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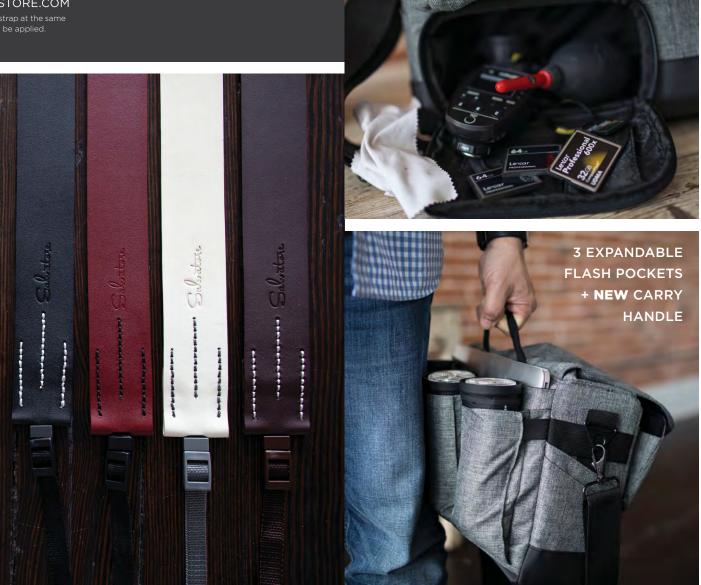
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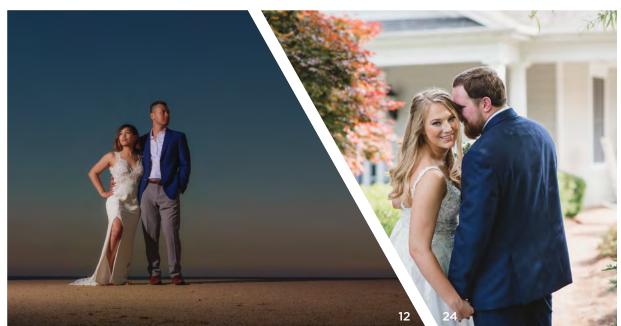


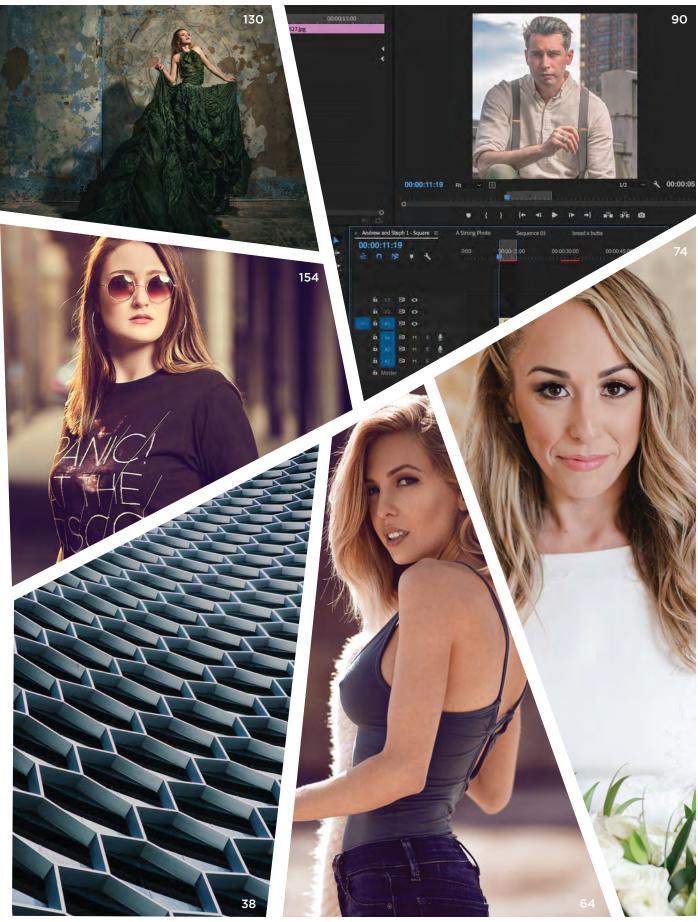


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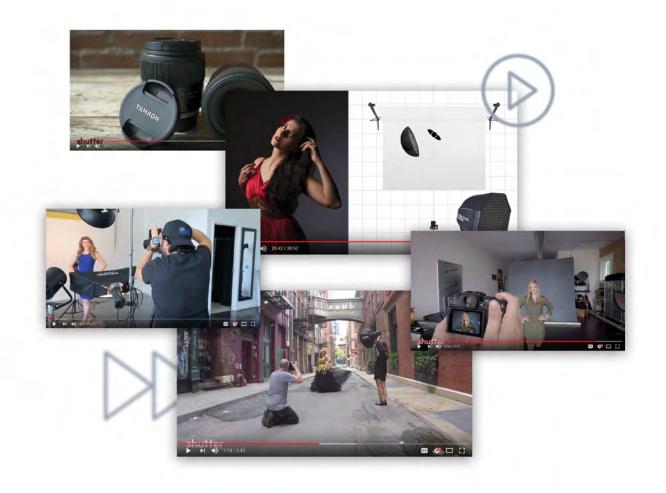
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MISSION STATEMENT

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

Shutter Magazine: By photographers, for photographers.

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THE COVER

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ABOUT THE IMAGE: This image was taken in June 2018 in

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LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief







Shutter Magazine July 2018

I have been a big fan of mirrorless cameras for a while now. My love for them began when I started traveling frequently for destination wedding work. I had always loved the imagery that my DSLRs produced, but I didn't love lugging around a 70-pound bag on flights and through airports. On a wedding day, we often have to go places that our bags simply can't roll—and the addition of lighting equipment required us to hire an assistant so we could keep up with our clients.

At the time, there was no better way because a DSLR was just the way we did things.

As mirrorless camera technology has improved, Sony has offered some incredible options for photographers. Their bodies have the most sophisticated technology I have ever used in a camera. When we initially switched our primary camera systems to Sony from Canon, we were surprised that our gear pack did not really shrink much. This is because the size of lenses has remained the same in relation to the sensor they cover. Sony's glass, although excellent, is still very large and heavy.

Many photographers have stayed clear of APS-C or Micro Four Thirds cameras because of the perception that they will not deliver professional-quality photographs compared to their full-frame counterparts. While a full-frame camera system offers superior quality in most situations, you would be hard pressed to tell the difference in 90 percent of situations between a full-frame system and an MFT/APS-C system.

Panasonic introduced mirrorless camera technology to photographers not too long ago, focusing on the Micro Four Thirds platform, which uses a sensor that is about half the size of a traditional full-frame sensor. A smaller sensor generally means less dynamic range and more noise at higher ISOs. We have been using Panasonic cameras since the GH4 for video, so we were familiar with the technology. The processing engine in the camera prevented us from using it for wedding photography because of its autofocus and low-light performance.

When Panasonic released the GH5, they made a solid camera with a refined sensor and autofocus system, but this camera was still very focused on videographers and provided a solid hybrid set of features. In early 2018, Panasonic introduced its G9, their flagship still-photography camera.

Every image in this article was photographed with the Panasonic G9. They say a picture is worth 1,000 words, so the easiest way to see the image quality is to look at the images laid out here.

When I purchased a G9 for our studio, it was as a test to shoot alongside our full-frame Sony bodies. After taking images side by side with my Sony A9 with an 85mm (42.5 for the G9) lens, I placed both images next to each other and asked five photographers to guess which one was shot with the full-frame camera. Four of the photographers answered wrong. From there, we decided to use the G9 as a primary camera system, but kept the full-frame system for daytime shooting. This camera creates amazing imagery, and the tradeoff of image quality versus portability is well worth it.

Here are a few areas of interest to wedding photographers who are considering a move to a lighter system.





IMAGE QUALITY

This is the number-one concern to photographers before switching to a smaller system. With a smaller sensor, there are limitations to the quality of the pixels available in a given frame. In the last few years, there have been astronomical leaps in the quality of camera sensors. As with most technology, over time things become better, and we are at the point now where a smaller-sensor camera under optimal conditions can produce images that are fine for printing.

Dynamic range on this camera has been improved over the GH5 by 1/3 of a stop. There is more than enough info to work within our style of HDR editing in the highlights and shadows. Does a full-frame camera have more dynamic range? Of course, but it's very rare that I need to use all of it, and that applies even with our G9's.

Color reproduction with this camera is very good. It has a new processing engine that produces some of the best in-camera JPEGs of all of our cameras. The Raw files contain a lot of color information that can be manipulated in post. The engineers improved color gradations in both skin tones and blue skies, which is especially noticeable compared to the GH5 or any other previous-generation camera.

Panasonic added an anti-reflective coating to the sensor that allows for much clearer images at night or when shooting into the sun.

MFT cameras have always provided a very sharp image. The smaller sensor tends to render sharper detail, and without the anti-aliasing filter, you can take advantage of better detail rendition without moiré, which Panasonic has eliminated through software in its processing engine.

How about noise performance? This is usually the Achilles' heel of a smaller sensor system. The G9 has improved ISO performance, and I have found usable images up to ISO 3200.

But you can also let more light in with a lower ISO. With a smaller sensor, you have double the depth of field, so a 1.8 lens will give you DOF close to a 2.8 lens, which means you can let in more light with one of the stellar fast primes available and still get your subjects in focus. All this being said, while DOF is larger, the bokeh rendition with a good lens like the Leica Panasonic options is super smooth.

All in all, if you are a skilled shooter, the G9 can provide you with ample quality for your wedding clients.





Panasonic G9 | Lens: Leica DG Summilux 12mm | 1/15 @ f1.6 | ISO 800

AUTOFOCUS

The G9 uses a 223-point contrast detection autofocus system that acquires focus in an industry-leading .04 seconds—in other words, it gets on target fast. Tracking has been improved, and is the best I have seen in a contrast detection system. The Panasonic also offers not only face and eye tracking like most of this generation of mirrorless cameras, but it also affects the ability to track the body of your subjects. The single-shot modes work the best because of the ridiculously fast and accurate target acquisition. Low-light autofocus works as well or better than that of any DSLRs I have used.

Now to get to the good stuff. The G9 features a 60 Raw FPS blackout free-burst mode in single-shot mode. No more missing the damn bouquet toss. This is one of my favorite features because you are able to capture any minute detail while basically capturing Raw video. This feature is innovative, but does have limitations. For starters, when using continuous mode, the number of shots in burst mode is reduced to 20FPS, which is more than you will likely need anyway. The camera also has a 50-frame Raw buffer, which is the only thing I wish would have been improved because you can use that burst mode for only a fraction of a second; I would appreciate a little more wiggle room in the next generation.

ERGONOMICS

This is an area where I feel the G9 is vastly superior to any camera on the market. The body is ultra-lightweight, but the camera has a very large grip that fits perfectly in the hand. The touchscreen is the most intuitive that I have used in a camera, and the menu system should be standard in every camera.

The camera features a top-panel LCD, and I didn't realize how much I missed it from my DSLR.

The MFT mount of the G9 can use any of the Panasonic or Olympus lenses, and there are a lot of high-quality ones to choose from.

When mounted with a 35-100 (70-200 equivalent), the camera is about half the size and a third of the weight of a full-frame option.

While I exercise with weights almost every day and am in relatively good shape, any wedding photographer will agree that at the end of a 10-hour wedding, your back will thank you for switching to an MFT system. Along with the overall size savings, the weight savings over a full-frame gear pack is incredible. We can fit two cameras and nine lenses in a backpack when we travel, along with chargers, laptops, iPads and other gear, with room to spare.

The camera features dual SD cards that are both UHS-II compatible. Two batteries can last us an entire wedding.

The viewfinder, one of the largest in the industry, allows you to see the entire photo from edge to edge. It's fast and responsive, and the EVF is my single favorite feature about mirrorless cameras. I want to see the image I am creating in real time—a feature I will never go without again.

IMAGE STABILIZATION AND OTHER FEATURES

The G9 features 6.5 stops of in-body image stabilization, which means that if you have steady hands, you can all but eliminate the need for a tripod at slow shutter speeds. Panasonic offers lens stabilization that, when combined with the IBIS, creates Panasonic's Dual-IS, which leads to incredibly sharp images.

PRICE AND LENS SELECTIONS

One of the best things about the MFT system is that it is substantially less expensive than a full-frame equivalent without sacrificing build quality. The bodies are only \$1,700 retail, and the glass is substantially less expensive as well. The whole system was easy to acquire, freeing up capital for marketing and other expenses.

I like being able to use lenses from multiple manufacturers. The Leica glass that Panasonic produces is incredible in both build quality and functionality. AF is fast, IS is included and the glass is about 1/3 the size of 35mm lenses. Leica prime lenses are my favorite, especially the 12 1.4, 25 1.4 and 42.5 1.2. Olympus has a large range of lenses that are compatible with the G9 as well.

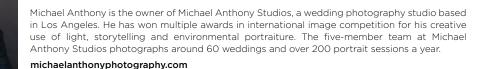




Panasonic G9 | Lens: Leica DG Summilux 25mm | 1/200 @ f11 | ISO 100

Wedding photographers have to constantly challenge industry norms. Many photographers cannot believe we are shooting weddings with an MFT system, but we are hard pressed to tell the differences in quality when comparing MFT and FF images side by side. Our cameras are just a tool to help us accomplish that task. Use whatever gives your clients the best experience possible.





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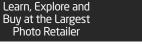


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HOW TO BUILD

PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS

----- THAT WILL -

THRIVE FOR DECADES

with **Phillip Blume**

Sure, most of us have a plan for this week. We know we have to edit three wedding projects before another day passes and our clients grow antsy. We have great intentions to blog or submit images to publications (fingers crossed). Or we may get ambitious enough to create a spreadsheet that calculates our profits and expenses so we'll know the exact number of sessions we should hope to book next year. (That counts as long-term planning, right?)

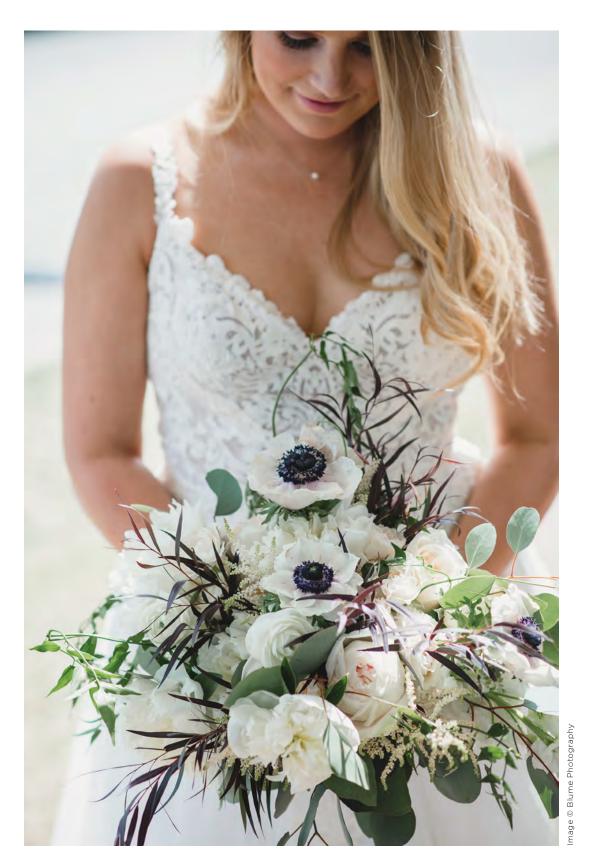
Of course all bets are off if Netflix or Facebook delivers something new to divert our attention.

It's a painful cycle, isn't it? Is this really how we want to spend our precious lives? Of course not. So rather than scraping by day to day, take the first steps toward building a business that allows you to thrive for decades.





Importor Dhotogra









AVOID BURNOUT

You might think burnout is the last thing you need to plan for. After all, you're still young and energetic, and photography is your passion. How could you ever tire of your passion?

But it isn't photography itself you risk getting burned out on, since taking photos represents just 15 percent or so of a studio owner's job. Burnout is the number-one reason over 70 percent of photo businesses don't survive beyond five years, while only a fraction of those hit the 10-year mark (which our own studio officially celebrates this year). The burnout comes from endless hours in front of computer monitors, constant defense against abuse of your copyright, occasional thankless clients, unrecoverable computer crashes, lost weekends, missed family events, strained relationships and the pressure of mounting bills and subscriptions. The list goes on. With all these pain points, day-to-day planning will never be enough to earn a decent salary—much less a nest egg for the future.

After 10 years shooting weddings, I attribute our continued joy for this challenging genre to two things: our choice early on to shoot a maximum of 15 weddings a year and our streamlined system that educates wedding couples about everything they should expect.

