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MAGAZINE

(industry insiders
share their
best-kept secrets)

KICK-START 2013



ADVICE YOU CAN TAKE INTO THE NEW YEAR
POWERHOUSE TRIPLE FEATURE

+ **Getting In Sync**
With Sal Cincotta

+ **Holding Yourself Accountable**
With Kristy Dickerson

+ **Setting Goals**
With Vanessa Jay

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& Feature Articles from Skip Cohen, Dave Cross,
Michael Correntino, Jen Rozenbaum & More





LAUNCH POINT

a word from the editor



“New beginnings.

Start the year off right. Talk, talk, talk, talk, talk.
We are always talking about doing something next year...
Well, next year is here!

Get your pen and paper out and start planning.

What do you want 2013 to look like?

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CONTENTS



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PICK YOUR POISON | SPECIALTY TIPS



BABIES
1 YEAR

Lori Nordstrom



SENIORS
Blair Phillips



BOUDOIR
Jen Rozenbaum

+ (FEATURES)



KICK START
A POWERHOUSE TRIPLE FEATURE
2013

GET IN SYNC
Sal Cincotta

HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE
Kristy Dickerson

SETTING GOALS & KEEPING THEM
Vanessa Joy

CONTENTS (CONT.)



GET 'ER DONE

- POWER OF THE VIDEO LOOPER
Rob Adams
- NOT-SO-OBVIOUS AUTOMATION
Dave Cross
- LICENSING YOUR IMAGES
Joel Green
- OFF CAMERA SPEED LIGHT TECHNIQUES
Michael Corsetino

(SHOUT IT OUT)

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A TRADESHOW
Skip Cohen

(DAILY GRIND)

DEFINING YOUR STYLE IN POST PRODUCTION
Laurin Thienes

Q&A
Sal Cincotta

PREPING FOR AN ENGAGEMENT SESSION
Taylor Cincotta



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preparing for the
ENGAGEMENT
SESSION
with Taylor Cincotta





We have to remember

most clients may never have had
professional portraits taken and therefore
have no idea how to prepare!



by Taylor Cincotta

Engagement sessions are so important for both our clients and us as photographers. They allow the client to get used to our style, workflow and feedback, so on their big day everything runs smoothly. They know when I ask them to do something that may feel funny or awkward, they can be confident it will produce a great image because they (hopefully!) loved their engagement photos!

We have to remember most clients may never have had professional portraits taken and therefore have no idea how to prepare! Make yourself their trusted advisor and guide them on when to shoot, what to wear, what to bring or incorporate, and where to shoot. Your expertise will be much-appreciated and valued, and will ultimately lead to the best session possible.

1. timing

I suggest scheduling the engagement shoot at least six months ahead of the wedding. By doing this you are able to give them a different season of the year for their images, which creates more diversity in the artwork they will have in their home. This also allows them time to use the images before the wedding for things such as save-the-dates. But even more importantly, because once you get within that six-month window of the wedding, they have to start paying balances to all their vendors like the florist and caterer. It can be tough for them to spend more on engagement photos when they have to write big checks to pay off the wedding.

For local engagement sessions, we typically shoot for one to one and a half hours. For destination sessions we'll shoot for two to three hours (more travel between locations). We tell the clients to allow for two hours for local sessions and two and a half hours for destination sessions so they aren't rushing to go somewhere.





2. Outfits

I tell my clients to bring two sets of outfits. The first should be somewhat casual; we suggest dressy jeans, heels and a nice blouse they might wear to dinner. As long as the colors coordinate they'll be fine (example – light blue and dark brown look great together whereas red and green don't work).

For the second outfit we suggest going a little dressier as long as it fits within their personalities. The last thing you want is a client who never dresses up to show up in slacks with moth holes and dress shoes that haven't seen polish in three years. If they are a casual couple let them be casual, but still guide them on wardrobe so their outfits are diverse. We suggest a summer or cocktail dress with heels and accessories, and then slacks or khakis for the fiancé – something dressier than jeans.

Make sure they know to have their outfits ironed and lint-free. Opt for flattering form-fitting styles and heels vs. a loose fit and/or flats for the most photographically flattering figure. Baggy clothes tend to make people look heavier than they are when photographed.

3. Hair and Makeup

We tell our clients to make sure their nails are neat (either painted or not – no chipping). We also highly recommend they use our makeup artists and hair stylists. We pass along their contact information so our clients can schedule with them directly. We suggest their hair should be worn down as they would normally wear it for a nice night out and to bring a brush and hairspray in case it's a little windy.





4. Pets and Props

I always encourage our couples to bring or incorporate anything that is meaningful to them in their engagement shoot. The more vested they are in the shoot the more value they will place on the photos, which equals larger sales for you! No one wants his or her images or shoot to look like someone else's. By allowing them to make their session personal with a pet or prop like a bunch of balloons or a vintage outfit, this allows them to remain unique.

If there is a pet involved I encourage the couple to have someone there to take it away as soon as we are done using them for photos. I incorporate the pet into the first 10-15 minutes of the shoot with a few poses, some solo of the pet, and then we're done! After that someone takes the pet home and my couple can focus and not stress over watching the animal for the rest of the session.

5. Location

I just got back from an engagement session in New Orleans (where Sal was my assistant = greatest day of my life!). The couple got engaged there and I was able to fly in and out the same day on the way to see my family in Houston, incurring only about \$150 in expenses to make it happen. By doing this for my couple, in their eyes, I did them a tremendous favor by flying all the way out to NOLA just for them. It's a gesture that, while yes it can be a lot of work, goes a long way with your clients. I highly recommend offering destination engagement sessions like this not only to give your clients something unique, but also to build your portfolio!

If you are shooting locally, try to have at least two locations lined up and make sure the locations are as diverse as possible. For example, one location could be a park, where you can shoot on a bridge, in the woods, on a walkway, etc. The second location could be downtown urban, brick walls, abandoned buildings and graffiti. More diversity in your images means more options for your clients, which means more sales for you.

I'll ask my couples if there is any place in the metro area that is meaningful to them or that they specifically had in mind. I limit this to the "metro" area because I can't afford to lose an hour of time driving from one shoot to the next. I group all my sessions for the day around one central area so that I can maximize my shoot time. Again, by allowing the client to give feedback on locations, they are more vested in the session.



In Conclusion

I encourage my clients to rely on me as much as they need. They will call from the mall for advice, text pictures of items to possibly purchase, and email pictures of them trying on outfits at home together asking to make sure they coordinate well enough. We'll collaborate on themes, ideas, locations, everything! By the time they come to see their images they are my friends, and I am their trusted advisor.

There are so many components that contribute to a great shoot. There are tons of amazing photographers out there, but what good is their talent if the client is wearing a baggy sweater or has chipped nail polish? Attention to these little details not only promotes perfection for your engagement sessions, but also make your customers feel at ease knowing they are in the hands of someone who knows what they're doing, and who does it well. ■

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define

YOUR POST PRODUCTION

STYLE

with Laurin Thienes





by Laurin Thienes

What's your style? The answer to this question is fluid for many, but it ought not to be. Defining the look of your images through post-production should be constant, ensuring clients that your consistency will follow through to their own shoot. After five years in the post-production business, I have seen many photographers who have built their businesses around consistency, and still others who have faltered due to lack of consistency. The definition of what your style is should not be a fluid answer. Let the look and feel of your imagery define who you are as a photographer.

With digital we do not have to visualize what kind of look we want for our images before loading film in the camera. With everything starting in color we can take it where we want to go in post-production. While the basic categories of each look are limited, the variations are quite extensive. It is important not to get stuck on these small nuances while defining your look. Here are the basic categories:

STRAIGHT COLOR

With a raw image, any editing program can adjust the white balance or change the contrast. You can also color correct based on the histogram. While personal preferences definitely come into play when deciding whether or not you like your images warmer or cooler or with more or less contrast, the key is to stay consistent. I have seen many portrait sessions and weddings where the photographer edited from warmer tones to cooler tones within the exact same image sequence. When presenting images to your client there will be areas that blatantly stand out due to inconsistent color. Sticking with good clean color is not a bad way to go, and without a doubt it is a timeless look. Adding a few black and white images to the mix and you will have a very solid session.

STYLIZED COLOR

One of the latest trends is to try to make digital work look like it was shot on film. It makes you wonder, why not just shoot film? However, with today's technology it makes it easy to cheat a little. Each type of film has a very distinct look, and the geniuses at Visual Supply Company have embodied many different types of film. Lightroom presets really help create the ability to visually produce the look and feel of film without actually shooting it. This can give your entire shoot a fun, stylized feel without going overboard and create enough of a variance from standard color to have a unique look.



The sheer number of Photoshop action sets available is nauseating. Many of the popular ones offer differing degrees to a starting point depending on your own personal likes. Photographers have had great success implementing a small percentage of artistic edits in each shoot.

Introducing artistic edits into your brand can cause some anxiety if you have never done it, so just ease into it. What you may love, your clients might hate, but this is okay as you develop what you want your brand to represent. As for your client, they can always order the color version of the same photograph.

ARTISTIC STYLING

Depending on your level of Photoshop skills, implementing more advanced artistic images into your workflow can be hard unless you work with a team that can handle some of the work for you.

However, if you are able to implement one or two over-the-top edits into certain shoots, this could be one way to differentiate yourself in your market.

Present this as fine art to your clients, only available as a large wall portrait.

ADVANCED PHOTOSHOP

If you are unsure of what kind of look you are going for, go looking for inspiration. Some great resources are organizations such as WPPI or PPA and the images submitted to them for print competitions. There are other places as well – fashion magazines, other photographer’s work, or online education venues such as Shutter Mag or creativeLIVE. Many of the aesthetics that make your work yours come down to what you personally like. Do you like bright colors? Or perhaps more of an original film look? Or even more, a dark, grungy, art-style look? There is no right or wrong answer here, it is just important that you dial in the look you’re going for and consistently work within it. You must also ask yourself whether your own photography fits into the mold of the styles you like.





I have seen it many times, trying to force the wrong type of editing onto images that ultimately need something different. The simple rule here is do not try and force your editing to work with images where it will feel, well, forced. When in doubt, a color image can often embody the scene just as well. While there is no right or wrong answer when it comes to what your editing style looks like, some scenarios do work well. Here is what we do within our own wedding work:

THE WORKFLOW

Select down to 700-800 images and color correct. We like a tonality that is on the warm side of neutral with increased contrast. This gives a solid set of consistent images. We can always turn to them if our client does not love a certain look or direction.

We typically select about 40-50 images we feel would be stronger in black & white and duplicate those. This always gives the client a color version to revert back to if needed. The black and white gives a nice variation for the client and helps showcase images we feel are some of the best.

