It takes more than pretty pictures to run a successful business.

Success starts with organization.

-Sal Cincotta Editor-in-Chief, Shutter Magazine & 17hats Member

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17 hats

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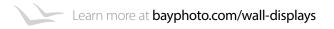
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Goodbye Chaos Hello Organization

Business experts Amanda and Donovan answer your questions on how to get organized.

Ever feel overwhelmed by running a business? Is your desk covered in "Don't forget!" stickie notes?

You're not alone. Fortunately, there's an easy way to get organized. Donovan Janus and Amanda Rae (formerly a wedding photographer herself) have helped thousands of photographers with 17hats, the all-in-one business platform that makes business easier.

Should I really invest the time to get organized?

Amanda: Yes! It's crucial. In our experience, the photographers who find success are the ones who get organized early on.

Donovan: And chaos can be costly. You'll make it work at first. Everyone does.

But, as your business grows, you'll forget simple things like returning calls and sending emails. And, your to-dos for the day move over to the next day, making your list overwhelmingly long.

Now you're stressed that your clients aren't getting the experience they paid for, and you start dreading that angry phone call. It's a high price to pay – and all because you failed to get organized at the outset.

Amanda: Bring everything to one place. Obviously, we think that place should be 17hats. (Laughs.) The point is, you need all your contacts and project info at your fingertips.

Donovan: Then commit to streamlining. For instance, 17hats email templates let our members create one email that can be personalized when sent to clients. No more writing the same email over and over!

to being organized?

I'm overwhelmed, and

I have to get organized.

How do I start?

Amanda: Other than keeping your sanity?! (Laughs.) For starters, you can reclaim hours in your day at all times. No more searching for stickie notes or writing on the back of old receipts.

Donovan: Right – organization will allow you to systemize and automate. Leads are now automatically responded to. Clients get automatic billing reminders. Why waste time doing tasks you can automate?

Amanda: Yes. It's that easy. Success relies on organization. Organize. Systemize. Grow. That's it.

17hats is amazing. It's like having an assistant! The workflows keep everything neat and organized. Oh, and no more paper! -Marcy E., Photographer & 17hats Member

Unlock the power of organization. Visit 17hats.com to get started.

7 hats

What's the upside



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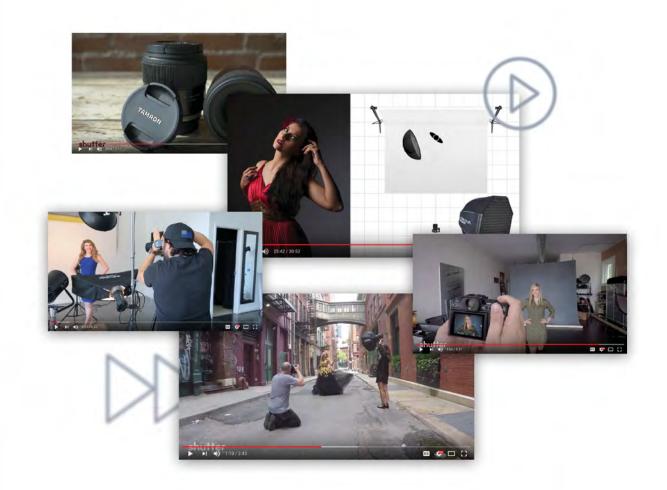
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Shutter Magazine's focus is on photography education. Our goal is to provide current, insightful and in-depth educational content for today's professional wedding and portrait photographer. Shutter uses the latest technologies to deliver information 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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Success is not always black & white. It's the grey area that makes the difference between success and failure. Sal Cinco

LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief



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Your Dream Studio: Understanding & Controlling Overhead Expenses with Jeff & Lori Poole

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Building Your Dream Studio

In last month's Business Corner, we started making an annual plan for your studio so that you know how much your studio has to make for you to make your desired salary.

A well-run home-based studio keeps approximately 45% of every dollar it makes. Your net profit should be 45% of your gross sales. This means that for a take-home pay of \$75,000, your studio should be grossing at least \$167,000:

$$\frac{\$75,000}{0.45} = \$166,666.67$$

To learn more on how to work these numbers and turn them into a plan of X shoots at Y dollars each, see last month's article (August 2018, "Your Dream Studio: Creating an Annual Plan").

Only 45%? But it doesn't really cost me anything to shoot and burn.

A common mistake that many new photographers make is assuming they keep every dollar they make. Businesses cost money. Whether you only offer digital files or you are a full-service studio, there are still costs involved. Cameras, lenses, memory cards, computers, hard drives, ink, paper, pens, internet, electricity, gas in your car-it adds up. If you're serious about making money in this business, it's important to treat it as a business. That means recognizing your expenses and learning to budget for them.

Every photographer should open a business checking account. Deposit all your sales into that account and deduct your expenses from that account. Do not buy personal items from your business account and do not buy business items from your personal account. Once you keep your finances separate, you'll begin to see your sales and expenses much more clearly.





Where does the rest of my money go?

As you start tracking the dollars you spend, they should fall into one of two categories: general expenses (commonly referred to as "overhead") and cost of sale.

Cost of sale refers to money that you spend in serving a client. It includes the cost of goods (the thing you're selling, be it a canvas print or a USB drive). It also includes costs for shipping, packaging, mileage and meals on the job. Other costs are contract labor paid per job, such as a second shooter, retoucher or album designer. Stay tuned for next month's issue when we explore cost of sale in depth.

General expenses, or overhead, is money that you spend that is not tied to a client or sale. General expenses can be broken down into these subtypes:

- Building overhead: rent/mortgage, utilities, insurance
- Administrative: dues, subscriptions, education/convention registration, office supplies, software, mileage, props, bank fees
- Marketing expenses: studio samples, paid advertising, wedding or other trade shows
- Employee expenses: hourly employees or office assistants
- Depreciation: camera gear, lighting, furniture, computers and other major purchases

Set up your accounting software or checkbook register (for your business checking) so that you categorize every expense as either General Expenses or Cost of Sale. Bonus points if you further subcategorize your General Expenses as listed above. You should not need to get much more granular unless you are aligning your subcategories with deduction types on your tax return.

Cost of sale should be no more than 25% of your gross sales. General expenses should be no more than 30% for a home-based studio or 40% for a retail studio. This should leave you with at least 45% net profit (home) or 35% net profit (retail).

Home Studio Retail Studio



2018



I spend too much on general expenses. What do I do?

It's not uncommon for photographers to realize they are overspending the first time they analyze their books in this way. Even if your accounting results aren't optimal, it's still a great bit of knowledge for you to have. Once you know there's a problem, you can take steps to fix it.

Our first year in business as Indigosilver studio, Jeff and I spent 68% of our gross sales on general expenses. We spent 38% on cost of sale. Now, if you're paying attention, you'll realize that 68% plus 38% adds up to more than 100%, which means we spent more money than we made. We closed out 2010 at a loss, despite making nearly \$90,000 in gross sales. It was incredibly discouraging to be going deeper into debt instead of living our dream.

We were able to reverse the trend by learning basic managerial accounting. Once we knew we were overspending, we could focus on cutting costs. If your cost of sale is too high, it usually means you don't have enough markup on your products.

Where can you trim the fat?

Take a hard look at your general expenses and evaluate where you might be overspending. This is often a tough analysis that requires looking at some difficult truths. Here are some common areas where photographers overspend.

Building Overhead: Are you living outside your means? Do you really need the location you're in? Jeff and I realized that a studio in the heart of downtown was not the best financial decision. We moved our studio to the suburbs and immediately added \$800 a month to our bottom line.



Administrative: Photographers love conventions. Jeff and I love conventions. We speak at them, and love seeing our photographer friends from all over the country. We believe in the value of in-person learning. But if money is tight, we may be more selective in which conventions we attend. We learned to scale back on buying every e-course, webinar, action and preset we came across. Some courses you buy on impulse, telling yourself you'll watch them in your downtime, only to find them buried on your hard drive three years later.

Watch your prop spending. Newborn and children photographers collect hats, wraps, fabrics, chairs and more. If you're getting Amazon deliveries on the daily, it might be time to scale back. If you're bored with your current selection, befriend your local competitors and offer to prop-swap instead of buying new.

Marketing Expenses: Cutting marketing expenses can be a double-edged sword. You don't want to reduce your exposure so much that you lose sales. Get creative with your marketing. Attend networking events and pass out your business card. Learn to give your elevator pitch to everyone you meet. Collaborate with other vendors in your area.

Employee Expenses: We know. You're so swamped. You couldn't imagine not having Karen answer your phone or package prints while you edit your images. But if you have a jack-of-all-trades assistant, she is probably not operating at maximum efficiency. Studies have proven over and over that multitasking is extremely inefficient. Karen simply can't get a lot done if she has to stop whatever she's doing to answer the phone, and then stop to send that email you just thought of, and then stop to do that other task you just realized has to be done right now. That means you're bleeding money on an assistant that's hard to tie directly to improved sales.

Instead, work on your own efficiency with systems. Systematize each task in your business until you do it the same way, quickly, predictably, every time. Use the Pomodoro Technique for better productivity. Better yet, start outsourcing. Delegate routine tasks like editing to someone you can pay per job instead of a catchall hourly employee. You'll save time and money. For an in-depth discussion on efficiency and outsourcing, watch the bonus video that accompanies this article.



Depreciation: Do you have gear acquisition syndrome? Do you buy that new camera body, lens or flash every time it's updated? "But it has this new feature than gives me sync speeds of one bajillionth of a second." Gear purchases should be evaluated like every other business decision: Does it make you more money? Is there a return on investment? Or are you just a gear junkie indulging in retail therapy? Most likely, you can squeeze another year or two out of your gear before it's truly deprecated. New gear is fun, but it's an expense that can easily be trimmed.

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Your Dream Studio: Understanding and Controlling Overhead Expenses | Jeff & Lori Poole



A PENNY SAVED IS A PENNY EARNED

By now, you can see that saving pennies and cutting costs diminishes your expenses, which in turns increases your net profits. Lots of small cuts throughout your budget can add up to big savings.

As for me and Jeff? 2010 was a loss. In 2011, we made a tiny profit, but not enough. In early 2012, we invested in learning business. That's when we moved our studio to a more affordable location, and our journey to financial balance began. Within a year, we increased our net profit to 29% (almost to the 35% benchmark for retail studios). We kept trimming costs and working our numbers, inching that profit higher.

For the past two years, Jeff and I have brought home net profits of over 50%-well beyond the benchmark. It feels so good to see that progress. It takes hard work and commitment, but no one said running your dream business was easy. Are you in?





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. Their Shutter Magazine column, The Business Corner, is dedicated to helping you grow your photography business.

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BUILDING THE RIGHT WORKFLOW

FROM **LIGHTROOM** TO **Photoshop**

with Dustin Lucas

Ps

To build the right post-production workflow, we have to look at what we want to accomplish as an end result and where we can save the most time. As a Lightroom user, I feel like I've milked as much efficiency out of this program as I can, but because of the back and forth with Photoshop, I have to create different workflows. Within these workflows, I have to rely on Photoshop Actions to streamline each edit, but what about large batches of images? We're in wedding season and I've got over a thousand images ready to export out of Lightroom!

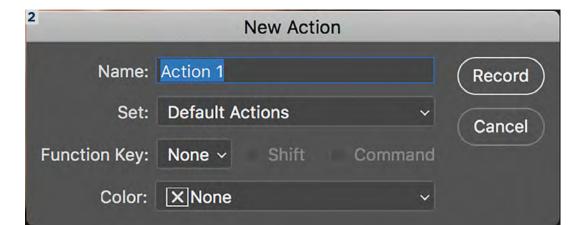
Photoshop has automation tools for batch editing and processing images to create copies. These allow you to apply actions directly to your edited images. This is great if you've already exported your edits out of Lightroom. To export and apply actions in one fell swoop, you can use Photoshop droplets during export from Lightroom. Droplets are a script that work with Lightroom-to-Photoshop workflows to run an action on multiple images. For batch processing, there is no better time-saving workflow. For your creative edits, you can set yourself up to quickly dodge and burn, custom-tone and mask skin-softening effects instantly.

Now you can export your wedding images and get them ready to deliver in no time.

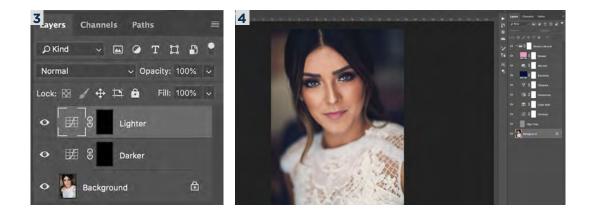
SETTING UP LIGHTROOM-TO-PHOTOSHOP WORKFLOWS

First, create an arsenal of actions or just a few handy ones. Open an image in Photoshop. Access the Actions panel by clicking on Window in the top menu bar and choosing Actions. If this is your first time creating Actions, you only have a default set available. (1) Click the folder icon at the bottom of the panel to create an Action Set. This organizes all your actions in one place. Once you make one, click the Create an Action icon to the right. We can name the action to recall later; add to a preexisting set or create a new one; assign a function key to quickly apply it through a combination of keystrokes; and color-label it for easier visibility. (2)

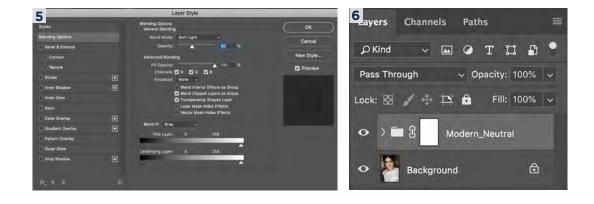
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✓ 🗆	> Custom RGB to Grayscale
~	> Molten Lead
~	> Sepia Toning (layer)
~	> Quadrant Colors
✓ 🗆	> Save as Photoshop PDF



Once we click Record, everything we do will be logged in our action. You can add adjustment layers, invert masks and build multiple prep actions ready for you to paint on effects. (3) For creative effects, it can get really heavy-handed, so you will want to adjust layer opacity, blend modes, fill opacity, etc. by editing the layer style versus adjusting in the layers panel. (4)

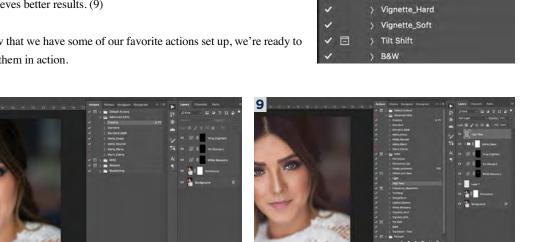


To access the current layer style, just double-click on the one you want to fine-tune. This saves yourself multiple steps in your action in the base you need to edit later. (5) Group layer adjustments together and create a layer mask so you can quickly mask out the entire grouping of layer adjustments later. (6)



Create single-step actions first like skin smoothing, dodge and burn, flatten and save, sharpening, white recovery, B&W conversion and convert to 300ppi. These can be included in certain creative actions, so it's good to have them separated in case you need to apply simple adjustments. (7) I typically combine my skin softening, dodge and burn, and recovery adjustments layers into a single action as a creative starting point. This would be applied to 20 to 30 of the best images I plan to apply creative toning actions to. Since I dodge and burn, mask skin smoothing and recover hotspots, I keep the creative actions separate. (8) This keeps my creative workflow organized and achieves better results. (9)

Now that we have some of our favorite actions set up, we're ready to put them in action.



