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*Salvatore Cincotta*  
BEHIND THE SHUTTER



## MISSION STATEMENT

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

Shutter Magazine: By photographers, for photographers.

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## THE COVER

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Sal Cincotta | [salcincotta.com](http://salcincotta.com)

**CAMERA:** Canon 1Dx

**LENS:** Canon 85mm 1.2L II

**EXPOSURE:** f1.2 @ 1/320th, ISO 200

**LOCATION:** Downtown Los Angeles, CA

**ABOUT THE IMAGE:** This image was taken in our apartment rental in Downtown Los Angeles in October 2015.

# LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief

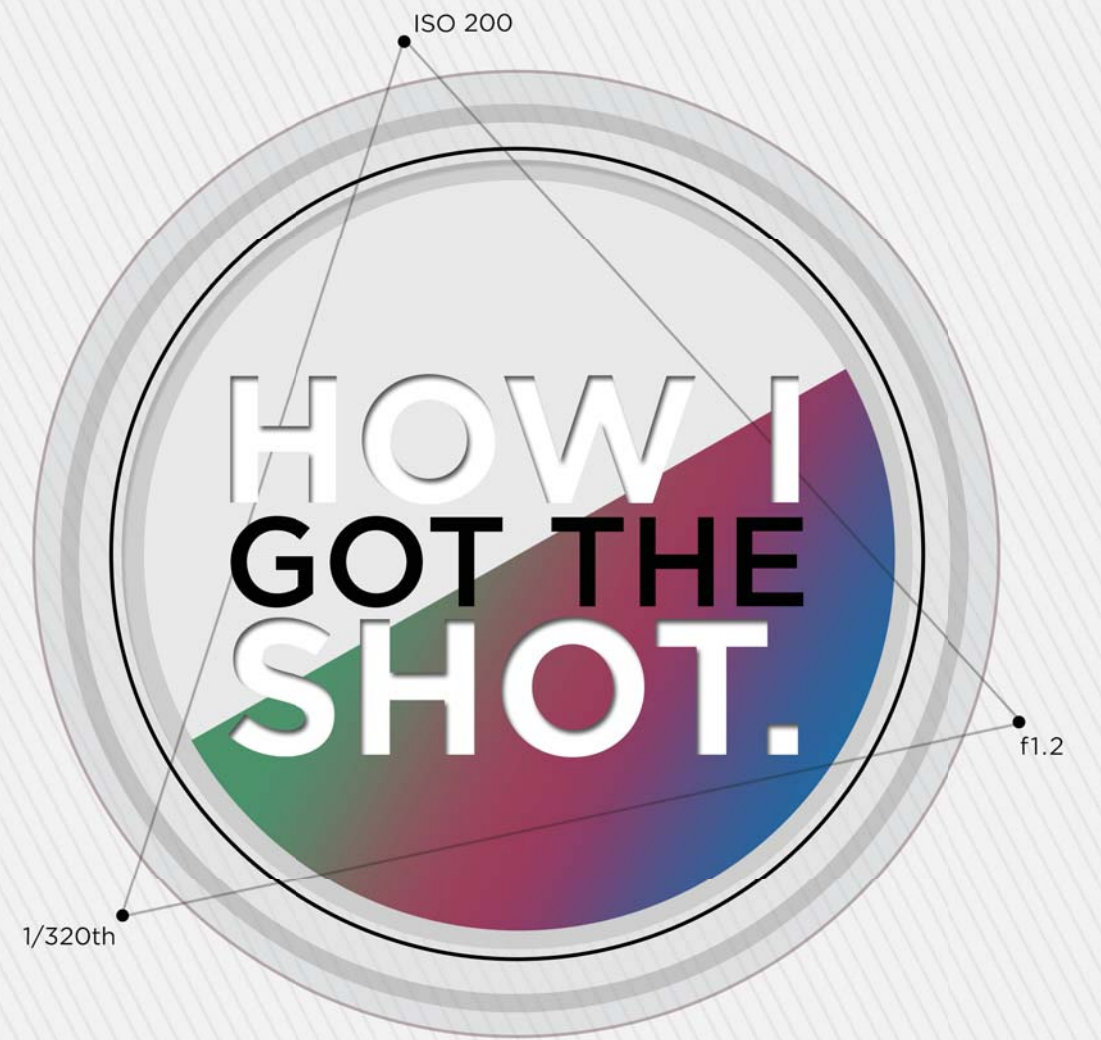
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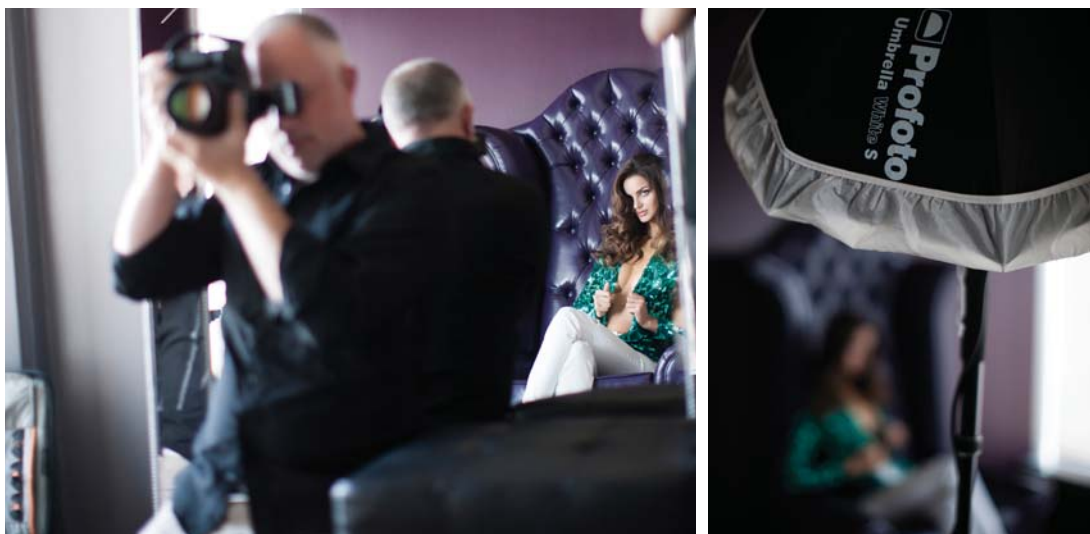
- Sal Cincotta











Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

This month for the cover shoot in Los Angeles, we got to work with the beautiful Mahlagha. Most of you probably haven't heard of her, but she is a bit of an Instagram sensation. You see, Mahlagha has 1.2 million followers. Yes, the *M* is for *million*. She is not only beautiful; she is a sweetheart through and through. We had an awesome time with her, and couldn't have asked for a more professional model.

We also worked with iconic L.A. fashion label Stello. They provided us with some wardrobe from their unreleased line that was being unveiled at L.A. Fashion Week. Again, an incredible partner to work with. Visit our Instagram page at [Instagram.com/salcincotta](https://www.instagram.com/salcincotta) for behind-the-scenes pics.

Hair and makeup, meanwhile, was provided by the always-on-time and incredibly talented Sabrina Bates-Whited out of L.A.

### Concept.

The concept was simple for this one: killer model, killer wardrobe and killer location in downtown Los Angeles. We had rented an apartment with a view of downtown, a perfect backdrop that offered some amazing natural light.

I wanted to ensure I was on my A-game while working with a pro like Mahlagha. She has worked with some of the best photographers on the planet, so the pressure was on, and I wanted to outshine them all.

### Location.

This proved to be pretty unsettling. First of all, you would think with a downtown urban oasis, I would be in heaven. But with my run-and-gun style of shooting, my concern was that I would run into a constant battle of permits.

There were so many great locations and shooting opportunities, but I had to make smart choices. The city has an impressive number of helipads on the tops of skyscrapers. (As a native New Yorker, I use the term *skyscraper* with a bit of a smirk on my face. Regardless, these helipads were pretty badass.)

Then we had the typical street shooting and unique architecture. I also wanted to shoot the Disney Concert Hall. And finally, we had our apartment with amazing views and north light. It wasn't about where, it was really about how the hell am I going to shoot all these fantastic locations? Sometimes, I find that too many options can be a distraction. I like to go into shoots with one or two locations in mind so I can focus on the task at hand.

This particular day, my biggest challenge was going to be my ability to focus—figuratively *and* literally.



Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography





### Lighting.

We used everything in the bag. We used natural light. We used a reflector. And we used Profoto B2's.

For this shot, we used natural light and a reflector, camera left. The best part about it is the fact that we had no intention of taking it. We were in between looks and getting ready to go to another location outside the apartment when Alissa, my assistant, insisted I take at least one shot to see how it looked. As you can see from the behind-the-scene shot, there was nothing there. Great light, yes. But we were shooting into the kitchen—so a very noisy and cluttered scene. Now, after taking a test shot, my mind was racing. I saw incredible light and incredible opportunity.

We needed to block out the background, so we took the painting off the wall and used it as a backdrop for the image, adding great color to the shot and really working with the red of her lips. The hat was an added bonus. This was Alissa's hat, not something we had with us for the shoot. So, yet again, the ability to pivot and improvise created something extremely beautiful for us.

### Gear.

- Profoto Silver Reflector
- Canon 1Dx
- Canon 85mm 1.2
- 1/320th of a sec @ f1.2, ISO 200

### Closing Thoughts.

I have highlighted this over and over again. You have to be open to what any particular scene is giving you, and be open-minded about the possibilities. Sometimes, the first shot you see isn't always the best shot. And in this case, had I not listened to Alissa, I would have missed a golden shot. This shot is a result of creative collaboration.

Ego gets in the way for a lot of people. There is a huge difference between ego and confidence. I am a very confident photographer, but I am not an egomaniac. I listen to the ideas and creativity of the people around me—and, quite frankly, sometimes they are damn better than mine. I am honest when I say I am not insecure, nor do I feel like I am any less of an artist because I listen to those around me. Good collaboration helps the creative process. That's how you build a great team. And great teams accomplish great things.

This was a day of incredible shooting opportunities. These opportunities were a direct result of planning and collaborating with an incredible group of people. Mahlagha, Alissa, Sabrina and I worked together to create some amazing imagery—some of which you can see in the article. There were too many to write about this month, but look for future blog posts about those images and how we got them.

*Want to see how we edited the shot? Sign up to be an Elite+ member today. Get the printed magazine and access to behind-the-scenes videos like this at [www.behindtheshutter.com/shutter-magazine](http://www.behindtheshutter.com/shutter-magazine).* ■



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

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## **5-Part Workflow** With Lightroom CC

# **Part 4** **Advanced Editing**

with Dustin Lucas

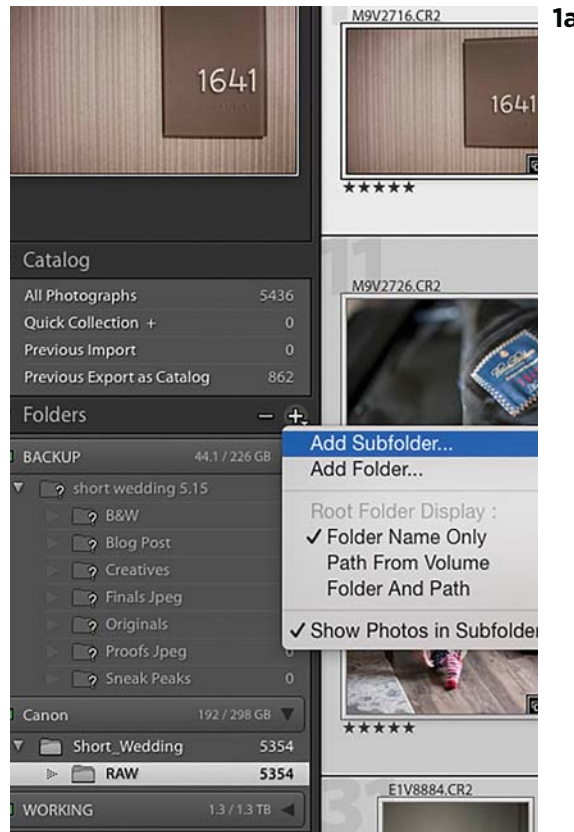
You are done with the monkey work and ready for the next steps before delivering files to your clients. Bring on the creativity. Lightroom CC offers quite a wide range of editing capabilities, as I have covered in previous articles. Now we are ready to see these in action. Let's look at how to streamline your advanced editing at a proofing level.



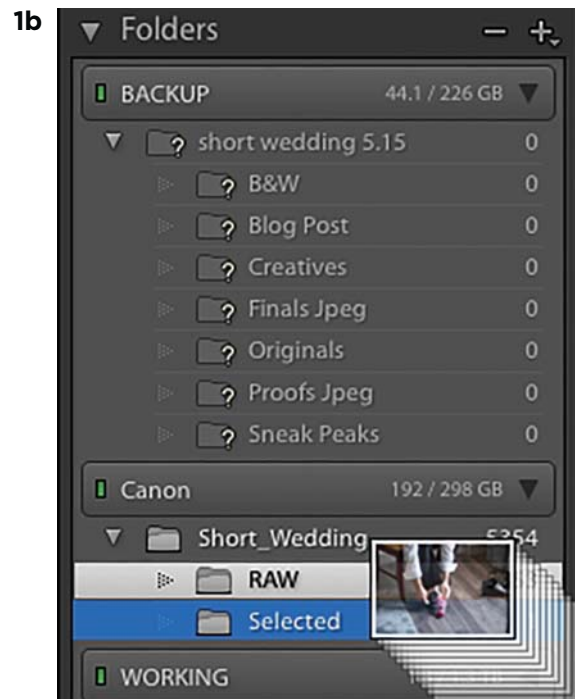
## Managing Files

At this point, we have 5-starred, selected and color corrected all 862 files. This is a great place to start organizing these files for further processing. If you are unfamiliar with managing files in Lightroom, please refer to my previous article, “5-Part Workflow With Lightroom CC Part 1: Storage & File Management.” With the Raw files organized and stored in Lightroom, we need to continue with file management for different types of edits. Keep in mind this workflow is for a single client catalog and not a master catalog.

Navigate to the Library module and begin to create subfolders in the Short Wedding folder. This moves the Raw files outside of Lightroom. (Images 1a & 1b) I suggest leaving all the files in the RAW folder and using Lightroom to organize these files as we have before. Creating and moving folders in Lightroom is time-consuming and doesn't create copies for you. Previously, we created Collections to manage the Original, Select, Black and White, Creative, etc., and I suggest staying with this workflow. (Image 2) It is so much faster and more efficient to work this way. Since we only have one Raw file saved and we want to make multiple types of edits to it, we need to create virtual copies.



1a



1b



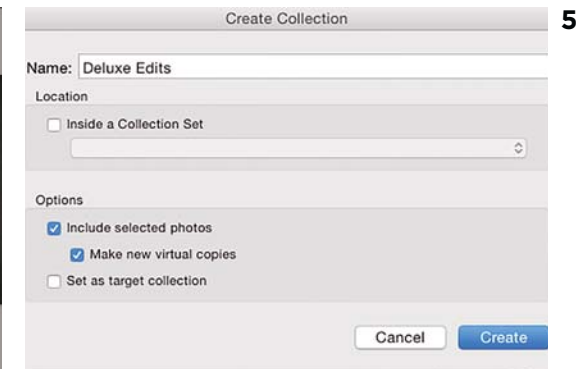
2

Virtual copies are exactly what they sound like, and they do not save to your HDD. This is important to remember because they exist in Lightroom only as copies. You must export these copies like any other file to apply the adjustments and create a new image file.

They are easy to create. Select the files and hold CMD and the apostrophe key ('). (Image 3) Once the virtual copies are made, they are automatically selected and ready for you to drag them into the proper Collection. (Image 4) Another technique is to select the files, create a new Collection and check the options Include Selected Photos and Make New Virtual Copies. (Image 5) This is useful for custom Collections. Taking this a step further, I use color labels to designate what type of edit is to be applied. (Image 6)



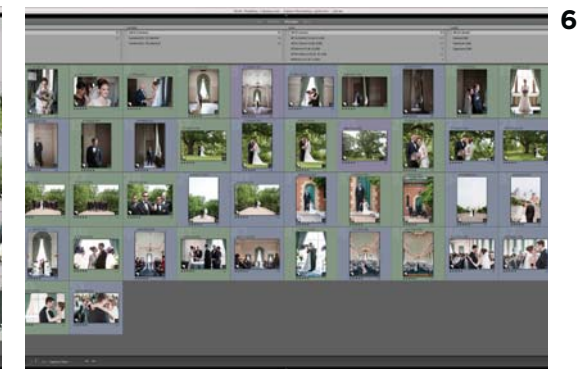
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5



4



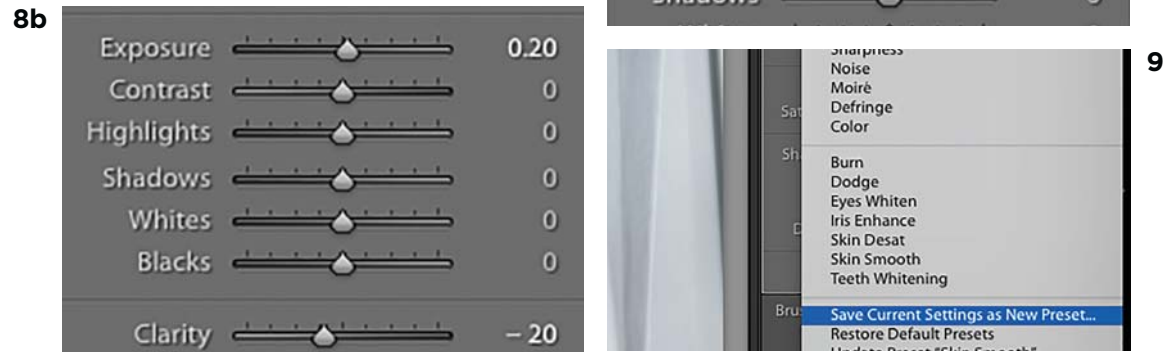
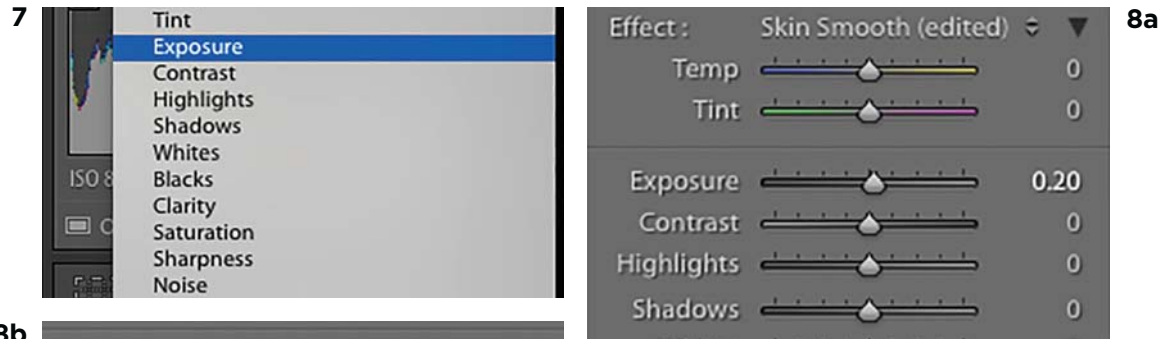
6

## Using Local Adjustments

Let's now process the creative edits a step beyond basic color correction. This is where hotkeys and knowing how to navigate Lightroom becomes crucial to efficiency. Using local adjustments is great for cleaning up your creative edits. You can integrate these into the color-corrected files, but you have to think of these files as proofs, not prints. This is how you add value to the other edits and make it worth the time you spend processing them.



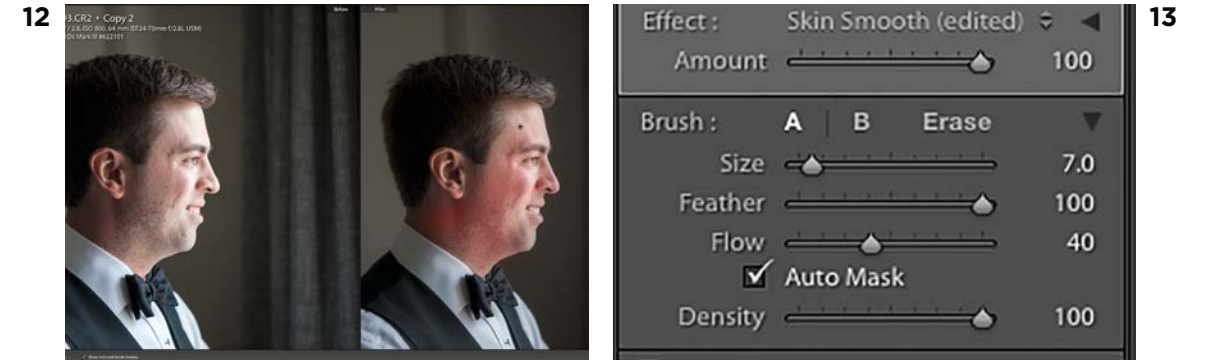
Before getting into the different brush types, we need to get familiar with the preset effects. Select the adjustment brush to get to these effects presets. Default single-adjustment effects are listed in the upper section, and the multi-adjustment effects are below. (Image 7) You can create and save custom presets. I suggest starting with the default ones and building from there. I have made a custom dodge/burn and a skin-softening effect. To do this, select a current default effect and add some adjustments to it. (Images 8a & 8b) For burn, I added some contrast, dropped highlights, and dropped the clarity and saturation. Drop down the Effects menu and select Save Current Settings as New Preset. (Image 9) Name the preset by the area affected first, then the effect—i.e., “skin soften, teeth whiten, etc.” This organizes things and makes selecting the appropriate brush much easier.