From there, we select another 30-50 images to really showcase. Using custom dodging and burning, then changing the feel of these images through enhancements – shifting certain colors, adding textures or borders – we are able to really put together a set of images that stands above the rest. All these upper level edits stay consistent from shoot to shoot though they stand out within the job and help the client see some of their images as pieces of art.

The final step always includes taking the top image (or maybe two) and turning them into a work of art. This often requires major Photoshop manipulation, significant tonality adjustments, turning on lights within images that were not on before, and just an overall manipulation to reach a different artistic level. These images upon completion can take a creative of the bride and groom and enhance it so it really stands out as the best of the best.

This scenario is used for 100% of our weddings, and is adjusted only with the number of images depending on the length of time spent shooting and total number of images captured. Again, there is no right or wrong here; it's just what works for our studio.

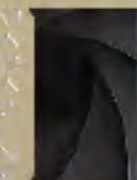
Challenge yourself to really nail down the consistency of both the look of your images, as well as what you are delivering job to job. Defining what you want your work to look like will require, to a certain extent, experimentation with what works for the clients you are attracting. Do not give up too fast if what you are doing does not sell. Make sure you give your newfound style time to set in. You will find that really championing consistency in your post-production will make your clients take note. It will also help you instill confidence in what you deliver. Repetition helps build confidence and your confidence is important to the ongoing success of your business. ■

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APERATURE
— SOCIETY —

BY
Salvatore Cincotta

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HOLD *YOURSELF* ACCOUNTABLE

with Kristy Dickerson





by Kristy Dickerson

At one point or another, life can take over whether it is welcoming a new baby to the family, moving or even the holidays.

It is inevitable that business sometimes doesn't get the attention that it should. It's not always easy to stay focused.

Waking up throughout the night with a newborn, unpacking boxes; these all stare us in the face like a big "To Do" sign. If it sounds like I am talking from experience, I am. At the end of this year we moved right in the middle of the holidays. And I have two boys so staying focused is not always easy!

I think life has its seasons and part of being a mom/dad leads to priorities getting shifted or even unusual working hours. Sometimes I look at other businesses and think dang they are everywhere and doing everything! As I write this it is 5 a.m. at my house, coffee in hand, husband and kids are still sleeping and this is my most valuable time to work. We all have peak times that are most productive, and in this stage of my life it happens to be very early. If you don't have kids I am sure you are reading this thinking I'm crazy!

The bottom line is we all have personal priorities that fill our time and make us who we are. On the other side we have business priorities, deadlines and goals that have to be met. Or do we have to meet them? That is my point. Working for ourselves I have no deadline that my boss gave me, no timeline to be in the office, or goals. When is the last time someone just walked up and handed you goals for your business? Yep, never.

Part of the New Year for me is planning and starting fresh. It's preparing goals, scratching off the items I've achieved and reassessing what I didn't achieve and why. At a normal 9 to 5 job your manager or boss is your accountability, while owning your business you have no accountability. You have no goals for the day or week, let alone the year.

I have talked previously about organizing the office, and the number one thing I start the day with is my To-Do list. I use Evernote. It is on my phone, iPad and both computers. No matter where I am, when something I am supposed to do or attend pops up, I add it immediately.

Looking at the bigger picture, why do I do these daily tasks? What are all these small tasks working toward achieving? That is what I challenge you to do. Choose a day or even a weekend trip to set realistic expectations for yourself and your business next year. The keys here are to be realistic and make them measurable. Don't set yourself up for failure and don't sell yourself short. By adding measurable goals you can assess your failures and rejoice in your victories.

By adding measurable goals
you can assess your failures
& rejoice in your victories.



Heres where I would start...

+(ONE)

Plan overall goals for the year. For example, in 2013 I want to shoot x number of weddings/sessions. I want to raise my prices to “this” and maintain this number of shoots. It can even be projects you want to complete. List them all. For example, re-design my website by this date, etc. The more details you can come up with the better.

+(TWO)

Break these goals down into tasks for each month. If one of your goals was to add weddings, how are you going to achieve that goal? Are you going to attend networking events, paid market or do a bridal show? As the year goes on it will change, but this is important to stay on track. You are accountable for yourself. Print or write your goals where you can see them all the time.

+(THREE)

Weekly and daily tasks should be in line with your ability to meet these overall goals. I don't have a lot of spare time, so sticking to tasks that feed my goals is important to me. Planning every year, month and a few minutes every day is important to stay on track.



You are accountable for yourself.
Print or write your goals
where you can see them all the time.

+ (Having a plan allows you to set tasks & achieve goals)

Will life derail these plans? Yes, I can almost guarantee it. But having a plan allows you to set tasks and achieve goals so when life throws surprises your business will stay on track. The livelihood of the family may depend on your success.

Without a plan you are just going through your day not knowing what you hope to achieve. I meet people who say their goal is to shoot x number of weddings this year. But what profit will that number of weddings yield? I recommend starting with the profit you want to yield for the year, and then break it down into a goal of profit for each month. Now what do you have to achieve to get there? You can shoot this number of weddings, but what are your expenses per wedding and per month? Factor that in. I know...a lot of numbers and planning! You are your own CEO and the boss of your Monday manager's meeting, you're accountable for you.

If you take anything away from this article start this year off with a bang, write down measurable goals for 2013 and apply deadlines to them. Put them where you can see them often. From there, write down action steps to achieve those goals. Then go to your calendar and choose 12 dates to re-visit your goals and strategy. Balancing business and personal lives is not always easy. At different points in our lives personal priorities overshadow business priorities and vice versa. Life has its seasons and I wouldn't have it any other way. Sure there are days when I would like to pass the buck to my boss, but the rewards that come with owning your own company are like no other. But then, no one ever said it was easy. ■

Without a plan
you are just going through your day
not knowing what you hope to achieve.



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GETTING
THE MOST
OUT OF ATTENDING
TRADE SHOWS

with Skip Cohen

" TIME is our most precious asset, we should invest it wisely."

Michael Levy



by Skip Cohen

This month launches the kick-off of convention season. Over and over again, photographers around the country are going to put aside their most valuable commodity – time – and make an investment in shows like Imaging USA and WPPI. Then they'll invest more time in local shows and state conventions, but not once leading up to any of these great conventions will they question the cost. I'm not talking about the financial side, although it isn't cheap to go anywhere these days, but the value of the time on the road away from their businesses.

Every time you head off to a convention without any goals, you're throwing time away. Again, that most valuable commodity that nobody has enough of simply runs through your fingers and disappears, gone forever without any return.

"Time is our most precious asset, we should invest it wisely." Michael Levy
I've written a lot over the years about how to get the most out of a trade show or convention. There's so much you can do in advance to be prepared for a great show and that includes more than just wearing comfortable shoes!

Here are some things to think about before you hit the road:

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED?

Take time and make a list of what you need to strengthen your business. First on the list is hardware or software that is a necessity. The key word here is "necessity." This is the foundation, the core of one aspect of attending any trade show. Again, make sure this list is gear you absolutely need to run your business.

It's a sidebar issue, but if you have a need for high-ticket items and your cash flow isn't as strong as you'd like it to be, get yourself approved for leasing. Knowing your credit line in advance gives you buying power and a chance to take advantage of show specials. Plus, you can utilize the leasing company's assets without depleting yours! Just hit Google and search for "leasing companies" and you'll find loads to choose from.

Next are products that aren't a necessity, but would sure be nice to have. It's a separate list and while it might seem like a waste of time, the purpose is to help you establish your priorities.

There's one more list to create. You need to think about what help you personally need with your skill set, from marketing and business to techniques in imaging. What do you personally need to help you become a better photographer and add a little reinforcement to your business...not just to survive, but to thrive?

from WPPIonline.com

from ImagingUSA.org



WHAT COMPANIES

do you want to make sure you visit at the convention?

Visit the website of the show you're attending and print out the list of exhibitors. I know you're going to get the same list at the show, but the purpose here is to get you thinking about everything it takes to run your business.

Reviewing this list can even be done on the plane ride to the convention if you're coming from out of town. Why do you need a list of vendors? You're looking for every company with products or services that tie in to anything on the three lists you just made of your strongest business needs.

Here are two links to help you with two major upcoming shows. Imaging USA is typically smaller than WPPI, but it has good substance and quality exhibitors.

Imaging USA Exhibitor List – also available online and searchable by categories.

The advantage is being able to learn about companies whose names you might not be familiar with.

<http://s36.a2zinc.net/clients/PPA/imaging2013/public/ExhibitorList.aspx?ID=1089&sortMenu=103005>

WPPI's Exhibitor List is less complete at this time since the convention isn't until March.

<http://www.wppionline.com/show/exhibitor-list.shtml>

WHAT PROGRAMS & WORKSHOPS

are you going to attend?

Do the same with the speaker list for that convention. Again, you need to know who is speaking and the specific topics. The challenge for every attendee is deciding which programs to attend. I realize we all have our favorites, but the challenge is to attend programs with content that's really valuable to your skill set. This is a lot more important than programs you just want to attend because they're fun, the speakers are entertaining or your friends will be there.

Pick at least one program each day that's outside your comfort zone. Stay focused on the importance of potential diversity in your business even though you might not be ready to tackle a new specialty. This is an ongoing process and so important to building your strengths and having a solid understanding of the photography business.

NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK...

One of the most valuable benefits of any convention is your ability to network, but this goes a lot deeper than just collecting business cards like we did years ago. This is about really talking with people.

Right off the bat, bring copies of your own promo piece. The most effective ones I've seen are oversized postcards with images of the photographer's work and contact information. You never know when you might want to leave a piece like this with a vendor you want to work with or a photographer you meet. It's something a contact can easily take home with them after the convention. Even though networking is more than swapping business cards, you still need to bring your cards. And make sure you have a phone number on them! I'm amazed at photographers who get caught up in the artsy-fartsy side of life and just want to send people to their websites hoping they will look at their images. Your business card should have as much information about contacting you as you're comfortable giving out!

If you work out of your home and don't want to list your home address, that's fine, but give people your email address, phone number and website. Be accessible!

Make it a point to meet at least one person from each company that manufactures every product you use. It'll pay off so many times down the line when you need help. It's a very specific level of your network. Make sure you build a relationship with them. Contact them in advance and set up a time to meet at their booth.

At every program you attend talk to the people around you. You'll be amazed at the diversity in the audience and at the same time you'll learn that many people are dealing with the same challenges you have.





WORKING THE TRADE SHOW FLOOR

Don't jump around unless you've scheduled an appointment in advance. Start in one corner and just work your way around the entire show. There are many small companies as well as the big guys and often you'll stumble upon a new product or concept that just might make your life easier.

