alone. That could wrongly communicate "take it or leave it." Rather, we ask an enthusiastic set of questions that demonstrate our care and to keep the conversation going: When did you two meet? How did he propose? How's the wedding planning going?

Or how about this: "Are there any wedding advice secrets you've wondered about? (They don't have to be photo-related!) We've been blessed to serve a lot of amazing couples all over the world and have collected a lot of great ideas - so we're excited to help in every way we can!" See what I did there? I was able to inject my professional credentials, but still make it about them.

A glamorous experience means your clients feel like stars. Stars get all the attention. So put the spotlight on your clients and their story first.

Give welcome gifts.

When you imagine a movie star's glamorous lifestyle, what else do you envision? I immediately think about the lavish perks of the job—freebies and gifts!

Gift-giving is a universal way to make someone feel special. But it can be hard to choose the perfect gift. Ideally, you want it to be sentimental and personal. Giving your wife a dishwasher for your anniversary is technically a gift, but it utterly fails to accomplish its purpose of making her feel loved and glamorous. As a business that serves a particular demographic, you can come up with good gift ideas for newlyweds and then use them repeatedly to suit your brand. (If only I could give Eileen the same easy gift on every anniversary! I'd be set!)

We start giving gifts as soon as we meet a couple, even before they're official clients. How many photographers do you know doing this? It's rare, and a real driver behind our higher booking rate. When we meet a couple, we gift a simple bridal magazine and some fine chocolates to help with planning. No one sees it coming. Immediately they know we are photographers who will both meet and exceed their expectations.

After we receive their contract, we send a thank-you gift of expensive gourmet cupcakes — something completely impractical and celebratory. Many photographers we respect also send a marriage book at this point, a gift that shows your couple that you value them and their marriage. We love this idea; strong marriages are at the heart of what we believe in. Marriage books have been impactful in our marriage, too.

But we have worried about sounding "preachy" and haven't really found a title we fully endorse enough to share with all our couples. (In at least one case we know of, a client canceled a wedding because she got offended by the book her photographer gifted her. If you ask me, her reaction was ungrateful and thin-skinned. But it's indicative of how some people react to "advice.") Instead, we now give empty journals couples can use to document their marriage.

There are other strategic opportunities to give gifts. If your couple has an engagement session, you can use the images for surprise photo gifts, such as honeymoon luggage tags or an easy ShootProof presentation that costs you nothing yet excites your couple and gets them marketing for you. At the end of our professional relationship with each couple, we like to surprise them with a gift card to encourage our now "old married couples" to keep dating. And I especially love the idea of gifting a photo Christmas ornament to past clients so our brand becomes a small part of their sentimental traditions every year.









Ask all the right questions.

When it comes to sending the right gifts or even getting rid of awkwardness in client communication, how do you get to know your clients more personally? Just ask!

Surveys are a critical tool in every serious business. We receive online surveys all the time from retailers, doctors, politicians, pest management and even fast food restaurants. So why aren't we photographers making better use of them?

Our wedding survey asks our couples a seemingly useless question: "What's your favorite Starbucks drink?" Everyone has one. And since Starbucks is almost everywhere, we are always stopping there for a latte on our way to a wedding shoot. We decided to deliver a surprise treat for our couples while we were at it. Now we know exactly what they like, and they feel super glamorous when we hand them something they love but didn't expect. Believe me, the bridal party will take note, too. What better way to make an entrance?

Our surveys also ask for special family situations beforehand. Now we're always sensitive and able to avoid the awkward "divorced parents" portrait moments that plagued our early wedding days. And because we explain that a full list of vendors makes it more likely for wedding pictures to get published, our couples provide every vendor's web address and email ahead of time. Without searching them out, I'm able not only to deliver images quickly to vendors who appreciate it, but also to find publishers for weddings via Two Bright Lights—great publicity for us and a completely glamorous experience for our couples who likely have never seen their faces in a magazine before.

We even ask our couples, "What three words would you use to describe your wedding?" and "What do you hope your friends say about your wedding day?" This gives us insight into their dreams for this wedding they are putting so much energy into. I don't take that lightly. I use those same adjectives and descriptions when I write our blog posts, social blurbs and emails to the couple.

It's not that you want to tell people what they want to hear if it isn't honest. But it's known to be psychologically powerful to mirror a person's attitudes and word usage when communicating. It makes them feel important and heard, which is what all people seek in valued relationships. If they feel their relationship with you is valuable, you'll experience the same kind of business-sustaining word-of-mouth referrals that have allowed our business to thrive even without advertising.





If powerful and easy surveys aren't a built-in part of your studio management system already (as ours are, using 17Hats), you can use a popular third-party survey maker like SurveyMonkey in the meantime. You can create and share a few different surveys this way for free.

Finally, to make posing more glamorous, it's all about how the subject feels. Even if you create a "glamorous" pose, clients remember feeling awkward or stressed when they see those images later, and they don't buy them. If they feel relaxed and spoiled during the shoot, even imperfect images sell like hotcakes.

During the wedding featured here, for example, I would never tell the cute little boy who ran into the couple's shots "get out" or "no." For one thing, he is the couple's son. In my book, these authentic fun-loving pictures are just as good as the so-called perfect compositions I was trying to create. So I encouraged the silly antics, got some shots, then presented a positive idea: "Hey, buddy, do you want to come help me take some pictures?" Instead of making a child sad and stressing his parents, I made a little buddy and had a great time finishing the portraits.







CONCLUSION

Glamour is more than a look. It's a feeling. And if there's one thing I know from the best marketing research, it's this: The approximately 50 percent of the market that spends more money and values artwork makes purchasing decisions based on a great service experience.

This part of the population has been termed "neos" by economists, and they are looking to feel glamorous. Don't disappoint them this year, and they won't disappoint you.

Watch my video to learn more about creating a glamorous wedding day experience, and visit the Photographers section of theblumes.co for a free "What's in Our Wedding Day Emergency Kit" download.





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.

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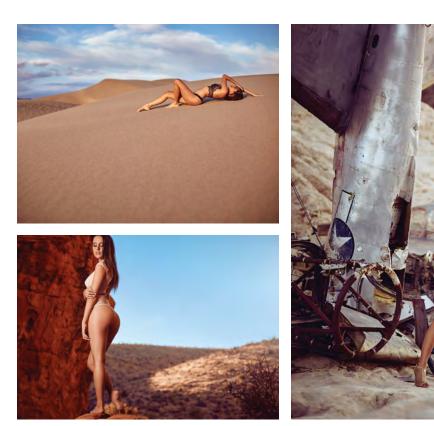
GLAMOUR Photography ON LOCATION

with Nino Batista

Bedrooms, bathtubs and showers, fancy houses, hotel rooms and pools are all common glamour photography locations that have been used for decades, and for good reason: They work. Shooting "sexy" outdoors conveys a risqué feeling because of its potential voyeuristic appeal. Here are some things to keep in mind when you head outside to create glamour sets or editorials.

Glamour is delightfully pointless. But then, most art is. With its zero practical purpose, glamour photography is about conveying a beautiful sensuality through imagery, whether an obvious editorial type of storyline is present or not. Often, a strong and direct contrast between the subject and the scene (say, "lingerie model in a busy city street") may create the requisite shock value you're after, and other times something softer and more connected ("see-through sundress in a rural field at golden hour") works better.

Regardless of where your vision leads, let's review some of my observations in the realm of outdoor glamour.





SELL THE LOCATION

Let's get right to it and discuss the most important aspect of location shooting: selling the location. No, this isn't a real estate venture. Think about why you trekked off to your location in the first place. Whether it's the woods, a wide-open desert, a dilapidated warehouse, a Victorian mansion on the coast or just a cheap motel room, you chose the location for a reason. You have to sell it in your final images. But how?

There are a few schools of thought and different artistic approaches. If you prefer environmental portraits, use wider focal lengths and hyperfocal settings to capture the location in your shots by default. That said, I have always found that shooting wide and hyperfocal can be tricky, and often takes more work to create something stunning.

A key aspect of hyperfocal environmental portraits is styling. Since you're not exploiting the glorious aspects of camera blur, almost every detail is as clear as ever in your environmental portraits. Leave no stone unturned, and take the time to review the entire scene in detail. The placement of one item can make or break the flow of a shot, either enhancing or disturbing your leading lines, or even the overall geometry of your composition. You're not hinting at a scene, you're displaying it—and the set is just as important as your subject. Environmental portraiture is not as easy as it may initially seem, but when it's done right, it's stellar.

But what if you want your shots to only hint at the location? From the technical side of things, you may be employing longer focal lengths and slimmer depth of field. This is where I find most of my inspiration and my preferred looks. But one should never just hide behind thin depth of field when shooting on location.

Perhaps you've acquired access to a fantastic California mansion to shoot in. You've negotiated the details, the costs, and traveled to the place for what you hope will be an epic day of shooting. Maybe you've even flown out of state for it. That's a lot of effort, right up front, and you haven't even dusted off your favorite lens yet. You would be remiss to somehow accidentally avoid showcasing your epic location if you didn't consider selling it in your shots.

Hinting at your location, the key elements of it, is crucial when you shoot longer focal lengths and narrow depth of field. If you're on a beautiful tropical beach, why would you not show it? Or at least show elements of it that clearly showcase where the model is in the shots. Your subject against just a simple blue sky, for example, can be captured almost exactly the same way in your backyard on a sunny day. Or, if you're at that California mansion, why would you focus on shooting your model against, say, a simple white wall the entire time? You have white walls in your house and studio. You didn't pop off to Cali to capture what you could have captured down the block, so you need to ensure that your venue augments your subject appropriately in each frame, even when shooting 85mm at f/2.8.

You and your team didn't scale a mountain in Utah to shoot against a simple tree, and you certainly didn't fly to Belize to shoot against a brick wall. You wouldn't rent a mansion so you can shoot against a white wall, and I'm going to guess you wouldn't go through the trouble of getting an exotic car on set just so you can barely show its sideview mirror off in the distance. Your location is a massive prop that complements your model, so use it wisely. Look at it as a return on investment. Whether you've invested money, time or both into a location for a project, illustrating it in your final work justifies your efforts to acquire it.

shutter.

SELL THE SUBJECT

All location capturing considerations aside, you are still doing portrait work, and so your subject should be your number-one priority. Going back to my comments about how your subject and styling complement your scene, it is always best to put some thought into this interplay rather than totally wing it. While some harshly contrasting components can be ideal, sometimes that clash is overpowering and comes across as forced. Or perhaps you are simply artistically bored with some common wardrobe and styling concepts because they match your location a bit too well.





nages © Nino Batist







mages © Nino Batista

COLOR

Even when you cannot decide what style of wardrobe you want, think carefully about the color palette of the overall scene. An outfit may not make sense to you in any way except for color, and that might be why it can work perfectly on your set.

