

the business behind the shutter | AUGUST 2014

SHUTTER

MAGAZINE

BREAKING INTO DESTINATION **WEDDINGS**

BY PHILLIP BLUME

PLUS
+++

TRAVEL
INSPIRATIONS

Portraits From Our Readers

+ **Birthday Club Sessions**
with Lori Nordstrom

+ **5 Tips for Better Branding**
with Kristy Dickerson

+ **Medium Format | Featuring Travis Neely**
with Sal Cincotta

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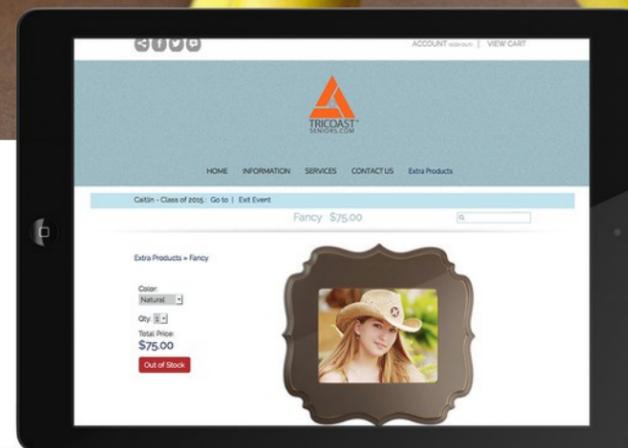
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A DIFFERENT
WAY

OF THINKING

WITH BLAIR PHILLIPS

BY BLAIR PHILLIPS



Volume is a word that is often frowned upon in professional photography. Many pros believe that volume work equates to very little skill or creativity. Until a few years ago, that's how I thought. After experiencing a small taste for myself, I quickly changed my tune. There's strength in numbers. With large numbers of orders comes large sums of money. I also found that you can stay true to your brand while offering volume photography. The thought of having a paying subject step in front of my camera every 60 seconds sounded pretty appealing. My wife and I dove in headfirst a few years ago, and have enjoyed growing the volume side of our business ever since.

We began with a dance studio with 250 students. At the time, I was worried about getting in over my head. One of the biggest reasons photographers fail at volume is lack of preparation. We took the time to set up a mock shoot, and created efficient systems to help us execute and keep up with it all. We quickly learned the areas in which mistakes could arise. You really have to think ahead. In most cases, you need to treat it with the same seriousness as a wedding. Once you leave your shoot, it's done. It is impossible to get 250 people back together after you got something all mixed up and out of order. Basically, I am trying to scare you into not making mistakes should you ever consider volume. It has to be taken seriously if you want to have repeat business. The large-volume companies are always putting down private studios by telling everyone that those competitors are not equipped to handle volume. They make it sound like we would fail miserably if we were hired for the job. It is our job to prove them wrong.

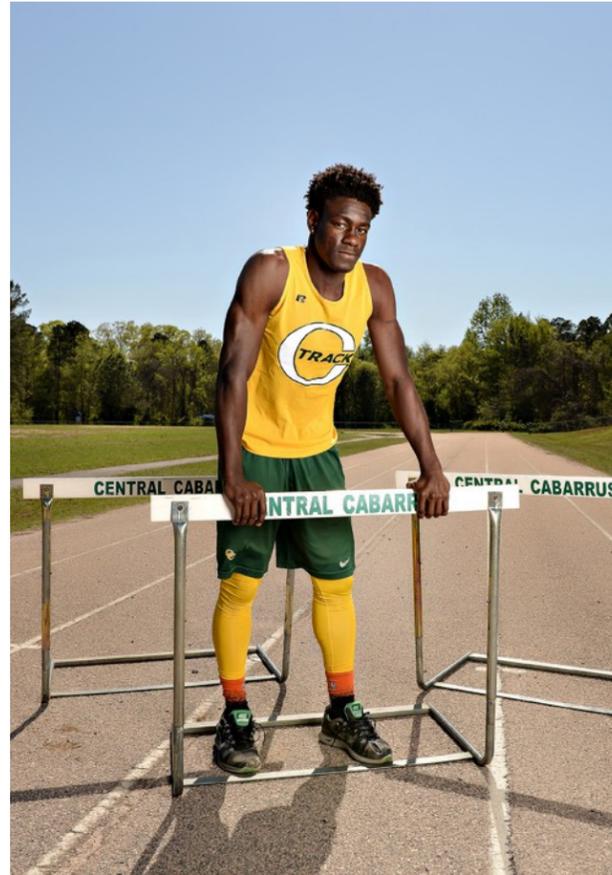


Timing is absolutely everything when you book your first volume job. You don't want your approach to be too late. Too early doesn't always hurt. I am going to use a dance studio as my first example to help with timing. Dance studios work the entire year to prepare for their dance recital. The recital is the big debut in front of family and friends. It can be an overwhelming experience for the studio owner and instructors. The best time to approach them is after the recital. You want to let the dust settle and give the owners a bit of a break to catch their breath. If you approach them right before the recital, they'll be too distracted. Call the studio and ask when the recital is. It is like this with any volume photography.

When you feel that the time is right to make your initial contact with a potential volume client, there are several things to consider and prepare. How frustrated are you when strangers come into your business trying to sell you something? You do not want others to feel that way. You should start with a short email introducing yourself and discussing what you can do for them. Set up an example shoot so you will have something to show them. Real pictures will get their attention way more than just an email full of text.

The email should state how organized you are and how quick your turnaround time will be. State your ultimate goal clearly: to make the parents happy. You want them to understand that photography day will run more smoothly than at competing studios. If you are able to arrange a meeting with them, come armed with actual products you offer. Load up your iPad with several examples of some mock shoots you have done. Walk them through the process you have put together. In most cases, I actually put together a keynote presentation and treat it as an educational experience for them. If you have their attention, you really need to impress them with the amount of effort you put into your meeting. Don't just leave and hope they call you back. You would not have secured the meeting if they were not genuinely interested. Near the end of your meeting, if you don't mind being so forward, pull your calendar up and ask them when they normally have pictures done.





I am going to shift gears for a moment and talk about school photography. Becoming a school photographer is not something you set out to be when starting your career. Adding school photography to your business can make you lots of money. I had the idea of getting whole-school contracts when I first entertained shooting volume. I knew I should start slow. I began trying to secure a high school's athletic program. I shot some examples that showed off my brand, and emailed the images to the athletic director. It was the same type of email I sent to the dance studio. He really liked the examples, and wanted to meet. After one meeting, he was sold and booked with me. He was so impressed with the way things went after our first shoot that he reached out to other schools for me. I went from one school to seven in a matter of a few months. Once I had the athletic programs secured, I felt it was time to try to get into regular school pictures. I talked with the principal about doing cap-and-gown pictures. She already knew I was doing a great job with their athletic program, so she gave me the opportunity. I immediately started a conversation about photographing all 1,100 students for the next year. I secured that contract as well, and will be photographing them in September.

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHY



In our area, students normally go to school in the summer and get their tux and drupe picture made for the yearbook. Since it is mandatory, every student shows up. While there, they have the option to have their senior pictures made that day also. They have a few session options. We also secured that contract. I will be photographing 249 seniors in one week at the school. There will be two photographers working all day for one week.

That is a ton of work, but after you do the math, who cares? By starting slow and building my reputation with these schools, I feel like I can make a very good living while working six months out of the year. I can use the other six months to be very selective in the studio and spend a ton of time with my daughter.

It has been amazing to see how my studio business has fed off the volume and how the volume has fed off the studio business. It is all about making relationships everywhere you go. Never underestimate the power of volume photography. ■



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5 TIPS FOR BETTER BRANDING

with Kristy Dickerson

by Kristy Dickerson



Last month, I talked about how picking a specialty can help your photography business. Every day I see a new photographer pop up in my area. I think the photographers who specialize and brand well are going to be the only businesses that make it. So this month, I want to dive into branding your business and define what a photography brand actually is.

You can search the Internet for a million different definitions of branding. But I think when you strip it all away, a brand is how potential clients think and feel when they hear the name/company. So applying that to photography when someone says Kristy Dickerson, my brand, will make him or her feel a certain way. Does my name imply wedding photography, does it imply high-end, low-end, exclusive, etc.? Branding is a process and it is not something that happens overnight. And branding is not just a logo and a website.

A powerful brand enables a company like Louis Vuitton to charge \$2,000 for a purse. Being able to charge a premium for a service or product starts with branding. The same goes for photography. Branding your photography business is essential.





BE AN EXPERT

Have you ever heard the saying “Jack of all trades, but master of none”? You do not want to be this person. You want to be an expert at one type of photography, which should be apparent in your branding, from imagery to copy to messaging, etc. Without picking a specialty, you’re never an expert. To see more about this topic, see July’s *Shutter* magazine article.

INVEST IN A LOGO

Branding starts with a logo. In order to build a brand, you have to define a look and feel. Once you have a logo, don’t change it. I see so many photographers changing their logos all the time. Imagine if Coca-Cola changed its logo every year. Imagine the millions of dollars in lost revenue and marketing it would have to do to inform its consumers. It is the same thing. Hire a graphic designer who takes the time to understand who your customers are and who you are. Often, because we understand Photoshop, we think we can cut corners and do our own logo and build our own website. Unless you’re a professional graphic designer, don’t do this. I created my first logo to save money, and it was hideous. Wait to invest in this until you know your specialty so you know how to brand. But the longer you wait, the longer it is going to take to establish your name and brand. Once you create a logo, a look and feel should be created for the website.

INTEGRATE YOUR BRAND

Your website's look and feel is so important. Everyone Googles companies before making buying decisions. But brand is about more than just a website. It is in our office, whether it be a home office or a storefront, it is in our tone and messaging in emails, it is plastered on social media, and it is what you wear. Can you imagine walking into a Louis Vuitton store and, instead of being greeted by someone in a suit, you are greeted by someone in a tank top and shorts? I would immediately have a different feeling about that brand!

A brand establishes trust. Your office space should be a reflection of your brand. If you are an editorial photographer and your website is very modern, your meeting space should match that. Even if you don't have a storefront, establishing a workspace in your home is important. Having a place to meet clients to establish trust is really important, whether it be an in-person meeting or a Facetime.

Social media is now a huge aspect of branding. That includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. Once you know your specialty and establish your look and feel, create a mission statement or tagline that serves as the basis of your tone and messaging. There are so many social media channels that we need to keep up with as well. Use services like Hootsuite and Everypost to make your posting more efficient. You have to also make sure you understand different mediums of conversation. Instagram posts consist of pictures, short conversation and hashtags. Social media is an excellent communication medium, and I have booked clients who have seen and gotten to know me through it. Here are a few tips for using social media.

- >> Be concise and short.
- >> Focus on one idea per post.
- >> Post pictures! We live in a visual world.
- >> Ask questions and engage the audience.
- >> Keep it positive and upbeat.
- >> Don't post about politics (I actually see this all the time).
- >> Share your personal side. It creates a level of trust and allows them to get to know you.
- >> When posting your work, include logos on your images, even on Instagram. I use BlogStomp to put my logo on images, then drag images into my Dropbox, and then they are on my phone, ready to post.



BE CONSISTENT

If you are not consistent, everything you are doing to establish your brand goes out the window. I cannot stress this enough. A lot of photographers struggle with this; when you are a creative, you constantly think of new ways to edit or change the look of your website and other aspects of your brand. Change for consumers is not good. What is your mission statement? Come up with five or six key messages that work together to build your identity. Keep your tone consistent in all your messaging. Your tone should always be positive and upbeat. If you are frustrated about something or forget your morning coffee, vent to your spouse or friend, and keep it off social media.

CREATE AN 'ABOUT US' PAGE

This is something that gets overlooked all the time. Many photographers have an insufficient About Us page, without so much as a photo. Every business should have a professional image on this page. That image should show your style, fashion sense and personality. Share a few personal things about yourself along with your image. This is especially important for photographers because it creates a level of trust while showcasing your skills.

Branding is a huge aspect of your small business. If you haven't invested time, energy or money in it, get going. Your unique brand is the only thing that separates you from the pack of other photographers, so you can charge a premium for your talent. ■



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BY VANESSA JOY

Last month I gave you four ways to take baby steps into improving your photography and business that'll lead to bigger results and positive changes in your career. This month, I want to take the same principle from Darren Hardy's book *The Compound Effect* to show you how you can apply them to your life as well (you know, that time you have when you're not working).

Hardy reminds us to "[b]e wary of the high price of putting too much focus on any single aspect of your life, to the exclusion of everything else." We're all guilty of putting too much focus on business. It's easy to do. We love what we do. We want it to succeed, and it takes a great deal of time and effort to make that happen. But what good is work when you can't take a night off to enjoy a date with your spouse? Or if you're never satisfied with a day's work so you're stressed, and you have stress dreams every time you sleep?

What I didn't tell you about the compound effect before is that it also has the ability to work against you. Think about it. One cookie isn't so bad. One cookie every day will add up to those love handles everyone loves so much. Or every time you decide to ignore family for work, it's a small decision that might be only 15 minutes long in the moment. But add those up over time, and you've created a bad habit that'll leave your family feeling lonely and rejected.

There are two steps you can take that'll help you make sure the little steps and decisions you make in your life and business are working to improve your quality of life. Pick any area in your life that you're not happy with, and simply 1) Kill the bad, and 2) Replace it with good. Here are the four main areas of life in which you can implement those two steps.



FAMILY

I think family tends to be the easiest part of our lives to quietly push to the side. These are the people who are closest to us, so we can easily take them for granted and not give them the care they need.

One bad habit I'd like to kill is use of cell phones during dinner. Think you're not guilty of it? Next time you dine with your family, count how many times you think of or pick up your phone to look at it. It's a distraction that causes us to not be present in the moment; while we're physically spending time with family, we're mentally on an adventure somewhere else.

If this is a habit that's helping the compound effect work against you, replace it with something good. Maybe leave your cell phone in the car or in another room so there's no point in even thinking about picking it up. If you still think about it, every time you do, let it be a reminder to you to compliment a family member who is sitting in front of you instead. Then you can watch those compliments add up to create an encouraging family environment.

A bride and groom are standing on a train track. The groom is on the left, wearing a dark blue tuxedo with a white shirt and a dark bow tie. The bride is on the right, wearing a white, ruffled wedding dress and holding a bouquet of white and yellow flowers. They are standing in front of a large, green, vintage-style train car. The train car has a large door with a wooden plank across it and a large wheel on the left side. The background shows a bright, sunny day with a clear sky and some greenery in the distance.

FINANCES

Finances are an easily traceable way we can see the compound effect working for or against us in both business and our personal lives. This is a good thing, because we can easily take a look at what we're spending money on and see in black and white how our habits are either hurting or helping us.

Take a look at the categorical breakdown of last month's credit card statement. Not sure how you spent \$584 eating out? I am. A little bit at a time. Think of your trips to Starbucks (don't get me wrong, I love Starbucks). Three times a week at \$4 each trip is \$12 per week, \$48 per month, \$576 per year. The same compound math applies to your cable bill (which has other negative effects we won't get into), photography subscriptions you don't use and office supplies you don't need.

Find areas where you can easily cut down, and make compound math work for you instead. Put that money you're saving into an IRA or other interest-bearing account, and have peace knowing after this photo gig is over, you'll be able to retire happily. That sounds like it's worth the price of a cappuccino.

FRIENDS

Remember those? You know, the friends you have who are not photographers (though don't we love a good tax-deductible networking night out)? If it's been months since the last time you hung out with the old crew, it might be time for some friend TLC.

Making a positive change through little steps with your friends is easy. I like to schedule time with my friends just like I schedule appointments with my clients. It's the easiest way for me to commit to spending time with them and make sure that it works in my schedule. Even if it's just once a month, make it a priority to schedule some time with friends.