Remember, many companies have mini-sessions going on in their booths, usually 15-20 minutes long. Often they're taught by icons in the industry, giving you a chance to talk with them in a smaller more informal environment.

Last on the list, a few important reminders – never have a meal alone! Breakfast, lunch or dinner are perfect for catching up with friends and making new ones. Wear comfortable shoes! You'll be doing a lot of walking just to get over to the convention center!

Finally, make dinner reservations with friends and associates BEFORE you get to Atlanta or Las Vegas. If you wait until the last minute you'll be stumbling through your address book trying to figure out who you know that might be at the show. It's a lot more enjoyable when you've got your plans set up in advance. Safe travels, everybody! ■

learn more!
Check out this video.

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editors note:

In Skip Cohen's December article in Shutter Magazine, the photo captions were ran incorrectly. Images of holiday cards should have been credited to Bleu Cotton and Alison Pierce. We regret and apologize for this mistake.

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THE
POWER
OF THE VIDEO
LOOPER

with Rob Adams



by Rob Adams



On a cold February night in 2009 I was filming an Indian wedding in New Jersey. It had been a very long day and I found myself with nothing to shoot during a three-hour gap that my client had scheduled to break up the events that make up a traditional Indian wedding celebration. While the guests were resting and the bridal party was changing outfits I filmed the entire ballroom table, got my set-up shots of the reception, filmed every possible angle of the venue and was eagerly waiting for the reception to begin.

Having just gone tapeless a few months before, I was beginning to experiment with off-loading my footage from the memory cards to a Macbook Pro I had just purchased. I hadn't given any thought to producing same-day edits by myself or even sorting through my footage on a wedding day. It was mainly to clear up card space for the long day. I had done a few SDEs in the past but I always had a dedicated editor on-site to capture tapes in real-time who would edit all day long. This was the technology of the time back then.

In my boredom, I started going through my shots, mainly checking for focus and playability, and ensuring I had good material. I did, and a few minutes later I found myself opening Adobe Premiere Pro to see if I could edit some of this footage natively. I was curious to see if Adobe Premiere could handle the footage from my Sony Z5U HDV camcorder in real time. It actually handled the footage with relative ease so I mentally shrugged my shoulders and started trimming down some video clips and placing them on the timeline.

All I was doing was taking my favorite shots from the day and piecing them together...very basic stuff, no transitions, no music and no color grading. Just piecing shots together back-to-back making sure each edit was clean and the shots were steady. About 10 minutes later I had 15 clips on the timeline in Premiere. I was impressed by the power of the Macbook Pro and the ease of working with tapeless capture. After reviewing the edit several times, I had to ask myself:

“Why don't I place this out for people to see during the reception?”



What happened next changed my business forever. I rendered the video out of Adobe Premiere using Adobe Media Encoder to a high-quality QuickTime format that took about 25 minutes. Processing power wasn't what it is today.

I scoped out a high-traffic spot near the bar and asked the maître d' for a high, round table like you see at cocktail hour. I placed the laptop on the table and looped the video full screen using QuickTime Player.

The same-day edit “Looper” was born.



I never imagined the kind of response that video got that evening. At one point while filming, I looked over and more than 20 people were standing around the laptop, watching and smiling with expressions of awe on their faces! Some were pointing to the screen and others were running over to their friends and dragging them back to the video. I promptly went over (when I had a moment between filming) and tossed some business cards on the table next to the computer. Within minutes they were completely gone. About 30-40 business cards – gone! At one point the bride and groom went over to see what the commotion was about. They were floored by what they saw.

It wasn't an elaborate video. It wasn't a fully produced, same-day edit that took four hours to build. There wasn't even any music. It was a simple loop of my favorite video shots, about four to five seconds each, and the most beautiful cinematic moments I could find.

I went home that evening and quickly uploaded the video to Vimeo with a short piece of instrumental music. I then posted it to the bride's Facebook wall. The next morning I checked my analytics and the result astonished me. My views had spiked by about 1,000 and people all over the world had viewed it. Apparently, the guests at the wedding went home and saw the video on the bride's Facebook page and sent it to all of their friends and family. It spread like wildfire.

The following week, I had roughly four times the normal number of inquires, most of them friends and family of the couple.

I'm sure photographers get a similar response when placing out a wedding day slideshow but because this was a video, the most common feedback I got was "How the heck did you get that video done so fast?" It wasn't even a great video, but to some folks, I've learned that speed equals quality.

Over time, I got faster and faster at producing these short loopers and by 2010, I was doing them on all of my weddings. I didn't charge for them because the business I knew they would bring was payment enough. I set aside about 45 minutes during cocktail hour and slapped them together with haste. I was fortunate to have a support crew of multiple camera people, so we didn't miss anything essential to the final edits, but I still hurried nonetheless. With each wedding, the short edits got better and more intricate.

From the time between 2010 and 2012 my business increased three-fold. The loopers, coupled with the upward evolution of cinematography work made for a perfect combination that sent my booking rate and the price I could command soaring.

I highly recommend taking a few minutes on your next job and cut six to 10 shots together in a basic video editing program. With today's technology and programs, it's even easier. Both Adobe Premiere and Final Cut Pro X can edit DSLR video files natively and the rendering is very fast. All I do is import the main folder that contains my video files. Organization is extremely important when doing a same-day edit because speed is based on knowing where to find the shots you want. After a while, I know what shots I want to use in my loopers or what sequences to build from what I've shot that day. Sifting through hundreds of video files is not the most efficient way. I get organized by separating all my footage into color-coded folders based on the cameraperson's name and the part of the day (see figure a). Now remember, I'm a wedding cinematographer that sometimes utilizes four camera units the day of a wedding. If you are a photographer just getting into shooting video and are only shooting a couple of video clips for a fusion slideshow later on, you will have much less to organize. This could work to your advantage.

I've been using Final Cut Pro X as of late to do my loopers (see figure b). I find the program to be extremely fast at searching through footage and rendering out my final video. With practice, any video-editing program will become second nature.





Here are some simple steps to make a quick looper using Final Cut Pro X. My video will also help to illustrate these steps.

ONE My workflow consists of skimming (going through) my footage to find compelling shots in the media browser. I then use the keyboard shortcuts [I] and [O] to mark where I want each clip to start and end. The [I] stands for “IN” and the [O] stands for “OUT” (see figure c).

TWO Once I have my clip range marked, I usually play it back by pressing the spacebar to ensure the shot is steady and remains in focus the entire time.

THREE To append the clip of video to my timeline, I press the letter [E] on the keyboard. FCPX takes only the portion of the video clip I have marked and places it directly next to the previous edit.

FOUR Once I’m done editing, I’ll usually do a bit of color-grading (that’s a whole other tutorial) to give the piece mood, and then export (render) it out to a playable .MOV file (see figure d).



If you decide to try a looper, I’m sure it will evoke serious reactions from the wedding guests and most importantly, the bride and groom. In fact, don’t even tell the couple you are doing it. This will save you embarrassment if you fail to get it done, but will super-charge your relationship if you are successful. I don’t suggest promising or selling a looper yet, just try one. And don’t forget to put out your business cards.

Watch my video for a quick tutorial on how I quickly and easily build my same-day edit loopers, and try one for yourself as soon as you can. ■





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GETTING with Sal Cincotta In sync



When you are working
side-by-side with someone...

You have to ensure that you
are **both on the same page,**
both in sync.

by Sal Cincotta



If you are a one-man or one-woman show, this article is not for you. However, if you are like me and work with your spouse or a business partner, read on. Working with someone else has probably been one of the single greatest challenges in my life. Yes, in my life! It's easy when it's just you. You call the shots. You make the rules. However, when you are working side-by-side with someone, it's not that simple. You have to ensure that you are both on the same page, both in sync, so to speak. Or you run the risk of taking your business in opposite directions. Miscommunication is the number one reason most partnerships struggle.

And if you are working with your spouse, let's all take a moment for some prayer. In all seriousness, working with your spouse is very difficult. Not only are you balancing the issues facing every partnership, but now you are injecting a more personal aspect to your relationship and suddenly every comment, gesture or tone is amplified tenfold. Business is hard enough; we don't need to make it tougher on ourselves.

Here are some tips and tricks to get in-sync with your partner to ensure you grow your business and relationships in 2013.





Set Goals

Nothing is worse than two people working together day in and day out with completely different goals and objectives. Setting goals isn't as simple as, "we want to shoot weddings" or "we want to photograph 15 weddings this year." That's definitely part of your business plan, but it doesn't ensure that you are in sync with how to get there. That's typically where the problems start to kick in.

Taylor and I have three to four meetings per year to set and adjust our goals and objectives. However, it doesn't stop there; it can't. You have to work together on your execution plan. How are your goals going to come to fruition? In 2012, we started four new businesses. Yes, four! Needless to say, Taylor and I were not in sync. I have since been put on business probation – no new businesses for 2013. I am, however, filing for an appeal.

Once you figure out all the tasks to bring your plan to life, the fun really begins.

Clearly Define Roles & Responsibilities

Now you have to figure out who is doing what. This is where I see a lot of people get frustrated working with a partner. You assume they know what you are looking for or expecting and they assume they are doing what you are expecting. Rarely do these two line up by magic.

Instead, sit down and list all the tasks required to execute the goals at hand. Maybe your goal is to do four bridal shows this year or have your own art exhibit showcasing your landscape photography. Awesome! Who is going to prepare the booth for the bridal show, get the price sheet printed, select and edit the images you will showcase, what shows will you do? Who will coordinate the details of those shows for you?

We have weekly team meetings to review upcoming events and constantly assign and reassign tasks to avoid anyone on our team saying, "I thought you were doing that!"

This exercise alone saves everyone on the team from wanting to kill one another and ensures we all work together in the most efficient manner possible.

Here is the rub, especially if you are working with your spouse: Stay out of the other's business. I can't emphasize this enough. There is no room for micromanaging when working together. If I am assigned a task, the last thing I want is my wife sticking her nose in my workspace. With that being said, I have to hold up my end of the deal; I can't slack off because then I am giving her a reason to get in my space.

Taylor and I spend nearly every waking moment together and we love it that way. However, we have learned how to coexist and thrive in both a professional and personal relationship. I have talked about this before; we each have primary responsibilities where one of us owns the task. We have secondary responsibilities where each of us can handle the task if needed. And finally, we have no-fly zones, where the other person better stay the hell out of that task.



Say What You Mean & Mean What You Say

Of course, I would be selling you fantasy if I were to suggest that if you follow my advice everything will go just perfectly and the birds will be chirping and you and your spouse will be dancing through the fields joyously celebrating. (Yeah, I just did that. You are welcome for the visual.)