7' 🖃 🗸 🖿 MISC

> Portraiture > Portraiture Lite

> Light

> High Pass

> Yin/Yang > Dodge/Burn

> Lighten/Darken

> White Recovery

> Image_processor

> Flatten and Save

> Frequency_Seperation

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WORKFLOW A: EDIT IN PHOTOSHOP

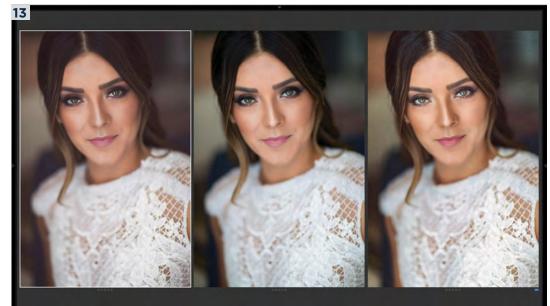
We are back in Lightroom ready to edit in Photoshop. Hold Command and strike the "E" key. This converts our Raw file into a Tiff file and opens immediately into Photoshop to apply our actions. (10) If you want to change your preferences, go to the preferences External Editing tab to change file type, color space, bit depth, resolution and compression. I prefer using Adobe's suggested settings of 16-bit ProPhoto RGB. (11) That's not a bad option because you can work one image at a time from Develop or select multiple images from Library. This requires us to apply the action manually for each image.



We can use the Automate Batch processor to apply an action to the opened images instantly. Under the Play settings, choose the set and action to apply. For source, we want to click in the box and select Opened Files. Lastly, set the destination setting to None so it leaves the images open; otherwise, it saves and closes your edits. Save and close would make sense if you were batch-applying an effect and wanted them to close and load back into Lightroom. (12)

Once we save our edit, the newly created files are loaded into Lightroom next to the original Raw file. This allows your workflow to be built on organization. (13)

12	Batch		
Play	Destination: None ~		ОК
Set: Advanced Edits			
Action: Creative			Cancel
Source: Folder v	File Naming		
Choose			
Override Action "Open" Commands			
Include All Subfolders			
Suppress File Open Options Dialogs			
Suppress Color Profile Warnings		- Alter	



8

Another preference you can choose is to have the exported copy stacked with the original. (14) This allows you to collapse all stacks after you save edits in Photoshop and the Raw file is hidden. That's useful so that when you're exporting images for a client, you don't have duplicate color-corrected files following the creatives. (15ab)

This workflow is great for quick edits and small batches of images. But we need to export a thousand images with some simple adjustments that Lightroom can't handle. This is not a viable option here. This is exactly what Photoshop droplets are for.





WORKFLOW B: EXPORT WITH DROPLETS

Just as with creating actions, we need to build an arsenal of droplets for each action we want to apply. Remember, you can apply only one action per droplet, so we want to combine any actions we'd like to batch together. Applying skin smoothing to all the exported images is a major time saver. I can now apply Portraiture to all my images right out of Lightroom without waiting for the export to complete and run another batch process.

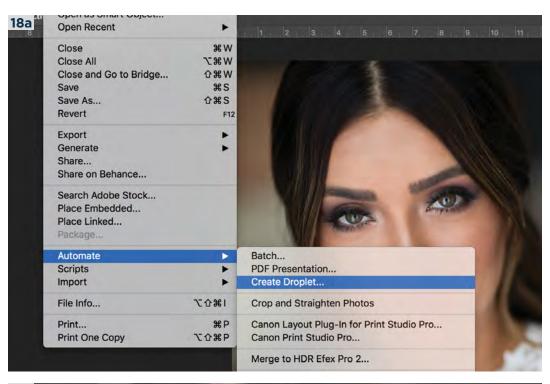
Let's create an action and droplet for Portraiture and fine-tune our process. Some things to consider are file type, creating duplicate background layers, flattening layers and saving the image. These can all cause the droplet to fail or run improperly and save over the exported version. We get only one shot to make this run correctly, so test it on a handful of files once it's built.

For a batch export, choose file type JPEG rather than PSD because we need the file to flatten and save automatically. Using another file type tends to complicate the process and requires another conversion to deliver to the client. After creating and beginning to record the Portraiture Light action, we need to duplicate the background layer. (16)



Then set the opacity to 40% by double-clicking the layer to open Layer Styles. (17) Open the Portraiture filter, adjust settings to our liking and click OK. The last step is to flatten the file and click the Stop Recording icon in the action panel.

Droplets are accessible in the file menu under Automate. Choose the location to save to—I recommend the Adobe folder saved in Documents. Create a new subfolder for Droplets and choose the Portraiture Lite action we created. You will want these to Save and Close, so choose this option for Destination so every file doesn't open in Photoshop. (18ab) Now we are ready to create our Lightroom Export preset to perform this script.



8b		Create Droplet	
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Action: Portraiture Lite			
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19 File Settings			
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O Post-Processing			
After Export:	Open in Other Application		0
After Export:			pe/Droplets PS/Portraiture Lite 🍸 Choose

After selecting our images to export, choose JPEG and sRGB color space so the files are ready to deliver after the script is done. (19) Under Post-Processing, choose After Export: Open in Other Application. Click Choose and select the Portraiture Lite droplet. (20) These settings can be saved as a preset to quickly recall in the future. These shortcuts mean the difference between a workflow that saves time and one that creates more work. (21)

Test this on a handful of images to ensure no errors happen after export. Trust me: There is nothing worse than a thousand files exporting and corrupting in Photoshop due to script errors. It's time to start over at that point.

THE RESULTS

It's all in the details and the prep to build the right workflow, especially for Lightroom to Photoshop. Just as presets are the essence of Lightroom, actions and droplets are integral to Photoshop. Embrace efficiency and build your arsenal of actions to streamline your editing. Next time you run an export, build a droplet and see the difference it can make. You can now batch your next set of skin smoothing.





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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with Sal Cincotta



Are you sitting there wondering why your business is struggling? Why your phone is not ringing? Why your email leads are nonexistent? Are you convinced that it's not your fault? That it's somehow the Russians? Or even worse, all those dastardly shoot-and-burners?

Well, I have some bad news for you: It's you, not them. You are the problem, no one else. You have no one else to blame.

In this article, I show you some ways to change your "luck" and take control of your destiny. The sooner you realize there is plenty of business out there for all of us, the sooner you will start taking a healthy and realistic look at your business—because then and only then will you accept that you control your business. This includes the good and the bad. There is no one else to blame.

As an entrepreneur, I love the pressure of knowing my success or failure falls on my shoulders. It's the fuel I need to push me to be better each and every day. So, where do we start?



ARE YOU A STANDOUT?

This is something I talk about a lot, yet I find that while many of you nod yes, there is very little you are doing to stand out. Standing out has little to do with photography. Standing out requires you to step back and assess your business and what you offer. Are you offering something that is unique or are you offering something that is a commodity? Being a photographer itself is a commodity, or service, that you offer.

We need to look at trends in the market both in and out of photography. What do our clients want? What is new in the marketplace and how can we incorporate that into our business offering to grab some attention? These are all very important things that make you stand out. We want people talking about us, talking about our services, and we want to make an impact so they remember us in a good way.

Remember the slow-motion booths that were popular in the wedding industry a year or two ago? Where are they now? Sure, they are cool and they got people's attention, but now it's over and there is something new. Our photography is a staple for the business, but we have to continually look for ways to make the brand stand out.

Salvatore Cincotta Photography uses service as a way to stand out. When a new client signs up, we send them a bottle of wine as a thank you. After their wedding, images are ready in two weeks or less. This is how you can stand out too.

DO YOU SUCK?

Yep. I put it out there. Some of you will get all worked up about this, but welcome to reality. People like to do business with people they like. If I am going to spend thousands of dollars on something, I am going to do it with someone I like.

If you suck as a person—no personality, abrasive, obnoxious, passive-aggressive, no sense of humor, or just an overall negative person—it can directly impact your business. You have a choice to make. No matter how talented you are, if people can't stand being around you or have to make excuses to friends and family for you, you have a serious problem. You can either fix your personality, which we all know is no easy task, or hire a person who is customer facing with a much more bubbly and positive personality.

It sucks to suck. You have to fix this and not dismiss it. You are not going to make everyone happy all the time. I know this better than anyone, but we need to realize the importance our personality has to the success of our business.

Have you ever called customer support and had a bad experience? Of course you have. And how does that make you feel about working with that company? Would you spend thousands with them if you had another choice? No way. Take that to the world of photography, where everyone and their sister is a photographer, and you will find people turned off by a bad encounter who took their money and business elsewhere.

ARE YOU MARKETING?

Wait, I have to market? Um, yeah. You always have to market. This is one of my favorite conversations to have with photographers. It shows how ill-equipped most people are to be entrepreneurs and own a business. I laugh when I hear photographers shout while thumping their chests, "I don't have to market, my business is all referral." Good luck with that. Translation: "When business slows down, I have no flipping clue what to do."

Get your head out of your ass. I don't care how successful you think you are. You will always have to market. So, you are more successful than Nike? More successful than Mercedes? Really? So they need to market, but you don't? Are you seriously that delusional to how the world of business works, how consumer behavior works? Consumers all have choices. And while they have choices, you will need to use marketing to ensure your potential customers know who you are and why your services are better than the rest. To what extent you market is open for debate, but at the end of the day, none of my businesses would be where they are today without a disciplined commitment to marketing tactics.

Here are some of the ways we get the word out about our business.

DIRECT MAIL

Why does it work? Because no one is doing it. Once the digital revolution was here, we all started spending time and resources on blogs, SEO and social media in hopes of generating new business. But guess what? Now consumers are numb to all this. Do you see your inbox every day? If you want to make an impact, start looking at direct mail again. Take over the real mailbox. This is powerful for seniors, families and commercial work.

EMAIL MARKETING

Build your list. Email is cheap and easy. Balance information with sales. If every email you send is just another sales email, you will be a spammer and people will unsubscribe in droves. Give value to your clients with topics that are relevant to them. People will be more likely to open your emails and take action when you have a special running.

SHOWS

Bridal shows and the like offer a very powerful way to be right in front of your target client. So many people are dismissive of events like this, and I am constantly dumbfounded by the logic. So, all your clients are in one place and you don't think it's worth being in the one place where all your clients are so they can see you and learn about your business face to face? Really? Then the excuses start to come. "Sal, you don't understand, I am not booking business from it." If you are in a room of potential clients and can't book business, you are doing something wrong. Fix the problem.



Awareness Facebook ad for Salvatore Cincotta Photography



Call to action Facebook ad for Salvatore Cincotta Photography

FACEBOOK

Welcome to the digital age. It works, and you can use it to target potential clients with pinpoint accuracy. Any time you think there are no people in your market, open up your Facebook Advertising Account (the one you still haven't created) and start building a target audience based on location, gender, marital status, etc., and you will quickly realize this is a goldmine for marketing and connecting with clients. How you connect, your message and your call to action are the subject of marketing education and best practices the world over. You need to figure it out.

VENDOR RELATIONSHIPS

Build your networking relationships. You like referrals, right? Give them a reason to refer you. For my vendors, I offer free family sessions and free onsite photography to build my portfolio and their advertising images.

VIDEO

Welcome to 2018, everyone. Video is everywhere. It's watched more than any email will be read or any web page surfed. Want your clients to know what you are all about? Create a video showing them your product or service in action. This same video can be used on multiple platforms and will make a huge difference. This can be a self-made behind-the-scenes video or a full professional production. Both will go a long way in showcasing your business.

These are just a few of the ways you can start marketing. It's not the most creative list or an exhaustive one, but my point is a valid one. If you are not marketing, you are killing your business slowly day by day. Marketing is something every business must engage in. To think your business is above that is a sign that you are in over your head. If that's the case, ask for help and bring in someone who knows what they are doing. It will make all the difference to your bottom line.





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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Unless you have been living under a rock, you know the Sony platform is taking the photo world by storm. Mirrorless is no longer a bastard stepchild of the world of photography. It's here to stay, and we need good glass to make our images come to life. All the megapixels in the world are useless if we don't have good glass on the front of this.

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- All-new"RXD" stepping motor AF unit is extremely quiet and perfect for video capture
- Moisture-resistant construction and water/dust/oil-repelling fluorine coating for confidence in shooting in inclement weather
- Exciting next-generation design keeping the brand consistency that is ergonomically superb
- Compatible with the Direct Manual Focus (DMF) feature that enables Sony cameras to instantly switch between auto and manual focus



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Featuring

HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH FOR CANDID BLACK & WHITE

with Alissa Zimmerman

My favorite part of photography is capturing moments. As a second shooter for a primary photographer who knows how to pose and who pays very close attention to details, I can hide in the corner and capture candid moments as they unfold.

Candid photos work so well in black and white, especially when laid out in a wedding album. Here are some of my tips to help you get the best candid images throughout a wedding day that look beautiful in black and white.

Understand When to Snap the Shot

I always find that being borderline-creepy is the best way to get the shot. My favorite candid images are the ones that are voyeuristic in nature, so naturally, you need to be in a voyeuristic mode to get that kind of shot.

My preferred lens is a 70-200 mm f.2.8, or sometimes an 85 mm f/1.2. These lenses allow me to keep my distance, to use a shallow depth of field to blur out some of the distractions in the background so your viewer is able to focus on the subject.

Sal and I have a very good rhythm on a wedding day, and I suggest you and your other shooter (whether that be your second shooter or primary) take the time to put together a plan similar to ours. This ensures you're getting those candid moments throughout the day.

First, you'll want to establish who has the dominant personality. Nine out of 10 times it's the primary photographer, which is why this person is primary. But sometimes the second shooter has an outgoing personality and is able to get natural emotions out of a group of people. If that is the case, embrace it. The worst thing you can do is force this.



Next, you'll want the person in charge of capturing the candid moments to assume the position. My preferred place is typically behind a corner wall or tree, somewhere out of direct line of sight. The key is to be as inconspicuous as possible—ninja style, if you will. Have your long lens and shutter-button finger locked and loaded. It's time for battle.



The final piece to the mission: the main attraction. This is where the designated person goes into comedian role, and when the photo sniper needs to be prepared for action. Jokes will be told, laughs will be had—and these moments are gold to capture.



Know Your Boundaries

Unfortunately, not all candid moments are so easily staged and based in laughter. Sometimes you'll have to deal with the tough emotions as well. Weddings bring tears of joy and also not-so-joyful tears. It's your job to capture all of these moments.



Photographers live for these moments: the groom crying when he sees his bride for the first time, the bride and her father sharing a first look before the start of the day, grandma getting out of her wheelchair to walk a few steps down the aisle. These are big moments that create big emotions for you to capture. You always have to be ready. It's so easy to get caught up in the moment and forget to actually take the picture (trust me, I know all too well). But remember to stay focused on your job and why you're there.