If you think you don't have the time, remember to "kill the bad." Take a look at a negative time-sucking habit you may have, like watching TV for two hours a night or scheduling photography sessions and appointments every single day of the week. Replace it with a half-hour coffee date with a friend once a month or once a week. You and your friends will be happy you did.

FREE TIME

The easiest person to neglect is yourself. This is where the bad compound effect can really take a toll. Eat poorly and don't exercise? Enjoy that heart attack by age 45. Don't take time to decompress or take vacations? Have fun getting burned out on life.

This is another area of my life that I like to actually schedule. I look at the gym class schedule at the beginning of the week and put in my calendar the classes I want to take that week. Even if they're just 30-minute classes, 30 minutes three times a week is going to compound-effect into me being much healthier than if I didn't go at all. I'm well-rested and happier. As Charlie Tremendous Jones said, "You will be the same person in five years as you are today except for the people you meet and the books you read."

Taking notice of how the compound effect is playing either negatively or positively in your business and life can have a profound effect on the direction your life takes. It may seem like the little things you're doing aren't producing results, but I assure you they most certainly are, and you have the ability to take full control over them.

Take a look at the video to discover three bad habits I've developed that have negatively affected my life, and how I plan on changing them. ■



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THE BIRTHDAY CLUB

with Lori Nordstrom



BY Lori Nordstrom

Years ago I became known as a maternity and baby photographer. That led to baby's-first-year sessions, and I soon found that clients weren't coming back in on a regular basis. Usually I'd see them again only when they had more babies. Sometimes I'd see them a few years later for a family portrait session or even during one of our studio specials or mini-sessions, but I wasn't doing a good job keeping up with clients or encouraging them to come back regularly. I also knew that photographing kids was my first love. That's why I started in the business. I wanted those kids back as they grew, and continue to photograph ages and milestones. So the "Birthday Club" was created.

Our Birthday Club is a promotion that any baby or child I photograph is automatically entered in. Every year during the month of the child's birthday, the birthday kid gets a free session. Yes, there are circumstances in which the word *free* can work against you. However, I've found that the Birthday Club has offered a way to honor our clients, say thank you for their business, allow me to reach out to them annually and create yearly revenue that I was previously missing out on.

To make our Birthday Club a success, I've put together a few systems I want to share with you.



© Lori Nordstrom Studio



celebrate with me!



>> TELLING CLIENTS ABOUT THE BIRTHDAY CLUB <<

I feel it's always important to verbally communicate any processes to my client, so I don't want to leave the Birthday Club info to a brochure. I tell clients about the club and exactly when I'll be contacting them (the month before the child's birthday) to schedule their portrait sessions.

>> CONTACTING CLIENTS TO SCHEDULE THEIR SESSION <<

The month before the child's birthday, I contact my clients to remind them of their child's free session and to schedule the session. I do my best to schedule the session as close to the child's actual birthday as possible, and many of my clients bring their child on the actual birthday. I talk to my clients about creating a special tradition around this event, something that they will look forward to every year.

>> CONSULTING FOR THE BIRTHDAY CLUB <<

Before every studio session, I conduct a consultation. This is typically done over the phone or via Skype. I talk about how we will be using the images from the session. I suggest replacing a wall portrait or grouping for the child's room each year, growing a canvas wrap gallery as the years go by, or capturing the birthday child's personality in an album or image box. I tell clients that most people end up with something for the child's bedroom wall (a portrait or grouping) to replace each year, and an album or image box to capture all the different looks and personality of that age. Framing for the child's room can be reused. When purchasing albums or image boxes, I talk about them in "volumes." I want clients to think about adding to their collection each year.

Then I suggest clothing, backgrounds and locations. I like to keep these sessions shorter, but if I know in advance that a client will be purchasing an album, I might suggest more than one outfit.



>> SELLING THE SESSION <<

I have found the best way to sell the Birthday Club session is right after I photograph it. With proper planning and the consultation, most of the hard work of making product selections and choices is done, so seeing the images is just the final step, and all that's left is filling the products that have already been chosen with the client's favorite images. I like this method of sales because it slashes my workflow time, making the session much more profitable.

During the Birthday Club consultation, I like to get a lot of details about what the child is into at that time, and hear about what has changed over the past year. I use those details in the session to talk to the kids about the things they love. I play their favorite songs, and even provide treats and little birthday gifts. I usually have a cupcake or small cake made, and present it at the end of the session. Cake, cupcakes, big cookies, a big ice cream cone or even lollipops all jazz up these sessions. (Be sure to ask Mom about any food allergies or sensitivities.)

Birthday Club sessions offer a great way to stay in touch with my clients, and bring in extra revenue from products that are purchased each year to commemorate the next milestone in a child's life. ■



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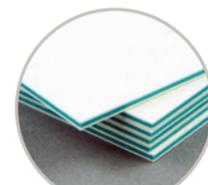


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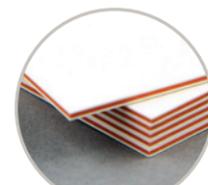
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BREAKING INTO
DESTINATION
WEDDINGS

WITH PHILLIP BLUME

So how do you break into the **destination market**?

FIRST,
know that your goal really is within reach.

BY PHILLIP BLUME



Let your imagination run wild: What are the top three goals you dream of accomplishing as a photographer? In all likelihood, travel or shooting exotic locations makes your bucket list. Using your camera to put food on the table is a blessed life, wherever you do it. But there's no question that tales of beautiful European weddings impress potential clients. Ego aside, their awed reactions are precisely the kind of sentiment you want engaged couples to associate with your brand. Whether your potential client is local or far, far away, a strong destination portfolio increases the perceived value of your services. The experience of building it could be the most exciting ride of your life.

So how do you break into the destination market? First, know that your goal really is within reach. The world is smaller than it was. Now, if you don't happen to already live in an exotic location, don't want to fall into a rut shooting the same remote venues over and over, and aren't one of the anointed few celebrity photographers who attract wealthy clients worldwide, what do you do?

Good news! There's another way. My wife, Eileen, and I have strategically positioned ourselves within a fourth category. It opens doors for us to travel occasionally, shoot one or two unique weddings outside our "territory" each year and build a strong global portfolio. Most importantly for us, it allows us to spend the bulk of our lives at home in rural Georgia, where we focus on the local scene and on our growing family. In concrete terms, over the past four years, it's translated into weddings in the Philippines, Central America, England and recurring gigs at closer destinations, including Vail, Colorado, New York City, and down to Savannah and our beautiful coastal islands.

Sound like the kind of variety you'd like to inject into your business? Here are the top five ways we market our photography on a global scale.



5

ONLINE WEDDING SITES

I generally discourage online marketing schemes, especially generic “wedding planning” sites. We’ve experimented with them, and might as well have flushed our money down the toilet. Not a bite, especially since search engines like Google constantly change the way such sites are ranked in search results. But there are sites I like for their unique approaches. FearlessPhotographers.com is built on the concept of photographic competition. Your membership includes opportunities to submit your work into frequent, legitimately judged contests. Your “wins” show on your profile and increase your chances of getting noticed by clients. Even better, you can search the complete list of photographer requests around the world, including budgets. Even photographers without any awards can win gigs by replying to the destinations they want most.

SnapKnot.com works similarly. Select “London” as a preferred city, and voilà! As far as users are concerned, you’re now an obvious choice for their London wedding. One caveat: I’ve noticed fewer inquiries and conversions as our prices have risen. Websites are full of tire-kickers. But if you want the job less for profit and more to build your portfolio, these are decent places to start the hunt.

4

CHARITABLE PROJECTS

Our humanitarian work has played a huge role in solidifying our “international” image. (See my articles in the August and November 2013 issues.) If you’re using your talents to serve in other parts of the world, make the most of it. Projects of personal passion test and teach you in the best way, free of the expectations of paying clients. Our personal mission trips to Guatemala allowed us to experiment with video, and the result was a swell in the interest and confidence clients place in our brand, in our ability to produce solid work in distant places.

Besides sharing every detail of your personal work on social media (which is great), I strongly recommend harnessing the fine-tuned power of Facebook to reach narrow target audiences. This ability to advertise last-minute to people anywhere in the world is revolutionary. When I travel to Guatemala for nonprofit work, or to New York for an engagement shoot, or to Spain to visit my sister, you better believe I’m headed to Facebook first. Try it. Advertise your services to a group at the destination you’re visiting. Offer a special rate. Make it known your “tour” through their city is for a limited time only. I advertise just one or two dates (when I’m definitely free); then I await responses. Soon enough, I increase my profit margin for the work trip I had to take anyway, or turn my family visit into a Spanish photography excursion.

Here are the *top five ways*

WE MARKET OUR PHOTOGRAPHY ON A GLOBAL SCALE

3

RECRUIT “GOODWILL” AGENTS

A particularly accomplished commercial photographer recently moved into my parents’ neighborhood. He chose small-town life to “get away from it all.” Suffice it to say, everyone reading this article—heck, people around the world—would recognize his images. As it turns out, he has an agent. The agent promotes this photographer to companies who then fly him out to photograph their ads. Our neighbor drives down his dirt road in the direction of the Atlanta airport and hops a plane to London, or L.A., or wherever. Soon he’s back playing on the front lawn with his son. So it occurred to me: *I need an agent!*

Instead of one costly agent, though, I wanted a *lot* of agents who would work for free. Asking too much? Not really. Your friends and family may not hold sway over big commercial clients. But our clientele are normal people getting married. As mobile as people are today, even the most sedentary of us has connections around the world. They’re your agents. Create a list of cities, states and countries where you have “representatives.” Choose your favorite destinations from the list. Make phone calls. Give your agents the full vision of what you want to accomplish, not just a “Hey, throw my name out there if you hear about someone getting married.” Send them business cards and marketing materials. Provide incentives for bookings where it helps; if incentives aren’t necessary to motivate, at least surprise them with a thank-you gift for referrals. Personal recommendations are the most trusted advertisements. And your “agents” are happy to do it, as well as provide you accommodations when you visit. Many of us can trace our successes to the generosity of friends and relatives; they’re bound to be even more enthusiastic supporters when you invest back into them.

Many of us can trace our successes to
**THE FREE GENEROSITY OF
FRIENDS & RELATIVES**

2

DESTINATION ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

This strategy comes straight from Sal Cincotta's playbook. We started building a destination portfolio earlier, offering to waive travel fees for one bride getting married locally but who lived in D.C. and couldn't travel back for her bridal shoot. Her D.C. portraits drew attention. But our mistake was thinking the shoot would be more exciting for her, and therefore more profitable, because of the location. A destination engagement must be a destination *for the client*. When they invest the time and money to travel, you can bet they'll care enough to purchase extra artwork.

One of our local couples met in New York. We encouraged them to do a shoot there, travel expenses on the house. The sales and their enthusiastic referrals paid for the travel, if not for the time away. But as you may have guessed, we stayed with a friend in New York, had a great extra day touring and used Facebook to identify additional clients while there. As a result, we get more New York inquiries and requests for destination engagements. (In those cases, couples already expect to pay for travel, so nothing is lost.)

1

KEEP YOUR CAMERA HANDY

In photojournalism school, I learned three basics of composition: Find a clean background, fill the frame and wait for a "moment." That last one is the hard part. It takes patience—something I have little of. But journalism doesn't leave room to pose the shot. You must remain alert and ever ready. If your photo professor sees you on campus without a camera over your shoulder, you're in deep trouble. The same goes for building a destination portfolio. Make your camera an extension of yourself. Be bold. You'll be shocked at the opportunities that arise. When visiting the Philippines, we were brought in last-minute to shoot a wedding we hadn't expected. Good thing we traveled with enough gear. The same trip, we spied an attractive couple in a restaurant. We introduced ourselves and offered them a free photo shoot, right then and there. We got our models! They hung with us even after the sky opened and monsoon rains drenched us. For them it was a spontaneous, romantic adventure. For us it was pure gold. Later we discovered the girl was a known recording artist. She sent out a pretty cool tweet, referring to us as her "international photographers." Be brave. Let the momentum build!

As a student, I dreamed of becoming a *National Geographic* photographer. After our family began to grow, I was content to give up that gypsy dream for a more traditional American dream. Our photography business would supplement my schoolteaching income, I thought. I never imagined our home-based business could be the launching pad for world adventures.

Destination weddings aren't for everyone. Costs are high and the profit margins are lower. Travel is a hassle. Time away and the risks involved detract from the glamour. But to dabble in destination weddings on a small, strategic scale can be the icing on a deliciously successful local-photo-business cake. And if you do have your sights set on becoming the world's next great destination photographer, it may be the most practical first step in the right direction. ■



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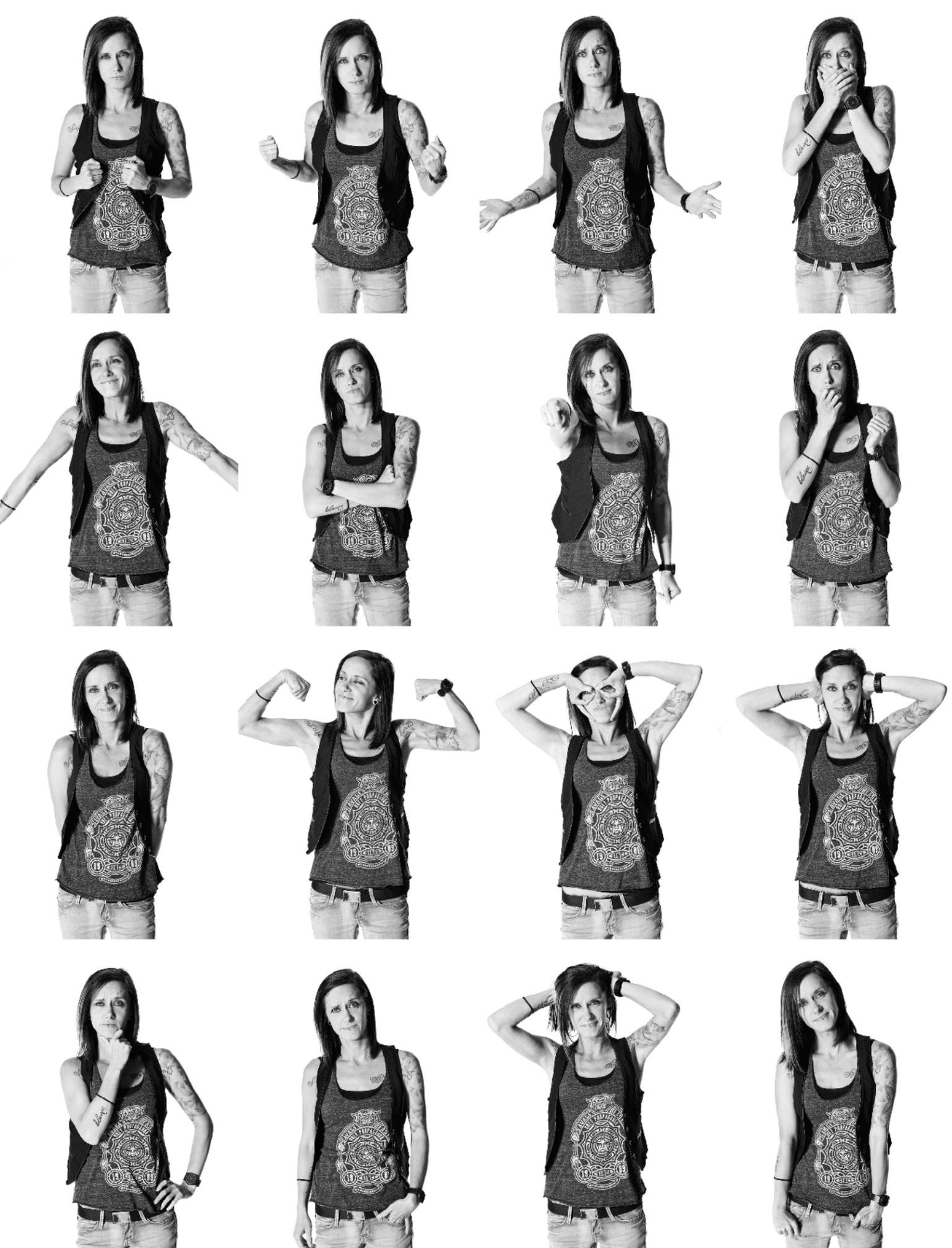
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SHUTTERSPEED

DOESN'T MATTER IN THE STUDIO

WITH MICHAEL CORSENTINO



SHUTTER SPEED



BY Michael Corsentino

Did the headline make your head spin? Well, it was supposed to, and it's *almost* always true. In practical terms, shutter speed plays a very small role in the studio. I'm speaking about situations where you're working with strobes, with little to no ambient light and within practical shutter ranges and ISO values one typically uses in the studio.