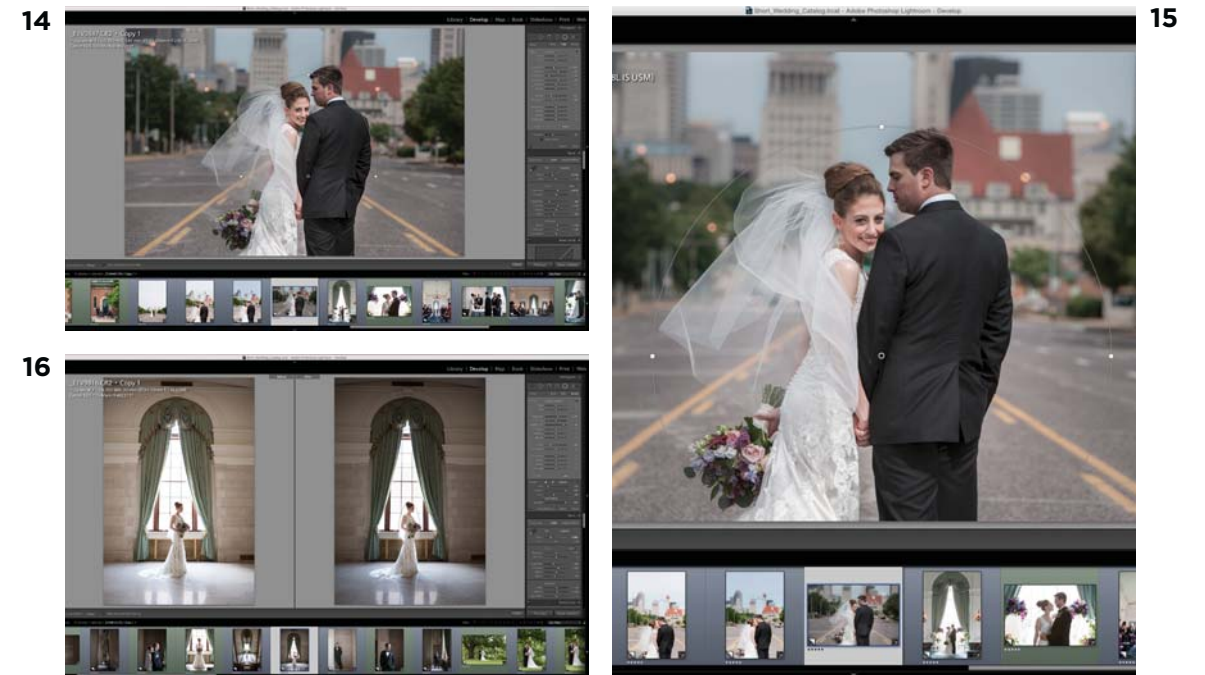
Select a file and strike the “K” key. This activates the most versatile tool, the adjustment brush. From here, click and drag your cursor over the area you want to treat. A newer feature that Lightroom added is Auto Mask. This works well in high-contrast areas where neighboring colors have distinct edges that separate the two. (Image 10) To activate this feature, strike the “A” key. You can remove the effect or mask by holding down Alt + Option and clicking the unwanted areas. (Image 11)



You can view the mask by either scrolling over the edit pin or checking the box labeled Show Selected Mask Overlay. (Image 12) Decreasing the brush size is easily done by repeatedly striking the “[” key or increasing it with the “]” key. After you’ve painted the mask, hold Option and click the Edit pin. Drag to the left to lessen the effect, stay at the center to keep the same preset settings, and scroll to the right to increase it. (Image 13) You can do this with all the local adjustment tools as well. The adjustment brush is great for custom masking your dodge/burn and skin smoothing effects. Move into Photoshop when you need more extensive work done.

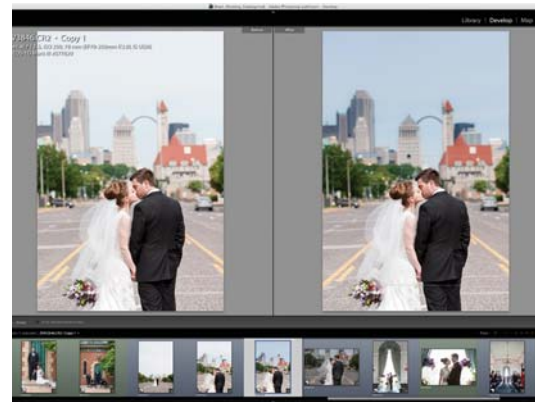


The radial filter can be very powerful when you want to lead your viewer to the subject. Activate this tool by holding Shift + M. The best strategy for this tool is to click in the center of your subject and drag the oval/circle outward. (Image 14) Hold Option while dragging to achieve a perfect circle. (Image 15) This tool allows you to custom-mask in the effect as well. Hold Shift + T to toggle the standard brush, and then hold Option to toggle the Erase Mask feature. I like to use this for burning down everything but the subject. This works well with close-up shots with high contrast. Another quick way to utilize this tool is to draw your oval in a small area and invert the mask by striking the apostrophe (‘) key. This leaves an image underexposed and brightened specifically for the subject. (Image 16)





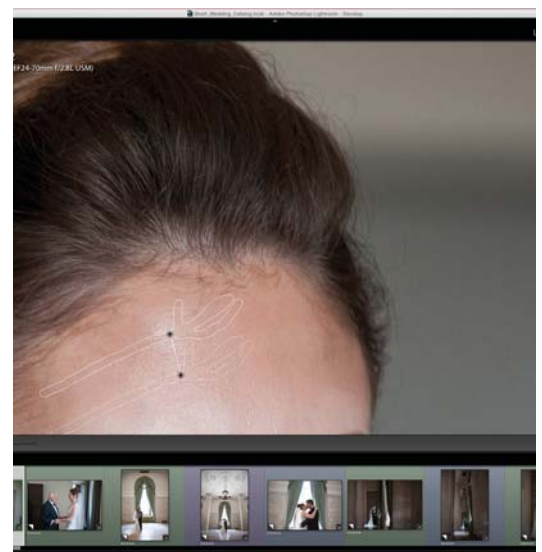
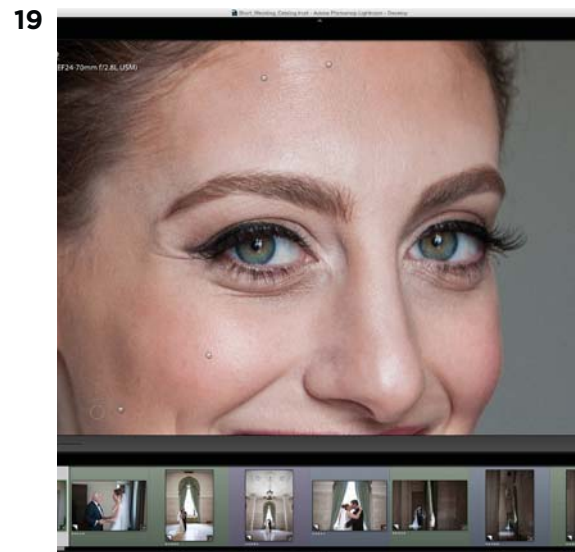
Next, the Graduated Filter effect is another great tool for those who use the rule of thirds a lot. Strike the “M” key, click on the opposite side of your subject and drag the edge of the mask just past them. As you drag the cursor, the effect begins where you first click, and feathers the mask to the opposite side. (Image 17) If you would like to adjust the width on both sides, just hold the Option key and drag the cursor. This tool has the same capabilities to custom-mask out the unwanted areas as the radial filter. I like to use this tool for darkening two-thirds of the image where the couple is off to the side. Also, this effect is great for burning down a sky. (Image 18)



### Spot Removal

Lightroom has made quite a lot of improvements to the accuracy of this tool. Strike the “Q” key, which brings up the Spot Removal tool. There are two types: clone and heal. If you are familiar with these from Photoshop, they work very similarly. Cloning replaces the areas selected with a copy of another area. Healing samples the area around the selection

and renders an approximate representation. Toggle between these by holding Shift + T. Begin by selecting an area you want to remove; a blemish or pimple is a great place to start. (Image 19) Lightroom auto-samples from a similarly colored and toned area in the image. You can adjust the sample area by dragging the other circle. (Image 20)



### Cropping and Straightening

This is a very subjective adjustment at a proofing level. It is a very intuitive tool in Lightroom. Striking the “R” key applies the cropped grid to your image. I usually keep the image locked to the original aspect ratio until I bring the image into Photoshop. (Image 21) From here, I can straighten the image by holding the CMD key and drawing a line on a vertical or horizontal axis. (Image 22) Auto-straighten to the rescue. I wish they had created a Quick Develop option for this instead for batching. By selecting Constrain to Image, an image that is cropped remains within its borders. This is a great option to have selected when using automated adjustments. What I like about Lightroom’s nondestructive functionality is that you can always reset this crop and get those pixels back when you need to print large. In Photoshop, you have to save out multiple versions, and then it gets messy organizing the files.



### Conclusion

Lightroom offers vast capabilities to your editing style. I’ll cover the other adjustment tools in the final article, “5-Part Workflow With Lightroom CC Part 5: Output & Archive Strategies.”

At this point in the process, we are ready for online viewing and/or a live preview with the client. I am comfortable showing these images to my client. I will work a few images extensively in Photoshop for that wow factor as well. Nothing better than having a canvas print ready as a surprise for the newlyweds. Usually a great sale. ■



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

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## Making Yourself and Your Business Unique

Throughout my “Building Blocks” series, I’ve talked about so many different aspects of your business: your website, advertising, customer service, your blog, your network and even your About page. The one thing we’ve spent absolutely no time talking about is how to be unique.

I’ve heard a lot of you bellyache about the Uncle Harrys of the world because they’ve got better gear than you do. Then there are those who think the challenge is in the market being too saturated. I’ve heard you say, “There are just too many professional photographers out there!”

I’m not saying it’s easy to be a business owner today. But if you honestly believe the problem of growing your business is because of Uncle Harry or too many competitors, then it’s time to hang up your camera for a day or two and do a little self-analysis.

The challenge isn’t coming from outside your business, but inside. Your success is based on what you’re doing with your skill set, your marketing, your promotions. So, let’s come up with ways to make you different from everybody else.

My good buddy Terry Clark once said, “Find out what everybody else is doing and then do something different!” It’s a pretty simple concept, and so easy to understand. It all starts with your skill set.

### YOUR SKILL SET

OK, it’s true, cameras are better than ever and everybody has access to shooting in “P” mode. But you’re a trained artist and your photos are different and exciting.

Everything starts with you constantly practicing your skills. In a recent podcast, Roberto Valenzuela talked about how he’s practiced a different aspect of his skills every week for the past 10 years. As an artist in an industry with an ever-changing technology landscape, you’ve got to do the same thing.

You’ve got to know every aspect of your gear, the rules of composition and exposure, and ways to make your images pop. When you know all the rules, only then have you earned the right to break them—there are no shortcuts to greatness as an artist.

And no matter what you hear from the occasional “spray and pray” crowd, you can’t fake it till you make it. You might get a couple of incredible images and have a client praising your work to all his friends, but any fool can get his first client. The key is getting the second, third and fourth. The key is getting them all to not only come back, but tell all their friends.

### THE “WOW” PRINT

A lot of you have overloaded your galleries with mediocre images. Many of them aren’t any better than Uncle Harry’s. Let’s dump all of them and show only “wow” prints. A wow print is one that’s so good that you’d have to show only that one to get hired. A wow print leaves clients in awe, hoping they can work with you.

### “WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT YOU?”

It’s not always a comfortable question to answer. We’re often perceived differently than the way we see ourselves. As an artist who specializes in working with people, you need to be friendly, sociable, giving, fair-minded; you need to have integrity and a sense of humor. Is that the way you’re perceived?

Business is based on relationships and friendships. If you’ve made some serious mistakes and are starting to develop a reputation like Comcast’s, it’s time to step back and change your persona. Anybody can develop the skills to capture an image, but getting natural expressions from your clients is about being likable, trustworthy and knowing how to listen.

I can tell how good a photographer is simply by going through her galleries and looking at the way people are posed, their smiles and expressions. Even if the photographer’s skill set isn’t quite developed, I can tell whether or not she has the passion for the craft. It all comes down to the response she’s getting whenever a client is in front of her camera.

### BE THE LEAD DOG!

*“There’s nothing in the middle of the road but yellow lines and dead armadillos.”*

—Jim Hightower

I’ve met so many photographers who are afraid to step out from the pack. If you’re offering the same things everybody else is, how are you going to be perceived as different?

I’m not just talking about your marketing or the services you offer, but being involved in the community. Be the person who always steps up to help. Build a reputation on giving back. Be a leader in your community, not just another business owner.

### DEVELOP UNIQUE PROMOTIONAL OFFERS

It’s not about your price point, but the perceived value of what you’re offering. Work with your lab, frame and album companies to develop products that are different. You still need to offer the bread-and-butter standards, but look for new products to create excitement for your clients.



A canvas wrap to most photographers is old news, but to many consumers, it's something they don't have on their walls. Michele Celentano recently talked about doing a collage of smaller canvas wraps with several different images that tell a client's story. Canvas wraps aren't new, but the way she uses them to tell a story is.

Technology has given photographers the ability to have their images printed on wood, stone, metal and glass. Be creative with the products you show your clients. In your studio or office, or the products you take when you meet with a client, remember that what you show is what you'll sell. I've seen photographers over the years who want to sell big prints, but only show 8x10's. When I've asked about having a couple of 20x30's, their answer is, "They're too expensive to show."

### CHANGE UP YOUR SERVICES

Years ago, one of the country's leading wedding photographers, Cliff Mautner, wanted to increase the value of his services, but without discounting like everybody else was doing. So he added a couple of hours of additional coverage. He added value to his packages without giving away the store.

There are so many different things you can do to stand out from the crowd. A family portrait artist could offer a "Day in the Life Shoot." The advantage here is your ability to shoot more as a photojournalist and put together a story of a family or child. That story also requires an album or several prints versus a traditional portrait. The nature of the shoot expands the potential revenue stream.

### KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR CLIENTS ALL YEAR LONG

Earlier I mentioned relationship building. That means you have to keep in touch with your clients well beyond the event they hired you for. Be the one who remembers their anniversary after shooting their wedding. Keep track of when they start a family. Pay attention to things happening in their lives, and look for ways to be involved.

### STAY ON TOP OF THE TRENDS

This is an easy one. Just look at the pictures in any well-known consumer magazine. Consumers are influenced by what they see in magazines, online and on television. Pay attention to what they're seeing, especially when it comes to portraiture.

### LOOK FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Cross-promote with other vendors who share your target audience. The variety of partners to work with is virtually unlimited. Salons, spas, restaurants, florists, tux shops, bridal salons and gift shops are all

potential partners. Sharing the cost of a promotion and working together on publicity and exposure help make your role in the community unique.

### LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN

There's an old saying: "You have two ears and one mouth, so listen twice as much as you talk."

When you first meet a potential new client, ask questions that help you understand how she sees herself. A perfect question for a bride is, "How did you meet your fiancé?" When you have them together, ask, "So, what's the craziest thing he's ever done?" You'll get them laughing, and, before you know it, the trust will start to build. More importantly, you'll be appreciated for getting to know them rather than firing off all the usual questions about their date, how big a wedding they're having, their budget, etc.

### UNDERSTAND AND CREATE VALUE IN WHAT YOU SELL

Tim and Beverly Walden are incredible fine-art portrait artists based in Kentucky. They don't position their products as portraits people are buying, but family heirlooms on loan to be handed down to future generations. They sign their work and include a certificate of authenticity on the back of prints. They don't sell photographs; rather, they create an experience for every client.

It's so important for you to stay focused on being unique in how you approach your market. Your work has to be outstanding. Your promotions need to be different from what everybody else is offering. You've got to make yourself and your work stand out.

Don't be afraid of being different. Be afraid of being the same as everybody else. ■



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

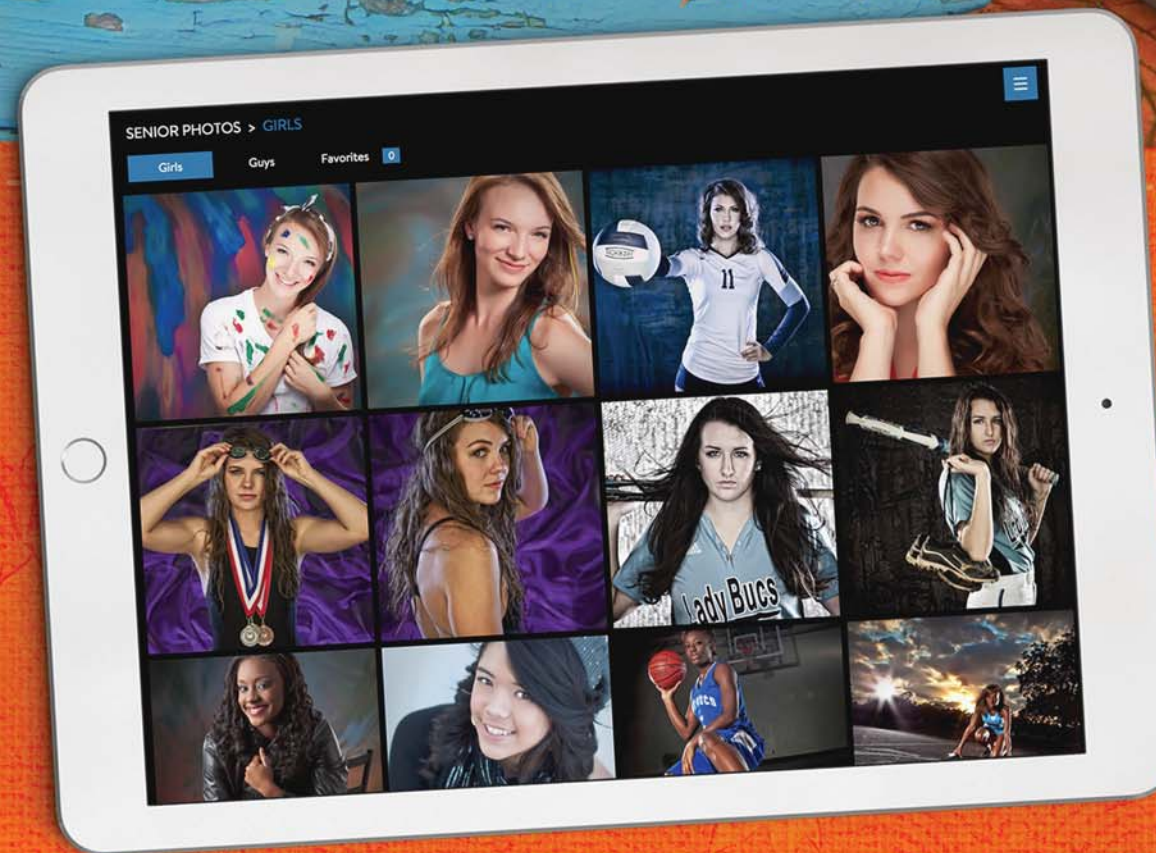
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LIGHT WITH

# MUSCLE

with Michael Corsentino

Just as athletes sculpt their bodies with new challenges, photographers use light and shadow to sculpt surfaces, create dimension and impart drama. One area of lighting that has long intrigued me is fitness lighting, and I've begun slowly building a portfolio of this type of work. This month, we'll look at my most recent foray into fitness lighting with help from fitness model Josh James. There's no arguing that Josh has an admirable physique forged out of grit, hard work and determination. The trick for me was coming up with a compelling, creative way to really show off all of Josh's hard work in the gym.

















Images © Michael Corsetino

The big takeaway here is direction of light, the shadows and highlights it creates, and its ability to sculpt surfaces like nothing else. So get out there and find some direction with your lighting. I can't wait to see what you come up with. Post images on the ShutterFest Facebook page, and tag me if you'd like my two cents. ■



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

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# THE BRANDING EDITION



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Image © Vanessa Joy

# Secret Ways to BRAND YOUR BUSINESS

It's Not All Logos and Packaging

with Vanessa Joy

At one of my first introductions to branding, I was sitting in a workshop, and the Nike logo popped up on the screen, and then Mercedes, and then Coca-Cola. The most common way to explain branding is by showing popular logos and letting the audience realize they have a connection to that logo, good or bad, and therefore a connection to that company and its product. That is branding, but that's not all that branding is.

People's lives are becoming more open and consumers more educated on what a solid business brand should look like. Consumers are starting to have a more critical eye and expect a higher level of experience when spending their money. Starbucks will always redo a bad drink. Victoria's Secret will wrap your purchases like a birthday gift. Apple will forever be dedicated to sleek and sophisticated electronic style. You need to find ways to communicate your brand to the world like these companies do.

The first thing that comes to most people's mind when thinking of branding is, "What else can I put my logo on?" or, "Do my pictures look consistent and flow together nicely on my website and with my logo?" It's so much more than that. Branding is about customer experience, so to effectively convey your brand message to your clients, you need to look at the overall picture. Walk yourself through the client process and see how they see you.