Unlike in a studio, you cannot always control the color palette of your location—you have to work with whatever is there at the time. Naturally, having some foresight into where you are going to shoot helps with potential color palettes. Large locations can be a treasure trove of new discoveries, and you never quite know what you may find while shooting. Bringing several wardrobe styling options is important when going on location because you don't want to get caught in a situation where blue, for example, is part of your vision for a scene and you don't have anything blue at all. Yes, you can do wonders in Photoshop, but if that one blue scarf is what makes the set work for you, it's better to have it on hand than have to edit 17 shots with an orange scarf. And you can't always fully envision a final shot on set when you know you have to fix it in post.

Think carefully about your location when trying to convey to your model the overall vibe you're after. While a great model will do this on her own, don't overlook the location's themes and mood. Soft, gentle posing and expressions may not work on a dark, broken-down basement staircase. Aggressive, angular posing with impassioned expressions doesn't fit the bill for a naturally window-lit, light-toned bedroom scene. Or maybe these scenarios do work. Don't compromise your vision. Take into account the character of the scene when deciding how you want your model to pose and emote. Determine how the site speaks to you and what you hope to capture.

And always remember that the tiny details of expression and posing can shift the atmosphere of a scene more than you may realize.

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LIGHT THE SUBJECT

And how about the light? A lot of us assume natural light is the order of the day when on location, and that's fine. However, modifying and controlling the light to tailor it to your vision outdoors is tantamount to light control in the studio. Even the smallest details can make a big difference. Lighting approaches are another topic for another day, but making decisions on simple things like diffusion is central to conveying the mood you are after.

As I have said hundreds of times at my workshops, light diffusion can radically change the tone of a shot, even if nothing else in the frame is changed. Super-soft, extra-diffused light has its place, but so does straight-on hard light, whether it's open sun or a bare-bulb strobe. You can make either work, or choose something in the middle—just don't overlook how your light affects your shot's final emotional feel.

There really isn't any one hard and fast rule about what type of light to use to convey a mood. But there are tendencies toward certain moods with specific light diffusion types.

Direct hard light conveys a mostly serious tone. Whether it's gloom-filled, strength-driven, desperation-heavy or sexuality-dominated, harder light works well when intensity is the order of the day. Diffused soft light offers more diversity and makes more sense when more subdued emotions are desired. A softer sensuality or a lighthearted sense of fun and playfulness works very well in soft light.

Rather than ask yourself which modifier is best for a shot, consider what type of light you want to use to reinforce the vision you're after, and go from there. No one light modifier is the master solution to all things, and no one type of light is the only type of light that should be used in any given situation.

There are no big secrets being held from you on lighting. You just need to change your mindset from gear to style, and explore your sets in a manner that allows you to see the light that's there, how to work with it, how to change it, how to enhance it.





age © Nino Batista







CONCLUSION

Every location offers a potential avalanche of lighting and mood opportunities if you take the time to see it for what it is, and capitalize on it. You can work with almost any location if you put the effort into it, so don't assume you're out of luck if you can't nail down your dream location.



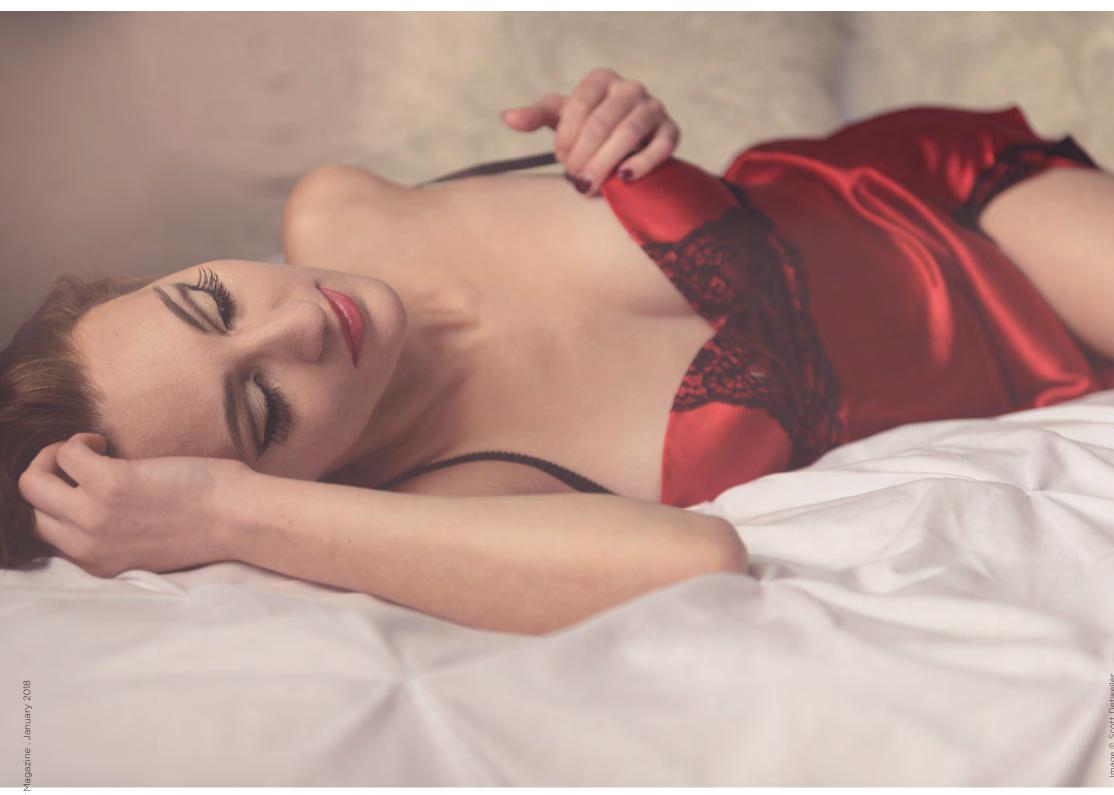
Nino Batista is a commercial glamour and exotic automotive photographer based in Texas. His work is regularly published in lifestyle and men's publications all over the world, and he is regarded as one of the premier glamour photography and retouching educators in the United States. Nino is a senior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

ninobatista.com

MEMOIRS OF A

MALE BOUDOIR PHOTOGRAPHER

with Scott Detweiler



It sounds like every man's dream job: Stand around all day shooting beautiful women in skimpy lingerie as they throw bundles of cash at you. Let me tell you firsthand that there is a tremendous amount of stress when one ventures into this alleged dream job. In this article, I cover tips, tricks and traps of boudoir, with a focus on male boudoir photographers.

Men and women have very different experiences in this field. Some clientsor their spouses-demand a female photographer, and there's no changing their minds. But I'd say that's about 20 percent of the market. So there are plenty of other fish in the sea, and with mad photography skills in tow, we can easily win those clients who don't care about the gender of the photographer.

CONSULTATION IS KEY

Have you ever stared at a word for so long it appeared to make no sense and lost all meaning? Many women do this in the mirror each morning. Armed with a hypercritical attitude toward their perceived imperfections and hatred of their hair, they are fully prepared to criticize every image you take. Sure, some are much better at handling this internal trauma than others, but you are walking right into this war zone.

All of our images will be judged to this standard, so we need to set ourselves up for success from the outset with a proper preconsultation. We need to get them set up and measured at a trusted lingerie shop. Improperly sized bras, panties that cut into sides and other wardrobe malfunctions can mean a loss of revenue or even entirely scrapped shoots. As a man, you can't assist with fitting and shopping, so partner up with someone who can fit your clients and also serve as a potential source for leads.

During the preconsult, getting to know the client is critical. I chat with clients about the shoot, what prompted it, what they can expect, their body issues and, most importantly, their goals. We also discuss the order of outfits, sets and accessories so we have a solid plan and can work efficiently during the shoot.

This consultation gives the client some clear expectations, and it shows them you are a professional and not just some guy with a camera. It builds their confidence that you will deliver great images in line with their ideals or goals. The preconsultation also shows you what traps to avoid—and whether or not you should even take on the client. The preconsultation is as much for us as it is for the customer. I need to know that they have the budget, mindset and attainable goals for this to be a successful experience for all involved.

SWEETEN THE EXPERIENCE

Beyond the sexy gift of a boudoir shoot, women seek these sessions for another reason. Perhaps there has been a recent change in marital status, or maybe they've reached a milestone in their life. It might be that dreaded birthday that is measured in decades; perhaps it's a weight-loss goal, or maybe just a general need to boost self-confidence.

Whatever the reason, we need to focus on the experience itself. Many high-end wedding photographers will tell you that selling the experience is how clients choose you over the unwashed masses that own nice cameras.

Treating the lady like a queen for a day goes a long way toward creating a repeat customer. Consider things like wine and cheese while her hair and makeup are being done. Have someone there to do her nails as a perk for some of your higher-end packages. Each thing you add sweetens the experience and will pay for itself several times over.











AVOIDING TRAPS: FOCUS ON BUSINESS

So, what are the traps for a man in this market? Keeping your libido in check is critical to your success. It can be difficult to focus while shooting a beautiful woman. You need to learn to think of it as an artistic business. I concern myself with the comfort of the client, the variety of images, the quality of the lighting, perfect poses and the model of Rolex I will buy if she purchases all of these fantastic shots. Keep your mind focused on the business and creation of the art. You'll tend to forget about the sensuality of the scene.

LESS IS MORE

Ladies prefer shots that leave a lot to the imagination. This is why sexy lingerie is so titillating, even though men just want to remove it. The images clients will most likely purchase are those that flatter and tease, not those that show the world all there is to see. Cast those shadows, use solid poses, block lines of sight and use props to keep things implied and in the realm of the imagination.

Learn the difference between sexual and sensual. A sexual pose is made specifically for sexual gratification, and often shows way more than most women care to show. Sensual images portray the romance of the moment. You are selling the lingerie, pose, softness and romance. I don't accept clients who want images that could be used in the pages of a men's magazine. I don't want the reputation that comes with that type of imagery, and higher-end clientele don't want it anyway.



KEEP IT CLINICAL AND KNOW WHAT NOT TO SAY

It's critical that you know what not to say. A female boudoir photographer can get away with tossing around terms like *hot ass* during a shoot. Men who use these terms come off as creeps. Choose your vocabulary with care, or you risk making your client uncomfortable.

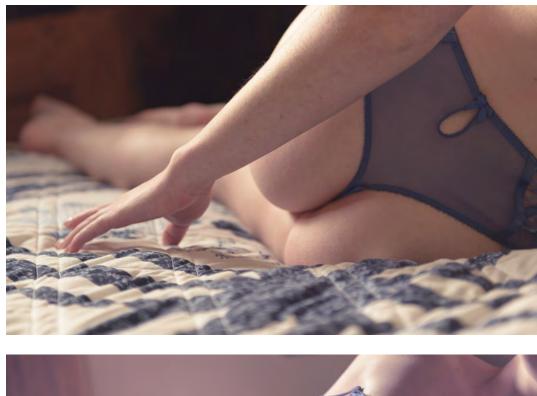
Show her the best images you capture during the session. These sneak peeks give her confidence and make the shoot roll that much smoother. I have often been described as "clinical" because I tell the client to push her bottom up, move her chest toward the window and use simple terms like that. I tell them when the images are looking great, that they are beautiful, but I do it in a way that doesn't sound creepy.





