

the business behind the shutter | MARCH 2013

SHUTTER

MAGAZINE

LIGHTING DOUBLE FEATURE

Ring Lights Rock!
With Michael Corsentino

Lighting For Seniors
With Blair Phillips

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& More!



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— Parker Pfister, award-winning wedding photographer



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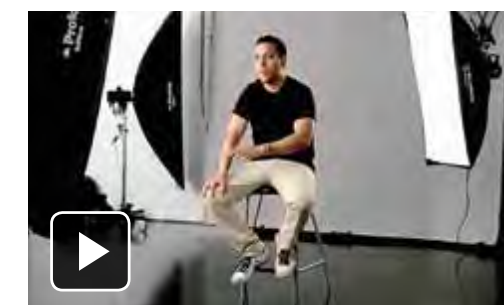
a word from the editor



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MOSHE ZUSMAN AND PROFOTO D1

“If I get a last minute call to go on a shoot it’s very easy; I just grab a D1 kit with me and I know I have everything ready to roll in it...everything is nice and compact in its’ case. I just put it in the car and go out.” – Moshe Zusman



See Moshe Zusman in action video

“It’s time to get your learn on.

Many of you are making the journey to Vegas this month. We hope to see you there!

If you see us, be sure to say “hi!”

And don’t party too hard. :)”



WITH SAL CINCOTTA



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Set the mood

WITH
TAYLOR
CINCOTTA





*Sales sessions are
vital to our business.*

*In order to have successful sales you
have to create an atmosphere that is
conducive to people spending money.*

*This requires that they feel
at home, relaxed & happy.*



by Taylor Cincotta

Following are a few tips I use to assure I have the right environment for great sales!

Drep

Before a meeting or sales session I always review my client's account. I want to remember their name, who referred them, their wedding date, their wedding vendors and any other details. Why go through all this trouble? So when they walk in my door, I can greet them by name and make small talk about their day. Little details like this really make your clients feel that you care about them and their big day. They don't feel like "just another customer."

These details can also help with your sales. If I know that "Susie" referred them, and I know that Susie bought our top package and had prints displayed at her reception, when I am walking my current clients through packages I can now say, "You can display the prints in this package like Susie did at her reception, do you remember that?" Now my clients have a visual of how to use and display their pictures, and it also creates a "keeping up with the Joneses" situation where they can't let Susie outdo them; they want to have the most pictures and the best display.





sound

Nothing is more awkward than silence. According to an article on Yahoo, “Music has the ability to change the emotional and physical status of people, whether they are in bad moods, good moods or sad moods.” I am a musician so I am well in tune with how music affects mood and emotion. I created a “studio playlist” in my iTunes account that I use for photo shoots, consultations and sales sessions. Any time a client is at the studio I try to have music playing; it just adds a mood and ambience.

Now you have to use common sense when putting together your playlist...nothing vulgar, no cursing, stick to soothing, relaxing classics. Remember you want people to feel happy and relaxed. Some artists on my list include Joss Stone, Michael Buble, Frank Sinatra, Ellie Goulding, One Republic, John Mayer, Ingrid Michaelson, Coldplay, Fleetwood Mac, Celine Deon and Nelly Furtado. I put my playlist on shuffle, and play it louder when people first arrive and for their slideshow, which is how I start off a sales session. Then I turn it down so we can talk without struggling to hear each other.

Turn off the phones. Don't let your staff or visitors disturb your session. The moment your client hears a phone ring, it snaps them out of the relaxed state you've worked so hard for. Suddenly they remember they aren't your only client, maybe you're busy, they feel rushed, etc. I turn off all phones, lock all the doors, and let my staff know that if they disturb my session, it's going to be bad news for them! (I do my best to come off intimidating).

smell

Just like music, smell, and every other sense we have triggers an emotion. For my meetings and sales sessions I always light a few large scented candles. The candlelight adds ambience and the scent (I like Vanilla) is calming and comforting.

Real estate agents bake fresh pies and cookies in a home when they host an open house for a reason. By doing some quick Google research I found five smells that are known to make people feel happy: jasmine or rose, lemon oil, licorice and lavender. Pick a subtle scent you like, don't mix scents, and make your studio smell fresh and warm!



What do people see when they walk up to your studio, walk through the door or into your sales room? Of course we want to make people feel welcome and relaxed when they arrive. *To ensure my clients feel this way here is what I do:*



+**Lights**

Don't have bright overhead lights; this makes people feel uncomfortable and irritable, obviously not conducive to a sales atmosphere. I use track lighting around the studio and aim the track heads at art displays on the walls. The lights are dim with a warm tone. I have a few lamps and candles as well, again with soft, dim light.

+**Layout**

When my clients step into our studio I want them to immediately see their images displayed on our 55-inch TV screen so we aligned our TV with the front door.

We also want our sales room to feel like a living room. Why? Because it's easier for clients to picture their images displayed in their own home. My clients sit on a big comfy couch and I sit in a big comfy chair next to them. We have a coffee table and an end table set up like a living room.

Notice I said I have a chair sitting NEXT to them, not in front of, or behind them, and I'm not at a desk. The reason for this is I want my clients to feel that I am in this with them. It's not me against them; I'm here to help. I feel that sitting anywhere other than next to them is too aggressive and makes them feel like it's a sales session, which is the last thing I want.

+**Colors**

I suggest sticking with earth tones. You don't want to decorate your room too bold or trendy so people with different tastes cannot relate or envision their own living room.

For paint colors go for warm neutral tones that will let your artwork stand out vs. a color that detracts from your artwork.

+**Projection**

When we operated sales out of our home, we used a 30-inch MAC monitor connected to my laptop. The images looked amazing on that screen but we quickly noticed it was way too small. People would sit on the edge of their seat and get as close to the screen as possible; we needed something bigger.

We now use a Samsung 55-inch LED flat-screen TV. While the picture quality will never compare with the MAC monitor, it's the best option out there. Now my clients sit back on the couch and relax while they view their images.

sight

touch

Common sense here. Make sure wherever your client sits is clean and comfortable. When purchasing a sofa or chair for your sales room, pay attention to how comfortable it is. Make sure you dust and clean the sales room as often as needed. A dirty or messy area screams unprofessional.

Have product samples near you so you can let your clients feel the quality. I keep a sample of every product I sell next to me. I show them all to my client, point out the quality and differences and let them touch and examine them. Think about when you go shopping; if you're buying clothes, you want to try them on before you buy, right? Again, common sense.

Fn Conclusion

If you don't know where to start, Google it. There is a science to creating a comfortable sales atmosphere. Visit your favorite luxury store, observe the staff, the colors, the light, how everything makes you feel. And if you're still unsure, hire a professional. Interior decorators know what they're doing and can get you on the right track. I consult with a designer myself (even though she is my sister!) on layout, décor and everything before I make a purchase. She always directs me and helps me make better choices.

Sales sessions can be intimidating if you're new to them. Do the research, make sure your clients are comfortable, be prepared, and you'll find success!

learn more!
Check out this video.

Happy decorating!

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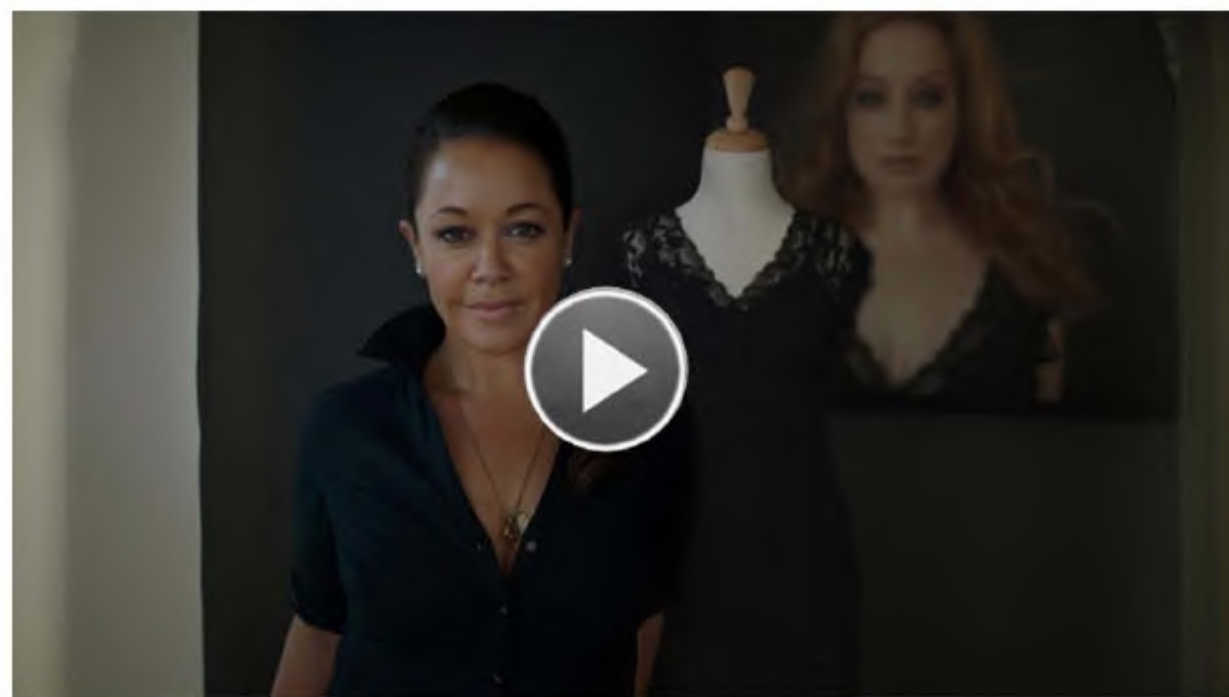


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RINGLIGHTS ROCK

with Michael Corsentino

© Michael Corsentino



What do I mean by an “X-factor” portrait?
X-factor portraits should have an
intangible quality
that leaves people saying, “Wow!”



by Michael Corsentino

When it comes to creating X-factor portraits I want every tool, technique and resource I have at my disposal. The right location, set or backdrop, great lighting and post processing all play an important role in the creation of the final look.

What do I mean by an “X-factor” portrait? X-factor portraits should have an intangible quality that leaves people saying, “Wow!” They should have something different and extra special about them—a coolness, pizzazz or sexiness that’s hard to put your finger on but that you can’t help noticing.

One of my favorite ways to create portraits that achieve this extra-special quality is with the use of lighting. Choosing lights with the best qualities for the task at hand, which modifiers to use to shape and control the light, and the right lighting pattern to use for the look I’m after is definitely determined on a case-by-case basis. Each choice yields different results that impact the feeling of the image one way or the other. Lighting is not a one-size-fits-all game so no one set of choices works for every situation.

However, if it’s a fashion or glamour look I’m after, two words immediately come to mind as one of my top lighting choices—ring light! Also referred to as ring flash, ring lights are a doughnut-shaped light source, typically mounted to the front of the camera with the lens coming through the center.

At least 99.9 percent of the time you’ll hear me screaming from the rooftops about why you should get your speedlights off your cameras as the first step toward better lighting. This is the one time, excluding some event photography situations, where you’ll hear me advocate the use of on-camera flash. Ring lights are just that good!

If you’re a fan, as I am, of Mary Ellen Matthew’s celebrity portraits, created for each week’s broadcast of Saturday Night Live, then you’re familiar with the ring light look. They produce an even, snappy, crisp, specular and at the same time almost shadowless light, save for the tell-tale ring light shadow created around a subject’s body. This shadowy halo is a dead giveaway that a ring light was used. One of the other distinctive ring light qualities is the circular highlight created in a subject’s eyes. Photographers seem to fall into two camps regarding ring lights: They either love them or they hate them. Obviously I fall into the “love ‘em” camp. Because of their even light and near shadowless quality, ring lights also make great fill lights. Used in conjunction with other off-axis lighting they help reduce shadows.

This promotional image for Photographers Byron and Wendy Row was created with a Profoto pack and head ring light fitted with a Wide Soft Reflector.

Granted these are specialty lights, not something I use on every shoot. But when the time is right these babies shine! Fashion magazines and the covers of glamour rags like FHM are rife with images produced using ring lights. I mean I've never actually looked at an issue of FHM, right? Moving on....

The ring light, invented in 1952 by Lester A. Dine was originally intended for dental photography. Today there are basically four different types of ring lights in use, each with different qualities, capabilities, price points and applications. Let's look at each type of ring light and how they fit into our portrait making.

The first types of ring lights are small, flash-tube based lights made by camera manufacturers like Canon and Nikon, used almost exclusively for macro work. There are also small LED versions made by third-party manufacturers generally for the same purpose. Since these lights were designed for macro photography and therefore need to be used at very close range, they're not used for portrait work. I mention them here simply because they are a type of ring light. I'd be remiss if I didn't warn you NOT to buy one of these if a portrait light is what you want. Unless, of course, insect portraits is your thing.

Next up are a class of speedlight light modifiers known as ring flash adapters. These ring-shaped modifiers have no power source of their own but rather fit over your existing hot shoe mounted flash. They use a series of reflectors and diffusers to channel the light from your flash down into the adapters ring, bending the light around the arch of the camera's lens and projecting it forward. While technically some of these adapters are supposed to work in ETTL/TTTL flash modes, I've personally had more success working in manual flash mode.

The third type of ring light is massive leap forward from the last two. While still flash-tube based this third class of ring lights is the pack and head variety. This is top-of-the-food-chain gear with way more power, more features and a price to match. In these systems the ring light is attached to a separate power pack generally available in studio and portable battery-operated versions. Some ring lights in this class also have light modifiers available to help shape and change the quality of light created.

Last are continuous light source ring lights. The great thing about these daylight balanced fluorescent lights in addition to their "what you see is what you get" operation is their price point. They also have a softer quality of light than their flash-based cousins. If you're looking for an inexpensive way to get into the ring light game this is it! These also differ from the other kinds of ring lights in that they're much larger and are typically mounted on a light stand rather than the camera. Some models also come with a dimmer control that is very useful. Because these lights are cool to the touch they can be easily diffused by cutting and affixing diffusion material to the front of the light.



This tell-tale shadowy halo around the subject is a dead giveaway a ring light was used.

"Canary" Backdrop from Drop It Modern

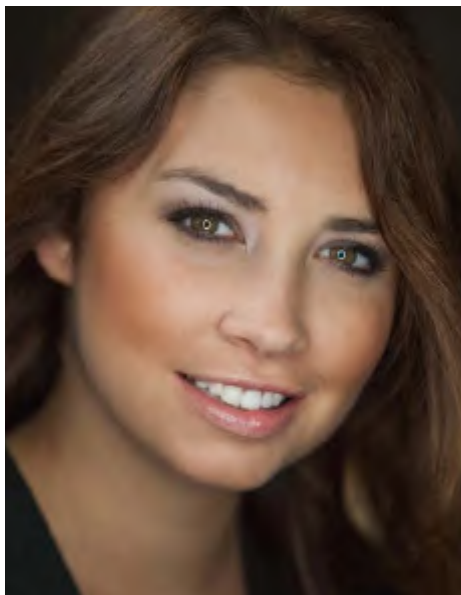
Now that we've covered the four main types of ring lights let's talk about exposure considerations to keep in mind when using them. Typically our lights are off-camera and remain stationary as we move around, in and out, back and forth and side-to-side photographing our subjects. Since ring lights are generally mounted on the camera, operating in a fixed manual power and moving with you as you work it makes sense that your distance from your subject will affect the intensity and power of the light source. In other words—check your exposures often if you're moving around a lot. I prefer to work in manual exposure mode and manual flash exposure mode in all ring light scenarios and use a flash meter to take quick exposure readings. While a flash meter can be mounted on a light stand and moved in and out as needed, it's way more useful to have an assistant take exposure readings for you if you can. This is because they can jump in and out as things change, take a meter reading, tell you what your settings should be and allow you to keep working without breaking the flow. Absent that, you'll be doing a lot of chimping.

The settings that worked for one exposure may now be overexposed if you've moved closer to your subject or underexposed if you've moved further away. You can control this in several ways depending on which type of ring system you're using. With speedlight ring flash adapters you'll use the flash power output and aperture settings to control your flash exposure. The same is true for pack and head systems except the power output for the ring light is controlled on the power pack.

As I've outlined in past issues the rule to keep in mind when working in mixed light situations where ambient light and flash are being combined is as follows: Shutter speed controls the ambient light contributed to the exposure and aperture controls the amount of light from the flash contributed to the exposure.

With continuous light ring lights you have a few more options. Since these are continuous light sources and not flash based you can control your exposure by using shutter speed as well as aperture, the distance of the light from the subject and dimmer control if you have it.

Well there you have it, the A-B-Cs of ring lights! The results speak for themselves and it's up to you to decide whether the look appeals to you. If you're looking to change it up and try something new, give ring lights a try. I think you'll be glad you did. Check out this month's video for a look at each of them. ■



This image was lit with a continuous light ring light. Notice the softer quality of light produced by the use of this fluorescent light source.

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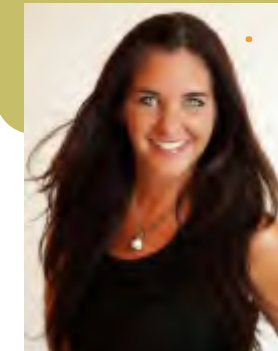
HIGH-END SALES

with Lori Nordstrom





“WANT TO
SELL MORE
WALL PORTRAITS?”



by
Lori Nordstrom

Want to sell more wall portraits? We all have heard the phrase, “Show what you want to sell.” But what does that really mean? Taken literally, it would mean if you want to sell for the wall, you should only show wall portraits, or wall groupings. If you don’t have a studio location, this is hard to do. Even with a studio location, showing lots of wall groupings can require a big investment.