There is one caveat, and that's an all-important shutter speed setting known as your maximum flash sync speed. This setting is critical to your success in the studio and in mixed-light situations. Your camera's maximum flash sync speed is the fastest shutter speed at which you can successfully use flash. Maximum flash sync speeds differ from camera to camera, but generally fall somewhere between 1/160 and 1/250 of a second for DSLRs with mechanical shutters, and higher for cameras with electronic shutters and medium-format digital cameras equipped with leaf shutters.



BACKGROUND LIGHTS

2 PROFOTO 500WS D1 AIR HEADS & MEDIUM WHITE UMBRELLAS STACKED ONE OVER THE OTHER.



BACKGROUND LIGHTS

2 PROFOTO 500WS D1 AIR HEADS & MEDIUM WHITE UMBRELLAS STACKED ONE OVER THE OTHER.



V-FLATS

CUSTOM BUILT BLACK BLOCK CURTAIN SYSTEM FOR CONTROLLING LIGHT SPILL.

KEY LIGHT

1 PROFOTO 8A 2400WS PACK POWERING 2 PROFOTO PROPLUS HEADS, AND 2 3X4 PROFOTO RF1 SOFTBOXES W/O DIFFUSION STACKED ONE OVER THE OTHER.



CAMERA SYSTEM

PHASE ONE IQ250, SCHNEIDER KREUZNACH 80MM 2.8 LS 100 ISO, F:11, 1/500 SEC



V-FLATS

CUSTOM BUILT BLACK BLOCK CURTAIN SYSTEM FOR CONTROLLING LIGHT SPILL.

ADDITIONAL EQUIP.

INOVATIV SCOUT 37 EQUIPMENT CART, EIZO COLOREDGE CG277 MONITOR, GITZO GT3532LSV TRIPOD, POCKET WIZARD PLUS III, SEKONIC L758DR, PROFOTO AIR CONTROLER, CAPTURE ONE PRO, CAPTURE PILOT, IPAD, TETHER TOOLS CABLES

In the studio, when you're using strobes, maximum flash sync speed is basically where the role of shutter speed begins and ends. As long as your camera's shutter is set at or below this number, you're on solid ground. If you use a shutter speed higher than your maximum sync speed, you'll end up with an underexposed horizontal strip along the bottom of your images. This is because the two curtains that make up the mechanical shutter inside your camera were traveling too fast and with too narrow an opening to allow the flash to illuminate the entire exposure, hence the underexposed strip. This is true for mixed-light situations as well.

Let's backtrack a little and look at the ways shutter speed affects exposures and motion. In ambient-light scenarios, shutter speed governs two important factors. First, it controls how long the camera's shutter remains open, which in turn controls the amount of time the camera's sensor has to collect light; this, in conjunction with aperture and ISO, affects exposure. The second factor is its ability to capture motion or freeze action. A slow shutter speed gives the camera plenty of time to collect light and portray motion, while a fast shutter speed provides less time for light collection and plenty of action-stopping speed. In mixed-light situations, those with ambient and flash, shutter speed controls the amount of ambient light contributing to the exposure, while the flash takes over when it comes to freezing the action. The action-stopping power of flash can be combined with slower shutter speeds (those slow enough to permit motion capture by virtue of the ambient light) to create some really interesting ghosting and light trail effects. This is commonly known as dragging the shutter.

Why shutter speed doesn't matter in the studio

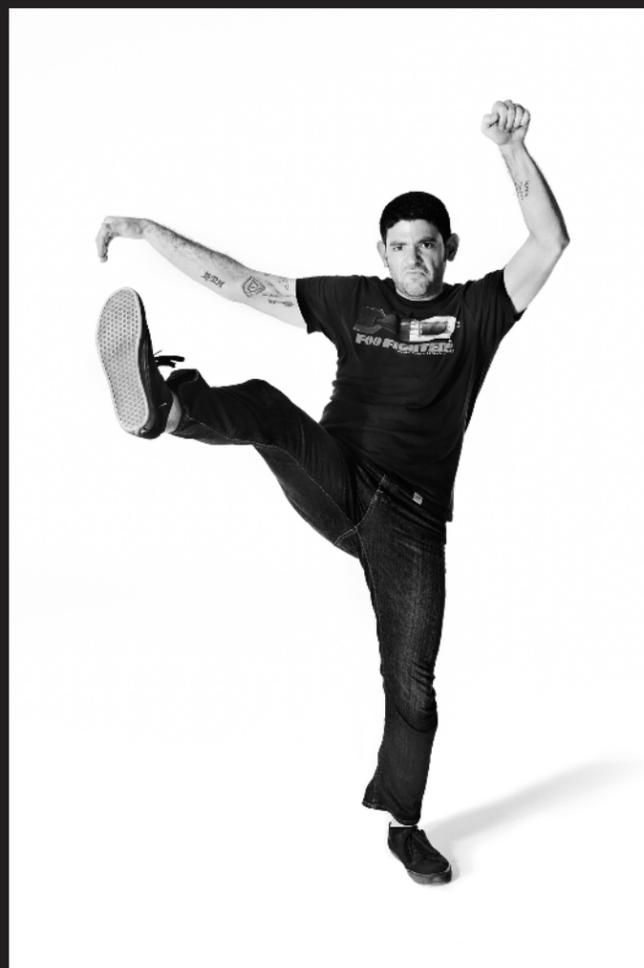
When we use strobes as the sole means of illumination in the studio, the role of shutter speed differs markedly. As outlined above, in practical terms, the only important consideration when it comes to shutter speed in the studio is the maximum flash sync speed for the camera being used. In the studio, we're not relying on shutter speed to control the length of time allotted for light collection or its ability to capture motion or freeze action. Aside from setting a shutter speed value at or below the camera's maximum flash sync speed, in the studio, characteristics such as quantity of light and stopping action are controlled by the flash and aperture. So why is shutter speed irrelevant in the studio when it's so important outside?

SHUTTER SPEED

The answer is simple but easy to overlook. Ambient light is a constant and very slow source, while the light from a strobe happens in a rapid burst lasting microseconds (more on this later). The burst from a strobe's flash tube is so fast that it outguns the fastest shutter speeds. If we're shooting at f11 in the studio, the strobe's power output is metered to match the f-stop, with a shutter speed of 1/125 of a second, to achieve a properly balanced exposure. If we then cut our shutter speed in half to 1/60 of a second, a full-stop difference, the resulting exposure will be exactly the same. That's because shutter speed is basically irrelevant in the studio. The flash is producing light so quickly that it isn't impacted by the change in shutter speed. Again, this is assuming the environment has little to no ambient light. This is why I typically recommend turning off most of the overhead studio lights and using the modeling lights on your strobes. That said, your studio doesn't need to be a black box for this to work. Even with a small amount of ambient light at common studio settings such as 100 ISO and aperture values between f11 and f16, without flash, you'd likely have a very underexposed if not black capture even at 1/30 of a second. Granted, there are limits, and if you have ambient light such as overhead lighting or window light, at some point, given a shutter speed low enough, you will start to introduce ambient light into your exposure. But we're talking about flash exposure!

I'm able to freeze the band members as they run back and forth executing midair jumps in the studio, without the benefit of superfast shutter speeds, because of something called flash duration. Flash duration describes the rate at which a flash tube ramps up to full power and falls back down again to zero power. If the only light in the studio is from a flash, that millisecond burst of light will appear to freeze anything in its path, regardless of the shutter speed.

So what flash duration should you be looking for if you're in the market for a strobe? That depends on several factors, most importantly the kind of work you are doing and what you're looking to accomplish. If you want to freeze splashing water, you'll need a very fast flash duration, while freezing dancers midflight requires slightly less, and so on. Superfast flash durations are usually the province of costly pack and head systems. However, there are reasonably priced mono heads that have staggeringly fast flash durations. The good news for speedlight users is that because these small handheld units don't have to deliver as much power output as their higher-powered cousins, they're able to deliver flash durations with fantastic stopping power.



SHUTTER SPEED



Don't despair over the technical details. These are really simple concepts at the end of the day. Let's recap and simplify things to their bare essentials:

- 1) Within practical ranges, shutter speeds play a very small role in the studio when working with strobes. As long as your shutter speed is set at or below your camera's maximum flash sync speed, you can pretty much set it and forget it.
- 2) Strobes freeze action because their illumination occurs so rapidly. It's really that simple!

Experiment and let me know how it goes. I'll be checking in on the ShutterFest Facebook page, so post any questions there, and I'll do my best to get you answers. ■



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MEDIUM FORMAT

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MEDIUM FORMAT

“

Medium format has been around for quite a while. Digital medium format, though, is something most of us might never consider for a multitude of reasons. I recently made the switch, and the quality of my imagery has never been stronger.

The level of detail from medium format is superior in every way, shape and form to that of the traditional 35 mm format. We thought it would be interesting to share with you what some of your peers around the world are doing with the format, this month featuring Travis Neely.

One thing is for sure: Medium format is superior to 35 mm, and it's here to stay. It's going to continue to evolve and grow in popularity. If you haven't already had a chance to play with one, rent one to see what all the fuss is about. Companies like CaptureIntegration.com provide rentals and all the support you might need.

–Sal Cincotta”



with **TRAVIS NEELY**

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE IMAGE.

The image of the smoking goalie. . . Well, I had heard about these guys who have been playing street hockey every Sunday for 10 years underneath a highway overpass in Pittsburgh. That day I shot both stills and motion. They are a really rough bunch of guys, and I noticed that the goalie smoked throughout the entire game. When the game ended and he took off his mask, I casually walked past and made one frame with the medium-format camera. There's just something about this image that I find to have depth and story . . . or maybe it's just the tones and creamy depth of field, but I love this photo.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN SHOOTING MEDIUM FORMAT?

I've shot with Mamiya's film cameras for over 10 years, but started shooting digital medium format around two years ago. I worked with the Leaf Aptus 22 before upgrading to the new Credo 80, which is an incredible system.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT MEDIUM FORMAT THAT YOU LOVE MOST?

Aside from the obvious aspects like the insane resolution and greater depth of details and tones, I like the fact that these cameras make you slow down your thought process and really think about the craft of making images.

MEDIUM FORMAT



© Travis Neely

TRAVIS NEELY

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I had absolutely no interest in photography until I was about 20 years old. I had a friend who was a photography major in college, and she showed me these hand-printed 11x14 black-and-white prints of punk-rock kids she had shot. I loved their simplicity and richness of tone, and I think that is the day I decided to devote my life to image making. About three months later, I picked up my first Canon 35mm and started shooting every day. That was at the end of 2001. Soon after, I started attending a fine art school in New Orleans, where we only shot monochrome film and hand-printed everything. Over the years, the subject matter of my photography work has shifted several times, but these days I'd say I'm mostly known for my fitness and lifestyle images. I'm preparing for several trips out West soon, where I will be shooting a lot of portfolio work in the outdoor lifestyle vein.

WHAT IS YOUR TOOL OF CHOICE?

Depending on the subject, I shoot either Canon 35mm with the Zeiss lenses (28mm and 50mm macro) or, preferably, my Mamiya Leaf Credo 80 system with the 45mm or 80mm lens. I try to shoot as much as I can with the Credo.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE YOU WOULD OFFER PHOTOGRAPHERS?

Well, this piece of advice is for the younger photographers just getting into the business or still in school: Find what interests you most and build your life and photography career around those things. I really can't stress that one enough.

WHERE CAN PEOPLE GO TO SEE MORE OF YOUR WORK?

www.travisshoots.com or twitter: [@travisshoots](https://twitter.com/travisshoots)



© Travis Neely

ITALY WORKSHOP

September 29 - October 2

Sal Cincotta + Roberto Valenzuela

- Private villa in Umbria, Italy
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- Rome airport pickup
- Extensive loaner equipment



© Roberto Valenzuela



© Sal Cincotta



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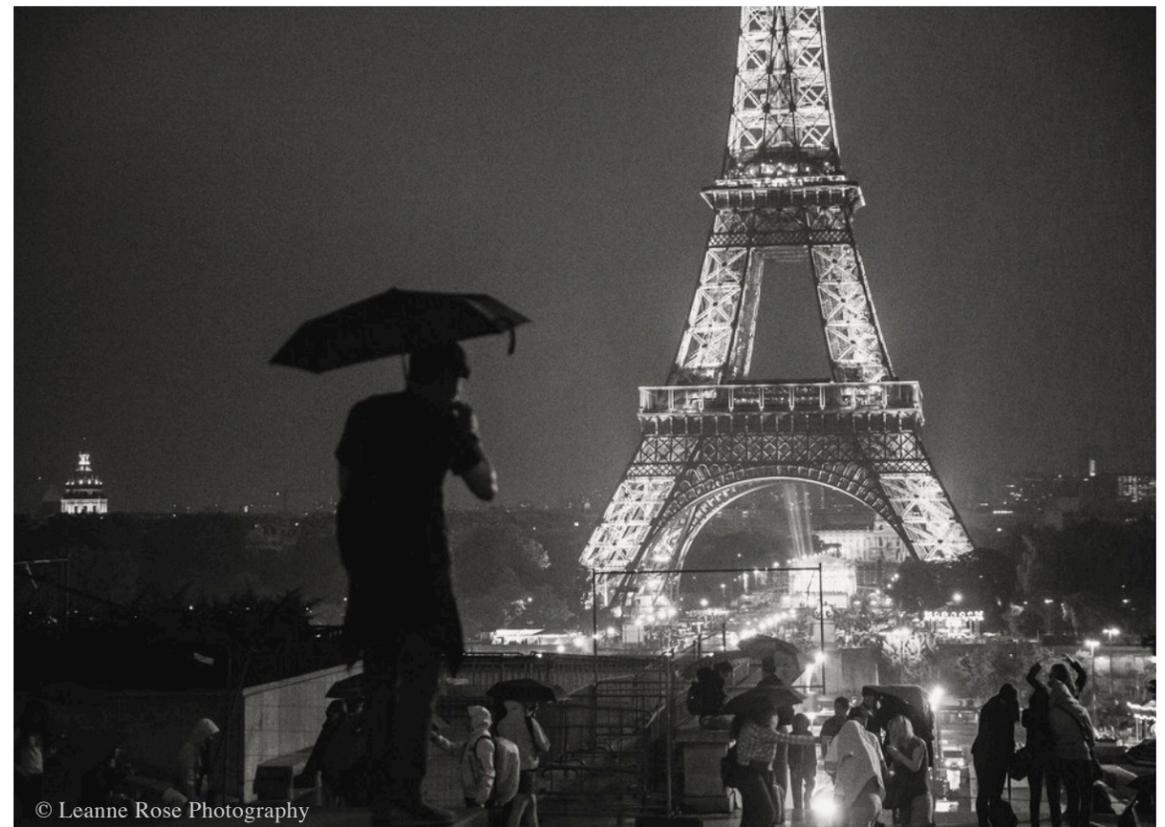
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INSPIRATIONS