DON'T WORK ALONE

Working with anyone alone is always risky, especially given the current stories in the news. You might not have done anything wrong, but someone can fabricate a story that destroys your business and reputation. I often have hair and makeup professionals hanging around who are covertly acting as chaperones. It's an added bonus to have female assistants who can reinforce the positives and say things that a male photographer shouldn't say.









SHOOT FOR VARIETY

Take a look at your last session and choose a random sequence of 10 photos. How many of those 10 images could be sold because of their uniqueness?

Amateurs are comfortable shooting from a single position while making slight changes to the pose. Staying in one place results in a large number of similar images and works against the maximum sales we want to achieve. If I move around, from full body to quarter body, to headshot, to close up, and then do the same sequence using different poses or parts, I end up with a ton of unique shots. I work from the broad side of the light to the short side and back again, headboard to foot-board.

Don't forget those macro shots of the eyelashes, lace, ribbons, anklets and other accoutrements. Many of these images might be weird choices for wall art, but they are ideal for background or filler shots in a book.



FUJ!FILM

So Timely

DON'T RETOUCH MUCH

I have a rule when retouching boudoir: I do not Liquify the body unless it's for something I could have avoided with a better pose, like a pinch in the side because I didn't ask her to stretch out.

I also don't remove that often-requested stubborn 20 pounds because everyone involved knows it is there, and removal of weight can cause psychological issues. Say you decide to knock some pounds off of the client. When viewing those images, she might acknowledge she looks great, but she knows how much she weighs, and this might turn into the nightmare of, "He removed some of my fat so he must think I'm fat!" Avoid this with proper posing, props such as sheets, men's dress shirts and long mirrors. And never light a lady like the broad side of a barn.

The type of work you shoot determines your reputation, so choose carefully. It is quite difficult to undo many of these decisions. Be sure your client's goals are in line with yours, and everything will work out. Work that diva angle, keep your mind busy and make sure they leave the studio with their head in the clouds.

Pull this off, and chances are good that you will get calls from your client's friends before you even deliver the first image.



Shutter Magazine

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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. sedetweiler.com

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product review





Why Fujifilm GFX?

Medium format produces better images, detail, tonal range and color. It's that simple.

But the extremely high price point of medium-format systems has kept it out of the hands of the everyday photographer. Fuji's goal is to bridge the gap and make medium-format quality attainable by everyone. The GFX has a sensor that is 1.7 times that of a 35mm. Trust me when I tell you that the color and detail you get from the GFX will blow you away.

While the camera supports full HD video, that's not why you are buying this camera. You want resolution. You want images to pop. The 51.4mp high-dynamic-range sensor delivers.

One of the first things that jumped out at me was the number of focus points. A disappointing feature in the very expensive world of medium format is the single focus point. The GFX made my jaw drop with the number of focus points and the ability to use the touch screen on the back to grab focus. I know this might not seem like a big thing, but as a wedding and portrait photographer, nailing focus is kind of important. Being able to lock focus on your subject without recomposing every shot is a huge win for this camera.

Watch the video to see how the camera performed on a shoot.



GFX details

· New 51.4MP Fujifilm G Format 43.8 x 32.9mm sensor with approximately 1.7x the area of a 35mm sensor

· Lighter in weight and far more compact form factor compared to medium-format digital SLR cameras

· Detachable electronic viewfinder that users can remove when using an external monitor or to make the system even lighter

· Ergonomic grip

 \cdot For flash photography in the studio or outdoors during the day, the GFX 50S sensor has a native ISO of 100; sensor can also be adapted to various aspect ratios, including 4:3 (default), 3:2, 16:9, 1:1, 65:24, 5:4 and 7:6, all of which are available in large- and medium-format film cameras

 \cdot Camera supports full HD recording at 29.97p/25p/24p/23.98p

 \cdot Newly designed Fujinon lenses with new lens mount for highest performance and image quality

 \cdot 3.69M-dot organic EL electronic viewfinder and 2.36M-dot touchscreen LCD back panel for easy viewing; EVF is detachable for flexible operation

 \cdot 1.28-inch LCD submonitor on top of the body

 \cdot 117-point (9x13/maximum of 425 points when miniaturized) contrast AF system on the GFX 50S; highprecision AF on the imaging sensor dramatically improves focusing accuracy with the shallow depth of field produced by medium-format lenses



GF Lens details

- \cdot GF lenses are Fujifilm's finest class of lenses
- · GF lenses, designed specifically for the GFX, support the new G Mount
- · Popular X Series aperture ring has a new C (Command) Position enabling aperture adjustments with the Command Dial on the camera body
- \cdot Lenses are dust- and weather-resistant
- \cdot Built to withstand operation at temperatures as low as 14 degrees Fahrenheit





BOUDOIR & BEAUTY

NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL?

with Amber Jones

When I found my new studio, I fell in love. It has huge factory windows on the second floor that give me privacy. I have north-, south- and west-facing windows. As we all know, being a professional means delivering a consistent product. When I moved into my studio, I found myself using only natural light because it is so beautiful. I know what time of day and quality of light I need for any photo my clients might pick out as a favorite. But what happens when you have a dark, dreary day, and your client wants that hardlight look? Have no fear...the strobe is here!

You have a few options.

1. Speedlights

I rarely ever use speedlights in my studio for a few reasons. They're usually packed away for my wedding reception lighting, and I don't have many large modifiers for them. But I did use them once for a shoot with MagMods.

2. Constant lights

I love my Ice Light 2 by Westcott. I can just screw it onto a light stand and add a little fill or backlight if I need to.

3. Studio strobes

This is my go-to. I started in photography right out of college and saved up for two Elinchrom lights. I used them all the time when I didn't have a studio with natural light. Then they stayed in a box for a couple of years, coming out only for business headshots. Then I heard about Profoto lights, and I had to have them. I do a lot of on-location shoots and didn't want to rely on electricity, so the versatility and the high-speed sync of the B1's won me over.

When I first got them, I didn't use them for studio work, just my weddings and location shoots. Then I found myself busier and needing to book shoots into the evening and on days that didn't have the type of lighting my client wanted.

I fell in love again with studio lighting because of the consistent look it allows me to create. I love that I can keep it simple.

Here is my go-to lighting:

Two Profoto B1's
Profoto 5-foot octa—I love the soft quality of light

- 110100 3-1001 0cta-110ve the soft quality of h
- \cdot Mola beauty dish with grid and sock
- \cdot Two PhotoFlex 2x4 softboxes—I use these for body shapes and rim lighting
- \cdot One 2x3 PhotoFlex softbox—I use it for fill (think clamshell lighting)
- \cdot Impact parabolic umbrella with diffusion panel
- \cdot V-flats
- · Insulation board
- · White seamless paper

I shot almost every image you see here with a 85mm 1.2 lens, and two images with a 50mm 1.2.

MY SETUPS FOR BOUDOIR LIGHTING

My brides now want to do a boudoir shoot as a gift for their soon-to-be husband, and many of them want silhouette shots in front of a window. I have a veil in my studio because I don't want to have to deal with the wrinkled veil clients shoved into a bag. If your client brings her own veil, beware of the wrinkles and warn her to steam or hang it up. The wrinkles will show up in photos, and it doesn't look good.

As you can see in the examples, the behind-the-scenes shots show the veil with the parabolic umbrella silhouetting the subject along with the final image with the parabolic umbrella and a final image in front of a 6-foot window.

This is a fast and simple image you can create for your clients that will most certainly make it into an album.



Behind the scenes

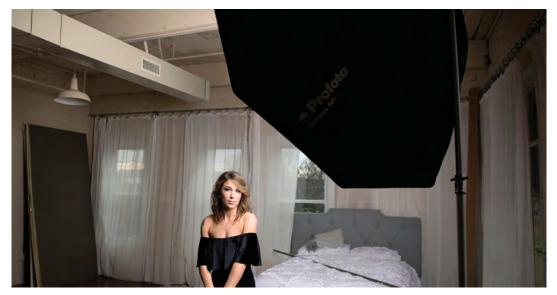
Parabolic umbrella

Window light

2018

2 Beauty headshots are something I always want to shoot while my boudoir clients are in the studio. They are classic and beautiful but not revealing. They make for great social media posts and add-ons that your clients can give as desktop prints.

The two examples are of my model with the window behind me and the 5-foot octa replicating soft window light in the same spot as the window. I am using high-speed sync so I can use a low aperture.



Behind the scenes

5-foot octa softbox



3 People love big, soft, flattering window light. If you don't have big windows or the light that is coming through your windows isn't pretty, bring out your strobes and create it. I aim my light into a 9-foot white seamless roll. I used one with high-speed sync for this example. If you need extra light, bring in another one.

The first example uses available light in my studio. The second uses available light and a reflector, which you can see camera right. I use insulation boards from Home Depot for large reflectors and prop them against a ladder or light stand.

The third example is a behind-the-scenes photo using white seamless paper. The fourth is the finished image.





Natural light + reflector

Natural light



Behind the scenes - white seamless paper



Final image - white seamless paper

dtheshutter.com

4 The full-body shot is very important in boudoir. Whether you are using window light or strobe, choose your lighting modifiers to enhance what you want the eye to be drawn to.

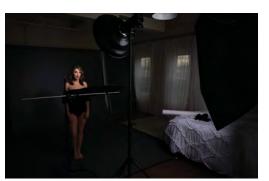
In the first example, I used window light to illuminate her whole body against the gray background. That made her legs too bright. I had two options: Use a flag on the bottom half of the window to cut down the light or burn down the bottom half of the photo. In the second example, I used a beauty dish as the keylight and the octa for fill to keep the viewer's eye focused on her face.



Window light

Beauty dish + octa softbox fill

5 When you are done doing full-body shots, go in for a tighter shot. I guarantee that you will not be disappointed. It's clean and crisp—and who doesn't love a good catchlight?



Behind the scenes



Final image - Beauty Dish + Octa Softbox fill



Behind the scenes

6 Here is another example of a beauty dish as the keylight and the octa as a fill. I placed the octa farther away and slightly behind her to eliminate the shadows that the beauty dish created on the wall. This same image can be created with brighter window light, but you may not always have it.



7 This shoot took place on a mostly dreary New England day, but the sun came out for a short while. When you see the light, take advantage of it. Windows are behind the camera and slightly to the right.



Behind the scenes





Final image - window light

Final image - window light

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Final image - window light

Experiment with your lights. Whether you want to use strobes to replicate window light or produce an original look, be creative. Test shoots are the best way to try out your new camera gear, new lighting or a new idea. Testing on a paying client can be disastrous. Find your muse and ask her back for a new-gear test.

I can't wait to see you and your experiments at ShutterFest 2018!