The photographers we coach often ask us how we make a living shooting just 10 to 15 weddings a year. This is a great example of where short-term thinking might become lethal for you. When we opened Blume Photography in a small poverty-ridden market during an economic downturn, we could have assumed there wouldn't be a demand for luxury photography. But we were luckily dead wrong. We placed our priorities first, priced our services accordingly and looked for clients in the right places.

To accomplish great client education, we began to use a mix of software automation (via ShootProof and 17Hats) together with our own growing collection of strategic email templates for all occasions. If you aren't a natural writer, you can buy template copy from coaches in your field. Otherwise, every time you write an original email, do so thoughtfully and save a copy. Once you've identified and answered every common client question, you'll have something prepared for any situation. Our communications are customized, clear, concise and preemptive.





CHOOSE YOUR TOOLS

To make sure your business's assets don't run dry, start with the basics. One of our best decisions early on was never to go into debt. As entrepreneurs we believe in taking risks—but not foolhardy risks. Don't "invest" by putting all the best gear on a credit card and thereby sink your boat before you even leave the harbor. But don't skimp on what you need, either.

I recommend that every pro photographer start with two reliable, full-frame camera bodies (one as backup). Select cameras with dual card slots for immediate image backup. Don't let the megapixel marketing game fool you. You don't need an expensive 42MP camera to go pro. And there's no shame in buying refurbished or "entry level" equipment. We've always purchased refurbished and used the same cameras for eight years until this summer, when the entry-level Sony A7iii became an extremely affordable and impressive upgrade option.

Equally important, research and invest in a fail-proof backup system. I've watched too many talented artists lose their business reputation over lost photos because they didn't back things up. Do it religiously. It is never a question of if, but rather when, your hard drive will fail.

Our first hard-drive fail wiped a year's worth of wedding photos and fully edited wedding videos from our computer. One minute our computer was running well, the next it was gone. A pricey attempt to recover our corrupt disk ensued . . . and also failed. Thank goodness, all our Raw photos and video clips had been duplicated automatically onto our Drobo 5D3 (which we place inside a fireproof safe every time we leave home), and in addition was backed up in the cloud. The crash still cost us a month of reediting photos and video, but our clients never knew and our business was saved. Now we keep our ongoing edits up to date via Apple TimeMachine and a smarter workflow.

LOCAL COMMUNITY FIRST

When I talk about social marketing, modern businesspeople are far too quick to assume I mean marketing through social media. Modern tech is both a blessing and a curse—a blessing because it opens up the world to us but a curse because we're tempted to think our businesses rely on online "celebrity" to succeed. After all, our idols have 20,000 followers on Instagram, right? But is a large online audience responsible for a studio's success?

More people every day are experiencing social media fatigue. Even during social media's rise, real face-to-face interaction and in-person relationships remained the currency of small business success. But now more than ever, you can succeed by joining your local Chamber of Commerce, delivering photos in-person to a wedding planner and showing up to networking events. As Woody Allen once said, "Eighty percent of life is showing up." My advice to you is counterintuitive and may be hard to swallow, but it works: Never ask for favors; instead, think of ways to collaborate and offer value to your industry neighbors.

Due to intermittent reinforcement (the same force behind slot machine addiction), pressure to get likes is driving us crazy. It's best shown by Skinner's classic rat-and-pellet experiment from the 1950s. Researchers provided one group of rats with a lever that, when pressed, provided them with a food pellet every time they pressed it. The rats pressed the button only when hungry, played on their exercise wheels and lived a happy life. A second group of rats was given a similar lever, but it didn't provide any food. These rats investigated the contraption but eventually lost interest in it. These rats too remained healthy and active throughout life. A third group was given a lever that sometimes provided a food pellet. Each rat might press the lever nine or 10 times before getting food. They became anxious and obsessed with the lever, fearing they might miss out on the food it provided if they left. They didn't use their exercise wheels. Many died of exhaustion.

Sound familiar? Escape those dopamine-inducing Facebook notifications, and you'll find more measurable success in the real world.











CREATE A VALUED BRAND

To create a brand that's valuable, you first must create a brand that's valued. That might sound obvious at first blush, but don't underestimate the power of branding to increase the financial stability and long life of your business.

Get-rich-quick schemes may work sometimes, but they fizzle just as quickly. Have you ever avoided someone in the grocery store aisle because you knew if you spoke she would give you the essential oils elevator pitch? I can't count how many friends I've had to mute on Facebook because their sales posts began spamming my newsfeed. Brands that focus only on product trends or prey on a universal hope to get rich fail faster. But if you focus your brand on your values, you can succeed for a lifetime.

Photographers shouldn't focus their advertising, webpages or consultations too heavily on the photographs we create. Photographs are a mere product. We also must not focus on our "competitive" pricing, which is to focus on monetary concerns. Instead, we have to ask ourselves what we really care about. What do we feel is important in life?

Eileen and I have focused our wedding studio on the value we place in strong marriages. We've focused our business on celebrating life through photos that preserve family history, and we've reclaimed life through personal charity and photo projects that help impoverished children around the world. There's no substitute for the deep personal connections we make with people through our shared values, personal stories and charitable projects. These are the people who become loyal clients and brand ambassadors for years to come. It's no easy task—begin thinking about your deepest values and how you can embody and express them in your business.

The anniversary issue you're reading now didn't end up in your hands by accident. It celebrates yet another year of continued growth for *Shutter*, an innovator in the photo education space. This publication doesn't reach readers around the world because its writers were surfing Facebook. *Shutter* and the entire Cincotta family of companies are the realized dream of one guy, Sal Cincotta.

Before Sal became an internationally recognized Inc. 500 company, I was writing for his much smaller online-only version of the magazine. Can you imagine how proud we felt watching it become the widely distributed industry force it is today? But how does Sal repeat his successes with business after business? Through confident, long-term planning.

This summer, Eileen and I are celebrating our own 10th anniversary since going full-time as Blume Photography. Our hearts are full. Yes, we're still a mom-and-pop photo studio operating from our home in rural Georgia, but make no mistake: It wasn't by accident that our small studio, which serves one of America's hardest markets, became a Bulldog 100 fastest-growing business. It's no accident that we've rinsed and repeated our steps to create other successful studios. At the end of the day, big thinking allows us not only to travel the world with our three children, but also to plan for retirement while giving back to charities that mean the world to us.

That's the dream, isn't it? So stop living just for today. Write down your long-term goals. Dare to dream big. Break the goals down into manageable action steps. Then turn off Netflix tonight and buckle down. You've got this.





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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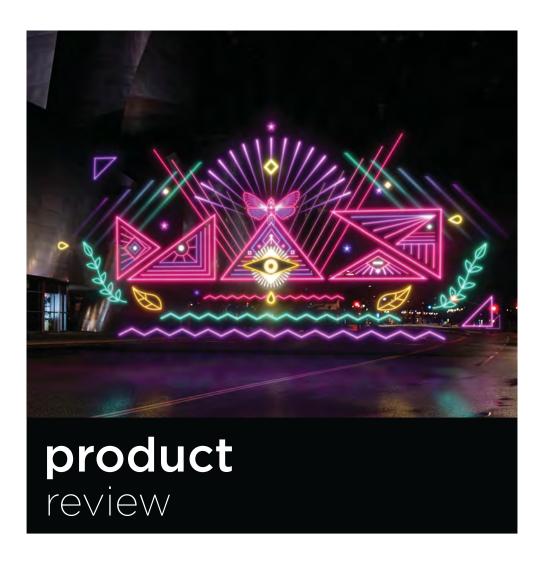
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Why attend Adobe MAX?

Adobe MAX is the world's largest creativity conference, with over 12,000 attendees expected in Los Angeles in 2018.

If you are a creative, then you need to get to Adobe MAX. I have been there, and it's everything Adobe. I love seeing what the future holds. Knowing where Adobe is taking its products is huge for me and my business as we plan for the future.

It's not just about sitting in a classroom. They have labs where you can learn hands-on and ask questions from the experts.

And networking? This is the place to be. There are tons of industry people, including Adobe staff, for you to connect with and learn from. This is one of my favorite creative conferences of the year.

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Assess the landscape.

The first thing you have to do with your own business is assess the current landscape. Who are your competitors? You have to spend some time on this one, and it's no easy task. We often get trapped in who we think our competitors are versus who our customers think our competitors are. A true competitive analysis reveals a lot to you about your own business. You might think your brand is super high-end only to find out that your customers see your competitors as low-end brands. That's a massive problem for your brand, and not one that is easily fixed. Perception is reality—and in this case, your brand is perceived as low-end. This might explain other issues in your business.

Looking at the competitive landscape tells you a lot about your brand, but the most important thing that will come of this is an opportunity report. Where is the opportunity in the market? You might find out, like we did, that clients want more than digital files. I am constantly in a state of shock at my local bridal shows when I see how many photographers either don't offer albums or offer complete shit when it comes to albums. They have convinced themselves that clients don't want product, but our own research with high-end clients has shown us that they do, in fact, want product. More than that, they want a complete solution from us, and they are willing to pay for it.

Instead of copying everything our competitors do in our local market, we looked at the needs of our clients. This is a mindset for your business that you must adapt in order to be successful.

Who cares what your competitors are doing? Sure, we need to be aware, but that can't be our driving force. We have to look at the landscape and the gaps in it.

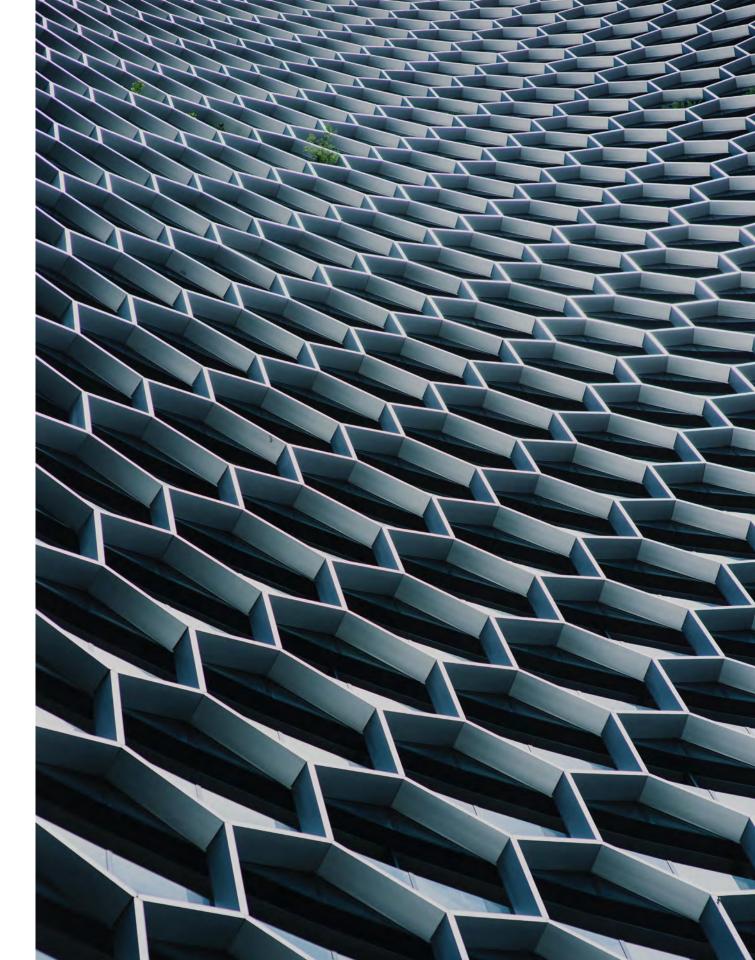
Look for gaps.

There is gold in them there gaps. Where there are gaps, you will find tons of opportunity. Gaps always signal to me that clients are looking for something that is not currently being filled. This is where most businesses fall short. They are so stuck in their day-to-day that they can't see 10 feet in front of them. This is a huge trap for you as a business owner. Gaps are where opportunity lives.

You have to start asking questions once you understand the market. What do clients want? Where are they not being serviced? Where is the opportunity?

In my local wedding market, I saw tons of gaps in the market. Wedding clients wanted a high-end luxury experience. This concept, 11 years ago, flew in the face of all the local conventional wisdom. The local wisdom was convinced it was price. Lower your price. That's what clients want. Wrong. Clients want digital files. Wrong again.

This was a result of businesspeople doing a horrible job of assessing the market needs and looking at where their competitors were failing. Instead, they all started doing the same thing: lowering prices and offering nothing but digital files. Today, more than 75 percent of the people I started with 11 years ago are gone, straight up out of business. It's sad because there were a lot of very talented photographers who are just horrible businesspeople.



Identify your strengths.

Once you identify the gaps—or, better stated, once you learn how to find the gaps—you will have reached a new level of awareness. This is a skill. Today, I can find gaps and opportunity in nanoseconds. I see them everywhere. It doesn't mean I can do anything about it, but I see it clear as day. My business, your business, Starbucks, Nike—I can see opportunity all day long.

Everywhere I go, I am looking for opportunity. You have to hone this skill. There is a lot of estimated guessing, gut instinct and experience all wrapped up into this, but you have got to be a student of business, all business. What are they doing right? What are they doing wrong? Where is there room for improvement?

The next part of this is to identify your own strengths. Just because you find a gap in the market doesn't mean you can do anything about it. One gap in the world we live in is time travel. Have you ever wished you could go back in time and change something you did? I know I do. I could probably charge a lot of money giving people the opportunity to right that wrong. Maybe they married a horribly selfish and insane person who wreaked havoc on their lives. Good news: The Sal Cincotta Time Machine is here to let you fix your past mistakes.

Hopefully you get my point. Opportunity without skill is a nonstarter. The key is matching the opportunity to your strengths or potential strengths. Can you learn the new skill? Can you hire someone with the skill needed?

In the world of wedding photography, this was where we stepped up. We knew people wanted more: more service, more quality, more tactile products. We worked with vendors to come up with products that were unique. We adjusted our marketing to highlight why these things were important. We were able to raise our prices and create more separation in the marketplace. Today, Salvatore Cincotta Photography is a premier brand in the St. Louis wedding market. That was no accident. It's a direct result of the exercise I am teaching you here.

Remember, match your strengths to the opportunity, and you will find gold.



Execute.

The place most businesses fail is in how they execute the work. Talking a big game is not enough. You have to get your ass up and do the work. It's not going to do itself. Artists are notoriously lazy. I have never seen anything like it. Talk, talk, talk.

And the best is when they get all indignant about how hard they work. No, sorry. You are not working hard enough. That's reality. If you want to be in the top 10 percent of 5 percent of successful businesses in your market, then I have some news for you: You need to work harder and longer than any of your competitors. There is no "I'll get to it tomorrow." I am super busy. My daughter has a dance recital today. Stop making excuses and execute.



To get where we are today, we have prided ourselves on working longer and harder than any of our competitors. I love it. It's a high for me and my team to know that we can come up with an idea and execute it quickly and efficiently.

You have to become addicted to winning. Yes, my fellow artists, winning. Not hugging each other. Not talking trash in your forums about the new photographers. Not blaming the world for your failures. Owning your shit. Owning your failures. Owning your laziness. And doing something about it!

The world is yours. I promise you, there is nothing but opportunity out there. No matter where you live. No matter how small or large your community. Opportunity is smacking you in the head. There is only one way to take advantage of it: Execute.

That alone will make you stand out from the crowd and soar to new levels.