Inspiration comes to us in many shapes & sizes

Put 10 photographers in a room and ask them to shoot a paperclip, and there's no telling what will happen. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why I love being a photographer. We all see the world in our own special way. Ultimately, though, nothing is truly new or unique. Everything is inspired by something that came before. In that spirit, this month we asked you, our readers, to submit some work you thought would inspire your peers. What you gave us blew away the staff here. *Enjoy!*



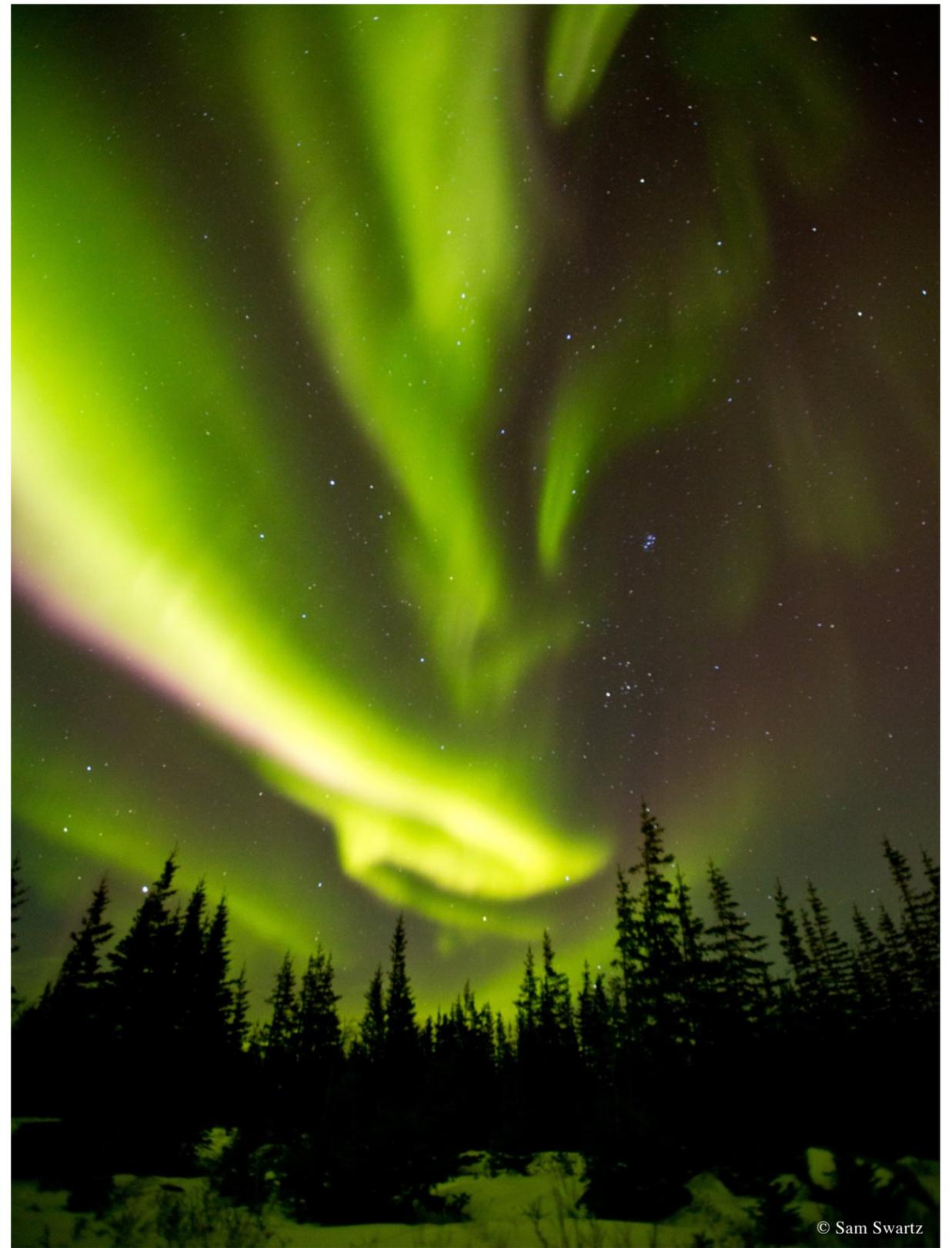
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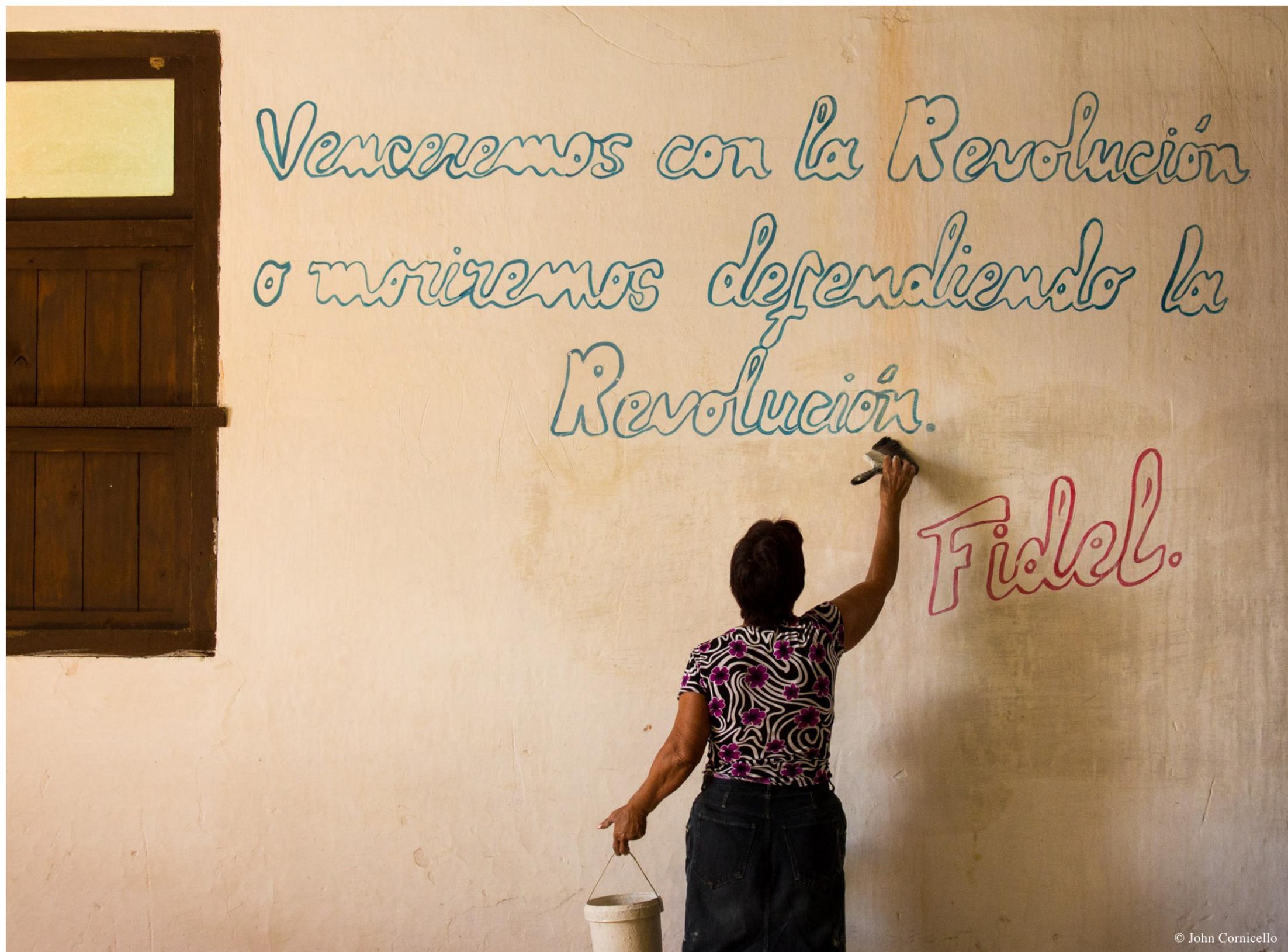
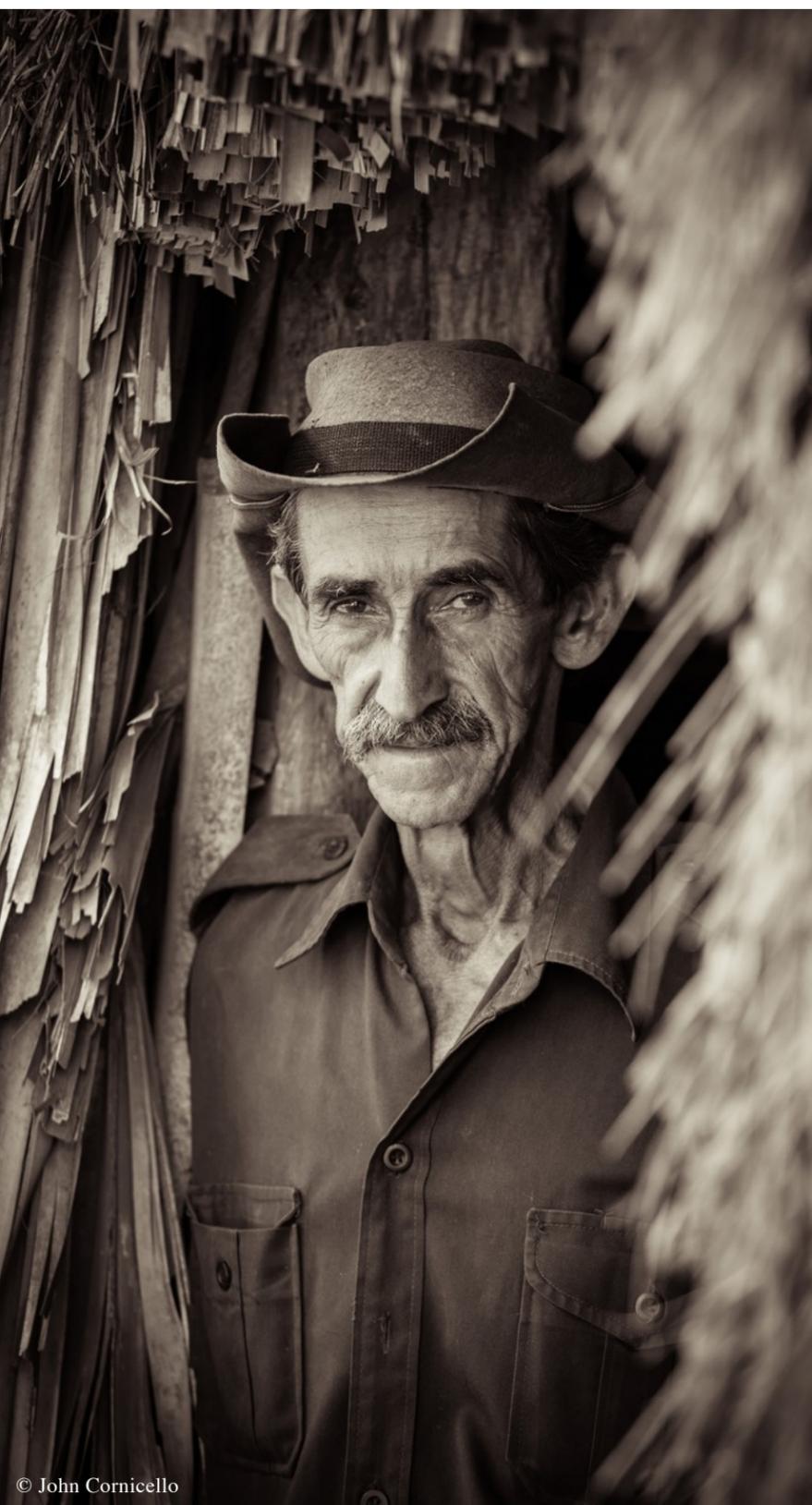


















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Thank you to everyone who submitted this month

>>WATCH [FACEBOOK.COM/BTSHUTTER](https://www.facebook.com/BTSHUTTER) FOR OUR CALL TO SUBMIT IMAGES NEXT MONTH!<<

PLANNED NETWORKING

WITH SKIP COHEN



STEP 1 + WHY SHUTTERFEST?

Let's start with the obvious. I know I sound like an infomercial, but last year's ShutterFest was one of the best events I've ever attended. It wasn't just a boutique convention, but the launch of a community. If you weren't there, you missed one of the greats, but next year's will be even better.

STEP 2 + HAVE A PLAN

In scuba diving, there's a great line: "Plan your dive and dive your plan." The reason this is so important is you've got limited air and thus limited time. The deeper you go, the shorter the dive and the more time wasted in a safety stop before you surface. So you've got to discuss with your dive buddy what you both want to do, your maximum depth and what you want to look for, and then follow the plan.

So you're headed to ShutterFest. What's your plan going to be? Just like in scuba, you've got limited time and capacity. You need to decide up front what things you want to do to get the very most out of the convention.

STEP 3 + GET TO KNOW THE COMMUNITY

Join the ShutterFest group on Facebook. Right now it's a thousand strong, and I'm assuming most of the members will be at the April event.

This is your chance to start building some relationships and getting to know who's going. Click on people's links to their pages. Look at their work. Check out where they're from, and start chatting with people who live within a 50-mile radius of you.

Don't be afraid to actually participate. This is a troll-free community with a lot of support and respect. Comment on discussion topics, offer feedback if appropriate and ask questions. You can stand on the sidelines and watch the parade go by, or you can be right in it.

BY SKIP COHEN



Networking could very well be the most abused word in business today. Everybody talks about their network, but only a handful really stay on top of the challenge and work just as hard to maintain their network as build it.

The truth is, any moron can collect business cards, shake hands with people and collect names and email addresses. The key is to put some advance planning into the approach so you're nurturing and building your network.

Next April's ShutterFest is the perfect event to use as an example of planned networking. It's approximately eight months away, and there are some significant things you can do in advance to make sure you get the most out of it.

STEP 4 + WHO'S GOING TO BE AT SHUTTERFEST?

The strength of your network is related to the quality of your relationships. Meeting people in person carries an incredible amount of weight and builds a stronger bond than meeting in cyberspace. Start paying attention to who's going from the ShutterFest group.

Next, check out all the speakers and start to get to know everybody's background. Start with their website and then follow up with Google and YouTube searches.

There's only so much time to attend actual programs, but part of the fun of ShutterFest is getting to know the people involved as well. There's always time at the non-classroom programs, meals and breaks between classes to talk with an instructor you've always wanted to meet.

Last April, Sheila and I met a lot of people just on the elevator. Then there were a couple of people we were able to get to know better over coffee in the morning or at lunch.

Gary Altman and I just started talking one morning before the workshops started. We've got the same sick sense of humor, and we were off and running. He's since done a guest post on my blog, and we've had a couple of great phone conversations.

Matt Meiers is another. Matt took one of my classes and emailed me with a question a week or so after ShutterFest. We've chatted a few times since then, and the relationship just grows.

Brent and Martha Shumaker are a young couple from Texas. After bumping into them on the elevator over and over again, we had a chance to sit down and talk about their business. I'm already looking forward to catching up with them again next year.

My list could easily go on and on. The takeaway is that a good network is based on relationship-building, and ShutterFest is so different from any convention you've been to in the past.

STEP 5 + VENDORS NEED TO BE IN YOUR NETWORK

While the trade show for ShutterFest is small, it's got incredible power. Nate Grahek, the founder of Sticky Albums, was in his booth every day and available to talk to directly. Clare Kubota, president of Kubota Image Tools, was there and was, as always, willing to answer questions and work with attendees. Max Alewel, one of the principles of Marathon Press, helped numerous attendees with marketing ideas.