In reality, you are going to fight, get pissed, angry, hurt, and every other imaginable emotional high and low. However, I can't emphasize enough, say what you mean and mean what you say! My biggest pet peeves in life are passive aggressive people! UGH! Makes me nuts. There is just no place for it in the workplace – it is probably one of the most unproductive traits I have ever seen. Nothing, and I mean nothing positive will EVER come from that behavior. So, if that's you... knock it off!

If you want to be successful in life and business, use your time wisely. I don't want to be a mind reader. I am way too busy for that nonsense and so are you. Most if not all high-performance teams are good at communicating and listening to each other. And because they don't have to spend time deciphering what people really mean, they are extremely efficient.

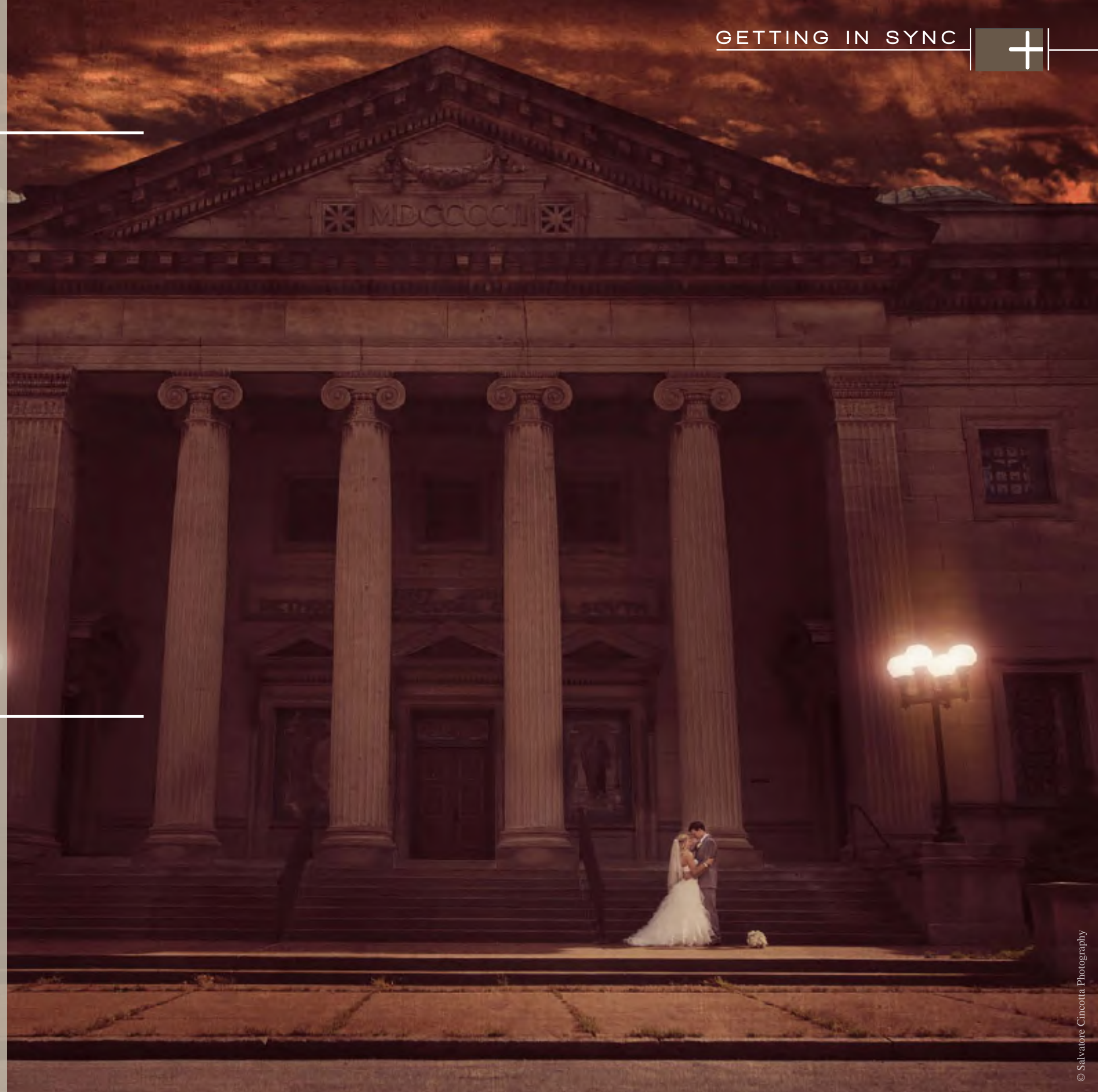
This was probably the biggest hurdle for Taylor and me to overcome early in our professional relationship. I am very direct and to the point, but because of that, she never has to guess what I really mean. Today, this is probably one of those intangible things that make us extremely efficient – we truly move and act as one – always in sync.

Be A Good Listener

No matter how much you plan and communicate, there are times when you just need to shut up and listen to your wife, your husband or your business partner. There should never be a struggle for power. That is extremely unhealthy for you on both a personal and business level.

I would say that while I am the vision of our company and a very opinionated leader, I am always listening to my team. I know one thing. I don't know everything. By listening to the people around me, it gives me better perspective as a leader and it fosters amazing creativity and growth inside the group.

Don't misunderstand, just because you are listening, doesn't mean you will always agree with people or do what they are suggesting. I listen to ensure I understand what they are saying. I want to hear them. It is with that information bundled with my own ideas, experience, and vision that I will make the ultimate decision. Someone has to own



Tone & Thick Skin

I don't know. Maybe it's my generation or being a native New Yorker that has made me a little thicker skinned. Somewhere along the way we sure have become a little too sensitive. I mean, come on, toughen up a little. If you are going to run a business, we can't get our feelings hurt every time someone says something we don't like or takes a "tone" with us, real or implied. Running multiple companies has given me exposure to a very broad customer base, both professional photographers and retail consumers. And sometimes I want to pull my hair out...what's left of it, at least.

Email is the worst, isn't it? We all know that tone is lost and misunderstood in email, yet over and over, we are the first to misread email when it comes to us and apply all sorts of meaning to it that was never intended.

True story. Recently, I received an email from someone about the magazine giving me crap about how hard it was to log in and she was having trouble and really not enjoying the magazine. Well, I try to respond to email as quickly as possible. I was on my phone and shot back a response that read, "Check the top right corner of the site and you will see the log-in." She replied back, "Well, with that kind of attitude I am going to cancel my subscription to your magazine." I thought to myself, is this seriously happening right now? Am I being punked somehow? I wrote back to her, "Not sure what you are referring to, I think you might be reading a little too much into my email. Actually, way too much. I am on the road and trying to give you good customer service and there was no tone whatsoever in my email, I was merely trying to direct you to the log-in point."

Two points here: First, watch your tone or, better stated, understand that there is tone or lack thereof in everything we do. That being the case, we have to anticipate how our message will be received and ensure it's the way we intend it to be received. Sometimes what we don't say can be as powerful as what we do say. And secondly, let's all toughen up. Business is tough. We can't take everything personally and we definitely don't have time to make everything personal. I think we all have a little crazy in us, so we have to be on crazy patrol when we find ourselves reading into things too much. Trust me; it will make life a lot easier.

Apologize

Whoa. Look at that word. You're not done, look at it again. Can you believe what it says? Seriously, just freaking apologize when you are wrong...to your spouse, to your clients, to your family. It's just easier than trying to figure out a way you are not wrong. That's way too much energy.

We do not run a perfect business at all. We make mistakes every day. And when we do, we straight-up own it and apologize to our clients or to each other. Taylor screws up and I screw up in our business; we don't have time to play the blame game. It's counterproductive and causes fights. So, we are committed to each other and just own it when we screw up. And trust me, neither of us wants to screw up, but it's not fair to your partner or business to deflect. When you are wrong or screw up, just be wrong and commit to not do it again. You will grow as a team and a business when you do.

I find that my wife, my clients, and people in general are very understanding about mistakes happening and just want to know they are being heard and that you will ultimately make it right.

This is the perfect time of the year to turn a new leaf and get your business and team on the path to success. ■



learn more!
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BABY'S FIRST YEAR

THE 1-YEAR SESSION

PART FIVE

This series of articles will help you plan for each stage throughout the first year.





“During each session I want to talk about all of the new things that baby is doing right now, and then be sure to photograph those milestones!”



by Lori Nordstrom

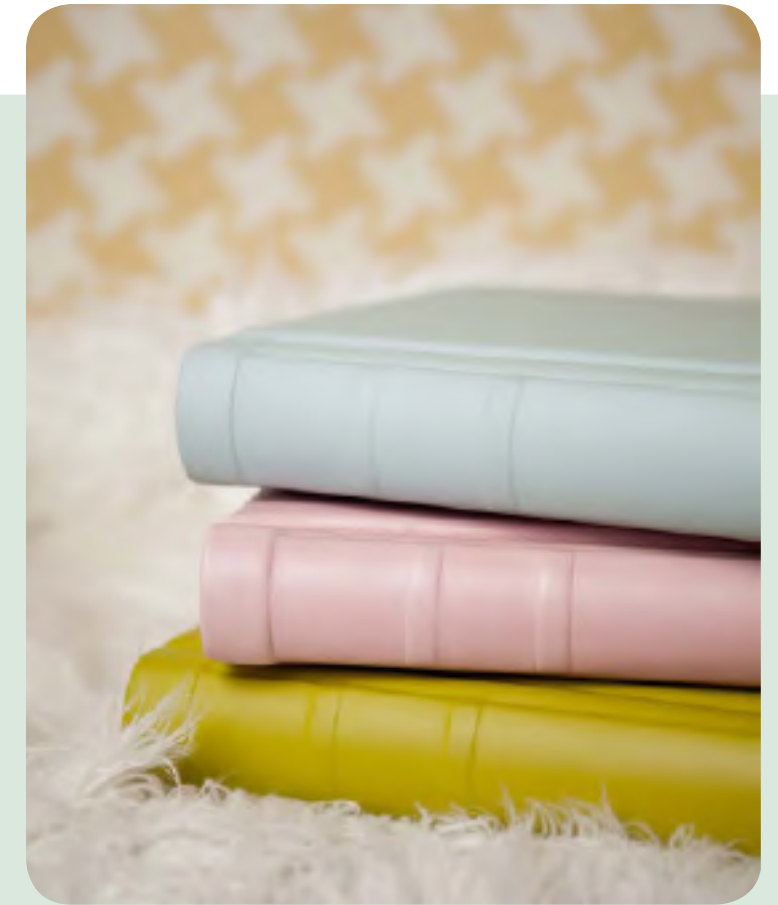
By the time the 1-year mark rolls around, the baby that toddles into your studio will be a completely different little person that first came in just one year prior. The first year of life is the time of the most growth and change. Babies will more than double their weight, sprout hair and teeth, begin babbling sounds and start to walk. It all happens so fast, so be sure to talk through these milestones with your mommy clients. During each session I want to talk about all of the new things that baby is doing right now, and then be sure to photograph those milestones! These changes and new beginnings turn into memories because we've talked about them and then focused on them during the session.