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

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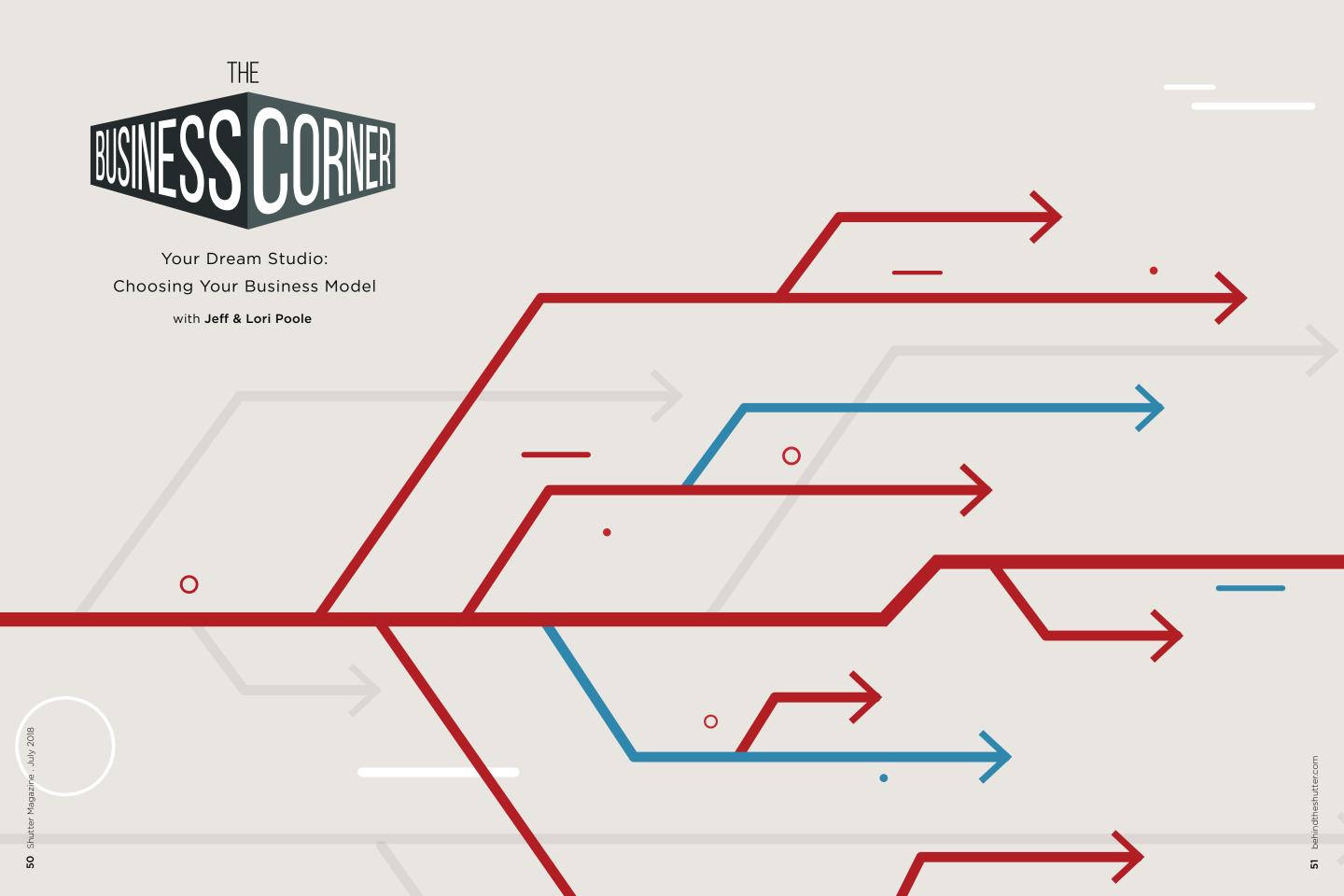
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DREAM JOB, DREAM LIFE

If you're reading this, it's because photography is your dream job. It's probably not because you dreamed of editing images until 1:00 in the morning while the rest of your family sleeps. If we're going to build our dream job, it's got to fit within our dream life. So what does your dream life look like? The goal is to work to live instead of live to work.

Ask yourself these questions. In your dream job...

- How many days a week do you work?
- How often are you shooting?
- What's your financial status?
- What kind of clients do you work with?
- At what price point are you comfortable?

In my dream life, I work four days a week. I shoot two of those days, and get the other work done the other two. I don't work weekends. My clients are the type who want the best quality and are willing to pay for it. They trust me to deliver the best possible experience for them, and they don't micromanage me. They refer their friends. I make a comfortable living, enough to support my family, maybe own a boat, and travel a couple of times a year.

Jeff and I aren't quite there yet. We work a little more than that, and the boat is still a ways off—but we've come a long way since opening our studio. That's my dream. What's yours?



YOUR DREAM JOB'S BUSINESS MODEL

Let's figure out how to make those dreams a reality. It starts with having a clear idea of your business model, volume and margin.

VOLUME

Photographers usually talk about the number of shoots we do per day or week. Wedding photographers may refer to number of weddings per month or per year. It's important to understand the factors that can influence volume. Volume can be affected by the size of your market, how much of that market you claim ("market share") and how many of your clients are repeat ("client retention").

MARGIN

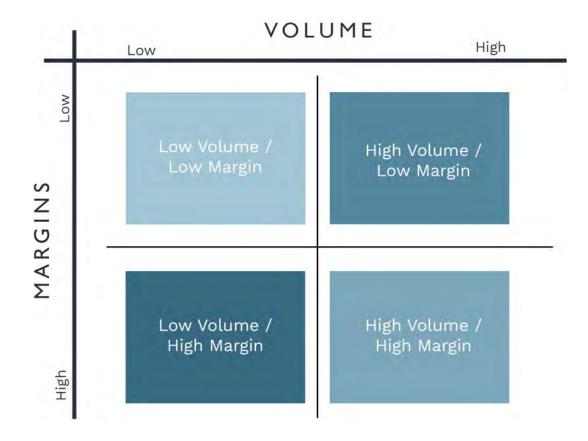
Margin is kind of like your profit, but it's generally referred to with percentage. Don't zone out here. I promise this is easy math. Gross profit margin is defined as [sale price] minus [cost of good], divided by [sale price].

For example, if you sell a print for \$100 and your cost is \$25, your profit margin is 75%.

$$\frac{(\$100 - \$25)}{\$100} = \frac{\$75}{\$100} = 75\%$$

See? That wasn't so bad, right?

The only numbers used in calculating margin are your cost of goods and your sale price, which means you have full control over your margins by setting your sale price appropriately. The standard margin for a successful photography studio is generally 75% or higher.



COMBINING VOLUME AND MARGIN

Relatively speaking, volume can be high or low. Margin can also be high or low. Let's abbreviate HV, LV, HM and LM to represent high volume, low volume, high margin and low margin, respectively.

Volume and margin usually combine and play off of each other. The most common two combinations are HV/ LM and LV/HM. Let's take a look in more detail.

HIGH VOLUME/LOW MARGIN

An HV/LM studio operates by completing lots of shoots for a relatively low price. Examples at one far end of this business model service schools, dance studios or sports teams. The goal of a HV/LM studio is to move 'em in and move 'em out. Profit is directly tied to volume, so more volume means more profit. A good analogy is a burger chain that boasts "billions and billions served."

Customer Service

In order to sustain HV, studios should operate a low-touch model, meaning there is little interaction with clients. HV studios generally do not offer consultations or in-person sales, and most client interaction is automated or conducted via email/phone. Generally, less client contact allows for increased volume. As a result, clients do not have high expectations for quality or customer service. Continuing our analogy of a fast food chain, there are no waiters at the restaurant. Order placement is done at a counter, through a window or even through an app. We don't expect amazing service at a fast food joint.

Product Turnover

Product turnover for the HV model must also be quick. When profits depend on moving product, faster is better. To support that fast turnaround, products are generally limited in range, lower in quality and possibly even partially assembled before the client orders them. Studios may offer low-cost products such as a slip-in album. There's not much customization available, but it's fast and cheap. Studios often choose to sell packages to make the client's decision process equally quick. The fast food restaurant keeps precooked food hot with heat lamps and offers easy, cheap value meals. You eat, you leave. You don't linger in the booth.

PRODUCT OFFERINGS ACCORDING TO MODEL

High Volume/ Low Volume/ Low Margin **High Margin**

BULK/ECONOMY:

- · Basic prints
- ·Slip-in albums
- Simple image boxes
- · Files SOOC

COMMON PRODUCTS:

- · Canvas blocks
- · Press albums
- Accordion books
- Batch-processed files

CUSTOM/SPECIALTY:

- · Metals, Acrylics
- · Fine art albums
- · Custom collages
- · Signature edits or composites

Marketing

HV demands lots of customers. To support volume, HV businesses spend a lot of money on advertising. They've got to get new customers in the door, and keep them coming back. Customers must be lured in with low prices and the product must be something they can come back for again and again, keeping volume high. HV models do best in larger markets, where there are lots of customers to bring through the door. For studios, schools provide that evergreen market. Fast food restaurants employ flashy TV ads, coupons in the mail every week and daily specials to get customers in the door and keep them coming back.

Feasibility

Can a HV/LM model work for you? That depends. Many photographers are more comfortable charging lower prices. If you decide to go for this model, you still have to make a profit. Operating at a loss isn't fixed by volume. "Hmm, I see that I'm losing money on every wedding I shoot. So if I shoot more weddings, I'll make money." Nope. It doesn't work that way.

If you are considering a high-volume business, first figure out if your market can support your goals. If you live in a tiny town, it's unlikely that you'll be successful as an inexpensive wedding photographer. There aren't enough people getting married in that town, and there certainly aren't going to be repeat clients unless residents get divorced and remarried annually just for fun. If your market can support you, decide if you're willing to invest in customer acquisition. Advertising for volume costs money.

The HV/LM model can certainly be successful. Fast food restaurants manage to make it work. This model has a low barrier to entry: It doesn't cost much or require a ton of expertise to get started. But it's a market with extremely stiff competition and a high failure rate. With low margins, it can be very difficult to get off the ground and gain momentum to get the volume you need to be sustainable.

Customer Service

In order to achieve high margin per client, the LV/HM model requires a high-touch approach to customer service. Studios wanting to garner the highest sales have a consultation with their clients before the shoot. This qualifies the client and allows the photographer to customize both the shoot and the product offering. Clients have high expectations for quality and customer service, and the studio must deliver on both.

Product Turnover

For higher-quality product offerings and more customization, turnaround times are going to be longer. Custom design takes time. The studio cannot pre-order custom items in bulk. The vendors the studio works with may also have longer turnaround times to produce the custom products. For the clients to be willing to pay more, the studio must offer products and services that are rare, beautiful, unique and/or specialized. Customers of fine-dining restaurants sip wine and converse long before entrees are ordered. Each course is a production. Food is of the highest quality, and the presentation is a work of art. Dining is unhurried, and the experience is just as important as the product.





Marketing

The LV model, by definition, requires fewer clients than the HV model. But those clients have to be the right clients. Marketing efforts are focused on building relationships. Studios build referral networks with other businesses that serve the same clientele rather than spend money on advertising. While repeat customers are appreciated, they are not as necessary for a lower-volume studio. A large market is also less important. LV studios can thrive even in small areas, and studios can afford to serve a smaller market share by offering niche or specialized services.

Feasibility

Does a LV/HM model appeal to you? Photographers considering this model must come to terms with charging high prices, and must get comfortable with in-person sales. Studios that specialize in a smaller niche (newborns, boudoir, etc.) tend to do well with a LV/HM model since there is generally a smaller pool of the population looking for their services.

If you're considering a LV/HM model, brush up on your people skills. Between client consultations, in-person sales and general schmoozing to build a referral base, you will be spending a lot of your time and effort around other people. Your new hashtag will be #hustle.

This model has a higher barrier to entry. You've got to know your stuff. You've got to hustle. You've got to work with vendors and learn to sell. But because it takes more effort and knowledge, there's a lot less competition in the market. It can be a little scary to raise those prices, but it can also pay off big time.

28

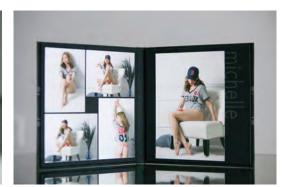
HV/HM

This model is pretty rare. Let's make lots of money per client and have lots of clients. Sounds great, right? This type of model works in specialty fields with an extremely high barrier to entry—something that's so hard to get into that you can charge whatever you want once you're in. Examples include fields like law, engineering, medicine and tech. The problem is, this space can be so difficult to get into that failure rate is high. Consider Exhibit A: the dot-com bomb. A lot of companies don't make it past the startup phase. For photographers, our barrier to entry isn't high enough to keep the competitors out, so this model isn't realistic.

LV/LM

This may sound counterintuitive: low profits and few customers. This model can work for items with an extremely high sale price. Examples include luxury cars, mansions and jewelry. These products have a high cost of goods, which makes it an expensive space to get into. Buyers are also rare, which means advertising costs are high. Imagine that you have a 15% margin on a million-dollar sale—would you take it? Of course. Unfortunately for photographers, the products we're selling generally are not on this scale unless you're selling diamond-encrusted wedding albums. If you are, teach me your ways.

WHAT ABOUT THE MIDDLE? Low By now, we've examined the idea that an HV/LM studio requires Volume/ a lot of clients to be successful. It also operates in a market with **High Margin** a large pool of potential clients, whom it lures in with low prices. Conversely, a LV/HM studio requires clients who spend a lot per sale. It operates in a market with a small pool of potential clients, whom it lures in with highquality products and specialty services. This can be visualized as a pyramid, with low volume at the top and high volume at the bottom. The width of the pyramid represents the potential number of clients. **High Volume / Low Margin**



Many photographers are most comfortable operating in the middle of the pyramid. They don't want to be too high on their prices but they also don't want to operate at the fast pace a high-volume studio requires. These photographers service a handful of clients a week, often shooting in the same locations as every other photographer in the area and offering the same types of products. The problem is that potential clients have a hard time choosing when everyone looks the same, so they base their decision on price. The photographers in the middle often end up in price wars to compete, and ultimately operate at lowered margins without enough volume to keep up. The middle is the hardest model to sustain.

REVISING THE DREAM

Now that you have a better idea of the factors that influence volume and margin, how does that affect your vision for your dream job? By now you should have a clearer picture of whether a HV/LM model or a LV/HM model suits your dream the best. If you've been struggling in the middle, you should now have better insight about which direction you want to go. Fast food and fine dining can both work. Each has its challenges and rewards.

With your business model firmly in mind, join us for next month's Business Corner as we map out your dream studio's annual plan.



Just a few years after Jeff and Lori found themselves struggling to survive while living in the basement of their studio, back in 2012, they are the proud owners of a brand-new home on the coast of North Carolina. The owners of Wilmington's Indigosilver Studio offer boutique boudoir portraiture and wedding photography. They are also the founders of The Shoot Space, their educational resource for photographers.

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THE POWER OF A SOLID BUSINESS ALLIANCE

with **Nino Batista**



Strategic alliances in business can make major differences in the success of all parties involved if done correctly. This is true for just about any industry, but is often overlooked in the arts. It should never be about competition as much as it should be about synergy (a business buzzword that usually makes my stomach turn, but stay with me here).

Aligning your photography business with someone else's can be the injection of energy you were always looking for if you're open to it and go about it the right way.

Like any other industry, there are plenty of fringe industries that photography benefits from and impacts. They include:

- Photography studios
- Photography equipment stores
- Wedding venues, coordinators, caterers, etc.
- Talent agencies
- Models
- Hair salons
- Makeup artists
- · Wardrobe designers
- Boutique clothing stores
- Filmmakers

And the list goes on. You probably have already worked with a few awesome folks in these industries. This happens by default after you've worked in the scene long enough, as the synergy (groan) between these industries and your photography business becomes more and more apparent as you become busier and busier.

Wedding photographers encounter many other industries. Did it ever occur to you to reach out to a wedding caterer? Perhaps you're just starting out and you get to know a busy wedding caterer—can you see how knowing them could lead to cross-referrals on the regular?

Obviously a personal connection needs to happen first, and you cannot predict how these interactions will go at first. I don't recommend aggressively targeting every caterer you encounter, but do keep them in mind as you work. They could end up being your best friend, personally and professionally, before you know it.

If your work is good and you develop a personal bond with this magical and successful wedding caterer, you can all but count on referrals happening. Their business stays busy and is likely chock-full of referrals, and if they like your photography, professionalism and personality, they are likely to mention you to any wedding catering clients of theirs who ask for photographer referrals. (Keep it reciprocal as long as the relationship remains fruitful for you.)

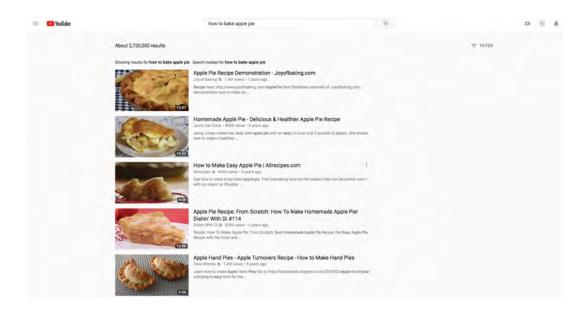
This goes for just about any wedding photography fringe industry, not just caterers.

Sometimes industries are so synergistic that they cannot survive without one another. If you shoot fashion, editorial or glamour photography, you encounter an endless stream of models. The dynamic between the modeling industry and the photography industry is very clear, and one cannot exist without the other. Can you think of some creative ways to benefit from these connections?

The creative arts industries thrive off the backbone of referrals. If you are well referred by your peers or fringe industry associates, you can stay busy, full time, on word of mouth alone. Obviously building relationships like this isn't always easy, especially when you are relatively new. But do not discount their importance—they can give you the opportunities you always needed.



But with trillions of sources of information on the web, suddenly another problem emerges: validity. Or lack thereof. There is simply no way every one of the 2.7 million "how to bake apple pie" videos on YouTube will be worth a damn, or accurate, or even about apple pie at all. We are in an age of too much information, and not enough actual knowledge or reliable resources.



And this is why, even in 2018, the personal referral is actually more powerful for business than it used to be before the internet casually took over the world. Your trusted friend telling you that someone they know is worth hiring is infinitely more valuable than millions of Google search results. Sure, we all have to search the internet for stuff, and we do it every single day. But that is precisely why we know that reliable, proven knowledge from a reputable resource beats out 2.7 million baking results. Accuracy is always better than quantity.