Again, the list could go on and on, but the point is simply that, because ShutterFest isn't a big, overwhelming convention and the staff is totally focused on making sure you get what you need, you get quality time with quality people.

As we get closer to the actual date, you'll be able to go online and get to know every company that will be there in 2015.



STEP 6 + GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE SOCIAL SIDE OF SHUTTERFEST

Let's start with one of the cardinal rules of networking at any convention, especially ShutterFest: Never eat alone! Figure out how many breakfasts, lunches and dinners you're going to have during the event, and start making some plans.

Breakfasts are perfect for connecting with people you've just met. It's a cheap, quick meal where the caffeine buzz keeps the convo flowing.

Lunches are always going to be on site because the agenda is jam-packed and you've only got so much time. It's ideal for planning something in advance with photographers you either know or have met online. It's also the perfect time to plan other things you might want to do, such as a nighttime shoot in the area.

Dinner is the granddaddy event, perfect for bringing people together. You've got plenty of time, you don't need to return right away to your next class and it can be anything from splitting a few pizzas, Chinese food, etc., to a five-star gourmet restaurant. You've got complete control, but you've got to make arrangements in advance.

Plant the seed before you get to ShutterFest for dinner plans. Go online and check out restaurants in the area. There's nothing wrong with making a reservation in advance, so you've at least got something up your sleeve.

What you don't want to do is get to ShutterFest, get so caught up in the excitement of the event itself, that when dinner rolls around you realize you never made plans.

STEP 7 + TIME TO SHOOT

Nothing builds a friendship faster than going out with a few other photographers and shooting together. At ShutterFest, you've got everything from the ability to do a PhotoWalk to getting a model and sharing time with some of the other attendees.

STEP 8 + COME EARLY OR STAY AN EXTRA DAY

Many photographers come in a day early just to have some fun with whoever's in town and to get out and shoot. Other photographers stay a day later after the conference is over.

Don't forget to follow up with your hotel reservation as well. There's nothing worse than wanting to stay late and not being able to keep your room.

STEP 9 + DON'T "SHOULD" ON YOURSELF

It's my wife Sheila's favorite expression of mine: "You know what I should have done?" Her response is always the same: "Don't should on yourself!"

If you plan it right, your ShutterFest experience could be the best investment you've ever made in your education and growth as a photographer and business owner. You'll grow your network with talented friends, educators and vendors. You'll have no need to be looking back and worrying about what you missed.

Just like in scuba diving, plan your dive and then dive your plan!

See you at ShutterFest. ■



WHITE BALANCE

IN-CAMERA FOR BETTER RESULTS



with Dustin Lucas



BY DUSTIN LUCAS

I have always been challenged with capturing the most out of my subject matter. Whether it's landscapes, architecture or portraits, I want to head into post-production with a fine-tuned image.

In my last article, I talked about controlling color in your photography by calibrating your monitor and creating a custom camera profile. This doesn't solve the issue of color balance; you still need to apply proper white balance when shooting and editing. We all use ISO, shutter speed and aperture to control our exposure, but how do we control blue and orange color cast? We've all seen the WB button or option on our cameras, but what do we know about changing it from Auto? Auto does all the white balance correcting for you, right? What about other presets like incandescent, fluorescent, daylight, flash, shade, cloudy, etc.? Understanding your camera's white balance settings and color temperature can save you all the painstaking hours of correcting color in post-production. We all want to capture more in our images, and by controlling white balance while shooting, you will achieve better results. We need to start by getting an understanding of color temperature and how it relates to lighting conditions.

Color temperature is the visual measurement of light, broadly described in photography as cool or warm. It is measured in kelvins (K), which describes the temperature rising, and is balanced with varied intensities of blue. As the image's color temperature starts around 1,000 K, it gives the scene a bluish cast. At the opposite end of the color temperature spectrum, 15,000 K has a deep yellow/orange cast. Increasing the K number in your white balance settings adds less and less blue. Knowing this becomes useful in photography when planning for your event's lighting conditions. For example, if you start the day by shooting in a lamp-lit room where the lighting is ultimately orange, using a lower-kelvin white balance setting adds blue to balance the neutral tones that are too warm. Vice versa with clear blue skies: a higher-kelvin temperature adds orange to bring back that daylight or balanced look to the image.

White balance is a misleading term because you actually balance for the neutral or gray tones in an image. RGB images, which are based on the reflection of color on the camera's image sensor, give the whites, mid-tones (or neutral) and blacks in an image. You will notice the difference when balancing for the whites with the WB picker tool in post-production; your images tend to shift too cool or too warm in the neutral tones. Especially when shooting in mixed lighting, it becomes very difficult to have the subject's skin tone and the room a similar color cast. This is where you need to understand which settings to use and when.

Starting with shooting in typical daylight, the appropriate color temperature ranges from 5,500 K to 6,500 K. White balance settings for this type of lighting would be: Auto, Daylight, PRE, or Custom. Auto white balance is the result of the ambient light being corrected to daylight (5,000 to 5,500 K). With this in mind, the only time suitable to use this would be outdoors in the open sun between sunrise and sunset. The Daylight WB setting would render a warmer scene overall, and is set to a constant color temperature. This setting keeps a consistent color temperature, unlike Auto WB. PRE, or preset manual, is a great white balance setting for mixed lighting, and is simple to set with a white card in every other lighting condition change. Also, you have multiple user presets to save each shot in PRE to toggle between recurring lighting conditions. With this setting, you have the ability to shift the color temperature of the whites as well. This can be done in your camera's menu in white balance settings and saved for later use. Custom gives you full creative control to choose what kelvin to shoot with. Both of these settings start to incorporate more style and control into your photography.

Introducing off-camera flash into your photography becomes a more complex issue when determining your image's white balance. Nothing to worry about—you just need to understand the color temperature that your ambient light and flash give off. While shooting outdoors at dusk, you are losing light by the minute. Typically the setting sun reveals deep magenta and orange tones in the sky, while the landscape is tonally golden warm. Mood is created with lighting, which can transform your work beyond just the setting and the subjects. Now, remember that in order to expose for the colorful sky, your landscape will be underexposed. In order to capture this mood, by correctly exposing for the surrounding environment, you need fill light on your subjects as well as a properly exposed ground image. This is where a reflector or off-camera flash can be a vital tool. With a setting sun, it is difficult to reflect sunlight back into the subject with a bounce disc. It's time to power up that flash and get it in manual mode!

CUSTOM

Custom gives you full creative control to choose what kelvin to shoot with.

Both of these settings start to incorporate

more style and control into your photography.

WHITE BALANCE

According to color temperature, daylight will vary from 5,500 to 6,500 K. Off-camera flash is balanced at a bluish white 5,000 5,500 K temperature. You can see the difference in the skin tone with the Auto, Daylight and Flash preset white balances. Auto casts the skin a cooler white and loses the mood of the environment. Daylight keeps the golden landscape, but the skin tone is cool. I shot this setting with the gray card to show the neutral-to-cool tone in the image. Flash gives the best out-of-camera white balance from the preset options because it warms the skin correctly and the landscape doesn't get too orange and green. I decided to warm the skin and keep the golden-toned landscape by choosing a custom 5,900 K color temperature. Again, this is a style preference that keeps the skin tone more sun-kissed. Since the temperature between the flash and the ambient light aren't too far apart, I didn't need to gel my flash like you would in an artificial-light setting. Using color gels on your flash is another component of white balance with artificial lighting. It allows your subject to cast the color with your flash as the surrounding light. You can then balance all the light cohesively instead of balancing one light source and manipulating the other to match. (I will be demonstrating mixed ambient lighting with flash in my next article.)

The best thing to remember when adjusting your camera for white balance is to assess your environment's color temperature. You must consider the difference between a balanced photo, which is based on daylight temperature of 5,000 to 5,500 K, and the available light. Camera presets can get you in the ballpark of what you need, but you have to control the color balance to get better results. You are controlling depth of field, shutter speed and ISO settings; why wouldn't you be doing the same with white balance?

After all, white balance is one of the most important components of color photography, and it should not be determined solely by the camera when selecting Auto. Now that you have the tools for white balance, get out there and shoot! ■



AUTO PRESET



DAYLIGHT PRESET



FLASH PRESET



QUESTIONS

- + How to prevent your clients from upsizing your digital negatives to print themselves.
- + Tips for finding the confidence to raise your prices.
- + How to effectively tap into online lead lists.
- + Re-establishing yourself in a new market.
- + Maintaining your online portfolio to stay current.
- + Getting leads to sign on the spot at bridal shows.
- + How to make a full time job work alongside a full time photography business.
- + Tips for coming up with interesting social media posts consistently.
- + How to manage your time and workflow effectively on a daily basis.
- + Is there a right/wrong way of asking for referrals?

YOU'VE GOT
QUESTIONS?
WE'VE GOT
ANSWERS

Q & A

WITH

Salvatore Cincotta



SHUTTER

MAGAZINE

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GOT MORE QUESTIONS?

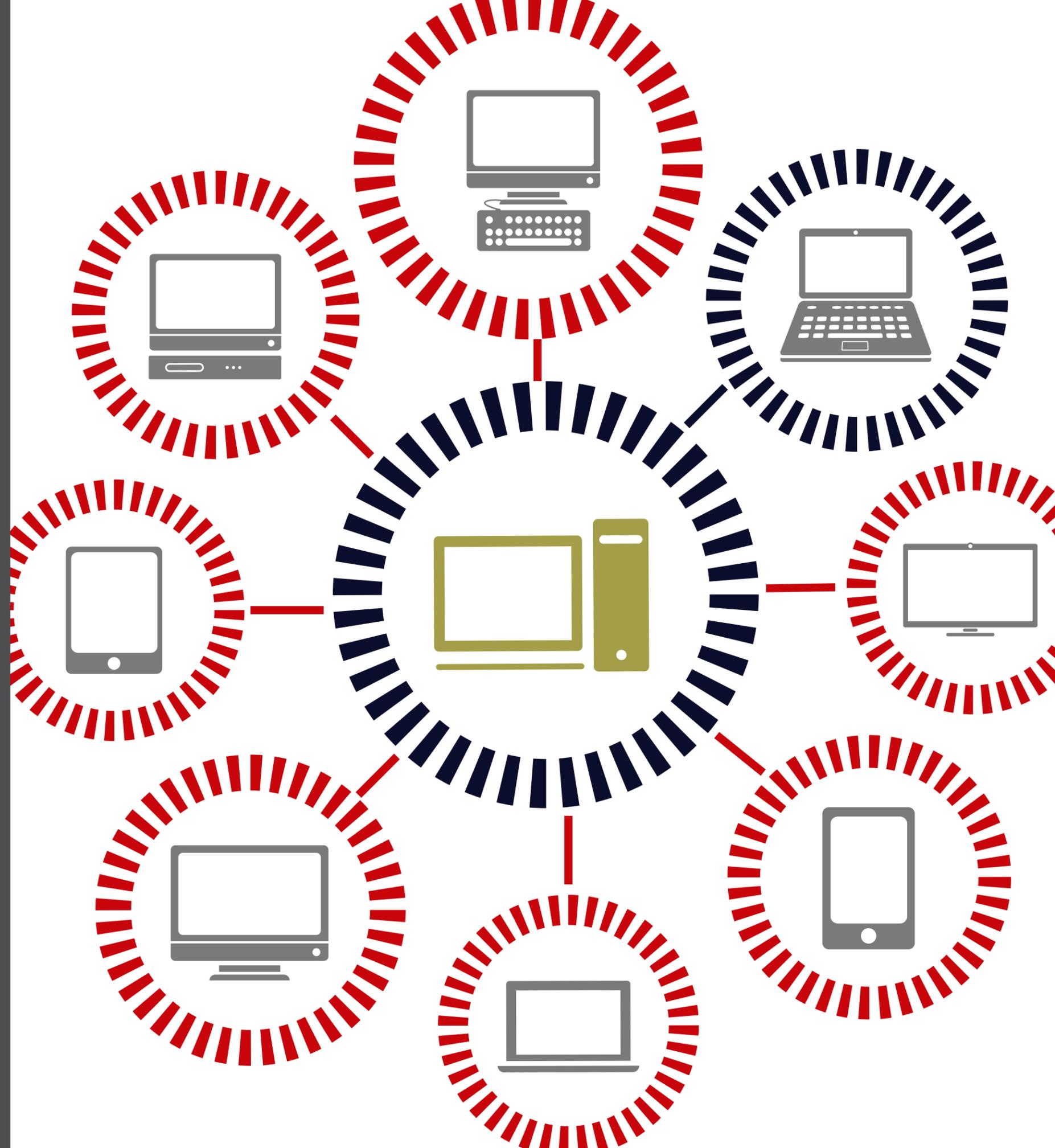
Every month we will have a call for questions on our Facebook page and Sal will answer them with real-world advice.

SEO

(SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION)

& A GOOD
USER EXPERIENCE

WITH JUSTEN HONG



BY JUSTEN HONG

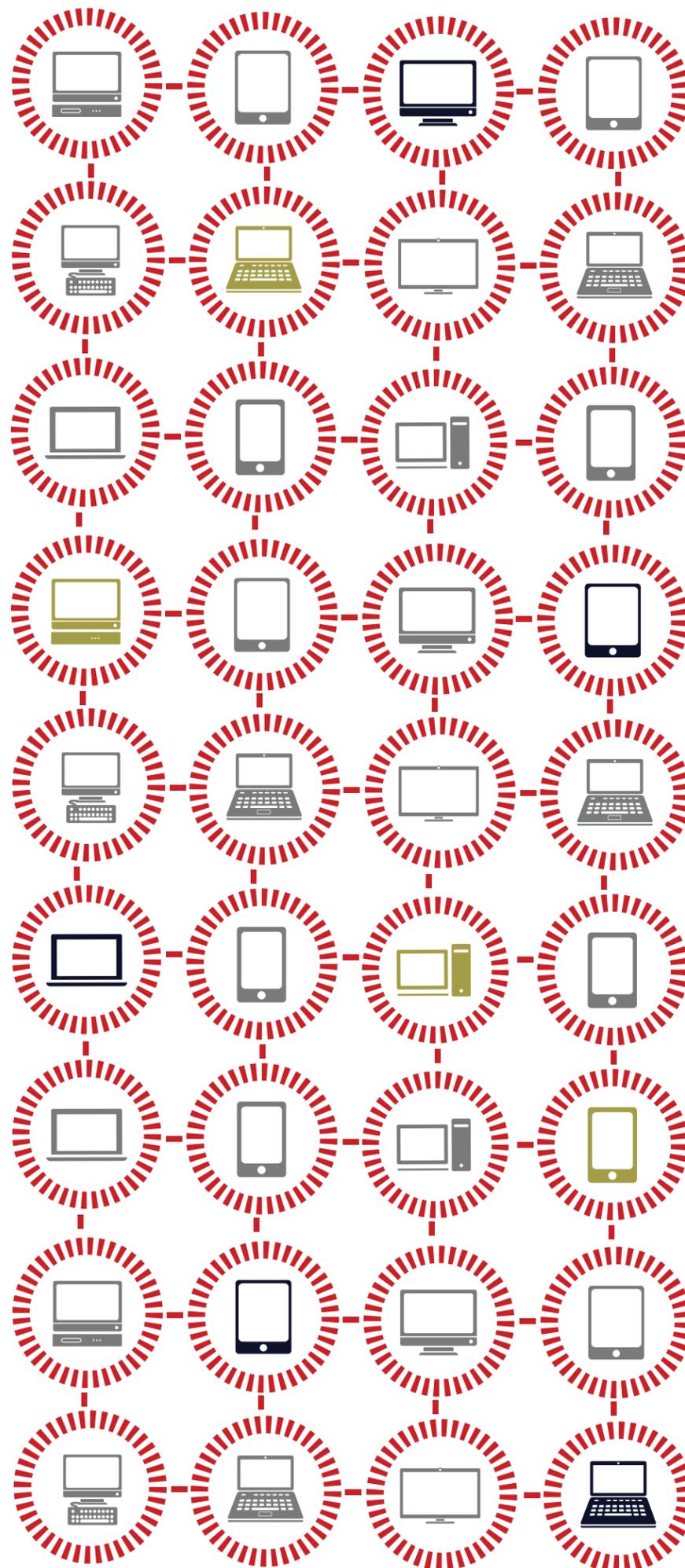


Google's last major algorithm update places more emphasis on making sure your website provides a good user experience. What does this mean? A good user experience can be broken down into a four major factors:

1. Your website loads quickly.
2. It looks great and is readable on any device.
3. There are no error pages.
4. The pages are optimized with relevant content.