During a 1-year session I start with the baby's "traditional" portrait. Typically a 1-year old will have about a 10-15 minute time span where he is willing to interact. During this time I'll need a ball, a toy, dancing and singing, peek-a-boo and a number of other tricks in my arsenal! If the baby has started to walk, it's often a game of chase and place. I use Mom or Dad a lot during the 1-year session. They will need to be the baby handler – chasing after their 1-year-old and then placing them again in the scene. I also want a parent close by since their baby is now on the go, and usually not completely steady yet. We don't want tumbles during the session, so I have Mom stay very close anytime we have a child on a chair, a step, or anything else that they might fall from.



After 10-15 minutes of shooting, I change the scenery. It's time for a new outfit and new background or location. With 1-year olds I've found a good 15 minutes is about all I can expect. Let your clients know this during your consultation call so they don't feel you are rushing through the session. Reassure them that you will be able to get everything you need in that amount of time. Note that we will only change clothes/background if the client has discussed wanting her portraits to hang in more than one room. I let our clients know that we will be designing each clothing choice based on what room the portraits will hang in. This has completely changed the flow of sessions for me. In years past, Mom might bring an outfit that was for a special occasion or purchased by someone special and given as a gift, but she had no intention of hanging it in her home. I would spend time during the session photographing this outfit and then Mom would buy a 5"x7". By pre-planning everything with my clients, I avoid this situation. If Mom really just wants a quickie 5"x7" I'll suggest planning for a snapshot at home and leaving custom portraits designed specifically for their decor and lifestyle to us!

During the 1-year session be sure to have on hand soft balls to throw and roll. These are a quick retouch off of a background if needed. The balls get the attention of the baby. Toys that make a noise are also great. Ask Mom during the consultation if there is anything that her baby has become attached to. Whether a blanket, a stuffed animal or doll, I want to photograph the child with that special item.

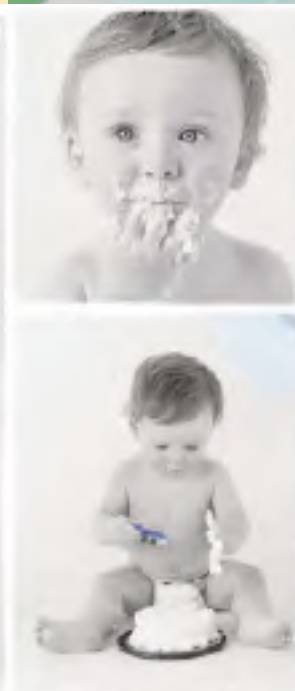
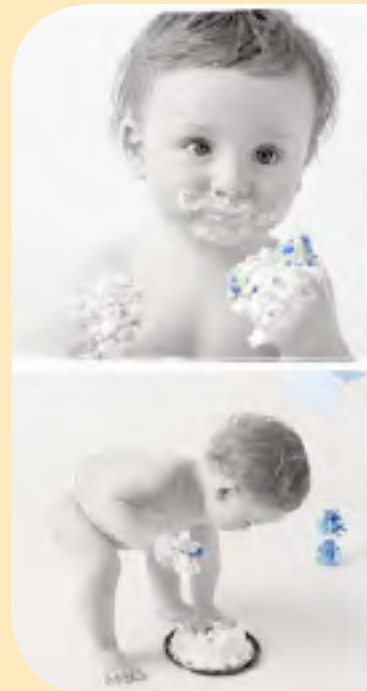




You'll also want to have all of the items needed for clean-up! I've recently gotten a little smarter about photographing birthday cake sessions. For my style, about 80 percent of my cake sessions are on my high-key background. I use a piece of linoleum turned backwards and painted with Tuff White Paint in my studio (<http://www.shootinggallerybackgrounds.com/backgrounds/tuffwhite/backgroundstuffwhite.htm>). The Tuff White actually makes for pretty good clean up, but watch the last session in the video included with this article and you'll understand why I made the switch! This child loved his cake so much – it was everywhere! I found cake for two weeks after that session! Now I use a piece of white background paper on the floor. It sits right on top of my high-key background, and you cannot see it in the images. After the session I wrap the cake and entire mess up in the paper and throw it away! Why didn't I think of that sooner? What used to take 20 minutes and supplies now takes me a couple of minutes to make it all go away. Using a complete white paper background sweep also works for these sessions if you don't have a permanent high-key solution. The paper is also easy to take on location. I photograph in black and white, but if you photograph in color, you could also use a colored paper. I've loved images I've seen of little girls with cake on pink paper, or boys on green, etc. A consultation call is needed so that you can plan around the outfit Mom is envisioning with cake.

The birthday-cake session is the best! It's easy to make this happen in a short amount of time. Have Mom or Dad place the baby behind the cake and get ready to snap away! Discuss with your client the different options for showing off all of those great images. At this stage we are typically planning their traditional portrait for the living room and a birthday cake designer piece (multiple-image piece) for the nursery. We'll also suggest an image box or small album with all of the birthday cake images. Those images will also be part of the baby's first-year album – a great way to end the album.

I've partnered with a local bakery to get our cakes and include them in the price of the sessions but there are many grocery stores nationwide that will do a free cake for birthday babies! Check with your local grocers and suggest those resources to your clients for a simple but cute cake.





Have fun with your 1-year sessions and embrace all of the new things that the baby is doing. This is an exciting time for parents as their baby is becoming a little person. The more you discuss with your clients about what is going on in the life of their child, the more precious the photographs will become!

1-year milestones

to look for and talk about with parents:

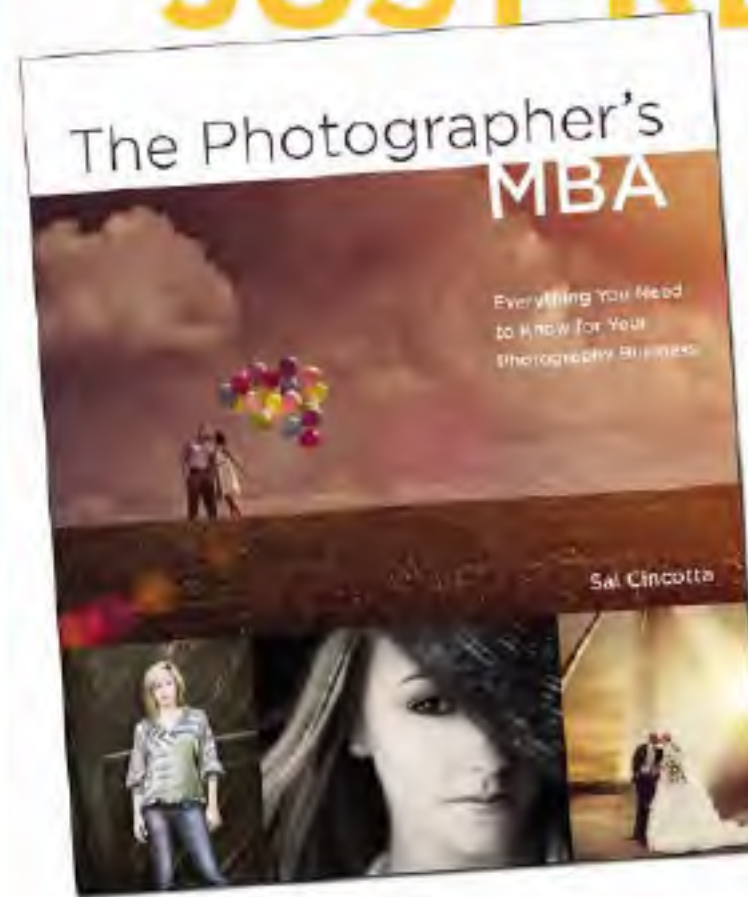
- + Plays patty-cake
- + Waves bye-bye and blows kisses
- + Starts walking
- + Crawls quickly
- + Starts drinking from a cup
- + Learns to feed himself
- + Recognizes humor
- + Begins using sound words
- + Understands certain words
- + Imitates behaviors
- + Dances
- + Helps to dress herself



learn more! **Check out this video...**
Lori shows how she shoots the 1-year session



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introducing

SENIOR GLAM SESSIONS

with Blair Phillips





We wanted something that most people had never seen or experienced in my market.

by Blair Phillips

High school seniors are going to continue to be much more difficult to impress with mediocre photography. Nearly every senior has a smartphone glued to their hand, and with the rise in popularity of apps like Instagram and Pinterest, they are visually stimulated by creative images from all around the world. They can take images, slap a filter on them and instantly share them with their friends. As a photographer, you will have to continue to raise the bar each and every year. One way I am raising my own bar is by introducing our “senior glam session.” It is a session add-on done at the end of a normal senior session. During this session, we introduce fantasy-styled makeup and wild, crazy hair.

We wanted something that most people had never seen or experienced in my market. The idea for the glam session is to add it at the end of a normal senior session, so once that session is over our stylist completely transforms their makeup and hair into something really exotic. We give them two completely different looks during this add-on glam session...wild clothing, exotic hair and over-the-top makeup that has allowed for awesome marketing images thus far.

The first thing you must do to pull this off is find a makeup artist who can also do hair. You have to set a small budget for hair and makeup so people will spend more on pictures rather than blowing their limit on makeup. We reached out through Facebook for someone who could do fantasy-styled makeup and hair and within an hour we had several stylist options. We picked the one we wanted and set up a test subject. A good suggestion is to just tell the stylist you are shooting your initial session for yourself for the sole purpose of gaining new marketing images. This way if the stylist you choose isn't the right fit, you will not have to make up excuses for why you never called her back. Once I knew I liked working with the artist, I fully explained the glam session and talked through the pricing structure to ensure we were going to both be happy. Her fee is included in the glam session fee, so the client is just writing one check, which I find to be the most comfortable. Make sure you tag the images to the artist's Facebook page as she can't wait to show them off.



Lighting is just as important as hair and makeup. Awesome hair and makeup is still not enough. It would be like driving all the way to the Grand Canyon and turning around just before you got there. For a glam session, go all out and break away from the norm. Don't be afraid to put some extra effort into it. I usually prefer at least a three-light setup. It is very important for my client and her parents to see and understand the effort I am putting into the session. It helps create an atmosphere for spending and validation that they came to the best studio in the area.