Being self-employed, an entrepreneur and a motivated artist who is determined to make a living off your work means you have to think outside the box at all times. Every successful artist entrepreneur's path is slightly different, filled with 80-hour work weeks, crazy ideas, little sleep, repeated failures, compromises and ultimately success—usually on a road you never fully intended to walk down when you started.



This is why when I met my girlfriend, Josie Fox—a full-time model and actress based in the Midwest—it didn't take us long to see how we could use the synergy between our roles in the industry to benefit both of us. We somewhat quickly stumbled onto the idea of doing a national workshop tour together.

We offer both of our skills sets and experience in our instructional content for workshop attendees, with a curriculum from both sides of the lens, as it were. This expands the instructional scope of my own workshops (which I have done since 2012 across the country), thus injecting some new energy into that aspect of my business. As much as I can show attendees about all things photography and retouching, providing them with firsthand knowledge from a veteran model's perspective is something I simply cannot do. With Josie onboard, my workshops now offer expanded knowledge and fresh validity for both our businesses.

While Jodie is a full-time model, spokesmodel and actress, she too has expanded her service offerings to the industry with this initiative. This increases her visibility in new areas and affords her a new credibility as an educator, as she has essentially joined the teaching circuit of the portrait photography world by offering a model's perspective. Josie also happens to be a photographer, which amps up that synergy even more.



In working together on this, the halo effect immediately comes into play. Her audience is now aware of my brand, and vice versa. New leads, referrals and work has already emerged from our cross-branding, benefiting both parties a month or so into this venture.

When you have that entrepreneurial spirit, a drive to succeed and the creative vision to capitalize on new opportunities others may overlook, that is when you know you are meant to be a self-employed artist. Cultivating personal relationships with industry peers can make or break your business and career. One of the key aspects is working to make sure everything remains reciprocal—never forget that. You cannot expect that wedding caterer to send you referral after referral every week if you never refer any business to them.

Think of new and dynamic ways to leverage all the synergies that you can with your industry and fringe industries, and don't be afraid to take risks. Running your own art-based business is about risk, basically at all times. Thrive off of it. Use it to energize your efforts. Become a hub and a leader in your corner of the biz. It'll all be worth it in the end.

If you want to know more about the Nino Batista + Josie Fox Workshop Tour, visit my website at www. ninobatista.com.



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





The secret to all business is relationships—the good ones and, yes, even the bad ones. The bad ones drive us to do things like start a magazine. The good ones support us, sometimes every step of the way, sometimes literally from the ground up (like the hotel ballroom floor Sal and I sat on when he told me his idea for this magazine and I pledged my support).

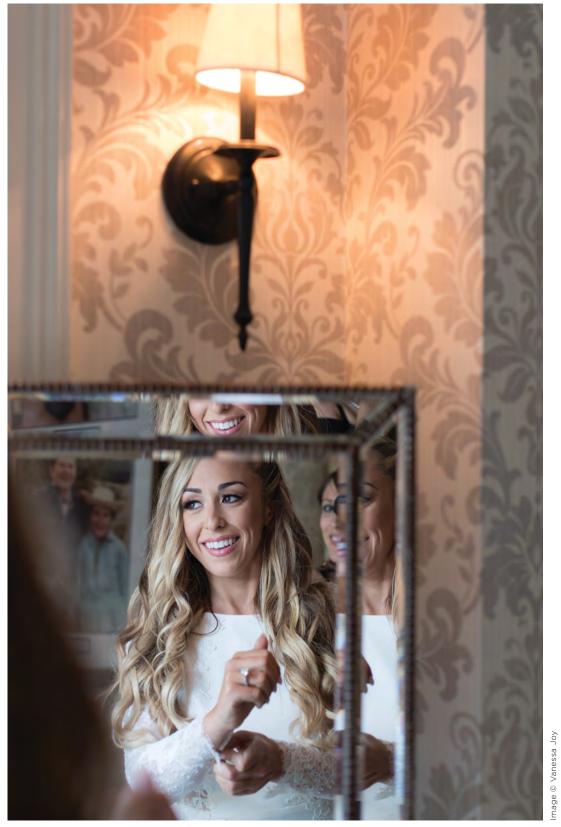
"It's not about what you know, it's about who you know." I used to say that with a twinge of bitterness in my mouth. Now, a decade or so later, I realize that isn't a snide statement. The best thing you can do in business is expand your network.

If so much of our success sits on the shoulders of whom we know, then it's our job to get out there and expand our reach. Here's how you do that.

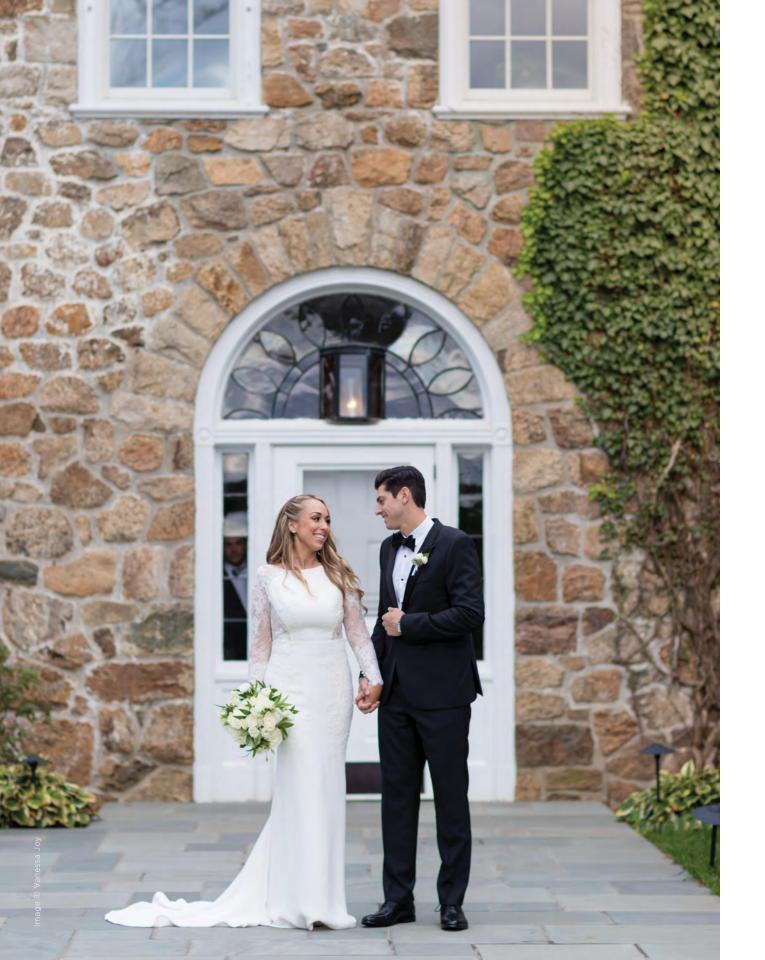


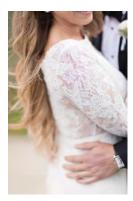






















GET UNCOMFORTABLE

This year I spoke at a convention for wedding gown preservationists. Pretty obscure. But those people need social media advice too, and that's what I was there to teach.

I knew absolutely no one, not even the person who flew me there to speak.

There I was at the opening-night mixer. I dressed confident but not intimidating, and walked into the ballroom. My heart was ready to burst out of my chest as I surveyed the room. I had no idea what on earth I was going to say to anyone. I held my breath, walked to the nearest circle of people talking among themselves and said, "Hi, my name is Vanessa."

I didn't stay long talking to anyone, so it didn't get that awkward. When the convo died, I simply excused myself and found another group and did the same thing. By the end of the night, I had met at least half the people there. No, I didn't remember their names (I should work on that), but the next day when I had to teach them, I knew a lot of smiling faces. By the time the next night's party came around, I felt like I was out with friends.

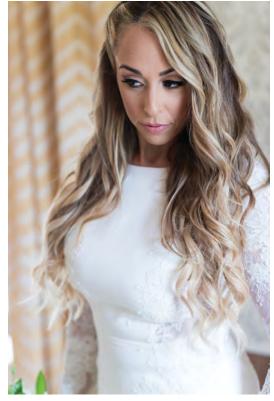
Shy? Me too. If that story made you sweat, you are not alone. The success with new relationships doesn't come from how comfortable you are meeting new people. It comes from you simply doing it regardless of how you feel. Pivot.

It's not brain surgery. People like to talk about themselves. They like to brag and have people gush over them. So, give them the opportunity for both. Ask questions about what they do, how they started, what motivates them, what they're most proud of in their life right now. Anything works. (Well, maybe not politics, especially these days.)

When you do talk, replace the number of times you typically use the word "I" in your dialogue with their name. According to Dale Carnegie's classic *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, the sweetest sound to anyone's ear is their own name. Just don't overdo it like this guy I went out with once who said: "Vanessa, why don't you, Vanessa, tell me what Vanessa likes to do on the weekend, Vanessa." We didn't go out again.



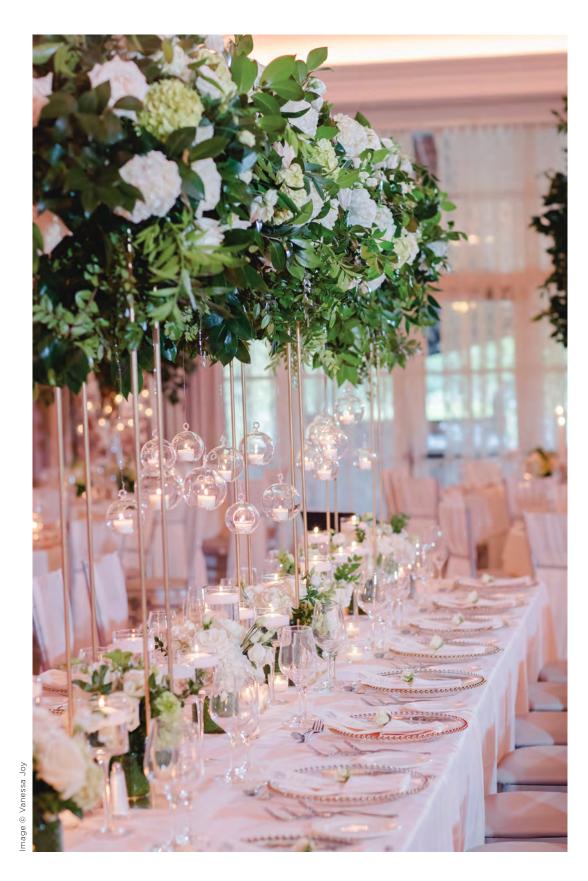




















BE THE COOL KIDS TABLE

One of the first times I went to a big photography convention, I remember feeling like I was back in high school. I was never at the cool kids table then, and I certainly wasn't at the photo convention either.

In fact, I remember once sitting in a room with a couple of speakers from the show just watching how they interacted with one another like old friends having the time of their lives. I wondered how I could get in with that group. Then it dawned on me: I couldn't, at least not to the extent that they already were. I didn't have the history they had together.

Instead, I realized that it was never about getting into the cool kids club. It was about making your own. I don't look up; I look across to find colleagues with whom I can form friendships that'll last a lifetime. I make my own circle, and you can too. You can do the same thing with wedding vendors in your area, with families, with any kind of business relationship you can imagine. Be your own cool kids club and develop relationships over time that will help your business grow as you help theirs.



Being in the photo industry is an amazing privilege. Being a part of the ShutterFest family has been incredible. There are no others like us. We are the cool kids table.

Check out the video for some more tangible networking tips.





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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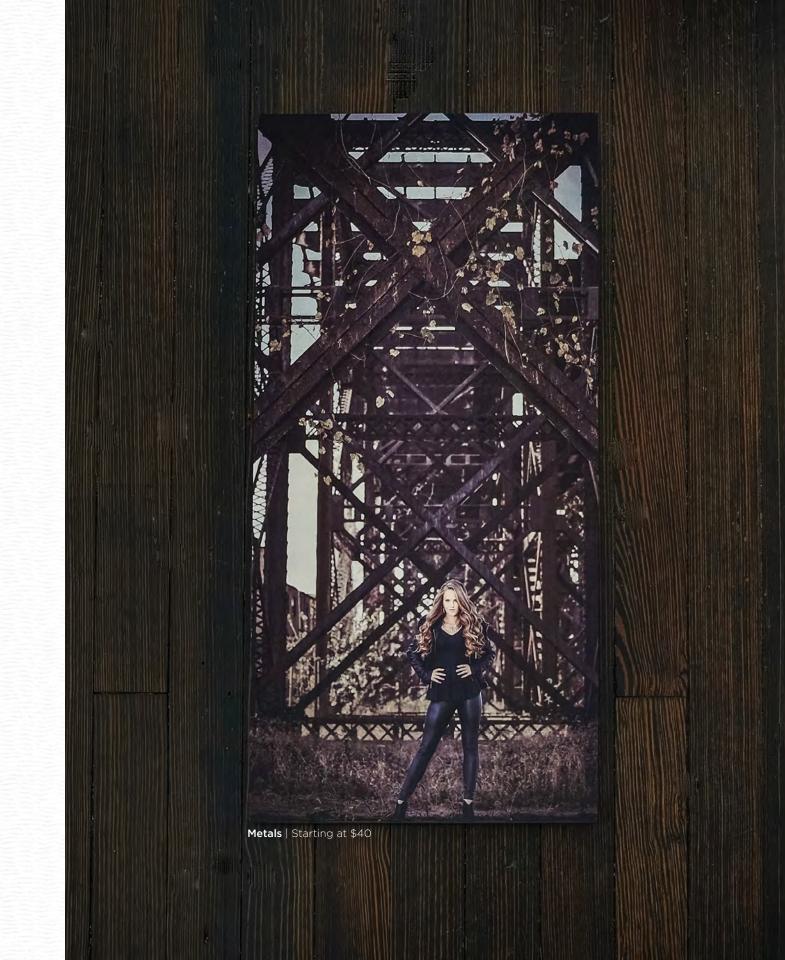
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10 TIPS FOR CREATING EYE-CATCHING SOCIAL MEDIA VIDEOS with Andy Strong

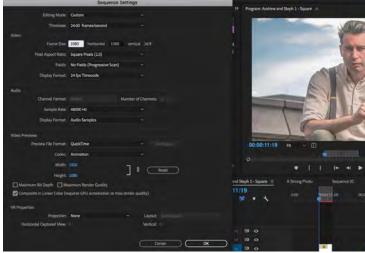
We've all been there, scrolling aimlessly on our phone, floating in a sea of emojis and LOLs. We may not even realize we're doing it, but suddenly 10 minutes (or two hours) pass, and we've watched 10 two-minute episodes of something called "Parkour Cats From Outer Space" and found ourselves ordering some swag from their website. What is going on here? How does one begin to make an impact in this sea of endless distraction?

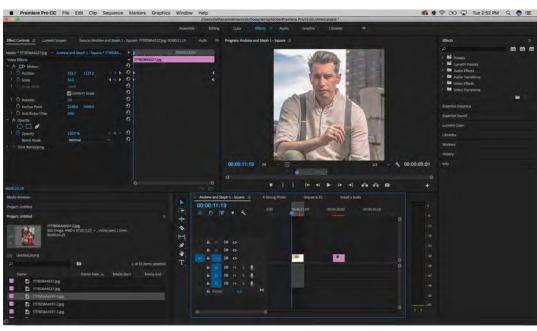
This is an ever-evolving science, but there are some methods to the madness of keeping people's attention. Search for "square video performance," and you'll get a plethora of research showing that square videos outperform landscape videos. More screen space, more engagement, more time spent watching, more purchasing. They are a native fit for popular social media platforms, but how do we get square?

If square video is your only deliverable, you can start by creating a square using Sequence settings in Adobe Premiere. Simply change the frame size from 1920x1080 to 1080x1080, and voilà! Your video is now square. A great place to start.

If you need both 16:9 and square, edit the 16:9 first, and then make a copy and change settings to square. Make necessary adjustments to the video using Effects > Motion > Position/Scale in Adobe Premiere to keep your subject in the new framing.



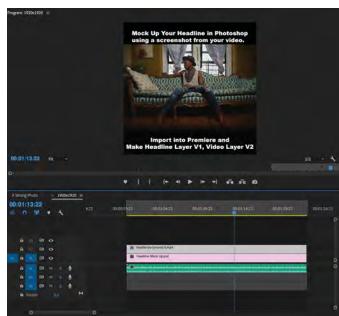


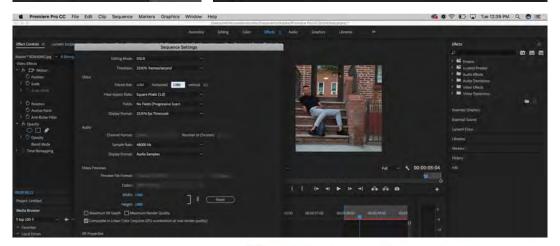


A/B Test: Add text to the top and bottom of your 16:9 video to make it a square. Create a buzz-worthy headline and place it meme-style on the top and bottom of the video in black bars. Use sequence settings 1920x1920 to match the long edge of your video and add your text. I prefer the interface in Photoshop for editing text; you can also use the built-in tool Legacy Text in Premiere.