YOUR WEBSITE NEEDS TO BE FAST-LOADING!

How many times have you clicked a link and left because it was taking too long? Make sure you are not losing traffic because of this. How do you know if your website is too slow? Visit it from a couple different computers and devices at different times of the day. Ask friends in different locations to check it. The best way is to use Google Webmaster Tools. Log in and then click the Other Resources link in the left column. Click the PageSpeed Insights link, type in your website URL and hit the Analyze button. It will give you a Mobile and a Desktop score. If either is red, you need to do something ASAP. Yellow is OK, but green is what you need for a great user experience.



ADDITIONAL TIP:

Your website is loaded with tons of images. You need to make sure all of them are the smallest file size possible. Since I design a lot of photography websites, I am constantly reviewing other sites, and I see the following issue all the time. I visit a gallery or a blog, and the images load like a game of Tetris. I immediately know what's going on. The photographer loaded 300 dpi images. You need to make sure your images are 72 dpi. Anything more than that is overkill, and slows down your site.

The best way I have found to keep file sizes down, while still having control of the quality of the image, is to use Photoshop's Save for Web & Devices feature under the File tab. Even images exported out of Lightroom can be slimmed down. The most efficient way I have found to do this is using Photoshop's Batch feature. Using Photoshop Actions, you can create a Batch so you can compress entire folders of images. I am sure there are multiple ways to do this, but I had to create an action for my vertical images and one for my horizontal images. I then run the batch, and it takes care of all the images in my folders.

YOUR WEBSITE NEEDS TO BE RESPONSIVE

—or, at minimum, have a mobile-friendly version.

This was the first year that more website surfing was done on mobile devices than home computers. That means more than 50 percent of all web surfing was done on a mobile device, and these numbers continue to climb. This is where responsive design comes in. Google loves and prefers responsively designed websites. These sites render differently, depending on what type of device they're being viewed on. However, it uses the exact same source code to do so. This is different from having a separate mobile-friendly site, which usually creates two sets of code, and, if not done properly, can create duplicate-content issues, which is a Google no-no.

A well-designed responsive site eliminates almost all need to zoom in to view content, making the site user-friendly. Here is a sample of a responsively designed website we recently built: www.toddanguishphotography.com. View the site on a desktop computer and then on a mobile phone or tablet. You will see how the site changes for each device. If you open the site on a desktop computer, grab the bottom right of the window and start to shrink it horizontally, and you will see it transform to fit the window.

We recently adjusted a client's website to be responsive, and saw it climb a little more than two full pages in ranking the very next time it was crawled.

MAKE SURE YOUR WEBSITE DOESN'T HAVE ANY 404 ERROR PAGES.

If you redesigned your website or changed the names of your page URLs, chances are you may have error pages. When you click a bad link, you're taken to a page that reads, "Sorry but this page no longer exists..." You can fix these pages by using a 301 redirect, which tells search engines that a page has permanently moved and points them to the new one. This is also important because you can transfer some of the link juice (ranking power) from the old page to the new one. If you have a high-ranking page and then redesign your website using a 301 redirect, the new page continues to rank well so you're not starting over from scratch.

To find out if your website has 404 error pages, use Google Webmaster Tools. Log in, click the Crawl button in the left sidebar and click the Crawl Errors button. Your 404 error pages will be listed on this page.

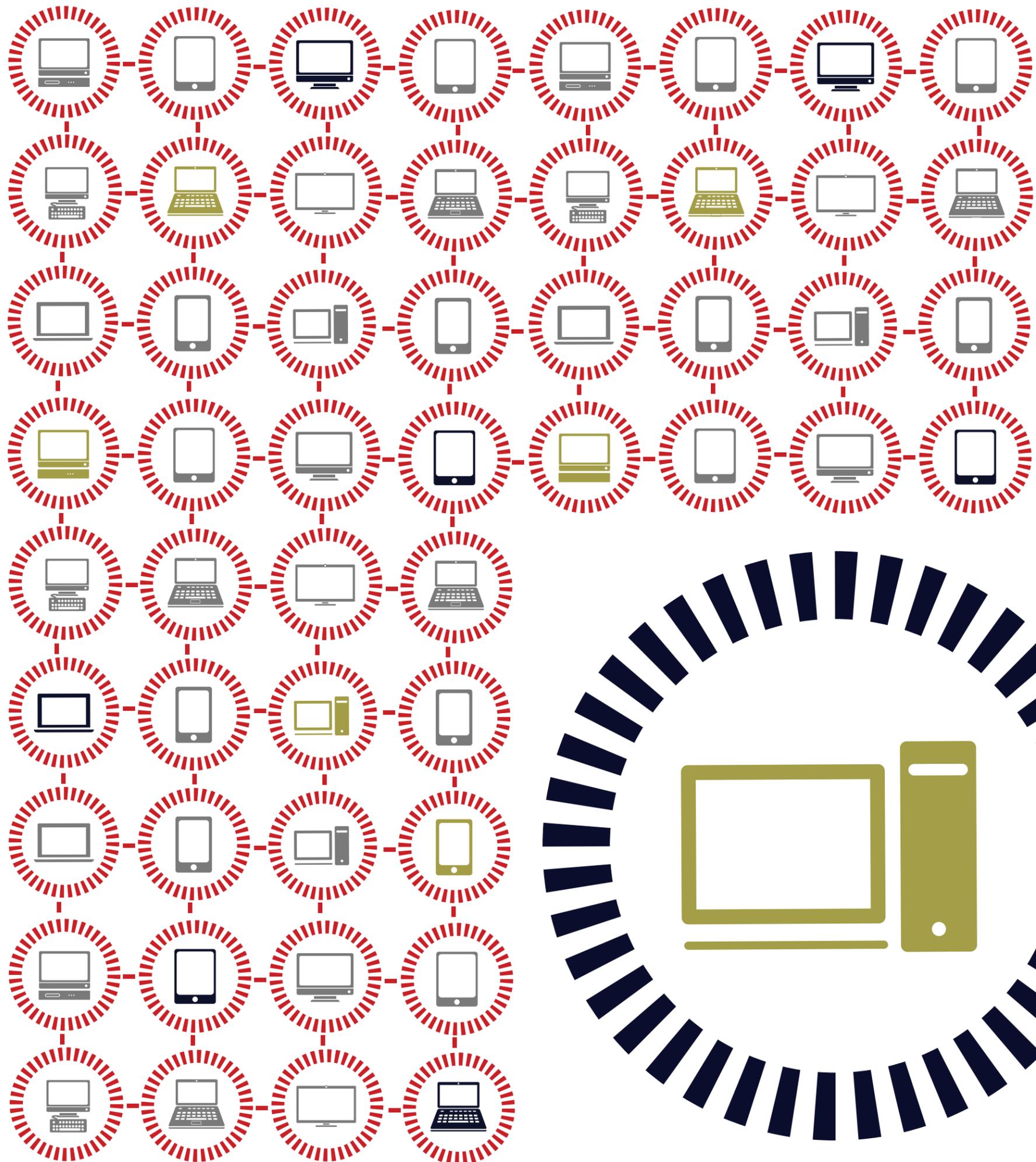
To fix them on a WordPress website, download the plug-in Simple 301 Redirects. Once it is installed, log into your WordPress admin and click the Settings tab in the left sidebar. You will see the tab for 301 Redirects. Paste the old URL in the left-hand field and the new one in the right. Just make sure you eliminate the `http://www.yourdomainname.com` from the left column, but be sure to include it on the right, or the redirect won't work. So it will look something like this:

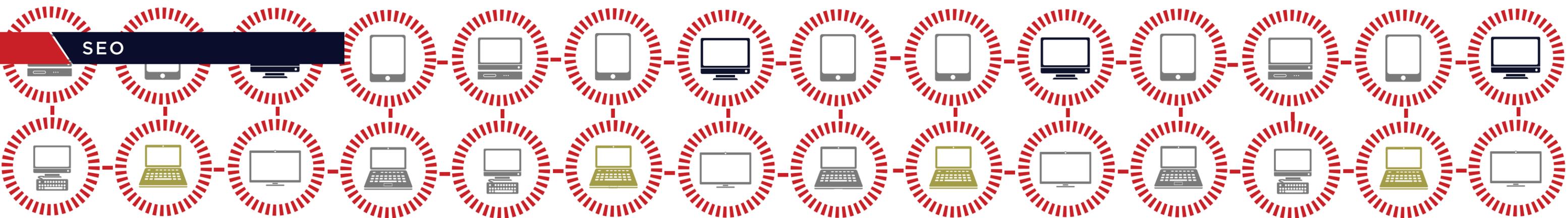
`/old-wedding-photography-page/ » http://www.yourdomainname.com/new-wedding-photography-page/`

If done in a timely fashion, fixing all of these may also solve the problem if you recently launched a new website and your website rankings plummeted.

YOUR PAGES NEED TO BE OPTIMIZED WITH RELEVANT CONTENT.

The content on your page needs to match what it is being optimized for. Don't optimize a page for a search term and then have content on that page that doesn't match it. This could have people finding that page, looking for the content they searched for and finding something else they were not looking for. This will most likely increase your website's bounce rate (people leaving your site as soon as they get to it), and it also doesn't deliver a good user experience.





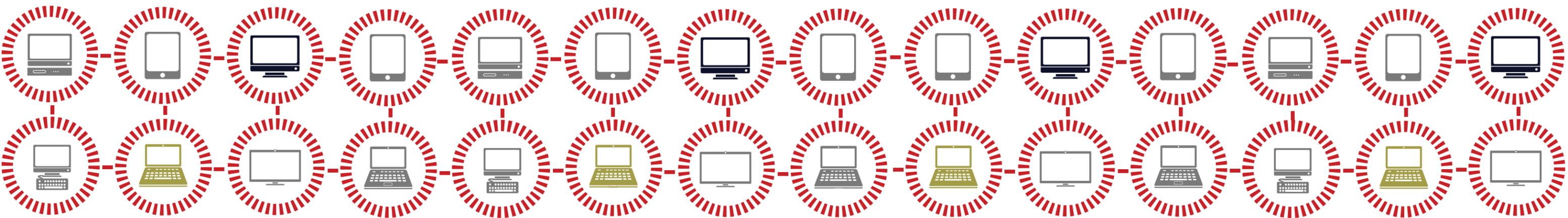
SEO TIP OF THE MONTH

PASS AROUND SOME OF THAT LINK JUICE

Make sure you have good internal linking throughout your website. Internal links are those that go from one page of your site to another page on your site (not a different website). It is also a good way to pass link juice (ranking power). What exactly is link juice? Imagine pouring juice into the top of your website. The juice flows through and pours into all the links on that page. This juice will pass page ranking power to other pages, so make sure you are linking to your most important pages.

A FEW WARNINGS

1. Don't use the exact same anchor text directing to your targeted page, because if the name of every link going to that page is exactly the same, it may appear spammy to Google. Therefore, if you have a page called st-louis-wedding-photography, anchor text links could be something like St. Louis Wedding Photography, Weddings, Wedding Photography, Click Here to Learn More, etc.
2. Do not have more than 100 links on a page, or your juice will become too watered down and lose its power. The most common place I see this is on blog pages, especially websites that use the blog as their main homepage—even more so if you have all of WordPress's default blog links, like Tags, Archives, Recent Post, Categories, Meta, etc. Having all of these usually creates more than 100 links per page. Hardly anyone uses those links anyway if you have a search field. I would have only Categories and possibly recent posts, as long as you are still under the 100 links. You can also change the number of posts being displayed on your main blog page in the WordPress admin under the Setting > Reading tab.
3. Don't have external links leaving a target page using the main anchor text going to another page. For instance, on your main wedding photography page (st-louis-wedding-photography), don't have a link on that page named St. Louis Wedding Photography going to a different page.
4. Make sure all your links on your website are not just internal links. Make sure your website is linking out to other great topical websites. Websites with no external links look suspicious to Google. ■





BOUDOIR

Personal Projects

SUMMER STYLING WITH SIZZLE

WITH STACIE FRAZIER



BY STACIE FRAZIER

Although our summer season here in Las Vegas goes on a lot longer than in the rest of the country, the official end of summer is coming quickly, but there's still enough time to do a summer-themed boudoir personal project! If you've ever heard me speak or read some of my articles, you know that personal projects are near and dear to my heart. Not only do they provide an opportunity to learn and grow, but they also allow you to style the entire shoot with your creative vision instead of your client's, for a nice change of pace.

Personal projects can be tiny or huge in scale. Your larger projects can be immensely fulfilling but require more time, commitment and models. My "Pure Beauty, No Makeup" series (discussed in the April 2014 issue of *Shutter* magazine, <https://www.behindtheshutter.com/empowering-boudoir/>) that I began shooting in 2012 is a perfect example of a large project. It is, hands down, the most meaningful one for me and my clients. These lovely ladies braved being bare-faced (and more!) in front of my lens as an exploration of the attitude and emotions of being photographed sans their daily beauty routine. These huge endeavors are always rewarding, especially the end product, but my smaller, more impulsive projects are usually the most fun. I try to scatter these shoots throughout the year for this reason. As a business owner and a creative, I have found that I absolutely need these small projects for my mental health and well-being. They give me the freedom to be as creative as my soul desires, in a nonstressful environment, and they resemble play more than actual work. They force me to wander outside my comfort zone, which is where the real learning and growth begins.

For these instant-gratification shoots, my spokesmodel comes in extra handy (see the March 2014 issue, <https://www.behindtheshutter.com/boudoir-spokesmodels/>). I don't have to worry about finding a model—I've already got a creative partner who is as excited as I am, and she has signed the necessary release forms. In the past, I have tried a few small projects with friends or everyday models (women who represent our target audience), and there are almost always issues, especially when it comes to usage of the completed images afterward.

Summer is a perfect season for a personal boudoir project since so much of what we do is indoors, usually in the bedroom. It provides us the unique opportunity to shoot outdoors for a change of pace and environment. For me, summer conjures up thoughts of fun, playfulness, flirtation, freedom, bright colors, and the added bonus of the sensuality of water and the heat of the sun. To celebrate this magical time of year, I wanted my photo shoot to be styled and directed to reflect all of that.

Here is how I made my most recent personal project come to life.

A romantic couple is shown from the chest up, submerged in a swimming pool. The man, on the left, has wet, wavy brown hair and is looking towards the woman. The woman, on the right, has long, dark, straight hair and is wearing a bright yellow, fringed bikini top. She is looking back at the man. The water is clear blue, and the background is a soft-focus view of the pool's surface.

• *get your whole team in on the action* •

The overall look and feel of client shoots are most often determined by the client's needs. For instance, our clients provide their wardrobe, which determines their color scheme, or they have a certain hair or makeup look in mind. And, while it's incredibly important to honor client wishes during their shoot, it can create a feeling of ennui among your team since there's only so much glory in sexy, loose waves and smoky eyes for the umpteenth time. Our makeup and hair artists are creatives too! Asking them to contribute to the overall concept of a personal project shoot and plan of attack encourages them to stretch creatively and grow as professionals. But, most importantly, it gives everyone something to get excited about.