Even though I have a retail studio, I like to work on location. I enjoy being in my clients’ homes, helping them with clothing suggestions and choosing personal props for their session. I also enjoy walking through their homes and making suggestions for where to hang their portraits. By doing this, and then designing for them in PreeVu Software, I can “show” my clients what I want to sell by showing and suggesting wall portraits or wall groupings right on their own walls. This is even more powerful than your client walking into your studio and seeing a wall grouping that showcases another family. I’ve learned that an order appointment in my client’s home, with only a laptop, can lead to very high sales, because the process is customized for every person.

If selling wall portraits is your goal, then set up systems to lead your client through the entire process so they will be ready to purchase for the wall:





THE FIRST PHONE CALL

From the very first phone call, the prospective client should know your specialty is creating custom wall concepts for her home. Ask where they will be hanging their portraits after you've discussed who you will be photographing and the type of session you'll be photographing. Since most people won't have a clue where they're going to hang their portraits, it becomes your opportunity to make suggestions and let them know you'll be asking them questions about their home and decor style. At this time I ask clients (even first-time callers) for some quick snapshots of the walls in their home, any place they'd consider hanging a portrait.

(PreeVu allows you to design wall concepts right on your client's wall. When finished, export the design from PreeVu and email the wall grouping for your client to see before the consultation call.)

THE CONSULTATION CALL

Plan your consultation call a couple days before the session. I ask our clients to send over the images of their walls before this call so I can make suggestions for clothing and locations based on where we will be hanging their portraits. I also want to show them designs I've put together in PreeVu. When at all possible, show your clients the concepts you've built (groupings on their walls that include the frames, without images) before this call so you can discuss each room and the suggestions you've made.

When a client asks if they can do a clothing change during their session, I tell them they'll change clothes for each room we photograph for. This has cut down on needless time we used to spend changing outfits. If we are only decorating one room, it will be one outfit. If we are decorating three rooms, they will bring three outfits and we will photograph three different backgrounds or locations.

If you do not have the client's wall photos yet, remind her again how important it is to have those snapshots so you can design the session based on their decor style and colors. Let her know that as soon as you have those, you'll email over some design concepts so you can discuss the session.

THE SESSION

During the session I like to make comments based on our previous conversations about where my clients will hang their portraits. For example:

"I love her pink dress! It's perfect out here in the flowers and it's going to look so sweet in her room!"

"This grouping is going to look fantastic in your family room! I love the textures of your sweaters and it's all going to look great with the browns and yellows in that room."

I also want to comment on memories and relationships. Look at what's happening right in front of you—put it into words and create a priceless image based on the memories being created through your camera!

Keep the conversation going so Mom feels good about the choices she made for clothing as well as the final presentation of the images in her home. She'll also remember all the things that you say about her family.

Some examples:

Kids: "I love your giggles! Do you two always love each other this much?"

Child and Dad: "Your daddy is such a great dad! You love your daddy snuggles!"

Child and Mom: "I love that he constantly wants to be right beside you. Treasure these moments!"





ORDER APPOINTMENT REMINDER

The day before the order appointment, give your client a call and let her know how excited you are for her to see her images. Remind her of the time you've set and that you'll be helping her make decisions while there. Remind her of the rooms you photographed for and let her know that you've got some wall groupings already put together for her (if you haven't already sent them over).

ORDER APPOINTMENT

If you follow this process, by the time your client gets to the order appointment, she is excited to see her images and ready to buy! You've already discussed where you will be hanging her portraits as well as suggesting sizes, framing and the best placement of the images. The order appointment should be fun and go quickly with this pre-planning in place.

FOLLOW UP

After the order appointment, send your client a hand-written thank you note letting her know what great choices she made and how wonderful her portraits are going to look in her home.

TIP: Give your clients the simple instructions of photographing a wall straight on, and not at an angle. Ask them to have something measurable on or against the wall in the photograph, and measure it (you'll then be able to use this measurement in PreeVu for the exact dimensions of the wall and the images and framing you'll be hanging on the wall for them). Try to show some other elements in the room. If they can't include other elements with the wall shot, ask them to take some additional pictures so you can get an idea of colors and style of the room. I give clients my cell number since this is the easiest and quickest way to get photos to me!

Studio: "Have you thought about where you will hang your portraits?"

Client: "No...I hadn't thought about it. I was thinking we'd get a couple of 5"x7"s and maybe an 8"x10"."

Studio: "Well, we specialize in designing custom wall concepts featuring your images. We offer canvas gallery wraps, traditional framing and really fun, hand-painted framing that we can match to just about any color scheme!"

Client: "Hmmm... that's interesting."

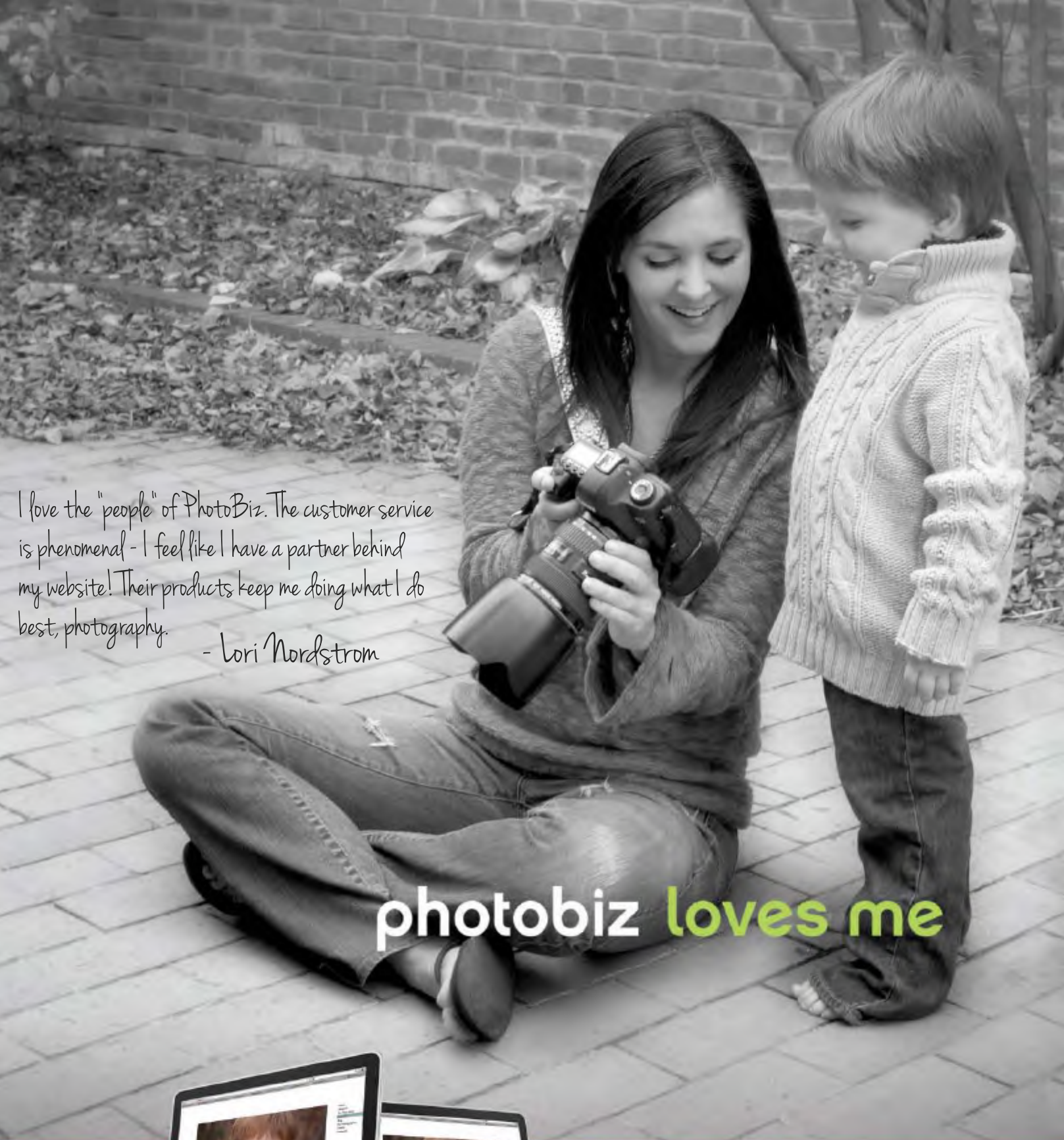
Studio: "What I'll ask you to do is just walk through your home, and any place you'd even consider hanging a portrait, take a snapshot of that wall and send it over to me. You can do this with your phone and text it over to me—super easy!"

Selling for the wall is something that can set your studio apart. The majority of photographers now are selling a disc of images, and they are doing it very cheaply! We are de-valuing what portraits mean! If a picture paints a thousand words, why are we giving it all away for a couple hundred bucks? I've found that giving our clients options allows them to say "yes." They can't say yes if we don't suggest. The best way to suggest is to customize the suggestion by making it all about them, their decor style and their lifestyle.

The only way to do all of this effectively is to get in front of your clients for the sale. Do NOT put your images online for sale. How can your clients make decisions without your help and suggestions? Plan and prepare with them, and then spend time with them showing them their images. Relive the memories you captured and show them how they can re-live them every day, "I want you to be able to enjoy this memory every single day."

If you are trying to make the switch from online sales to in-person sales, the key is to get excited! Let your clients know you have a great new way to show them their images so you can do it all together. I like to say, "I'll hold your hand through the entire process!" When I started using PreeVu, I also let my clients know, "I have a great, new design software that I'm super excited about! I'll be able to play interior designer with you and show you what it will all look like before you make any final decisions."

If you're excited, your clients will be, too. Make a plan for success. You'll be creating something special for your clients AND you'll make more money!



I love the "people" of PhotoBiz. The customer service is phenomenal - I feel like I have a partner behind my website! Their products keep me doing what I do best, photography.
- Lori Nordstrom

photobiz loves me

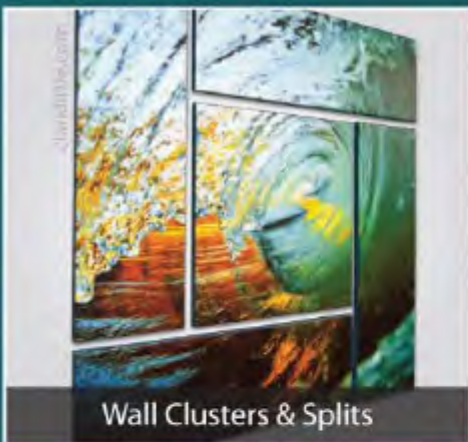
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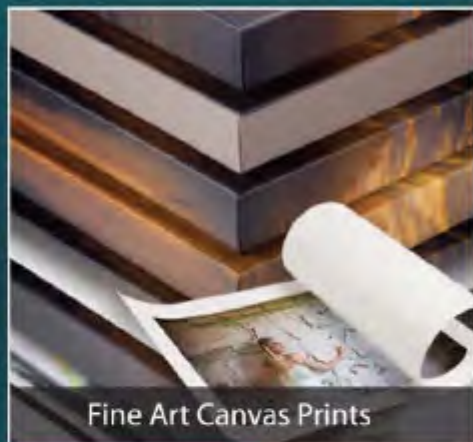
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St. Louis Baby Photography for the Wilsons

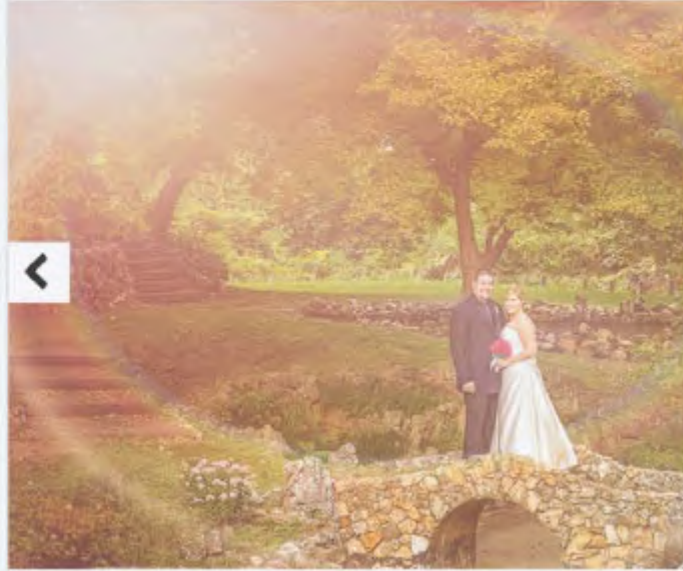


St. Louis Wedding Photography for the Smiths

- WEDDINGS
- ENGAGEMENTS
- MATERNITY
- SENIORS
- FAMILIES
- BABIES

ST. LOUIS WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS

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LATEST BLOGS



St. Louis Senior Photography for Henderson



St. Louis Baby Photography for the Wilsons



St. Louis Wedding Photography for the Smiths

- WEDDINGS
- ENGAGEMENTS
- MATERNITY
- SENIORS
- FAMILIES
- BABIES

ST. LOUIS WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS

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LATEST BLOGS



St. Louis Senior Photography for Henderson



St. Louis Baby Photography for the Wilsons



St. Louis Wedding Photography for the Smiths



St. Louis Senior Photography for Anderson

- WEDDINGS
- ENGAGEMENTS
- MATERNITY
- SENIORS
- FAMILIES
- BABIES

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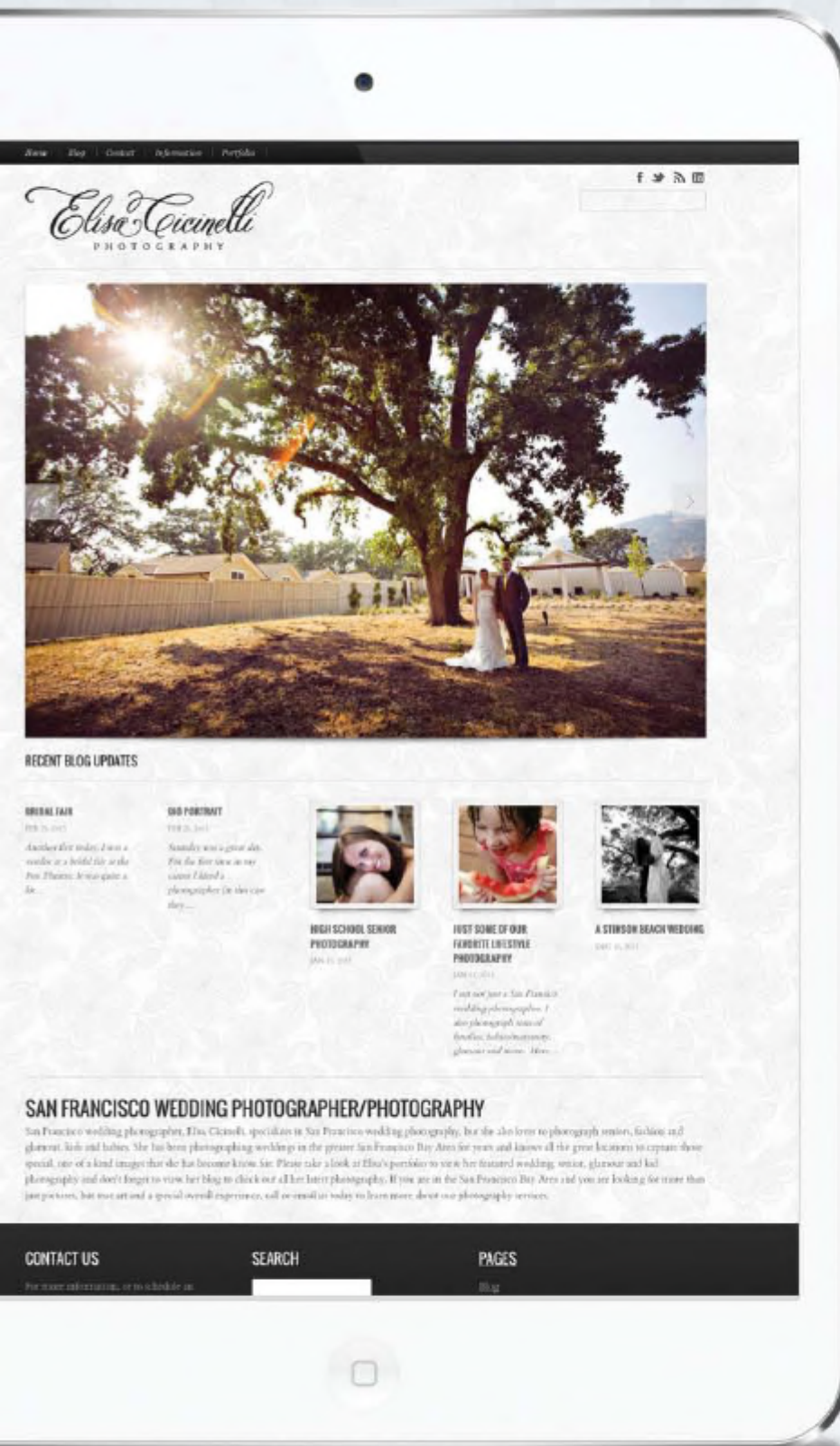
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CONTACT US

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MAKE THE MOST of your WEBSITE by Justen Hong



As a professional photographer your number one marketing and advertising tool, without question, is your website. Potential clients should be able to find it on search engines. It should be viewable on all devices and computers and display properly in all browsers. It should showcase your best work, reflect your image and brand, and it should be user friendly. Following is the recipe for a successful website.