My lighting choice for glam sessions are two kicker lights accompanied by a main light. I use the kicker lights behind my subject to separate them from the background. The kicker lights act as edge lighting. The output of the kickers is much stronger than my main. I use them with just a small parabolic reflector and no modifier. Now let's talk about the importance of the main lighting. The larger and closer your light is, the softer it will be. My main light is normally positioned at 45 degrees either left or right of my subject. The output of the main light is half as much as the kickers. Try and keep your main as close to the subject as you possibly can; a medium-sized softbox will do the trick. When you have a dream-type setup, how can it not evoke emotion and bring out creativity you didn't even know you had? Remember your lighting is what is going to bring all the components to life. Don't be afraid to pull out all the stops.

LIGHTING



Lighting is what is going to bring all the components to life.

Don't be afraid to pull out all the stops.

Location is something that a lot of photographers seem to over-think. The result of this is to just fall back into what has worked in the past. I have found that I usually can find a good location just about anywhere. For a glam session, I like to use a location that does not fit or makes very little sense. The more contrast, the better for glam. Think of it as “beauty and the beast.” I’ve got an area with a chain link fence and a double gate that works well. I will use the area in several ways. Clients love to see that you are making art and using your creativity right before their eyes. Indoors is usually a last resort for a glam session as I want to break away from what my clients would expect from another studio. They have chosen to add the glam session because they want to experience something that makes them feel like they are in a fantasyland. By shooting these outdoors, you will get lots of looks from passing traffic that will leave them with a high level of curiosity wondering what you were doing. The big reason I started adding a glam session was to get people talking and my plan has done just that.

With any add-on session, make sure you can guarantee a profit as your time costs money. Run through every scenario when it comes to structuring pricing. Clients will try everything possible to figure out a way to beat your system. The best way I have found to structure pricing on these sessions is to require a minimum order. This should be explained in great detail when you are selling the concept to a client so there are never any surprises. Minimum order requirements are something new we’ve added to our business that I wish we would have done years ago. Every person can’t be your client and you should be paid for your knowledge and skill. Validate your prices if you feel necessary by explaining all the effort and skill it takes to create your images. I have found it becomes easier with time to simply state your prices and just be quiet. Some clients have actually ordered large wall prints from a glam session. Since this is an add-on session I don’t feel the need to shoot for a large profit as I am going to benefit by having ultimate marketing images.

Our industry is in the midst of constant evolution moving at a pace much faster than years past. With sites like Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook we must continue to create fresh ideas and programs for our businesses each and every year. We live in a world where everyone can see what you are doing, so why not put forth the extra effort to give them something awesome to lay their eyes on. I’m not suggesting that adding a glam session is the right idea for you and your brand. What I am suggesting is that you find a way to create an add-on session that fits your style, personality and brand.



learn more!
 Check out this video.

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LICENSING Your Images

Licensing is the process by which a copyright owner allows another to use a copyrighted image and sets forth use limitations on a copyrighted photograph. The decision of whether and when to license a copyrighted photo is an important component to protect the ongoing validity of the copyright. Properly drafted, licensing arrangements can ensure that the photographer (or owner of the copyright) retains the degree of control he/she intends to maintain over the image.

Basic Copyright Considerations

The legal process and the mechanics of how to copyright a photograph are beyond the scope of this article. However, once a photograph is properly copyrighted, it is incumbent upon the copyright owner to monitor how and when an image is used. Failure to do so could undermine the enforceability of the copyright and possibly void the protections afforded by the copyright.

Are Terms Appropriate for a License?

A properly drafted license agreement should contemplate a variety of issues. Like the previous article addressing model releases, developing a checklist is a critical first step in granting a license or developing a license agreement. The checklist should consider such issues as: (1) determining who gets to use the license, (2) the scope of the licensed use (print only or some other form of dissemination), and (3) the intended duration of the license. In order to prevent or at least minimize potential disputes, the terms of the license agreement should be clear, concise and narrowly defined. Without precision, one may inadvertently grant a license far broader than intended.

The license should also set forth the consideration for its grant. As discussed in the prior article for model releases, consideration is a legal term of art that simply means “something of value.” In particular, while consideration typically involves a financial exchange, money is not the only legally acceptable form of consideration. Most jurisdictions require consideration for a contract document (i.e. a license) to be binding.

Other common considerations to be included in a license are as follows:

- (i) what territory is covered by the rights (i.e. usually a geographical territory),
- (ii) the payment terms (i.e. whether the owner is paid through royalties or by a one-time fee),
- (iii) whether the licensing rights are exclusive (or whether the licensee has the right to allow others to use the image through its license), and
- (iv) whether the owner retains the right to review (for purposes of approving / disapproving samples of how an image is to be used/disseminated).

by Joel P. Green JD/MBA



Exclusive vs. Non-Exclusive Licenses

An exclusive license may be granted only in writing and provides that the individual or entity granted the exclusive license is the only individual or entity entitled to use the photograph. Granting an exclusive license in perpetuity limits the photographer's/owner's retained rights to use/disseminate a photograph in the future. A non-exclusive license may be written or oral, but ensures the ability of the photographer to allow more than one individual to use a photograph simultaneously.

Significantly, non-exclusive licenses may be implied from conduct vis-à-vis the parties, as well as by considering how the parties treat a photograph. Furthermore, because there is no legal requirement that non-exclusive licenses be written, enforcement is often through the legal process and the court systems. Common factors courts consider include: (i) whether an individual asks that a photograph be taken, (ii) whether the photographer takes the photograph and delivers it to the individual requesting it, and (iii) the photographer intends that the person requesting the photo use it as initially planned. If a party refuses to pay as agreed, a non-exclusive license, even one implied by conduct can be terminated. The termination is usually effectuated by the photographer giving written notice that a license has been revoked.

Types of Licenses

Typically there are two types of licenses, namely, the Rights Managed license, and more recently, the Royalty Free license.

Rights Managed licensing occurs when a photograph is licensed for a precise use in a defined geographical area. The price of these types of license arrangements increases as the length of time grows longer and the geographical territory expands.

The Royalty Free license, conversely, involves a one-time fee paid by the licensee often resulting in the right to use a photograph in perpetuity and with no limitations. A Royalty Free license can be used in the context of a competition and should establish time limitations for use and competition terms.

Is a Written License Necessary?

Although licenses may be verbal, it is unwise to grant a verbal license. Failure to memorialize an agreement in writing runs the risk that it will be litigated to the copyright owner's disadvantage at a future date. In the event of a copyright challenge, proving that a copyright owner protected its rights may be difficult. Further, a copyright owner may lose lucrative rights to future compensation because he/she failed to properly document the license arrangement. Also, money damages are difficult to ascertain and, absent a written document, the majority of jurisdictions do not allow the licensor to recover attorneys' fees in the event the license has to be litigated.

Summary

Appropriately documenting a license is the only certain way to protect a copyright image, a photographer's control of that image, and the copyright owner's rights to future income derived from such image. Haphazard verbal licenses risk the copyright protections the copyright owner went to initial lengths to protect and is not in the best interest of the photographer growing a business. ■



NOT-SO-OBVIOUS AUTOSOMATIION

with Dave Cross



by Dave Cross

Anything that helps you work faster in Photoshop should be considered automation. One of the reasons that I say that is because too many people only think of actions when they think of automation. And at the risk of repeating portions of past articles, always remember the phrase “compared to the alternative,” meaning that even if a technique only gets you part of the way toward your goal, it’s almost always faster than the alternative, manual method. Sometimes that means using methods that are not obvious means of automation.

So here are some not-so-obvious ways of speeding up your work in Photoshop.

Blend If Sliders

Before jumping in to the sometimes challenging task of creating a Layer Mask to hide portions of a layer, consider using the Blend If sliders. Although these controls have been a part of layers for a long time, they are one of the more hidden features. For me, this function is very often the first thing I try, before assuming I’ll have to create a Layer Mask.

In this first example I want to create a faux magazine cover for a senior who’s really into fashion. After creating a basic magazine cover layout I was left with the name of the magazine partially covering her head, but I wanted her to be in front of the magazine name.

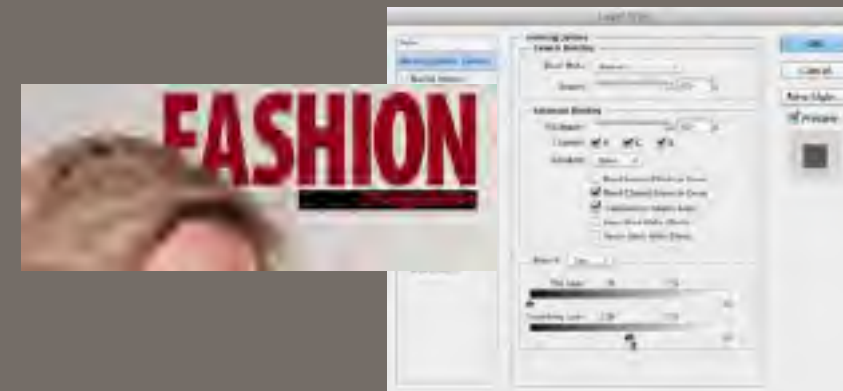


Typically many people would start the painstaking process of trying to extract her from the background and/or creating a Layer Mask to achieve this result. Although it is quite possible that I’ll end up having to do this, first I would try using the Blend If sliders. Here’s how:

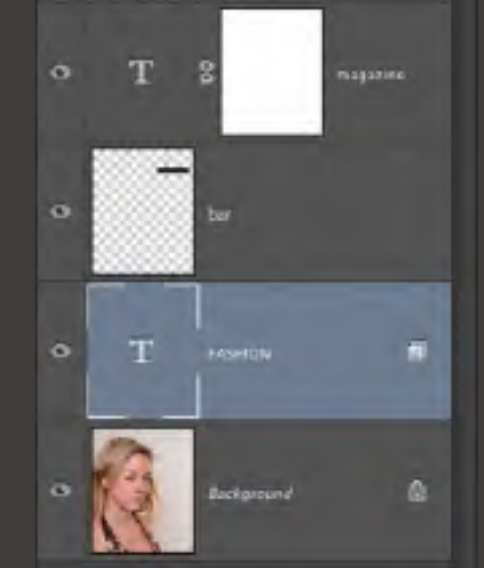
STEP 1: Double-click to the right of the FASHION type layer. This will open the Layer Style dialog, but with the Blend Options showing. At the bottom are the Blend If sliders.



STEP 2: I want the text to become transparent so just her hair pokes through. By dragging the black triangle in the Underlying layer slider to the right, you can start to see the effect.



STEP 3: Very often the effect is close to what you want, but the edges of the pixels look a little jagged. The hidden solution is to hold down Option (PC: Alt) and split the triangle into two halves. This creates a transition between the pixels that are hidden and those that are visible and often creates a softer, more believable edge.