BONUS TIP:

for Snapchat users, and Square is currently native to Instagram and Facebook. Who knows what interesting new dimensions will be trending in the future?



1:1 - 1080x1080

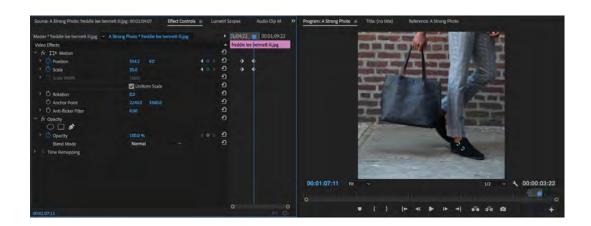
9:16 - 1080x1920 Snapchat



16:9 squared to 1:1 1920x1920 Facebook, Instagram

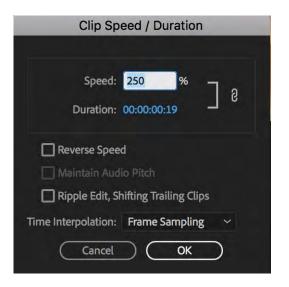
2. MAKE MOTION YOUR BEST FRIEND

Use the position and scale tools to keep your video in constant motion. To keep up with the overstimulated mind, try creating movement even if your original shot was static. It can be as little as a 5% increase in size, but the more movement in your video, the more likely your audience's brain will stay engaged. Again, you'll use Effects > Motion > Position & Effects > Motion > Scale to make your adjustments. There are plenty of ways to overdo it—season to taste.



3. FIND YOUR RHYTHM

Use varying speeds to stimulate the brain. Use Command + R to bring up the clip speed/duration window. Juxtapose slow-motion video (50% speed shot at 60fps) with sped-up footage at 150 to 200% speed, and take your audience on a rhythm ride. Continue with a roller coaster of quick cuts to keep the brain engaged, and then hit another slo-mo beauty shot. Watch your video with the sound off and clap each time your shots change. Does it create a compelling rhythm? Does clapping at each cut give you a better understanding of the pacing of the video? Are there any moments that could use a slower or faster cut?





4. DOUBLE THE FUN

Get footage from multiple angles and distances, and, if possible, use an additional camera to grab video simultaneously. You can always do a second take from an alt angle to create a similar effect. Make the same moment more interesting by cutting between your shots. Put one camera on a steady medium shot on your subject, place the second camera at an angle and grab closeups of hand gestures or a profile for an angle/distance double whammy.





5. SHORT VIDEO, SHORT SHOTS

Again, keep the story moving. If a shot is up for three to five seconds without a change, social media users have ample opportunity to keep scrolling. Create a five-second montage of half-second shots or a slideshow of still images that blasts through at five to 10 or more shots per second for three to five seconds. A time-lapse is a great way to use fast-paced still images to move your narrative forward. Be careful not to overdo it: Too much too quickly can confuse rather than entice. Alternatively...

6. BE A ONE-SHOT WONDER

There are two sides to every coin, and if strobe-light-like editing isn't your style, a steady moving shot is a great alternative. If you have access to a steadicam or Movi, choreographing a single shot that moves around an interesting space and follows your speaker can be a great way to keep your audience's attention. A steady single shot builds tension, and when done well, can create magical "how'd they do that?" moments. If you are going this route, have your choreography worked out in advance. It's recommended for experienced teams with plenty of time to rehearse and try multiple takes.

7. USE YOUR WORDS

A staggering number of videos are watched without sound. To get your message across, appeal to the parts of the brain that are activated by decoding language. Reading increases attention spans and can also help us remember more than spoken words alone. Use this to your advantage and add text to your video.

MOVING TEXT IN FIVE STEPS: TO HAVE EACH WORD POP UP AS IT IS SPOKEN:



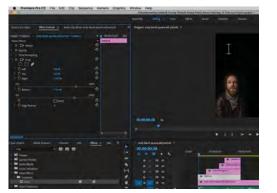
1. Use Premiere's Legacy Text to type out your text.

2. Make adjustments to font size and use the Transform > Height & Width tools to fill the screen with text. You can change fonts individually as well.



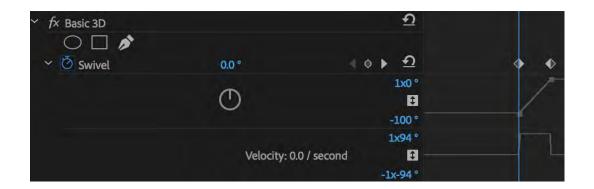
- BELIEVE
 | DANCING | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100
- 3. Drag your text into your sequence.
- 4. Make a copy of your text in a new layer by holding the Alt key as you drag to a new layer.

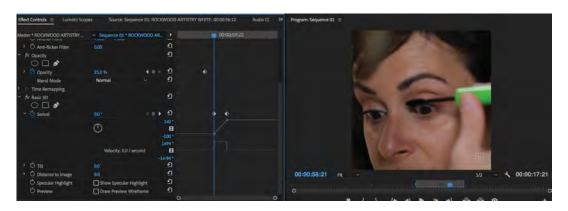
 Make a new layer for each line of text.
- 5. Use the Crop tool in Effects > Video Effects > Transform > Crop so the spoken word matches up with written text. Remember, one line of text per layer makes this possible. Crop out lower layers first using "bottom" crop and then adjust "right" crop to make words appear. You will need to add keyframes at the beginning and ending of each spoken word to animate your reveal.

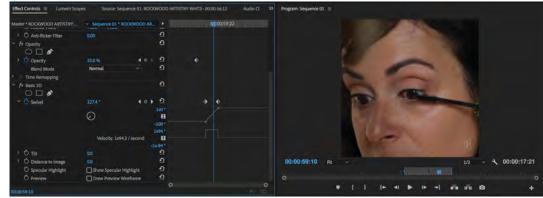


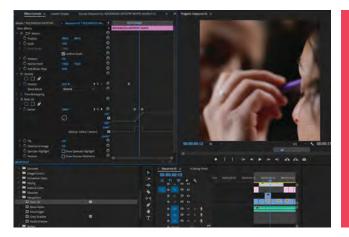
8. BRAND LIKE A PRO

Market research suggests the average attention span while engaged on social media is less than 10 seconds. Brand your video within the first two seconds. Get your name out there first, and keep it up throughout the video. Put the company name up first, give it a little motion pizazz and move on to your video. Keep a small translucent brand/ID marker, or "bug," in a corner of your video. You can even make your bug spin using the Swivel tool (Video Effects > Basic 3D > Swivel), and add a little flair to keep your viewers' brains engaged.









BONUS TIP

Match up the last frame and first frame of your video to make your loop seamless. Instagram and Facebook automatically loop videos, and if your audience is engaged through multiple runs of your video, they are more likely to engage with your content.

9. USE THE POPULAR CANON

Anchor your video with the familiar. I shot and edited Kat Robichaud's "Song for David Bowie," which tells the story of Robichaud hearing the news of Bowie's passing. The link got listed on a Bowie subreddit and views spiked so quickly we thought a bot had to be to blame. Do you have an undying love for a cultural icon? Does a particular decade make you swoon? How can you use pop culture to theme your next video?



○○ Fred Hausman III, Suzanne Yada and 92 others 54 Comments 7 Shares

Comment

Share

10. AUTHENTICITY IS MAGIC

With so much news and views thrown our way, it can be hard to pick out sincerity. If you are working to make an impact in a sea of information, the only you to put out there is with your most authentic self. That David Bowie video wouldn't have worked for someone who is not a true superfan. You can fake it till you make it, but don't try to sell a fake version of yourself or the company you are representing—you'll end up creating more work for yourself to keep up a false image.

1 Like

And there you have it. Mix and match these tips to create a video that will keep your audience engaged to hear your message. And don't just take my word for it. Study your own social media use. What kinds of videos keep you engaged? How long are they holding shots before moving on? What kinds of videos keep you watching for an entire minute or more? Take note of their techniques and borrow where you see fit.

And remember, social media rules of engagement are constantly changing. Who knows, you might just create the next trend.



Andy Strong believes in dancing in public and smiling at strangers, and is scared only of heights. He works behind the camera directing, photographing and videoing artists from Bollywood to Broadway, and specializes in helping businesses of all sizes build their brand and find their truth. When he is not behind the camera, Andy performs with his band the Damn Fanatics. He also enjoys outdoor adventures with his very talented wife and best friend, Ariel Hansen Strong, and their dog, Bowie.

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— Jessica Robertson, M.Photog., Cr., FP Jessica Robertson Photographic Artistry









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Every company dreams of having the perfect well-oiled machine with self-sufficient employees: the go-getters, the self-starters, the idea people, those who can manage themselves and their own daily to-do lists without being micromanaged.

We just don't live in a perfect world.

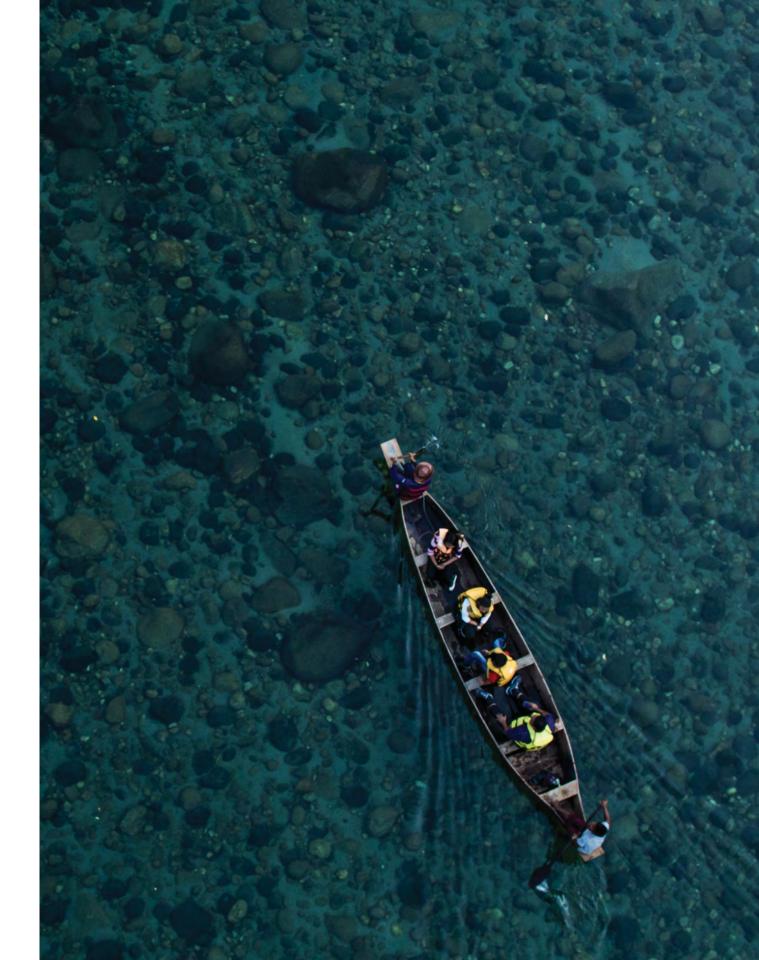
But this dream of a well-oiled machine of a team can be achieved fairly simply. It takes trial and error, of course. And it's going to be painful along the way. You're not going to get it right the first time around (or the second, third, fourth or fifth, sadly). But stick with it. Keep pushing new practices and ideas that work for you and your business, and you will find success for your team.

1. Figure out and implement a workflow and processes.

You're not going to get it right on the first try. Getting your team to a state of true functionality requires a constant state of trial and error. We are still finding broken pieces to our team on a daily basis. It's about what you do and how you respond when you find those pieces. How do you pivot? How do you pick yourselves up? Do you work together to solve the problem? Or do you leave each other out to dry and save yourselves?

I have been with this company for almost seven years, and I spent the first five years working late, painful nights with my team trying endlessly to figure out process and workflow to make our business as efficient as possible. Put the time in now, not once it's too late and your business is exploding. At that point, you're already off to the races and you won't have any policies in place. You'll simply be reacting to all the fires being thrown at you daily. I guarantee you will hate your job.

Take advantage of tools like 17hats. This business tool is there to help you, not to overwhelm you (although it may not seem that way at first). Take a few days and sit with your team to map out your business and your client experience. You will not be able to set up anything in 17hats without knowing and mapping out your client journey. You will also need to set up all of your emails, quotes, invoices, contracts and questionnaires inside the templates before you can create a workflow. People tend to think that because 17hats is meant for helping your business automate processes by creating workflows, that's the first step. Wrong. Do not let this tool scare you away from taking the next step to get started. Reach out to their team for help; it's why they are there.



2. Make sure everyone on your team knows his or her lane—and stays in it.

This is one of the toughest things for our team because we are all so closely integrated with all of the businesses across Cincotta & Co. Aside from the design team, each of us was trained to wear multiple hats across each company inside the umbrella company. We were also taught to always help each other, no matter what—that no one was above doing any task, no matter one's rank or seniority. When we moved into our new building, four of us took turns sweeping, vacuuming, dusting and mopping all three floors every week. We would clean the gutters outside the building. We still do our own dishes and take out our own trash. If the CEO of the company can do these tasks, no one is above any other task at this company.

Lanes are still very important. When it comes to crunch time, each person on your team needs to be able to stay focused on his or her own tasks. Once that line gets blurry, it gets difficult to manage your people on a big-picture level. It would be like me creeping over into Sal's lane and posting Facebook ads for the week for him. That's definitely not my lane. And it makes no sense for me to even be glancing in that territory when I have other things to focus on.

Instead, I have a list of my top eight to 10 things I need to get done for the day. Once I have those things completed and I see that he (or anyone else on my team) is in the weeds, instead of just leaving for the day, I ask if anyone has anything they could give me from their list to free up some tasks. That is the definition of a well-oiled machine. It seems so simple, but, embarrassingly enough, we didn't figure that one out right away.





3. Manage each other's strengths, not weaknesses.

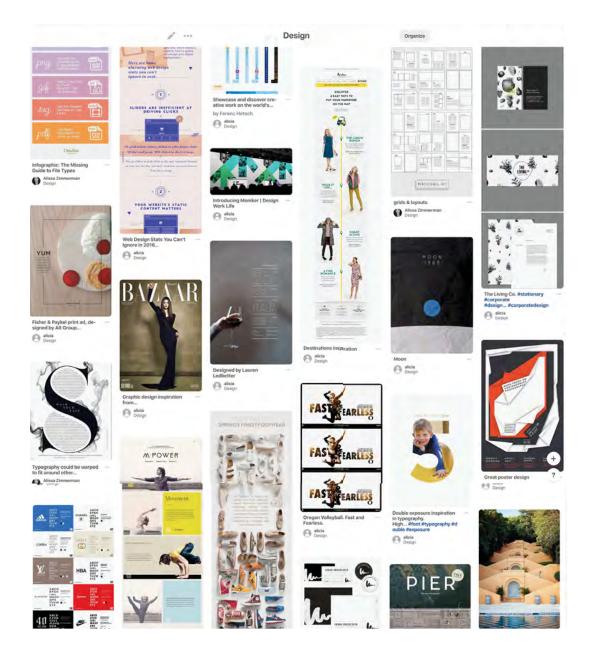
We all took the Gallup StrengthsFinder test a few years ago (and actually have all new employees take it after they pass the 90-day trial period with our team). This test tells you your top five strengths out of a list of 34.

Sal has always managed us in a way he learned when he was younger: You will never teach someone who is a 4 (out of 10) in organizational skills to be a 10 in organizational skills. You'll spend all the energy in the world, and they will never get to 10 by managing them to their weakness. But if that person is an 8 in customer service, you can spend that same energy and easily get them to a 10 by managing them to their strength.

So with the Gallup StrengthsFinder test we all took, we were able to see how we all mesh together to complement Sal's strengths and weaknesses and each other's. (The test is \$99 for the full version, which gives you access to all 34 traits, and \$19 for just your top five traits. Well worth it.)

1. Restorative	People who are especially talented in the Restorative theme are adept at dealing with problems. They are good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it.	VIDEO
2. Deliberative	People who are especially talented in the Deliberative theme are best described by the serious care they take in making decisions or choices. They anticipate the obstacles.	VIDEO
3. Relator	People who are especially talented in the Relator theme enjoy close relationships with others. They find deep satisfaction in working hard with friends to achieve a goal.	VIDEO
4. Adaptability	People who are especially talented in the Adaptability theme prefer to "go with the flow." They tend to be "now" people who take things as they come and discover the future one day at a time.	VIDEO
5. Intellection	People who are especially talented in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.	VIDEO POF

Part of our process is putting together mood boards for every shoot to keep us organized, but that doesn't ever stifle the creative juices. The inspiration comes from everywhere at all times.