If you have a 100 percent Flash-based website, it is WAY OVERDUE for an upgrade!

Why? First, Flash-based websites are not as search-engine friendly as other platforms. Second, tablets like iPads, smart phones and other devices can't see your website PERIOD. More and more surfing is occurring on these devices; statistics show that by 2014 more Internet surfing will occur on mobile devices than on laptops and desktop computers. This means if someone is searching for a photographer in your area on a mobile device or tablet, and they visit your Flash-based website, they will see nothing and there is a good possibility they will never come back. Your website must be built so all users can see it, no matter what type of device they use.

Have a cohesive look

Does your website look completely different than your blog? It shouldn't. It should be seamless and integrated into your website. Having a website that looks nothing like your blog waters down your brand and your image.

Only show your best images on your homepage

Make sure you are showing your best work on your homepage! Only show images there that you would enter into competition. Many times potential clients won't venture beyond your homepage if they don't see the quality of images they are looking for. I would limit it to 10 or so and remember it is a teaser to get them into your site, if they want to see more, they will go to your portfolio or blog.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

I don't care if you have the greatest website in the world; if your potential clients can't find it, it is useless. There are many ways for clients to find your website: online advertisements, pay-per-clicks, magazine ads, brochures, business cards, etc. With all these avenues, none are more powerful than a highly placed organic search-engine ranking. The algorithms that search engines use to rank websites are extremely complex; however your website's ranking really boils down to two main factors: content and links. Content refers to the readable text/copy, and links refers to incoming links from other websites to yours.

Content: Your content is all the readable text/copy. Essentially, the more times you use your keywords and phrases in your website, search engines will pick up on them and rank them higher for those terms. Your targeted keywords and terms also need to be placed in the proper locations. You need to use them in your meta titles, meta descriptions, page names, header tags (h1s, h2s, h3s, etc.) and body copy.

WARNING: Your content needs to be original! You can't just copy someone else's text as search engines will detect duplicate content and may penalize your website. Don't try to fool the search engines either. For instance, you can't just write your keywords over and over on a page or try to hide them. You can't put white text on a white background; if you do, you run the risk of being removed.

Links: Links are used by search engines similar to votes. The more votes (links) a website has, it tells the search engine that it is more important, therefore ranking higher than other websites with fewer votes. If possible, try to make your incoming links have your keywords in them, as opposed to just linking from an image of your logo. For instance, if I was a St. Louis wedding photographer, the perfect link for me would be "St. Louis wedding photographer Justen Hong." Also, incoming links from highly ranked and topic-related websites are better than those from lower ranked and non-related sites. For instance, a link from a local wedding website to your wedding photography page would be worth more votes than a link from a car dealership. Any incoming links help, some just more than others.

How do you acquire more links? I'm not going to lie, link building is difficult, but you need to be creative. Write an article for a wedding blog (with a link back to your website), join your local chamber of commerce (they always have a web directory), send out press releases (with links), ask other local businesses for a link, or get links from other photographers that you don't compete with.

What is the best website platform or content management system (CMS) for photographers? We work with multiple content management systems, platforms and web languages. Some are better for certain objectives than others, but for photography websites, we feel no other platform is better than WordPress. Why? It allows you to maintain your entire website yourself.

*Elisa's website is based on a theme called Reportage by Graph Paper Press.



If the theme is designed properly, WordPress is probably the most search-engine friendly content management system currently available. Plus there are SEO plugins like All in One SEO and Yoast that can help with your onsite search engine optimization. It allows you to have a seamless look between your website and your blog. It has become very popular so there is a large talent pool of designers and developers using it. This is important because if your designer or developer becomes unavailable, you shouldn't have a difficult time finding a replacement. Finding help can be an issue if you use an obscure or less popular CMS.

It can work with multiple budgets. WordPress itself is FREE, along with tons of themes. There are also inexpensive premium themes you can purchase. If you can't afford a fully custom-designed theme, you should be able to find another cost-effective WordPress solution.

It has a great selection of free plugins. Plugins are functions and features you can add to your site. Example: There is a plugin called Wordbooker. It allows you to tie your Facebook page and your blog together so anytime you add a new blog post it automatically adds a Facebook post with a link back to your blog. It is constantly being updated for security and stability, so as long as you keep it up to date, it is very safe and secure.

OK, you're sold on WordPress now and everything sounds great. A couple things you need to know. WordPress requires the setup of a database. Most hosting providers make this relatively easy to do; however, if you are not technically inclined, it can be a little tricky. Also, not all themes are built equally. WordPress is like any other technology or platform, if it is not built properly you can have issues with it.

WordPress SEO Tips:

Now that you know a little more about WordPress and SEO, and you are serious about increasing your search engine's ranking, go install WordPress' Yoast plugin (or All in One SEO). You will need to understand these plugins so take the time and make that investment. If I wrote an article about all the ins and outs of SEO this article would be a book, but here are some great blog tips to get you started:

- Make sure you are blogging on a regular basis; make it part of your regular workflow so every time you finish a shoot you write a blog post.
- Add your favorite photos and make sure you write a decent-sized, keyword-rich paragraph for each post. And don't limit your blog post to just your photo shoots.
- Write informational articles that establish you as an expert in your field. Remember, your blog is more than just a place to show photos. It should become a large database of keyword rich content and information. Great information and articles have a way of getting linked to, which will help your ranking even more.
- Always remember to use your targeted keywords and phrases throughout your website. For instance, instead of naming your blog post The Anderson Family, which no one would ever search for; title it something like St. Louis Family Photography for the Andersons. Now you have St. Louis Family Photography in your title, which is a phrase that people would search for.
- Set up your blog categories using possible search terms. Instead of just naming your categories: weddings, engagements, babies, etc., name them wedding photography, engagement photography and so on.
- Don't forget to add tags to your post. Tags will help with your onsite search results and SEO. And like everything else, be sure to use your keywords.
- Most importantly, make sure you write a keyword-rich Meta Title and Meta Description. This is what will show up in the search results.

Track Your Leads

Use Google Analytics, or my preference, Google's Webmaster Tool to track your website's activity. You can see what people searched for to find your site, where they are coming from, what they clicked on, etc. More importantly, make sure you are tracking your leads. Always ask people how they found you, as that information will help you in the future to see where to invest your advertising and marketing dollars.

Cost

What should a new WordPress website cost? For a fully custom-designed WordPress theme, you can expect to pay anywhere from \$3,000 to \$6,000+ depending on the functionality and the quality of the designer/design firm. If you plan on using an existing WordPress theme, you can usually find them for a couple hundred dollars or less. If you plan on going this route, I highly recommend that you allocate \$500 to \$1,000 to have a WordPress designer customize it to meet your particular needs and to brand it as much as possible. If you only have a budget for the theme, make sure you select a theme that you like everything about, because it will be extremely difficult for you to change it without WordPress, CSS or PHP programming knowledge.

My advice to anyone making a decision on a new website never changes. Make sure you do it right the first time and, you get what you pay for. Remember, your website is probably the most important investment in your photography business. Think about it this way, I believe the national average for wedding photography is somewhere in the ballpark of \$2,500. That means you could pay off a new higher-end custom WordPress website with just two new weddings. ■



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posing . lighting . shooting

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We will focus on business, business, and more business.
your business plan . pricing and packaging . marketing and advertising
social media . branding . managing costs . contracts
working with and hiring second shooters . sales (in-studio and online)
how to deal with objections from clients . developing referral channels . SEO



seniors demand

VARIETY IN LIGHTING

with Blair Phillips





We have to keep up
with current trends &
always bring something
new to the table



by Blair Phillips

Photographing seniors forces you to stay on top of your game. All the new ideas you implemented last year will simply not be enough. As a senior photographer, we have to keep up with current trends and always bring something new to the table. Photographers talk about being different and adding variety yet seem to find themselves doing the same things over and over. It's not because it's not wanted, but it is simply easier to continue to produce what has always been comfortable. We have all been guilty of coming home from a convention with a wealth of knowledge and motivation, but never really doing anything with it. If you wish to be a successful senior photographer, the market will force you to constantly look for ways to add variety.

***The biggest lack of variety I see
in many photographers
is in their lighting.***

Simply moving your subject onto another background and using the same lighting style does not give you true variety. Forcing yourself to use different lighting sources throughout your senior sessions will add instant change to your work. Think of how boring an album would be with the exact same lighting all the way through. Seniors are not going to get excited without variety. Using several different light sources is a guaranteed way to add diversity to your photography.

A large portion of my business is album sales, but these would not be nearly as prevalent if I shot senior sessions with one light source and one style. I am going to share three lighting sources and the ways I have learned to use them. Let's talk about studio lighting first.



I use a one, two, three, even four light setup every day. It can't stop there; I make myself use all of those lights in different ways. Adding drama to images is easily accomplished using one light and creating heavy light fall-off. Position your light to the far right or left of your subject to create a really directional lighting pattern. Using this with something personal that a senior brought for their session makes a great candidate for one light.

Once you are happy with that lighting situation, it is time to add another element. Leave the one light in the same position and add a reflector on the opposite side to slightly fill in the shadowed side of the face. Move your reflector around the subject for several shots and you will have several more looks.

One of my favorite ways to use one light is to position a softbox directly over a subject's head pointing to the floor. I then put a reflector in their lap tilted up toward their face. This gives a very glamorous lighting look with just one light. The reflector underneath the eyes really brings them to life and packs a punch for a great high-impact look.

Have your senior sit on a stool or chair and lay your one light on the ground pointing up toward their face. The position of your softbox should be 45 degrees either to the left or right of your subject. This will add another level of variety with the use of just one light.

Raise your one light up to shoulder level, stand on a ladder and photograph from a higher vantage point. Have them continue to look up in the direction the light is coming from and you step down from the ladder and photograph from a different perspective. Just by simply changing your photography position, the image will have a completely different feel and attitude. If you find yourself with only one studio light, there should be no excuse as to why you can't add variety to your senior sessions.

Here is where it really starts to get interesting. Introduce one or two more lights to your already existing main light. Position another light behind your subject keeping it just out of the image. That light should be pointed to the subject's backside. This is where you will introduce separation lighting. Power output is one of the most important considerations. Your light behind the subject needs to have a much greater output than your main light. Creating a ratio from front to back is what really makes your client separate from the background. A common mistake with portrait photographers is the constant influx of even lighting. Even lighting is something I avoid. Always try to create a ratio of power with your light sources. The next time you watch a news reporter covering a story on location at night, notice the use of separation lighting. Without it, there is no defining edge that shows depth of subject to background. Whatever you do, stop making excuses and make yourself use your studio lighting in ways that may be out of your comfort zone. Go in on your day off and practice.

ONE LIGHT





ON Z E T E

To be successful with seniors, you need to be able to shoot at any time of the day. Seniors are in love with the scenic, high-contrast outdoor images they see all over Pinterest and Instagram. I got tired of always shooting natural light in the shade because I was intimidated with off-camera flash. It really put limits on my photography and cut down on the variety I was able to offer. You will find harsh lighting conditions throughout the summer months while shooting outdoors. I wanted the look of overpowering the sun, but thought it was way over my head. I took a studio strobe outdoors one day and had it figured out in five minutes. It was so easy and it forever changed my style.

Put your subject's back to the sun and position your light to camera right or left about five feet from your subject as your main light. Take a spot meter reading of the darkest part of the sky you can find. Adjust your aperture and shutter speed so the sky will be perfectly exposed and don't touch your camera settings from there. Turn your light on and set the output to half power. Take a test shot with your strobe firing on your subject. If the subject is too bright, simply reduce the power output of your light. If the subject is too dark, do the opposite. By achieving perfect exposure of the sky, that would leave your subject underexposed as well. Balancing your subject and background is really quite simple and often intimidating. I am using a battery pack to power my strobe and a light cart that we fabricate that allows me to not have to rely on an assistant or carry anything.

Have you ever stumbled upon a great idea by way of a misfortune? I was on the way to a wedding one day and realized my video light was broken. I heavily relied on the use of my video light to create moody and romantic images at night of my brides and grooms. I swung by a home improvement store and bought a 100 watt household light bulb. That light bulb went in my studio strobe and became a bright modeling light. Realizing I could now have 100 watts of continuous lighting to create images in the dark that would allow me to maintain ambient lighting was empowering. That added another element I could use on my senior sessions.

If I want to shoot at night in a downtown area and still maintain all the ambient lighting from the buildings and street lights, this is where continuous lighting comes into play. You have to match your additive light source to the same as the ambient light in the background. Simply turn your transmitter off so the light will not flash and use only the modeling to light your senior. I usually photograph this technique at 1600 ISO, f/2.8, and 1/60th of a second. Diversifying your use of lighting is what will separate you from the average Joe. You can continue to make excuses or force yourself to do something different and add a lot of variety. Lighting can be altered by one simple adjustment,

so don't be afraid to give it a try.

learn more!
Check out this video.

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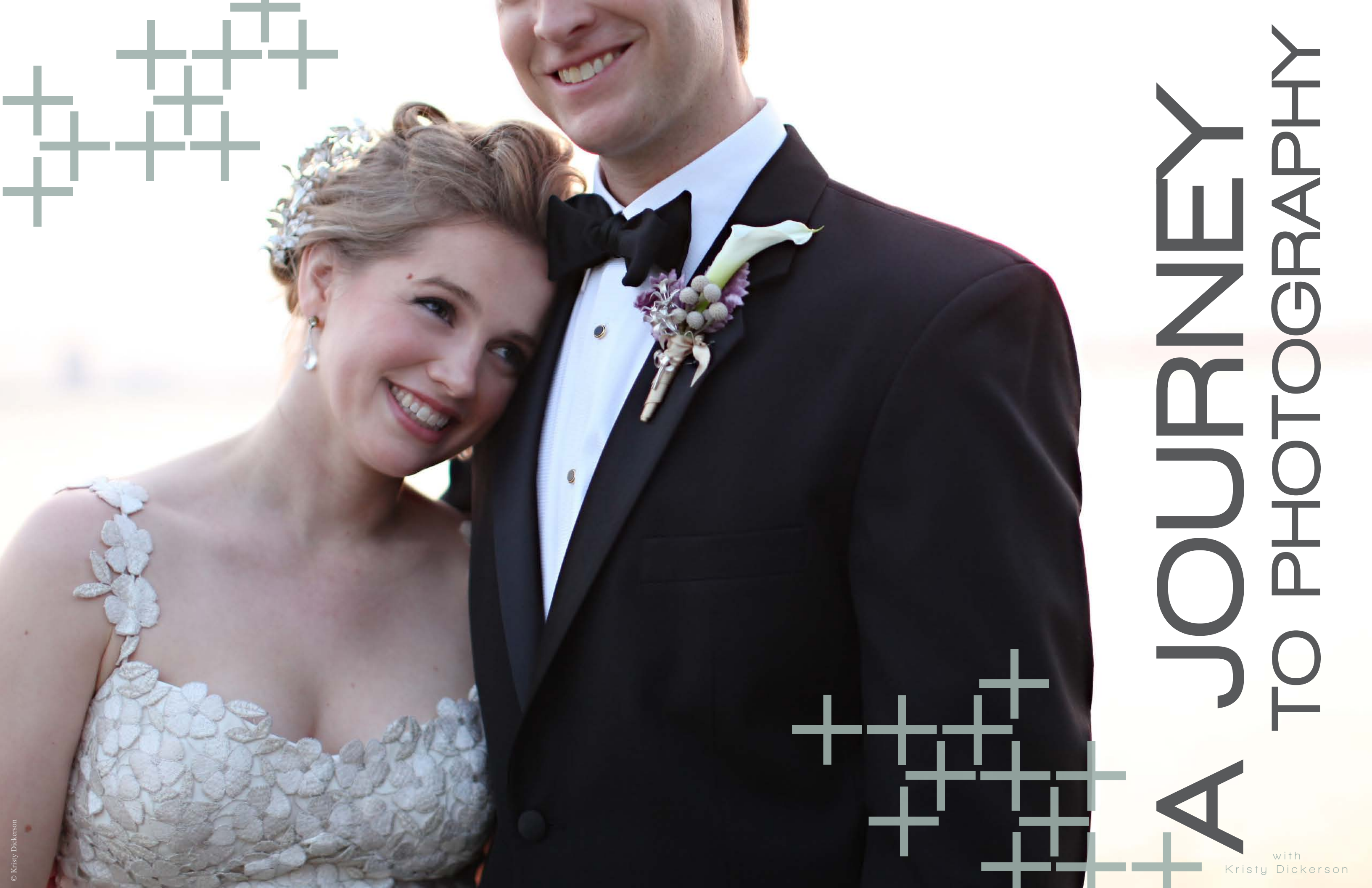
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A JOURNEY TO PHOTOGRAPHY