Here are five ways you can communicate your brand that you may not have thought of before.



## Social Media

Gary Vaynerchuk writes in his book *The Thank You Economy* that individuals need to work on their own personal brand. The book shows how powerful social media would become, how it would require that everyone create a brand for themselves. When you're sizing up a new business or a potential new friend, what do you do? You check out their social media, and in just a few clicks and scrolls, you think you know them and what they're about.

Your customers are no exception. When they first look at your website and want to know more about you, they'll click on your Facebook and see how many likes you have. They'll open your Instagram feed and see if it looks artsy and professional. Your social media is 100 percent a platform for telling the world who you are, and your first opportunity to convey your brand.

If you're looking to improve your social media brand presence, consider these tips:

- Decide what you'll post about your personal life. Do it intentionally one way or the other, and be prepared to be judged on it.
- Clean things up. Feel free to go back in your feed and delete posts that aren't conducive to how you'd like to convey your brand.
- Be everywhere. Social media helps boost SEO.



Image © Vanessa Joy



Images © Vanessa Joy

## Client Experience

Ever experience buyer's remorse due to a product just not being all it was cracked up to be? Or left a store with a bad taste in your mouth because of how it handled a concern or complaint? This plays a huge part in not only your brand but whether or not your customers will refer you.

It starts with setting expectations and delivering on your promises. Don't promise your potential clients a great experience if all you do for them is your job. That's not an experience, that's what they paid for. The difference between buying clothes at Target and Bloomingdale's is night and day because one offers an experience and one-on-one customer service, while the other simply offers you clothes.

Part of your brand, and your entire business, is the experience and attention you give your clients. This doesn't just mean the formulated task list you have for everyone who comes in the door; this also includes how you handle problems as they arise. One of the best ways you can communicate what your company is about is not by how you make your clients feel while everything is hunky dory, but how you make them feel when addressing more difficult issues. The experience is what your clients will tell others about.



## Communication

Don't worry, I'm not going to pick on your grammar here—although proper grammar and email etiquette should be a no-brainer. How you speak and the words you use say a lot about your brand.

For example, if you saw a website that was bright and airy and whimsically romantic, and then chatted with that photographer, you'd expect the same cheery personality coming through the other side of the phone, or a smiley face or two in an email. If, on the other hand, you went to a photographer's site that was more moody and dark, you'd expect to correspond with someone a bit more serious in tone.

How you speak and what your personality is like deeply impacts your brand because you are your brand. This isn't to say that you need to go change your personality to match your brand. It's simply to state that who you are, especially if you're running a boutique studio selling yourself as the primary photographer, is more what your clients are buying than the pictures. As the saying goes, "People don't pay you for how good you are at what you do, they pay you for how good you are at who you are."



Image © Vanessa Joy



Image © Vanessa Joy



## Environment

Where you meet with clients speaks volumes about your brand. Meeting at a Starbucks or Panera? You're imparting a brand image. If you're fortunate enough to have studio space, you have much more control over this.

Do yourself a favor and walk into a Toyota dealership, and then a Porsche dealership. After taking one step in the door, you'll be met with a completely different atmosphere. Without ever taking a look at the cars in the showroom, you'll know which car is better. You want your clients to know without even seeing your products that you've got the best around. Eventually, the reverse ends up being true, and they'll see your photos or name and correlate it to the atmospheric experience they had, and draw conclusions about you and your brand from it (hopefully good ones).

To maximize your environment, just think of the five senses and walk yourself through your space. What do you see? Messy areas, or neat, color-coordinated spaces? What do you hear and smell? Noisy neighbors and dinner cooking, or a crackling fireplace and lighted candles? Encourage taste and touch by offering them food and drinks and inviting them to hold your albums. Anything you can think of to positively engage the senses will create a lasting impression about your brand.



Images © Vanessa Joy

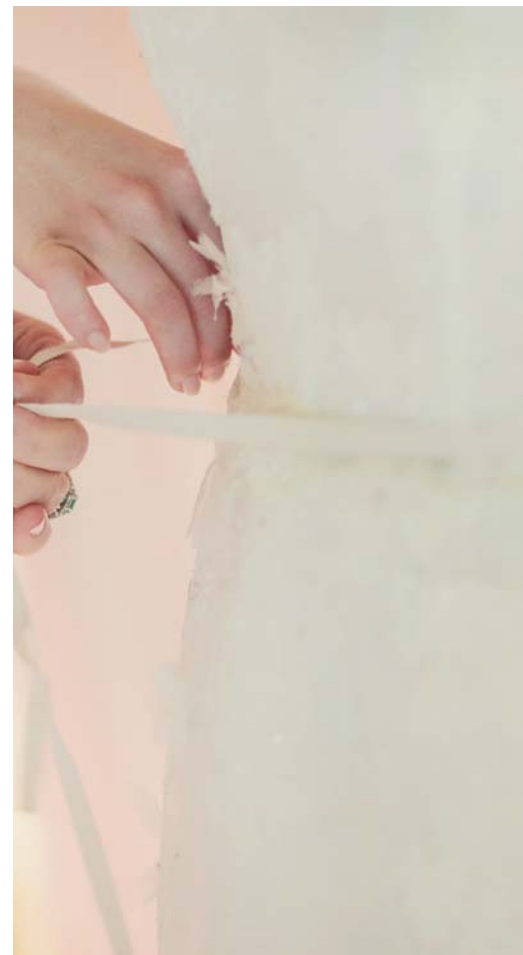
## What You Wear

This may sound silly, but I have a proven track record on this one. One of the first clients I booked for my own business was a beautiful blonde girl with impeccable fashion sense. I met with her in person for a consultation in pants and a nice shirt. It went OK and I was in her budget, but soon after she asked to meet me again with her maid of honor. Now, knowing what she was like, I chose to wear a fun fashion-forward dress and heels. She commented on it more than once, saying how much she liked it, and she booked with me that week.

What you wear says a lot about your brand. It doesn't have to be designer clothes, but my more high-end clients relate better to me if I am wearing them. They recognize the designer brand, and I reap the benefit of that brand association.

The second part of this has to do with style. Since I am my brand, I want to dress the part. Rarely do I let my clients see me in dark colors, because my brand is light and airy and pastel logo colors. It may sound silly, but I've been told I look like my brand. It's no accident that I wear a lot of light pink and turquoise and clothes from Free People. It's all part of my Vanessa Joy brand and how I want my clients and potential clients to view me.

Check out this video for more on visual branding do's and don't's. ■



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Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry (LearnPhotoVideo.com). Vanessa has been recognized for her talent and business sense at the renowned industry events CreativeLIVE, Clickin' Moms, WPPI and ShutterFest. Her peers love her informative, open-book style of teaching.

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A wedding couple in a white dress and dark suit are embracing on a rocky shore. The background features a vast ocean with white-capped waves and a sky filled with soft, grey clouds. The overall mood is romantic and serene.

# Building Your Brand & Portfolio *Through* Partnerships

with Leonardo Volturo

This month, I want to share a few stories and give you some tips on how we were able to create and leverage relationships to build our existing wedding portfolio, as well as build a new portfolio from scratch for our new studio. The end result was not simply ending up with new images, but getting our names out there in different markets and other types of photography—and cultivating vendor relationships.





image © Leonardo Volturo



image © Leonardo Volturo

## Bridal

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Let's dig into approaching a bridal salon. The goal is to build a relationship for referrals, display your work and gain the use of the shop's dresses to build your portfolio.

A good starting point is to look back at your previous weddings and see where the brides got their dresses, and use those images as a way in. You can then show up with a 20x30 canvas featuring one of their brides for them to showcase. Shops love featuring their own real brides versus stock images from dress designers.

Before approaching shops, we asked ourselves, "How can we help them help us?" You can't walk into any of these situations and simply ask for product or if you can leave your marketing info there. You need to make it more about them and show interest in their business and a willingness to do things to help them grow. Dale Carnegie said, "You can make more friends in two months by being interested

in other people than in two years of trying to get people interested in you."

So with that in mind, we quickly came up with ideas of things we could do for them that would be mutually beneficial. We set up a meeting with an owner and her two daughters, and presented some of our ideas. First, we let them give away a free engagement session with us to brides who spent a certain amount of money. That of course brings us brides and also encourages their brides to spend a little more with that added incentive.

Then we worked a cross promotion, and used them as one of our preferred vendors, offering our brides \$100 off their purchase.

Next, we wanted to work in a way of gaining access to their dresses. We offered them canvas prints from our shoots to be

hung in the store. This part can get expensive, depending on how big the shop is and how many images you want to put in there. It's great exposure. We printed up 24x36 canvases and put them at the entrance, by the mirrors and in the dressing rooms.

Think about how many brides go into those dressing rooms and are now staring at your images with your watermark as they change in and out of dresses. That is great exposure for your brand. You're building your portfolio, and you're allowing the store to showcase its dresses on "real" brides rather than just stock imagery.

This shop also does prom dresses. Prom dresses equal junior and senior high girls. They'd been sending out marketing pieces several times a year to their list of high school girls. As we did for bridal, we offered to photograph some of their girls featuring several prom dresses they wanted to showcase. We

were able to piggyback off of these shoots to create images for our portfolio and feature our images on their marketing pieces. All of which didn't cost us anything but our time.

We then helped them put together a prom fashion show that we photographed. We used the fashion show to market ourselves with promotional postcards featuring the shoots we did of other girls.

This one simple relationship we were able to build landed us exposure and a relationship on multiple levels. It's an integral piece of marketing and networking that you should be doing when you're looking to build both your relationships and portfolio. We covered all of our bases stemming from one simple conversation and by being genuinely interested in someone else's business and success.





Image © Leonardo Volturo

## The New Studio

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Earlier this year, we moved from our old office/showroom space into a full-on studio with an infinity wall, sales area and office. Our expenses went up across the board for this larger space. We went in there with a plan for how to

monetize the space to its fullest potential. We wanted to do headshots, fashion style shoots, creative portraits and more. To begin to monetize those other avenues, we needed a portfolio before we could even begin marketing.

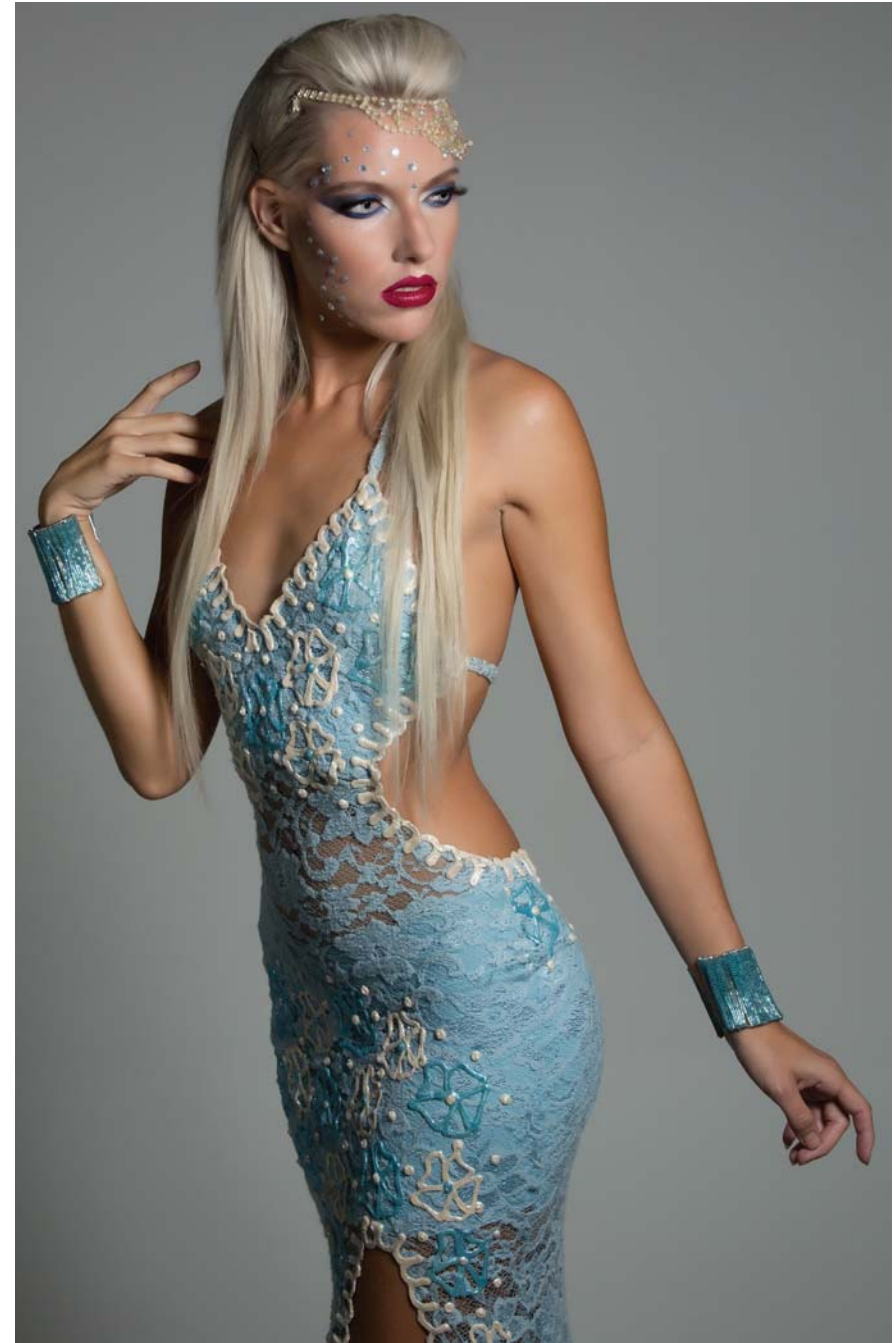


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Rewind back to April of this year. We were heading to Costa Rica for an engagement session, and the client's hair and makeup artist, Rogelio Morales, was flying with us. We hadn't met before. We hit it off right away and worked closely over several days on styling and planning our shoots. During that time, we'd discussed how Rogelio wanted to

build his portfolio. So after the trip, we set up a meeting to see how we could start working together regularly. We planned portfolio-building shoots and concept shoots that were also used for *Shutter* articles. The opportunities and relationships began rolling in the more we collaborated and got to know one another.

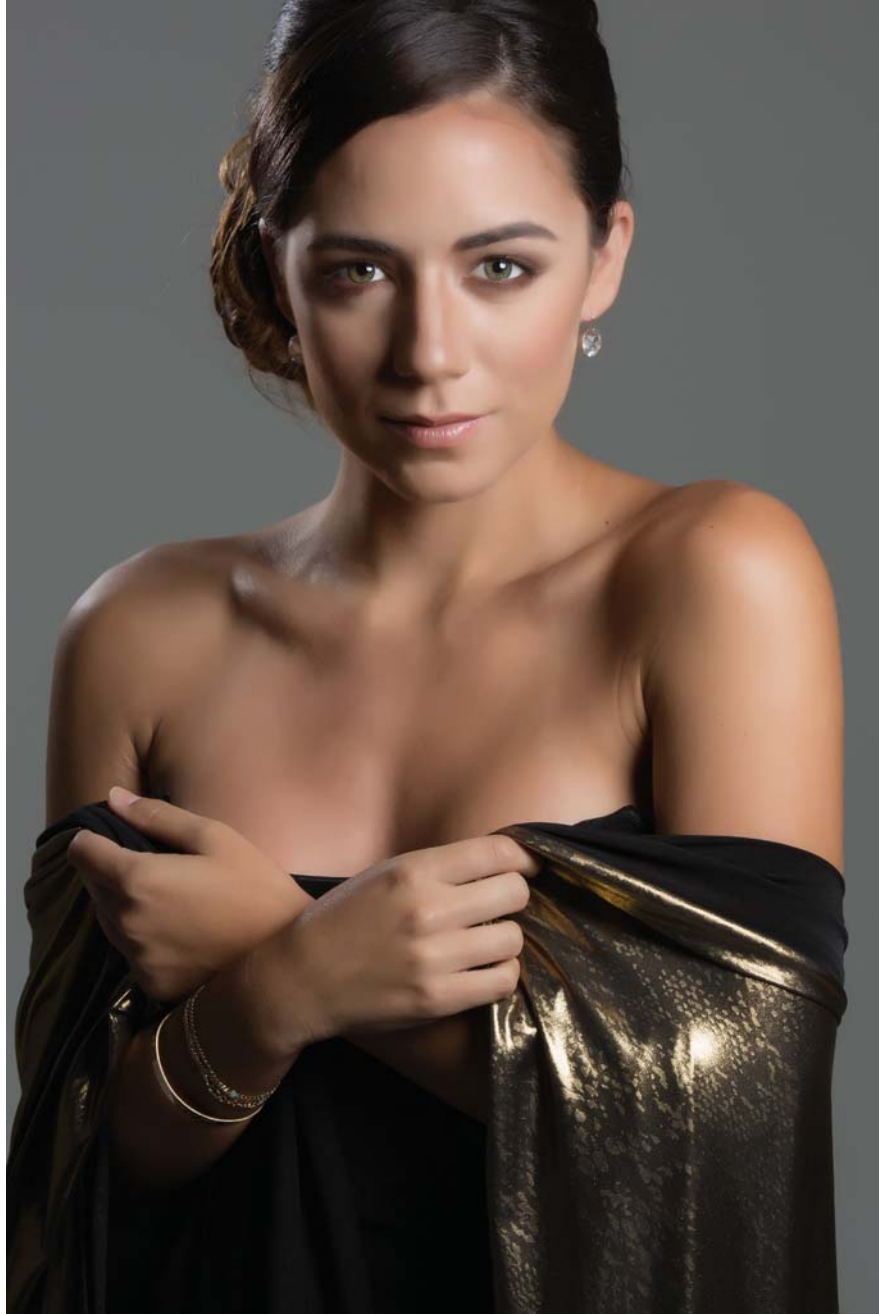


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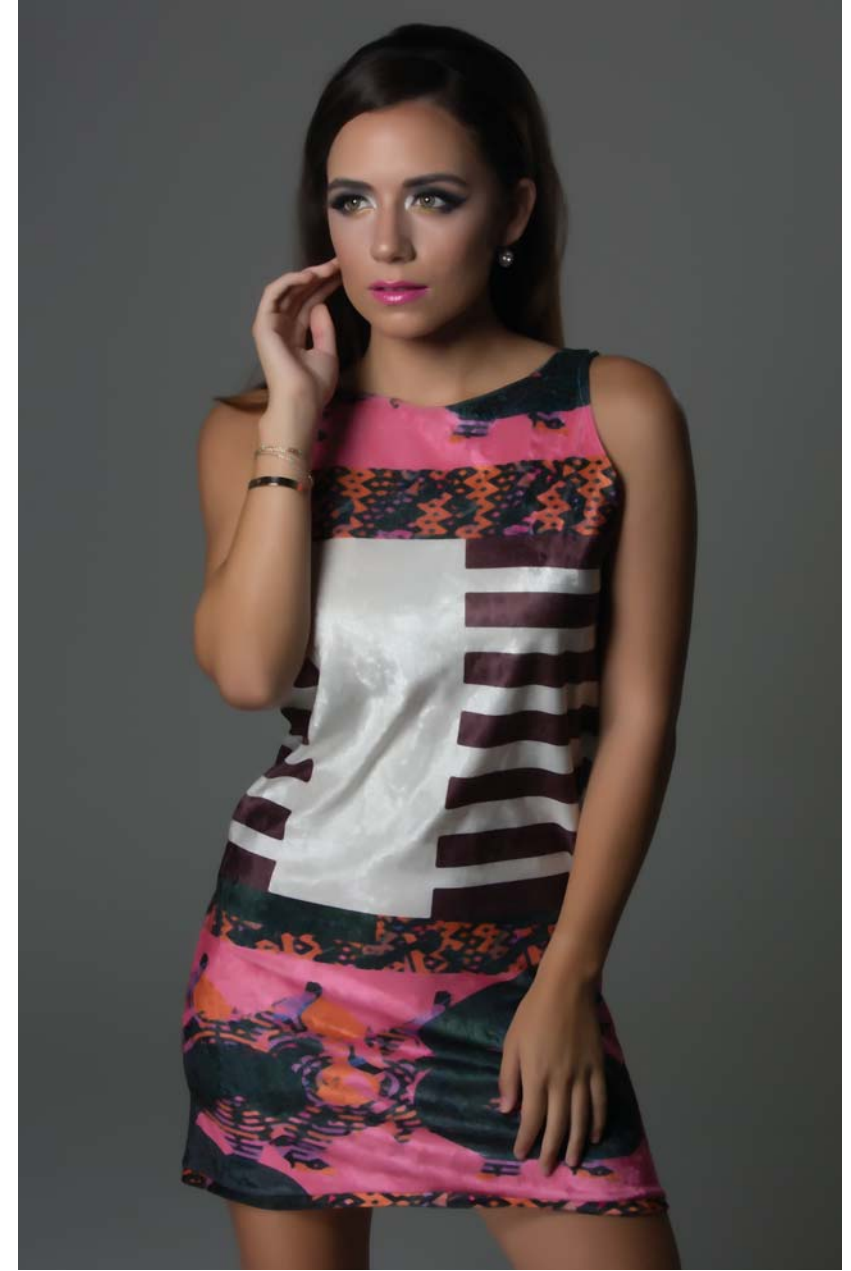


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A great opportunity for us to make a connection and build our portfolio came when Rogelio told us he was friends with a business owner who had a new makeup line, Brugal Makeup. The owner was about to launch her first store in a mall, and was in the process of rebranding. We collaborated with Rogelio and Brugal, deciding on looks based on the products they offered. We wanted to show the looks that

could be achieved with their various palettes. We chose models and concepts, paired them with various looks and colors and even seasons. We teamed up with designer Lisu Vega to source wardrobe to complement those looks. Brugal needed promotional content, we wanted to build our portfolio and Rogelio wanted to build his. It was a win for everyone.