The key is to keep your distance. A long lens and fast glass allow you to go into stealth mode to capture some incredible moments. When everything is unfolding, shoving a camera in someone's face will kill the moment and enrage the person or people in front of your lens. Be respectful and make sure your clients don't even notice your presence.

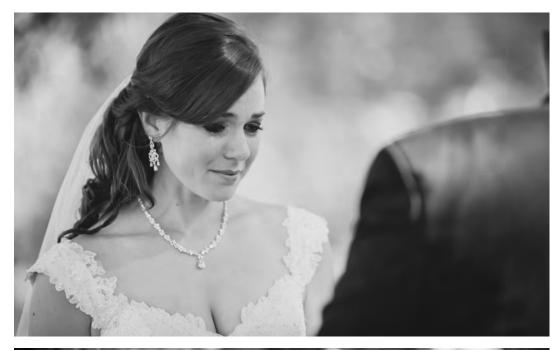
When you finally reveal the images to your clients, the flood of emotions will surface all over again. That's how you know you did your job.



2018

Change Your Perspective

This can be taken a few different ways. Photographers sometimes need to change our perspective to see the world in a photojournalistic way. I don't see the world from a big and artistic perspective quite like Sal does. He sees a range of perspectives, which adds such a unique element to his photography that can't always be replicated. I, on the other hand, see things pretty black and white (no pun intended).







The way I photograph is close up and personal, romantic and emotional. This is good to look for in primary and second shooter balance-if you're the primary photographer and see the world big and dramatic, find a second shooter who sees the world tighter and more emotionally. Perspective can be trained as well, so figure out what visual dynamic you want for your brand.





Another simple way to change your perspective: Get low. If there is a ton of clutter in the background, take a knee and shoot at an upward angle. This puts your subject in the sky (or in the ceiling if you're indoors) and removes all of the distractions around you. If there is a horizon line cutting through the neck of your subject, get low and make sure the subject is above the horizon line.

If you can't do either of the above, use glass or other reflective objects near you (such as wine glasses, handheld mirrors, even your mobile phone) to shoot through or use for unique reflections in your images. Or buy a prism to always have on hand for this very reason. This technique blurs out the noise in the background and drives your viewer's eyes directly to the subject.



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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westcott. SWITCH

Having the right tool for the job is critical to creating the perfect image. Knowing that I can easily switch between light sources and modifiers by simply changing inserts, now that's true power and control!

SAL CINCOTTA

How does Sal Switch?

Sal Cincotta switches light inserts on his Rapid Box Switch between studio strobe when he wants more power and speedlites when on location.

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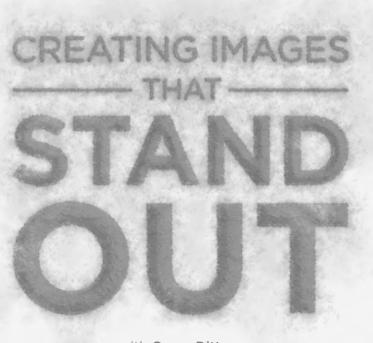
When will you make the Switch?

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TOP PRO PHOTOGRAPHER

PHOTO © SAL CINCOTTA



with Casey Dittmer

It's easy for us to fall into grooves. We find what is easy, standard, inside our comfort zone, and we don't deviate. It feels safe, especially when we want to be consistent in delivering high-quality imagery to our clients. But it's also complacent, lazy, one note—boring.

Maternity portraits offer a perfect example. The majority of the industry approaches these sessions in nearly exactly the same way. Posing, lighting and scenery...trust me, scroll through your Facebook or Pinterest, and it all runs together.

But what if you challenged yourself to push boundaries? To not accept that there is a black-and-white answer for what is acceptable in your approach and technique? What if you created the new normal, set the bar, set it high, and never looked back?

You know me: I'm all about stopping the scroll, standing out and using dynamic maternity to build one's brand and gain the audience's attention. Changing things up isn't that hard. It doesn't require money or new equipment. It's simply making small adjustments and mostly playing to find new ways to capture amazing images. Here are some great ways to change the game and blaze your own path.



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- Find inspiration in art, pop culture and other avenues of creativity. I love taking a photographic technique that is meant for sports, fashion or editorial and melding it with maternity. The pregnant form is beautiful and such an amazing shape. It works well with artsy approaches. I want my viewer to love the overall image and then notice that the subject is pregnant.
- Push yourself to use nontraditional poses. Maternity posing is tricky and you have to be conscious of flattering the belly at all times. That doesn't mean you can't play with it and push the boundaries. Look through fashion magazines and pay attention to placement of arms, hands and faces. Work those into your poses to give your images a more contemporary look. It's ok to not have the hands on the belly.
- I love when my images look editorial and not so...here is my belly. Place the belly with more subtlety, secondary rather than front and center. Have your momma sit, stand, lie down, lean or twist. Some poses will work, others will not. It's ok. It's the best way to learn.
- Play with light. Mold with light. Make your own light. This can be the best part. There is no right or wrong way to do this. Experiment. Use harsh light, preexisting shadows and weird objects to cast unique shapes. Mix light sources to create different color casts. The sky is the limit. There are so many benefits to doing this. You will learn many new techniques that you can just add to your normal work. That doesn't mean you should produce shit light and call it art. It means pay attention to flattering her body. Light her face properly, but in a unique way. Harness harsh light, use shapes to selectively light her body, create patterns that focus the attention of the viewer on all the right places—these are all great ways to manipulate the light and produce a professional image.
- Find new places to shoot or new ways to use existing locations. I shoot mostly outdoor goddesses, so I pushed myself to shoot only indoors for this article. I wanted to show that you can create multiple looks, styles and images in the same spot without several backgrounds or sets. Again, using the unexpected choice for your location could be the key to a high-impact image. When I get to my location, I get sucked into the obvious "sweet spot" shot and sometimes forget to look around at all the other possible choices. Shoot in your first choice of locations and then look around at different angles. Many times, you don't even have to move your model; just changing your position can yield a completely different look. Get on the ground, climb a ladder, go behind a bush—trust me, getting dirty and making it a little awkward can produce gold.

Let's look at a few of these tricks in action. I went outside the box for all the images in this article to show something completely new.



WHITE SERIES

I have done flour shoots before with dancers. I love how moody yet soft they can be. (I don't love the cleanup, but it's so worth it.) I wanted my model to look pale so that the image was about shape and defining features. Covering her in flour gave us that look. We kept the styling simple: white piece of chiffon, a nude bra...and a 5-pound bag of flour. This was about her shape, simplicity and purity.

I shot in all natural light and played with her pose for an editorial feel that still flattered the belly. We were careful in posing her fingers and wrists. We wanted her hands free from the body on some shots, and for others we used them to tastefully cover her body. It helped that we chose a momma who was not as far along as we typically shoot for. Otherwise, there's less ability to bend, lean and twist. She had more flexibility and a more forgiving figure when we broke normal posing rules. Since we didn't have any props or choice of backgrounds, it was key to create variety through her body shape. By simply shooting her sitting, standing and lying down, we were able to create multiple unique shots. But these would hang as a solid set on the client's wall.



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For light, I went on an adventure to Home Depot. There are so many things you can get there to create your own light modifiers. Next time you go, look through your photographer eyes, not your "gotta fix the shitter" eyes. Buy at least one thing and challenge yourself to use it in a session. It gets those creative juices going. I bought a roll of screen door mesh and a roll of HVAC insulation. Using silver duct tape, I made a large three-sided "photo booth" type box with the silver insulation. I loosely unwound the screen mesh and clamped it randomly on the front side of the silver box. I used two lights with grids to create dynamic shadows and light her face.

Shooting through the screen gave me the most dynamic results. The reflections and layers produced something totally different than what you would normally see. In other images, I used baskets to create shapes on my subject. I strategically placed shadows and highlights where I wanted them. Color gels, directional light and heating vent covers all played parts in creating new and exciting lighting for these sessions.



Many of the images you see here are a product of altered posing, simple fabrics and light to create unique and bold images. Experimentation leads to great things. I used lighting to change the look of our location, even though all these images were shot in our studio. Each one began with a planned concept, many finishing with totally different results than expected.

It's an adventure. No matter what, I know that when I start putting these images on social media and my website, they will not look like a million other images in rotation, and they will pique my audience's interest. So get out there, don't be lazy. Push. Hustle. Join me. I broke the mold. I said no to the black-and-white approach. I love living in the gray.



Casey Dittmer is an award-winning published photographer from western Colorado. As a 17-year veteran of the photographic industry, Casey has seen trends, economies and businesses come and go. She loves traveling and sharing her knowledge in the hope that it will help other photographers build a strong base for their business and avoid some of the roadblocks she has encountered.

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Why Tyndell Euro Totes & Frame Bags?

Branding and packaging are two of the easiest ways to stand out. I am constantly amazed by how many photographers deliver their products in a sloppy way. There is no other word for it. Have you ever purchased a new phone or laptop? When you open your new laptop or iPhone from Apple, everyone says the same thing and has the same reaction. They are blown away by the packaging. Shouldn't your clients have that same experience with those images you took so much care to create? Of course they should.

Now, it's easy. Tydell has bags and totes that can be custom branded. These are high-quality products that your clients will appreciate and hang on to. Best of all, you can customize your brand without breaking the bank.

Euro Totes Details:

Frame Bags Details:

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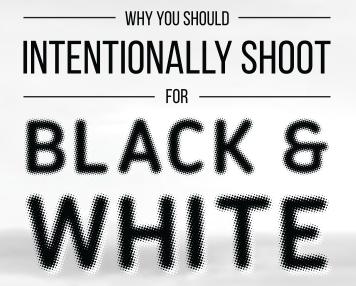
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with Nino Batista

So, let's start with a quick poll: Raise your hand if you've ever pulled all the color out of an image in postproduction because you simply didn't know what else to do with it, and making it black and white seemed like the way to go. Your hand better be up, because we've all done that. That is testament to the lack of respect we often give the genre of monochrome photography. If changing an image to black and white is a careless afterthought, what are the chances that you've created a monochrome masterpiece? When we change our mindset from "I don't know what else to do with this so black and white it is" to "I am going to create black-and-white photos today when I shoot," a radical thing happens: Your monochrome images become more focused and striking.

In the world of film cameras, black and white is seldom an afterthought. You simply start with black-and-white film and you set out to make black-and-white images. Easy. Before color film was prevalent, most photographers created monochromatic images exclusively, whether you were Ansel Adams or my grandmother in the Bronx with her Brownie. Black-and-white film wasn't a limitation that was finally resolved with the invention and widespread use of color film. It was an art form unto itself-and still is.

There's a very good reason for that: Great black-and-white photos are not as simple to create as they might seem.



DON'T GET LAZY

Digital photography affords us the luxury of making an image black and white after we've shot it in color. While this is clearly convenient, it has also become a crutch for the modern digital photographer. Too many times we convert to black and white out of frustration with color issues, boredom or to post both color and monochrome versions of the same shot to social media while asking the question "Which do you guys prefer?"

All of this does an injustice to the art of black-and-white image making.



Setting out to shoot for black and white simply by changing your mindset to the idea of doing it intentionally is the first step to crafting great monochrome images. Thinking about value alone, with no real consideration for hue, is often liberating when you first set out to deliberately shoot for black and white on set. You should be thinking about shadows, highlights, textures and specularity when shooting for monochrome.



Overall contrast is paramount to just about anything else in black-and-white images, as there are no colors to create separation, interest or dynamics in your shot. Everything revolves only around the interplay of black, white and millions of shades of gray. Style your shoots, your sets and your wardrobe with mostly contrast in mind, and you'll be far happier with your monochrome work.

Are you using monochrome preview mode on your camera on set? Every camera brand has a slightly different way to go about changing this, but seeing your shots fully desaturated on the back of your camera helps immensely when you are envisioning your black-and-white project on set. This makes a big difference in previewing your intentionally black-and-white projects. And don't panic—the Raw files will come into your computer in full color, as usual. Hence the term *monochrome preview mode*.

But simply desaturating your image is the most limiting way to make it monochrome in post-production. There are so many subtle (and not so subtle) possibilities in changing your color Raw files into black and white.

BLACK-AND-WHITE CONVERSION

You've likely used the black-and-white function in Lightroom or Capture One Pro, or the black-and-white adjustment layer in Photoshop. If you haven't, give them a try. If you've used them with success before and wished you had even more control over how the value shifts occurred across your image's hues, there are some additional tools at your disposal.

These are the same tools that have always been there. You may not have thought to use them before when converting to black and white simply because you weren't thinking about color and overlooked them.

It all starts when you realize that the black-and-white function in Capture One Pro, for example, changes every hue in the image to its equivalent value in grayscale actively and nondestructively. But did it occur to you to go to your Levels function and shift the sliders in each of the red, green and blue channels or the red, blue and green channels of a Curves adjustment? As you shift the midpoint around on the red channel, for example, your black-and-white image starts taking on new possibilities that you may not have realized were possible.

In Photoshop, try adding your Black and White adjustment layer on top of a Levels, Curves, Selective Color or Color Balance adjustment layer. Anything you modify on any of the color modification layers below the black-and-white layer starts to affect your monochrome image in new and cool ways. Experiment with these until you start finding looks you enjoy, and see how your black-and-white converting advances overnight.



I like to do most of the heavy lifting of black-and-white converting in Raw. Whether it's Lightroom, ACR or Capture One Pro, major shifts to your image should always be done in Raw for the smoothest results. Black-and-white converting in Photoshop via adjustment layers can get great results, make no mistake. But getting your head around black-and-white conversion in Raw (even if you do further contrast tweaks later in Photoshop) will give you the most control with the best results, no matter how wild your creativity.

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WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

While monochrome photography was simply the only kind of photography possible at one time, it has persisted well past the invention of color photography—for good reason. Monochrome images evoke a unique response from viewers, whether it's a vintage vibe or a dramatic flair that color images simply cannot reproduce.

Despite the oddly persisting myth, color blindness in humans is not the inability to see color, but instead the inability to differentiate between (usually) two complementary colors. Since almost all humans see in color to some degree, a black-and-white photo is a literal depiction, or capture, of reality in an unrealistic way. This alone creates interest in monochrome images by showing us our world in a unique manner.

Black-and-white images have more intense shifts in contrast and texture because any adverse affects that these radical changes cause to the image's colors simply do not matter. This

was the deciding factor for creating a new ongoing project I am doing with Josie Fox entitled "El Camino Encantado," which is exclusively in black and white. Apart from the mood that monochrome gives the project, it also gives us a little more freedom to create in almost any lighting scenario or location because there are no color considerations to worry about. Naturally, I start shooting with monochrome in mind, and all I generally worry about lighting-wise is contrast.



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SUMMARY

Don't let black-and-white photography be that incidental afterthought. If you have to desaturate an image and then post the color version and monochrome version to social media to see what others think, you probably didn't set out to do black-and-white photography with enough intent. If you want to flip over your desk because a shot's color isn't cooperating with you in post and you converted to black and white as a quick fix, again, you probably didn't set out to do black-and-white photography with enough intent.