with
Kristy Dickerson

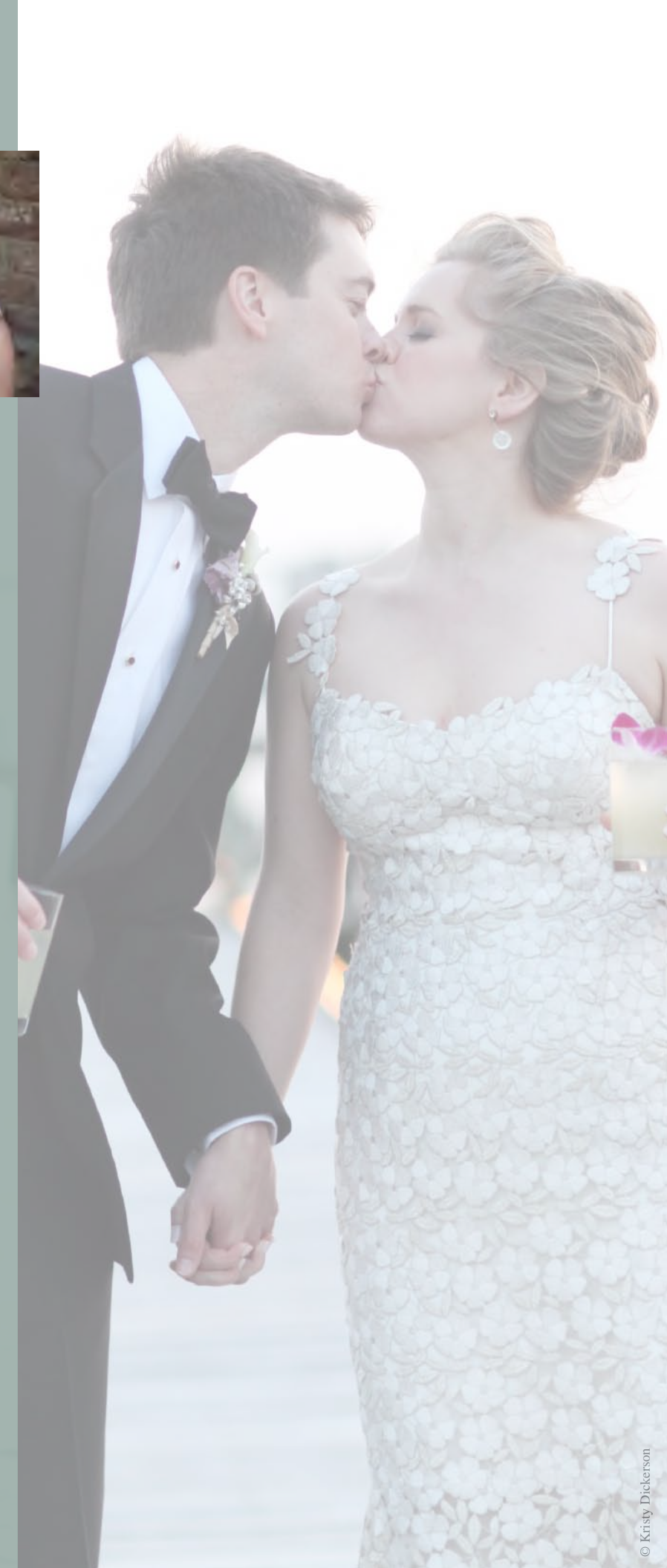


with
Kristy Dickerson

I don't talk about this much. I have only shared one personal blog post and otherwise never talk about. We all have struggles, whether financial, relationships, health or a million other things. No matter how big or small, I rest my worries and faith on the one belief that life is short, that we are blessed and today we are all together. Did I always think this way? No, but I think life's journey has taught me some lessons that push me to love deeper, laugh longer and be thankful.

Okay so here is my story. My degree is in business finance with a minor in management. I worked at a local bank, and looking back at this point in my life I was content. I was going through the motions of life. One day this cute guy came in to the bank and I noticed he was flirting with me. I quickly brushed him off. The next day he came again and asked me to get coffee sometime. I told him I didn't drink coffee, but let's be real, it ran through my veins. Yes, he came back again, and as the saying goes...the rest is history.

We dated for only a month before we got engaged! Who does that? On top of that we set a date to get married three months later! October of 2006 we were married. While at the wedding I made a comment to Jeremy that the wedding photographer has such a fun job. If you stop reading now you might think you have heard this story before.





After the wedding I thought nothing more about being a photographer. It was an exciting time for us; moving in and establishing our lives together. January of 2007, only four months later, Jeremy developed a severe headache. It was so bad it was making him sick. After a short doctor's visit, they sent him home with migraine medicine. On January 22nd at midnight he woke me up and said Kristy, help. The rest happened in slow motion.

I looked over and he was having a seizure and was unresponsive. I called 911 and it felt like a million years before they arrived. Upon arriving at the hospital he somewhat came to but was seizing every couple of minutes. They quickly took him back for an MRI. Within minutes the doctor came out and I will never forget her words, "Mrs. Dickerson, I am really sorry but your husband's brain is bleeding and at this point we don't know if it can be stopped. We have a helicopter en route and will transfer him to the closest neurology unit." She said, "Say your goodbyes and meet him there." I was numb. I don't think I was fully processing the situation.

I met him at the neurology unit and the doctor said, "You have two options. Try to stop the bleeding with surgery or try to medicate and see if it will stop on its own. I was clueless. The only answer I could mumble was just to save him. The area in his brain that was hemorrhaging controlled his speech, right side movement and fine motor skills. There was a good chance all of this would be damaged by the surgery and he might end up a vegetable. At this point he was still having seizures, could hardly talk, and things were certainly not getting better. Between the doctor, Jeremy's mom and me, we made a decision to wait it out.

Thank God his brain stopped bleeding. The damage was done and they sent him home to recover. I went home to take care of this man that I married only four months ago. He was seizing at least a couple times an hour, his speech was still a little slurred, and the right side of his body wasn't functioning normally. We went from figuring out how to share toothpaste to me trying to keep him alive. At this point they thought the brain hemorrhage was either related to stress or an arteriovenous malformation (a congenital malformation of blood vessels).

Fast-forward six weeks. Our "normal" was being adjusted and Jeremy said his leg was hurting; it felt like he had a pulled muscle on the back of his calf. Call me the overly paranoid wife, but I immediately loaded him up and headed to the emergency room. Within an hour they had him strapped down to a bed telling him not to move, that he had blood clots in his leg that could dislodge and go to his heart and kill him. Talk about the longest night of our lives. The next morning they inserted a vena cava filter into his main artery so if it did dislodge hopefully it would break up and dilute the impact.

Normally a patient with a blood clot would be treated with blood thinners, but remember six weeks prior he had had a brain hemorrhage. Do you treat the clot and risk his brain bleeding again or do you just wait and pray that somehow this blood clot will disappear? Typically, I would have leaned on medical advice, but no could tell us what to do.

They sent us home, still having focal seizures from the brain hemorrhage, and his leg swelling like crazy from the blockage. After seeing doctor after doctor we found this young doctor at Emory University who determined Jeremy was too young (28) to have all this going on. The following week we got a call to come into her office. She said, "I know what's going on. You have a rare blood clotting disorder called Factor Five Leiden Homozygous." Her conclusion was that he had a blood clot in his brain that busted and then another one in his leg. Why did he have 28 perfect years without any signs she did not know, but her immediate recommendation was to start blood thinners. It was still risky but we had no other plan. The recovery was long. The seizure medicine started working and life slowly started to return to "normal." My weeks were filled with transporting Jeremy to doctor appointments, driving him to and from work, monitoring medicines and INR. I was depressed and so was he. Here he was this young, active, successful man and his whole world as he knew it was shattered.

Our life was sped up. Normally six months into marriage you are thinking about goals and dreams. All we could think about was living and what if this and what if that. Calling me a paranoid wife would be an understatement. We had talks that most newlyweds wouldn't dream of having. Then I became pregnant. At that moment it was the best thing that could have happened to both of us. Was I scared? Yes. Did I have thoughts about having to raise a baby on my own? Yes, but for once in our life together we were focusing on something else besides Jeremy's sickness. We were going to the doctor to hear a heartbeat instead of a game plan to recovery. I whole-heartedly believe that my getting pregnant saved us both.

Jeremy's seizures stopped, his blood clot in his leg dissolved, and at year one the blood on the brain had dissipated. He would have to be on blood thinners for the rest of his life, which was risky in itself, but I remember the doctor saying, "I promise we will get you back to a 'normal' life."

Where did photography come into the picture? During all this mess I picked up a camera. I started documenting life. "Life is short" was an understatement to us. I documented our happiness, my baby bump, and Jeremy. This was physical proof to me that we were okay. We were going to be okay. After having our first son, this knack for photography turned into a passion. I didn't want to return to the corporate world so I started taking photography classes. I reached out to my wedding photographer, took private lessons, carried bags and looked for training everywhere I could. I started with local classes and then I got introduced to photography associations, workshops, instructors and this whole photography industry. I started my business in 2009. To me, weddings brought back this happy time in our lives and the meaning of capturing and documenting it was so important to me. It was purposeful, and it fed my soul.

While traveling to workshops across the country I realized there were a million other people like myself, wanting to learn but with no easy way to connect with instructors. I felt a calling and embarked on this journey to help others like myself find quality education. Not that I didn't already have enough on my plate, right? FisheyeConnect was born in 2010 and, what started as a way to help new photographers has become a passion to not only help aspiring photographers but to help instructors manage and market their events.



Why did we get married so fast? Not sure, but chances are that Jeremy would have been home alone and doctors said he wouldn't have made it. Why did I get pregnant when I did? Why did my path bring me across certain people? Why, why, why?

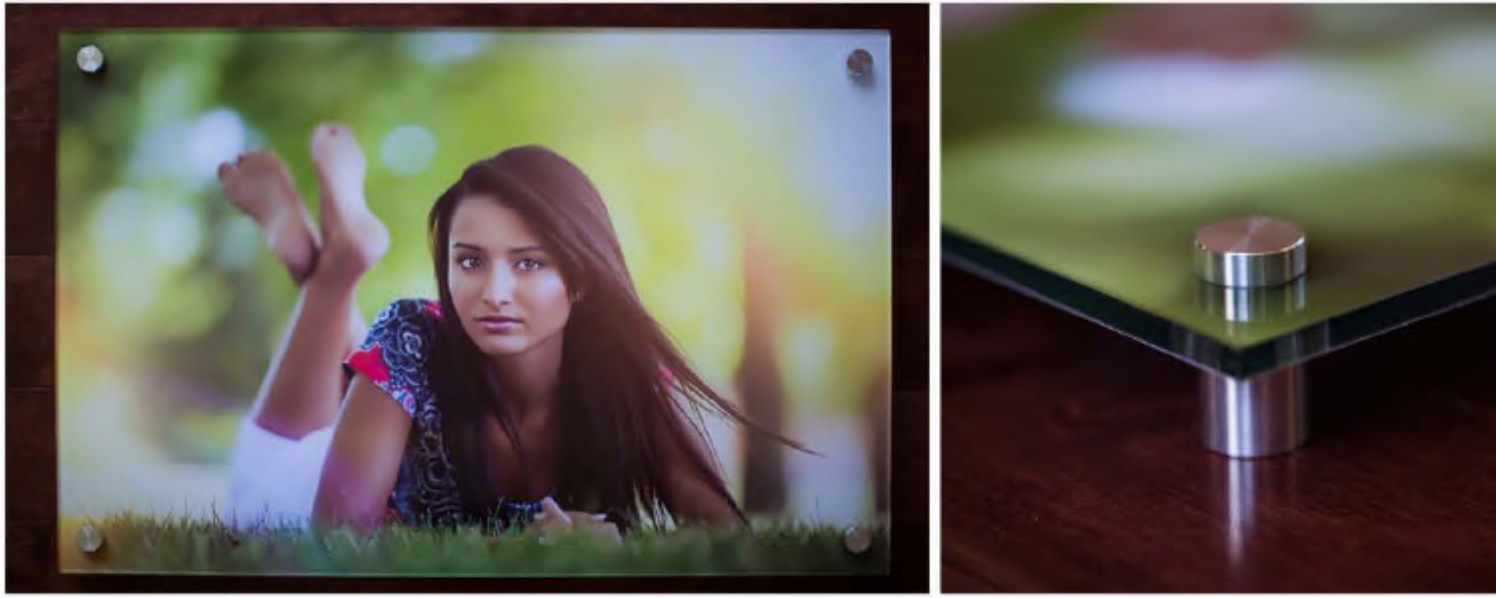
Through all these heartaches, trials and tears I have found me. Looking back, I wouldn't change a thing. Our experiences and relationships help to shape us. Ask me seven years ago if this would be my story and journey to being a photographer, being blessed to meet so many talented artists through FisheyeConnect, being a mom and wife...I would have called you crazy. Does Jeremy still have this condition? Yes, and it is serious; if he gets dehydrated he can throw a blood clot. I choose to live in the moments, to push my worries aside (full disclosure is not always easy), and chase my dreams. None of us are guaranteed tomorrow. We all have a story. I am slowly realizing that success to me is not necessarily the end goal, but the day-to-day journey, getting me there, loving, connecting and helping others along the way. ■

XOXO,
KD

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KEYS TO SUCCESS

with Dave Cross



by Dave Cross

Using keyboard shortcuts seems to be a personal thing: Some people use shortcuts all the time while others only use menus. My recommendation is if you're not using keyboard shortcuts you should be, as they can save a ton of time. However, I also understand that it's hard to learn and remember a lot of shortcuts—so don't. You can gradually ease into using the keyboard by starting with a few essential shortcuts and adding more over time.

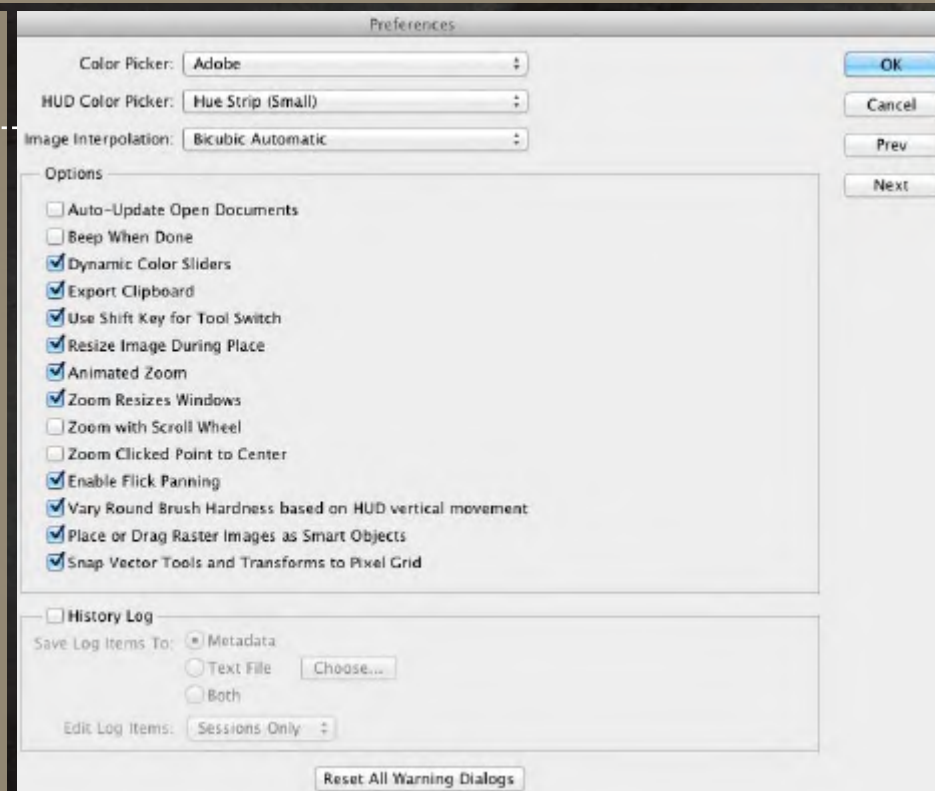
So why bother using keyboard shortcuts? Why not just use the menus and the toolbox? Let's look at a simple example. Imagine you use your mouse to click on the Add layer Mask button at the bottom of the layers panel. Then you move over to the toolbox to click on the Brush tool, go to the bottom of the toolbox to make black your foreground color before moving back to the image to paint on the mask over the right edge of the photo. Then you head back to the toolbox to select the Move tool before returning to mask in the Layers panel once again. That's a lot of real estate to cover!

To do the same thing using the keyboard (after adding the layer mask), press B for the Brush tool, D for default colors, paint, then press V for the Move tool. Much faster and you only had to remember three keys. And other than remembering that it's V for moVe, the other single keys are pretty logical.

And that's really the point here. I'm not suggesting you immediately attempt to memorize every keyboard shortcut for every tool and menu command. Rather I'm recommending that you look at the tools you use most and learn the single letter keys to activate those tools. Many of the most commonly used tools have logical letters such as M for Marquee, C for Crop, L for Lasso, T for Type, etc., so they're pretty easy to remember.



For tools such as the Lasso set of tools, press the letter (in this case L) to activate the current Lasso; then press Shift and the letter to toggle through the other tools in the same set. This is a preference you can change if you want: In General Preferences, turn off the setting Use Shift Key for Tool Switch. Then to toggle through the tools in a set, just press the letter repeatedly.