Image © Leonardo Volturo

Following that, we were introduced to the pageant world. I needed a model for an upcoming *Shutter* article, and Rogelio mentioned that a friend of his was the head of a pageant and represented some girls. We were quickly scheduled to photograph Miss Cuba Queen of the Continents (my model for last month's article). I got the shots I needed for my article, and they got the shots they needed. They were so happy with us and our work that they wanted us to photograph another one of their girls, Miss Teen Cuba, the model in this article.

What began as a simple shoot for trade turned into a future well-paying session, a new relationship and an entry into a brand-new realm for our business. In a short amount of

time, our portfolio was growing exponentially and we were making money in our new space.

We began offering Rogelio as our in-house hair and makeup artist for engagement sessions and weddings. That's given us the confidence of working with a proven stylist on a regular basis, while he gets a new income source.

All you need to do is be genuinely interested in others to snag so many opportunities and avenues out there, to make connections and build your business. Make everything a two-way street. Be willing to go that extra mile for someone else, and you will be repaid many times over. ■

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Leonardo Volturo is an international award-winning wedding and portrait photographer, writer and educator. He and his his wife, Melissa, operate Leonardo Volturo Photography, a boutique South Florida studio. Together they cater to discerning brides around the world with their signature blend of modern, stylistic and dramatic imagery.

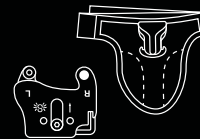
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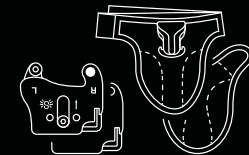


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## BUILD YOUR BRAND

### 5 TIPS FOR BEING MORE THAN JUST A PHOTOGRAPHER

with Craig LaMere

It's so easy for anyone to call himself a photographer, so it is more important than ever to find your way out of the masses and be seen as unique. This month, I talk about work you put out to the world, how versatile you are in your shooting, your identity and the stuff you are doing just for you. These are four of the big components that go into a shooter who's more than just a picture taker.





## YOUR WORK

Your work is your introduction to the world. It really is your calling card and what potential clients are attracted to first. One of the best ways to separate yourself and be more than just any old shooter in your area is to have work that is on another level from most of the other work in your market.

This could be because of the locations you use, the type of lighting you use, how you process images or all of the above. No matter the difference, make sure you are doing something to be different. If you are shooting the same, processing the same, using the same filters, you are setting yourself up for a pretty hard time because you are producing a mass product. Mass products can be sold in volume at a lower price. If your customers can get your product from 50 other shooters in your area, they are going to get it for the cheapest price they can.



Image © Craig LaMere



Image © Craig LaMere



## VERSATILITY

Just about every single human being is a photographer. Whether they use a DSLR, a point-and-shoot or a phone, everyone is snapping images. At no time in history has it been easier for people to become photographers. I can't even imagine the number of images the average person sees in the course of a day, between Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Pinterest.

Pro shooters are always stressing about how this glut affects their business. I would argue it's not the number of shooters in their area, but rather the skill level and versatility—or lack of it—that's hurting a lot of shooters. If you put all your eggs in one basket and decide you are only shooting one or two ways or only shooting one or two genres, you are walking away from business—or, I should say, business is walking away from you. The more versatile you are, the better able you are to take advantage of the opportunities that will come your way.

It is way easier to get business from existing clients than always having to find new ones. Do a great job for a client, and you'll see that client again. If you're a one-trick pony, you'll lose your hard-earned clients. Being versatile does not mean you have to market that you shoot everything. It just means you can shoot everything if you need to. You're a reliable, go-to resource for your clients, and that is big.



Images © Craig LaMere



Images © Craig LaMere



## FINDING YOUR IDENTITY

One of the most important things a shooter can do to elevate himself above the pool of millions and millions of generic shooters is to create a distinct identity that clearly defines who he is and what he has built. Some people call this branding. But identity is more than a brand in our industry. We artists are not only creating products to sell to the public; we are also selling ourselves to the public.

When you create a brand, you are creating an idea about your business and your products. But when you create an identity, you are creating a persona. Your persona is your personal connection to the world. This is why identity is far more powerful than a brand—it's that personal connection that stirs an emotional response toward not just your work but to you as the creator of the work.

Nike is one of the strongest brands on the planet. Its logo is so recognizable that it transcends all continents, languages and people. Nike could put that swish on a pile of poop, and someone out there would buy that poop because it is Nike poop. Even with the global reach Nike has, could most people name the owner or founder of Nike? If the owner of Nike were sitting next to you on a plane, would you automatically know who it was? I would bet my last dollar most of you would not. I know I wouldn't.

Apple, on the other hand, has always had something Nike never did: a very clear captain of the ship. Nike has had great spokespeople but never a Steve Jobs. Even after his passing, Jobs is still the captain at Apple. He was, is and always will be synonymous with Apple. His philosophies and ideals were the company, and he was the identity of Apple. In death, it could be argued Jobs has become even more of an icon for the company.



Image © Craig LaMere



Images © Craig LaMere

## SHOOTING FOR YOURSELF

One of the very best things a photographer can do to ward off boredom and stagnation is to shoot personal work. Many full-time photographers, for various reasons, never take time to shoot for themselves. The rampant discontent is obvious from all my speaking and teaching engagements. I always ask people how many shoots a month they do just for themselves. The answer is usually very few, if any.

The one commonality between shooters is that they all picked up a camera, discovered they loved it, got better and better at it, fell in love more and more with the images they were producing, and decided they would like to make their living doing what they loved. Isn't that the dream of everyone?

The irony of what I am seeing out there is that the more successful that full-time shooters become, the less they enjoy photography. Because they aren't enjoying shooting as much, they and their work stagnate. I don't know any shooters who are in the business just to create revenue. Because there really are no places that teach people the reality of owning a studio or the reality of the business of being a full-time shooter, we all find out quickly that this is a very hard industry to make a living in. It's easy to get bogged down, to become too busy for anything other than client work, and to stop shooting personal projects.





Image © Craig LaMere

That's why full-time shooters become disenchanted. The lack of personal shooting can stunt your artistic growth. You'll cease to fulfill your creative needs. When that happens, many shooters go into autopilot mode. That is not to say the work is not at a high level. It just means it soon becomes the same work over and over again.

If you fall into this category, take some time to shoot something just for you a few times a month. You will see a dramatic change in yourself, and your work will reflect it. ■



Craig LaMere is an award-winning professional portrait photographer from Pocatello, Idaho. As well as running his full-time studio in Idaho, Craig is also an international educator and speaker specializing in lighting and posing. He has two dogs named Logan and Steve and two cats named Emit and Martin.  
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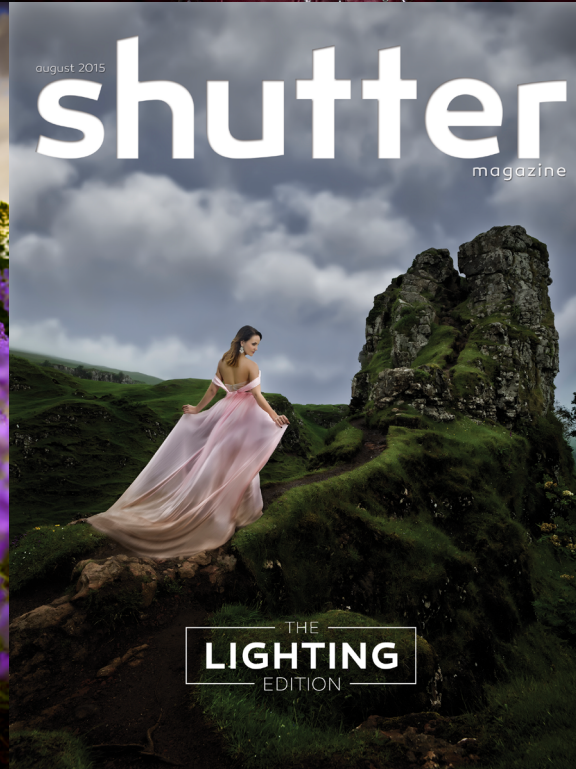
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Circle Pendant, Artistry Ornament, & Mother Of Pearl © Mark Garber Photography







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The Anatomy of a Strategically  
**Search-Engine-Optimized**  
**Homepage**

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with Justen Hong



Your homepage is the most important page of your site. It almost always has the most page authority, since the majority of inbound links typically link to the homepage. There is no formula to a perfectly search-engine-optimized homepage. There are a couple hundred or so ranking factors, so it's hard to nail them all down. Even a mediocre website that has a ton of high-quality inbound links can rank very well. The design and content of a homepage can have a tremendous effect on how well a website ranks. Let's dissect a sample homepage and the design choices I've made on it, strategically, to help boost its ranking.

## Header

You can't see it in the screen shot, but the actual website will have a "sticky" header, meaning when you continue to scroll down the page, the header stays at the top of the screen. This allows users to always have access to the main navigation no matter how far down they go. This creates a good user experience, which is a ranking factor, and it makes moving around the site convenient for users. We also added the phone number in the header, making it easy for visitors to call from any page on the site. When users click on your phone number to make a call from a smartphone, search engines take note: It's called Mobile Clicks to Call, and it can help with your local rankings.

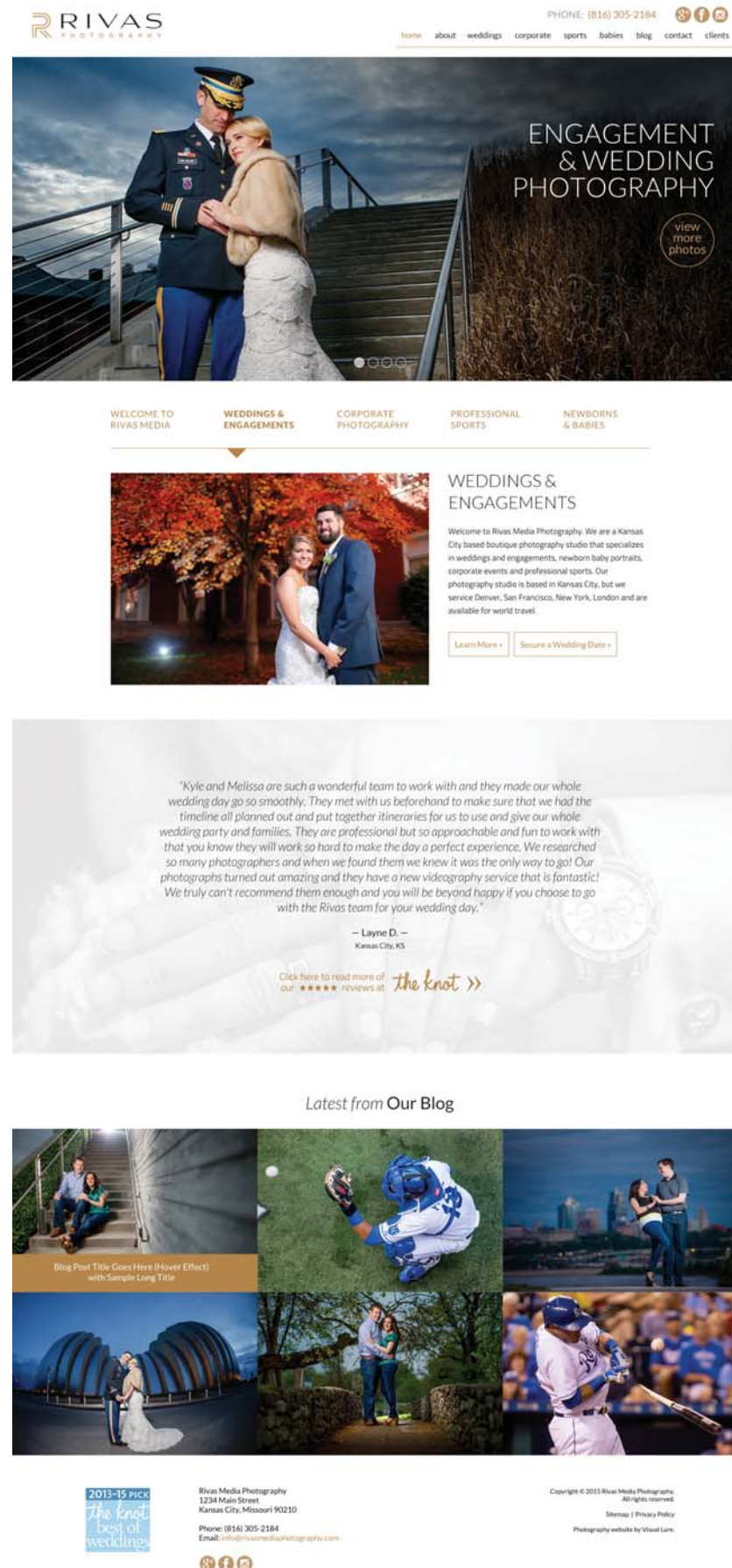
## Slideshow

I've recently been moving away from slideshows on the homepage because they tend to slow down load times (Google hates slow-loading sites). We've developed a high-performance slideshow that loads quickly, and we keep the slideshow image count down. In this sample, we are highlighting the studio's four core markets with one signature image for each category, along with a button to drive them to the portfolio pages.

One huge mistake I constantly see is photographers keeping a large portion of their portfolio on their homepage, whether in a slideshow or a grid of some kind. By doing this, you are not incentivizing visitors to go any deeper into your site, especially the ones who are just there to look at photos. This can lead to an increased bounce rate (when a visitor looks at one page on your site and then leaves)—or, worse yet, pogo stick (when a visitor looks at one page on your site and then bounces back to his original search). Both can negatively impact your ranking. The best homepages lure visitors into other sections of the site, easily guiding them to the information they want.

## Main Content

Down from the slideshow is the main content area. We have this section broken down into tabs. The welcome section will contain the <h1> html tag. The <h1>, also called the "header one" tag, is important when it comes to SEO. It should contain the main targeted search term that the web page is targeting. In this case, I would have it read something like: "Kansas City Wedding Photographer." It is also important to have additional keywords sprinkled throughout the paragraph copy, but only where they make sense. Do not just add them to add them—and, most importantly, do not keyword-stuff the body copy. That could lead to a search engine penalty.





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Shown in the screenshot is the Weddings tab. Weddings & Engagements is another header. We also have a link to learn more, and an important call-to-action button to Secure a Wedding date. It is important to have call-to-actions throughout the site where they make sense.

Next we have a testimonials section. This is here for two reasons: to add credibility and because it's a good place to add additional keywords. Studies have shown that when websites have testimonials, people tend to trust them more, even if they don't know the person. We also have an outbound link going to The Knot where users can read more testimonials. Keep in mind that anytime you have an exterior link on your website, it should open in a new window. You don't want to lose your visitors.

This section is also a great place to have additional natural keywords. In the sample testimonial, the word *wedding* is used multiple times, along with *photographers*, *photographs* and *videography*. It is important to have your targeted keywords and related keywords throughout your site in natural occurrences. Always avoid keyword stuffing.

Second to last is the "Latest From Our Blog" section. We've added this to keep the homepage fresh. Anytime our client adds a new blog post, it is automatically fed into the homepage with an eye-catching featured image. Adding fresh content to your website on a regular basis can help with ranking and bring Google's spiders back more often. That is why it is so important to blog and keep your portfolio current. You don't want your site to get stale. Freshness is a ranking factor.

Finally, we have the footer. In the sample footer, there is a "2013-2015 The Knot Best of Weddings" logo, which adds additional credibility to the site. Next we have the NAP (name, address, phone number), along with additional contact info. This is extremely important to have on every page of your site. Google looks for a NAP on every page, and uses it as a ranking factor, especially for local searches.

Use a local phone number rather than an 800 number. Google prefers a local phone number for local searches. To the far right is the copyright, along with links to an HTML site map and a privacy policy. The HTML list site map provides links to every page of your site. If you have a WordPress website, there are multiple plugins for adding HTML site maps.

One last thing: It's important to have a privacy policy accessible from every page, especially any page where you are collecting personal data. Google looks for these. ■



Justen Hong is an award-winning, internationally published graphic designer in the St. Louis area. His work has been featured in *The Big Book of Packaging*. Justen's driving passion is creating logos. A dozen of his logos appeared in *Logos Talk II*, by Hong Kong publisher Artpower International, and many more of his logos appeared in several LogoLounge books. He 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. Justen has a studio art background with a degree in graphic design, and a printmaking minor. He also loves art, photography and architecture.

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*by Salvatore Cavotta*  
VBYSAL.COM



# You Are the Brand

with  
Melanie Anderson

This month, I show how you can become your own brand.

I have been in business for almost a decade now. Over the past few years, I have developed my brand and begun to stand apart from my colleagues. I did this through social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and, more recently, Periscope. I can remember for years being told I should separate my personal account from my business account. I was skeptical about doing this since the name of my studio, Anderson Photographs, contains my last name. No matter how many employees I have on staff, my name is on the sign. I am the brand of the studio.

I struggled with that. About two years ago, I started realizing that pretty much wherever I went in the community, I was recognized. People tell me all the time, "I love your work" and, "Are you *the* Anderson?" To this day it makes me smile, warms my heart and humbles me. It didn't happen overnight. It took years to get to this point. I think it was a result of the way I use social media and because I began embracing the idea that I am the brand.



Image © Melanie Anderson



### Business Cards

Make sure your picture is on your business card. Remember, you are the brand. It will help your potential clients identify with you. Choose your image wisely. Make sure it's professionally shot with good lighting and processing, represents your style and is conducive to the overall feel of all your marketing. When you exchange cards with other businesspeople, look to see if their picture is on their business card—if not, there is your opportunity to invite them in for commercial headshots.



### Get Creative

My studio likes to create team photos with a twist. We were all huge *Walking Dead* fans, and decided to create a themed poster. We do this often to keep things interesting in the studio and reinforce our creativity to our clients, documenting behind the scenes the entire time. This is just another way our fans can follow along and feel part of what we do and get to know us even more, reinforcing our brand of “having a good time.” You can view a behind-the-scenes video of the making of this poster on our Anderson Photographs YouTube channel.



Image © Melanie Anderson

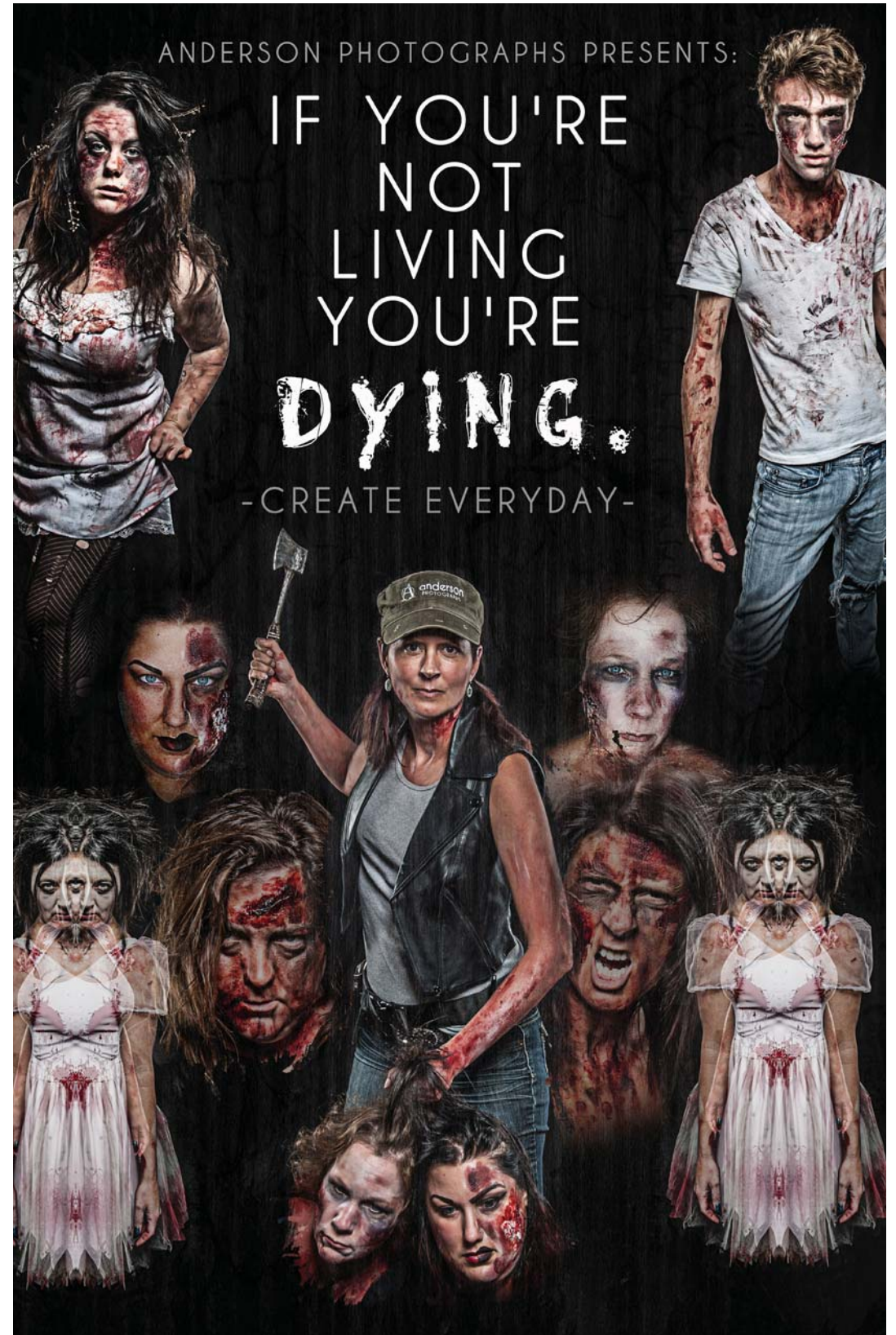


Image © Melanie Anderson



## Social Media

My actions, energy and images became the brand that it is today. I am known for “open-mouthed” selfies. I am known for traveling for both work and pleasure. I am known for “work-hard, play-hard.” I want to impact the community and beyond in a positive manner. My social media postings are meant to inspire you and to bring a smile to your face. I want to interact with each of you on a personal level. I do that by sharing my life. We post behind the scenes wherever we go, in the studio with clients, on location photographing volume sports, in networking meetings, etc. People feel that they are a part of everything we do. They cry with me in times of family health emergencies, and they celebrate with me when I win awards and recognition. It’s a great feeling knowing your community is behind you.