Our team shares a few Pinterest boards that we pin to on a regular basis. These boards include photo shoot inspiration, design ideas, studio decoration and photo packaging ideas. Any time any of us on the team sees something online that we like, we pin to shared Pinterest boards.

There's nothing more priceless than this real-time ability to collaborate and share ideas and inspiration with your team.



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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I love long lenses like this because they compress the background and make your subject pop off the background. We took this lens with us on a recent trip to 17-Mile Drive in California to test it out—see the results for yourself. I think you are going to like what you see.

Details:

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- Stabilized: Power Optical Image Stabilizer (OIS) compensates for the hand-shake movement in combination with Lumix cameras supporting Dual IS and Dual IS 2.0 in-camera stabilization
- Fast focusing: Supports sensor drive at maximum 240fps sensor for high-speed autofocusing
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POST-PRODUCTION THAT PACKS A



with **Dustin Lucas**



As creatives, it is in our blood to break out of the box and try something new. If you are not pushing yourself and developing your photography, where's your growth as an artist? In this article, I give you the tools to try something new and pack a punch with your images. We will dive into corrective adjustments and how to direct your viewer. These are the basics you may already be doing today, but we are going to mix things up a bit. You are going to hear about color profiles a lot in Lightroom Classic, which are vital when mixed with color grading techniques.

FROM CAPTURE TO CORRECTIVE CHANGES

As soon as I import, build previews and cull out the bad shots, I have my final set of images. These are all getting a standardized edit to keep as proofs, something I would not necessarily share or post in a portfolio. I would choose my top 20 images to correct for this creative, punchier look I had envisioned at the shoot. The corrective adjustments for lens distortion, straightening the horizon, noise reduction, sharpening, white balance and brightness would be left as I would take the image directly in Photoshop to finish up. Instead, I want to keep everything in Lightroom and make changes across multiple images quickly. (1)



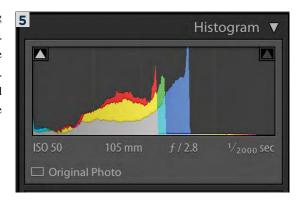
Let's start by correcting for the landscape and pulling in some dynamic range. Keep in mind that we have brushwork to do after that, and we do not want to create more work when we do so. In my corrective edit, I lifted the exposure for the skin tones. Now I want to go back to my initial exposure half a stop lower. You can see the difference with this simple change. (2)



Next, I need to remove the Lens Corrections Vignetting that I like on the 85mm. This already gives us a slight advantage as it burn the edges of the frame right to the main subject if it's centered in the frame. (3)



For the moment, I will leave the white point setting at 0 because it doesn't really help the main subject. Even though we have a gap on the right side of the histogram, I can rely on my dodging to brighten her. (5) Now we can start to use a layered dodge and burn technique to brighten the subject and bring the attention back to her.



DIRECT YOUR AUDIENCE WITH LOCAL ADJUSTMENTS

For Local Adjustments, I like to build up my effects for a natural and subtle look. To add punch, there is nothing subtle about it—we need some drama to move our attention to the model. I start by accessing the Adjustment Brush by striking the K key. We can choose prebuilt settings under the Effects section or apply custom settings.

Before we start, we need to figure out how many layers we want and the right increments of exposure we want to add. We used +0.50 exposure during our corrective, so we don't need to go much brighter than this. As we add a new mask, it's going to add the effect to her face each time, so if we want to do three layers, we need to divide +0.50 evenly. I recommend small increments of exposure since we can always add more masks, and this will look more natural even as a creative edit.

Let's use +0.15 exposure and choose a large brush size, around 20.0, to paint around the subject for our first mask. Feathering is important here because we do not want a hard line or obvious haloing around her. I tend to let half the brush apply outside the edges of the subject. (6)





Now we accentuate her face by increasing the exposure setting to +0.50 and only brightening this in our final dodge mask. I brighten her left arm as well to better balance with her right. (8)





Now we start to nitpick details. Add another mask to her face and warm up her arms. I am really digging this image so far. We have done only a handful of corrections, but they make all the difference. (9)

GET CREATIVE WITH COLOR PROFILES & COLOR GRADING

One of my favorite features of Lightroom Classic 7.3.1 is the new Profile Browser. You can apply standard Lightroom profiles, third-party profiles and the new creative ones. I like to use the Modern profiles because they add different options of a matte style tonality. Modern 08 allows me to keep this matted look without losing too much punch. (10)



Starting in the Basic Panel, we add clarity and vibrance while lowering the saturation to reduce the orange and red tones. (12)





Next, I would naturally want to pump up the dress a bit in the HSL panel. With the target adjustment brush, I can zero in on these colors. When using this panel, we have to remember it affects the entire image, not just the area clicked in. By boosting the red and orange saturation and luminance for the dress and skin, and darkening the cool tones in the background, our image gets a subtle boost. It's like a dodge for the client and a burn for the background. (14)



Once we add some sharpening, our image is about done. (15)



Some final changes would be to darken around the model a bit more and try to burn down the hot spot in the upper right corner. (16) It helps to close your eyes and open them to see where your eyes go naturally. We zone into the hot spots or brightest area of the image, and the goal is to get you to the model. (17)





THE RESULTS

To achieve the best results, you have to dial in the shot up front and shoot for the landscape. This doesn't mean you should completely underexpose your subject and stop down to f16. I find that wider apertures lend themselves to this sort of processing. It's okay if you aren't off-camera lighting your subject. You may have to add more layers of dodging. The most important thing is to build up effects and be subtle with your develop settings. You can always add adjustments, which is much faster than starting over.

Take a few images from a recent shoot and apply these techniques to them. Even if you are not a fan of this type of creative edit, it's healthy to step out of your shell.

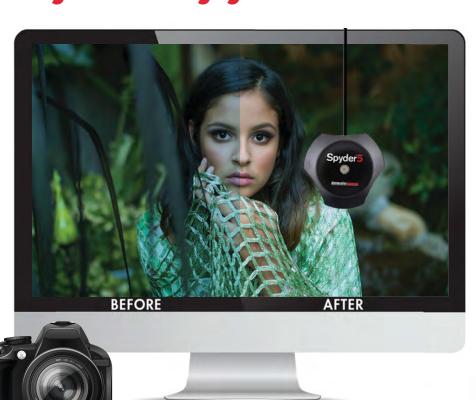




Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his master of fine arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin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

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Bon't Be a Commodity Photographer with Scott Detweiler





Let's coin the term commodity photographer. Think generic can of peas or a jar of salsa with a white label that simply says "SALSA." These products may have different manufacturers, but they are so similar that we often can't tell the difference. Even if you have a brand preference, it might not outweigh that attractive sale price of another product that is so similar.

In the world of photography, this same idea rings true. You might be just another can of peas and not even know it. Let's explore some of the pitfalls and potential solutions to prevent you from being an easily replaceable commodity. Here are a few ways to tell if you fall into the category of a commodity photographer.

Can someone take the same photo you just did but with a cellphone? As a photographer in an age when everyone has a camera attached to their body, you need to step up and deliver in areas where they cannot. That might seem obvious, but maybe it hasn't hit home.

How about your lighting skills? Are you special because you are using only homegrown, farm-raised natural light? Sorry, but you are replaceable by anyone with a good eye for composition, and you better step up your game in other areas to avoid being a can of generic creamed corn. Sure, natural light is beautiful and can be used in creative ways, but it is also available to everyone. Using just natural light and being unique is a much harder battle to win than if you learn to incorporate reflectors or additional light sources into your body of work to separate you from the masses.

Lighting is one of the biggest game changers and one that isn't hard to learn, especially given the number of resources out there. At ShutterFest alone, there are around five lighting classes each day. Maybe it doesn't need to be said, but if you are using a pop-up flash or speedlight on your camera, you are not doing yourself any favors. Most people prefer ambient light to the flat, lifeless light created by light sources in line with the lens.





Take a painting class to up your game. You can learn a lot from classical portrait painters, who place everything on the canvas with a purpose; they even have guidelines for how they do that. Most photographers have probably never taken any type of art class, so this is an excellent place for you to improve your game and differentiate yourself, especially in the higher price ranges. Composition is an area of never-ending education. You can learn from thousands of years of artistic achievements.





mages © Scott Detweiler





Learning to see composition on location is a skill that must be learned. Here are two simple drills you can do to help develop the "photographer's eye."

1. NIFTY FIFTY

Put a 50mm lens on your camera and leave it there for three months. Force yourself to compose images in camera and zoom with your feet. I guarantee you will learn plenty about composition. This is my number-one tip for new photographers. It will change your life.

2. 10-IN-10

Another great drill is the 10-in-10 challenge. Take 10 unique images within 10 feet of your position. They say the most boring place is your own backyard, and this is a great place to challenge yourself with this exercise. I have mentioned this in previous articles and still stand by it as a great way to learn how to see, especially in seemingly dull environments.



Do you snap photos as fast as the camera can take them, or are you focusing on quality over quantity? Giving your client hundreds of photos that have 1/10th of a second between shots isn't doing you (or them) any favors. If you had to change from a CD full of images to a DVD because you needed more space for the steaming pile of pictures you are giving per session, you are more like a can of peas. Not only are they probably never going to look at them, but you have eliminated any additional sales opportunities by giving it all away up front.











There will always be someone willing to offer more for less money. This is how the market works. But your job isn't to be part of the race to the bottom. Once you are the sole creator of your style of art, the competition goes away and money becomes less of an issue for your potential clients. The bitterness your clients will feel as they hand their future generations piles of craptastic images is much, much more significant than the momentary sweetness of a slightly lower price. Your job is to educate your clients. Don't just respond to price requests; tell them about all the care that goes into the images you are producing.

If you attended ShutterFest Extreme this year, you heard how much impact your passion has on influencing the purchase decision. My parents decided to take my senior portraits with the family Polaroid, and to this day, only one crappy image survives. I wish this were a message they could have read, but sadly they are no longer with us. I wish they had saved some entertainment money and put it toward professional photography instead so my kids could see what I looked like when I was their age, but that moment is gone forever. Don't let your clients live with this same mistake. Passion for what you do places you leagues beyond someone who simply has a nice camera. Let them know it.



ge © Scott Detwo

People hire me because they want that look only I can provide—I am the only one who can give it to them. If you are using a bunch of presets you purchased for \$14.99 (normally \$45,950), you are probably kicking out the same work as someone using social media photo filters. If your style is some action that came in a bundle, then you might be producing the same product as 50 other local photographers. Post-production, especially skin retouching, is a considerable differentiator in the market. No one wants senior photos with the skin of their hormonal rage machine in peak season, and smoothing the skin is not going to cut it.







Understanding how to capture those special moments in a meaningful way takes practice. Learning poses that flatter the subject, seeing the light and scouting locations are things anyone can learn, but those skills take time and practice. These are things that many commodity photographers don't do so well, and it is usually pretty obvious.

As a side note, you don't get extra credit for using manual mode on your camera—no one will know the difference in the resulting image. This might seem like a silly point, but more than once I have heard this used as a reason someone should be considered a superior photographer. The image is all that matters. How you get there is your choice, and there is nothing wrong with using those other modes on your camera.









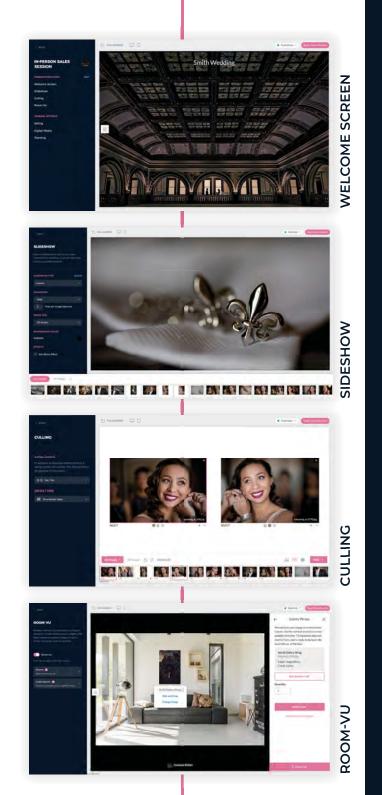
Take some classes, attend workshops and find a style or product that only you can deliver. Oh, and learn to light—or you are also competing against all those cellphone photographers. "Photo" means light, and it is the first part of the word of your chosen profession.

If you are concerned that the neighbor lady next door with the nice camera is stealing your clients, you should probably read this article twice.



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

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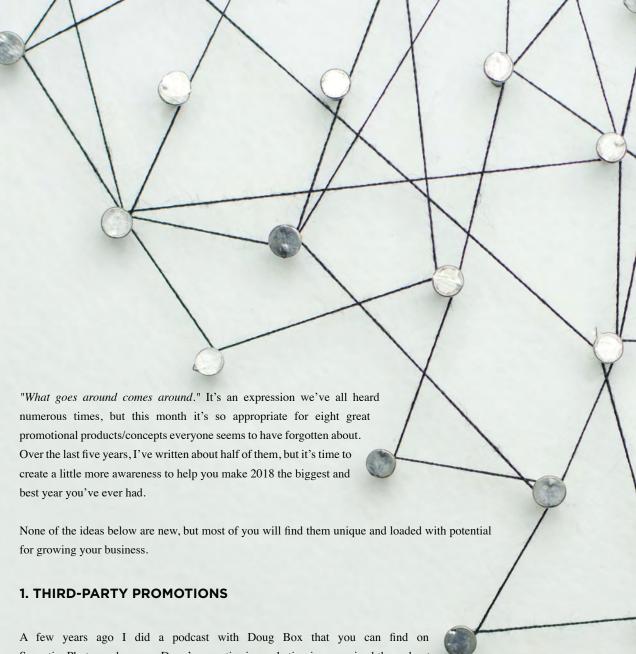
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8 OVERLOOKED PHOTOGRAPHY MARKETING IDEAS

with **Skip Cohen**





SproutingPhotographer.com. Doug's expertise in marketing is recognized throughout the industry, especially in the portrait world.

Doug talked about third-party promotions and gave a great example. A photographer in Texas wanted to offer a discount on her portrait work for an exciting promotion. But if she offered a discount directly, she would be undermining her own pricing and credibility.

Working with Doug, she designed a gift certificate for a local insurance agent. Each time the agent sold a policy, he could present the certificate to the new policyholder as his gift to them. The certificate was customized to his office and brand, protecting the photographer from the challenge of undercutting her own pricing.

The concept works with so many different applications. When we bought our last house, the Realtor brought us a gift basket the day we moved in. There could have easily been a gift certificate in that arrangement for a portrait sitting.

2. DAY-IN-THE-LIFE SHOOTS

Expand your product line with a day-in-the-life shoot for a child, family or pet. These are especially useful for children, who aren't going to do as well in a studio environment anyway. And it doesn't have to be a whole day.

Now think of the potential. Instead of the typical in-studio or on-location portrait session, spending two to four hours with your subject on their turf gives you the ability to be a better storyteller. Photographing a child in their own environment with their friends, family, toys and pets gives you content to build an album and offer something more than just individual prints.

Think about themed storytelling too. Doing a day-in-the-life of a family as they prepare for Thanksgiving is perfect for an unusual album. It also demonstrates your ability as a photojournalist and storyteller.

3. DATE NIGHT

Women make 98 percent of the purchase decisions to hire a professional photographer in the portrait/social categories. That means your best target is Mom. The date-night shoot has incredible appeal to mothers, especially when they have young kids. Your role is to plant a seed of romance, reminding Mom and Dad that's it's been too long since they got out for a night without the kids.

First, contact a restaurant. It doesn't need to by all that upscale, but should be romantic. Work with the management and buy some gift certificates at a reduced cost. Then, remind Mom that it's been way too long since she and her husband went out alone. Just like for an engagement session, do an updated portrait on location before their evening out.

So, your package includes an on-location portrait session and dinner for two at a great restaurant. The couple wins with a night out and an updated portrait. You win with something special for your client, and the restaurant wins because it becomes part of the event.

This is an excellent approach for wedding photographers with past clients. You can modify it to meet the needs of any couple.



4. CANVAS PRINTS

Canvases have been around for years, and even if they make you yawn, think about your clients. They may not have ever seen a beautiful canvas portrait. You can also do a collage of smaller canvas prints for a nice arrangement.

Take it a step further and look at everything your lab is capable of printing on. One of my favorite prints in our home was a shot by Elena Hernandez of Sheila and me several years ago. It's printed on a sheet of stainless steel.

Introduce your clients to old and new printing technology, because it's all new to them.

5. HYBRID SLIDESHOWS

The concept of slideshows isn't new, but technology has made it so easy to capture short video clips and then combine them with still images and great music. I shoot with the Panasonic Lumix, which allows me to go from still images to video and back to stills with the push of a button.

Many of you are missing an opportunity by not offering video slideshows and their endless applications. From holiday cards to engagement and birth announcements to family events, weddings and portraiture, every client has a soft spot for a presentation like this.