Happy accidents notwithstanding, craft your monochrome images from planning to shooting to editing with a deliberate focus, and watch your black-and-white work change overnight.



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



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2018



Since the first issue of *Shutter Magazine*, I've shared one article after another with ideas to help you build a stronger business. I've shared ideas about virtually every aspect of your business today—from your website to your blog, marketing, direct mail, education and partnerships.

This month I wanted to have some fun with a series of my pet peeves and easy ways to fix them. This list is not all-inclusive. I'm doing a brain dump, and this month's article is meant to be a free-form collection of ideas all of you can start working on immediately.

1. USE THE PHONE MORE

As the art of conversation slowly dies in a world of social media and text messages, you'll stand out if you talk to more people rather than email or text. Building an excellent reputation and relationships is about being accessible. While email is fine for established friendships, use your phone to introduce yourself in a way that lets your personality and passion for the craft shine.

2. SEND PERSONAL THANK-YOU NOTES

It's old school, but handwritten notes are back with a vengeance. When somebody has been helpful to you, take the time to say thanks. If you lucked out at the last convention and got one of your favorite vendors to talk about the business and their products, send them a note thanking them. Trust me, they'll remember the kindness.

3. BE A SECOND SHOOTER

If you're a wedding photographer, you probably just rolled your eyes. After all, you've spent your entire career building a business and your brand. Your days of second-shooting are over, right? Think again. Second shooting gives you a chance to do two things. It expands your skill set, especially in areas like workflow and style. It's like playing tennis or golf with somebody better than you. Your game improves. Second, it helps you build a stronger network with a better relationship with another photographer. Sooner or later, you're going to need help on something. Having a relationship with somebody you've worked with will always be stronger than with somebody whose style you know nothing about.

4. NEVER EAT ALONE AT A CONVENTION OR CONFERENCE

I'm still amazed by the number of people who go to a conference like ShutterFest and don't socialize with new friends. Breakfast, lunch or dinner is the perfect time to build new relationships and solidify old ones.



5. THERE ARE NO ERASERS ON THE INTERNET

Stop writing stupid or inflammatory comments on Facebook. People let themselves get dragged into conversations that are endless examples of the worst side of human nature. If you can't add anything new to a thread, walk away from it.

6. DON'T BE A HOTHEAD

This really belongs with the previous comment, but it also applies to your regular emails. Don't write anything you wouldn't want to be posted on a billboard in your community. It's okay to be angry and even witty in the way you shut somebody down, but think about what you're writing before you post it or send it. There are times when it's appropriate, but most often I read things people should be embarrassed to share, not proud of.

7. RENT BEFORE YOU BUY

Cash flow for any business, new or established, is always a challenge. If the gear bug has you under its spell for that new lens you've always wanted, rent it first if it's a high-ticket item. If you still feel it's going to make a difference, talk with photographers in your network. There are some great stories about photographers who shared the expense of an exotic lens, lighting gear or a large-format printer.

8. LEARN TO WRITE OR HIRE SOMEBODY WHO CAN

Writing might not be your strong suit, but so many of you sneak by trying to fake it until you make it. If you're just not a good writer or if you hate to write, wander over to the high school before the new school year starts and talk with an English teacher. Find yourself an A student who likes to write. You might even find an English teacher interested in moonlighting.

9. STILL BLOGGING EVERY FULL MOON?

The art of blogging starts out with consistency. If you started a blog and then fell short of posting at least twice a week, and on the same days, pull the plug on your blog until you can ramp up your posting frequency. And remember, your posts don't have to be shared in almost real time. Build a stash of posts you can draw from when you're too busy. Your website is about what you sell, but your blog is about what's in your heart. A great blog can do so much to help you build a stronger relationship with your target audience, which should be your readership.

10. YOUR GALLERIES ARE YOUR STOREFRONT

So many of you still have galleries with your complete collection of images Uncle Harry could have captured. This is so easy to fix, and I've brought it up dozens of times in articles and workshops. If it's not a wow print, don't share it. A wow print is an image so good it's the only one you'd have to show to get hired. Stop sharing old and mediocre work and pictures that don't begin to demonstrate your skill set.

11. CLEAN UP YOUR CONTACT PAGE

I know it's easy to put up an email template and then wait for people to contact you, but remember that old line about striking while the iron is hot? Give people a phone number to call you at. When somebody has been on your website and they're excited enough to write to you, you're missing an opportunity if you don't give them a chance to talk to you directly. Nobody can sell you better than you. If you don't have a phone line for your business and don't share the number, maybe you shouldn't be in business.

12. KEEP IN TOUCH WITH PAST CLIENTS

Success in business today is about building relationships. Most of you are sitting on little goldmines: the contact information for your past clients. Unless you made a mess of their lives, they have the potential to be your very best ambassadors. Keep in touch with them throughout the year. Put them on your holiday list for a card in 2018. Follow them on Facebook, especially their birthdays and anniversaries. Use your database for a direct-mail postcard about something special you are doing or changing in your business. Last but not least, call them now and then—just a social call to find out how they're doing. Check out the book *UnMarketing* by Scott and Alison Stratten.

13. GOT YOUR HOLIDAY CARD READY FOR DECEMBER?

No professional photographer should ever send out a store-bought holiday card. Create your own card with one of your personal images and print a custom card for this year's holiday season. A card like this is one of the very best and easiest marketing tools—it's your image together with your message, not Hallmark's.

14. ARE YOU INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

It's probably quiet now, but the fall brings in the need for help in the school system, fall walkathons, United Way fundraisers and dozens of other community events. People like to buy products from companies they perceive as giving back to the community. With or without your camera, there's a need for more proactive people in every part of the country. Here's your chance to stand out from the crowd. In the words of Roger Staubach, "There are no traffic jams along the extra mile."



And there you have it: a 14-item list of Skip's favorite fixable pet peeves to help you step up your game, build a stronger brand and move your lifestyle from macaroni and cheese to steak and lobster.

But don't forget that nothing happens if you don't keep developing your skill set. Attend every workshop you can. Take classes at conferences like ShutterFest that are outside your comfort zone. Never compromise on the quality of anything in your life—not your images, your business or your relationships with friends, vendors and clients.





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

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Sal Cincotta recently won top honors from One Eyeland, which named him the #1 Wedding Photographer in the United States and the World. Check out how Sal positions albums for his wedding and portrait clients.

Their First Family Heirloom

That is the reality of the situation. Clients don't typically think that way, but it's our job to educate them on the power of print. It is more than just a saying—it's something that needs to be explained to them. I have found that once I educate my clients on the value of an album, the conversation is a much easier one.

Don't think like a used car salesman. Think like an adviser. My job is to guide my clients through the process. We are the experts. They trust us to guide them.

This holds true for seniors, families and any other portrait client. An album is a unique way to display their favorite images, and there is only so much wall space in their home. This, again, positions albums as a perfect add-on to any sales session.

Show Clients Something With Impact

Clients are inundated with options. They don't know what they want or need—that's a fact. They rely on us to show them something that resonates. The choices are endless. We show our clients full sample products so they can envision how they would use them in their home and with their images.

"Go big or go home" is our philosophy, and our samples drive that point home. Photographers tend to be cheap but expect clients to spend big. But if you want to sell large albums, show large albums. If you want albums that are not littered with crappy images and look like a scrap book gone horribly wrong, then stop designing that way. We show our clients exactly what we want to sell them. We show them clean designs with high-quality pages and cover options. And we always show larger sizes to drive home the point that bigger is always better.

Offer Different Tiers of Albums

No one album is a perfect fit for every client or every session, which is why we love working with Bay Photo Lab. They offer a ton of options and pricing levels.

Their BayBooks are perfect for seniors, families and other portraits. We use BayBooks for our engagement, family and senior clients. They are extremely cost-effective and highquality press-printed books.

Here are the products we offer our clients. For our engagement, senior, and family clients, we use Press Printed BayBooks.

- Engagement Album: 12x12 hinged lay-flat pages with a metallic satin laminate cover and metallic pearl paper
- Engagement Guestbook: 8x8 standard perfect-bound pages with a lustre cover and smooth lustre UV coating paper
- Senior Album: 8x8 hinged lay-flat pages with a metallic satin laminate cover and metallic pearl paper
- Family Album: 10x10 hinged lay-flat pages with a metallic satin laminate cover and metallic pearl paper



Press Printed BayBooks



Hardcover and softcover BayBooks are printed on Indigo printers, the highest-quality digital press-printing technology available. They work for wedding albums, portrait sessions, seniors, babies, coffee-table books, high-end proof books, portfolios, parent albums and more.



Their Pacific Albums are perfect for wedding clients. These are handcrafted and extremely customizable. I know it can be overwhelming to choose, but here is my advice when dealing with these options: Choose the options that best match your brand. Your clients are drawn to your brand and their tastes will likely fall in line with that. I am a very modern photographer, so I am going to offer a more modern cover, like acrylic rather than wood. My clients would reject that as too earthy, etc. So, rather than trying to be a one-stop shop, load up on samples of what you want to sell, what will attract the clients you want to work with.

Photographic Albums

Bay Photo offers a wide selection of handcrafted professional albums for weddings, portraits and events. All of their albums are highly customizable with a range

of options to please every client. Choose flush-mount Pacific Albums for premium options such as full wrap, metal, wood or acrylic photo covers, different page thicknesses, gilding and much more. Sunrise Albums feature panoramic spreads printed on professional photographic papers mounted back-to-back for a slim profile. Softbound Albums offer beautiful print quality in an economical package, perfect for companion books, seniors, portfolios—you name it. With such an excellent variety of options, the creative possibilities are endless.





Contact customer service for ordering instructions

And of course, invest in you! We refresh our samples every year. We want to show clients our current work. I never want our studio or work to be dated. Bay Photo Lab makes it easy with their sample discounts. Stop procrastinating and start building your samples and selling more albums to your clients.

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Images @ Salvatore Cincotta Photography, Boudoir Divas, Art Suwansang, Stephanie Millner, & Joseph Carroll

THE **PROS & CONS** OF BECOMING A WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER

with Phillip Blume

So you think you want to become a wedding photographer? Be careful what you wish for.

Yes, it's true what they say: A career in wedding photography can be quite lucrative. For my wife Eileen and I (The Blumes), our decade-long career has allowed us to create a life of travel and comfort we never imagined. On the other hand, the vast majority of photographers who approach weddings as a golden goose get bitten, and there's good reason for the burnout and high failure rates. This job isn't for the faint of heart.



Still, you're a confident young buck, and none of those horror stories have scared you away yet. Those other photographers just aren't cut from the same tough cloth as you, right? You're hot on the scent of your dream job, and nothing is going to stop you. Ok then. In that case, let's take an honest look at the pros and cons of becoming a wedding photographer. If you're going to do this thing, we at least want to be sure you aren't jumping in blindly.



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PRO #1: POTENTIALLY VERY PROFITABLE

This is the big one. So let's camp out on this thought for a moment.

Without a doubt, weddings can be profitable. And in case you're wondering, there is currently no threat of oversaturating the wedding photography field, whatever people say. (Anyone worried about an oversaturated market doesn't understand how to reach the vast submarkets within the American economy and others—but that's a topic for another time.)

You also have the freedom to choose from multiple business structures, any of which can be successful. You may shoot for high volume. Ask yourself: "If I charged only \$1,500 for all-day wedding coverage plus digital images, could I get booked and make a living?" Absolutely. That package rate is significantly below the national average, making you appealing to the bargain-hunting crowd, who make up approximately 45% of the overall market. Your recurring business costs are extremely minimal with this shoot-and-share model. Basically, if you're willing to shoot 40 weddings per year, you can gross \$60,000. Sounds good, right?

On the other hand, you could create a low-volume bespoke brand like our studio, The Blumes, which features full service and high-end heirloom product sales. It is not unthinkable to average \$7,000 to \$10,000 per wedding this way, even if you're based in a small local market like ours, with high poverty levels. In this case, like us, you may aim to book just 15 to 20 weddings per year. I'll let you do the math. Even after material costs, the net income is very good.

CON #1: FINANCIALLY UNSTABLE

Sadly, money is the number-one motive I hear photographers give for shooting weddings. If that's you, save yourself a lot of grief—just get out now. Do anything else.

I don't say this to discourage you. In fact, I believe you can do well as a wedding photographer. I know you can. Our workshop students often do great. But if you go into this thing like most people do (without a mentor and a lot of business savvy, trying to reinvent the wheel), it will fail. It fails very fast for about 70 percent of even "the hard-working hopefuls," as I call them. Then most of the early survivors are gone within a couple years after that. So do you want to do this job for just a few years? Have a fun experience, then look for a "real job" to do? Or do you want wedding photography to be your real job, to provide for you now, for your kids' education, and on into retirement?

Then you better have a game plan, because as a business owner, you are constantly unemployed. Does that make sense to you? Every consult with a potential bride is a new job interview. Some years might be good, and others will be inexplicably lean. It takes time to learn what you're doing wrong and how to do it right so you can bring home the bacon. There's no company health insurance, paid vacation or 401k.



SOLUTION #1

Get a mentor. Your financial success will come slower—or not at all—if you enter this jungle without a guide. You can start with a virtual mentor, perhaps an online teacher who shares free info via YouTube or a subscription email. Then invest in one-on-one coaching or business workshops. We've invested more in our own education than we've ever spent on gear or marketing. It's the best choice we ever made, and it's why we are where we are now.

Be sure you get good info. A lot of voices pop up on the web: unknown "experts" who hope to make it big in the education space but have never actually succeeded as photographers themselves. So check out their credentials; consider how long they've worked in the industry; and, finally, ask yourself whether they share your values. Businesses are built on values, and you need a mentor who will show you a path to success that doesn't sacrifice who you are (and what success means to you in the first place).

Start living by a budget if you haven't before. A great way to make yourself more fiscally aware is by paying in cash rather than credit card. (Heck, even in futuristic tech-savvy Tokyo, where Eileen and I met, only cash is usually accepted. Maybe it's why the Japanese are more debt-free and financially stable.) Itching to get that newest camera body, but it doesn't fit the budget? I've had a new camera in my shopping cart countless times, but finally put it back on the shelf and used the same gear for almost eight years. It has never affected my ability to produce for clients.

As someone who grew up in poverty, it's actually been hard for me to overcome the psychological guilt of success. As success comes, we encourage you to be generous. That's where the joy comes. Share your knowledge with those behind you, and commit to using your blessings to give back to causes you believe in.

dtheshutter.com

PRO #2: WORK FOR YOURSELF

I love working for myself. I wouldn't have it any other way. You get to set your own schedule, sleep in more often and travel wherever you want since your work can be done from the road. If you're like me, the thought of working for the man is almost too much to bear.

Eileen and I even homeschool our three children to escape the school system's rigid schedule. We're free birds, and it's allowed us to travel as a family, working while we visit England, Spain, France, the Philippines and friends around the USA. The perks are real.



CON #2: YOUR NEW BOSS CAN BE A SLAVE DRIVER

You've heard it said: Entrepreneurs are the only people who will work 80 hours per week to avoid working 40 hours per week. The struggle (not just the perks) is real, too.