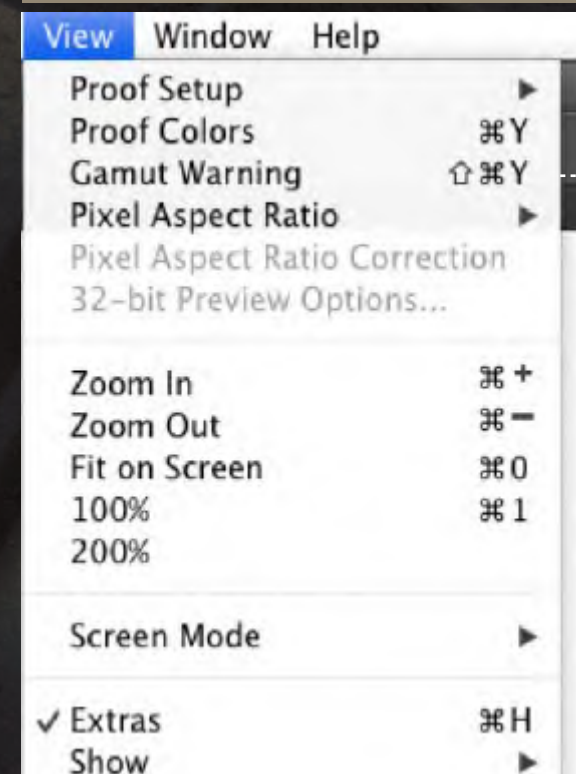
There's one other way to use these single-letter tool shortcuts, and that's to temporarily activate a tool. Here's how it works: If you press the letter for a tool, you'll switch to that tool; then you have to press a different letter to switch to another tool. If you press and hold the letter for a tool, that tool will only be activated for as long as you hold down that key. For example if you were using the Clone Stamp tool and wanted to temporarily switch to the Healing Brush, you'd press and hold down the J key. Once finished with the Healing Brush, let go of J to return to the Clone Stamp tool.

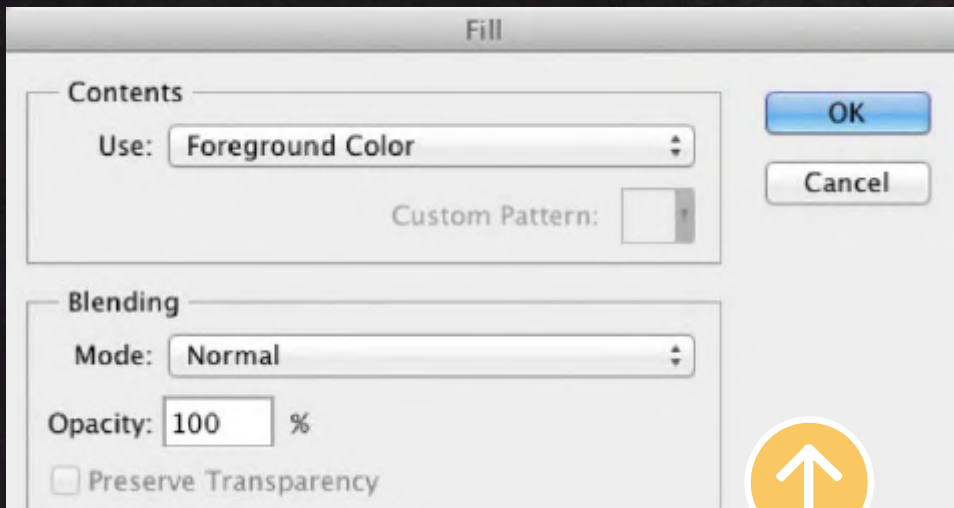
Here's another useful shortcut that's built in to any painting tool: Hold down Option (PC: Alt) to temporarily activate the Eyedropper. Once you've chosen a color, let go of the key to go back to painting.

Think of some other functions and menu commands you use regularly and start to learn those shortcuts. For example, to navigate around your document do you head over to the toolbox, click on the Zoom tool, go back to your image and click to zoom in? Instead, with any tool active, you could press Command + (PC: Control +) to zoom in and Command - (PC: Control -) to zoom out. Or you could press and hold the Z key to temporarily activate and use the Zoom tool. And rather than using the scroll bars or clicking on the Hand tool to scroll to a different part of your photo, press the Spacebar to temporarily activate the Hand tool. When you let go of the Spacebar you'll return to whatever tool you were using. (As you might expect, the Spacebar shortcut does not work when you're using the Type tool).



Assuming you work with layers, a very common command is to duplicate either an entire layer or a selected area to a new layer. Pressing Command J (PC: Control J) will "jump" the layer or selected pixels to a new layer. There are many more keyboard shortcuts for working with layers, but this is the one I would start with.



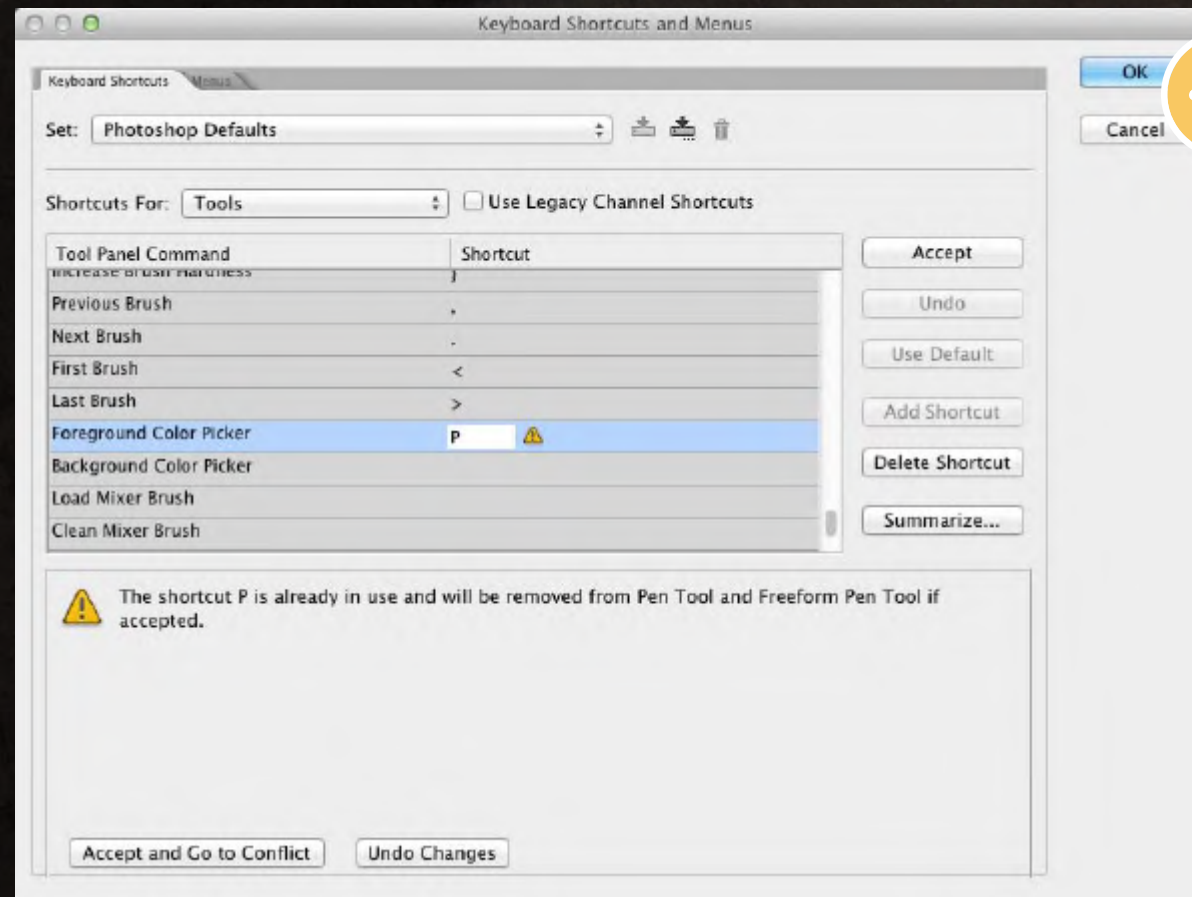


Here's another example of a shortcut I use often: Make a rectangular selection and fill it with a color. Press M for the Marquee tool, make your selection and press a shortcut to fill that selection. Option Delete (PC: Alt Backspace) will fill with the current Foreground color, while Command Delete (PC: Control Backspace) will fill with the background color. Granted, these are a little more challenging than the other shortcuts we've looked at so you could always just go with one shortcut: Shift F5 to open the Fill dialog. Then choose to fill with the Foreground, Background, a Pattern, Content Aware, a specific color, Black, White or 50% Gray.

There are also a set of useful shortcuts when painting on a mask: Press X to swap between the foreground and background colors (black and white); press [to make your brush size smaller and] to increase your brush size. Just by remembering these few shortcuts you can save a ton of time while painting on masks. And if you're really adventurous, there are keyboard shortcuts to switch the brush blend mode between Normal and Overlay (a very common task when working with masks): Press Shift Option O (PC: Shift Alt O) for Overlay and Shift Option N (PC: Shift Alt N) for Normal. Bonus: These shortcuts also work for Layer blend modes.

I mentioned this in a previous column but it's worth repeating: It's also possible to customize keyboard shortcuts. Adobe allocated shortcuts to many functions, but there may not be a shortcut for a function that you use all the time. You can apply shortcuts to just about any function (menus, panel menus and tools) using Edit>Keyboard Shortcuts. Find the function to which you want to add a shortcut, then click beside that function. Enter the shortcut that you'd like to use and it will "warn" you if that shortcut is in use. If it is, you'll have to decide whether you want to accept that change.

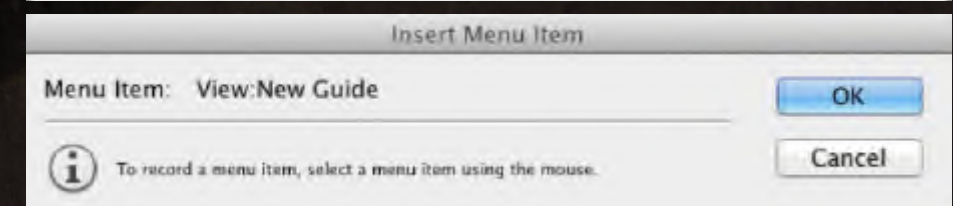
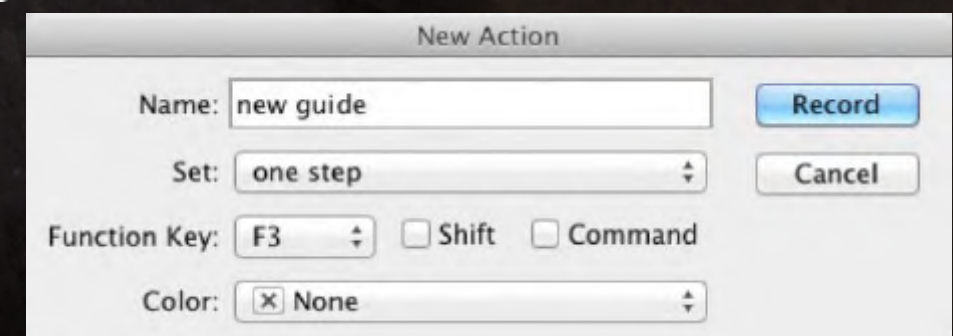
Hint: If you look around, you can probably find shortcuts that are currently allocated to functions that you never use. You can "re-purpose" those shortcuts and use them for functions you use all the time.



Here's an example: I wanted to give a single letter shortcut to the Color Picker. So I went to Edit>Keyboard Shortcuts, to tools and scrolled down until I found Foreground Color Picker. I chose P as my shortcut and was warned, "The shortcut P is already in use and will be removed from the Pen tool and Freeform Pen tool if accepted." My thought was that I use the Color Picker way more than the Pen tool, so I was happy to accept that change. Now of course, if you're a big-time Pen user, don't make that change, but that's the thought process I would use to decide about changing shortcuts

There's one other way to allocate a shortcut to a function in Photoshop: by recording an Action. Actions can be accessed using the function keys (F1 through F15). Let's say we want to give a keyboard shortcut to New Guide, but can't find a key combination that works (or isn't spoken for). Create a new Action, choose an F-Key shortcut and start recording. From the Action panel pop-up menu, choose Insert Menu Item and then choose the function you want to record. Stop recording. From now on press the F-Key to access the New Guide command.

Bonus: You can use F1 through F15, and then start adding in the Shift and/or Command (PC: Control) keys, giving you lots of opportunities to create shortcuts through Actions.





Top 12 Keyboard Shortcuts

- +Command Duplicate Layer:**
Command J (PC: Control J)
- +Default colors:** *D*
- +Swap Colors:** *X*
- +Change Brush size:**
Bracket keys ([= smaller,] = larger)
- +Change the Opacity of a Layer or Tool:**
Press 1-9 for 10-90%. Press 0 for 100%
- +Move tool:**
V or press and hold Command (PC: Control)
- +Hand tool:**
H or press and hold Spacebar to scroll
- +Zoom in and out:**
Command + and - (PC: Control + and -)
- +Zoom tool:**
Press and hold Z or Command and Spacebar (PC: Control and Spacebar)
- +Confirm type:**
Press Enter or Command Return (PC: Control Return) on a laptop
- +Re-apply the last filter (change settings):**
Command Option F (PC: Control Alt F)
- +Context-sensitive menu:**
Right click for a menu of choices that relate to your current tool

Some people find it hard to remember keyboard shortcuts. Part of the problem might be that they're trying to remember too many. That's why I recommend you start by thinking of three or four tools you use most and remember the single letter key for those tools. If you can't remember the key, hover over the tool to see the letter and then press it. Yes, that will take longer at first, but the more you do it, the more quickly you'll remember the keys and save time.

As you start to remember a few tool shortcuts, do the same thing with menu commands: When you head to a menu to choose a command, take note of the keyboard equivalent that appears beside the name of the command. Then release the menu and press the keyboard shortcut for the command you want to use. Again, it's going to take you a little longer at first each time you do that, but gradually it will start to sink in and before you know it you'll be pressing shortcuts like the pros! ■



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WEDDING ALBUMS 101

with Laurin Thienes





From the very start of my interest in wedding photography, my mindset has always been to include an album in my packages. My first weddings and packages were shot with film and my only options to get the images easily into my client's hands were by selling wall portraits and wedding albums. Giving away negatives was never an option—the average client could not easily print 120 film so we produced full wedding albums. Mind you, these albums were not the awesome flush mount and press-printed books we have today. No, these were books with gold tipped, snap-in pages and that awful oval cutout on the cover. However, at the time, that was what was available and the clients still saw the albums as a way for the story to be told. You might look back today and think how insanely tacky the older albums were, but what you are forgetting is the fact that you are still looking back at the albums. Whether your album, your parent's, or your grandparent's, you are viewing family heirlooms years down the road and the wedding album you include in your packages today is your couple's first family heirloom.

Fast forward a few short years and it is amazing what can change. I remember vividly when I saw my first flush-mount album—a relatively basic 10"x10" album that approached a \$1,000 starting point. Luckily, today that same album wholesales for a third of that original price. The mindset should not change though—including albums in your packages and as add-ons is a way to set yourself apart from the pack and today there are many different options to explore that are diverse enough to be unique to your studio. With so many different album manufacturers you could look for days for the right product, but the trick is to decide what you are going for before just randomly searching. If you consider your typical client to be fashionably trendy, you might lean toward album companies that offer metal or acrylic covers, or leathers in funky colors. You can also look to what types of paper are offered on the inside—art paper, photographic paper or metallic. If your studio gravitates toward the environmentally green crowd, there are multiple album companies offering “green” albums. Or if your clientele is a little more traditional, perhaps they are looking for a fusion-style album that combines an adhered-mat style page with a flush-mount style album. Really, the sky is the limit and there are products unique enough for everyone to find styles that they like. The key is to find products that you love and that represent you as a brand.

by Laurin Thienes

Ask yourself these questions over and over until you have an answer: What defines you as a photographer? Is there a definition to what makes your studio you? And the most important: What is your brand? In previous articles I have explored ways you can define some of these questions. One aspect I have never touched on is how including albums in your product offerings will help you set yourself apart and truly define you as a photographer.

Is your brand like McDonalds? Or is it like Morton's Steakhouse? If you identify with the former, you likely fall into the shoot-and-burn category. I am here to tell you to **KNOCK IT OFF**. It's time to raise the bar—both for yourself and for your clients. You are overlooking the biggest way to set yourself apart. Why are you not sending every couple you photograph out the door with a stunning album? It has always been amazing to me the number of photographers that do not include albums in their packages or even offer them as part of their product lines. The simple truth is there is not a better way to display your ability as a storyteller than with a top-tiered wedding album. If including albums in your packages scares you—it is time to take that next step. Your images and clients demand it.





Manufacturers

It is important to provide albums that the average bride and groom cannot get on their own. We have seen companies such as Blurb, Shutterfly and even Apple get into the cheap press-printed album market. I will even concede that these are fun books to have around on a personal level, but I could never give an album like this to a client because it would not represent my brand. Instead a great entry-level book is offered by many of the professional print labs. Their press-printed books offer a great level of quality that is also a good starting point for some of your smaller packages.

Here are a few album manufacturers I have had the opportunity to work directly with as a starting point when looking for new products; each offers something unique.