Amber Jones is a wedding and boudoir photographer based in West Hartford, Connecticut. She has worked professionally since getting her photography degree from San Jose State University in California, and built her business from scratch after moving to the East Coast in 2010. www.amberjones.com

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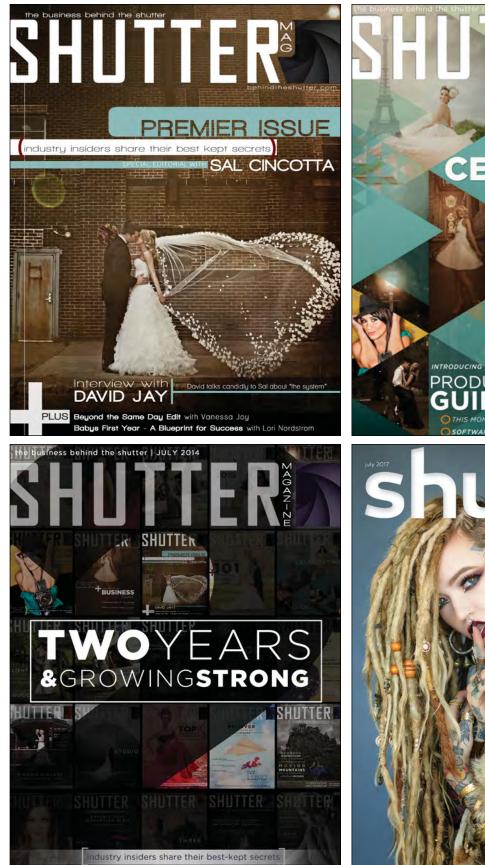


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INSPIRATIONS

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.

BEST GLAMOUR IMAGE

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

Sal Cincotta, Editor-in-chief

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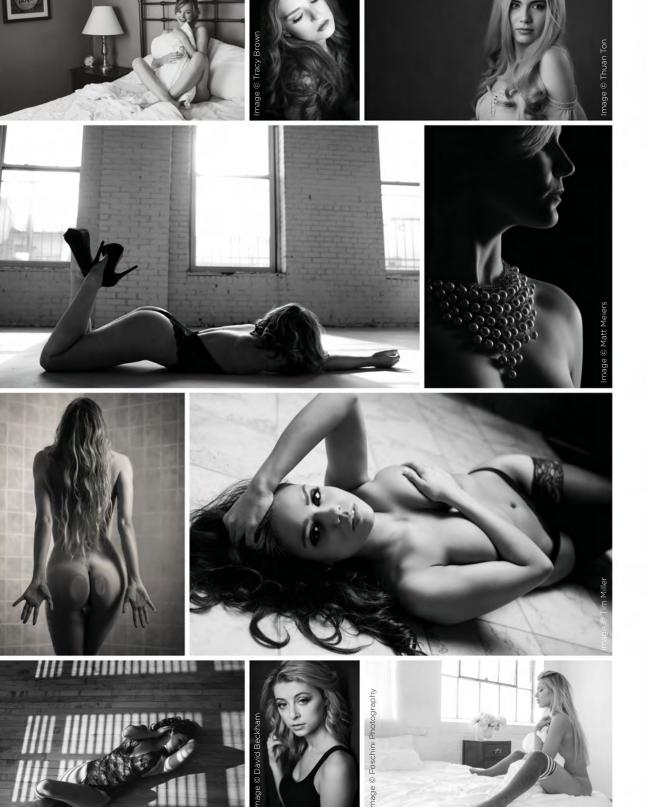






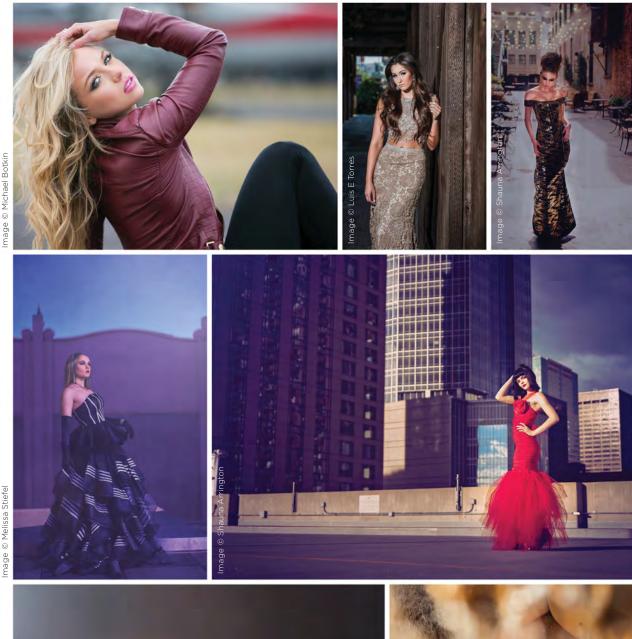
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Inspirations | Our Readers



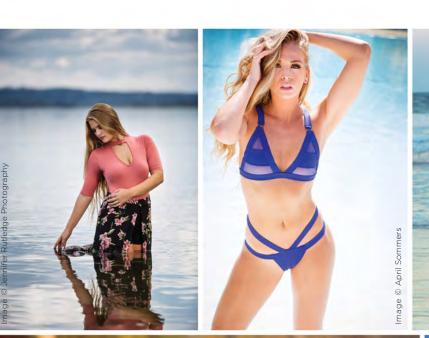


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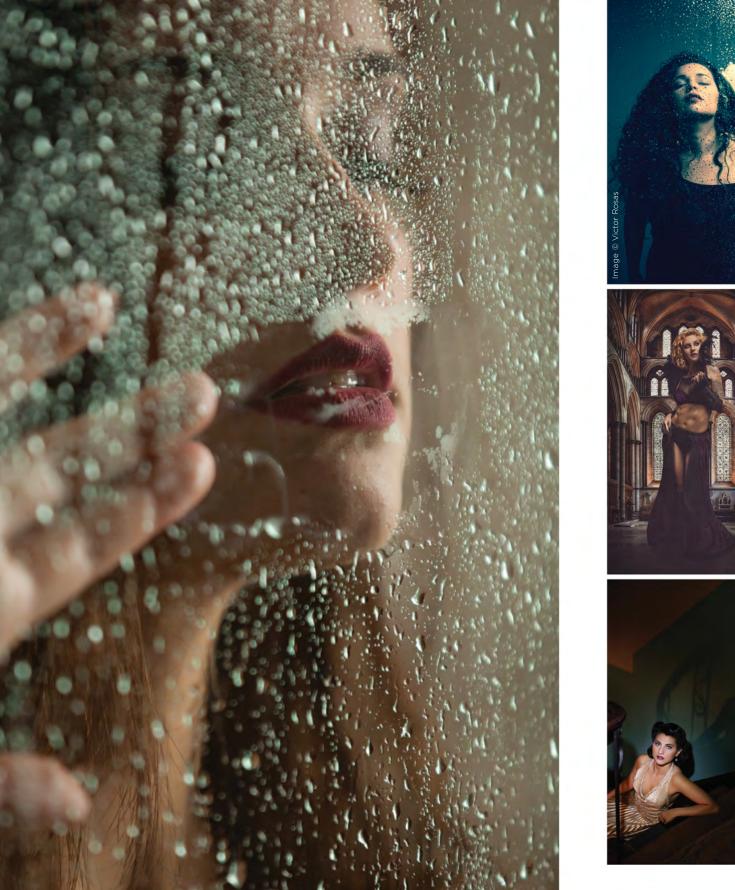


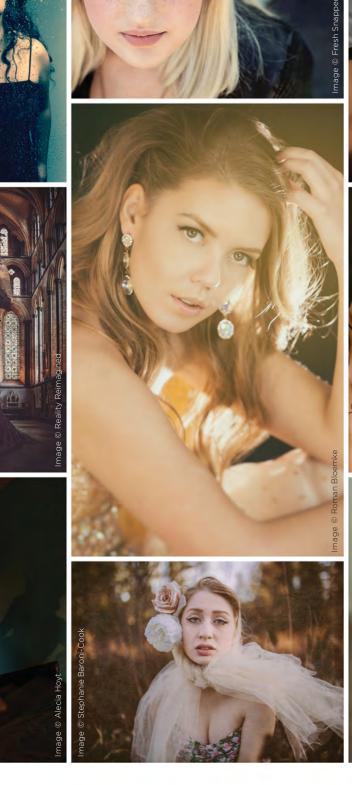




Inspirations | Our Readers

















transitioning *Jacobian* natural light *ta* studio light

with Vanessa Joy

Seven years ago, I looked at studio photography as a completely foreign concept. I was a natural-light wedding photographer and didn't do much else other than the occasional family portrait. Lighting that came from lights, instead of the sun, was totally bizarre to me. I had no idea how to begin to control it, especially when I wasn't outside.

If you're new to controlled lighting, you're in luck, because I remember being in your shoes. While I've done a good job over the past couple of years learning the headshot business, photography and lighting, the images of the model in this article are all from the very first time I ever worked with a model in my studio. I had a great team on my first run. Jade Bambi was a great model, and HMUA MakeMeUpEva.com helped bring my vision to life.

There are many parallels between natural and studio lighting and photography. Most people who teach studio photography and lighting don't teach it from a natural-light perspective. When I tried to learn it all those years ago, it became even more confusing than when I started. The old saying "Light is light" applies here. In this article, I break down studio lighting in a way that's easy to understand, from the perspective of a natural-light shooter who painstakingly learned how to light in a studio.





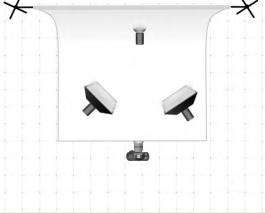
THE SAME THINGS

First, understand that studio lights are literally meant to mimic the sun. My Profoto D1's are round in shape and set to a light temperature of 5600K (same as the sun). The light that's coming out of a studio strobe is subject to all of the same laws of physics that sunlight is: Light travels in straight lines, bounces off surfaces at an equal angle to which it hit the surface, etc.





There are even similarities in the light shapers that are used on strobes, to the typical environmental elements that we see altering the sun. Softboxes are squares, like windows, and even have diffusers on them that soften the light much like a sheer curtain on a window. I wanted the images of my daughter in this article to be bright and natural, so I used two 3x4-foot Profoto softboxes toward the front of her, and one lighting up the backdrop (see lighting diagram). Anytime you see a light shaper, just think of a window and what would happen to sunlight coming through a window of that shape and size.





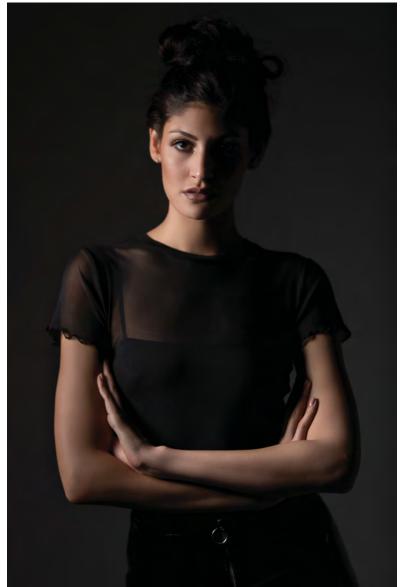
THE VOCABULARY THINGS

One of the most irritating parts of learning studio lighting was the vocabulary. Everyone I tried to learn lighting from would say things like "feathering the light" and "inverse square law" and expect me to know what they meant. Why would I be sitting in a lighting class if I knew what they meant?