Whether a giant corporation or small studio, a business has to be nurtured to survive—especially during its infancy. When you work for the man, you don't have to deal with any of that; you probably don't even hear about the business's struggles unless it makes the news. You can simply fulfill the limited obligations assigned to you, then leave it all behind at 5 p.m. In a secure job, there's a real sense of peace that comes with that.

You can expect a certain ongoing level of stress if you open a wedding studio. There's no end to the marketing work that can be done—through social media and traditional relationship-building with clients and vendors. You may travel, but prepare to never wander more than an email or phone call away. Clients expect you to be reachable. That bride may suddenly panic about her day-of schedule a month before it even needs to be finalized. A planner may expect you to show up for a venue walk-through you perceive as useless. If you don't respond quickly and tactfully, their negative Google reviews may stain your reputation forever. You need to show up with a smile to every bridal show, networking event and consultation. Then you'll pull all-nighters editing photos and cleaning gear. Too little sleep, and you may feel flu-ish come the wedding day—but God knows you're not going to call in sick. How do you like being boss now?

SOLUTION #2

Wedding photographers need systems to remain sane. This isn't the simpler portrait world, where you may book a client online, meet her for the session, then part ways. With weddings, you're often connected with a client by phone and email for 12 to 18 months surrounding their event. That creates many additional opportunities to miscommunicate, fail at meeting expectations or slowly go sour on demanding bridezillas whom you're stuck with for the whole year. On the other hand, if you're a people person with the skills to nurture long-term client relationships, you'll enjoy forming close bonds, even lifelong friendships, as we have with so many couples. We've been invited to our couples' anniversary parties later, watched their kids grow as they return to us for family portraits and, in one case, were even made godparents to a firstborn son. (I promise, the giving of your firstborn is not required by our contract.)



To fully enjoy the freedom of the self-employed wedding photographer, give yourself structure, too. It's different for everyone, but I recommend early to bed and early to rise, email checks just twice daily and social media checks just once daily if you can. Tighten up every aspect of your client workflow so every step of backing up and delivering photos is consistent and predictable. Make logical policies and stick by them. Explain the system and policies plainly during wedding consultations so there are no wrong expectations. And pepper your clients with small gifts leading up to their wedding to make the long haul more meaningful.

PRO #3: CREATING ART WITH SWEET COUPLES AT THE HAPPIEST TIME OF THEIR LIVES

Relationships have become our favorite part of the job. If you enjoy meeting new people and building relationships (perhaps even more than you enjoy photography—yeah, you heard me right), wedding photography might be for you.

Wedding days can be a lot of fun. At the end of some weddings, I'm physically exhausted and tempted to think otherwise. Then I remember what life was like at my former jobs as a retail manager at a swimming pool store and as a high school teacher. Creating artwork for couples in love is way more inspirational than diagnosing an angry customer's algae-filled pool; and though I loved teaching, I don't miss the ache of giving a failing grade or dealing with administrative politics. Over hundreds of weddings, we've had almost no bridezillas—some stressed-out brides, perhaps, but nothing that couldn't be cured with simple empathy and care.

Plus, we get to take pictures for a living. I mean, c'mon. I've loved the art of photography since I was a kid, and that hasn't changed—but now I get paid the big bucks for it. Sign me up.



CON #3: LOTS OF DRAMA AND BUSY WORK

Then again, let's get real. While our couples are great, there is often a lot of drama from their families: divorced parents who won't stand in the same group photo together; drunk Uncle Bobs who harass us; jealous siblings who purposefully show up late for portraits; occasional mothers of the bride who regret that our style (which their daughters love) isn't more "traditional"; the groom who studies law and wants to pick apart your contract or threaten a lawsuit if he can't have the Raw images (a term he doesn't understand).

I've been told by a grandmother to "get your f***ing camera outta my face," watched a hawk turn a dove-release into a bloodbath, been assaulted by drunk guests and cursed by countless church ladies. Then I arrive home to a thankless night of image culling, lens cleaning and checkbook balancing. All in a day's work, right?

SOLUTION #3

To stay a step ahead of the drama, we send our couples a sensitive questionnaire that asks how to address tense relationships between family members and how to organize group photos. If there's a problem, then it's not on us. Our brides and grooms are always our clients; they sign the contract, not their parents—no matter who might be paying for the job.

For us, it's a matter of perspective. What's most rewarding is getting to invest in our couples' marriages. Without ever being pushy, we offer strategic marriage advice here and there and let our couples know we're available to them personally. For many young couples, having a trusted adviser outside their social circle is a great resource that allows them to open up. Be careful if you do this, because it has resulted in our receiving some unexpected phone calls and long conversations.

When you're emotionally invested in clients as friends, their family and marriage struggles can add a degree of hurt and sadness to an otherwise rose-colored job. But that's real life. Marriage isn't the wedding; it's what comes after. And beyond the discomfort, we derive a deeper sense of purpose from our work by relating in this way.

CONCLUSION

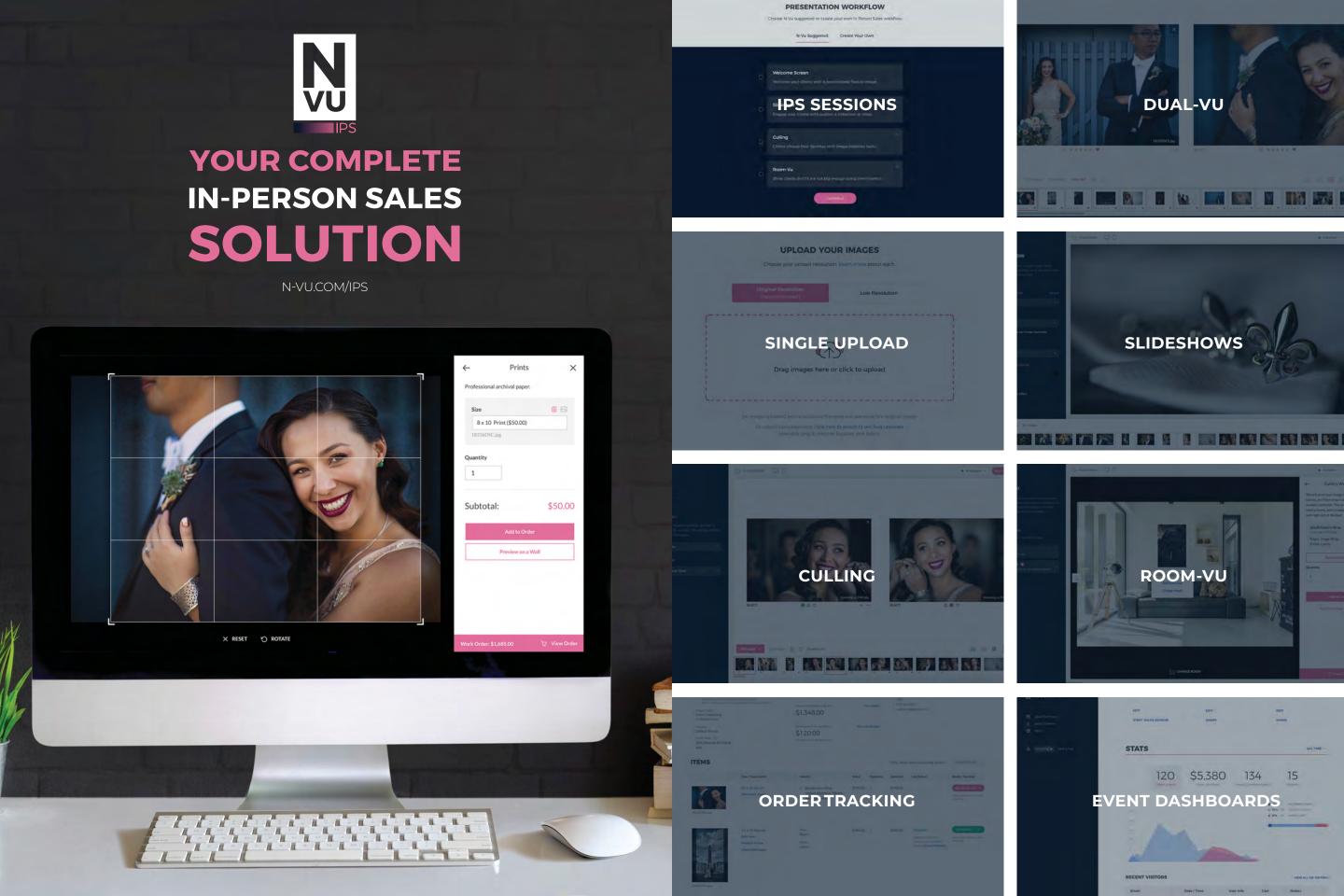
There they are: the pros and cons of wedding photography, in clear black and white. It's a high-stakes game with no do-overs. If you decide to go in, go all in. Only then will your clients be well served. And you will thrive.





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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STUDIO LIGHTING FOR **SENIORS**

IT'S NOT **ALWAYS BLACK & WHITE**

with David Beckham

Finding the right light indoors can be just as difficult as on location. This article looks at a few setups for studiolighting seniors. Each image has a pullback showing how the lights were arranged, the equipment used and the setting for camera and lights.

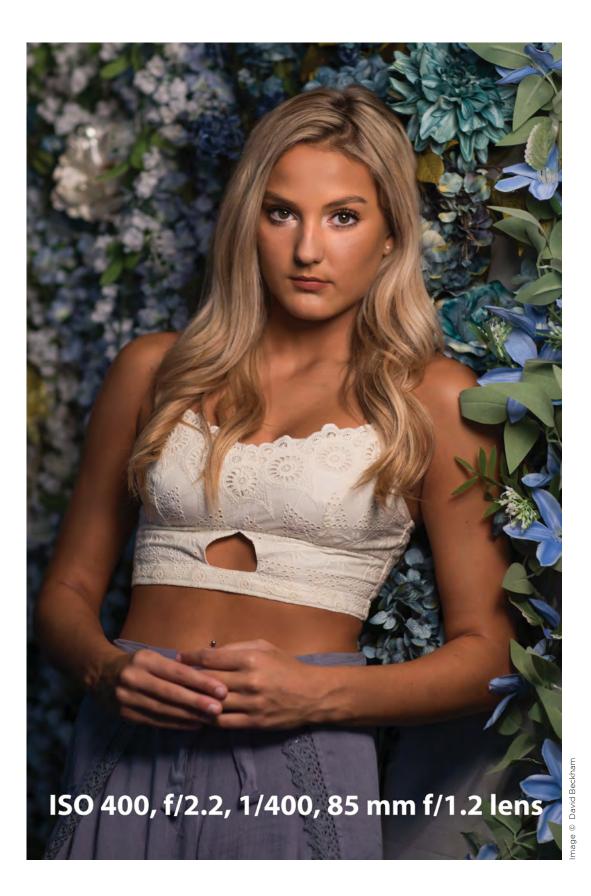
The cover photo is a remake of the iconic Maxell cassette tape commercial. Some Photoshop was used to get Caitlin's hair to emulate the blowback, but everything else was shot in camera. The lighting was a PLB1000 halogen continuous light by Paul C. Buff. These aren't available anymore, but there are similar 1,000-watt variable light heads on Amazon. I love using this type of light for soft-light settings. It was coupled with a 36-inch-square softbox placed just out of view, camera left. For the finish on the photo, I added some noise to give it a vintage effect. Using the continuous light source also allowed me to use the light in the lamp prop. I tried this shot with a strobe and wasn't able to get that added aspect of the finished photo because even at low settings, the strobe was too strong. The continuous lights are also great for teaching and demonstration because you can see exactly what it will look like before you take the shot. Shooting with halogen lights can be a little tricky. They get incredibly hot, so your modifiers can't be too close to the bulb.

FLOWER WALL

I shot Caitlin in the flower wall with the PLB1000s. I chose a Bowens beauty dish for the main light without a diffuser sock and placed it 42 inches from her face to get that soft glow and eliminate harsh shadows. The backlight is 6 to 8 feet away so I could get a more evident rim light on her body. You can see the difference in mood by shooting with and without a backlight in the two samples. It also helped sculpt her abs and cheeks with the contrasting highlights and shadows. To get the color tones right, I set the WB to 3100K. The pullback is SOOC.



ages © David Beckham



2018



TO GRID OR NOT TO GRID

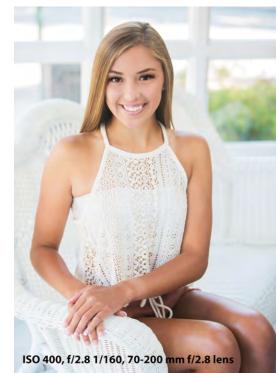
I use grids on almost all of my studio backlights and sometimes on the main light too. I shot the main image of Tiffany with an AB1600 and a Larson 14x48 softbox with a grid. This allowed for a controlled light drop-off around her, which pulls your eyes back to her. The face of the box is set about 4 feet from her face to keep the shadows soft. The grid creates more straight-line light, which tends to cause harsher shadows. I kept those shadows soft and glamorous by placing the softbox close. In the pullbacks, you can see a difference between the grid removed and a larger softbox without a grid.

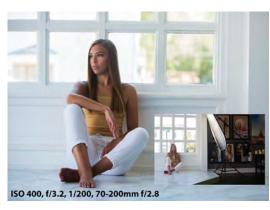




WINDOW LIGHT

If you are lucky enough to have window light in your studio, you should take advantage of it with every senior. Ideally, they should face north so only ambient light comes in. Mine face north and west so I have two sides of light coming in; even then, sometimes that's not enough. My most popular wall prints are set like the one of Devan in the chair. It has bright and airy light everywhere. To get this, we reflect light back from the ambient light source. If you have ever heard me speak, you've heard me say, "The best light comes from above." Those reflectors need to bounce light down on your subject-never up, unless you are looking for Blair Witch lighting. The other two examples show how to reflect the best light back on Devan. Moms are useful for holding reflectors, but boom stands work too.









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TWO-LIGHT SETUPS

These are great for sports and dramatic light. I used grids on both softboxes in the shot of Devan in her ball uniform. We used two AB800s on full power and pointed them directly across from each other. I like the main to be larger or wider than the backlight. As you have the subject step between the light, you can broad-light them by how their body is turned. Sometimes I like their body short-lit and have them look back into the light.





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The largest shooting area in my studio is all white. I used eggshell-white paint with texture sand mixed in. This gives me a glare-free surface that still bounces soft light around. It also makes for great lighting with one- and two-light setups.

These shots of Kenzi sitting in the white chair use a single AB800 on full power. The first one uses a 24x36 softbox. The light fills the area, giving us a nice bright image. Kenzi has large catchlights, minimal shadows on her face and wonderful, even skin tones over her whole body. The second one uses a beauty dish with a scrim. The light on her face is amazing, with incredibly soft shadows and beautiful catchlights. The drawback to using a beauty dish is the dropoff of light around her. Her face is brighter than her body (but Kenzie loves how tan she looks).