Jorgensen Albums – <http://jorgensenalbums.com>

Queensberry – <http://queensberryalbums.com>

Signature Collection Albums – <http://www.scalbums.com>

Vision Art – <https://www.visionart.com>

Renaissance – <http://www.renaissancealbums.com>



design

Quality design work doesn't come naturally to many photographers and that is normal, but it need not be scary. There are many solutions that make offering albums very simple. Many of the album manufacturers offer design services and there are some great software products like Fundy Album Builder to help you create great and classy designs. The goal is to tell a story and by loosely following these basic tips you can create great album designs:

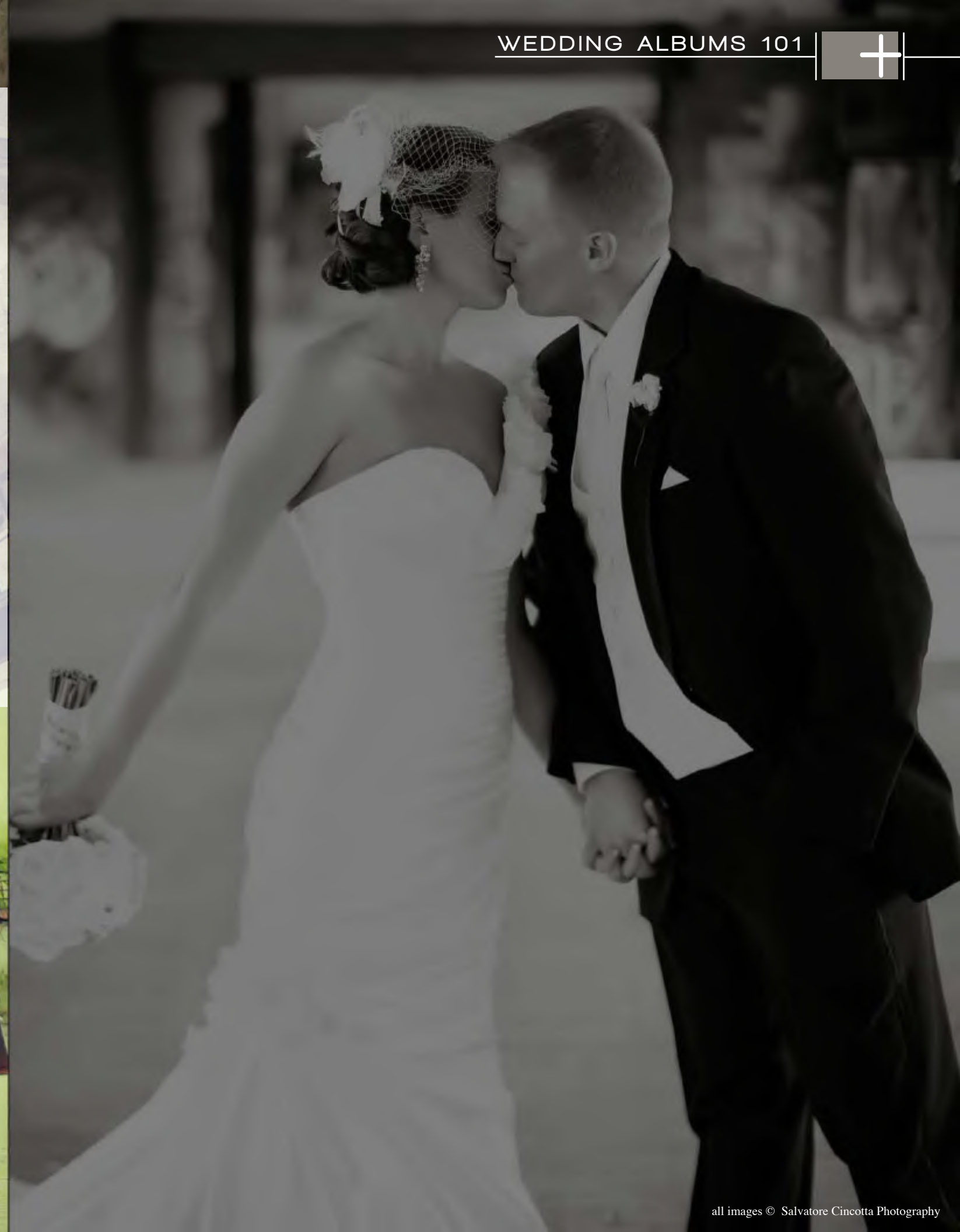
I like to start albums on the left side so when the client opens the album they are greeted with one large image of themselves, and I like to close the album in the following manner. (Jen, pls ask Laurin if he meant to say "...in the same manner, or in a similar manner, since nothing followed that explained how to close the album.)

Stay in chronological order. Sometimes you have to cheat a little, which is okay but, for example, make sure the first kiss is after the bride walks down the aisle, or the first dance images are placed during the part of the design dedicated to the reception.

Look at each two-page spread as one canvas so you are able to tell the story fully from left to right. As a general rule, use one larger image and two to four smaller images per two-page spread.

In a 30-page album, select 8-10 images from the following categories: Getting Ready, Ceremony, Bridal Party/Family, Creatives, and Reception. This leads to a balanced story throughout the day. Adjust the number accordingly if there are aspects of the day that were covered more thoroughly.

Remember less is more. Fewer "great" photos will make a better album than many "good" photos.



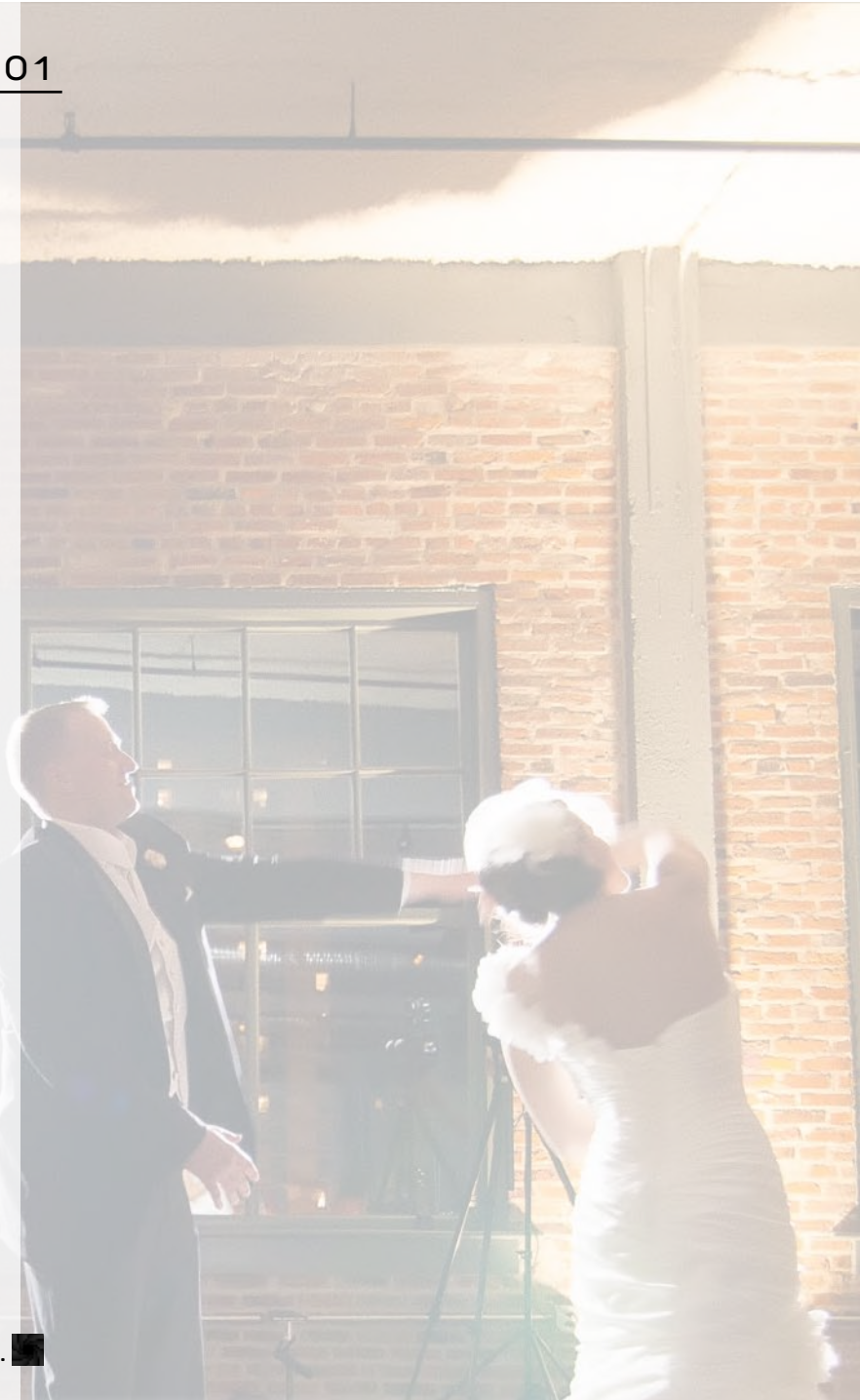


(define your style)

With the WPPI convention quickly approaching, now is a great time to think about introducing wedding albums into your packages. The tradeshow is a great way to see album manufacturers' full product lines and to touch, see and feel. It can be overwhelming but if you have an idea of what you like or are looking for, then it is as good a time as any. I talk to many studios that, while they already offer albums, have never landed on one product that they love because they have never defined for themselves what they are looking for. They end up jumping from one company to another.

Quality wedding albums will help define your studio & help differentiate your work from others.

Next time you think about just handing a disk over to the client and walking away, be conscious of how much better your brand would be represented if you were instead, delivering their next family heirloom. ■



PHOTOGRAPHERS

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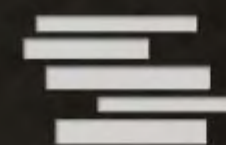
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BETTERQUALITY

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THE SIGNATURE
COLLECTION

by Salvatore Cinotta



PARTNERSHIPS **PROMOTIONS**

with Skip Cohen

with Skip Cohen



“Some people fold after making one timid request.

They quit too soon.

Keep asking until you find the answers.

In sales there are usually four or five no's
before you get a yes.”

-Jack Canfield



by Skip Cohen

Business is definitely getting better. I'm hearing a lot of optimistic comments from photographers and seeing a positive change in different markets, but things are still tough. Whether business is good or bad, you need to constantly think about ways to make it stronger. You need to protect that investment you've made in your business, and let's not forget your education.

In tough times, especially in this “perfect storm” economy we've been in for the last few years, we look harder at everything that costs us money and time. We discover ways to be more efficient, and find things we should have been doing all along.

Let's start with your potential partners out there. You've been struggling by yourself to build your business for too long. No matter what your specialty, there are many possible partnerships with key vendors in your community. Let's use wedding photographers for example and something as simple as a postcard mailer.

I've written a lot about direct mail, but let's go into a little more detail. Let's assume you've been thinking about designing a postcard for a direct mail campaign for the upcoming wedding season. You've decided to go with an oversized postcard, but the cost to design, print and mail out 10,000 to prospects within a 50 to 100-mile radius is killing you. Let's cut that cost by a factor of four and save 75 percent of what you were stressing about spending!

Let's bring three partners into the mailing. Just pick any three of the following: florist, limo, travel agency, hotel, bridal salon, wedding planner, tuxedo shop, caterer, bakery or talent rep for a band. All three need to hit the same target, but instead of each struggling on its own, there's an incredible potential for a partnership.

Notice the one category that's missing? It's the one everybody always forgets—OTHER PHOTOGRAPHERS! Your strongest allies to grow awareness in your community are often your competitors. I'm not suggesting you've got to buy a boat together, just work to develop the same awareness within your target audience.

From the wedding perspective, there are only so many weekends a year you can work before your life implodes and you have no life. You need to build relationships with other photographers you respect both in terms of skill and integrity. Another consideration is to work with other photographers who have different specialties. A wedding photographer, children's shooter and family portrait artist would make an outstanding team to stimulate interest in professional photography in any community.

Here's a prime example from my buddy, Bruce Berg, in Oregon. He's very open about the success of the Lane County Children's Contest that takes place the first quarter of every year. It's put together and supported by three different studios, all competitors, and has been ongoing for almost 30 years! Over the years it has brought in almost \$40,000 in additional revenue for Bruce; he's very open when he talks about it in his posts. He wrote in a guest post recently:

“Joining with your competitors may seem destructive, but there is plenty of business to share. Besides sharing costs, we agree on the base entry price of \$45, which includes entry into the contest, display at a local mall for three weeks and a Facebook image. Sure, we're competitors, but we want each other to be successful, too. Having just one photographer would be too self-promoting to gather all the community support we have.”

I'm tired of photographers not considering a project simply because they don't have the funding. There are so many opportunities for you to share costs with other vendors, but you have to be creative.

Here are more ideas for promotions you could set up in your community:

“There are so many
ways to fail
but only one way
to succeed:
NEVER GIVE UP!”

-Johni Pangalila

Mother's Day is only three months away. There isn't a grandmother on the planet who doesn't complain about not having enough pictures of her kids and grandchildren. Get together with a florist and another local venue and come up with the ultimate Mother's Day present: a portrait, brunch and flowers! Then work with each vendor to cross-promote and make it a limited-time offer.

For children's photographers, how about a partnership with a local children's clothing store? Vicki Taufer talks about one of her first promotions. She photographed all the kids of the staff at a local children's shop. Well, they all put their images at their desks, checkout lines, etc. and as each mother came through with her purchases, Vicki's images became a constant topic of discussion.



Here's an idea for a blog post series. Everybody is always looking for ideas of what to write about. Well, how about doing profiles of people and businesses in your community? Get out there with your camera and "own your own zip code!" Hit the staff at places where you do business. Create a profile of your favorite hostess at a local restaurant, a wide angle shot of your favorite bartender, chef at a restaurant, pharmacist or dry cleaner. Let them know you're doing a series on your favorite places in the community. When you run the post, let them know they're being featured that day. The beauty of this is in the simplicity. To start, you only need two or three killer images to support 200 to 400 words in a post. Write from the heart; these are the people who you enjoy doing business with. You support them and in turn they're going to support you. This is where this idea really gains momentum... each person you feature is going to become an ambassador for you!

If you want to get fancy, print the page from your blog and put it into one of those inexpensive Lucite frames that stand on their own. Then drop it off to the vendor as your own little gift. Within a month or two you'll have the whole community following you and wondering who's going to be featured next.

Let's hit one more idea that targets another segment of your potential audience. How about the upcoming prom and graduation season? When I was a kid there seemed to always be one horrible car accident after prom each year. M.A.D.D. came along and helped build awareness, and we hear about a lot fewer prom-night tragedies these days.

Here's an opportunity for a perfect partnership with a limo company. Now add a tux shop and a florist and you've got three partners for portraits before prom. Work with each vendor and build it all into one package price. Even better, tie back a portion of the proceeds to the senior class fund and work with the local PTA to build awareness.

As you work to build partnerships and redefine the endless stream of promotional opportunities remember that old expression about Rome not being built in a day. Not everybody has the same ability to visualize the benefits of companies working together.

Be patient and keep working to open the door with potential partners. Just don't give up and don't worry if a promotion doesn't bring success the first time out. It takes practice and patience. ■

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LESSON 2: IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET CLIENT

Identifying your target client is the first piece of essential market research you must do. :: In the boutique studio business, our target client is female. If you already have a business, choose your best client as a model of who your target client is. If you don't feel you have that "model client", make someone up! Who are you "after"? Who is your business targeting? What qualities would you look for in the ideal client you want to walk through your door? Get as specific as you can as you list the qualities of what you want in a client.

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LET'S GIVE THEM
SOMETHING
TO TALK ABOUT

with Justin & Mary Marantz



It's not just that they're talking that matters,
but rather
what they're saying.



by Justin & Mary Marantz

Most of us have heard the marketing wisdom that “word-of-mouth marketing” is where it’s at when it comes to growing our businesses. However, there are a couple qualifications that we would like to add. First, it’s not just that they’re talking that matters, but rather what they’re saying. And the second, what they’re saying can be cultivated.

Just getting your clients going out and saying your name is not enough. If what they’re saying does not line up with what you want your brand to stand for and the reasons you want new clients to hire you in the first place, this kind of word of mouth could actually do you more harm than good.

Imagine one of your clients is going out into the world with their virtual megaphone saying, “You should definitely check out my photographer...he’s really cheap!” or “My photographer would be amazing for you...she was so patient when we did our 76 family combinations.” Clearly, these are not the kinds of messages most of us want going out to get people to hire us. We would never take out a billboard saying “Hey, we’re really cheap” or “Hire us if you’re looking for someone who loves to do four hours of family pictures.” The truth is our best clients want to go out and talk about us. They care about helping us succeed. But by not knowing what we most want them to say they will likely default to saying the first thing that comes to mind. So instead of leaving that to chance, our second qualification says...what if we actually gave them something really good to talk about?

We have made it our goal to create a “remarkable” client experience from start to finish. We try to create an above and beyond experience for our clients that they will want to go out and talk about and say the exact things we would want our potential future clients to hear. We don’t want clients who are just price shopping or going through the motions of finding any photographer. We’re looking for clients who want “us.” What better way to do that than to get our current clients to rave about the work and experience that their friends can only get with us? To give you an idea of what that looks like, we have broken our client experience down into five parts starting with the very first time a potential client comes to our website.



On the Website: Connection & Scarcity

Every page on our site is designed to give a potential client every chance in the world to fall in love with us...or not. And to be honest, we view either of those outcomes as a win. If someone comes to our site and says, "These are the people we have to have on our day," or "No, these are definitely not the photographers for us," either way we would rather they figure that out early. Because the people who love us are going to love us (and rave about us) like crazy, and the people who don't are probably never going to be convinced otherwise. So from our viewpoint, the only way we lose is if someone comes to our site and goes away feeling lukewarm.