Feathering the light is the easiest of the two. It just means that instead of pointing the light directly at your subject, creating a harsh light, you turn it so it's pointing just in front or behind them, letting only the edges of the light touch your subject. This reduces the power of the light on the subject and produces a softer-looking light.

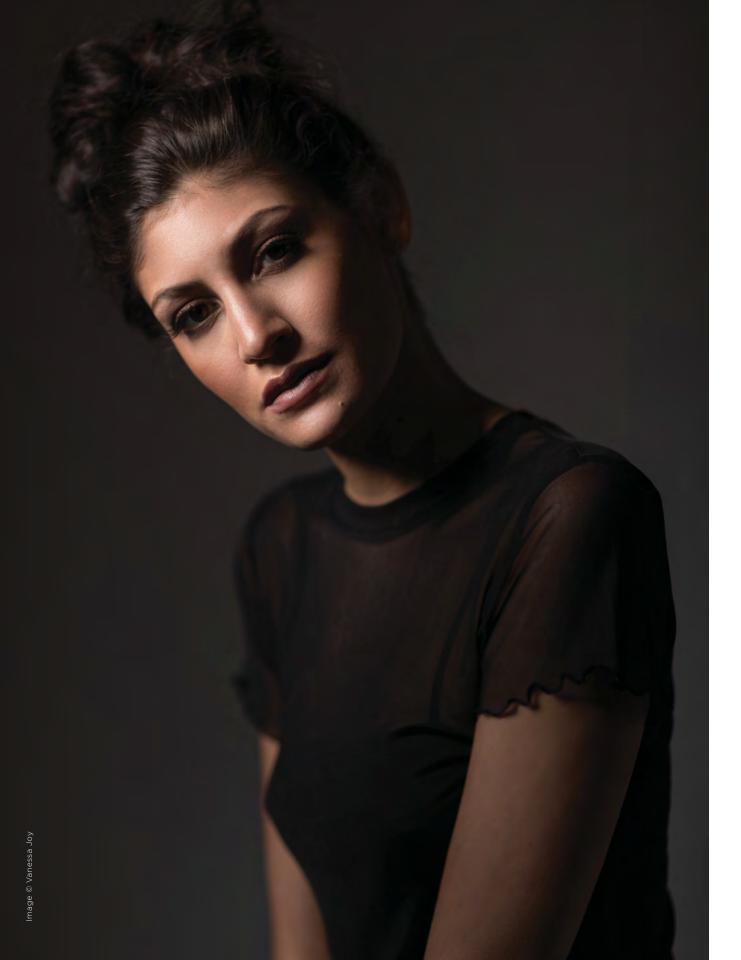
Inverse square law is a bit more complicated, but if you're just beginning to grasp the concept, you don't need to know all the mathematical details yet. The basic idea is that the farther away your subject is from the light (window or studio), the less intense the light is on the subject. You know this because you know that if you pose a subject close to a window, it lights them more brightly, and if you move them away from it, you have to adjust your exposure because it won't be hitting them as strongly.

There is a measurable rate at which the light fades away as you move away from the light. This means you can mathematically determine the amount of light that is falling off of your subject based on the distance. But what matters most is that the light falls off more quickly the closer you are to the light.



Before I lose you, let me remind you that you already know this. Here's an example.

When you put a subject close to a window, the bright side of the face is way brighter than the dark side of the face. It becomes a fairly contrasty image. However, if you move that same subject 5 feet away from that window, the bright side of her face isn't that much brighter than the dark side. It becomes a much less contrasty image. That is inverse square law happening in front of you.



THE EASIER THINGS

One of the great things about working in a studio is the ability to tether your camera to your computer. Being able to see your image on a bigger screen than the back of your camera helps you take better pictures and identify mistakes that you're making in time to correct them.

I use Tether Tools gear in my studio, and I love it. It's not as complicated as you might think. All you're doing is plugging in a long USB cable from your camera to your computer. Then, using software like Capture One or Lightroom, you initiate tethering and load the pictures directly into the software to look at and edit. Eventually you'll realize that shooting tethered is better because you have so much more control over your image.

Another huge time saver is post-production and editing—not only because your images are now better incamera because of tethering, but also because you can proof the images with your clients on the spot. This saves you a ton of time as opposed to the regular proofing and ordering process. My www.nj-headshots.com clients are done proofing and ordering their pictures before they leave the studio from the shoot that day. I love how fast and effective the process is.

After image selection, I send the images to my retoucher for the typical skin smoothening and hair fixing. Delivery for these images is as easy as you'd like it to be. I just throw them in a SmugMug gallery, where they can be easily downloaded. Done and done.

If you haven't given studio photography a try, before jumping in head-first, shadow another photographer. Watching a few of my fellow photographers work in their studios, like Moshe Zusman and Miguel Quiles, was one of the best things I did. Only so much can be learned from articles and online education. Take the time to step into a real studio with true client interaction and hands-on experience.





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 her informative, open-book style of teaching.

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ESSET TEST



To make a beautiful composition in Photoshop, a photographer needs time and the necessary skills, to be sure. But perhaps the most important piece of the puzzle is to have vision for the image. What's the story you want to bring to life? Who are your characters? Where do they come from?

Here are five steps to creating alternate realities in Photoshop. By following these suggestions, you can bring other worlds and characters into focus (and possibly inspire other up-and-coming composite artists).

1. STUDIO LIGHTING AND EMOTION

The world is defined by light and by the consequence of light: shadows. Our lives are dictated by these two things—when to rise, when to sleep, how long we engage in certain activities. The most powerful aspects of life that are affected by light and shadow are our emotions and mood.

Tell a ghost story without holding a flashlight below your chin—does it have the same impact? Look longingly into your lover's eyes and then turn on all the lights in the house before you kiss—is it as intimate? The first step in creating an amazing piece of composite art is to set the mood of the final piece with the right lighting. Use highlights and shadows to tell the story.

I've asked my model, Lauren, to show me a neutral expression.



Now that we have a base, let's see how the story changes when the light is moved around her.



Look into her eyes. Do you see neutrality? Perhaps emotions like defiance, vindication or even amusement break through. Lighting augments the story and in some cases changes it. It is a character just as much as the person in your images.

When you begin shooting for a composite, light the subject in a way that tells the story you wish to see in the final piece. A common misconception is that there are specific ways to light a subject for a composite. You can have the dimmest and darkest images, and still extract and create a world around them—what you need is a story and the lighting to support it. Be cognizant of your vision for the final piece. If your design has a strong light source behind the subject (like fire or the sun), add the lights to your setup that add to the realism of the final piece.

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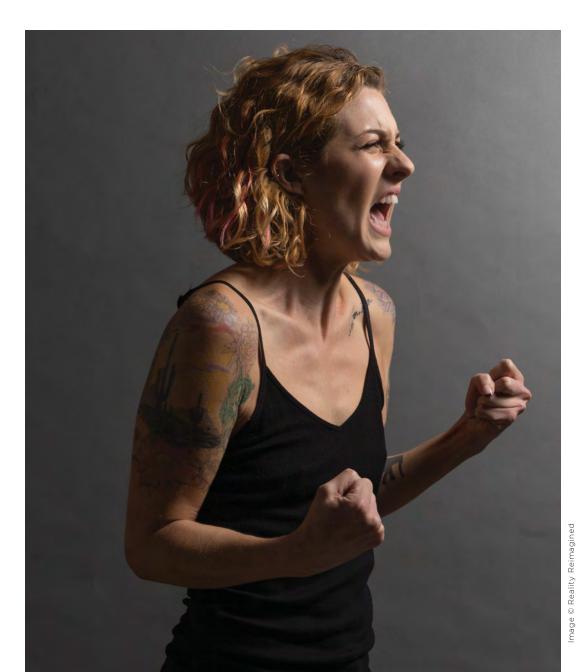
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2. PURE EMOTION IS BETTER THAN A POSE

I have a theater background. Guidance is always key when you need to portray an emotion. When you stand in front of hundreds of people and you don't commit the necessary power to your words and expressions, the audience checks out and you'll read about it the next day in the reviews. Your success as a performer depends on your realistic portrayal of emotion. I've learned to utilize storytelling to guide my subjects into showing me their real expressions and emotions. Showing our true emotions makes us vulnerable, and when we find the courage to commit to it on camera, we will believe it (and so will the audience).

Lauren, let's show everyone what I'm talking about. I want you to yell for me, like a battle roar. Aaaaand... action!



Lauren, that's not a roar, that's more a mild yawn. Your home is being invaded, your family has tried to run but has been cornered on all sides with no hope of escape, and the only thing standing between them and the baddies is you! You're not someone who crumbles in fear—you are a warrior who doesn't need a weapon because you *are* the weapon! Save your family, save the day—*roar*!



Well done, Lauren. Calm down. Go take five.

When preparing the concept for your next composite, write down at least five emotions that you want to see in your final piece. This is a technique used by actors when they work with a script: They connect with the key emotions hidden within the story. As a photographer, this key will help guide your direction to the subjects you photograph and the design choices of your final piece.





3. A NEW DIMENSION BEYOND JUST TWO

We live in a three-dimensional world, but we compress it into two dimensions for a photograph. There are so many techniques to augment an image to make its three-dimensional nature come alive. One of the best ways is to use highlight and shadow to your advantage through the technique of dodging and burning. You can augment the natural highlights and shadows that appear in the image to give the subject definition and three dimensions.

Let's bring Lauren back in, transformed into the character of the Consort of Darkness.



After

As you can see in the "After" image, I've enhanced the shadows around each side of her head, which accentuates the highlights on her face. Deepening the shadows under her chin and along her neck and collarbones gives more definition to her body. You can also play with the highlights and shadows of her hair to further accentuate the shape. As with all things in Photoshop, subtle changes can make quite an impact; start light and build upon the look.

4. BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

A composite consists of multiple elements; inevitably, those layers and pieces have different tones of color and luminosity, which breaks the realism of your piece. If you unify them with one or two colors, the elements appear as if they belonged together from the beginning. Add a solid color adjustment layer to the entire piece that is in the same color group as the dominant colors of your character. For Lauren's character, I have sampled the color from her lips to serve as my unifying color.

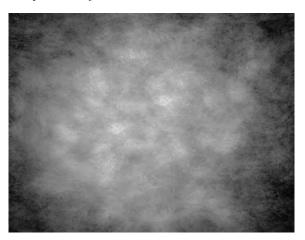
You can leave the adjustment layer's blending mode at Normal or experiment with modes like Screen, Lighten, Color or even Hue.

Lower the opacity and the fill of this layer to 50% and then slowly bring it up or further down in percentage until it feels right. Add a texture to again unify all the elements. I use my own stock images for texture, whether that is a brick wall, scratches on an old piece of glass or a close-up shot of a rock face. Search a stock site like Adobe Stock for linen, paper or grunge texture.