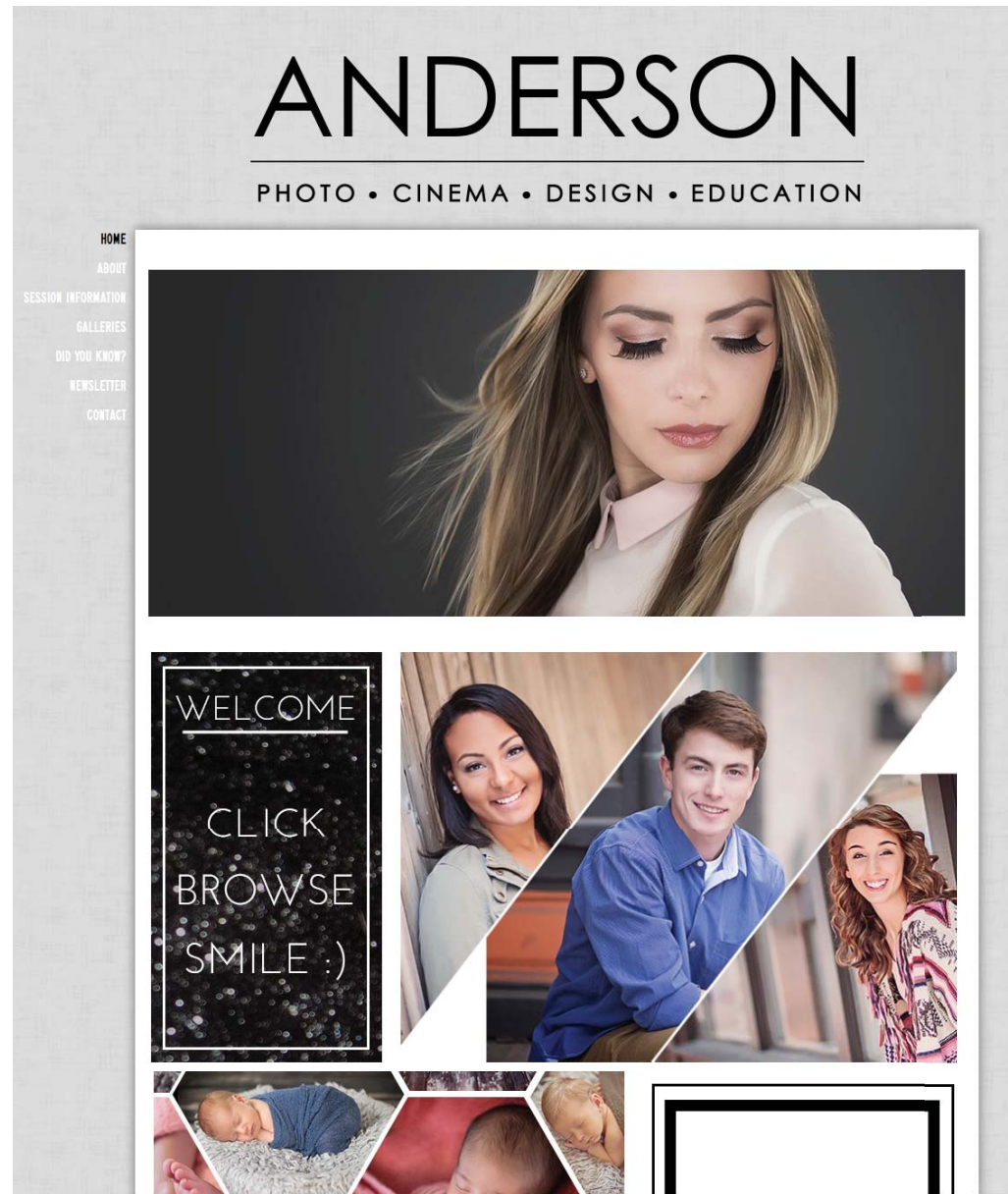


Image © Melanie Anderson



Images © Melanie Anderson

## Recognition

We recently received the *Hagerstown Magazine* HotList award for best photography studio (for the fifth year in a row). For the first time ever, we received a Herald-Mail Readers’ Choice award, which honors the best in the tristate area. I was so surprised and honored by this last award since we didn’t even solicit votes. I can’t help but think this is a result of the community embracing all that we do, through our marketing, quality of work and the image we project. That can be a lot of pressure, but the pride that comes from it is overwhelming. As a result of winning these awards, showcasing that our studio was voted best of the best, I am taking my staff to Disney World for five days in November. We are so excited to celebrate. We work hard for these achievements, and of course will be documenting the entire trip.





## Products

My favorite branded product is our ChapStick. We order these in sets of 500, and I probably order almost 5,000 a year. We have a jar of them in our studio for clients to take. We pass them out at all our events and give them to everyone who attends networking meetings and when we photograph large volumes of people for photobooths and sporting events. Our ChapSticks are the talk of the town. No matter where I go, I get comments on them. We choose a flavor that is pleasing, and ensure our logo and contact info are on each one. When I am out and about, the first thing clients ask me is if I have any extras on me.

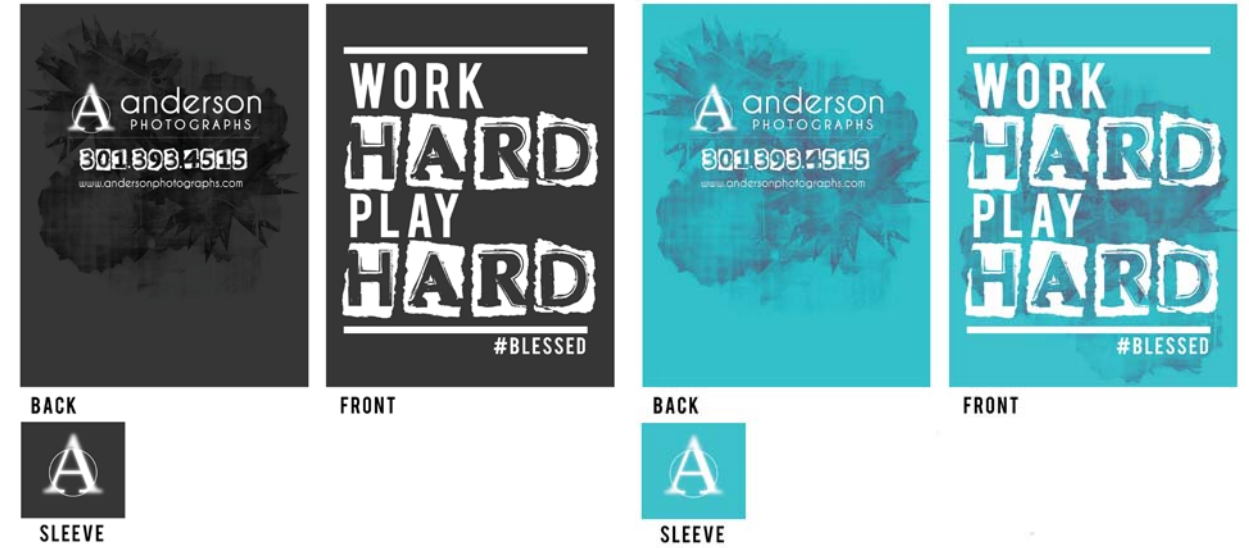


Image © Melanie Anderson

## Our Moto: “Work Hard/Play Hard #Blessed”

Not only do our T-shirts say this, but we live by this—not only at the studio, but in our home as well. I believe in having many opportunities to celebrate success, no matter how big or small. We take time to enjoy our lives by celebrating wine Wednesday at the studio, going to a local restaurant for “b1g1f” martinis after a long day and even taking trips. I have taken my staff on day trips, a cruise and now the upcoming Disney World trip. Why? Why not? My team is a huge reason why my studio is successful. Without them, I would need to work harder and would have less time to play.

It’s a balance. I believe in celebrating as often as we can, and we share those moments all over social media.



## Action Plans

1. If your headshot is not already on your business card, make it happen now.
2. Go through all your contacts’ business cards. Any that do not have headshots on them, invite that person/company in for promotional commercial headshots.
3. Create a tagline for your studio. Ours is “Work Hard/Play Hard #Blessed.”
4. We have these printed on our T-shirts and use it on social media.
5. Buy branded ChapStick and pass it around everywhere. This is such a great branding tool that clients use daily. You can buy them at CustomLipBalmStore.com. My latest flavor is the peach aloe vera. Tell them I sent you for a discount on your first purchase. ■



Melanie Anderson is an award-winning photographer and wife to her husband of 20 years, Bill, and a mother to their four children, Sarah, Emily, Kayla and Billy. Anderson Photographs is located in the Arts & Entertainment District of downtown Hagerstown, Maryland. Melanie is a Certified Professional Photographer who received her Photographic Craftsman degree in February 2015. Melanie is passionate about one-on-one mentoring and works diligently to provide educational resources and workshops to fellow photographers through Anderson Education. Learn more at [AndersonPhotographs.com](http://AndersonPhotographs.com).

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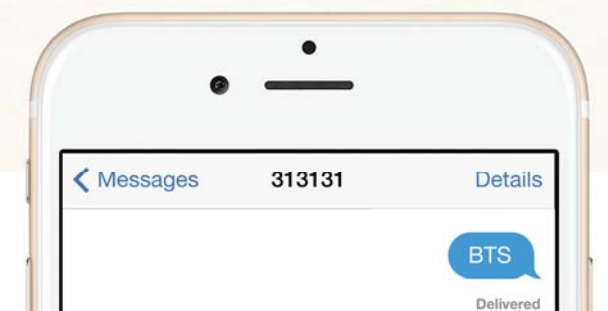


*“As soon as I saw StickyApps, I knew that it had a ton of potential to make my income more consistent. Within just a couple of months of following up with small businesses in my community, I’ve reached my first goal of \$1000 a month of additional income through my custom websites.*

*My clients have received only positive feedback on their new sites, and they are thrilled! It is also bringing new opportunities to my portrait business. I highly recommend this platform to any photographers who are looking to expand their business!”*

— KATE TREICK PHOTOGRAPHY

Text keyword **BTS** to **313131** to learn each step of the system Kate Treick is using to grow her business.





Keeping Up  
by Creating  
**Brand Consistency**

with  
Blair Phillips

Branding can be just as important, if not more important, than your photography. It is an invaluable part of how the public views your business. It is a feeling or emotion that comes to mind when someone thinks of you. Aesthetics are one of the first things that come to mind when talking about branding. If you are trying to get people to spend money with you, you must create an environment that is conducive to spending. Your workspace and studio should reflect your brand throughout. They should have a feel and a look that represents exactly who and what you are. We have a certain candle that we burn each day in the studio. Our clients are used to that smell. It has become a part of our brand.





## Establishing Brand

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Maintaining a brand can actually be the easy part. Establishing it is often more challenging. The easiest way to establish your brand is to rely on friends and family. Relying on those people can help ensure that you get started off in the right direction. Print 10 of your favorite images you have ever created. Put the images in front of them and ask them for five to 10 words they feel best describe the images.

What you are looking for is to receive emotions that best describe your work. Once you have those keywords, you can begin to build your brand. When I first did this, there were two words that were mentioned by several people: *eclectic elegance*. Those two words became the direction of my brand. Everything I do in my business reflects eclectic elegance.

Now that you have established your brand, the hard work has only begun. A company's brand should be treated as a human being. Your brand is your reputation. Your brand often has only one opportunity to make a great impression on people. It is similar to opening a restaurant. You must do everything within your power to make a customer's first visit a success. If the experience is not great, you will likely never see them again.

Fortune 500 companies have a spokesperson who goes straight to the media if there is ever a huge problem with their product. Their number-one job during that situation is to protect the brand. Celebrities are very protective of their brand as well. After a personal controversy, the first person you normally hear from is the celeb's publicist. This should be a reminder of how valuable your brand really is.

Let's spend some time putting some things in place to make sure your branding is living up to its full potential. Create a progress report for your brand. It is very easy to get so busy that you get off track and head in the wrong direction. Take a break from your photography for a few hours, and use that time to make sure your branding is where it needs to be. Ask yourself if your brand is running wild or if it is truly reaching your target market. Evaluate your work, customer service and day-to-day operations. During that evaluation, make sure you are providing something that truly sets you apart from your competitors.



Image © Blair Phillips

## Specialization

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To maintain longevity in the marketplace, a lot of photographers specialize in several genres. I've found success this way. This is a good way of making sure you nail your brand. When you look at a senior session and a child session I have shot, you will easily recognize my brand in each. Branding is instinctual. You should automatically be able to imbue all of your photography with a similar style that echoes your brand. To ensure your brand is working and growing with you, stay true to your ideas and follow your style and instincts.



Image © Blair Phillips



## Social Media

Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives. There are tons of photographers who use social media as a way to start, maintain and grow their business. There are arguments for and against keeping your personal life and business life completely separate online. I like to keep them together.

A glimpse into a photographer's personal life is a window to his brand. I post studio images on my social media pages, but I also post selective images that show the bond with my family. I post images of things I do outside work. This allows clients and potential clients to see what I am like. All of those activities help build my brand in the customer's eye. People argue that they do not want clients to know all of their personal information. If there are things you don't want people to know about you, just don't share that information. Social media is generally the first place people go to see any of your work, so let your brand be known there.



Images © Blair Phillips



Image © Blair Phillips





Image © Blair Phillips

### Gather Branding Tips

One of my most favorite things to do is to visit high-end retailers as a customer and just sit back and watch how they handle day-to-day operations. I was out of town a few weeks back, and, while checking out of my hotel, I got a branding idea. It was a high-end hotel that made its clients' spending feel justified. Normally you are given a piece of paper under your door the night before with a list of charges. When I reached the counter, I was handed a leather folio with my receipt and a very nice pen inside. That was a great example of its brand really working for them.

The staff called me Mr. Phillips throughout my stay. That was a direct representation of the brand they have built. That little extra effort will have me talking about my experience with that company for a long while. I will also try to incorporate similar branding techniques that will give my customers the same emotions I felt at that hotel. Once you become brand-conscious, you will begin to evaluate every customer service experience you encounter.

Branding is involved in every business transaction. It is a type of silent partner that runs parallel with customer service. Customers are easy to reach, but it becomes more and more challenging to get them to come to your studio. This is partly due to there being more choices for consumers, as well as clients' lifestyles becoming more stressed for time.

Rock-solid branding is an absolute must in order to find complete happiness through success. Great images alone are not going to be enough for the future. Continue to search for creative ways to establish a presence in consumers' minds. Once you establish that presence, it is up to you to create a residence there. ■



Blair Phillips launched his business nearly 10 years ago in a small town. Since then, Blair Phillips Photography has become a beloved household name to its many fans and clients. Each year, Blair photographs up to 30 weddings and over 600 high school senior, newborn and family studio sessions. He has educated photographers all over the United States at events by WPPI, WPPI U, Imaging USA, SYNC Seniors and various state PPA groups.

[blairphillipsphotography.com](http://blairphillipsphotography.com)

# Salvatore Cincotta DESTINATION WORKSHOPS 2016

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Developing  
Your Personal  
**Style**

with  
Lori Nordstrom







Image © Lori Nordstrom

"If you want to know the real secret to what matters most in business, just look in the mirror. That's right, it's you. When all things are equal, and in the competitive world we live in today things almost always are, people buy you."

-Jeb Blount, *People Buy You*

I often hear questions like these from photographers: How do I know when I have a style? How do I get people to recognize my work?

We all want to be known for something. We want our work to be recognized. Developing a recognizable style takes time, but it starts with simply diving into your own personality and who you are as a human being. You'll know you have a style when you start seeing "you" show up in your photography, marketing, communication, your overall look. This style represents your brand, and your brand is what people think about when they think about you, or think about working with you.

In *People Buy You*, Jeb Blount reminds us that the real secret to what matters most in business is what we see in the mirror. In the competitive world we live in, most things in comparable businesses are equal. And when all things are equal, potential clients will choose a small business based on the personality of the person they will be working with. In a small service-related business like photography, this couldn't be more true. Potential clients will choose to work with someone they know, like and trust, someone they connect with.

One of the first steps in developing your style, and in turn your brand, is to figure out who you are and what message you want to project to your marketplace.



Image © Lori Nordstrom

Ask yourself these questions:

- What are three to five words that describe my personality?
- What are the values I want myself and my business to be known for?
- What do I love to photograph?
- What do people tell me I'm good at?
- What am I passionate about?
- What are my strengths?
- What can I do differently that my target client has never seen?
- What parts of my background will connect my target client to me?



Don't try to be all things to all people. A niche market is not only a focused market, but a targetable market. As soon as you understand what your style is, you can go through the process of finding and developing your niche and defining exactly whom you want to work with—whom you want to attract to your business. Remember, even large vendors can't meet all the needs of all the people. Successful businesses have identified a previously unmet need in their area—in other words, they have developed a niche market and are profiting by meeting needs that no one else is meeting.

Don't worry that defining your style and niche could be limiting for you. It doesn't mean you are barred from doing a variety of things as a photographer, but having a specialty will attract those clients you get the most joy out of working with. If you are trying to do it all, you just become a blur. Being a generalist sends no message at all. Specialists stand out.

We have to create an identity and niche for long-term business growth. Our clients are on information overload, and photographers are everywhere. All photographers can do a little bit of everything, so how are you going to stand out in the minds of your clients and potential clients? You must be very clear in your area of expertise. The majority of successful businesses succeed by following a narrow focus in their market, product, service, benefit, location, category and marketing methods.

"No one wants to work with a cookie-cutter," said personal branding specialist Meg Guiseppi. Your clients need you to specialize in the exact thing that they need. They want to deal with an expert. You'll be able to charge more for your expertise, and you are going to get opportunities to do the work you want to do. In short, define your niche and describe your uniqueness; be an expert, and you can achieve success.

#### Case Study of two children's portrait photographers

**Name:** Nancy

**Personality:** "Outrageous, bold, life of the party, animated"

**Values:** "I want my clients to have a ton of fun during their sessions. I want kids to leave with happy faces and stories to tell. I want parents to remember the giggles and excitement every time they see their portraits."

**Passions:** "Loving life, trying new things, making people happy, living every day to the fullest"

Nancy's photography is colorful and saturated, and shows kids running and jumping. She is not into posing or telling kids to stay still. Nancy plays games and always has a fun surprise for kids to be photographed with and take home. Nancy loves to photograph kids at play, and her favorite locations are the park and playground.

Nancy's logo is a fun font with bold colors. These colors are carried throughout her marketing; everything is bright and cherry. Phrases such as *let's play*, *giggle* and *laugh out loud* are used throughout her website and printed pieces. When communicating with parents, Nancy tells them their children will have a great time, and to prepare them with that expectation. Nancy gives the parents specific cues, like, "Tell your kids that you're going to meet a friend and have a great time together." She makes it clear that she will let them be themselves and will capture all of those happy moments with her photographs. She helps parents understand her fun style by sharing testimonials from moms whose kids didn't want to leave or who begged to have their picture taken again.



Image © Lori Nordstrom

**Name:** Mary

**Personality:** "Soft-spoken, sweet, caring, loving, personal, insightful"

**Values:** "I want clients to know how much I care about them and their family. Family values are very important to me, and I believe that each stage of childhood should be captured beautifully and treasured. I want my clients to feel appreciated and to communicate to them through words and images how important their children and their family are."

**Passions:** "Truly getting to know people, deep conversation, the smell of babies, long walks, quiet moments, and alone or one-on-one time"

Mary photographs primarily in black and white. When she chooses color, the colors are soft and hazy. The eyes make the statement in the images—you seem to see right into the very soul of a child. Mothers trust her, and never hesitate to hand her their baby or allow her to leave her sight when photographing their child. When photographing families, she asks them to lean in, to whisper to each other or to think about all of the reasons they love one another.

Mary's logo has soft colors and a scripted font. Her marketing talks about cherishing each moment, remembering the love and telling a story. Moms feel instantly comfortable around her. She uses testimonials from mothers who trusted her and felt nurtured after spending time with her.