There’s no magic formula here: In some cases try dragging the This Layer triangles to hide portions of the layer you’re on. In other situations (like this one) it will work better to drag the Underlying layer slider. And it’s also important to note that this is often an “all or nothing” technique: Sometimes it works really well, and for other situations it doesn’t help at all. But the key is it only takes a few seconds to see if it has a chance of working; therefore, I often try this before I assume I’ll have to make a Layer Mask.

1

Here's another example: I want to add some text to this photo and make it look like it was painted on the bricks in the background. Conventional Photoshop wisdom would say make a displacement map and use the Displace filter – a good solution that takes a few steps. Instead, I'd try Blend If first. I may end up using the Displace filter if I don't like the results of Blend If.

1. In this case, I tried dragging the white triangle on the "This Layer" slider first – I wanted to let some of the brick texture show through in a gradual manner that looked better than simply lowering the layer opacity. I used the Option-drag (PC: Alt-drag) method to make sure that the effect was softened.

2. Then I went to the Underlying Layer slider and split and dragged the black triangle. The result was exactly what I wanted, without going to all the effort of using the Displace filter.

3. And as a bonus, it's easy to reposition or even change the type layer (that would be much harder if I'd used the Displace filter).

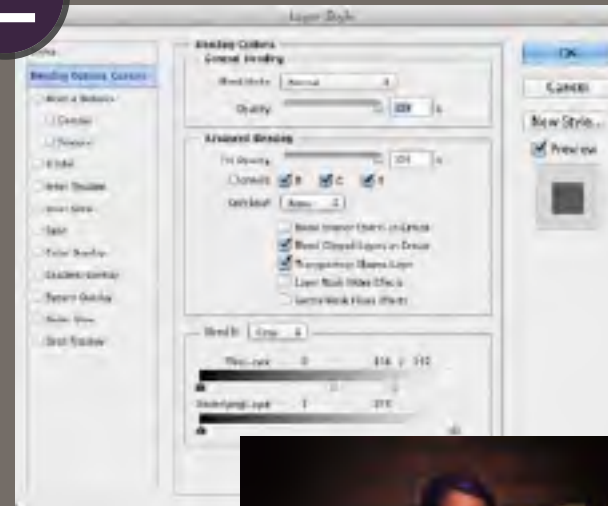
A few important notes/warnings about the Blend If sliders:

Up until Photoshop CS6 there was no visual indication in the Layers panel that you had applied the Blend If sliders, so it was easy to forget that you applied them.

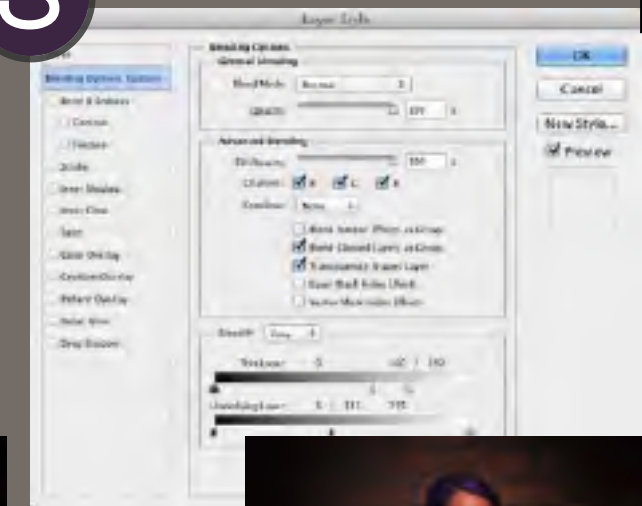
This technique makes pixels appear transparent, but they are still there. If, for example, you were to apply a layer style, it would appear around the outside of the original shape, not around what you see in the document.

The Blend If sliders work on the entire layer, so it is not possible to affect only certain portions. For example, if there were multiple areas on a layer with white pixels, all the white pixels would be equally affected.

2

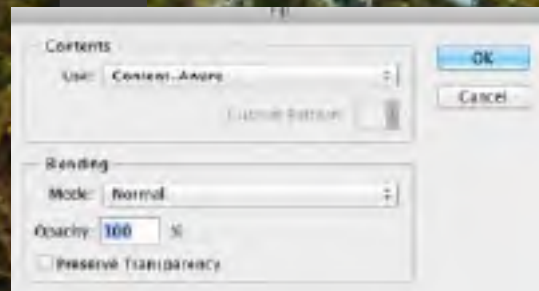
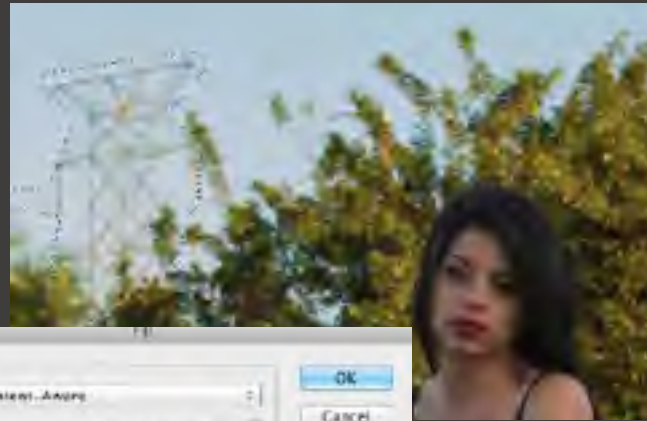


3

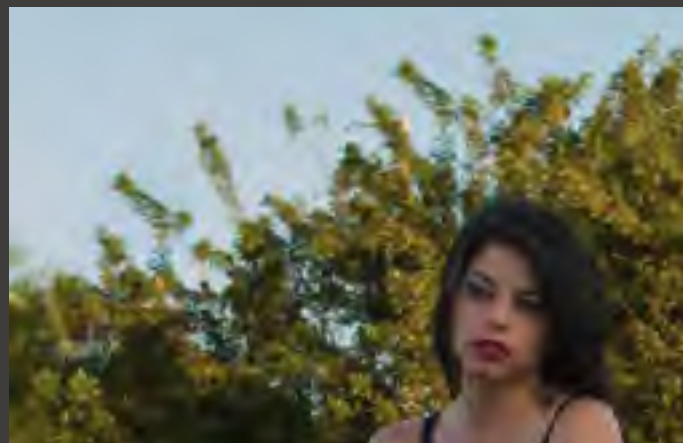




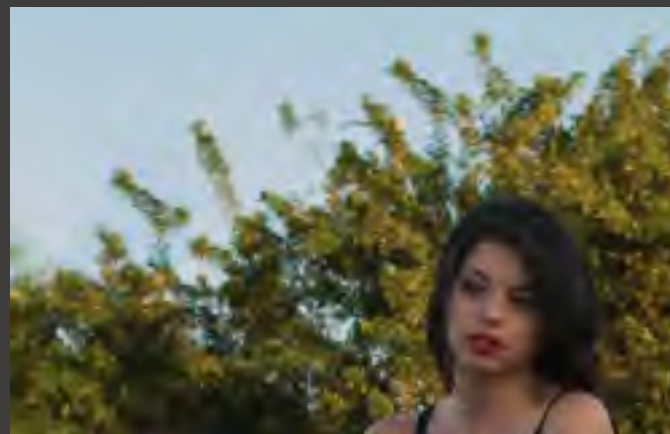
It's actually pretty darn good – most of the time. In this example I wanted to cover up the electrical tower in the background. Making a quick selection around the tower. I used Edit>Fill and changed to Content-Aware.



The selection was filled with nearby pixels, and the result is pretty good.



It might need a little bit of tweaking (often by making a smaller selection and using Content-Aware Fill again), but compared to manually cloning with the Clone Stamp, it actually works pretty well.



One of the biggest developments over the last few versions of Photoshop has been the Content-Aware Technology. First seen in Content-Aware Scale in Photoshop CS4, this technology has made its way into new and old tools and has opened up some great possibilities, and it's a prime example of the "compared to the alternative" way of thinking.

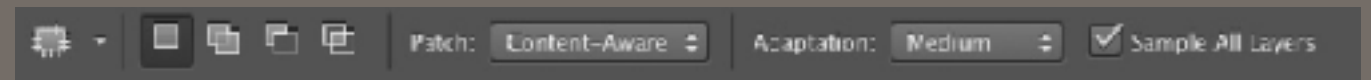
Most people are probably aware of Content-Aware Fill (based on the "buzz" that surrounded it when it was first introduced). This technology lets you fill a selected area "intelligently," using surrounding pixels.

A couple of hints about Content-Aware Fill:

1. If you don't like the results, Undo and try it again. Content-Aware Fill randomly chooses pixels, so each time it will give different results.
2. If it uses the wrong pixels to fill in, you can temporarily hide with a Layer Mask the areas you don't want Content-Aware Fill to use (see video for an example).

My only complaint about Content-Aware Fill is that you cannot put the results on a blank layer. Thankfully in Photoshop CS6 that problem has been solved with the improved Patch tool.

Content-Aware Patch tool



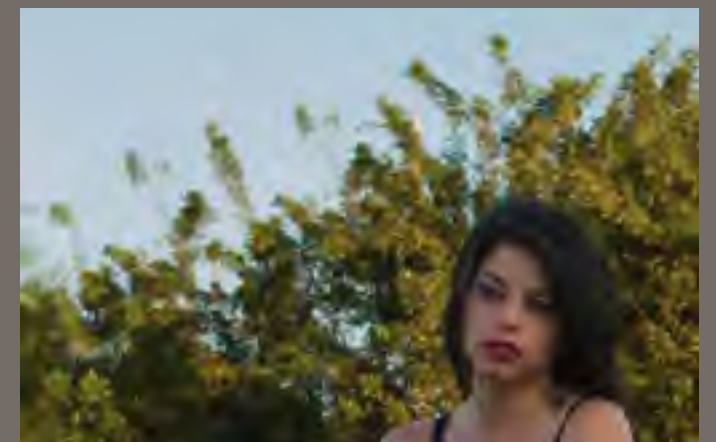
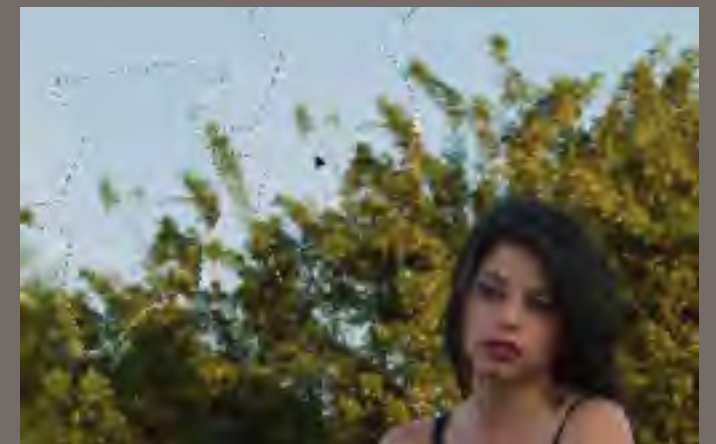
Now in the Option Bar you can choose two incredibly useful settings: Content-Aware and Sample All Layers. This means that the Patch tool uses the same technology as Content-Aware Fill but you can drag to select the area it uses to fill, and put the results onto a blank layer.