As a team, plan as much as you can ahead of time so everything goes as smoothly as possible. Let everyone know what is needed from them and what your goals are for the project, and keep the excitement high. It's especially important that you, as the photographer, communicate your end vision clearly beforehand so they can formulate their ideas around the atmosphere, color scheme and desired results.

• *decide on a theme* •

Again, themes are not usually something clients ask for. The theme of a client shoot is generally sensual settings with sexy lingerie. But on a personal project, you can let your mind go wild, and the theme will help keep you on track when designing your perfect shoot.

For our latest personal project, my team and I decided on a Fourth of July Backyard BBQ & Pool Party. Two years ago, our very first session with our spokesmodel Shana was an Independence Day-inspired shoot. We had so much fun the first time, we thought it would be great to revisit the idea with new looks, styling and the experience that we've gained (<http://www.hauteshots.com/blog/2012/07/04/all-american-girls-las-vegas-photography/>).



• *explore new locations* •

Get out of the studio/hotel room, and find a location you haven't used yet. A personal project is so much more fun in a new environment. Choose a bar or restaurant during off-hours, but, if weather permits, get outside and enjoy the season.

For my summer-styled shoot, we decided to use my own backyard. Summers are scorching hot here in Vegas, and I knew we needed to be working in a location that allowed us to take our time and cool off indoors while resting between setups. An added bonus: I have a pool! And by using my home, it allowed us to turn the event into a party for the entire Haute Shots team and their families, since we weren't working around someone else's hours.

• *come up with a color scheme* •

A color scheme can go a long way in helping to bring your vision to life. It ties each scene together and makes it more editorial in scale. Use a color wheel to decide on a scheme, or allow your theme to help dictate it. There are also some great websites that have groupings of colors for themes if you need some inspiration.

This year, we decided on primary colors. Since we had already used a red, white and blue theme for our first Independence Day shoot, I wanted to have a brighter, summer-party feel for this one. I was pretty strict about our use of color here, and any apparel or props we used would have to really pop in yellow, red or blue. Luckily, there's a lot of everything available in these colors.

• *play with props and wardrobe* •

Think outside the box. You don't need to shoot only lingerie for your personal projects for your photos to convey sexy. The showing of skin is a hallmark of boudoir, but there are many ways to make it sizzle by using swimwear and summer fashion instead of lingerie. In many ways, swimwear is more versatile than lingerie—stretchier fabrics, strings to play with, and availability in every color and style imaginable. What can you do with a sheer cover-up? How about a floppy hat?

Don't forget about some props. Many of our props are background filler, things that help complete the atmosphere of the scene. For our BBQ set, we needed props that told our story: the sexy chef, decorations and, of course, the classic hot dog. This was the funnest part of the entire shoot for me. My whole theme came to life in my mind because of that hot dog. Strange how some ideas unfold.

• *decide how to light it* •

Another important aspect for your personal project is deciding what your desired lighting effect will be, and then utilizing the necessary tools required to get you there. Since you don't have the pressure of an actual client shoot, this is a perfect opportunity to try new techniques and experiment to your heart's content.

For this project, I knew I wanted the colors to pop and the skin to glow, and that I needed to offset the harsh sunlight we would be working in. I decided that a ring flash would be perfect for this. I added a Scrim Jim to help diffuse, bounce or block the harsh sunlight in certain areas. I also got a chance to use our mobile battery pack, which is perfect in an outdoor situation where access to electricity is limited.



• *embrace the challenges* •

Challenges will arise, even on your just-for-fun shoots. If you're working outside, you could have extreme lighting conditions or something about the set that isn't quite working. The challenges are what will help you to learn and grow as a photographer, so embrace them. The challenges also make your shoots more memorable.

One of our greatest challenges, aside from the 107-degree heat and harsh lighting, was figuring out how to get floating beach balls to only show my predetermined color scheme of red, yellow and blue. My makeup artist handled that one brilliantly by taping rocks to the undersides of each ball.

• *have fun* •

Prep your sets and have all your equipment ready to go before the day of the shoot so that on the day-of, you can just focus on having fun. You and your team deserve a fun-filled day of creativity; lead the shoot with a positive, nonstressful attitude. We went into this one with a general layout, with only a few "must have" shots on the list, which left the rest of the session to be more freestyle than usual.

To balance the work/fun ratio for my team for this hot summer shoot, I cooked a nice spread for them and encouraged them to suit up and take breaks in the pool. And, of course, we had summer drinks on hand for everyone. Our shoot was not only a great team activity—it was fun and relaxing, and we ended up with a huge set of images that we love.

I hope your personal summer project is as fun and successful as ours was! ■



 **SHUTTER** MAGAZINE
LEARN MORE! CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO...



WEDDING VIDEO EDITS

MUSIC VIDEOS

VS.

SHORT FILM

VS.

FULL COVERAGE

WITH JOE SWITZER



BY JOE SWITZER

Wedding videos used to be simple: Record the wedding and just put it on VHS or DVD. Today there is a battle between filmmakers who shoot music videos, short films and full coverage. Most of my filmmaker friends claim they have the best formula for success and are totally convinced that brides want what they offer. It's hard to argue with wedding film/photo companies that are successful making money and giving brides the most unforgettable experience, especially if you are a filmmaker who is doing it the way you want to do it—right? Maybe not.

I'm going to throw a curve ball at you and make a bold statement. The majority of filmmakers are missing out on a tremendous upside for themselves and their companies. They can double their income and cut back on half of their editing time if they keep an open mind and rethink the way they deliver and edit wedding films.

Let me give you my definition of the various wedding video edits so that when I start throwing these terms around, you'll be able to follow.

[1] MUSIC VIDEO

This is a two- to five-minute video edited to one song (sometimes two songs, depending on how you cut the music).

[2] SHORT FILM

This 15- to 20-minute video uses multiple songs and different sources of audio from the event. The audio comes primarily from vows, speeches and other sounds recorded from the different scenes throughout the day.

[3] FULL COVERAGE

This is basic camera coverage of all the main events of a wedding day, with one or more camera angles. The wedding and reception are filmed in their entirety, and this video can last one to three hours, depending on the wedding. Nothing is edited out, except maybe the moments when you move the camera, or moments between speeches. All audio is live, and nothing is synced to music.

Let's start with Full Coverage. This is the old-school way of filming. It's exactly how you imagine it. A video person in the balcony with dirty shoes, a wrinkled shirt and his 12-pound tripod. I know I'm being stereotypical, but I mean no harm. We at Switzerfilm refer to this as "Uncle Bob's" camera angle; even when we're meeting with potential clients, we actually refer to it as the Uncle Bob angle. We all know this type of wedding production works, and when brides think about what a wedding video looks like, well, this is what a bride and groom think all wedding videos look like. This style is nice for people who like little interaction and engagement with "the video person," and the final product has all the major moments of the day captured. What's not to like? Sure, it's not creative, but at least you have minimal editing time and the bride gets her major wedding-day moments captured. That being said, offering just this service is a mistake. You miss out on being creative, and you will never have a wedding video to advertise. Sorry, Full Coverage people: You are going to have to offer something else.



Lately it seems like everyone has jumped on the Short Film bandwagon. This video style, proponents will tell you, is the present and future of wedding filmmaking. Here are the three reasons they give for its success:

- #1 - Storytelling
- #2 - Audio
- #3 - Longer films

Short films make sense to most filmmakers because they can use the audio sources, tell a story and give the bride something that isn't just a video slideshow. This is rational thinking, and I understand why so many have chosen this path. Now let me explain to you why they're wrong.

At Switzerfilm, we offer a best-of-both-worlds approach, with the option of Full Coverage as an add-on. This works for us and it will work for you. Look at the way you market yourself. Are you seriously going to make 20-minute films that people are actually going to watch? When was the last time you ever watched a video on YouTube for more than five minutes? Short Film editors make a great product but it's not marketable compared to the power of a Wedding Music Video (especially if you do same-day edits). Now you just double-dipped—good for you! Why can't you do a same-day edit that's 15 to 20 minutes long? Probably because the reception crowd would riot.

By the way, when a potential bride is looking online at wedding videos, she doesn't know how long a typical wedding video should be. If a bride is comparing you to another company that makes a 20-minute video and you make a 15-minute video, does a bride think that she gets more value with the company that makes a 20-minute video? If you believe that a bride hires you based on the length of a video, then those who offer the Full Coverage add-on win that business.

Now I'm going to really piss off a few of you by saying you don't need to use audio to tell a story. That's right. I got 99 problems, and audio isn't one. I'm not saying I don't use audio on corporate shoots or even weddings. When shooting Full Coverage, we mic up the officiant and groom, and even record the field recorder. For 65 percent of our weddings, we record audio (that's the percentage that books us for both Music Video and Full Coverage). Over the last decade, we have used audio six times in music videos. So it can happen, but it's rare. We use no audio for 95 percent of our Music Videos for many reasons, including the fact that most people hate the way they sound on camera, the vows are traditional and predictable, it interrupts the song and editing time, and distracts your audience from really getting into the music video.

Still not convinced to switch from Short Films to Music Videos? Let's talk about the time you're gonna save from editing. It's picking-out-music time! How long will it take you to find those six or seven songs? If you're like me, about 30 minutes to an hour a song. With Short Films, you probably have six or seven songs to choose that need to be edited to flow from one song to the next. Short Film people do have some supporters: the music licensing companies.



With Music Videos, you can't just throw any song down like you can with a Short Film. With a Short Film, you have plenty of audio to use over your soundtrack. If the songs you choose suck, you might get by with it, but not with a Music Video. The song selection is of utmost importance; I recommend using something that matches your couple's style and taste. More than 90 percent of the time, our clients trust us to select the song, and we use both indie and mainstream music. We have always used SongFreedom.com for all our music.

Producing Short Films involves editing in your audio from the event, making sure the audio levels don't peak, color enhancing, shooting longer shots and then previewing your 20-minute masterpiece two or three times. Some wedding filmmakers offer Music Video SDEs only. Can you imagine? You leave every wedding completely finished. No editing.

My last and most important point of this article is from the bride and groom's perspective. Who are we as the video person to decide what speech or what vow was good enough for the wedding video? I was a groom myself this year, and my bride and I enjoyed everyone's speech and every moment of our ceremony and reception. Sure, we might only watch the Full Coverage a few times, but we have it all and we have it all forever. If you stop and think about what it's like to be a bride or groom these days, wouldn't you appreciate a company that keeps it simple and at the same time delivers a creative and quality experience?

The bottom line is you have to do what makes you happy as a filmmaker. If you love editing 20-minute Short Films and that makes you feel good and successful, then just do it. However, it has a cost of taking more of your time to edit and decreasing your marketing exposure (people on Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo will watch a three-minute video but not a 20-minute video).

There is no doubt you will have more time, a better business and happier brides making Music Videos with the Full Coverage add-on. Happy filmmaking. ■



**Lady Gaga Imagine Dragons LMFAO
One Republic Plain White T's Train
The Last Goodnight The Band Perry
Ingrid Michaelson Angels & Airwaves
Maroon 5 Frank Sinatra Marvin Gaye
Colbie Caillat Etta James Jackson 5
Lynyrd Skynyrd The Temptations**

**Tyrone Wells Dave Barnes Matt Wertz Mat Kearney
Parachute Little & Ashley Justin Amos Lee Joshua Radin
James Zerbin Kim Edwards GOBI Mikey Wax Matt White
Jon McLaughlin Rusted Root Ben Rector Mercy Me
Vanessa Carlton The Afters Sixpence None The Richer
All Sons & Daughters Marc Cohn Filter Brendan James
Jess Penner Kathryn Ostenberg Mindy Gledhill Runner Runner The New Velvet Shirock Derek
Gust Stars Go Dim Goldheart Honor By August The Royal Foundry Trouvere Phil Wickham
Katey Laurel Rachel James Allegra Curtis Peoples The Gabe Dixon Band Joshua Logan
Jeff Radford The Great Romance Eliza Dear Evan McHugh Landon Smith Luke Hendrickson
Hannah Christianson Alva Leigh Caleb Lovely New Heights Sara Masterson Todd Carey
Junkyard Poets Escape Directors Frances England Ryan Spriggs Dave Preston Astoria Kings**

...

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EDITOR



SALCINCOTTA
www.SalCincotta.com

LOCATION: O'Fallon, IL

PASSION: Weddings & Seniors

Sal was exposed to photography at a very early age and has been in love with our craft ever since. He can still recall the smell of the chemicals in his aunt's makeshift dark room in the basement. However, a career in photography would elude him for over 20 years.

Graduating from one of the top 25 business schools in the country, Sal pursued a corporate career with his photography becoming more of a hobby. In 2007, he left corporate to pursue his dream of a career in photography and has never looked back.

Today, Sal Cincotta and his wife Taylor own and operate a very successful studio in the St. Louis metro area. Salvatore Cincotta Photography, Salvatore Cincotta Films, and BehindtheShutter.com.

Focused on wedding and senior portraiture, Sal has had the opportunity to shoot for corporate clients like Nordstrom's and the St. Louis Cardinals to elite sports celebrities and the White House, photographing President Obama.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Medium Format: Featured Artist Travis Neely
Q&A with Sal Cincotta



PHILLIPBLUME

www.BlumePhotography.com

LOCATION: Athens, GA

PASSION: Weddings

Phillip and Eileen Blume are international award-winning photographers who exemplify a new generation of socially conscious creatives. They not only push boundaries to create unforgettable imagery around the globe, but also innovate to address poverty and impact the world for real change. As owners of a high-demand boutique studio, they've worked with clients in New York, London, Manila, Antigua and beyond. In 2011, they released their first feature documentary film, *Lost Boys of Paradise*, which screened across the United States to raise awareness about children fighting to survive in Guatemala's post-civil war slums. By implementing sound business principles and catering to a select number of wedding clients, Phillip and Eileen strike a balance that affords them time and resources to invest in what they value most – parenting their two young daughters, adoption, involvement in their community, and personal projects. As educators, the duo accepts invitations to speak to students and photographers about the art and business of photography. They have appeared at WPPI in Las Vegas and on CreativeLIVE for Photographers Ignite. In 2014 they will premiere their new studio space in Athens, GA, as well as workshops for photographers.

FEATURED ARTICLES

[Breaking Into Destination Weddings](#)





MICHAEL CORSENTINO

www.CorsentinoPhotography.com

LOCATION: Petaluma, California

PASSION: Lifestyle Photography

Michael Corsentino is an award-winning, contemporary wedding and portrait photographer. He is an American Photo 2013 Top 10 Wedding Photographers nominee, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom expert, Capture One Pro Certified Professional, author, contributing writer for Photoshop User Magazine, Shutter Magazine and Resource Magazine, speaker and international workshop leader.

Based in Northern California, Michael has been shooting digitally since 1999. His love affair with the magic and science of photography is more passionate today than ever. Stylish, dramatic, edgy and modern images set Michael's photography apart. His award-winning photojournalism, fashion and editorial styles have made him an in-demand portrait and destination-wedding photographer. Passionate about education, Michael loves to share his lighting and posing secrets, post-processing techniques, time-saving workflow strategies and shooting philosophy at workshops and speaking engagements.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Shutter Speed Doesn't Matter in the Studio



SKIP COHEN

www.SkipsPhotoNetwork.com

LOCATION: Sarasota, Florida

Skip Cohen is President/Founder of Marketing Essentials International, a marketing consulting firm specializing in projects dedicated to photography, primarily photographic education. (www.mei500.com)

He is also the founder of Skip's Summer School (www.mei500.com), the founder of the Akron Photo Series (www.AkronPhotoSeries.com), and the co-founder of GhostRighters (www.GhostRighters.com), a content resource for professional photographers needing help with editorial content, web re-design and marketing. His blogs, SkipsPhotoNetwork.com and PhotoResourceHub.com, is read by thousands of professional and aspiring photographers. On May 21, MEI launched PhotoResourceHub.com a new content site for professional photographers with video, podcasts, blog posts and an ongoing calendar of industry events.