As you can see, Nancy and Mary have two very different personalities, and neither is right or wrong. You may be drawn to one over the other based on your own personality (and so will potential clients), but you can see that each can be successful by drawing from her own uniqueness, by developing her own personal style. By being clear about who they are, they have learned to weave themselves into all aspects of their business.





Images © Lori Nordstrom

When you clarify your own personality, strengths, values, uniqueness and passions, you'll have a much clearer vision of whom you want to work with and how you'll do business. Be true to your personality in all aspects of your business. Be thoughtful and deliberate in the language you use, the marketing you create and the experience that your client has working with you.

By basing your business around your uniqueness, you'll not only develop your style and niche, but it will be easier for you to avoid the extreme burnout that businesspeople often experience, because you are always being true to who you are, and always doing what you love. There is only one you, so be all of you that you can be. ■



Lori Nordstrom (M.Photog.Cr., CPP, ABI) owns a boutique studio (NordstromPhoto.com) specializing in children and family portraits located in the tiny, picturesque town of Winterset, Iowa. Lori began her career photographing her own kids in her backyard almost 20 years ago, and is now known not only for her simple and sweet portraits of children, but as a leader in the photography industry in the areas of business, marketing and sales. Lori is a PPA-approved business instructor, and is passionate about sharing her knowledge with other photographers and small business owners.

[nordstromphoto.com](http://nordstromphoto.com)

Salvatore Cincotta

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# The Perfect Studio

## HOW TO BRAND A SPACE THAT SELLS YOU

with Phillip Blume

When Ed Catmull, founder of the infinitely creative and beloved Pixar Animation Studios, was asked to take control of a stagnant Walt Disney Animation Studios in 2006, what do you suspect he changed first? Did he fire Disney's disgruntled, failing animators and directors? Replace them with new talent from Pixar? Surprisingly, no—he retained nearly every employee, including his adversaries. Instead, this ingenious leader did something else. He remodeled the interior of Walt Disney Animation Studios.

What did Catmull expect to achieve through interior design? Pixar and Disney had struggled through a contentious partnership for years; frankly, everyone expected them to part ways. Yet Catmull understood something important about branding a workspace. A strategically designed environment inspires us with new feelings and ideas. It can either nourish our emotional and psychological needs, or stifle them. Within a year of transforming Disney's segregated, hierarchical offices into an open floor plan to foster human interaction and candor, Disney transitioned away from box office flops like *Treasure Planet* and, once again, began producing world-class hits like *Tangled* and *Frozen*.

Are there design elements you can incorporate into your photography studio that will inspire greater success? Yes, there are. And those elements don't necessarily require a huge financial investment. They will, however, require you to invest careful thought and time in determining your brand. Once you can define your brand clearly in your own mind, you will want to communicate it through your studio design. If done correctly, the emotional effect your studio has on your clients will be as powerful as the effect a beautifully created photograph has on its viewer. It will create a sense of connection and desire.

That translates to demand. Let me explain.







Images © Phillip Blume

## An Ideal

As I write this article, I'm sitting on a comfortably firm, newly upholstered sofa in the warmest corner of an open, brightly lit space. Through a long bank of plate glass windows, I'm watching rain fall outside, while light from the fireplace flickers on white 10-foot-high ceilings. We mounted the oak mantelpiece and applied the final coat of white paint to the brick walls just yesterday. Every detail was painstakingly considered.

I'm in love with the brand-new Blume Studio, and so are our clients. We've been hosting them here already for the past month as we finished construction. I'm a perfectionist, and I constantly have to fight the urge to hide my progress until a project is "perfect." (There's no such thing on earth.) And in business, the most important lesson I've learned is to be a man of action, fail fast and make adjustments along the way.

We've understood for a long time that communicating our brand via an experience is a huge key to success. So we've used whatever was available to us—first our own living room, then an unfinished basement and finally this studio—to communicate that brand. It hasn't always been as refined as now. But it has always worked like a charm. So let's use Blume Studio as a model while we discuss three practical steps you can take to begin branding your studio today.



Image © Phillip Blume





Image © Phillip Blume

## Define Your Audience

Your first step is to define your ideal client. Whom do you want to work with? *That* should be your audience. Marketing to them is the endgame you must keep in mind. Write down a bulleted list of descriptors for your ideal client. Frame that list. Then come back to it for a cold, swift kick-to-the-pants reminder every time you begin drifting in terms of the jobs you accept.

We all start somewhere, and it's OK to take whatever work you can get. But be especially critical about the work you show. Specialization is key. Remove the tagline "specializes in weddings, newborns, landscape, architectural and fine art photography" from your business card. Discerning clients (those who can afford to keep you in business) don't trust that kind of babble. In our case, we are wedding photographers. Yes, we occasionally photograph seniors, newborns and families, but you won't find them on our homepage.

Seth Godin, in his book *Tribes*, describes the immeasurable marketing value inherent in creating community around your brand. First, he says, you have to make a connection between your client and yourself. If your client can't relate to you, it's a hard sell. Biologically, we make instinctive judgments about people based on the environments they inhabit. Make sure your studio environment describes you as someone your ideal client wants to connect with.

Godin explains it is crucial to connect your "tribe" to a shared purpose. Frankly, that purpose can be shallow or deep. It doesn't matter—as long as the purpose is something your ideal clients can all sink their teeth into. For example, if your clients are the Real Housewives of Beverly Hills, by all means make every effort to flaunt your success. Diamond-encrust the heck out of your studio! The purpose your clients relate to may be crude material gain. Financially successful people (or those wanting to appear successful) love to network and connect themselves with other success stories.



Image © Phillip Blume



In Blume Studio's case, our nearest city happens to boast America's highest poverty rate. (Immediately after we started Blume Photography, we probably helped contribute to that statistic.) Not the ideal market, right? Fortunately, the relatively small population of wealthy families here are also charitably inclined. Personal humanitarian work is a passion of ours, and we naturally desire to connect with clients who both share our values and have more disposable income. So while our studio speaks of quality, it is also simple, parsed down, and mementos of our humanitarian work are kept on display as conversation pieces.

## Determine the Details

Once you define your audience, you're ready to design a space that speaks to it. Did you define your ideal client as "a hipster couple who value my epic or 'fearless' style of artistic expression"? Your studio needs to match those values. The last thing your studio needs is a "down on the farm" vibe, with soft lace doilies as drink coasters. Instead, go contemporary or modern. Your sign should flash your logo in glowing light, just like the eye-popping off-camera flash you use. Maybe your granite slab fireplace mantel should be asymmetrical, highlighting the unexpected composition of your photos and quirky personality of your clients. What they see in your studio is a reflection of you. If they love it, you and the unique experience they had in your studio will stand out emotionally above the rest.

Do you live in wine country? Our friend Mike Larson, of Mike Larson Private Estate Weddings, is a prime example of this niche branding. That business name is a mouthful, but the clients he once served were all over the map. Once he made the leap of faith and narrowed his sights on "private estate and vineyard weddings," his business exploded. Mike and his wife are the world's most down-to-earth people, but do you think Mike started dressing differently for his new brand? You bet. And do you think he stimulates his clients' senses with a can of Coke from his fridge or fine wines in stemmed glasses? Imagine the leathers and high-end fabrics you could select to furnish a vineyard studio. If Mike brought his clients in and sat them on a tattered Ikea couch, he would lose all credibility as "the private estate wedding photographer." I think you get the idea.



Image © Phillip Blume

In the same way Starbucks aims to be a "third place" where you feel at home and happy to spend your money, we shouldn't allow small savings or shortcuts in design to compromise our studios' ability to be that atmosphere for our clients.

The Blume brand can be described in two words: *storytelling* and *heritage*. When we meet prospective clients, we talk to them about the authentic moments we capture and the finished artwork we specialize in—handcrafted books and display pieces that their grandchildren will one day find and treasure. Everything in our studio supports that narrative. The wood trim in our studio, our giant coffee table, workstation, and even our bathroom vanity are custom made by Sons of Sawdust, which specializes in building with reclaimed wood that has over 100 years of stories behind it. We willingly paid extra and waited longer for linen upholstery that wasn't available in-store. Exposed brick and concrete lend a commercial feel, but more importantly relate to our photographic philosophy: that present reality is beautiful, and doesn't need to be hidden under too much posing or touch-up. The same is true for our lighting fixtures, one made of an old tripod and the other an antique dentist's lamp. Nothing in our studio is allowed to appear mass-produced. That's because the artwork we want our clients to value is unique and handmade, too. How can they learn to value that if we don't express the same values?

Yes, we want to appear modern and tech-savvy to a degree. But even our new iMacs sit on an old wooden workstation. Our cutting-edge theater, where we screen wedding films, has a sliding barn door. Our glossy magazine features are framed in old barn wood. We bought a Keurig machine for convenience for when our clients outnumber the size of our French press. But the cartridges we use are biodegradable, high-quality organic coffee. These are not purchases I would think to make for myself on a normal shopping spree. I think differently when it comes to our studio.

## Start Small

I mentioned before that during Blume Photography's early days, we likely helped contribute to our market's poverty rate. I wasn't joking. Our entire home at that time was fewer square feet than our current studio. Imagine approaching our home for a consultation. You look through your windshield questioningly. *Can this be the right neighborhood?* Lawns are overgrown. The road is in disrepair. As you approach our driveway, you hear the howls of 17 dogs from the small fenced yard next door. The next house is abandoned—literally charred black by fire. *This is where we've come to meet the award-winning photographer?*

Our situation wasn't ideal. But once you walked through our front door, I can guarantee you would have forgotten the world outside. Our cramped living room was tastefully appointed. We cleaned it of our toddlers' Cheerios and toys. Even the dining table (our then "packaging area") was cleared. The aroma of vanilla candles hung in the air. Then, as now, you would have been served fine cheeses, loose-leaf tea or a Coca-Cola (strictly in a retro glass bottle, mind you). Brand-consistent music plays softly from a quality stereo. We paid the premium so you wouldn't hear any of Pandora's disrupting commercials.

Start where you are. Many of us dream of owning a physical studio. The worst mistake you can make is to view your studio as an end unto itself. You risk building a brick-and-mortar structure that has no soul—no purpose with which your client tribe can connect. Remember, *you* are your brand.

Click the video for a tour of our new studio, plus more of the particulars. See you there! ■





Image © Phillip Blume



Phillip Blume is an international award-winning photographer and, with his wife, Eileen, cofounder of Blume Photography Studios and Come-Unity Workshops. In addition to photographing weddings and portraits worldwide, the Blumes focus their efforts on personal projects to help those suffering extreme poverty. As educators, the two have appeared on CreativeLIVE, and speak to thousands of photographers every year. They live with their children in rural Georgia.

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WITH

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- 
- + How to update your business name without losing your established client base.
  - + How to know when it's time to revamp your studio brand.
  - + How to create a brand that will appeal to your ideal client.
  - + Steps to creating a second studio under your main brand.
  - + How to use your story behind why you do what you do to capture the attention of potential clients.
- 

#### GOT MORE QUESTIONS?

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



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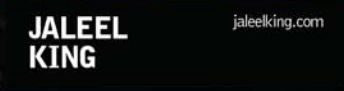
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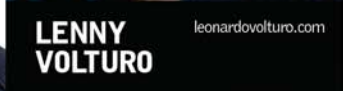
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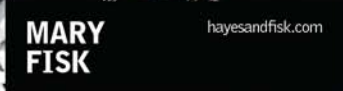
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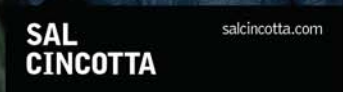
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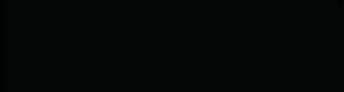
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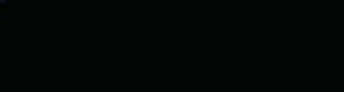
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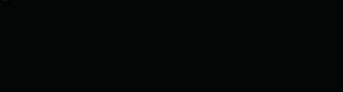
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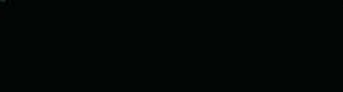
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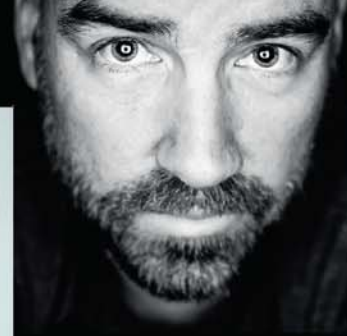


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# CREATIVITY

WITH **CONSTANT LIGHTS**

*with Michael Anthony*

Lighting comes in many shapes and sizes. Over the next few months, I am going to be writing about the advantages of different kinds of lighting and modifiers, and how to best use them. Today, I want to talk about my favorite way to light dark environments and add some flavor to normal photographs: constant lights.

I absolutely love constant lights because they are quick and easy, and allow you to see exactly where you are putting your light. They are simple to adjust, can be very compact and are great when you are blending them with the ambient light in a scene.

Good lighting doesn't always mean expensive. These recommendations are aimed mainly at wedding and portrait photographers who need compact lights for location shoots.



### **Compact Constant Light: Yongnuo YN-300 II**

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Yongnuo makes very good lighting equipment at an incredible price point. I started using these flashes years ago before Canon introduced radio-controlled flash. I was always amazed by their quality, so I knew that their video lights would be no exception. The lights are compact and bright, and come with built-in barn doors to control direction. I have used other daylight-balanced lights, but because of the low price, small size and awesome battery life, this is my favorite daylight-balanced light. We have multiple YN-300's in our studio.

### **Warm Constant Light: Profoto B2 or Lowel ID-Light**

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The built-in modeling lamp on the Profoto B2 is LED-based and will give you 90 minutes at full power. The light accepts all Profoto modifiers, and, because it is both a strobe and a constant light, it is a great option for a traveling photographer. I often use this light to illuminate backgrounds or to light my couples in dark environments. It's a great hair light for standard indoor portraits as well. It's a bit pricey. A less expensive alternative is the Lowel ID-Light, which is incredibly bright, dimmable and has really beautiful color.

### **Large Constant Light: Westcott Ice Light**

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The Ice Light is a larger unit that's touted as a portable "window light." It can be quite soft when placed close to a subject. Westcott just produced a second version featuring a removable battery and 50 percent more power. I use this light less than the two above, but it is a good tool for very specific circumstances, specifically head and shoulder photos. It works great outdoors or in open shade to add some quick direction to light. Westcott claims nearly perfect color from this daylight-balanced light, which I believe after my experiences with it. This option is more pricey than the Yongnuo, at almost eight times the cost, but there are competitors coming into the market.

### **Getting Creative With Constant Light**

---

You don't always need to create constant light. It's often already available. One of my favorite ways to add a little bit of spice to a normal image is to light up a background. As a wedding photographer, most of the rooms our couples get ready in are filled with lamps. Take a look at the image here.

I was using the window light to illuminate my subject here. The background was uninteresting, so I removed the lampshade and placed the bare bulb close to the wall directly behind my subject. I flipped on the light and switched the white balance on my camera to cloudy. Now my subject had perfect warm skin tones from the window, and the background was lighted with a really beautiful orange from the lamp. This was a quick way to make a normal photograph interesting.





## Using Available Constant Light

When shooting this ring shot, I wanted to illuminate the ring with a very hard, very small light source. I had purchased this set of battery-powered string lights from Amazon for \$8 a color to use as backgrounds for detail shots and foregrounds for portraits. I placed them behind a glass bottle to give the background an abstract pattern of light. This gave a really nice bokeh to our background.

To light the ring, I needed a light source that was hard and small, and could be controlled relatively easily. Thankfully, I always have my iPhone handy, and the flashlight was a perfect solution to light this ring. The flashlight can be easily maneuvered to put the light exactly where it's needed. Just keep in mind that the flashlight on the iPhone is not color balanced, and correction will be needed in post.



Images © Michael Anthony



Images © Michael Anthony

I love using constant light in dark environments. The reason is that you are able to see exactly where your light will be falling, along with how it affects the overall contrast of the image. At this wedding venue, the lights were dim during the reception, and the couple had a long string of votives and other candles on a semi-reflective table. I wanted to make it look like the couple was being lit by candlelight, but there were not enough candles on the table, and the light fall-off caused the couple to be underexposed and the candles to be overexposed. This was the perfect scenario for a video light.

By placing the light directly behind the votives, we were able to add a strong directional light source to the image, illuminating the faces of the bride and groom. By hiding the light within the composition, the light seemed to be coming from the candles. Placing the bride and groom into a romantic pose allowed us to further enhance the ambiance of the room, as well as the connection between them. This is a great example of a type of image I would use to either open or close a wedding album.



## Finding Extraordinary in the Seemingly Ordinary

When you are in a dark environment, look for light patterns being created in your natural environment. In a dark room, chandeliers can be a great source for a beautiful background. During this wedding, I saw a pattern on the wall from the light coming through the chandelier glass.

The pattern being created on the wall was casting a gorgeous orange pattern on the wall, complementing the colors in this Indian wedding, and I wanted to use it to create a beautiful image. I used the barn doors to shape a video light from the upper corner of the image into a beam that came down onto the couple. I turned her body away from the light and brought her face back into it, allowing her to be lit on the short side of her face, which is always flattering for a female subject.

You can create your own light patterns using glass and a constant light. If you find a semi-translucent pattern, you can actually shine a light through it onto a background just like you see occurring naturally in the image above. It's a great way to make an image more interesting.



Image © Michael Anthony

This second image was taken of the same bride on the next day of her wedding inside her dark hotel. I placed a video light close to her face to give us soft shadows. I wanted to create texture in her makeup and her beautiful jewelry. By positioning the light off to the side, we were able to accentuate the gorgeous details of her attire. The amazing thing about constant lighting is that you are able to see the shot before you even take it.

Some of my favorite available-light sources are bus stops and illuminated panels, like those in movie theaters. This image was shot using the latter. Because the image panels are large and the subject is placed very close, you get very soft shadows and a reflective surface. Always look for natural light sources when it's dark outside.



Images © Michael Anthony



## Blending Constant Light With Flash

You can use constant lighting alongside flash for a gorgeous result. I often do this when shooting a couple outside after a wedding. We typically use an incandescent constant light source as our keylight, and a bare-bulb flash as a backlight. I wrote a bit about blending different color-balanced lights in my August article, and this is one of the ways that we do just that. By being able to see the light spill from the keylight, we are able to quickly get the shots we need when it matters. This image was photographed at a popular location in Los Angeles using that exact technique.

No matter how you choose to light your subjects, the principles of lighting will always stay the same. While we photograph in a way that is interesting to us, ultimately what drives us to continue to create is what types of images our clients are buying. Images with impact sell the most. Photography is a win-win if you adopt this mindset, because the more you continue to step outside the box, the more happy clients you will have.

For your next five shoots, use available or constant light in a way that is different than you normally would. Use shadows, geometrical lines and composition to create something truly unique to you.

There are no magic tricks to using light, but if you can change the way you see light on a daily basis, it will impact your imagery forever. ■



Image © Michael Anthony



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

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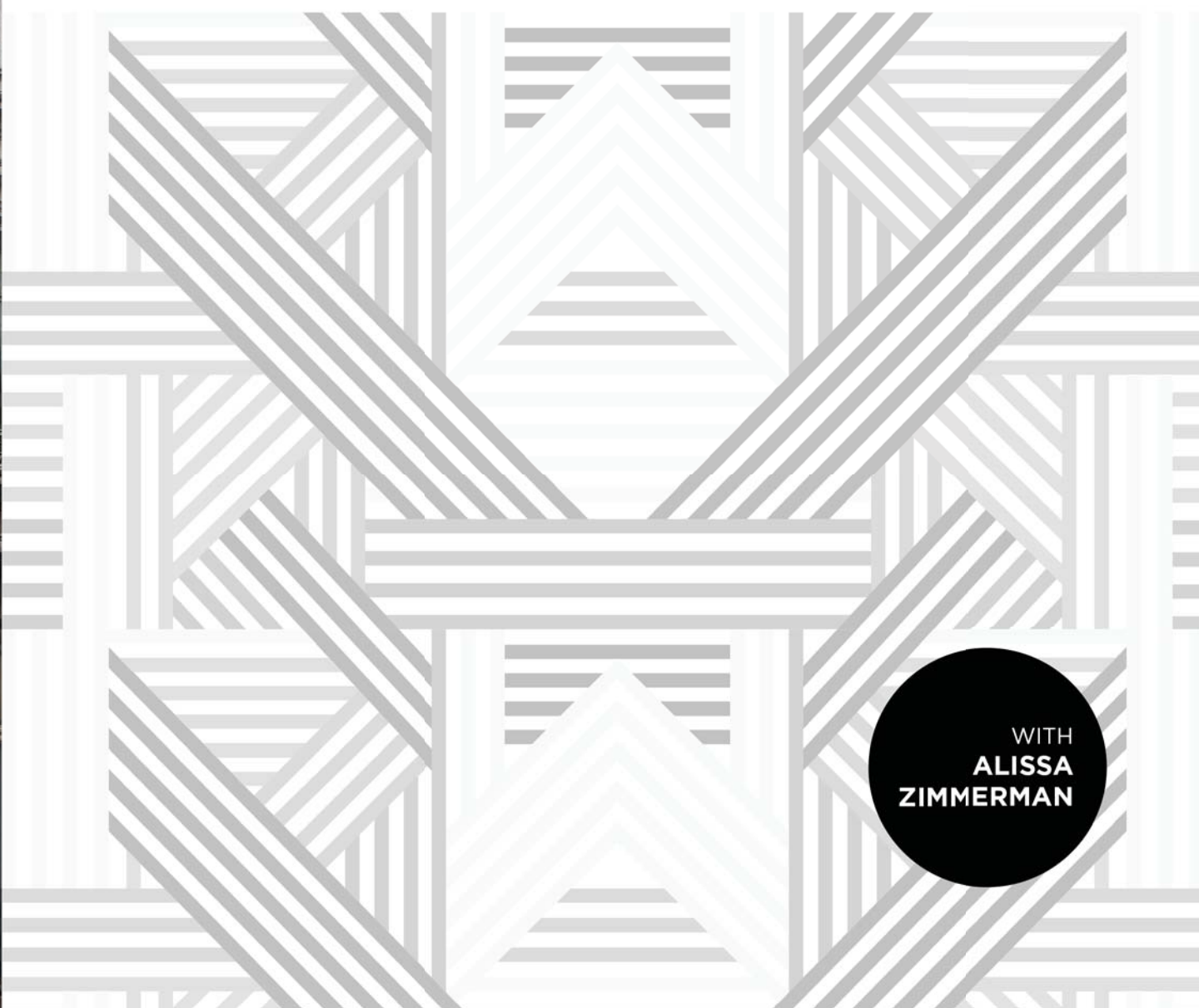
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give back to you.**  
*-Lolly Daskal*

We all go through multiple phases in our lives in the pursuit of finding ourselves and becoming the person we were meant to be. For many, that pursuit comes in multiple phases and continued personal growth over the course of their life. The person you think you were meant to be when you were 18 is not the same person you thought you were meant to be at 25. This evolution in self-value is what I consider the pursuit of excellence—personal excellence, that is.