In order to give those potential clients every opportunity to figure that out, every page of our website is stamped with who we are as people and photographers. Each page will act as a mini-target of potential connection so they can easily figure out if they love us...or not. Here is what we do: In the header of our blog site, we have three-second videos of the two of us just being us, hanging out and dancing in a field. On the main page of our blog, I write very personal posts about our lives, who we are as a couple, and how we see love. I talk about how Justin likes to drink orange juice with his chocolate cake, and how that challenges me to see the world differently. Our "About" page and promo video show how we take on the world together, and how "You wash, I'll dry" is a mantra for our life. Our "Stuff We Love" page is a collection of random stuff we love, including football teams, favorite wines and favorite TV shows. Every time a potential client nods in agreement, that's just one more connection for them to fall in love with us as their photographers.

If all the other pages on our site are about connection, there is just one about scarcity. It's our "Info Box" page, and it gives the disclaimer, "Just so you know, we actually don't take every wedding that comes to us. Only if we truly believe we will be the absolute best fit for you, will we agree to be the ones there with you on your day. Because honestly, we don't think you deserve anything less." So as a client makes their way through our website it goes something like this: Fall in love, fall in love, fall in love...now you may not be able to have us. In that scarcity, we create an exclusive group of the "Justin and Mary Bride," and the people who make it in are all the more excited and likely to talk about it.

Each page will act as a mini-target of potential connection so they can *easily* figure out if they love us.

+ In the Meeting: Appeal to the 5 Senses

We do a lot of filtering before we ever get to the in-person meeting stage. We do this so by the time we make it to meeting, we are already pretty certain this is a couple we would want to book. In that filtering, we're looking for happy couples (first and foremost) and great personalities, but we're also looking at the style of wedding they're going to have, the location and what they're looking for in photography. We want people who best line up with our photography style and personalities, because they are the ones we are most likely going to make really happy. These are the people who will most likely turn into our word-of-mouth evangelists.

To appeal to all five of their senses, we think about how the room smells when they first walk in. We usually use a caramel or vanilla cupcake candle.

We think about the music we play in the background, the kind of music that sends a message about us and our brand.

We think about sight. Our meeting room feels like you're sitting in a three-dimensional version of our website: teal walls, vintage cameras, Js and Ms all over the place, and the "one-way" sign from our blog header hung in the corner. We also think about lighting. We always do soft pin-lighting, lamp light and candle light, never harsh overhead lighting that feels cold and corporate.


We also think about taste. As soon as that couple walks in, they will see a square coffee table absolutely covered in food. We offer chocolate-covered caramels, blueberries, dark chocolate, biscotti, artisan cheeses, red wine and coffee. These all feel rich and decadent, kind of like a splurge, but a necessary one at that.

Finally, we think about touch. We chose our chocolate-brown velvet couch and silk teal pillows because we

knew our potential clients would be sitting there for hours during our meeting and we wanted those textures to go to work for us. And instead of giving them a flimsy sheet of paper when it comes time to talk pricing, we give them our 11"x14" embossed chocolate-brown linen "Info Box" full of magazines, a sample contract and our à la carte pricing menu. We prefer this option because it makes our information feel established and substantial, not flimsy and wavering.

+ Leading Up to the Wedding: The Courtship Stage

As soon as our clients book with us, we want to make sure they know great experience doesn't end after the first meeting. We already know these are the kinds of clients predisposed to want to rave about us. So we want to make sure we keep giving them something exciting to say. For these reasons we created a series of gifts that we give leading up to the wedding. First is our "Perfect Fit" gift that we send out right after booking. It's a box of those same chocolate-covered caramels we served in the first meeting with a card that reads, "Just like your favorite song on the radio, that old pair of blue jeans, her hand in yours...isn't it great to find the perfect fit?" This is just our way of saying after our clients have made a fairly substantial investment with us, relax, we wouldn't have taken your wedding unless we thought we were the very best fit to be there with you on your day. And we're going to make sure we keep taking care of you. On the day of the engagement shoot we'll greet them with a bottle of wine or take them out to dinner afterwards as a chance to get to know them better. And finally, about two months before the wedding when we know things start to get crazy, we send them our "Date Night" gift box full of movies, our favorite movie candy and popcorn with a card that says, "Here's to spending a night in the most comfortable room in your house with the most comfortable person you know. Justin and Mary, we're all about date night."



We want people who
best line up with our photography style & personalities,
because they are the ones
we are most likely
going to make really happy.



+ (At the Wedding: From Clients to Friends)

After months leading up to the wedding, we genuinely feel we are going to the wedding of friends. So we asked ourselves, "If we were going to a friend's wedding, we would bring a gift. Why not do that for our clients?" As soon as we decided that we should, we instantly knew that an 8"x10" silver frame would be the perfect gift from us. But then we decided to bump it up a notch. We asked ourselves if it could include an image from the day we gave it to them. So we did a little research and found a portable Canon printer that we can take with us on all our weddings. At the reception, we pull a favorite, quickly retouch it, print it and put it in that silver frame tied with a teal bow and a card that says, "Thank you for bringing us in as friends, but treating us like family as we documented the start of yours." It takes about 15 minutes, but will stay with them for a lifetime.

+ (Beyond the Wedding: Create a Legacy)

After the wedding, from their initial blog post and the story we write about them, to the delivery of their gallery and album, to the holiday gifts that we send—a silver frame ornament they can hang up for years to come with their picture inside and a card that says, "'Tis the Season to be Married"—everything we do is to remind them that they made a good choice because they invested in their legacy. And when people feel that they made a good choice, that they were really taken care of and that they have something that will last a lifetime...that's definitely something they are going to want to talk about.that, I believe you will have succeeded. And that is what I hope for us all. ■

After months leading up to the wedding,
we genuinely feel we are going to the
wedding of friends.

learn more!
Check out this video.

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behindtheshutter.com

THE **ART** **PART 2**
OF **video**
STORYTELLING

with Rob Adams





by Rob Adams

As I write this, I'm on a plane back to the U.S. from Ireland where my wife, Vanessa Joy, and I had the privilege of teaching photo-video fusion to a group of European-based photographers in Dublin. Anytime we teach fusion or "Video 101" as I affectionately like to call it, there's this moment about halfway through our presentation where the light bulbs just start going on over the heads of audience members. You can see it happen. Faces get brighter and you can see the ideas and concepts clicking in. I can almost tell the moment that 2D-still photographers realize how storytelling is achieved with motion and the realization that they can do it. After all, we see it every day in television and movies but rarely do people stop and take notice of how it's done. We are more apt to just sit and be entertained, and not question why or how a camera captures motion.

In last month's article, I walked you through some basic concepts behind storytelling with video. I'll quickly re-cap the basic points from that article and then put it to practice with some tips for shooting.



SEQUENCING

The idea behind a sequence in filmmaking is that several shots come together to form a scene. The shots are carefully designed to bring you into the moment and tell a smaller part of an overall story. As photographers who may be integrating fusion or some form of video into your workflow or products, effective sequencing can mean the difference between amateur, montage video presentations and well-polished, professional looking visual art. Movies look like movies. Why? Because things are done right.

Plan out 3-5 shots of the same action from different angles. Use a mix of extreme close-ups, close-ups, medium shots, wide shots and extreme wide shots. The idea is to tell the story in 180 or 360 degrees, moving the viewer around the scene. Place your camera on a tripod so it's nice and steady. Shaky video will detract from the scene. Capture 6-8 seconds of each bit of action from varying angles, heights and distances. Think outside the box. Don't film everything from standing position at eye level. That's boring. Get down low, shoot from the ground, shoot from up high if you can and always use your rule of thirds. The concept of composition in motion is very much like that of still photography. There are minor differences as the camera starts moving but we should follow the fundamental rules of framing a shot. You'll also want to vary up your aperture to tell the story more effectively. Use shallow depths of field up close on someone or something for a more intimate look, and widen your aperture for far away, wide shots. This will help you focus better and see more detail in a shot. Roll your camera for only a short time and you'll find editing your sequenced shots together a much easier task.



A/B ROLL

Last month I showed you how A/B Roll works into a video edit. You have your main action, and then you have shots that help tell the story but aren't necessarily driving the story along. A perfect example of this is a high school senior talking on camera about winning the state championship in soccer. The young man gives 3-4 good comments about what a great experience it was to beat an undefeated team to win the title match. Rather than showing him talking for three minutes, we cut to various shots of him kicking a ball around, or maybe even footage of him playing in the game. We show him lit very dramatically for a cool side-light shot. His lips are not moving and he looks very serious but we still hear him talking about the exuberance of winning it all and now heading off to college. Music helps drive this piece along. That's B-Roll. In your video editing program, you'll want to place the footage of your subject talking on a lower-numbered track. To add B-Roll, place the video you intend to overlay on a higher-numbered track and mute its sound allowing the music and talking to be the only audio. Experiment with cutting around to different shots and going back and forth between the B-Roll and your main footage by leaving gaps on the higher-numbered track. Mastering B-Roll is essential to good video storytelling.



+ REVEAL SHOTS

You want good reveal shots? Get a slider. These nifty portable devices add instant production value to your video shots and are great at setting scenes or revealing objects and people. Reveal shots do exactly that. They reveal something with motion. Find some foreground and then focus beyond it to your intended subject. Place the camera on the slider and move it back and forth from behind the foreground object to “reveal” the subject creatively. Experiment with speed and fluidity to get different results. Watch for bumps and movements that aren’t smooth. They are easily noticed onscreen but hard to pick up watching the camera’s LCD. Can’t afford a slider? A simple “tilt-up” or “tilt-down” using a fluid tripod video head will make a good reveal, especially for wide shots. Place your camera on a tripod and start rolling with the camera aimed high. Slowly bring the camera down on your subject in a controlled fashion and pause for a few seconds when you reach your intended frame. You may have to do this a few times. It’s normal. Even the pros don’t always get it right the first time or two.

+ ESTABLISHERS

Establishing shots are everywhere. They are used in all motion pictures and television shows to show the viewer where they are in the current scene. It can be a building, a sign on a door, an airplane landing or a swing set in a park...just about anything that denotes a location or type of place. Use establishing shots to bring a viewer into a scene so they aren’t trying to figure it out when they should be noticing your subject. If I don’t see an establishing shot, my eye is usually watching the background for clues taking me out of the story. To get a good establisher, a really wide shot of your surroundings is a great idea. If you’re at the beach, shoot the waves or a flock of seagulls. At a dance party? Film the DJ from behind his booth. Establishers are necessary. Keep them 3-4 seconds in length and steady.





OVER-THE-SHOULDER DIALOGUE

I get asked about this all the time. "Watch movies," I tell people. "Pay attention to where the camera is and what lens and focal length they use when two people are talking."

For a close-up dialogue, the shots cutting back-and-forth between two actors are framed the same way with similar composition and aperture. Most of the time, especially if the scene is romantic or dramatic, the aperture is very shallow. This makes the conversation more intimate and the idea is to make you feel like you are listening in on something you shouldn't. If you ever find yourself filming someone's face talking or want to give your video a really intimate feeling, shoot close-up and shallow. That doesn't mean put a 24mm lens in someone's face and crank it wide open. Wide lenses distort faces up close. Use a longer lens such as a 50mm, 85mm or even a 135mm. When shooting dialogue, a tight shot is often better to allow microphones to be hidden or put just out of frame. Compose your shots similarly for more than one person and always ensure your shots are on the same side of the action. If two people are facing each other talking, place your cameras on the same side of their bodies, shooting over each person's shoulder. Try to maintain similar exposures, white balance and aperture for best quality. Using the same lens on identical cameras set the same way is a good idea. Use tripods.

For many of you, these are new concepts as video is still being explored by today's photographers as a new frontier. I have a hunch that motion imaging will become a very important element in the future of photography for weddings, portraits, seniors and even landscapes. I encourage each of you to try shooting video. I hope these articles give you some inspiration and practical advice. **Cheers!**

learn more!

Check out this video...



THE VINEYARD CHRONICLES

DANIELLE YANIAK COLLIN WEIR

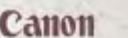
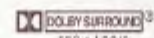
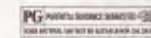
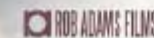
JEANNINE DEVANEY JOHN MINOR CONNOR RAMELLINI

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WHEN
**DISASTER
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by **SALCINCOTTA**



It was a normal day; I was sitting on my laptop working on email and getting my-to do list in proper order. You know what I mean by proper order, don't you? I mean, organizing my six pages of to-dos! Am I the only one who has a six-page to-do list?

All of a sudden, my laptop stopped responding. I figured I must have had too many things open at the time, so I tried to reboot. The error message was one I had not seen before. On reboot, I got a "panic error" from the operating system that stated "Unknown Operating System." And while the computer reported a panic error, I can tell you, I was now the one panicking!

I sat there trying everything I could think of for almost two hours! My mental state was quickly deteriorating as I thought about the importance of my email and documents stored on my machine. "What was I going to do?" was all I could think to myself. See, I am an IT guy with 8+ years at Microsoft as a database programmer. I KNEW BETTER! Everything in our studio is backed up with diligence...client images 100 percent safe and backed up. So why in the world am I not backing up my laptop? Truth is, there was no good reason.

Like many photographers, unfortunately, you may have been in a similar situation. Whether it was a memory card that went bad or a hard drive that failed the solution is never straightforward or easy.

Next is what I did to save my ass and to ensure this never happens again.



Step 1 // Head to the Apple store

I made an appointment with the Genius Bar and took my laptop in that morning. I was still optimistic at that point. I was hoping that something was just corrupted on the drive, but that my files were still available. Well, within 15 minutes it became clear that the drive was dead. There was nothing I could do.

I thought, ok, well, I have a new problem here. My laptop is out of commission and I am out of work. I have to get back online and working. Let me get a new hard drive for my laptop while I am here. Easier said than done. Apple apparently did not have any hard drives available for me to buy. And it would take three to five business days for them to rebuild my hard drive at a cost of over \$350!

Ok, well that's not a practical solution. I can't be without my machine for over a week. Not to mention, the Apple store was over an hour away from my house. So, that's a lot of back and forth to restore a hard drive. I could not believe that they did not have one I could purchase outright to do it myself.

Step 2 // Determine My Options

I knew I was screwed here. And I knew it was my fault. Regardless, I had to figure out what could be done. I reached out to Drive Savers Data Recovery (<http://www.drivesaversdatarecovery.com/>) on Wednesday afternoon. The best part, I actually spoke to a person. They took me through the process and what to expect. Obviously, they couldn't guarantee anything at this point. I had to ship them my drive.

The people at Drive Savers emailed us a FedEx label for overnight shipping. By Thursday morning my drive was in their hands and being inspected. We got a call later on Thursday letting us know the drive was being worked on and we would know more by Friday morning.

I was still in panic mode at this point and frantically working on getting my laptop back online. Finding all my applications, both on DVD and downloaded was a fun challenge, as well as finding the licensing keys for everything. Keep in mind, at this point, I still did not have a replacement drive. This proved to be a little more challenging to find. Because they are a 2.5" smaller drive, they are not readily available at every electronic store. Most had to be ordered and shipped. I just didn't have that kind of time.

Luckily, I found a store within driving distance that I could run out to and get a new drive. Where Apple wanted over \$300, I found a new drive that was twice the size of what Apple was giving me for \$80! I was happy to say the least.



Step 3 // Rebuild the Machine

In parallel to what Drive Savers was working on, I had to get my machine back online regardless of the outcome. Now that I had a new hard drive, I was able to get my operating system reinstalled and email set up and running again. However, I had lost all my saved emails. (Fingers crossed!)

It took me two days to get my computer rebuilt and all my applications reinstalled. The biggest pain...remembering all those passwords for all my sites. You know what I mean... your bank, your website, your blog, Facebook, Twitter...I am not going to lie. I have my web browser set to “remember me”—makes life a lot easier during the day-to-day of my business.

Step 4 // Report from Drive Savers

Friday morning came and I was anxiously waiting to hear from Drive Savers. Friday, they called us three times with status updates about my drive. The first call came in and they were happy to report that they had recovered over 98 percent of our files. To be exact, they recovered 477,000 files. Yes, I know what you are thinking. Holy CRAP! That’s a lot of data on your laptop. I told you, I had my life on this machine, and that did not include client images.

To say I was elated at the news is the understatement of the year. They were running some final tests and virus scans on my files, but the drive would go out later that day for next-day Saturday delivery.

RECOVERED!!

Step 5 // Final Steps

Saturday morning my drive arrived from Drive Savers on the portable hard drive I had sent them to use for recovery. In the two days leading up to Saturday, I was getting my machine and software set up and scrambling to set up and respond to emails. Once the drive arrived, I was ready to copy over three main folders/items.

1 // Email mailboxes. Top priority was to get my old email back online. This is important to me is because it serves as history for conversations with team members and clients. We all get those emails from clients telling us about something we promised or said a year ago. I need that history. I have email from five years ago!

The way Mac mail stores its files you can easily reimport those mailboxes into your new setup. The key is having access to these files and them not being corrupted. Luckily for me, they were good to go.

2 // My Documents. Next on the priority list was recovering the Documents folder. Luckily, I store everything in this folder. You should get in the habit of keeping all your contracts, Word documents, Excel documents, PDFs, etc. in a single folder. This makes it easy to recover and ensure you can find everything since it’s in a single spot. Even if you love using folders to sort your items, let them operate as subfolders in the main Documents folder.

3 // Desktop. My desktop is sort of a working area. I keep a lot of files in progress or those used on a daily basis sitting there. So, it’s not necessarily mission critical, but it’s definitely something I need to recover.

After that recovery I am happy to report as I sit here and write that everything is back to normal. Well, maybe not normal. I have added a few more gray hairs and changed some procedures to ensure this doesn’t happen again.



So, what did I learn?