The third setup is my favorite: just one 12x36 softbox with a grid. It is aimed with the center of the light about at her neck. Because the AB800 flash tube is inside the modifier, it can fill the whole strip box with light. The grid puts it just on her and the falloff around her is dramatic. I love the editorial mood. Since the modifier is so close, the catchlights are unique and the shadows are soft. I used my 24–70 lens to stay under the modifiers. Her pose makes her legs look longer because I am shooting at 42mm focal length. The controlled light leaves highlights on her skin and shows off her muscle tone.



The last shot of Kenzi uses a snoot on a Flashpoint Xplor 600. The snoot directs the light exactly where I want it, and concentrates it for a "sun ray"-like effect. So when we point the light through her hat, it leaves patterns on her face. If we used a softbox this close, it wouldn't give this effect. Typically you have to put the light 18 to 20 feet away to get those kinds of shadows and light patterns.

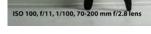


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Gracie loves to dance, and these two-light setups work great on the white background to show that off. The first shot uses a 30x42 softbox as the main and a 12x36 for a touch of backlight. The second one has the light much closer, and rather than place them opposite each other, they are on the same side, one in front, one in back. The main is there to light her face and body with even light. The backlight is there to cut across her body and make brilliant rim light. I removed the scrim on the backlight to let a harsher light flow through. I put the scrim on the outside of the grids to make it easy to adjust the intensity of the backlight.









ISO 100, f/13, 1/100, 70-200 mm f/2,8 len

Another way to get strong rim light is to use a cone with a 20-degree grid to direct the light exactly where you want it. I use these on cloudy days with a twolight OCF setup to create backlight that looks like sun. It is also what I did with Gracie in the green dress. You can see the highlights on her arms and hair, which adds separation from the tapestry behind her.

In Gracie's last shot, we are back to a single light source. I stumbled across this a couple months ago when I was putting my new parabolic modifier on the Xplor 600. I turned on the model light and got this great radiating pattern on my wall. I needed to shoot at ISO 640 and f/2.8 at a slower shutter but got some interesting and unique setups that were ideal for her tap-dance outfit and poses.









The last set with Katie is more traditional, with a Savage Evergreen paper backdrop. The lighting consists of two AB800s with gridded softboxes set at full power for back and rim light. The other AB800 has a 7-inch cone with the 20-degree spot grid to highlight behind her, creating a natural vignette. It is set at about three-quarter power. The main is an AB1600 set at half power with a Paul C. Buff white beauty dish to light her face and upper body. We used a Wescott Eyelighter with the matte white reflector to brighten her irises and soften the shadows under her chin. I prefer this modifier over the original because I wasn't a fan of the reflections in the subject's eyes.

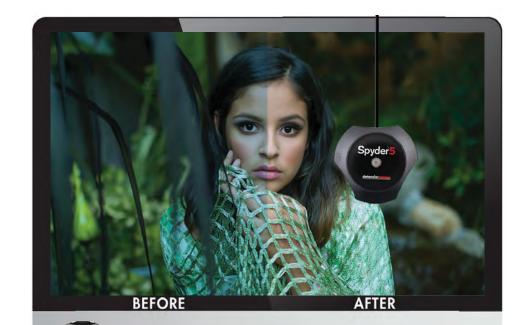
The next time you have a rainy day, grab your favorite model and experiment with these simple lighting techniques.

David Beckham has a studio in Pickerington, Ohio, specializing in fashion-style senior photography. He will be returning to speak for the fourth time at ShutterFest 19. He also teaches

workshops from his studio four times a year.

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ARE YOU MISSING HALF OF YOUR IMAGE DATA?

with Scott Detweiler

Digital cameras are great, and we all love the instant feedback they provide over film, but unlike film, they store their image data in computer memory. Because of this, they don't magically save it as a whole and complete image like film does. That hidden complexity can lead you to miss a lot of what your camera can do and increase noise you could have easily avoided.

Because digital cameras are complicated creatures, manufacturers have added a little gizmo so you can see if you are indeed gathering all the data and using the memory efficiently. But most photographers blow off this handy little meter as esoteric and unnecessary. That magical meter is called the histogram, and today we are going to master that bad boy to get cleaner, less noisy images.

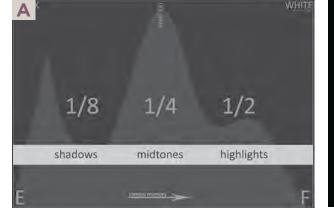
I've made much of this article less technical so it is easier to digest. Please take my examples for what they are meant to be, and not a treatise on RAM storage. To get the most from this article, get your camera and bring up the histogram for a recent photo so you can follow along and learn how this graph works.

IDENTIFYING STOPS

Imagine your camera is limited to four stops of light-capturing capability. The labels in Diagram A explain the parts you need to pay attention to so you can make adjustments in the field to get the best result later. To make life easier, we will focus on the Luminosity Histogram (the white one) and not the ones available for red, green and blue, but the same rules apply if you use those.

Notice that we have pure black on the left (labeled Black with an arrow indicating that point) and white on the right (labeled White). That means the curve of the data we capture for most images probably looks like it stretches across most of the width of this graph. I have added a gray curve for a hypothetical photo, but ignore what image it might be and notice how the chart works.

If the curve touches the left edge, we know we have a pure black somewhere in the photo. The height of the curve at the left side indicates just how much black we have, and the same for the far right where white lives. It might go up and down as it works its way across, and that is just an indicator of how many pixels of those values we have captured.



Fun fact: If you take a photo of a gray card, you will notice that the histogram looks like a line precisely in the middle. Gray cards are 18% gray, and that is what your camera meter wants in the middle. This isn't always ideal, since things like snow will be underexposed, so we do need to keep an eye on what our camera wants versus what we need to capture.



The hypothetical photo we graphed in Diagram A has a lot of gray in it because the curve almost touches the top at the middle line. We also know the data in the middle is our midtones, and conversely, the data on either side represents shadows and highlights. So, at a glance, we know we are looking at the graph for a photo with a lot of gray, a bit of a highlight area, no pure white and a substantial amount of shadow but no true black.

The left side represents the blackest part of the image and the right side is obviously the white. Nothing exists beyond the edges of this graph, so if your histogram is touching either edge, you know you are probably going to miss something since the data beyond is not capturable. Most cameras have a setting to blink the "clipped" areas that are off of the graph, and this exposure/shadow warning should be heeded and enabled in your camera settings. There is a bit we can do in Lightroom to bring this area back since many cameras capture a tiny bit more than what is shown, but it isn't reliable.

Each bar divides our histogram in Diagram A into four equal sections and each represents a full stop. A stop is twice as bright as the stop next to it. That means if you are even one stop underexposed, your image is half as bright as it should be. The stop on the far right comprises half of the image data our camera can capture. It's kind of mind-blowing that half of the data is stored in that single stop, but that is how it works. Underexposure by even just one stop means a much smaller image for adjustment in post. You can also see that the shadow side of the histogram captures only one-eighth of the image data or less. Getting the most information attainable is as simple as pushing that exposure as far right as possible.

The trap here is that the camera's computer applies a curve for you before you see the result as the preview. That image might appear too bright for you, so you may make rash decisions that impact the image based on this tiny picture that does not necessarily represent the data captured.

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To save the day, a glance at the histogram can instantly tell you if the "gas tank" is full, meaning the histogram reaches across to nearly touch the right edge. That right edge is the part we need to control, and getting the chart as far to the right without clipping is your goal. Even if you have no true black, pushing the exposure to the right side is much more critical. Sometimes the camera meter will second-guess you, and that is when you can use the +/- adjustments to nudge things. You will often hear the phrase *shoot to the right*, and now it probably makes more sense. Doing so means you are filling as much of the camera memory as possible and using the system to its fullest.

Underexposing and leaving the brightest stop (the far right one) empty might be ok with you because you are an edgy pro, but what happens to the stop that would have lived in the shadows of the far left edge where our camera has very little memory? The problem lies with the fact we are only capturing those four stops of information with our fictitious camera as shown in Diagram A. Now the stop that was on the far left (the darkest one) has been clipped off of the graph and the camera can no longer capture it, so we end up with the chart in Diagram B. No matter how much you mess with the sliders in Lightroom or Photoshop, that clipped data was never captured because our camera couldn't record it.

Image © Scott Detwei

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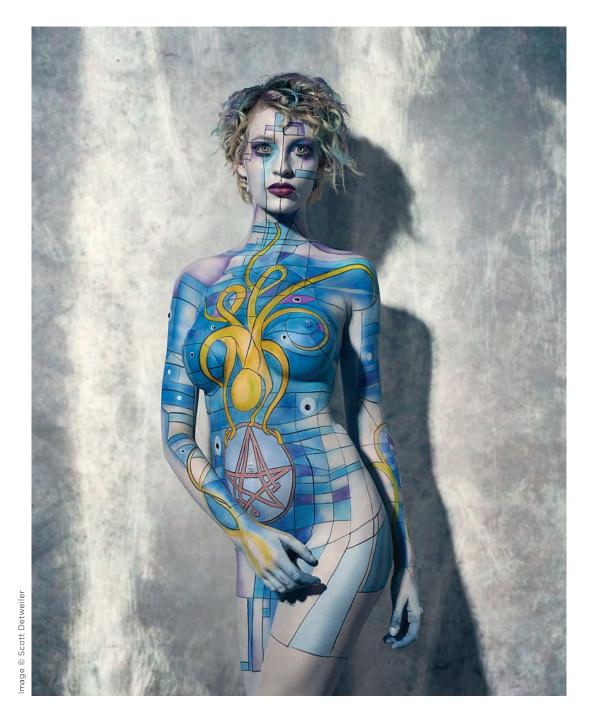
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The dark side of the histogram already represents an area where our camera isn't dedicating much memory to those stops, and pushing them off the left edge means certain death for those pixels. It isn't a matter of messing with controls to make it brighter; it was beyond the ability of your camera to capture it.



This also happens when you accidentally underexpose an image and then want to brighten it in post-production. We are in effect telling the computer to find data that wasn't recorded, which isn't possible. To help you magically resolve this, programs like Lightroom add noise in an attempt to make whatever data they do have look brighter. In the end, underexposure results in unnecessary noise in the shadows and can affect the rest of the image, causing those terrible bands people see in shadows.



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It might be obvious now that taking shots with a higher ISO to capture the data always yields a better result than underexposing and hoping to brighten it in post. Lightroom can do wonders at noise reduction, but it isn't very good at making up data you didn't capture. Don't be scared to use ISO to get the proper exposure. You will always get a better result using the camera memory like it was designed.



LEARN EXPOSURE EQUIVALENCIES

Doubling is a common theme with your camera. You can always double your ISO, slow your shutter by half, open your aperture a stop or double the power of your strobe to add a stop. These are all exposure equals. Wrap your head around them to help you get the most from your camera. If you notice your histogram says you are one stop underexposed (the graph isn't going far enough right), then you know you need to find that stop of exposure somewhere.

One other trap is knowing who the star of your photo is. Be sure they are correctly exposed. Ansel Adams created a great way of working this called the Zone System, and it is worth learning. Caucasian skin should be one stop over 18% gray in an ideal situation (that is, on the bar marked 1/2 in Diagram A). But what if the sun or a bright sky is in the shot and our histogram shows the exposure is too bright overall? The answer is to expose for the skin, of course, and ignore what the sky is telling us unless we can bounce light or add light to expose for both. I won't go into the light meter in this article, but it is how things are measured and it's worth knowing how to change it to the proper setting depending on your situation.

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The histogram is such a critical tool, something everyone should use, at least initially, when setting up a shot. Underexposure is not an artistic decision at the time of capture; it is merely a failure to use the camera memory to its fullest. The decision to underexpose in post-production is where the artist can make those decisions.

Leave that graph up on the preview and capture all that pixel goodness so you have less noise and more flexibility in post.



Scott is a conceptual portrait photographer based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Along with his original approach to portraiture, he excels at fashion, boudoir and occasionally weddings. When he's not shooting, Scott turns his studio into a classroom where he holds workshops on subjects like lighting, conceptual work and boudoir. sedetweiler.com Whether you love images popping with color or in black & white, ACI's metals are perfect for your client's wall.



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Sal Cincotta, Editor-in-chief

Inspirations | Our Readers





















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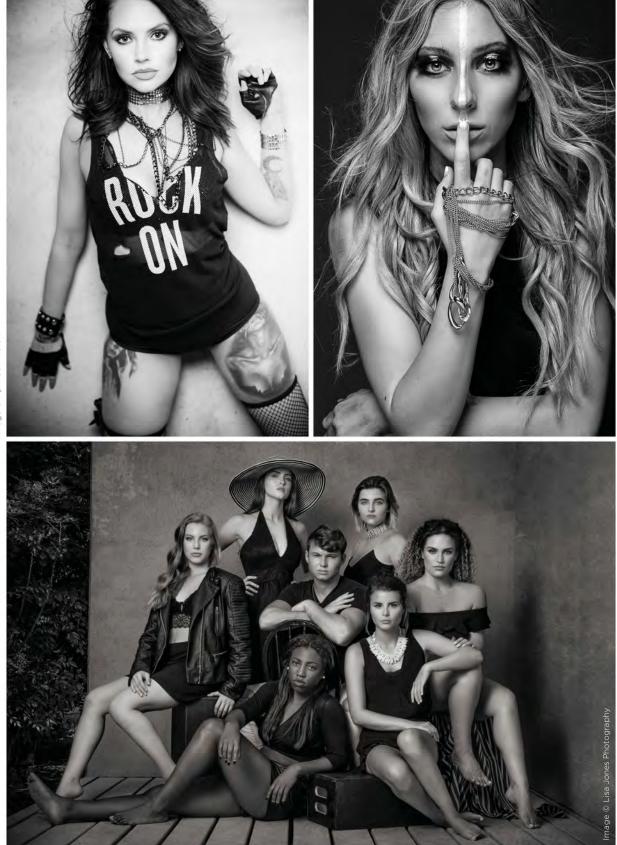




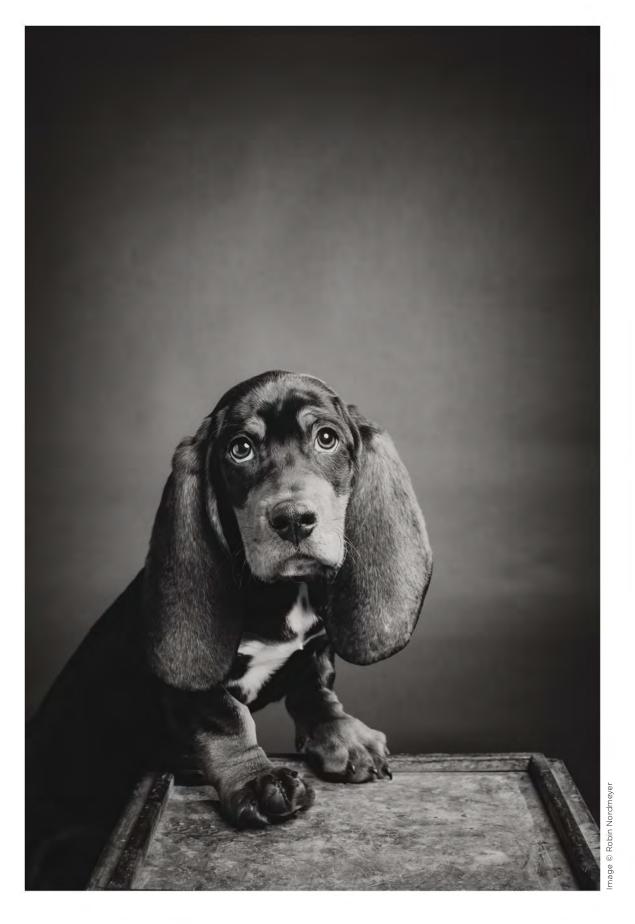




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4 WAYS TO PUT PEP IN YOUR **BUSINESS STEP**

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with Vanessa Joy



I was sitting at a bar last night with my husband, who's been a wedding cinematographer for 20 years. I've been a wedding photographer for the past 18 years, so we have similar ideas about what it means to do this for a living, day in and day out. We talked about the burnout factor not just in photography but in any creative field. Our world is oversaturated with creatives who haven't yet begun to understand the burnout factor.