I recently celebrated my fourth year as a member of Team Cincotta. I looked back over the course of those four years to see the person I have become—someone I never would have imagined existed just four short years ago. Sal has groomed me into a leader, a fighter, a competitor, a savvy businessperson. More importantly, I have pushed myself to be all of these things just as much as he has pushed me, because I never want to lose this incredible opportunity I've been given—and while I may not be an owner of my own company, this article should resonate with many of you as business owners and entrepreneurs.

I read an *Inc.* article on our flight home from China called “Top 10 Qualities of Highly Successful People,” by Lolly Daskal. It got me thinking about the qualities I see in Sal and the ones I strive for in myself. The article talks about qualities that benefit those around you, but my biggest takeaway was the fact that the majority of the top qualities were those that focused more on the self. As Daskal writes, “If you live your life as most people do, you will get what most people get. If you settle, you will get a settled life. If you give yourself your best, every day, your best will give back to you.” I couldn't agree more.

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## Trusting Yourself

As I sat thinking about the article, I realized that so much of what I have accomplished over the past four years has to do with learning to live and let go, to trust myself and my instincts and let go of fears and insecurities—all things that were stopping me from growing as a person and in my role in this company.

Learning to trust yourself is huge. There was a point in my life when I let fear dictate my every decision. Which, of course, got me nowhere. I had big dreams, and even bigger disappointments when I couldn't find a way to avoid the fear of challenges or failures. It's always easier to give up and blame someone or something for not allowing you to accomplish your goals. It takes a strong person, however, to channel those fears into productive behaviors that motivate you to succeed—to look at your challenges and potential failures as opportunities to kick ass and take names. That was one of the biggest mind shifts I had to go through to get me to where I am today.

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## People: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Surrounding yourself with the right people in the pursuit of excellence is another crucial piece of the puzzle. We've all been there before: You grow up with a certain group of friends, then separate when you go off to college. Then the friends you make in college soon go in their own directions as well. Life is all about experiencing new things and meeting new people. That doesn't mean these people have to remain a key factor in your life forever. Sometimes the best way to move forward and accomplish your goals is to let go of cancerous relationships—the ones that hold you back from being the best version of yourself. It's a tough idea to process for many, to just weed through friends. Yet, it is one of the most freeing feelings to not have the weight of haters in your life. At this point in our lives, a true friend is someone who believes in you—supports you, regardless of how insane your ideas or goals may be.

Not only do you need to filter out the negative people in your life, but this is also the time to start surrounding yourself with like-minded people—individuals who have the same or similar passions, who want to see you accomplish great things. The people who understand that starting a business takes a lot of time and attention, and don't get butt-hurt if you can't chat on the phone every night or go out drinking every weekend.



## Suck It Up

Working for a New Yorker has been one of the most impactful experiences in my growth. For someone who started out as a people-pleaser, being around this blunt, sarcastic, honest and usually pretty harsh personality has given me incredibly thick skin. Life is too short to beat around the bush, especially with people you truly care about—this goes back to my point about surrounding yourself with the right people. I have never once thought Sal's blunt honesty was about putting me down or belittling me. Instead, I see it for what it is: honesty that will push me in the right direction of bettering myself and growing into the employee he needs.

With that thick skin also comes a sense of pride in yourself and your work. I have learned to never accept no for an answer—that results come from being persistent and confident in what you bring to the table. Again, life is too short to waste time with niceties. You want something? Go get it. Someone tells you it can't be done? Prove them wrong.

The pursuit of excellence starts with yourself. Once you learn to understand and trust yourself, the rest falls into place. As a business owner or as an incredibly driven employee of a business owner, you should never stop pushing yourself and those around you in your own personal pursuits. Of course, it's always easier to give up, to take the short cuts or the easy way out—but what's fun about a life with no challenges? ■



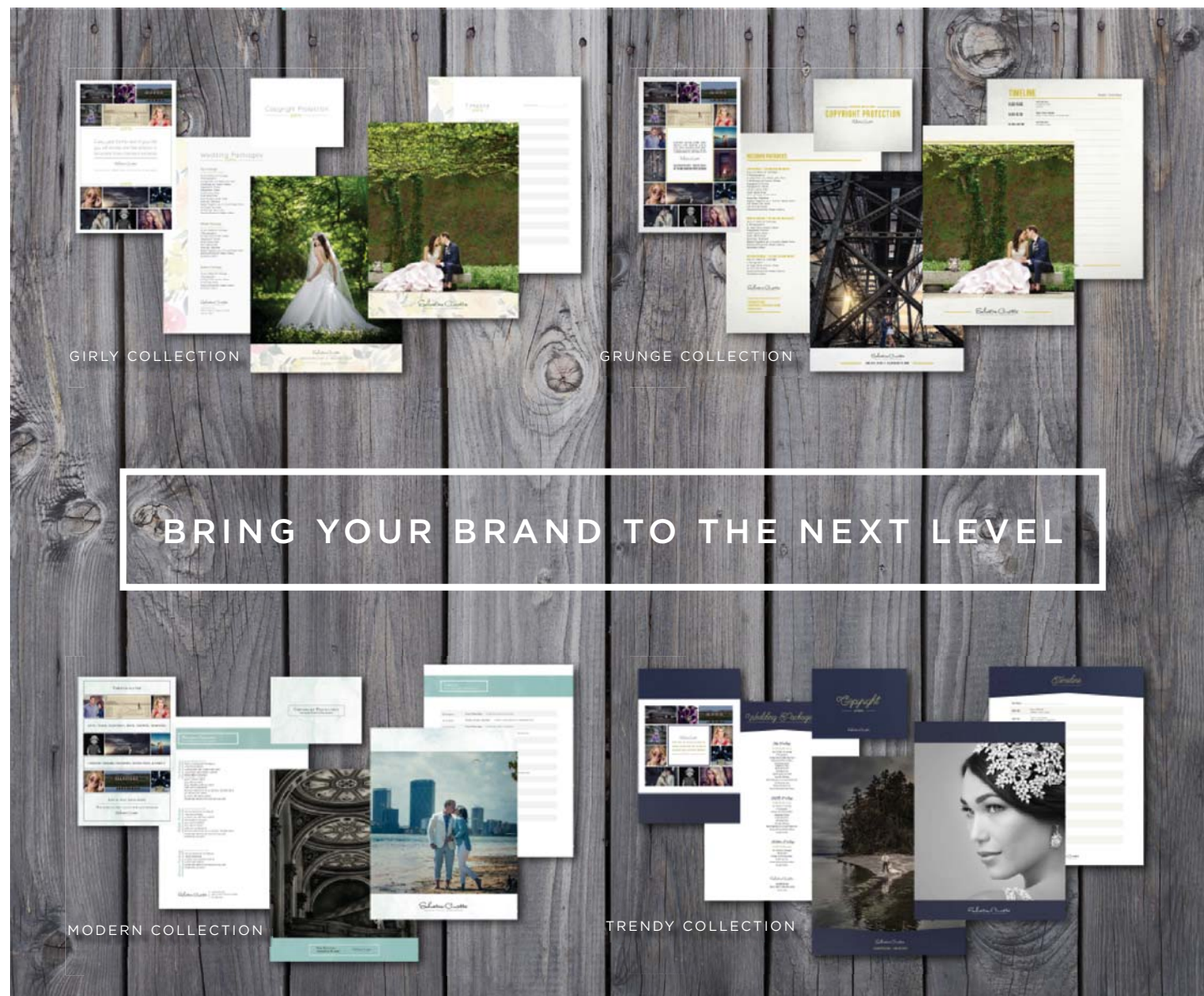
Alissa Zimmerman graduated with a degree in television production and has been a part of the Salvatore Cincotta team since 2011. Today she is behind the camera regularly as Sal's second shooter and as the executive producer and camera operator for Salvatore Cincotta Films, Behind the Shutter, Shutter Network and Sal Cincotta's School of Photography. Alissa is the creative director for *Shutter Magazine* and serves as Sal's right hand, managing daily operations within the family of Salvatore Cincotta brands.

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### Why Bay Photo Lab?

Shooting and burning is the single most dangerous trend in our industry today. Everyone thinks they are a photographer. Worse yet, too many people think they can make a career out of their hobby. We have the best jobs in the world, but we also have an incredible responsibility to our clients. They are hiring us to document the biggest moments of their lives. Why, then, do photographers think it's OK to deliver an incomplete service? No one has ever hung their DVD on the wall.

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# The Next Generation of Video Delivery

with Rob Adams





For as long as I can remember, delivering video content has been a mixed bag of options, each containing its own limitations and drawbacks in terms of creation, packaging and delivery. With streaming services like Vimeo and YouTube, digital delivery has become far more mainstream and convenient than authoring and burning a physical DVD or Blu-ray disc. The DVD is dying. I've always loathed the process of authoring DVD menus and building them in underperforming and buggy applications like the now defunct Adobe Encore and iDVD.

The process was frustrating because of all the minutiae involved with routing menu buttons, animating transition screens, adding compatible background menu images and then burning the actual disc—a process that failed more often than not. It's not uncommon to waste four or five blank DVD-R discs before happening upon a successfully burned DVD that could be delivered to a client worry-free.

A relatively new startup called MediaZilla has created a paid service that does all of this tedious, frustrating work for you, including custom packaging. MediaZilla offers the style and organization of an optical disc menu that is deliverable online and physically. I've been using MediaZilla for more than six months to deliver videos to not only my wedding clients but my corporate, commercial and philanthropic customers as well.

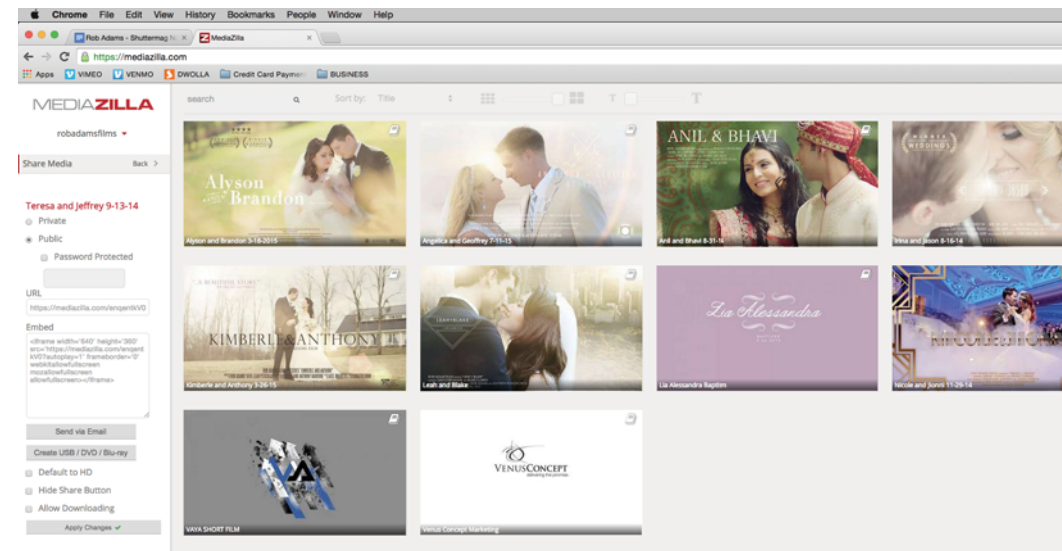
## Why You Need It

This startup is undoubtedly going to make you drool knowing you can provide your video clients a means to access, view, download, stream, store and future-proof their video content, all from a single interface. It's made me change my entire delivery process. Don't get me wrong, I'm still down for giving my clients something tangible in the form of a branded thumb drive or Blu-ray disc with custom artwork, but there's something about MediaZilla's presentation that is actually making my clients steer away from the traditional expectation of some sort of optical medium for their wedding films.

The best part is, all of MediaZilla's products are handsomely customizable, and even more custom functions are planned, according to cocreators Jon Geddes and Michael Guastamacchio.

## What It Is

Let's take a look at this revolutionary platform at a glance before we dive into everything it can do. MediaZilla is a subscription-based online video delivery platform. Video content creators pay a yearly fee—\$500 at the time this article was written—and can create an unlimited number of video menu “collections,” as long as the total amount of uploaded video doesn't exceed 1TB of data. That may not seem like a lot of space, but MediaZilla's guidelines for encoding and optimizing 1080p video aids in reducing file sizes while maintaining high playback quality.

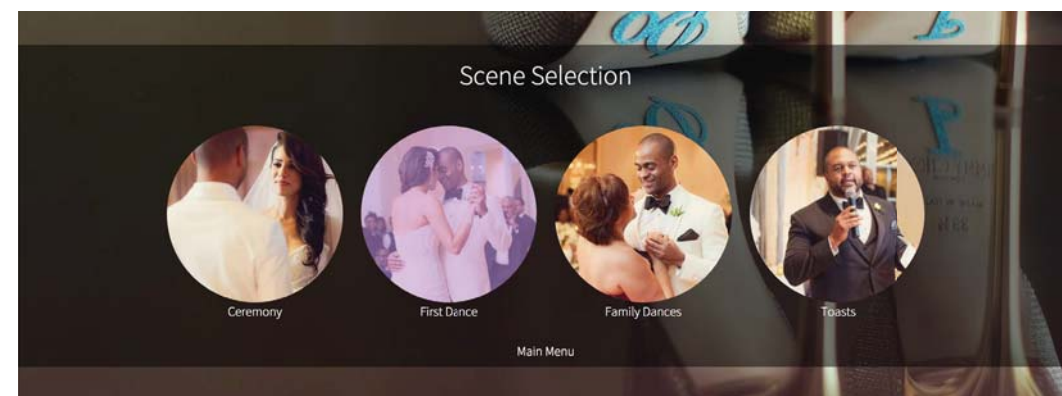


## What It Does

When a video is uploaded, it is transcoded to meet the platform's specs. Then you are presented with both a low-resolution and high-definition (up to 1080p) streaming version. This is about where the similarities between MediaZilla and other streaming/hosting platforms end.

One of the most striking features of MediaZilla is its ability to deliver multiple videos to a single client in a professional menu-based, shareable and embeddable interface. Content producers can arrange the videos in the form of buttons on a single menu or multiple menus, with multiple buttons and a couple of layout options. When videos are grouped together, they form a collection.

Instantly, an HTML5-based menu is created, with default options. You can then customize and rename buttons, menus and images with a few simple clicks. There are only a couple menu types available at the moment, but more customization options are on the way. With the existing interface, we can make menus look more branded by changing the highlight color of the button rollovers, choose a video thumbnail to serve as a button image or, my personal favorite, upload a custom background image for each menu to make collection images fully branded and far more professional-looking.



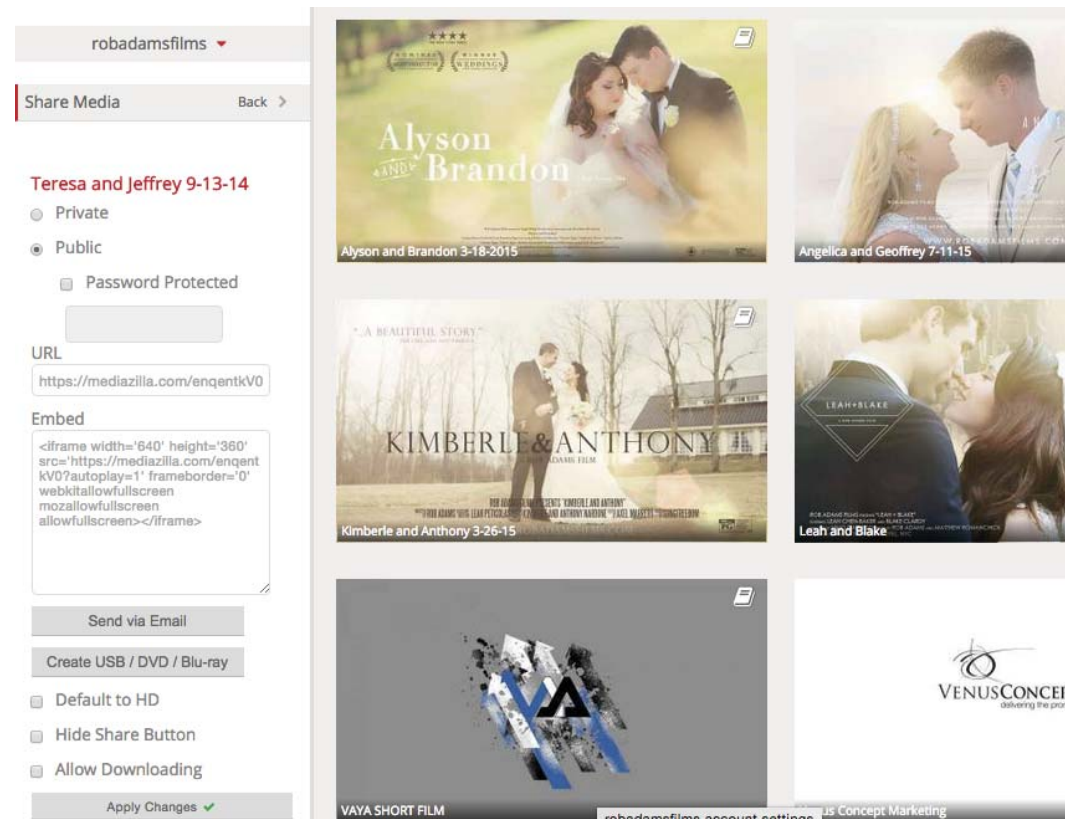


## It Gets Even Better

Once the collection and all of its associated menus are created and the compilation is ready for delivery, sharing the entire thing is handled in several different ways.

The most simple way is to share the collection's direct hyperlink, which gives complete full-screen browser access to the collection's menu system and all of the videos. The client gets a mobile version as well.

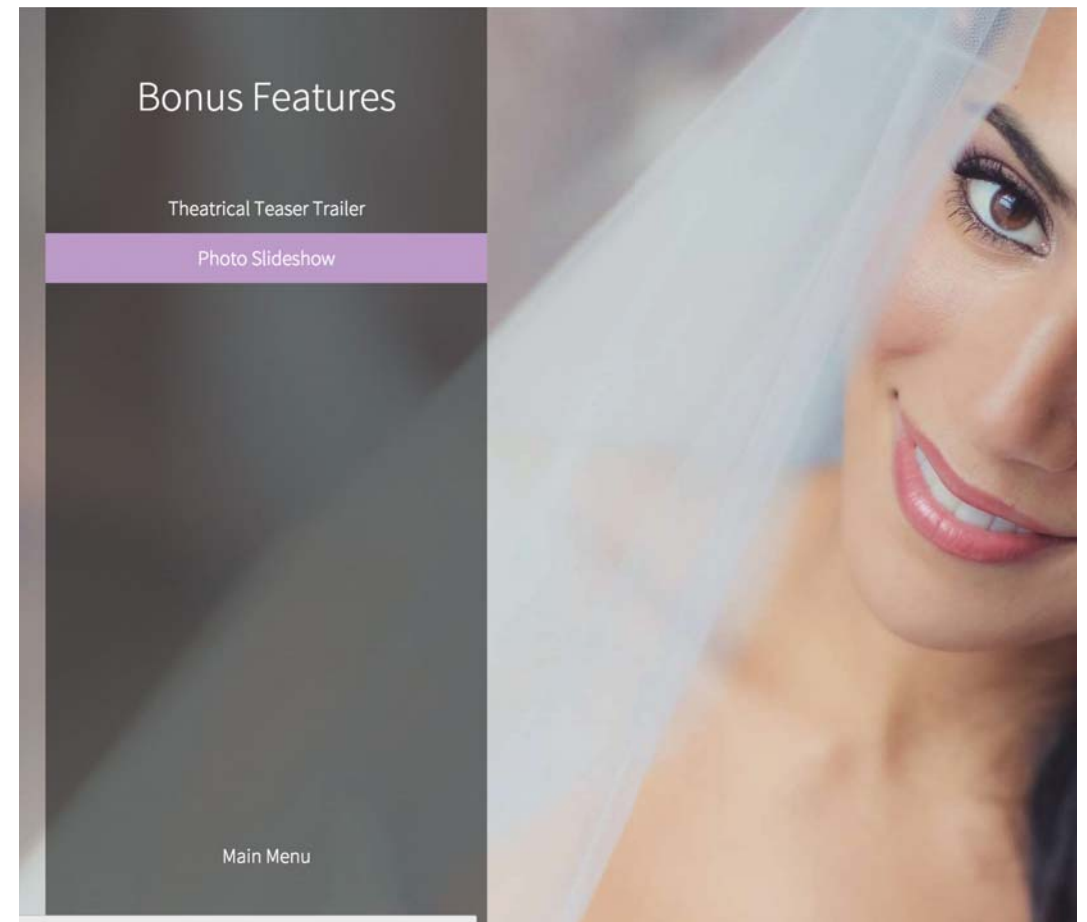
This is simply amazing: Before, if I'd wanted to deliver multiple videos—like a wedding video collection, which has multiple parts—I would have had to deliver separate links that would all have to be loaded individually. With the MediaZilla collection, all of these videos (feature wedding film, full ceremony, full reception toasts and dances) can all be delivered in one nice, neat and professionally branded menu system, just like an optical disc. In addition to providing a direct link (which, by the way, can be secured with a password), you can provide clients with embed code that allows them to plop a single video or the entire collection—menu and all—into a web page, blog post or anything that accepts HTML5 embed code.