Composite - Before







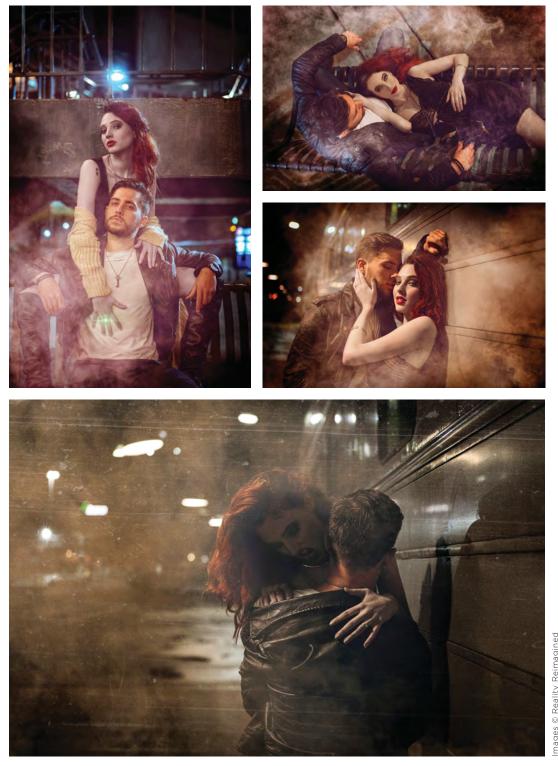
Composite - After

WHERE DOES YOUR STORY BEGIN?

I attended my first ShutterFest in 2015, the second year of the conference. During the second evening, I answered a call from two models who were looking for a shoot. Soon we were by the pond near the Hard Rock Café getting ready to take some images. I quickly cast a set of characters for them, a period of time and their stories.

I asked the models to invest in their emotions and expressions, and didn't let up until I got the right shot each time. I walked the set of each scene and looked at the available light and let the highlights and shadows dictate the story.





indtheshutter.com



ge © Reality Reim

Compositing is about the art of storytelling. It enables artists to visit any reality they can imagine. Turn on some of your favorite music and write down 10 emotions you've felt today—who was with you, what was the weather like, were there other people around and how did they respond? Is there a story there? Can you cast someone in the role who represents what you have in mind?

I look forward to seeing your stories come to life.



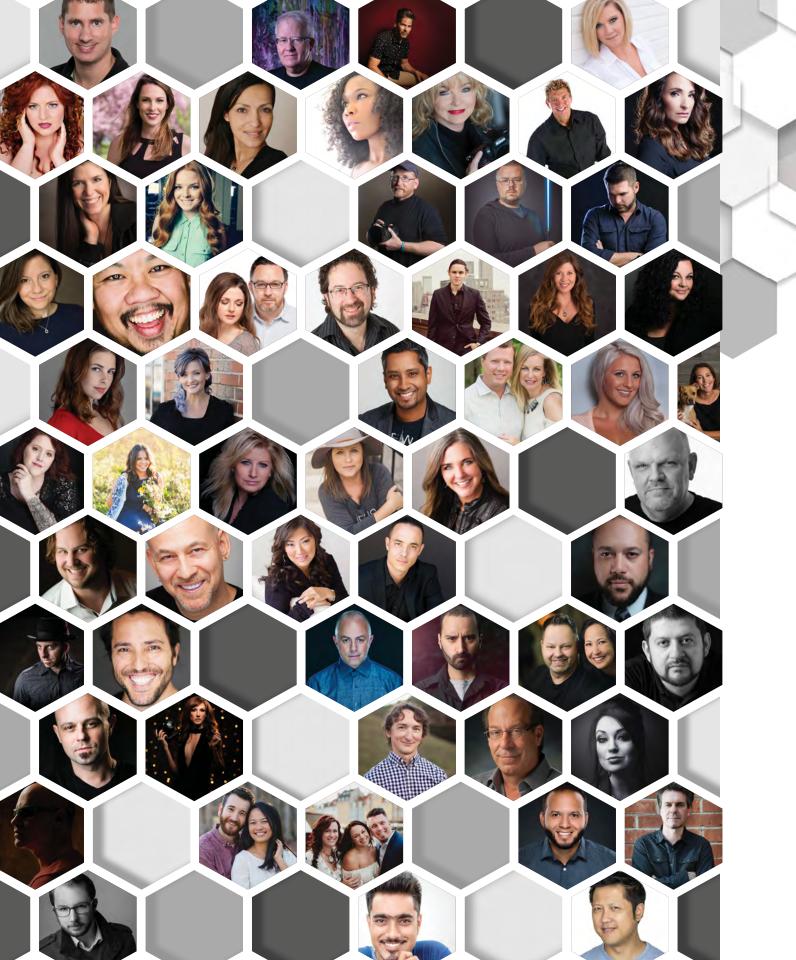
David Byrd has an overactive imagination and has used that gift in his art. He has a degree in theater, and worked as an actor and director before turning his attention to photography and Photoshop. It was through those collective disciplines that he realized he could tell stories from his imagination through photography, similarly to how he once did it in the theater. **realityreimagined.com**

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OF A **DESCRIPTION DESCRIPTION DESCRIPTION**

Deciding which lighting equipment to bring on location is all about striking a balance. The sweet spot is having enough tools to get the job done right and handle any curveballs that come your way. What you want to avoid is bringing so much gear that it becomes burdensome. I've done it more times than I care to admit. What you need from one situation to the next differs depending on a variety of factors.

Tool choice depends on the quality of light you want to create. You need to plan. You have to consider location, distance between your vehicles and the shooting location, number of assistants, the weather forecast and, finally, a backup plan for when everything goes south.

This article is a case study about choosing the tools for a location shoot.



MAKE A LIST

I start by making a packing list of all the equipment I'll need based on my lighting plan, number of assistants, number of locations and the difficulty of getting the gear from the car to the locations. I pack plenty of options and backups in case Mother Nature decides not to cooperate, gear fails or ambient lighting conditions change. I carefully monitor the weather forecast so I have a good idea of what to expect on the day of the shoot.

Below you'll see the equipment lists I created for the shoot, broken into categories.



GRIP:

· Shur-Line locking extension paint pole with a Kacey Enterprises 5/8 pole adapter

· Avenger light stand (black, 10.8') MFR # A630B

· Gitzo Series 5 Systematic 6X carbon fiber tripod (giant)

· Really Right Stuff ground-level tripod

· Manfrotto MHXPRO-3W three-way pan/tilt head

This shoot was a high school senior session with multiple locations within a three-hour window. Parking was a bit of a hike from each location. I had to transport my own gear because I had no assistants. Family members would be assisting during the shoot, and the weather forecast was calling for overcast to scattered showers. My lighting plan was for two looks, one soft and open, the other edgy and cool.

When shooting on location, determine how you're going to support your lights. Do you have the permits you need to use light stands? Will you have assistants to hold lights? Because I knew using light stands at the planned locations was a question mark, I chose a Shur-Line locking extension paint pole with a Kacey Enterprises 5/8 pole adapter as the support for my keylight. As long as the strobes and modifiers are light, paint poles make great supports when you have assistants to hold them (in this case, a family member).

I packed one Avenger medium-duty light stand in case the assistance I'd been promised from family members didn't materialize. You have to plan for all contingencies. The light stand could also be used to support a second CTO gelled strobe behind the subject to replicate the warmth of the sun if necessary. I packed two tripods and one Manfrotto three-way pan-tilt tripod head to use on each. The Gitzo is a full-size tripod that provides maximum stability for my honking mediumformat camera, while the Really Right Stuff groundlevel tripod is rock solid. I don't use a tripod often in the field, but they're indispensable for certain techniques, such as motion blur and producing duplicate exposures in perfect registration to hide strobes.

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STROBES/TRIGGERS:

· 2 Elinchrom Quadra pack and head strobe systems

·1 Elinchrom EL-Skyport **Transmitter Plus HS**

· 4 PocketWizard Plus III transceivers, 3 mini jack cords

When I know someone will be supporting my keylight using a paint pole, I always go for the lightest strobe system I own, and that would be my two Elinchrom Quadra pack and head systems. Holding up a strobe for hours is hard work, especially for the uninitiated, so I want to make it as painless possible. The Quadra's 400 watt-seconds of power, hundreds of pops on a single battery and super-lightweight head make it ideal for fast-moving location work. Its companion Elinchrom Skyport HS radio trigger allowed me to control the strobes' power.

I brought two packs and two heads not only for additional light options but also to serve as backup in case any one piece in the chain failed. I also brought four PocketWizards to wirelessly trigger using my flash meter or trigger the strobes manually if necessary. I needed only three, but I packed an extra transceiver in case one failed, along with extra mini jack cords.

STROBE LIGHT MODIFIERS:

·1 Elinchrom Rotalux Deep Octabox (27.5")

· 1 Lastolite 8-in-1 umbrella (41")

·1 Elinchrom Rotalux softbox for flash ($14 \times 35''$)

· 2 Elinchrom Quadra Reflector Adapter MK-II

Elinchrom's 27.5" Rotalux Deep Octabox is my de facto modifier for on-the-go location work. It's traveled far and wide with me because it's extremely compact, lightweight and versatile, and it creates light from soft to edgy with enough coverage for full-figure work and everything in between. I chose the Lastolite 8-in-1 umbrella and 14x35 strip box to serve as accent/rim lights if necessary. Because of its shape and the broad quality of light it throws, the Lastolite 8-in-1 umbrella, GTO-gelled and used to shoot through, is a great substitute for the sun as a backlight on overcast days. The two Elinchrom Quadra Reflector Adapters are used to attach light modifiers to the Quadra strobe heads I would be using.

EXPENDABLES:

·1 roll of CTO gel

· 1 scissors

· 1 roll gaff tape

Expendables are a category that refers to consumables and miscellaneous gear. I always bring a roll of color temperature orange (CTO) gel, scissors and gaff tape (good for a multitude of tasks) in case I need to gel my lights on overcast days to replicate the warmth of afternoon sun. As it turned out, I had plenty of warm-toned sunlight to serve as a rim/accent light behind the subject.

REFLECTORS/DIFFUSORS/MISC.:

·1 Lastolite TriFlip 8-in-1 Grip Reflector Kit (30")

- ·1 Lastolite TriGrip Diffuser, one stop (30")
- ·1 Sunbounce Dress Tube

I always take reflectors and diffusors of various shapes and sizes on location. My strobes never even leave my bag when reflectors and diffusors are all I need to get the job done. In this case, I needed compact, easy-to-packand-operate reflectors and diffusors that would easily fit into one roller bag. My go-to tools for this were the Lastolite Joe McNally 8-in-1 Tri-Grip Reflector and a Lastolite Tri-Grip Diffusion Panel. Both are collapsible, pack down to about a third of their expanded size and easily fit into a roller bag. They're also easy to open, close and operate due to their built-in handles.

There are so many uses for each of these tools that it could easily fill an entire article. Suffice it to say that with a reflector, I can fill in shadows and bounce light from the sun, a strobe or an ambient light source. A diffusion panel used alone or in combination with a strobe can be used to soften harsh overhead sunlight; with a strobe fired through it, it's essentially a makeshift collapsible softbox.