While this is going to sound like an infomercial, nobody does it better than Photodex, and its ProShow 9 does it all. I recently put together a slideshow of 60 images and three short video clips for a friend. It took me less than an hour, and that included picking the music and the style of dissolves from the ProShow selections. It's a great presentation, and Photodex has the technology to make it all so user-friendly.

6. SLIDESHOWS AT EVENTS

It's been at least 15 years since Mike Larson told me how he expanded his wedding coverage. Mike, an accomplished photographer from California, always presented an ongoing slideshow at each event during wedding receptions.

He'd download his images at various intervals of the wedding and load them into a slideshow. He had a small projector and used one of his California Sunbounce reflectors for a screen. It couldn't have been easier, and he found his sales increase as guests had fun being part of the evening presentation.

Keep in mind that Mike is also an outstanding photographer. I remember him saying to me, "Skip, you won't believe what I can do with images when they're clean, right out of the can." Mike's skill set is outstanding, and he's able to create instant presentations with his images because he's not wasting time having cleaning them up in post-production.



7. PRESENTATION BOXES

If you've been to ShutterFest, you've seen the PhotoFlashDrive.com booth and Brian Campbell's talented team of creative designers. I'm still amazed that every artist isn't using their products because they do such an incredible job of elevating your presentation of the finished product to the client.

From prints to USB drives to beautiful gifts to your clients, they never miss a beat. And, if there's something you want but don't see in their product list, they'll listen and see if they can help.

Years ago I watched a presentation at ShutterFest by Glen Clark, who talked about packaging and the importance of elevating everything you send to the client. Today it's even more critical than it was back then.

You've got to separate yourself from the competition. When it comes to the finished product being delivered to your client, you're the only one who can give your presentation the respect you know it deserves.



Wood Presentation Set from Photo Flash Drive

8. BELLA ART PRINTS AND POSTERS

If you've been to ShutterFest, you've hopefully met the team from Marathon Press. Their Bella Art Prints are incredible and incredibly affordable. But you can kick it up a notch with their movie-style posters for your clients.

Again, this isn't a new idea, but Marathon is making it more affordable. The whole idea is to create something different from what everybody else offers. A Hollywood-style poster gives you a chance to inject some of your creativity into an upcoming wedding, anniversary or event, and it's got three different applications.

One unique framed poster is a great gift idea. Smaller versions are perfect for a save-the-date message and mailing. The artwork offers a terrific way for your clients to share announcements via social media. And with each poster, you can tag the event at the bottom with your business name in the same way Warner Bros. would tag a movie.

There they are, eight ideas, none of them new, but all of them likely underutilized in your marketing.





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

STROBE/S AVAILABLE LJGH!

with Michael Corsentino





Before flash: This image was captured using only the existing ambient light at the location.

It always makes me smile when photographers tell me they're "available light" shooters. The first thing I do is grab the nearest strobe, hold it over my head in a Statue of Liberty pose and ask, "Do you see this strobe? Guess what? It's an available light." If photography is just your hobby and available-light shooting is what you're comfortable with, that's perfectly fine. But if you're aspiring to be a pro, you're doing yourself and your clients a disservice by not learning how to use flash.

Photography is all about light and the interplay it creates between shadows and highlights. Whether you're in the studio or on location, strobes put you in the driver's seat for quality of light and the shadows and highlights that result. Even if you're a hobbyist without strobes, you're missing out on a wide range of creative choices and options. Any way you look at it, flash benefits every photographer.

To the uninitiated, strobes can be intimidating. Knowing where to start can be confusing. I've met many photographers who don't consider themselves technically inclined, so they stay away from flash. This fear keeps people away from using strobe more than anything else. The good news is these fears are completely unfounded and using strobes is actually very simple. What if I told you I could give you the flexibility to shoot anywhere you want, any time of the day you want, and create any type of lighting you want regardless of the prevailing ambient light conditions? That's what strobes afford us: maximum flexibility and creativity.

Without strobes, you're at the mercy of ambient light conditions. That means if the sun is bright and harsh, your images will be bright and harsh. If it's overcast, your images will be flat and lack contrast. If the sun is setting, the sky may look gorgeous but your subject will be underexposed. Even if the ambient light is cooperating, providing great illumination, that's where it begins and ends. The only option you have is to work with the light Mother Nature is providing at that moment.

What if that's not the quality of light you want? What if the lighting changes suddenly? With strobe, you create the lighting you want rather than the light you're given. Get excited rather than intimidated by the creative options possible with strobe. Treat flash just like you treat your camera—they're both just tools. Learn how to use them, when to use them, when to turn them on and when to turn them off. You'll be glad you did.

One of the best ways I know to get available-light shooters excited about strobe is to show them firsthand what's possible with a before and after flash shootout. I'll have them shoot ambient only at first, and then turn on one or more strobes to show them what a difference flash can make.

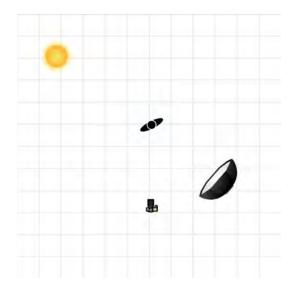
The before and after flash images you're seeing here are from a recent workshop I did in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I've included these images rather than my own to demonstrate that anyone, even people with little to no experience with strobe, can produce awesome images with flash. At a minimum, all you need is one light and a desire to learn and push beyond your comfort zone. I love seeing people's reactions when they see what they can do with strobes. As you can see from these before and after pictures, strobes open up a world of possibilities. Strobe also gives your images a polished and professional look that can go a long way toward differentiating you in your market.

The effects you can get with strobes run the gamut from a simple kiss of fill light on your subject's face to completely overpowering the sun and creating a super dark, moody look. The only limit is your creativity. Strobes allow you to underexpose the ambient light (using shutter speed) while using flash to properly expose your foreground subject. Think environmental portraits. Add high-speed sync into the mix, and the latitude for your ambient and flash exposures becomes even greater.

With this method, you can shoot with wide apertures and flash at the same time, perfect for location portraits. Strobes give you control over the amount and quality of illumination. You control the contrast, degree of illumination, the amount of shadow created, whether those shadows are soft or crisp, where the light falls, how much of it illuminates your subject (using grids) and whether you want light on the background (via distance or another strobe).



After flash: Using strobe allows you to underexpose the ambient light and fill your subject back in with flash. It's perfect for holding detail in a cloudy sky. With this technique, you can create a wide latitude of balances between ambient and flash, anything from dark and moody to just a kiss of fill flash to open up the shadows on a subject's face. Adding high-speed sync permits the use of shutter speeds beyond your camera's native sync speed and shallow apertures.



Using the sun as a background accent/rim/kicker light is a great way to work with two light sources when you have only one strobe. This diagram illustrates a pattern known as cross light, where each light is placed on the diagonal opposite each other. When you don't have the sun at your disposal or in the right position, you can easily use a second strobe with a CTO gel. This is exactly what we did when shooting in the alley and Before flash: This image was captured using only the field locations.



existing ambient light at the location.

This is a classic lighting pattern known as cross light. It couldn't be simpler and it works like a charm to create sophisticated, layered and dimensional lighting.



In this BTS image, you see a strobe positioned behind the subject's left shoulder and the edge of the keylight modifier used on the camera on the right side of the image. This is a After flash: Combining flash and ambient light classic cross-light arrangement. Note the CTO gel on the strobe behind the subject. This was used to replicate the with a quality of light not possible using only warm glow of the afternoon sun.

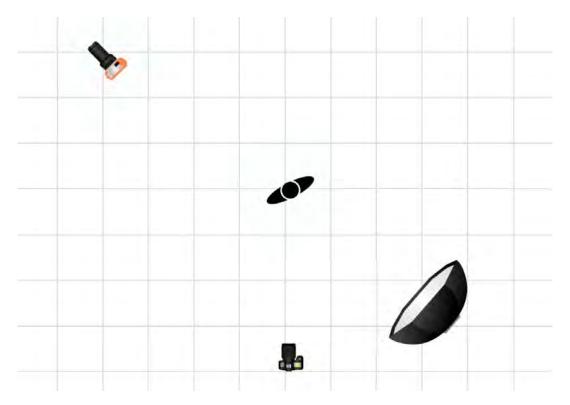


creates a dramatic, sophisticated, moody look available light.



Before flash: This image was captured using only the existing ambient light at the location.

It's easy to replicate the warm glow of the afternoon sun even when it's nowhere in sight. All you need is a strobe and a sheet of color temperature orange gel (CTO). I use this technique on an accent light placed behind subjects on location to create a warm setting-sun look.



Placing a color temperature orange (CTO) gel in front of the strobe is a great way to replicate the warm glow of the afternoon sun. As illustrated here, I often use this technique as an accent light placed behind my subjects while illuminating them from the front with the keylight.

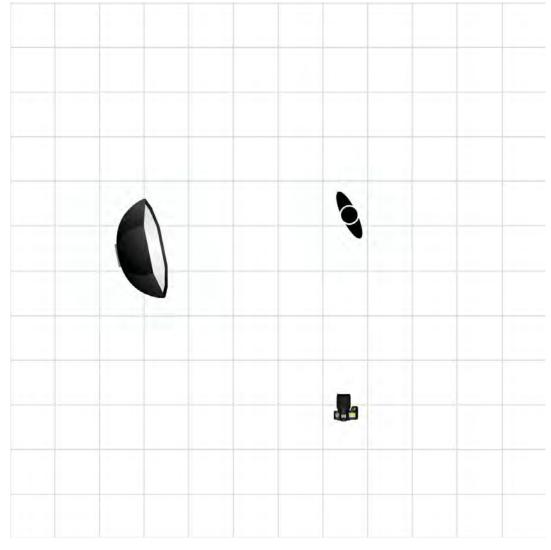




After flash: Two strobes arranged in a cross-light pattern, one in front and one behind (with CTO gel), takes the image to an entirely different level than ambient alone.

The fun with strobes, gels and ambient light doesn't stop there. Another favorite trick I love to show strobe newbies is how to turn ambient light into a cool blue tone while keeping their subject in perfect white balance. This cool modern look is easily accomplished by switching your camera's white balance setting to tungsten. Then, all the ambient light in the scene shifts to blue.

To bring your subject back into proper white balance, all you need to do is add a sheet of full-cut color temperature orange gel (CTO) in front of the strobe you're using as your keylight. CTO gel perfectly matches the tungsten color balance being used and brings whatever it illuminates back into the proper white balance. You end up with a steely-blue ambient background and a subject illuminated by light with the correct color balance for tungsten an awesome effect.



Setting your camera's color temperature to tungsten while shooting outdoors shifts the color temperature of the ambient light in the scene to blue. Placing a CTO gel in front of the flash brings back whatever it's illuminating into proper daylight color balance.



Before flash: This image was captured using only the existing ambient light at the location.



After flash: By simply changing the camera's color balance to tungsten, you're able to shift the ambient light in an outdoor scene to blue. Using a strobe with a CTO gel in front of the flash brings back whatever it's illuminating into proper daylight color balance. This technique works well with modern and contemporary locations like this office building facade.

The before and after images in this article are just the beginning of what's possible. I hope that seeing them gets you as excited about strobes as I am. One or more strobes, a desire to learn and explore, and a guiding hand (me) is all you need to take your photography to the next level with flash.

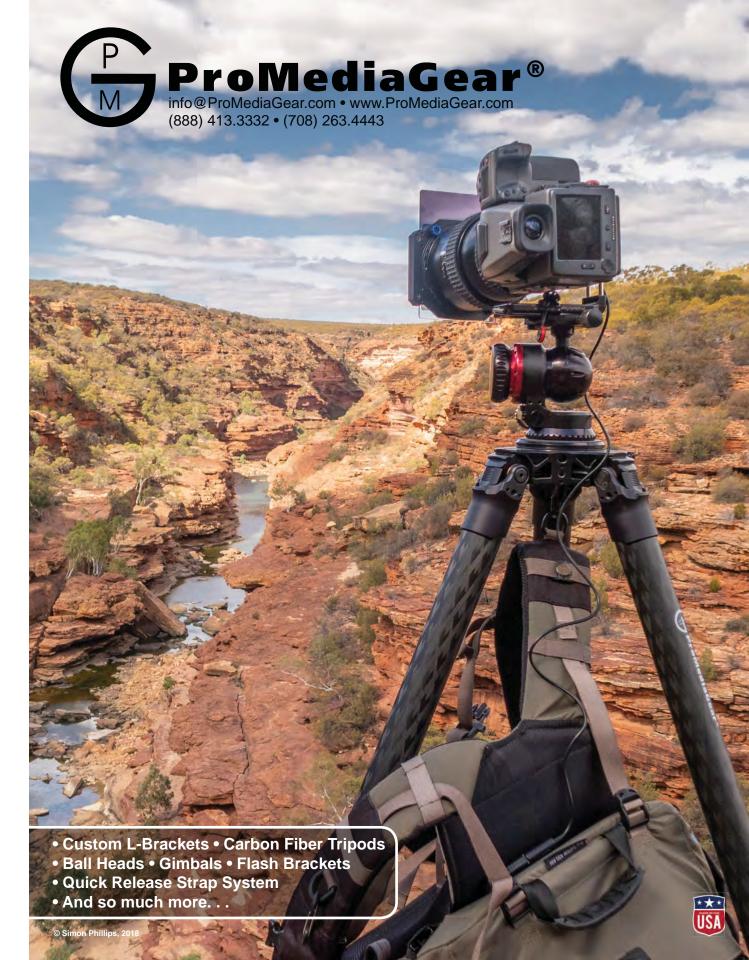
If this article has you fired up, I encourage you to get out there and swing for the fences. Dig through my previous columns in *Shutter Magazine* and check out my companion videos on Behind the Shutter's YouTube channel. Everything you need is there.





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





PRODUCTIVITY PROPUCTIVITY

with Christine Yodsukar

Back to present day, we have the same revenue, except I work only five and a half hours a day. How on earth did I go from working 12 hours a day to this, and still make the same amount of money? The funny answer is that I had a baby. The real answer is that I became more productive.

Becoming more productive means becoming more profitable. One option is to do the same number of activities but in less time. Let's say your time is worth \$100 per hour and you make \$1,200 for 12 hours of work. If you do the same amount of work in less time, you are now making the same amount of money but doing it in six hours a day instead of 12. Instead of your time being worth \$100 per hour, it is now worth \$200 per hour. The dollar value of your hour has just doubled.

Another option is, instead of sipping on a margarita with those six hours you saved—or in my case, enjoying one-on-one time with my two-year-old son—you now add more revenue-building activities into those remaining hours. Instead of making \$1,200 for 12 hours of work, you are now making \$2,400 for those 12 hours of work because you increased the dollar value of your hour to \$200 and then smashed that full 12 hours of work.

Whether you want to make more money to take care of your family or you want to get your work done in less time so you have more time to do other important things, productivity tweaks can help you get there.



SCHEDULING YOUR DAY

I recently saw a video by a man named Jay Shetty in which he poses this question: "What would you do if each day you were given \$86,400, and if you didn't use it, you lost it?" You immediately think about what you would do with all that money. Here's the punchline: That figure, 86,400, is not dollars, it's seconds. That is how many seconds we have every single day. Everyone has the same amount, and everyone can choose to do with it as they wish.

With this in mind, we have to schedule our days to allow us to be productive and profitable. We need to know what we are doing before we can do it better. The first thing you need to do to schedule your day is write down the must-haves.

High Performance Coach Brendon Burchard, author of New York Times Bestseller High Performance Habits, talks about needing at least three 50-minute work time blocks in your day. If you have less than three, it will be hard to take your business anywhere. The 50 minutes for each time block allows you 10 minutes of transition time between activities. I've found this to be extremely important in letting my mind reset when I finish one thing before moving on to the other, which makes me better at the next activity.

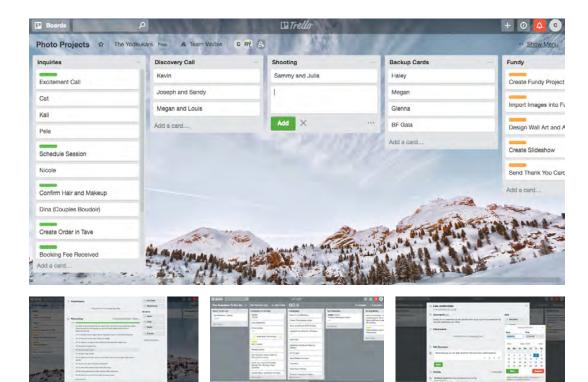
Next, you want to include time for your health and wellbeing, both physically and mentally. This includes eating, exercise and time for quieting your mind. For quieting the mind, I prefer meditation. A simple 20 minutes a day makes me feel like I've just uncovered some of life's greatest secrets; at the very least, I'm able to let go of worries and fears I've gathered up that day.