What can you do to make sure this doesn't happen to you? First of all, you can't prevent it. It will happen. If you look at business statistics, about 80 percent of them fail in the first year, and then another 80 percent of those that succeed fail within the next five years. And if you don't fail, you'll likely hit a few snags that'll spiral you downward creatively. Burnout comes not just from how hard you have to work, but because you're always trying to find a way not to be bored of what you're doing every single day. It's not easy to be a self-starter and conjure up a work ethic that could rival anyone's. To add creativity on top of it and have to be creative on demand requires a magic formula that very few people figure out.

I want you to be successful not just in photography, but in life as well. Here's what helps me in photography and owning my own business.



#1: BE CREATIVE

I know that sounds silly, especially since I just finished telling you about the woes of being creative on demand, but creativity is in our blood. It's our strength. That does not mean our creative muscle can be stagnant for years without getting weak. Being creative requires work and constant flexing. It requires exploring, experimenting and even failing. In fact, just today I tried something new in the studio and pretty much landed flat on my face in front of a client.

Look outside your industry or genre of photography for inspiration. If you're a portrait photographer, look at weddings. If you're a wedding photographer, look at fashion photography. If you're a children's photographer, look at food photography. Whatever it is, step outside what you typically do and draw inspiration from unfamiliar sources.

One of my goals this year is to bring a lot of portrait techniques and skills into wedding photography. I hope this will spark my creativity and give my portfolio a little edge by showing off things that are typically not seen in wedding photography. (If you'd like a little posing inspiration, visit bit.ly/2DMLUdm.)



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#2: BE LAZY

A lot of us think that taking a break means we're being lazy. Be lazy because you need to have a break. I always look with fondness on the Jewish community for taking a Sabbath day of rest every week. In fact, their old law says that someone who does not take a Sabbath day should be stoned to death outside the camp. They don't do that anymore, but it's certainly a strong statement about the need for rest.



It's not just about the rest. It's not necessarily lying on the couch with your feet up with a bottle of wine, although that does sound great. It can mean spending time with family and friends, and working on relationships and things outside of work, which need just as much if not more attention than the things inside of work. By making sure you take rest, you're strengthening your world outside of work and strengthening yourself as well.

In the book *Getting Things Done*, author David Allen stresses that being bored is necessary for creativity. When your mind is relaxed, you can be your most creative self, and that's when you come up with a ton of ideas. You can even jot down ideas while you're relaxing in the shower with a waterproof notepad from Amazon.

#3: PUSH YOURSELF

It's easy to be a photographer and find a bit of success or even make a living at it, and quickly grow stagnant. I'm a firm believer in being content but never complacent. Complacency leads to being bored, and that boredom can lead to dissatisfaction. I find it really helpful to have big long-term projects or goals that you are actively working on. I'm not talking about those goals you hope you will achieve one day. I'm talking about the ones where you sit down and make a plan in order to get there by a certain date.

Another favorite book of mine is *EntreLeadership* by Dave Ramsey. In this book, he talks about goals not truly being goals unless you have an actionable plan to achieve them. If you don't have that plan, then they're just dreams. So find something you want to be, do or have within the next one or two years, and make a plan to reach that goal. Break down your plan by months or weeks and do things that move you closer. Sometimes it takes a thousand little steps to get to the top, sometimes maybe just five big ones. Whatever it is, keep yourself pushing ahead and wanting more, but at the same time, always be content and grateful for what you have. Having goals and pushing yourself forward should never be done based on envy or looking around at your competition. It should come from within, something you want and are willing to work for.



#4: CALL FOR HELP

Use your support system. It's amazing how perfect everyone's lives look on social media, and I admit I do try to paint a pretty picture. Social media has us thinking that everyone else has it all together, but no one does. It's always the ones who portray the most perfect life who have the messiest house on the inside. After all, we want a clear, concise brand online that exudes professionalism and high-quality photography. But that doesn't mean you can't admit your struggles—yes, even on your business social media accounts. It's amazing how much support you get when you lead an open dialogue about your struggles to those closest to you or even to those online.





It's important to have close friends you can confide in. My confidants and my husband see the real me, every nitty-gritty thing I go through. But that doesn't mean you can't reach out to your acquaintances or your audience online for some light support as well. Don't write sob stories or do it too often; but sometimes, all you need are a few "atta boys" or a couple "keep your head ups" to push yourself past whatever burnout or struggle you're going through. Plus, a little honesty online will probably inspire others.

I hope these tips help you find a way to push through burnout in your photography career. Try one of them or try all of them, but just keep moving forward. I'm going to leave you with a quote I have hanging up in my office by Martin Luther King Jr.: "If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."





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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WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS with Christine Yodsukar



Although it's been common in Facebook photography groups to bash the video team at a wedding, we can learn quite a bit from their craft and apply it to our own. My husband, Rich, is a cinematographer, and through working with him, I have learned ideas and techniques that have improved the way I photograph a wedding and the way I deliver wedding albums as well.

When we are photographing a wedding, we want to begin with the end in mind: a beautifully designed album. We want that album to have symmetry and balance, proper proportions and beautiful leading lines. This is how we use cinematic rules for our photography.

As I watched my husband and his cinema team prepare for a wedding, they talked about what one another would be capturing and how they would capture it. What side of the subject would the light be on? Would the subject be looking and moving camera left or camera right? Would their transition shot entering the getting-ready rooms be a pan up or a pan left? They talked about these parts of the day beforehand so they could film symmetrically to one another without being in the same room.



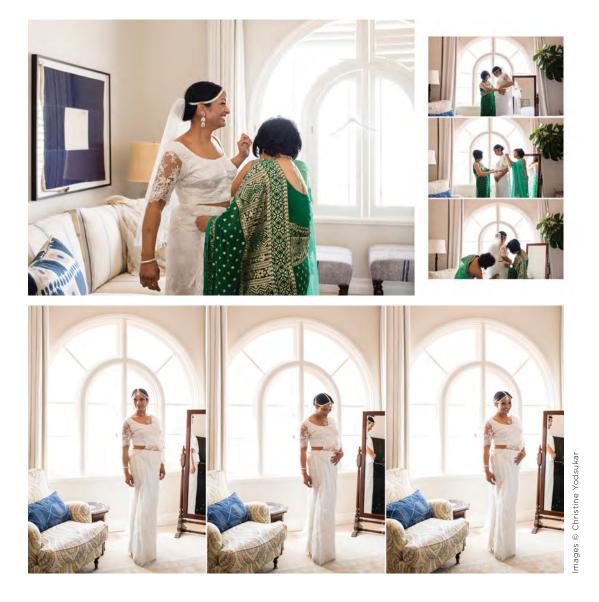
How does this translate for us photographers? Let's imagine you are photographing one partner getting ready and your second shooter is photographing the other partner. To create symmetry between the two sets of photos, you can photograph your subject with your light source camera left and your second can photograph their subject with the light source camera right. When you create your album design later, you can create two spreads that are symmetrical to one another or you can create one spread that shows symmetry between the two storylines.

You can also create symmetry with movement, even in a still image. If you show your bride "going to her ceremony," she can be moving from the left side of the frame to the right side of the frame. The groom can be shown going to the ceremony by moving from the right side to the left side of the frame. This type of storytelling makes each of their stories cohesive while still having their own separate stories. The alternative to this, which is what we don't want to do, would be photographing both partners exactly the same with the light source on the same side of their portraits, and movement going the same way. This becomes repetitive and doesn't give each partner their own storyline. Think about all the ways you can create symmetry between storylines throughout the day.

When Rich's cinema team set up for a ceremony, they would make sure that the two cameras on the couple's faces had the same frame. They wanted the headsizes the same for each partner. It would be weird if in their final film, one partner's head was smaller than the other as they cut back and forth. Subliminally, headsize within your frame can also translate to power and authority. With a wedding story, we want to avoid giving one partner authority over the other. They also did this for multiple cameras during toasts, special dances and performances. This allowed our editor to cut together beautiful sequences that matched with headsizes.



Keeping headsizes consistent is something we can incorporate as well. Not only is this important for telling their story, but it is important when designing their album. We want each partner to have portraits with complementary headsizes to their partner's portraits, but we also want a series of each person where their headsize is the same.



Instead of constantly zooming in and out randomly during the bride's portrait session like I did when I first started, I now take multiple series of portraits, keeping the headsize consistent in each series. So I do five to 10 full-body portraits of the bride, keeping her headsize the same. I move in for a medium shot of her, and get five to 10 of those. I can move in for tight closeups and get five to 10 of those. Now when I design the album, I create stunning layouts of series of photographs that go together beautifully.



I use this technique when doing portraits for each partner, bridal party portraits, family photos and grin-andgrabs. I also use this idea for reception details. I get wide, medium and tight photographs of each detail so I can create cohesive spreads of the reception in the album as well.

At your next wedding, keep your feet planted for a minute and take a series, then move in for another series and so on. Or shoot a sequence of photographs with one lens, and then shoot the same sequence with a different one.





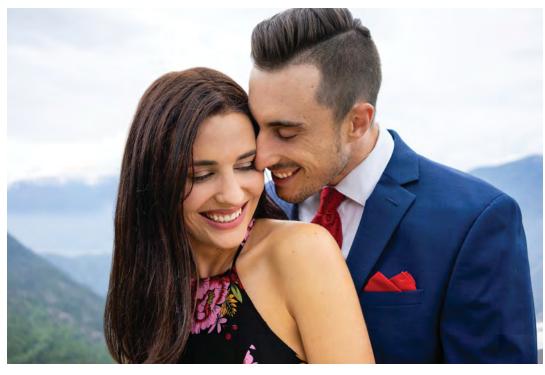
Leading lines is something I learned from one of the cinematographers on our team who is now one of our grooms. Of course I had heard of leading lines, but he took my understanding to a whole new level. As we designed his proposal and engagement album, he saw details that I was not paying attention to, and the result was the best album we've ever designed.

Rich and I photographed his proposal and engagement using hand railings, a bridge and the horizon as leading lines to lead your eye to the couple. We even used their bodies. When we were designing the album, our team member suggested we incorporate the leading lines into the album's edges and corners. We had leading lines originating from the corners of the album. We made horizon lines parallel with the top and bottom of the album. The resulting album contained leading lines in the photographs, but the album itself became part of the leading lines too.





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Wedding photographers' job is to tell the best story possible so that years down the road, our couples and their kids can relive their day. By borrowing storytelling techniques from cinematography, our stories can be stronger and more cohesive—and also stand the test of time for our clients.





FROM THE PRO MIGUEL OCQUE

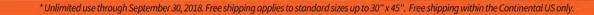
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- Miguel Ocque Photography





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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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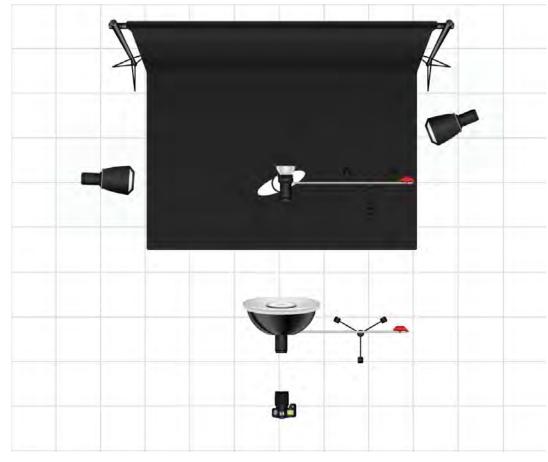
depth + drama

with accent lights

with Michael Corsentino

Creating lighting styles is a lot like cooking. You start with an idea of what you want and season to taste, adding what you need as you go. Each step taken on the path to achieving the look you've visualized is a series of building blocks with an eventual whole that's greater than the sum of its parts. Readers of this column know I'm a big fan of working with one light, but there are times when additional lights are called for. This month, I turn up the heat and show you what's possible with four lights.

Despite using four times the number of lights, the level of complexity does not quadruple. In fact, it remains fairly straightforward technically. As I'm fond of saying, light is light, so whether you're working with one light or four, it's all still just light. The questions about how much light you want and what quality of the light each strobe should have are now simply applied to four lights. Think exactly the same way you'd approach the options you have when using only a keylight.



In this overhead lighting diagram, you can see the lighting pattern, modifiers and angles used for each strobe. Note that the accent light above the model was pointed down toward his hair.



Note the angle and distance of the lights from the model's eventual position in the center of the studio. The accent light for the model's hair is partially hidden by the Mola Demi beauty dish used for the keylight, but its boom arm is visible.

I'm still relying on the keylight to serve as my main source of light, just as we do when working with only one light. But, as you'll see when I add accent lights on the left, right and above the model, I take the lighting from ordinary to extraordinary one light at a time. Each accent light functions like a sculptor's chisel, bringing out new planes, facets and shapes in the subject. This creates more depth, drama, dimension and a sense of volume that can't be achieved using just one light. This style of lighting is often used in the entertainment industry, although with considerably more punch than I've opted for here with these more editorial-style images. I'm avoiding a heavy-handed look, opting instead for subtlety. If you prefer the brighter accent lights often required for sports and promotional images, simply increase the power of the accent strobes, and you're in business.

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Depth & Drama With Accent Lights | Michael Corsentino

Each light is based on the output used for the keylight, so I started there. My first step was to measure the light output from the key using a handheld flash meter and adjust its power as needed until it matched my desired f-stop, in this case f/16.



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Each accent light is based on the power setting of the keylight, and the first step is to dial that in. Here you can see that the beauty dish with diffusion sock created a broad circle of bright light, more light than I wanted on both counts for this moody portrait.

I used a Mola Demi beauty dish to modify my keylight and tried several different iterations—diffusion sock, bare, etc.—until I settled on using it paired with a 30-degree grid spot to confine the key's light to a tighter circle. Next, I individually metered the left and right accent lights and set each to match the power of the keylight at f/16.



Removing the diffusion sock from the beauty dish and adding a 30-degree grid spot helped confine the light to a tighter circle by heightening its falloff. This also reduced the overall illumination, which had been metered at f/16 by around a stop. This didn't bother me because I wouldn't be relying solely on the keylight to illuminate the model's face. I also wanted a lower key effect from my main light, so I left its power setting as it was.