He has been a recipient of ADL's Torch of Liberty Award and Foto Imagen Magazine's Man of the Year Award and in 2001 he received PPA's Legacy Award for his work in support of PPA Charities. His images have been published in a long list of photographic trade magazines, including: Rangefinder, Shutterbug, Foto Imagen, Studio Photography and Design, Petersen's Photographic and The Hasselblad Forum. He's also competed in print completion in both WPPI and PPA's national conventions.

In addition, he has written six books on photography: The Art of Wedding Photography, The Art of the Digital Wedding and The Art of People Photography with Bambi Cantrell: Don Blair's Guide to Posing and Lighting Body Parts: and Wedding Photography from the Heart, co-authored with celebrity wedding photographer Joe Buissink. Book number six, GoingPro, co-authored with Scott Bourne, was released by Random House in October 2011 and remains on the photography book best seller list at Amazon..

FEATURED ARTICLES

Planned Networking



KRISTY DICKERSON

www.KristyDickerson.com

LOCATION: Atlanta, Georgia

PASSION: Weddings & Engagements

Kristy Dickerson is the founder and CEO of Fisheye Connect (www.fisheyeconnect.com), professional laundry sorter, CFO of multitasking, wedding photographer, mom of two, and a wife who is never wrong... never. Upon earning her degree in finance and business management, she started her photography business after the birth her first son. As if she didn't already have enough on her plate, in June 2010, Kristy launched Fisheye Connect for other photographers, like herself, looking for quality education. Fisheye Connect allows aspiring photographers to connect with photography industry experts by location, instructor or interest. It is a searchable database for photography workshops/ events, along with services that help instructors manage the marketing and financial aspects of their businesses. Merging Kristy's business sense with her passion, Fisheye Connect has become a thriving community of photographers learning and growing together.

FEATURED ARTICLES

5 Tips for Better Branding





STACIE FRAZIER

www.HauteShots.com

LOCATION : Henderson, Nevada

PASSION : Boudoir

Stacie began her journey as a graphic designer, who needed to learn photography for her duties as a designer, in 2004. The first photo Stacie ever took in her career as a designer was published in Lucky magazine, which catapulted her into taking photography more seriously. She ventured into boudoir photography in 2009 with the launch of her business, Haute Shots, and rapidly gained acclaim as a true professional in her field with the ability to bring out the beauty in every woman, no matter her age, shape, or size. Since then, Stacie has built a loyal and diverse international clientele.

Stacie is the Boudoir Expert for MpixPro, has been featured in "Boudoir Photography: The Quick-Start Guide For Professional Photographers" by Ed Verosky and "Canon Speedlite System Digital Field Guide" by Michael Corsentino, as well as numerous magazines and reality tv show sizzle reels. The future is looking bright for Haute Shots as more and more opportunities present themselves to Stacie, enabling her to share her passion for boudoir with the World.

FEATURED ARTICLE

Boudoir Personal Projects





JUSTEN HONG
www.VisualLure.com

LOCATION: Caseyville, IL

PASSION: Logo Design

Justen Hong is a St. Louis area-based, award-winning, internationally published graphic designer with works in multiple LogoLounge books, The Big Book of Packaging, plus logos that will soon be featured in a new book published by Artpower International publishing out of Hong Kong. Justen is the owner and head designer at Visual Lure®, which specializes in logo design, graphic design, web design, search engine optimization (SEO) and packaging design, with his true passion being logo design. Justen has a studio art background with a degree in graphic design and a printmaking minor. He also loves art, photography and architecture.

FEATURED ARTICLES
SEO & A Good User Experience





DUSTIN LUCAS

www.evolveedits.com

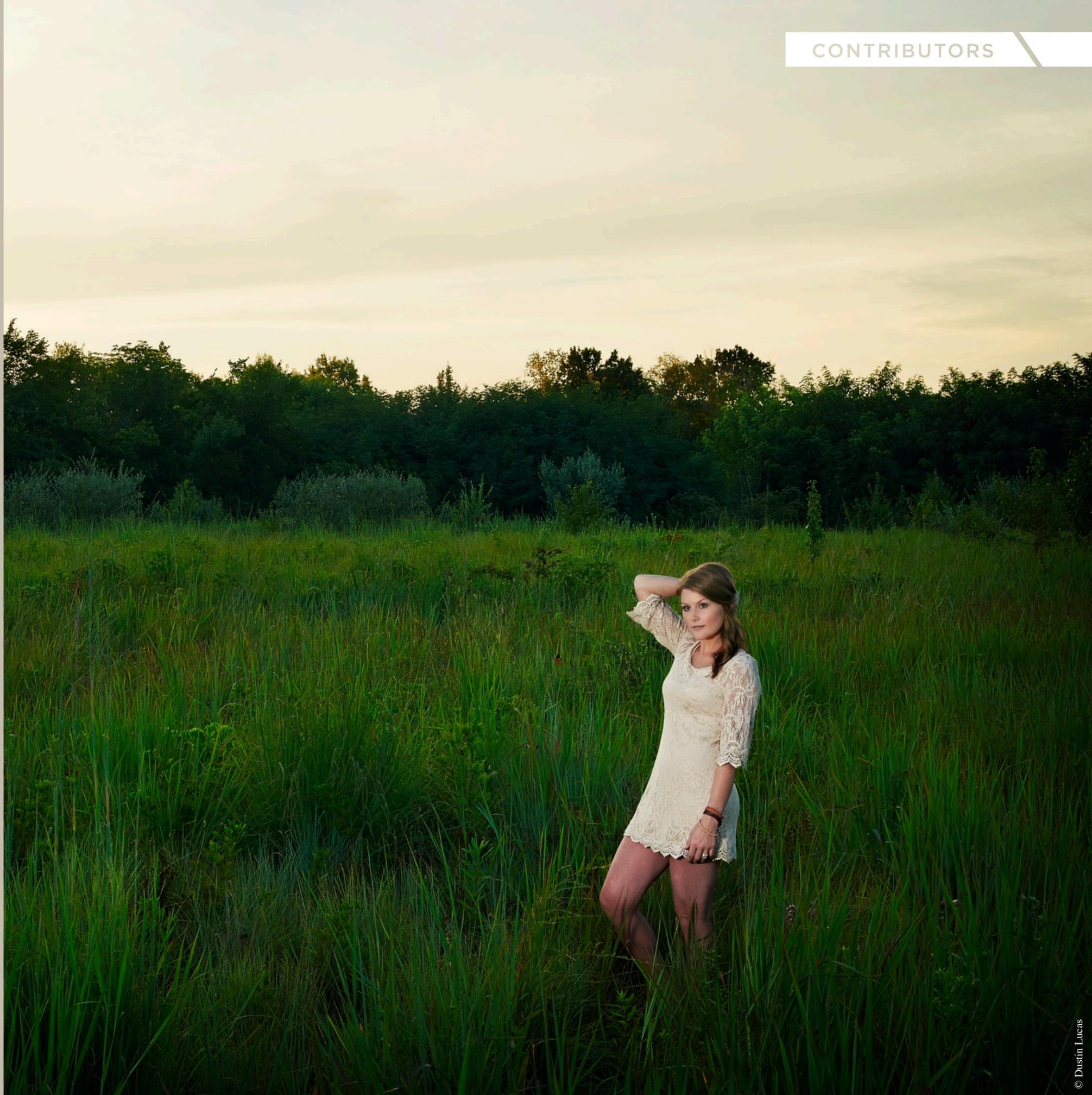
LOCATION: O'Fallon, IL

PASSION: Photographic Education & Digital Process

Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator with his interests in the wedding industry as well as the academic world. The educational route led him to the wedding industry after achieving his Master in Fine Arts degree from SIUE emphasizing in analog photography. Through his academic endeavor, digital was taught along side within analog photography and this allowed for a more dimensional application of the medium. A career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits and he quickly gained traction in the editorial process. While teaching advanced photography classes at the University of Missouri in St. Louis, Dustin is expanding his practice of post-production and education to his colleagues and peers. He believes education is a huge component of servicing his community. "As an artist, the balance between education and business in the wedding industry allows my passion in photography to expand."

FEATURED ARTICLES

White Balance In-Camera for Better Results





VANESSA JOY
www.VanessaJoy.com

LOCATION: Freehold, New Jersey

PASSION: Weddings

14 Years of photography, eight years of shooting weddings, three years of business ownership (not to mention five college degrees)

Vanessa is a trilingual (English, Spanish and a bit of French), award-winning photographer, living with her husband, Rob Adams, in the great state of New Jersey. She has studied photography since 1998 and has spent most of her life running a successful wedding photography studio that shoots 35 weddings a year (at a premium price). In her first three years of business, Vanessa achieved honors such as: 20+ publications in print magazines (including three cover photos and interviews in *PDN* and *Rangefinder*), a Grand Imaging Award from PPA and a second-place wedding Image Award from WPPI.

Vanessa enjoys speaking across the country at venues such as CreativeLIVE, Clickin Moms, WPPI, Imaging USA, PPA-related conventions and personal workshops. She is recognized for her talent and even more for her business sense. Vanessa's clients love working with her, and industry peers enjoy learning from her generous, informative and open-book style of teaching.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Compounding Your Efforts for Success Part 2



LORINORDSTROM
www.NordstromPhoto.com

LOCATION: Winterset, Iowa

PASSION:
Babies, Families, Weddings & Seniors

Lori Nordstrom {M.Photog.Cr., CPP, ABI} owns a boutique studio specializing in children and family portraits located in the picturesque town of Winterset, Iowa. Lori is a PPA approved business instructor and marketing consultant for Studio Management Services. Sharing with other photographers and small business owners is one of the things she most enjoys. In 2009 Lori started Photo Talk Forum, an online community of photographers working together to grow their businesses.

Lori has always had a heart for children and believes in giving back. She has run a successful fundraising campaign for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS) for 10 years. In 2011 Lori began her own non-profit organization, Dando Amor which focuses on helping orphaned children in Ecuador. Lori and Travis Gugleman hit their goal of raising \$100,000 the first year of Dando Amor existence. You can find out more about going to Ecuador or making a donation at www.dandoamor.org

FEATURED ARTICLE
The Birthday Club



BLAIR PHILLIPS

www.BlairPhillipsPhotography.com

LOCATION: Landis, North Carolina

PASSION:

Seniors, Babies, Families & Weddings

Blair's team includes four employees plus Blair, who photographs 20 to 30 weddings and 500 studio sessions per year. Blair has a passion to teach photographers how to express themselves in ways they can't find with traditional training. He speaks to and teaches thousands of photographers and digital artists each year at national conventions and expos including WPPI, Imaging USA, SYNC Seniors, and various PPA conventions.

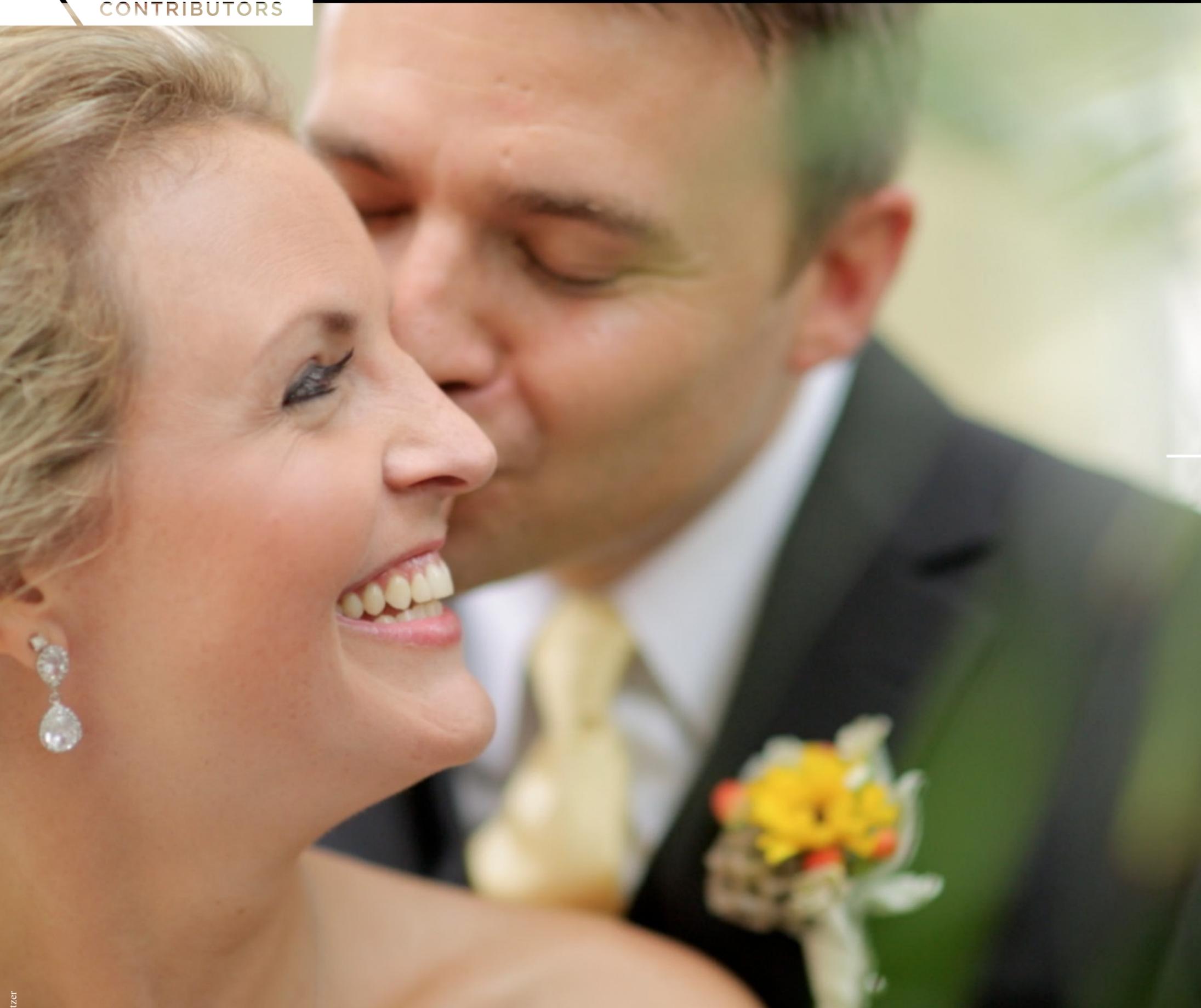
Blair and Suzanne's "eclectic elegance" style and positive energy educate and inspire photographers, while allowing them to stay true to themselves. This young team pushes the envelope daily with creativity and positive inspiration. As a side note, after 10 years of marriage, Blair and Suzanne welcomed Ava Blair Phillips into the world on August 3, 2011.

FEATURED ARTICLE

A Different Way of Thinking



CONTRIBUTORS



JOESWITZER

www.switzerworld.com

LOCATION: St. Louis, MO

Joe says "I got lucky and fell into the film/photo world. I'm probably known for my enthusiasm and randomness. I totally enjoy capturing real moments creatively...even if that's with my iPhone. I prefer Cold Stone ice cream once a week with Snickers, cookie dough, carmel, fudge, and a splash of Robitussin to take the stomachache away. My favorite color is the number 9. I'm writing this without any help from Google so I hope you feel like you know me better now. I hope they aren't mad at me for not writing something more professional."

FEATURED ARTICLES

Wedding Video Edits

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