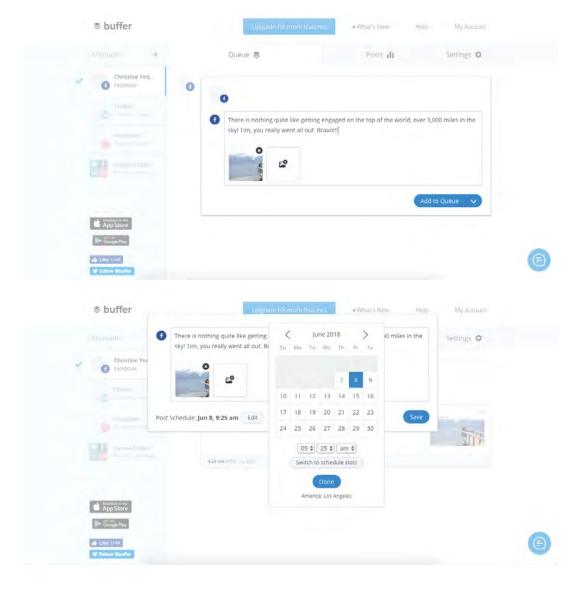
Some of my coaching clients prefer Bible time or just sitting in silence with a cup of coffee. We often overlook this time for quieting of our minds, but this is when we gain that all-important clarity. And how many times have we forgotten to eat? Too many. That is why I schedule six times a day to eat, so I never forget. And lastly, we need to exercise every single day. I admit that this is the first thing to go when I've let myself feel overwhelmed and stressed, because it's just so easy to not go to the gym. Studies have shown, however, that exercise releases serotonin, the feel-good chemical, which reduces stress, anxiety and depression. We could all use less stress.

Now that you have some of the things you need in your day to be the best business person you can be, schedule them however works best for you. I plan my day with alarms so I never miss something I am supposed to be doing. Check out this free tool to help you schedule your day at https://www.theyodsukars.com/how-to-schedule-your-day-to-achieve-anything-you-want.

I use Trello more than any other productivity tool. It is like a series of virtual whiteboards with as many boards as you want, as many teams as you want, and layers and layers of information within. I use Trello with my Photo Project Board. Every qualified lead we get is entered into this board on a list called Inquiries. This list contains areas for that card to move through: Schedule Session, Confirm Hair and Makeup, Send Booking Email to Client and so on. After Inquiries, they move into the Discovery Call list, Photographing, Backing Up Cards, etc. Within each client's card, I keep notes about them and their session or artwork that I don't want to forget.

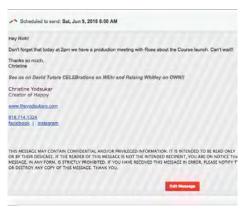
I also have Trello boards for our video branding clients, allowing them to drop ideas they have into our Swipe File list if they see something that inspires them that they want to share. There are even boards for my Blogging, Social Media and Speaking. Trello keeps me organized and connected with my team.





Another amazing tool for productivity is Buffer, which allows you to take one of your 50-minute time blocks in your new daily schedule and create a week's worth of Facebook posts all at once and schedule them for throughout the week. No longer do you have to scramble each day as you remember that you didn't post anything that day and have no idea what to post. With Buffer, you can take your time, create well-thought-out and strategic content, and schedule it all.

The tool I use the most for client work is the software I use to design and sell my artwork to my clients. Fundy Designer allows me to design a wedding album in 20 minutes or less. I also design wall art for my clients that I can then reveal to them in their Design Consultation within the same software. Design Software is a must for any photographer. Now you're not spending hours in Photoshop creating your albums and artwork.



The last tool for productivity that I want to share with you is Boomerang for Gmail. I used it every day when my son was brand new because I was up in the middle of the night more than I was during the day. Boomerang allows you to schedule when an email will be sent. Even though I was writing and responding to emails at 2:00 and 3:00 a.m., I could schedule them to be sent at 7:15 a.m. while I was sound asleep trying to catch up from being up all night. I love this tool because it allows me to keep that level of professionalism by sending emails during working hours when my actual work schedule isn't normal at all.





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

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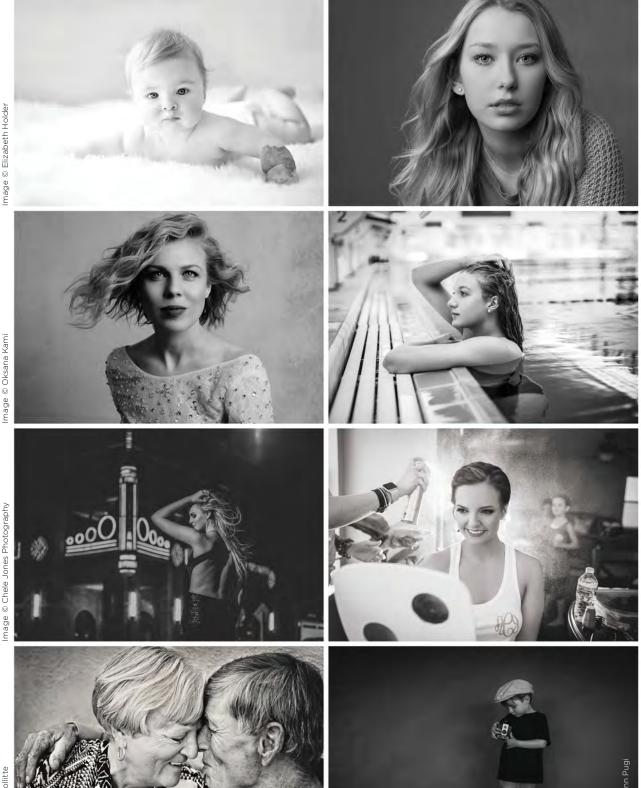












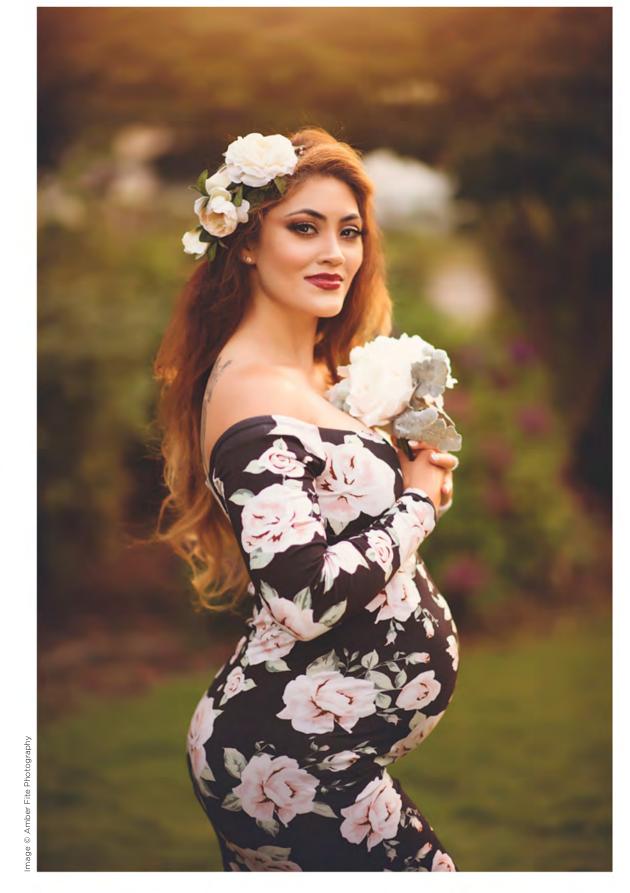




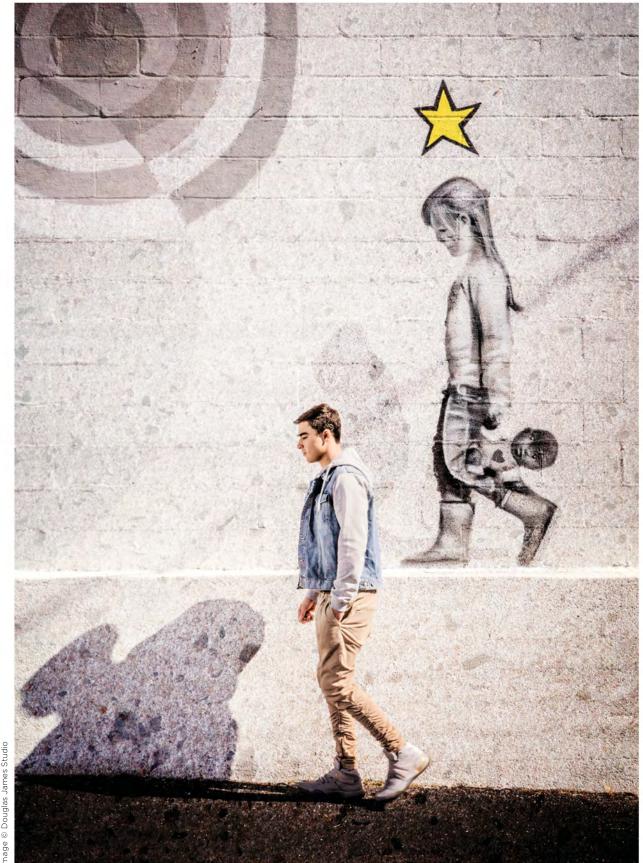








Inspirations | Our Readers











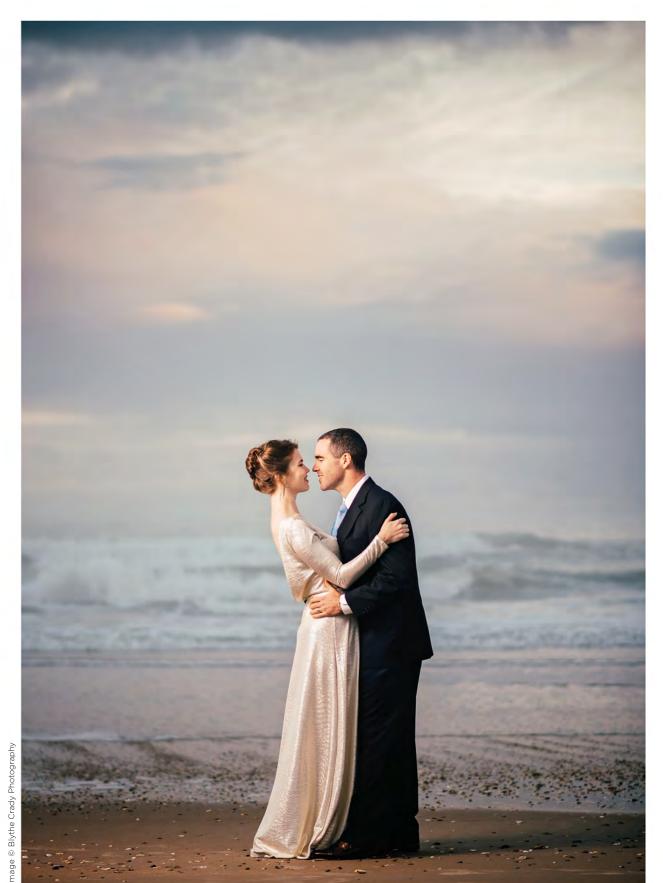










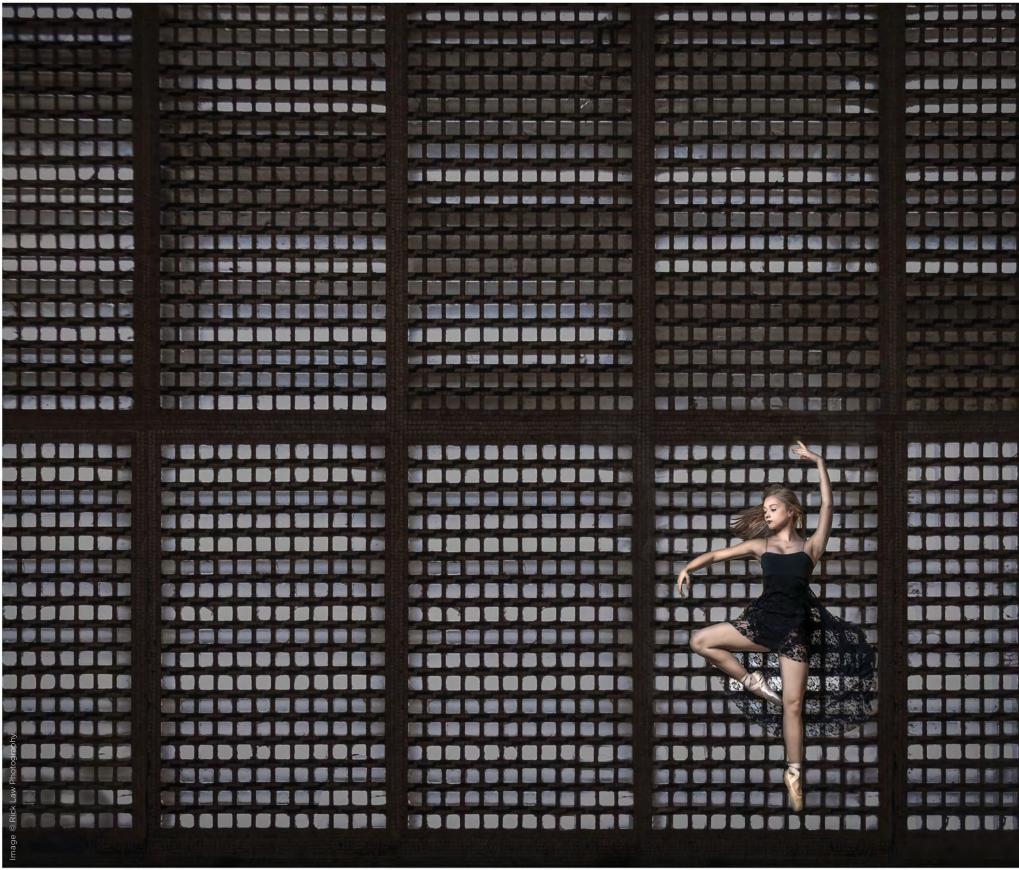






















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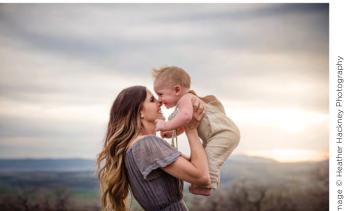












































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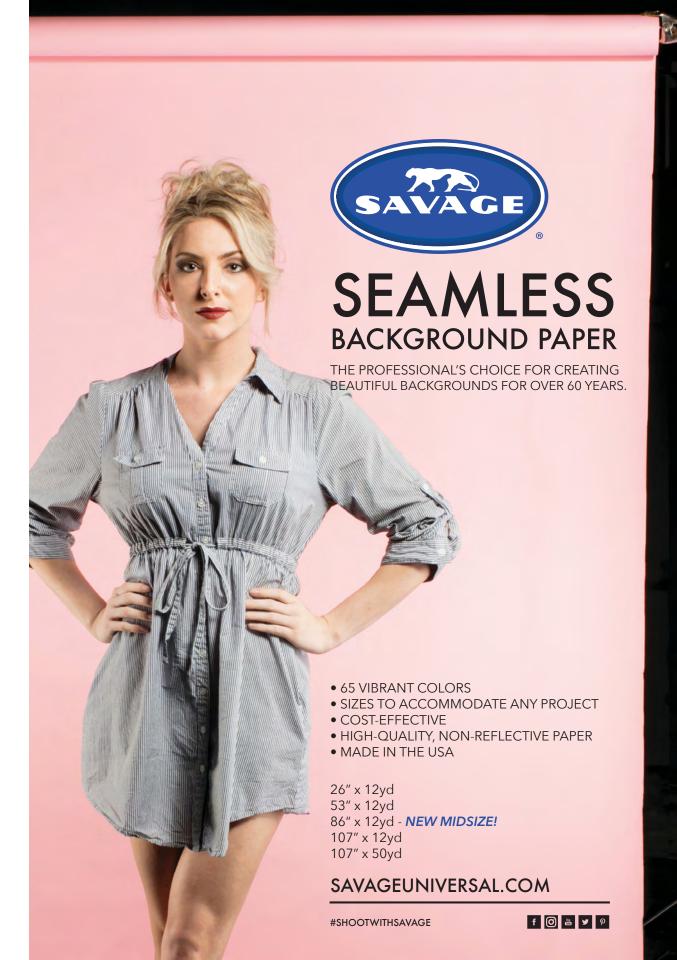
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final inspiration

photographer | salvatore cincotta image title | arna



exposure | lighting location

f9 @ 1/250, ISO 100 profoto b1 | ocf beauty dish snæfellsnes peninsula, iceland gear | phase one iq3 | schneider 80mm f2.8







"I'm not ruled by the circumstances" Michael Anthony

"The one thing I value most about the Profoto system over any other lighting brand is creative consistency. I know that my equipment is going to work every single time no matter what environment that I'm working in and I know that I'm going to have the tools to create the perfect image to match my vision, every time."

Watch the video at profoto.com/michaelanthony