1 // The value of my data. I know this seems like an obvious ah-ha moment, but there are certain things that have value and others that I am ok without. Well, my email and work documents are by far the most valuable data resources I have to run my business.

2 // The value of my time. I lost two days of work trying to deal with this. If this happened during the middle of the season it would have been disastrous and probably set me back weeks if not months.

3 // Passwords. This was a nightmare. I had been using auto-fill from Firefox and that is fine, but when something like this happens you are screwed. I was turned on to a solution out there that plugs right into Firefox. Check it out, it's called Last Pass (www.lastpass.com) and they plug right into your browser, store all your passwords securely and will auto-fill your sites whenever you visit them from your machine.

4 // Backup solutions. There are a plethora of backup solutions on the market. Everything from BackBlaze to Carbonite. I have actually tried these and hate them!

Sorry, I know I have some fanatical people out there who love these services. I tried them and here was my challenge. They throttle your bandwidth. So, if you are backing up a small amount of data, it probably works great for you. However, I had over 500 gig of data on my laptop. In addition, both solutions are very limited in the control of your backup process. Meaning, they want to back everything up. You might be asking, why is that a bad thing. Well, for one, my team uses Dropbox to share files, some very large. That folder is already being backed up by the company. I don't want to back that up again—there is no need to and the files can be huge—video, etc.

Maybe I want to limit it to two folders let's say. The only way to control that is to exclude 400 folders vs. just saving back these two folders. Now, things may have changed recently, but as of two months ago when I did a bunch of research they just weren't at the professional level I needed.

Solution? Built right into your Mac OS is Time Machine. It will handle all the backups for you and keep everything on a hard drive of your choice. You are not limited by bandwidth and it will allow you to version control your restores. I can't tell you how many times I have adjusted a Word document and wanted to go back to three versions earlier. Time Machine has that capability.


I picked up a 1.5tb portable hard drive (makes it easier for me to backup on the road as well) for \$79 and have backups running all the time.

I think the solution is different for everyone. You have to determine what you are backing up, what your tolerance for loss is, how quickly you would need access to your data, and what type of failure are you planning for—lost or stolen, hard drive failure, natural disaster, etc.

Learn from my mistakes—not having a backup plan in place is just ignorant. There is no excuse. The cost of backup is negligible when compared to the cost of failure. Not to mention, if you are a Mac user, it's built right into the system. Now, go back something up! ■

**NOW, GO
BACK-UP
SOMETHING!!**

SHUTTER  **MAGAZINE** 



THE STATE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHY
INDUSTRY
& WHAT YOU
CAN DO ABOUT IT
with VANESSA JOY



by Vanessa Joy



I remember my very first wedding couple, Danielle and Nathan, whose wedding was the first I photographed under my own company. It was a \$2,000 shoot-and-burn job and to this day I still have a photograph of them in my online portfolio. Not because it's my best work, but because it means something to me. It helps me remember why I do what I do. Yes, it reminds me that I love photographing weddings, but it really reminds me of the kindness of the wedding photographer, Andres Valenzuela, who gave me that first job, and the kindness of the other wedding photographer, Kenny Kim, who took a chance on me and encouraged me to the point of starting my own business.

Do you have someone who took the time to teach you photography or helped you with your business? Even if it's the author of the book you read to teach yourself photography, or the photographer whose work first inspired you, somebody somewhere taught you most of what you know. So for us, it's time to pass it on. Now it's your turn.

As a new photographer there are so many fears and questions that come with trying to break into the industry. Where do my leads come from? What if I don't have any work to show? What if my work isn't good enough? Will anyone ever pay me for my work? All these fears are relevant and completely justified. Especially since most new photographers have reported it is very difficult to learn from the expert photographers they know. After interviewing dozens of photographers, here are some of the responses I got when I asked them what it was like to find photographers to mentor them:



"I spent days emailing studios that I found online whose work I liked, but I would get no response at all or they were too busy to take time to meet with me or allow me to come along on wedding days. Networking was a little difficult because I wasn't sure where to go to network."

-Nadya F.

"It has been extremely difficult to find mentors."

-Moses C.

"In the beginning of my photography career, it was hard for me to find anyone to return an email or a phone call."

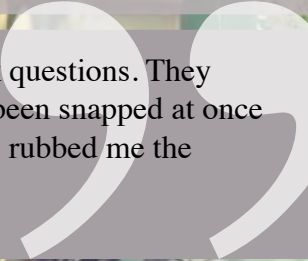
-Jessica L.

"I have asked over 10 photographers if they would mentor me, or if I could intern for them in their studios, watch them, etc. All of them said 'NO.'"

-Jackie A.

"I notice certain photographers get annoyed or even angry when newbies ask questions. They assume we haven't searched and questioned on our own before asking. I've been snapped at once or twice through a Facebook group for 'taking and not giving' and that really rubbed me the wrong way."

-Kristina I.





If they're not able to learn from experienced photographers how can we be mad or even surprised that they're not charging enough or not holding themselves to the same professional standards that we do? It's not training your competition; it's training your competition to not compete with you by providing clients with subpar photography at half your price. I'd rather have a photographer in my backyard that has similar pricing with good photography rather than one who charges half of what I do with poor photography (but not poor enough that the average client notices the difference, only the price).

I discovered similar problems when I asked the same photographers how they figured out what to charge. When most start out, they don't have much confidence to charge for their work. To top that off, they don't know what the average price is for photography in their area and charge much less than an experienced photographer, undercutting them without even knowing it.

“The hardest part for me was not knowing what to do, the uncertainty ...not knowing what to charge and what to offer.”

–Ahmet Ze

“I talked to other photogs who were willing to share their approach to pricing.”

–Belkis H.

“When I first began, figuring out what to charge seemed like an impossible task. I asked so many other photographers only to receive the same response: ‘I can't tell you that. You have to decide that on your own by determining your cost of business.’ I had no idea at that point what that even meant and I was lost.”

–Kristina I.

(Ironically, limited skill and low pricing are the two things that most experienced photographers I interviewed agree they don't like about new photographers.)

“I feel new photographers that don't understand the business are hurting it.”

–Patrick S.

“...an uneducated, inexperienced person with a camera selling themselves as a pro at rock-bottom prices cheapens what we do. Inexperience sold as professional is killing the industry.”

–John P.

“If you are going offer photography services you should at least provide trained professionals and charge appropriately. I think this is why so many brides have become price shoppers because photography is being discounted so much by this approach.”

–Steven Y.

“If you want to be a pro, be a pro and learn your equipment. The bad part is they charge their clients low prices for mediocre images and the client learns to accept that as good work. When a pro who understands their camera and can produce high-quality work, the client thinks the skilled pro charges too much.”

–Martin T.



I agree with every one of those statements, but after putting them side-by-side with the perspective of new photographers, whose fault is it that this backslide in the industry is occurring? All these concerns from experienced photographers are exactly what new photographers can't learn because they were refused the education from experienced photographers when they tried to ask about these things. It reminds me of a line Drew Barrymore once said in the movie, Ever After:

“If you suffer your people to be ill-educated and their manners corrupted from infancy, then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded, Sire, but that you first make thieves and then punish them?”



Even if you're not the teaching type, or don't have the time for an intern, or don't want to take on a second shooter, the seasoned photographer can still help. Just having coffee with a new photographer or networking at meetings and photo events will make a huge impact. Even if all you do is provide younger photographers just a little encouragement to up their photography skills and prices, you've bettered the industry, and yourself.

So are you part of the problem or part of the solution? Are you a new photographer who is too prideful to work for free and learn, or are you a new photographer that is so hungry for knowledge that you'll work for your education and even pay for it at workshops in order to better your skill?

Are you an experienced photographer hoarding your trade secrets, or are you **a mentor** who is beautifully passing on the trade to the next generation?

This idea of paying it forward is paramount to the advancement of the photography industry, especially in these uncertain times when photography seems to be turning into a commodity. We can all either work to keep it a valued art, or sit on the sidelines and watch it crumble as the prices fall.

The importance of helping other photographers learn and succeed cannot be understated. Without bridging the gap and helping to raise the industry level, we will have no way to compete other than with pricing. And when a photographer's only differentiating feature becomes price, the only way to beat the competition is to lower prices. By doing this we all lose. We can help the situation by turning competitors into colleagues, teaching them the value of their photography and passing on the photography craft. I agree with Julia from New Jersey when she said, "...I realized that by helping each other, we're helping the industry." And I hope we all come to the same realization.

If by reading this you're inspired or convicted, angry or have input, comments, suggestions and opinions, **I want to hear them!**

Watch this video to see three easy steps to get involved and then click the link below to join the conversation online and give us your two cents. ■

Join the online chat about it here! <http://www.facebook.com/btshutter>

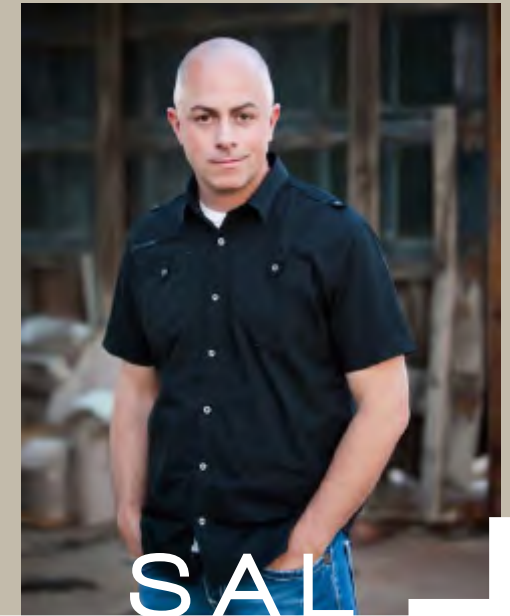


learn more!
Check out this video.

SHUTTER  
behindtheshutter.com



EDITOR



SAL
CINCOTTA

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.

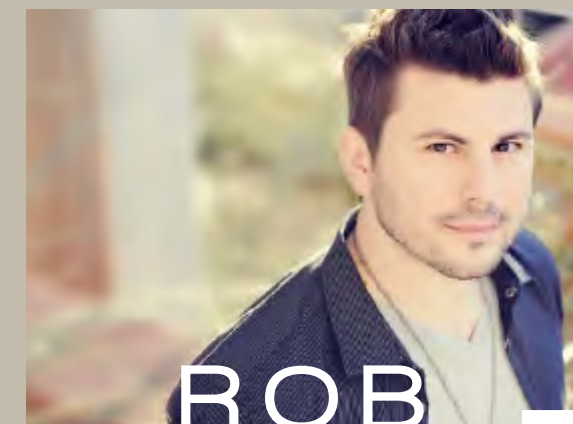
Today, Sal Cincotta and his wife Taylor own and operate a very successful studio in the St. Louis metro area. Salvatore Cincotta Photography, Salvatore Cincotta Films, and BehindtheShutter.com.

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

When Disaster Strikes

Q&A with Sal Cincotta



ROB
ADAMS

www.RobAdamsFilms.com

LOCATION: Freehold, New Jersey

PASSION: Weddings

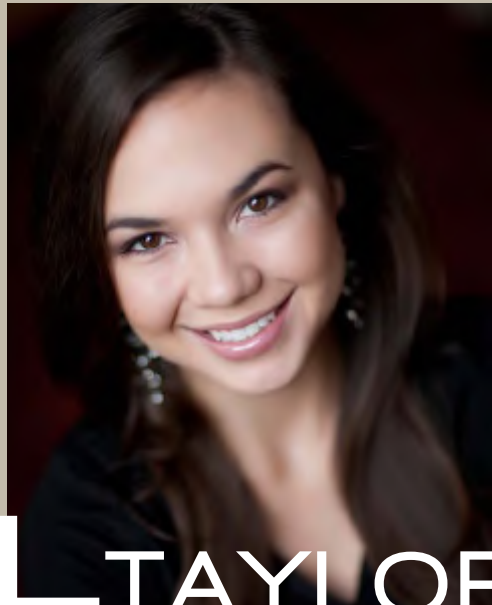
“Wedding films are my life. It’s all about the the story-telling. The art of seeing action, drama and beauty unfold and then harnessing the emotion of it all and the making it come to life on screen...that’s why I do this.”

Rob Adams began his video career in television over 15 years ago. Four years after that he merged into the wedding industry and eventually started his own business in 2006. Recently, Rob filmed and directed his first full-length feature film that was premiered at Robert DeNiro’s personal screening room in New York City.

Because Rob is on the cutting edge of the DSLR video revolution, his business has grown rapidly over the past few years and his passion for finding new creative ventures in the field has as well. His main goal, along with making sure that every product that leaves his studio is amazing, is to teach other wedding film-makers how to bring their work to the next level. Speaking around the world at venues such as creativeLIVE, WPPI, Imaging USA and more, he wants to see each and every film-maker learn about the little things that make filming and editing go from “good” to “the best in your market.”

FEATURED ARTICLES

The Art of Video Storytelling Part 2



TAYLOR

CINCOTTA

www.SalCincotta.com

LOCATION: O'Fallon, IL

PASSION: Weddings & Seniors

Taylor is a business school graduate, only picking up a camera in the last five years. Catching the bug from Sal, Taylor has fallen in love with the romantic side of wedding photography and photographs 20+ weddings per year, along with running the sales side to their studio.

She brings her own sense of style to a wedding day and her clients love the calm she brings to an event. Her passion is in creating moments for her clients.

More recently, Taylor has gotten increasingly involved in the training aspects of our industry and now enjoys speaking and writing educational pieces for new photographers.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Set The Mood



© Taylor Cincotta

CONTRIBUTORS



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, are 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

Partnerships & Promotions



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

Ring Lights Rock





DAVE
CROSS

www.DCross.com

LOCATION: Tampa, Florida

PASSION: Photoshop

Dave Cross has been helping photographers and creative professionals get the most out of Adobe software for over 25 years. He has a Bachelor of Education, is an Adobe Certified Instructor, and is a Certified Technical Trainer. Dave has taught at Photoshop World, the Texas School of Photography, the Santa Fe Workshops, and Imaging USA. He runs the Dave Cross Workshops in his own studio/workshop in Tampa, Fla. He is well-known for his engaging style, humor and ability to make complex topics easy to understand. In 2009 Dave was inducted into the Photoshop Hall of Fame.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Keys to Success



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

A Journey to Photography





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

Make the Most of Your Website





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

The State of the Photography Industry & What You Can Do



MARY & JUSTIN MARANTZ

www.JustinMarantz.com

LOCATION: New Haven, Connecticut

PASSION:
Weddings & Love Stories

Justin and Mary Marantz are destination wedding photographers who travel internationally and call New England home. This past year they shot 40 weddings and took their “Walk Through a Wedding” workshops worldwide including to England and Australia. They presented their “J&M Lighting Intensive Tour” in 10 U.S. cities, and drank way more Starbucks than any normal person should...and they’re just getting warmed up.

FEATURED ARTICLE

Let’s Give Them Something to Talk About





LORI NORDSTROM

www.NordstromPhoto.com

LOCATION: Winterset, Iowa

PASSION:
Babies, Families, Weddings & Seniors

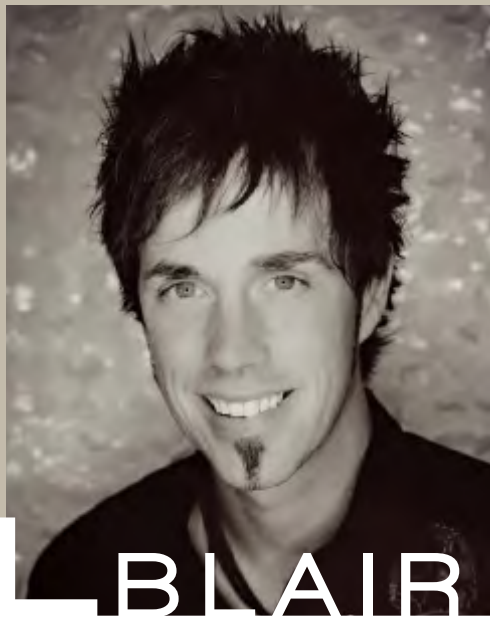
Lori Nordstrom {M.Photog.Cr., CPP, ABI} owns a boutique studio specializing in children and family portraits located in the picturesque town of Winterset, Iowa. Lori is a PPA approved business instructor and marketing consultant for Studio Management Services. Sharing with other photographers and small 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's existence. You can find out more about going to Ecuador or making a donation at www.dandoamor.org

FEATURED ARTICLE

Wall Decor - High End Sales





BLAIR PHILLIPS

[wwwBlairPhillipsPhotography.com](http://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
Seniors Demand a Variety of Lighting





LAURIN THIENES

www.EvolveEdits.com

LOCATION: Portland, Oregon

PASSION:
Weddings & Engagements

Laurin Thienes was 17 when he photographed his first wedding – 20 rolls of Porta400VC. Never looking back he went on to study photography with some of the most well-known photography studios in Oregon as well as leaving the state to study still photography at Brooks Institute in Santa Barbara, CA. Upon returning to Portland, Laurin was the studio manager of Holland Studios, a high-end, high volume wedding photography studio photographing over 250 weddings per year. After his departure from Holland Studios, he has continued to work as a contract and freelance photographer, having work published in *Grace Ormond*, *Men's Style*, and *Rangefinder*. Most recently, Laurin is the co-founder of Evolve, a premier wedding and portrait post-production service in Portland, OR. Outside of photography, Laurin also likes to cook, travel, and spend time with his wife and young daughter.

FEATURED ARTICLE

Wedding Albums 101





(Don't miss our next issue)
APRIL 2013



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