One other item I always bring on location is the Sunbounce Dress Tube, a handy collapsible dressing tube that provides privacy on location for quick wardrobe changes.

dth

BATTERIES:

 \cdot AA, AAA batteries

· Phase One camera batteries

· Spare meter battery

· 2 spare Elinchrom Quadra batteries

CAMERA/LENSES/ETC.:

· Phase One camera and lenses

· Sekonic L-758 DR flash meter

· Compact flash cards

This category is pretty self-explanatory. I bring a range of lenses, typically three focal lengths from wide to telephoto. I also bring plenty of memory cards. Like power, the last thing you want to run out of on location is storage space. On some location jobs, I also bring a laptop, a card reader and an external solid-state hard drive to back up images throughout the shoot.



BAGS

To transport everything, you'll need bags that are up to the task. I was essentially working alone on this shoot, so I needed all my lighting equipment to fit into one bag. I used a large Kata rolling bag (no longer produced) that held everything except my camera, which was in a medium-size rolling Pelican case. Two hands, two bags-that's it!





ige © Michael C

THE SHOOT

The weather cooperated and I had plenty of afternoon sun to use as backlight. I needed only one strobe and the Elinchrom Rotalux Deep Octabox (my keylight) for the entire shoot. Even though I didn't use everything I'd brought, I had what I needed to get the job done and handle any curveballs that came my way.

Having a solid plan and being prepared for any eventuality is your best defense. It allows you to relax, work confidently and produce the winning images your clients are counting on.





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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We've changed photography. Now it's your turn.

Photo Credit: Ben Grunow | DC-GH5 with Leica DG Vario Elmarit 8-18mm Lens 1/400 sec, F/5.6, ISO 100, Focal Length 12mm (24mm, 35mm camera equivalent)











005 / 8.2:1 TIRAN13

LUMIX

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(at actual size)

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Photo Credit | Bence Mate Lumix G9, LEICA DG VARIO-ELMAR 100-400mm, F4.0-6.3 ASPH. , POWER 0.I.S. (H-RS100400) A massive, super high-resolution 3,680k-dot OLED Live View Finder improves visibility for perfect framing even in direct sunlight.

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5-Axis Dual I.S2 body stabilization combines with LUMIX 0.I.S. lenses for incredible long zoom stability, working for both photo and video recording.

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Enjoy massive 80mp RAW capture utilizing the 20.3 megapixel high resolution sensor, plus dual UHS-II SD card slots that allow for continuous recording and critical image backup. 4

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A Joystick Controller on the back can be used to smoothly and intuitively select focus blocks inside the new 225-Area AF detection grid.



Bence Mate Lumix G9, LEICA DG VARIO-ELMAR 100-400mm, F4.0-6.3 ASPH, POWER 0.1.S. (H-RS1004

Photo Credit | Bence Mate Lumix G9, LEICA DG SUMMILUX 12mm, F1.4 , POWER 0.I.S.(H-X012)

Panasonic



Introducing the newest addition to the LUMIX G LEICA mirrorless micro four thirds lens family. Featuring a Power Optical Image Stabilizer, high-speed autofocusing and a rugged dust, splash and freeze-proof design perfect for wildlife photography.



<image>

Why Settle?

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Photo Credit | Ben Grunow Lumix GH5, LEICA DG VARIO-ELMAR 8-18mm, 1/400 sec, F5.6, ISO 100, Focal Length 12mm (H-E08018)

MAKE YOUR MARK WITH MASKING

 \bigcirc

LIGHTROOM CLASSIC

with **Dustin Lucas**

With the new year approaching, I finally found time to explore more of what Adobe has released in Lightroom Classic. Beyond the long-waited performance upgrades and the faster preview generation, what editing capabilities does it offer? Local adjustments and masking have always been a necessary component of my workflow, but the lack of performance when doing so in Lightroom required me to go into Photoshop. I can quickly edit in any program, and the resulting rasterized edit saves in my catalog. Like most Lightroom users, I want to stay in Lightroom because it is my wheelhouse.

So what's all the hype with the new masking feature? Much like the addition of the Auto-Mask added in the brush panel, there is a new innovative and more accurate method called Range Masks. Instead of your mask's edge being analyzed for hard edges and somewhat similar tones, you have more control in choosing the range of Color and Luminosity. Like many of us, we fear Photoshop because of its complexity and inefficiency with hundreds of images.

In this article, I show you how to keep things simple, how to move fast and, above all, how to create quality edits.

LOCALIZE YOUR ADJUSTMENTS WITH BRUSHES

Using Local Adjustments in Lightroom can be a time-consuming process because you have to meticulously paint masks or drag a gradient and/or radial filters to mask each image. Even dodging and burning an image can be a painful process. There are editing techniques to help with this, like underexposing an image entirely and dodging the main subjects. This is common during a bridal prep when the portraits are window lit and the naturally heavier shadows bring the viewer right to the subjects. I typically lower the exposure a stop or two. (1)



Then, I choose a radial filter, invert the mask, click and drag over the face and add any missed areas with a brush. (2) Match your effect with exposure lifted to the same amount you dropped the entire image to originally. (3)

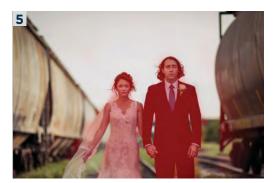


When you do that for 100 images, you'll find yourself spending up to an hour editing before even getting to the first look—and this is for simple compositions. That's not a scalable workflow.

With a more complex image, we don't have the luxury of a quick mask for dodge and burning, but we can be more selective with the brush tool. (4)



After applying a gradient or radial mask, the brush tool can add or remove the mask. With the brush tool, you can adjust within the painted mask, adding and subtracting masked areas of the image. (5) For skies, large foregrounds or half the image needs darkened, so I go to a gradient to apply a nice natural adjustment. Doing this pours the adjustment effect onto areas I do not want to affect. (6)



I use the adjustment brush tool for the majority of masking because it's simple and gets into the tight spots without shifting back and forth between masking tools. The way you get back some of that large area masking efficiency is with the Auto Mask option. (7)







AUTO MASKING WITH EFFECTS

Auto Masking was a huge step in the right direction, allowing users to maintain that speed and accuracy they expect from Lightroom.

This feature is available exclusively with the adjustment brush and can be used as a refining mask tool for the gradient and radial filters. (8)

8 Brush :	A	В	Erase	
Size	-0			16.0
Feather	_		Ò	100
Flow	<u></u>			100
	Auto	Mask	¢	
Density			<u> </u>	100

Let's start by applying a gradient filter to the foreground to remove the blue cast and brighten this area. Strike the "M" key to get us quickly into the gradient filter. Click at the bottom of the frame and drag the cursor upward to paint on our mask. To see where we are masking, strike the "O" key to show the selected mask overlaid on our image. (9) Faded red areas are where our effect will be applied. This is a different approach to masking—we typically see adjustments masked out, like in Photoshop. Just imagine painting white on a layer mask that is painted black, and it's clear as day.



I could achieve the same effect at the cost of efficiency by just striking the "K" key and using the adjustment brush with Auto Mask as well. This does a pretty decent job where there is distinct contrast and hard edges between areas where we want to apply effects. (10) This image is quite simple, with limited busy distractions in the background. Remember that masking already implies more time on a single image; do what you can to reduce time spent. (11)

Auto Mask is a great tool for easier masking, but how do we retain the efficiency of Lightroom? I am talking about the ability to paint a quick mask, adjust sliders and sync this between multiple images. Syncing images from the same sequence does not work with current auto-masking techniques, as you can see here. (12) There is a solution to this workflow crisis in Lightroom Classic called Range Masks.

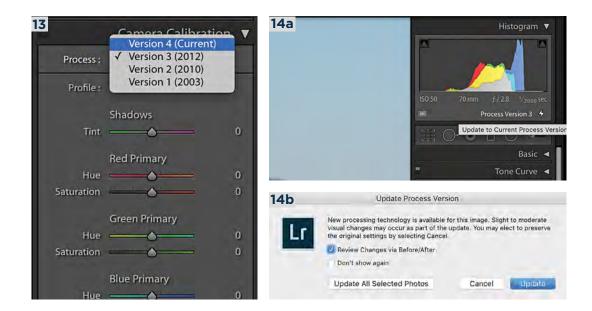






REACH BEYOND AUTO WITH RANGE MASK: COLOR

With the inception of Lightroom Classic, you may have noticed a new addition to Camera Calibration Process versions. There is a Version 4 (current) added to the list of previous versions like 3 (2012), 2 (2010) and 1 (2003). (13) Luckily, Adobe hasn't updated the 2012 Color Process on us just yet, throwing our edits into a tailspin. With change, there is always going to be resistance, but with this upgrade, you get more functionality with the new Range Masking feature. This will not alter the appearance of your images, so take advantage of this upgrade for any images. Go into Develop, select all images in the filmstrip, click on the lightning bolt symbol in the Histogram panel and choose Update All Selected Photos. (14ab)

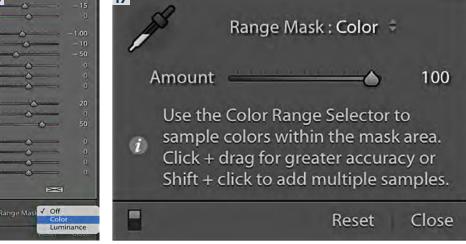


Now we are ready to dive into the Range Masks and see what they can do. There are two options to choose: Color or Luminance. Each option has its advantages, but most of us will need the timesaving tool. Let's start with Range Mask: Color.

First, we need to paint a mask and adjust the sky. Strike the "M" key for the gradient tool. We can drag from the top of the image that is darker to just past the horizon line, or into the mountains, in this case. Turn on our Mask Overlay to see that our mask is spilling onto our subject. (15) Instead of auto-masking her out, we can click on Range Mask: Off and choose Color. (16) Our mask options have changed with a recognizable dropper tool, an Amount slider as well as a few tips below for selecting color ranges in our image. (17)

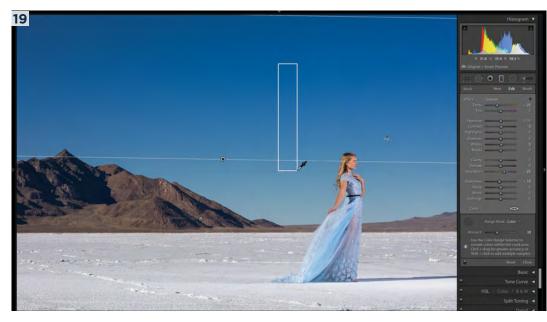
This may become difficult to mask since the dress has blue in it as well. This is why the HSL target adjustment tool would not help us control the sky only, and why we have to mask. (18)







Since the sky has a range of colors, we can click the dropper tool and click and drag the cursor over the areas to which we want to apply an adjustment. (19) To add other colors to our mask's range, hold Shift and continue clicking. With our mask applied, I can see shadow areas of the mountain and dress being affected. (20) This is where the Amount slider allows us to alter this wide range mask to remove the unwanted areas. Drop it to 20 so the mountains retain their original look, and then adjust for the sky. (21) This works really well for cloudy skies, and retains some separation between the blue sky and white clouds.