## Other Cool Features

But wait, there's lots more! Let's say you made a mistake. Perhaps you misspelled the groom's name. With a couple of clicks, you can quickly fix the mistake in the collection, and it will automatically update on the end user's link or embed code. The menu (which took you no time to build) also contains a simple but elegant dissolve transition when you change from the main menu to any of your submenus and then back again.

A clean fade-to-black occurs when you choose a video to play from the menu, resulting in a smooth viewing experience. Try doing that with a manual DVD build. You can also add music to your collection. A song uploaded as an MP3 loops over the menu and plays continuously, regardless of how you click between menus. When you select a video to play, the music fades out softly with the visual transition.





## The Really Fun Part

Now that you have a fully functional, custom-branded, custom-button, music-highlighted, multiple-video-menu system to deliver online, you can deliver that same experience on a DVD, Blu-ray or flash drive, and it's all done from the MediaZilla interface.

The MediaZilla team has been hard at work rolling out new fulfillment features that eliminate the need for video content creators to build and compile their own optical media and thumb drives. Select your completed collection in the user-facing interface and choose DVD, Blu-ray Disc or USB Drive, and the MediaZilla bot automatically creates (at no additional charge) your custom menu collection and video assets in the form you've selected.

I've tried all three of these delivery platforms, and they all work flawlessly. The DVD menu is a bit clunkier due to the limitations of DVD menu capability, but the Blu-ray experience is identical to the online version. The USB drive allows viewers to pop a custom-branded flash drive that you've provided into a smart television, PC, Mac, Xbox or PS4, and play the actual menu HTML and video assets as if they were viewing the content online.

Another great feature that makes MediaZilla so much more appealing than Vimeo and certainly YouTube is that clients can download each individual video file within the collection directly. They can also sign up for a free MediaZilla account and add the collection you've created into their own private library. If they do this, you can delete the collection under your account, and it will remain available to your clients. That pretty much solves the 1TB limitation.

## Future Enhancements

The cofounders say there will soon be a complete fulfillment option that allows viewers to order and receive their optical media items directly through the interface, requiring no additional work on your part to deliver the items personally. You'd be able to set the price for such items, accounting for the cost associated with having MediaZilla do this for you.

This is exactly what I've been waiting for. For now, I will continue to download the ISO image files for the optical media and burn the discs myself, which doesn't take long. It's a pleasure, actually, considering that I don't have to worry about failed burn processes, computer software crashes and other DVD and Blu-ray headaches. I simply wait for the confirmation email that my DVD or Blu-ray disc is ready to be downloaded, and then set the ISO file to burn using my Mac's disk utility. The USB feature works the exact same way, only you have the option of adding the video files yourself or downloading them from the MediaZilla servers along with the menu HTML package.

I'm super-impressed with how MediaZilla offers so much in a first-generation service but also has left so much room to grow. The customization options that can be added to this platform are endless. I envision a multitude of custom menu layouts, various menu transitions, logo branding, a landing-page option for additional branding and SEO, multiple music choices for various menu screens, ultra-high-definition support for 4K content, multiuser sharing and editing, and so much more.

Be warned, though: The MediaZilla team is still working out some bugs that are inherent with features as complex as this service provides, but I do know personally that they are working tirelessly to perfect the platform in a way that will make it almost impossible for video content creators to ignore. ■



Rob Adams is a New York City-based wedding cinematographer, commercial film producer and educator who has been producing wedding and corporate films for high-end clients for more than 17 years. Rob's visual storytelling style and knack for creating amazingly high-production value under pressure is industry-leading. He films and speaks around the world.

[robadamfilms.com](http://robadamfilms.com)





# shutter

@ADOBE MAX magazine

A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT THIS YEAR'S  
CONFERENCE FOR CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS

If you are a photographer today, you use an Adobe product. There is no escaping it. The software titan is the 800-pound gorilla. And it's damn good at what it does. We may not be 100 percent happy with every facet of its software, but Adobe has been part of my business since I started 10 years ago, and even longer for many in the creative community.

As a professional speaker and educator, I don't get to see many conferences as an attendee, but this year, I went to Adobe MAX as just another face in the crowd. I got to get my learn on and enjoy myself without having to worry about my presentation or getting stopped in the hallway. It was incredible. If you have a chance in 2016, I highly encourage you to attend the event. You will not be disappointed. This conference is dedicated to everything Adobe.

From the opening keynote, I was blown away. Adobe senior leadership and product managers knew it all. They get it. They really do. As many of you know, I worked for Microsoft for 10 years. Microsoft was notorious for not listening to its user base. A lot of software companies get this bad rep. During the MAX, I got the feeling that Adobe leadership is listening, and not only trying to understand our current needs, but predict our future needs as well.

MAX is not your typical trade show. It's focused more on education than profits. You get the sense that it's about the attendee and not the advertisers. Of course, every trade show has to make money, but I'm just not sure Adobe got the memo on this. Why do I say that? Well, this year, every attendee received a Fujifilm X-T10 digital camera with an 18-55mm lens. Talk about making an impact. They got my attention right out of the gate.

Alright, alright, you must be thinking, "Toys are great, but did you learn anything, Sal?" I did. I learned more at Adobe MAX than I have in a long time. There was no fluff in the classes, and the topics were more real-world scenario and solutions than they were features and basics. I was able to pick topics that were relevant to me and my business.



While sitting through these courses, I learned about features that I never knew existed. Watching some of the experts work and how efficient they are with built-in features and shortcuts was mind-blowing. I learned things that had an immediate impact on my business. That's powerful. That's worth the price of admission.

The list of new products and features announced is plentiful—a quick Google search will reveal plenty. Adobe is making a huge push into mobile integration, for one. Here are a few things coming to your devices:

**Photoshop Fix** empowers you to do retouching on your iPad or iPhone. Heal, smooth, liquify, lighten and make other edits.

**Photoshop Mix** lets you cut out and combine elements from different images, blend layers and apply looks.

**Lightroom for Mobile** allows you to capture, edit, organize and share images anywhere, anytime.

“wake up, dumb-dumb...  
this is the future.”

Now, do I see myself editing my weddings on my iPhone any time soon? No, but wake up, dumb-dumb. This is the future. People are mobile and social. The ability to get something more powerful than an Instagram filter up on your blog without having to go home and get on your computer is powerful, and gives you a competitive advantage. This is something we cannot ignore, and something I think Adobe is getting out ahead of.

Do some research on other major Adobe MAX announcements. There were so many new features announced. It was overwhelming. The major products have had either new features added or major improvements to their existing feature set.

Finally, do yourself a favor and look into Adobe Stock. Wow. Adobe will now offer stock video footage to its already existing marketplace for stock photography and graphics.

**Verdict: Adobe MAX for the win. Well worth the money. Be sure to register for 2016 as soon as you can.**



How to

# Sell, Shoot and Edit

Your First Video Project

with Joe Switzer

---

The hardest video to sell, shoot and edit is the first one. Many of you have thought about video for years. You understand composition and lighting, and have mastered the art of photography, but you've never started your first video project. Today we discuss the key ways to get your video company up and running by starting and finishing your first video production. This isn't easy. It takes dedication, but if you give it a chance and complete this one video project, chances are you will be a filmmaker for life. I've broken it down into three fundamental parts. Let's start with the sales process, which I have found to be a weakness for most first-timers.





## Selling

It's hard to sell your first project when you have no previous work to show. But it's no different from your first photo session. You probably did your first session for a small fee or even free. So my advice is simple: Just give it away. No matter how qualified you are behind the camera, if you can't sell yourself or have nothing to show potential clients, then you won't be a success.

Find something or someone you adore, and put all of your passion and energy into doing the first project for free. Maybe it's a charity, friends who are getting married or a small company you're obsessed with. Your first sale will be memorable and influence future clients. Keep an open mind, and don't be so picky if it's not exactly a dream project.

The first sale that started Switzerfilm was for \$150. It was a wedding highlight put to VHS. The sale came from a wedding photographer who recommended us and told their client that we were just getting into the business.

Weddings are a fabulous way to get started with video. The quickest solution might be to start working with a photographer in your area. Or, if you're already a photographer, this is a simple add-on you can offer to all your current clients. Once you have this first video to show as a sample, you will start booking future film projects.





## Shooting

What do you need for this first video project? A misconception is that you need three professional 4K cameras, monopods, tripods, sliders/tracks, a handheld stabilizer, drone, audio tools, lighting and a bag of a dozen lenses. Eventually you might have all of that equipment, but you can start with something as simple as a monopod and an iPhone in a worst-case situation.

Most of you at least have a camera, a few lenses, and a monopod or tripod. That is all you need to get started and capture amazing shots. To get off to a great start, use a camera, monopod and track. The Sirui P-324S Carbon Fiber Photo/Video Monopod is a great choice. You can find a decent slider on eBay for less than \$100. If you have a larger budget and want the best, get the Rhino 24" carbon slider for \$500.



Images © Joe Switzer

To make your filming experience easier, it's best to have the same fluid video head on both your track and monopod. This allows you to take your camera off quickly and connect to your slider and monopod in just a few seconds. Reread and highlight those last two sentences. This can break you and ruin your filming workflow. We use the Manfrotto MVH500 AH video heads.

First, you must realize that time is against you with video. Take extra time. You'll also be exerting more physical energy to get your shots. Many of you who are shooting photography take for granted how easy it is because you're using the handheld technique, grabbing all sorts of different angles with your AF mode on. Handheld and autofocus do you no good if you want a professional video look. This is a big obstacle to overcome for photographers, but with a little practice, it will become second nature. You'll be able to use your video tools quickly, and rarely miss a moment with manual focus.

You don't just want to show up and start filming at the ceremony. If you are one of those photographers who works by the hour, you will need to reconsider your hours for video production. You're going to need all the time in the world. Even though we're not capturing more than a few hours of video footage all day long to make a two- to three-minute video, we spend most of our time positioning ourselves for the candid, in-between moments, and of course getting all those angles and establishing shots: wide, close-ups and time-lapses. You don't know what shots will make the final video, so it's essential to keep moving and positioning yourself for success.

Doing this all day long is exhausting because you're starting in the morning before the bride or groom gets ready, and you don't stop until about halfway through the reception. When you get to your edit, you'll be thankful for all the variety and extra footage to work with.

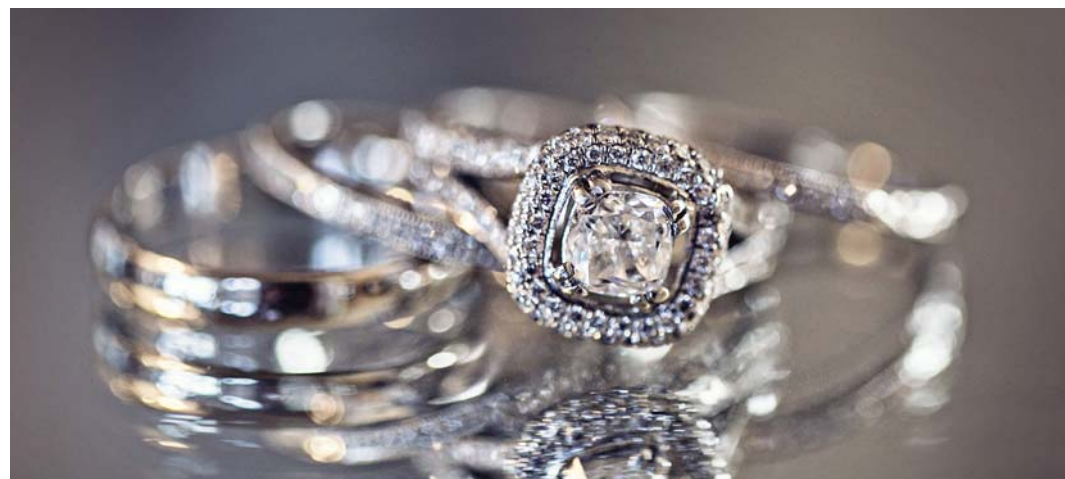


Image © Joe Switzer

## Editing

After you sell and film your first video production, the final step is the edit. Before you learn anything about editing, I want you to think about this analogy. Remember your last lavish family dinner? A dinner where you plan, prepare and enjoy each other and all the home-cooked food? You end up having a pile of dishes that need to be washed. You could wash them right away or you could let them soak. If you let them sit and soak, you might forget about them until the next day. You might be running late, so you might not get to them until the following evening. Maybe you're too tired, you had a long day at work, so you put it off again. Get the point?



It's best to start your edit right after the shoot, while it's still fresh in your mind. You'll finish it much more quickly because you just experienced the production behind the lens, so you can easily visualize the amazing moments of the day. Don't let those dishes soak!

What software should you use to edit? Another misconception is that you're going to need to spend thousands of dollars to buy a Mac and Final Cut Pro. If you're on a Mac, iMovie is a great way to get started. If you're on a PC, use anything free; Windows Movie Maker, Sony Vegas and Adobe all do a great job. Most of you are on the Adobe cloud program, so it might be easiest to use Adobe Premiere Pro. You just want to do basic editing, so you won't need anything fancy for your first productions. If you have a budget and want to purchase something for the long term, we use an Apple MacBook Pro running Final Cut Pro.

What should the edit look like? The overwhelming majority of creatives who want to get into the video industry make this so complicated on themselves. For some reason, they think they need to make a 20-minute video, tell a story, use audio, insert fancy transitions, text and graphics, and use color filters.



Images © Joe Switzer

For your first edit (for all edits, actually), think simple. Switzerfilm wedding videos are two- to three-minute films put to music. That's it. Roll the credits. We make music videos that don't have text, graphics, transitions or audio.

We use SongFreedom to license all our music for all of our wedding and corporate productions. For our most recent edit, we used the American Authors tune "Best Day of My Life." Look for music that is mainstream or indie, and nothing longer than four minutes. If you fall in love with a song that is over four minutes, shorten it. For your first edit, you probably won't have enough amazing footage for a one-minute video, so keep your song choice short. Your goal is to make something that people can engage with and share. Nobody is going to share a 10- or 20-minute video, so don't waste your time making it.

After you get your song, it's time to place it in your editing software. Now how do you decide what video clips to put where? I usually like to use the approach of a good speaker. Orators tell you what they're going to tell you, tell you, and then tell you what they told you. You can apply this same template to your first wedding edit. You want your video to start out with excitement and wonder by giving the audience a glimpse into what the video is all about. Maybe the wedding edit could start with a few shots of the reception, wedding and creative post-ceremony shots. If you have a three-minute song, the first 10 to 15 seconds is your chance to bring your audience in and let them know they don't want to stop watching.

The rest of the video could be in order of the events, like wedding prep, ceremony, post-wedding shots and then reception. The ending needs to be that "wow" moment and recap of how amazing the day was. A common mistake of first-time editors is they use all the footage and have nothing good left for the memorable ending that inspires viewers to share and watch again. The actual video clips need to be short and unpredictable. Use a few one-second, three-second and half-second shots. Then, for the epic motion shots, you can get away with holding those for up to five seconds.

You want to keep viewers on their toes so they can't predict the flow of the edit. For most of our edits, the bulk of video clips are around one to three seconds. Keep the shots as short as possible in all your editing.

You know enough people to find something exciting to film, so just do it. You can more than double your business with this new revenue stream, but the biggest reward is seeing the reaction of your clients watching their video for the first time. It gets a different reaction than a photo. The music and video is a combination that causes tears and thunderous applause like you've never seen or heard before.

Giving video a try might just change your business and your life. ■



Joe Switzer founded the international award-winning photo-cinema business Switzerfilm. His team is made up of four young creative minds striving to take the world of wedding cinema and photography to the next level. The team travels the world for inspiration, going anywhere and everywhere to top their latest work. Joe finds joy in teaching all over the world and helping up-and-coming "ographers" lay the groundwork for a solid future. Over the past 10 years, he has counted the majority of his clients as lifelong friends.

[switzerfilm.com](http://switzerfilm.com)

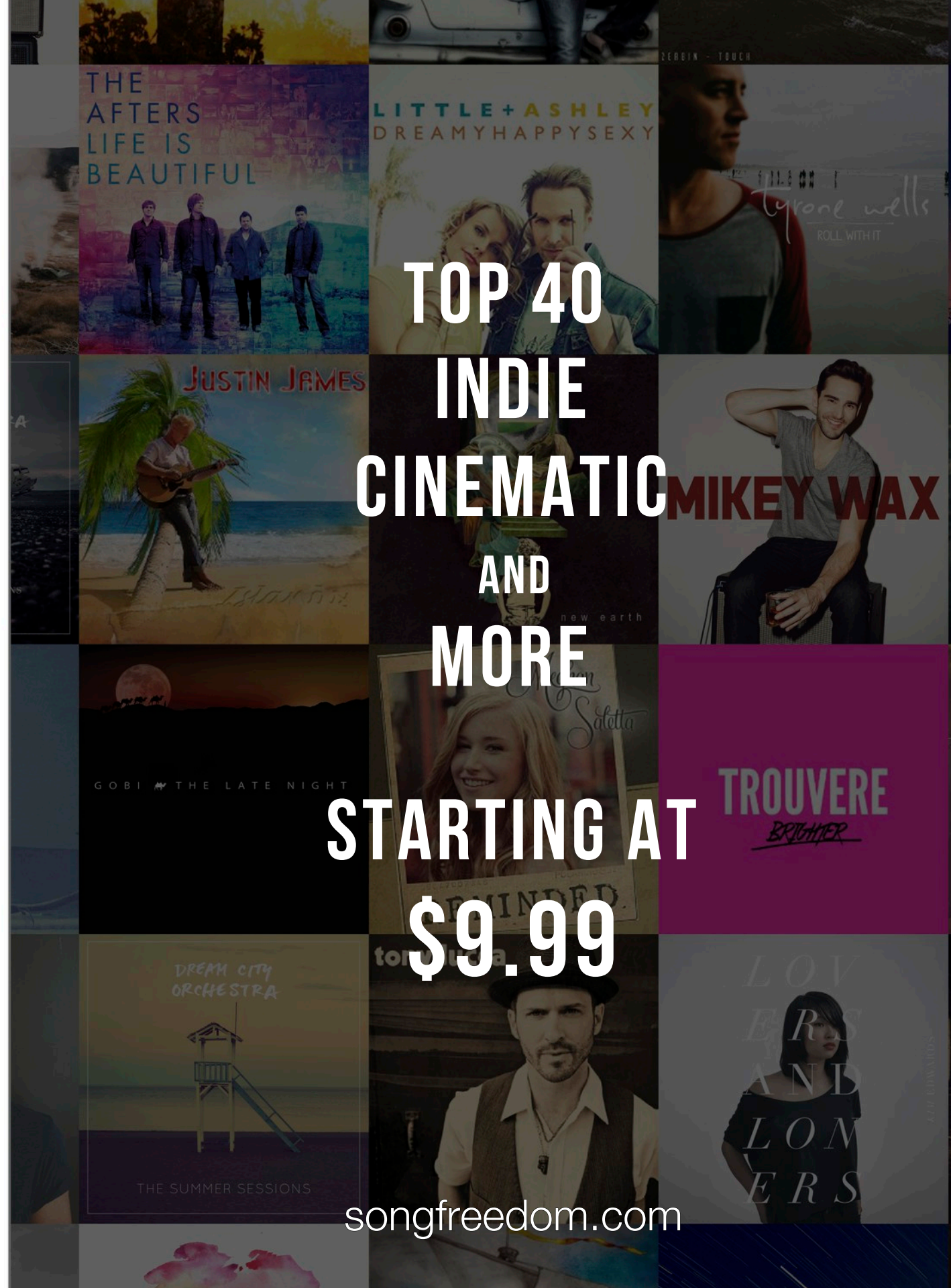




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