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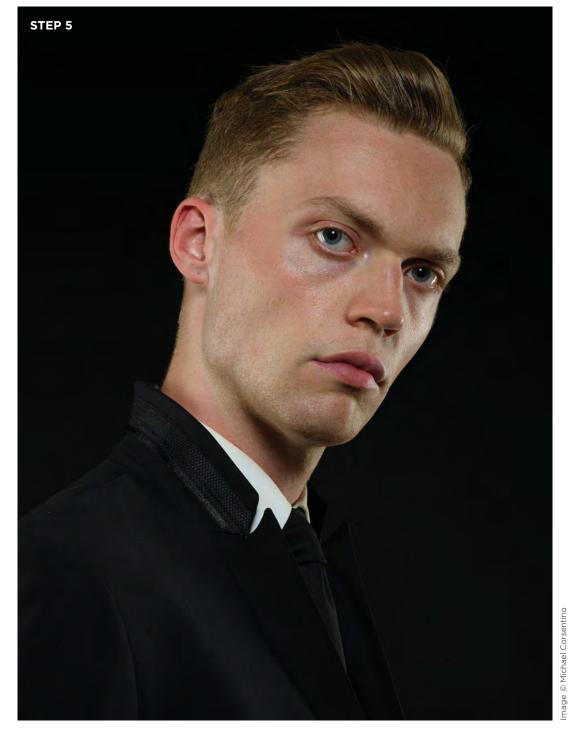
Working one light at a time and starting camera left, I began adding each accent light. Each of the side accent lights was metered at f/16 to match the keylight. You're seeing the contribution of the keylight and the camera-left accent light. Note the added highlights and sense of dimension on the left side of the model's face.



Now that I had the left accent light dialed in satisfactorily, I shut it off and moved on to the right accent light. I metered it at exactly the same f/16 power setting; this way, the keylight and both side accent lights matched. You're seeing the contribution of the keylight and the camera-right accent light. Note the added highlights and sense of dimension on the right side of the model's face. That's the beauty of working with a handheld flash meter. I hadn't even clicked the shutter, but I knew that when I did, as long my camera settings were exactly the same as those used on my meter—f/16, 125/sec, 100ISO—my first exposure would be bang on. I simply chose f/16 for the accent lights as a way to create a level playing field between all the lights. I planned to adjust their power up or down later as needed, but ended up liking all three lights at the same power. I placed an accent light above the model to accentuate his hair and dialed it in intuitively.

Ultimately, even at its lowest power, this 500ws strobe with 7-inch silver reflector was way too bright and caused my model's blond hair to clip severely. Step by step, I knocked down its output even further with a layer of velum to diffuse and soften it and a double layer of neutral-density gel to lessen its intensity, which did the trick. The left and right accent lights were each Elinchrom 14x35 strip boxes. I had 30-degree egg crate grids ready to go just in case, but they were unnecessary.

Modeling lights are a big help in the studio. They allow you to visually access the effect each light has on a subject in real time. This makes adjusting the positions of your lights significantly easier and much faster than having to capture images, review and adjust as you go. By using the modeling light on each accent light, I was able to see how they affected my model's face and roll them around until I found the prefect positions for each of them. The same is true for the height and angle of the keylight; the modeling light made it much easier to judge the lighting, place the catchlight and make focusing easier.



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Here you can see the steps involved in getting the accent light for the model's hair dialed in. As you can see from the first image (Step 6A), the strobe's lowest power setting was still too bright, causing the model's hair to clip. The next step (Step 6B) was to add a layer of diffusion velum. This was better, but still didn't do enough to reduce the light.

This is the tip of the iceberg of what's possible when you add additional lights and thoughtfully season each to taste. The range of looks from low to high key is as wide and varied as your imagination allows. An accent light can be placed above your subject to provide extra illumination for the hair and separation from the background. A single accent light can add a fill from below your subject when used in conjunction with a beauty dish or other modifier from above. This fills in shadows in the eye sockets and under the chin. Double accent lights left, right and behind a subject can create edgy editorial sports-style images or high-key fashion portraits, depending on the modifiers and the lighting ratios you use.



too bright or overwhelming.

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It's clear from this final image that the difference between using one light and four lights is extreme. The additional sense of depth and dimension created with three accent lights with the keylight takes the image to the next level.

There's so much you can do by adding a few extra lights into the mix. You'll quickly discover the magic they can add to your pictures.





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

michaelcorsentino.com

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The Wedding Photographer's

by the Michael Anthony



Photographers are well known for investing money in their toys. In fact, I would be willing to bet that many of us got started on this career path after realizing the cost of their new toys, and that we needed to charge people for pictures in order to just afford them. I am no exception to that. I love cameras, lights and new technology. We have so many options to choose from, but many that we crave are unnecessary.

I have allocated more money toward my marketing and less toward my gear after realizing what matters most to our wedding business. But let's say you are just starting out. How do you choose the best tools to purchase? In this article, I break down my recommendations. I go a bit deeper than just camera and lens selections. When we compare brands, keep in mind most of my recommendations are subjective. Whether you use Canon, Nikon or Sony is not a concern. You just need to use one that works best for you. There are many other brands that I have not had experience with that may be a great fit for you, but this guide should give you a good idea of some of the things I think you should have in your wedding kit.

Items with an asterisk are recommended but optional.



The Wedding Photographer's Gear Guide: 2018 Edition | Michael Anthony





Canot

CANON 5D MARK IV

NIKON D810



SONY A7II



NIKON D850



SONY A9





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PRIMARY CAMERAS (ACTION)

Needs: Your primary camera needs to be focused on capturing moments. These recommendations excel in both autofocus and low light. They have full-frame sensors, excellent battery life, dual card slots and a buffer that can capture a significant number of images in a short period of time. This is your primary tool, so invest significantly in it. Just keep in mind that technology improves over time, and cameras have a working life of four to five years for most wedding photographers.

Uses: This camera will be used to capture the majority of the day: ceremony, reception, first look and any other time of the day where you will need to capture fast-moving action, often in low light.





CANON 5D MARK IV

NIKON D810





SONY A7RII

CANON 5DS



NIKON D850

SECONDARY CAMERAS (PORTRAIT)

Needs: Your secondary camera may be different from your backup camera, but I recommend a camera that can shoot in high resolution. This is particularly useful if your business model includes selling prints. If you are printing your images, having a camera that can excel in high resolution and dynamic range is a great option for adding high-quality imagery to your client's final product. For a backup camera, consider the APS-C or Micro 4/3 systems.

Uses: You will employ this camera when you are shooting portraits or when your primary camera fails. Stick to the same camera brand as your primary camera so you're using the same glass and keeping your kit as small as possible. If you travel a lot, consider the smaller MFT or APS-C systems.



LENS RECOMMENDATIONS

Invest in the best glass you can afford. It will stay with you from body to body, and makes a huge impact on your final image quality. Good glass retains its focusing ability and image quality over time. I recommend the Sigma Art line, which costs a bit less than native glass but performs well and even outperforms native glass in some areas.



^ ULTRAWIDE ZOOM

A 16–35 or wider is a great option for dance floor images, large groups and dramatic portraiture.

This lens is incredibly versatile for wedding

photography, especially when you need extra

reach, like in a church. It is useful for portraits because it allows you get close, midrange and

semi-wide, allowing for many different proofs in

70-200 >

a single shooting set.



If you were to shoot a wedding with only a single lens, this is the lens you would want. It can be used in a variety of circumstances.





< 50MM PRIME

This glass is a must-have because we always need fast glass, and if you had to choose one focal length, this one gives you the most versatility.



MACRO LENS >

Although there are ways to shoot macro with minimal gear, such as turning your 50mm upside down, for good detail images, a macro lens is a necessity. Because it's not used often on a wedding day, a less-expensive option is not a bad idea for this category.



^ 85MM PRIME *

This lens is a great choice for portraits, pushing creativity, great perspective and subject isolation.

V 35MM PRIME *

Like the 85, this offers great perspective and subject isolation, at a wider view. I love shooting with this lens. Along with the 85, it's one of my favorites.



LIGHTS

Lights are where things get interesting. Unlike competitively priced cameras with similar offerings, lights can range dramatically in price. Your brand loyalty will depend on what you find important. Remember, getting into brand superiority is like the Apple versus PC debate: As long as it gets the job done, you can work with anything.

For me, it's a no-brainer: Profoto has been reliable since day one. And while other brands are becoming increasingly more competitive with their product offerings, as a Sony shooter, I have experienced triggering reliability issues that are frustrating at the very least and devastating during important moments. The new offerings from Flashpoint are good options for those starting their gear kit, or for experienced hobbyists who do not need perfect reliability every time they press the shutter if it comes at a much higher price.



GODOX FLASHPOINT XPLOR 600 PRO ^

LARGE MONOLIGHTS

These lights are used to overpower the sun in bright conditions. I recommend either of them depending on what you are looking for. At 6.6 pounds with the battery installed, the B1x is much lighter than the AD600 Pro, which comes in at 7.11 pounds (Godox advertises the weight of this light without the battery or bulb). The Godox produces about two-thirds of a stop more light. For reliability, Profoto is time tested, and for me, never misses a beat. When moments count, reliability is the largest differentiator in price.

Build quality on both of these lights is very good, although at \$1,200 more expensive, the B1x definitely has the edge here, but Godox has continued to produce new products to compete with Profoto and other manufacturers. This is one of their latest offerings, and a darn good one (although it is currently selling at double the price of the previous iteration of this light). These are primarily used as a keylight to overpower the sun in bright conditions or with large modifiers. I take a single B1x to every wedding.

MEDIUM MONOLIGHTS *

These lights are great travel options and are used the same way as the larger lights above. If you have a heavy kit, these offer great ways to lighten the load a bit. I have never had my hands on the new AD400, but it looks to be very similar to the AD600 Pro that has been out for a few months.

The AD200 is a very popular light because it is not much larger than a speedlight, but puts out a lot of power. These are great for travel, but they are very fragile, so be careful if you put them on a high stand.

SPEEDLIGHTS

You'll use these lights most often on a wedding day, and it's essential that they are easy to use. I don't recommend brand speedlights anymore because for whatever reason, camera brands have not embraced lithium batteries, nor have they opted to make larger lights. A Protoco

A PROFOTO B2 QCCVCusum FLASHPOINT EVOLVE 200 > CONTINUE CONTINU

The A1 is the easiest light I have ever put my hands on. It comes at a high price point, but the quality of it justifies it for the photographer who wants the best quality. The light features a round head, which many critics say does nothing for the light quality. It's been shown through tests that the round head creates a more gradual light fall-off on the edges and more even distribution throughout a scene. The A1 has a built-in modifier set that is proprietary to the light, allowing you to pack less gear.

Check out the MagMod system for modifications to these lights. MagMod is an innovative company that's always creating new products like their MagBeam and new MagBox.



MEMORY CARDS

Quality memory cards are often overlooked, and I can't understand why we don't place more emphasis on the importance of these crucial items. The last thing you want is card failure, so it's imperative that you purchase the highestquality memory cards you can afford. We shoot with 128GB cards because a card is much harder to lose in your camera than in a memory cardholder or your pocket.



^ MANFROTTO 1052-BAC





^ HOODMAN STEEL SERIES



A SANDISK EXTREME SERIES

LIGHT STANDS

I love these options mainly because they combine sturdy quality with portability. They can be clicked together and attached to a strap for ease of use. Take a look at the Manfrotto Snap Heads for a great way to mount your speedlights to your light stands.

CAMERA BAGS

Think Tank Airport Security V2.0 or V3.0 (we use the V2.0), Sal Cincotta's Bug Out Bag or Vanguard Camera Backpack

You may be thinking: Who cares what bag I use? It won't affect your photography, but it's important to have a bag that's durable enough to stand the test of time and allows quick and easy access to your gear. I recommend a combo of a rolling bag along with a messenger bag for times when you need quick access. We use the backpack when traveling.

< KUPO CLICK STANDS



RAPIDBOX

PROFOTO

SILVER/WHITE **REFLECTOR >**



MODIFIERS

You want to have at least one soft light modifier with you. I prefer softboxes because they allow you to make the most efficient use of your lighting in an outdoor environment. If you are shooting in lower light where it is not windy, an umbrella can do the same thing as well.











So there you have it: everything you need for a solid wedding photography kit. Check out the video that goes along with this article to see what we carry in our camera bag.





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

michaelanthonyphotography.com

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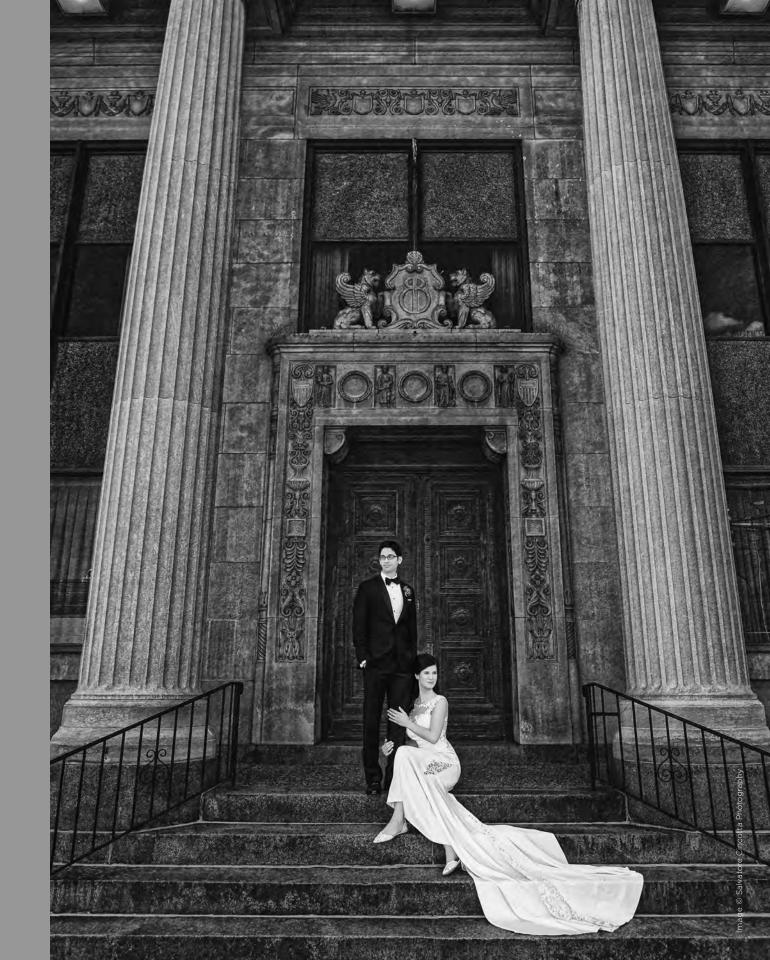
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final inspiration

photographer | salvatore cincotta image title | we are one



exposure lighting location gear 5.6 @ 1/160, ISO 200 natural light, open shade north city | st. louis, mo canon 5d mark iv canon 24-70mm f2.8L







"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