I especially like to use this tool when removing colorcasts in the groom's suit. Using Auto Mask with the adjustment brush selects his white shirt, tie, skin, hair and jewelry. (22)

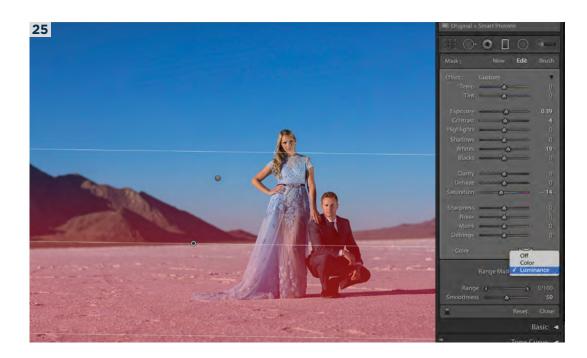


Instead, I can paint a quick mask over him, choose Range Mask: Color, pick the dropper tool, click and drag over gradation in the suit and apply my blue suit effects preset. (23ab) To increase your efficiency here, paint a slightly oversize mask so you can sync this local adjustment to multiple images in the same sequence. If you need to move the pins when you adjust your subject's position in the frame, simply click and drag the pins over the same area. Boom, you are done! (24)



REACH BEYOND AUTO WITH RANGE MASK: LUMINANCE

After we apply a gradient filter and drag upward through the salt flats to the top of the mountain, we can click on the Range Mask options for Luminance. (25) Our slider options are Range and Smoothness, which allow us to fine-tune the mask's selection. The Range sliders might look familiar to Photoshop users with experience adjusting Layer Styles Blend If. Not to worry if you haven't used this before—Lightroom makes everything simple and quick. The left slider drops the range in dark tones by moving it to the right. Vise versa for the bright tones and the right slider.



It's easy to exclude the darker tones in our Luminance Range Mask. Move the slider until the red overlay is removed from the suit. (26)



If you are having trouble seeing this mask, change the color of the overlay by going into the menu bar and clicking Tools < Adjustment Mask Overlay, and choose green, white or black instead. (27)

I recommend moving the slider in 10-point increments so you can remove the suit without losing more of your Luminance Range. After moving the dark value to 50, we finally see the mask overlay disappear. (28) This is where smoothness comes into play so you can refine the mask's edge and overall coverage.

Default settings are at 50. If we drop this to 25, we see an immediate change to the feathering effect in the suit. With such a dramatic change, we can start to move the dark value back toward the left, and at 25 there is little to no difference. (29) There's no reason to exclude these tones if they do not affect the suit, and I landed at 25 for my final setting. A little overlay is important to keep the image looking a little more cohesive and realistic, photographically speaking.







Now we can sync Local Adjustments for our gradient and adjustment brushes. These local adjustments have more sync-ability for a sequence of images because they can incorporate color or luminance range versus relying only on the custom painted mask. (30) Masking used to rely on still-life shots to sync, but not anymore. Because we photograph moving subjects, we need this flexibility. (31)



THE RESULTS

At the end of the day, this new masking feature isn't perfect. For those of you who touch all 800 images selected from a wedding, these techniques won't shave off hours of post-production. Adobe just isn't there yet, but it will help you create more accurate and efficient adjustment masks. Brush in larger areas using Range Masks to extend coverage when syncing images shot in the same scene. Auto Mask can help on a single image, but make sure to apply a range mask to allow flexibility when syncing images as well. Effects presets can go a long way, so you don't have to repeat the same slider movements to remove blue from the groom's suit.

Take some time to get familiar with Range Masks in Lightroom Classic now to make your mark with masking. This is just the beginning.





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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6 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS IN 2018

UZ ZO

with Michael Anthony

Why do we become entrepreneurs in the photography industry? Is it to chase the American dream? Is it to garner notoriety for our work? Is it about financial freedom? Or maybe it's just because it's something we are born with, the need to constantly improve and topple our goals. No matter what your reason is, there is likely something that motivates you to continuously strive for perfection.

Not every photographer who has a first name/middle name photography business is an entrepreneur. Not every person who wants to practice photography analyzes financial reports and market trends, or deals with the uncertainty that comes with running a business. There is nothing wrong with that. In this article, I speak to both the entrepreneur looking to build an empire and the photographer looking to make a few extra bucks and pursue his creative passion. Whichever camp you are in, you are still running a business, even if you are the creative who is employed by the entrepreneur.

There's no shame in admitting you're not the best businessperson. There's no shame in just starting out in business, or realizing your lack of business skills could be why you aren't getting the results you want.

Here's where business gets tricky: Fear of failure ties our hands and discourages us from taking the chances that are necessary in business.

Business moguls often talk about how you have to take risks to get rewards. But as we kick off 2018, I want to talk more about our own community and industry, starting with the Behind the Shutter community.

I have met many of you at conferences and speaking events over the past few years, including many who were just starting their business. I have seen many of you flourish and begin to spread your message on education platforms. I have had the opportunity to act as a mentor to many of you, and have learned a great deal from your successes and failures.

I've noticed the same trait in successful photographpreneurs. Rather then letting the fear of failure bind their actions, fear of failure motivates them to succeed.

I left a career in law enforcement to pursue this passion full time. I had a pension, ridiculously good benefits, an excellent salary and comradery with fellow officers. I knew that to succeed in one of the most competitive industries in the country, I would have to work 10 times harder than my competitors and offer my clients incredible value and a unique product. The fear of giving up my career that I worked incredibly hard to obtain motivates me every single day to succeed. This motivation causes me guilt when I am not working on my business in my spare time.

Fear of failure prevents me from celebrating our successes because I know that we have an end goal much greater than our current success. In my police days, there was a saying: Complacency kills. It holds for business too. If you are not continuously improving and adapting, you will not last.

Over the past five years, I have watched our industry change. The competition has increased dramatically, and photographers are becoming more serious on the business side of things.

Clients are changing too. There is more demand for printed, tangible products in addition to digital products.

In 2012, we adapted Sal Cincotta's business model. Over the past five years, we have had to adapt to changing competition and client expectations. Had we dug our heels in the sand and refused to adapt, our success would not be where it is today.

If you look online, it's really easy to see other photographers marveling at their success. The Facebook groups show the photographers who seem to make \$8,000 sales from a 20-minute portrait session every two weeks, or seem to book a wedding every two days. Wherever you are in your business, don't let the successes or failures of others motivate you to change course.

Our studio is doing well, but you have not seen the failures it took to get to where we are. The first year Michael Anthony Photography was in business, we made an average \$2,000 to \$3,000 per wedding. Five years later, MAPhoto clients invest an average of \$10,000 to \$13,000 with us, and Studio 23 clients invest between \$4,000 and \$7,000.

1. LEARN FROM FAILURE

Those numbers sound great, right? You would think that we've never had an upset client or customer service problem. We actually had plenty of challenges, but the failures between then and now built the foundations of our success.

Let's talk about a few of those failures, starting with our associate brand, Studio 23.

When I started Studio 23, the goal behind it was to offer clients excellent value at affordable prices. We would make up in volume what we were paying our shooters. I started with employees who worked for Jen and me. As a new business owner, I didn't understand how employees worked.

Coming from an athletics and law enforcement background, I understood loyalty, comradery and teamwork. What I didn't understand was how to inspire the people who worked with me to see the same goals that I did. In our first year of business, after booking 40 weddings from September through April, my employees resigned right before we got into the summer wedding season. Can you imagine having that conversation with 40 different brides who have already gotten to know their photographer? If I hadn't adapted to this change, this one error of mine in choosing the wrong employees could have easily put us out of business. Those employees also had tasks in the studio like printing, delivering and designing albums. When these people left the business, it caused utter chaos for us and our clients.

Going into 2017, I had to redesign all of our processes from the ground up, including our business model for Studio 23. We decided to outsource nearly all of our production to Evolve Edits, including JPEG conversion, gallery upload and signature edits. It's expensive compared to a full-time employee, but I know that Evolve isn't going to quit on me and put my clients in another bind. It's just a smart business choice that gives me more time to market.



2. ADAPT YOUR MARKETING

Your clients are nearly immune to online advertising. Tools like AdBlock make it hard to send your online ads to clients in places they were not originally looking for them. We used to rely heavily on Facebook advertising. Facebook has changed drastically over the past few years. Here are a few facts about advertising on Facebook you need to know.

- Facebook recently stated that it was running out of ad space in people's newsfeeds, and instead is now pushing those ads over into Messenger and Instagram.
- In 2017, Facebook started rolling out a feature that allows anyone—including your clients and competitors—to see your current ads on your Facebook page.

• Facebook says the majority of its ads are served on mobile and in their "audience network." This means that if you want to choose placements for your ads in an already competitive ad landscape, you will have to pay much more for results.

• Instagram, which is owned by Facebook, started rolling out algorithm-based news feeds and business pages, so expect your organic reach to drop significantly over the next few years. If you are relying heavily on Instagram now for your marketing, start diversifying now so that when organic reach gets close to 1 to 2 percent, you are ready for it. Instagram's adoption of business pages means they are closer to making this change.

Facebook advertising is an important part of our marketing, but not even remotely the largest source of our leads anymore. We used to use Facebook to generate new leads, but now we use it to reinforce our position as an expert in our field in the eyes of our clients. If you are new in business, consider using Facebook ads consistently to let clients know about your brand. If you have been in business for more than a few years, consider using it to reach a new audience. You will have to adjust your marketing strategy accordingly.

We rely heavily on traditional advertising, but we also use our clients as a mobile sales force. Here are a few things you should focus on.

3. REVIEWS

Online reviews are good for your business from a search engine standpoint, and they are also great for prospective clients to see. Not every review has to be five stars, either. In fact, people are more likely to trust a business with 100 reviews with a four-star average than a business with 10 or fewer five-star reviews. The more reviews you have, the better it is for your business, so encourage all of your clients to leave you reviews.







4. SURVEYS

Survey your clients after every job internally with a tool like SurveyMonkey. Internal reviews offer a great way to evaluate your performance and identify weak spots. Professional photographers use print competition as a way to evaluate our work and catch problems we didn't know we had, so why not do the same thing with our clients?

Surveys help us to see and rectify customer service issues before they become a problem. Ask questions like, "Is there anything we didn't capture that you wish we had?" The answers may be tough to hear, but I assure you that once you hear the same thing three times, you'll know what you need to change.

We developed a templated review email that we send our clients. When you work with someone for over a year, there is likely something in the process you could have improved. I started doing this late last year after I realized that from 2012 to 2015, we garnered a ton of online reviews.



5. REFERRAL PROGRAM

The most inexpensive and highly effective form of advertising is a happy client. Motivate your clients to get social about your business. Every few months, we ask clients to post their favorite image on social media, explain why it's their favorite and tag our business page for a chance to win a free print of that image. This leads to a ton of organic exposure. Will it get the phone ringing that day? No, but building a brand is a marathon, not a sprint.





6. STRIVE FOR THE BEST CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

The last piece of advice I have is the most important. Keep improving your customer service. I guarantee there are at least five things you can change today to give your clients a better experience. It might be something as simple as adding a map link to your automated email reminder or pouring champagne before their wedding sales session.

If you look at your business and make one change per week, at the end of the year, you will have taken 52 steps to improve your client experience. This will all translate into more bookings, happier clients and more profit per order.





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.

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