The video demonstrates this even better, but it goes like this:

- Add a blank layer.
- Make a selection
(with the Patch tool or any selection tool).
- Drag the patch to the area you want to use.

Note that unlike most tools in Photoshop that do not allow you to change settings once the tool has been used, with the Patch tool you can change the Adaptation settings to see different results. Just be sure to use the Adaptation menu right after you have made your move with the Patch tool (i.e. don't do any other operation).

Since the results of the Content-Aware Patch tool are on a separate layer you can easily make any necessary tweaks to the results.



Content-Aware Move Tool

New to Photoshop CS6, this tool offers two options: Move and Extend – both using Content-Aware technology. Imagine that you have a photo and you need to add a little more to it (to extend it), to use as a background image. After adding more canvas, the typical method would be to select a portion of the image, copy it and move it over to join up with existing pixels. While this is often a good start, there is usually an obvious seam that needs to be covered. The results are often better with Content-Aware Move tool set to Extend.



Here's the result of dragging with the Content-Aware Move tool (set to Extend). [insert extend] The results are a slight improvement over the first method, but of course still need some tweaking. Having said that, I'm all for cutting out any amount of work that I can so even this small improvement is still a help. [insert after extend]

And keep in mind that if your goal in extending an image is to create a background over which you'll place another photo, you don't have to be quite so concerned over making the seam look perfect.



The other interesting option with the Content-Aware Move tool is to move selected pixels to a new position and have Photoshop cover up the original pixels – on a blank layer. Say what? Yes, you can reposition someone and have Photoshop just cover up his or her original position. Once again I would take advantage of the option to put the results onto a blank layer (Sample All Layers) and I go in with low expectations: I expect that it will give a pretty good result way faster than I could do this by hand.

Again the steps are pretty simple:

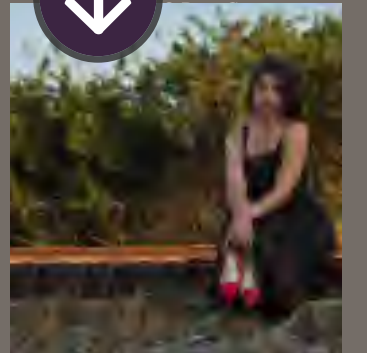
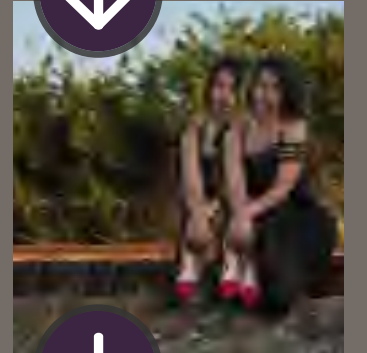
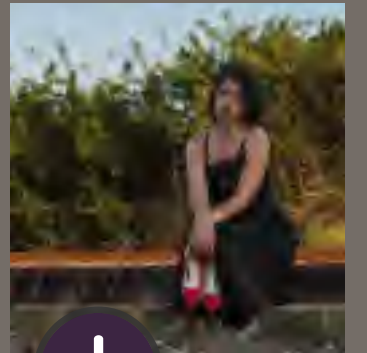
- Add a blank layer.
- Make a rough selection around the area you want to move.
- Set the Content-Aware Move tool to Move Mode and Sample All Layers.



- Drag to the new position.

Results will vary, but when you consider what this tool is doing, automatically, in a fraction of the time it would take you to do this manually, it's pretty amazing. In this example I needed to patch one small area that didn't work so well, and copy some pixels to cover up a crooked railroad track. But still, at a fraction of the time this would have taken me in the past.

Circling back to the beginning of this article I would remind you that anything you can do to speed up the time you spend in Photoshop is a good thing. Even if the initial results aren't perfect, if it gets you closer to the result you want and it's faster than manual effort that's a wonderful thing. And it makes you more money. 📷



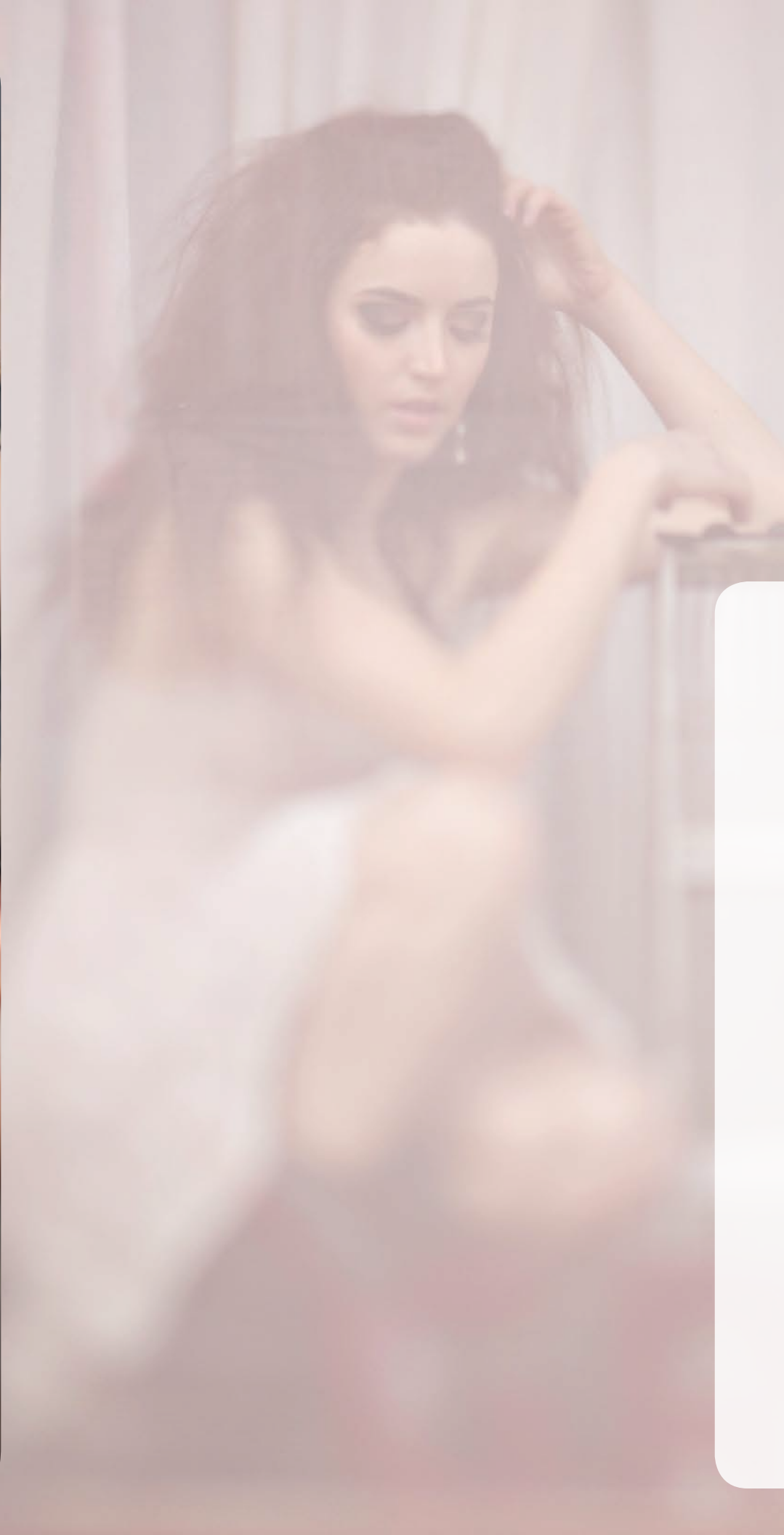
LEARN MORE In the accompanying video,

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A woman with long, dark, wavy hair is sitting on a red patterned rug. She is wearing a light-colored, strapless dress. She is looking towards the camera with a neutral expression. Behind her is a wire cage, possibly a birdcage, with a metal door. The background is a light-colored, textured wall.

how I shoot a
STYLIZED
BOUDOIR SESSION

with Jen Rozenbaum



“ I was going out of my mind. I felt a little bit like a boudoir factory. My clients were happy because they were getting what they wanted, but I felt like I was shooting the same thing over and over. ”

by Jen Rozenbaum

Let's face it; we all get into creative slumps once in awhile. For me, I feel burned out and exhausted when my busy season is over. I start itching to do something totally different and out of my comfort zone.

This year was no exception. Come November, I was going out of my mind. I felt a little bit like a boudoir factory. My clients were happy because they were getting what they wanted, but I felt like I was shooting the same thing over and over. I didn't even need to think about it much of the time; it had become incredibly routine.

Ugh, the kiss of death for creativity! I was in a major slump, and it was getting to me. The more I shot, the worse I felt. So what do you do when you feel this way? How do you get out of the slump?

I woke up one morning and thought to myself, enough already! I am going to create something I want to shoot. I am going to imagine and produce a session from top to bottom the way I want it to look. What a wonderful opportunity to flex my creative muscles and break out of my rut.

The first thing I did was look for inspiration. I picked up a few fashion magazines. On the back of one was an ad for Chanel Noir perfume. I loved the look of the ad...it was dark, sleek, yet feminine and beautiful. That is how I wanted my photos to feel.

Now I needed a location. I knew it had to be someplace special. I didn't want a regular hotel room. I was feeling sick and tired of my studio already so that was out. What could I do that would be different?

A while back someone told me about a website called www.AirBnb.com, a site that allows people to rent out their rooms, apartments, condos and homes for a night, a month, whatever they want. I figured this would be a great time to check out the site. After many hours of searching, I found a place in New York City that I felt was unique and had the vibe I wanted. The only problem was that this particular apartment was only rented three nights at a time (which meant I would have to have it for two full days). Well, you know what that means; I would have to plan two shoots! Please note, not all AirBnb locations will allow shoots or multiple people in their places so be sure to read all the notes on the home you want to rent before moving forward. It sounded like fun to me!



making it happen...

I had already loved the noir (dark) feel of the Chanel ad, so maybe I could do a yin/yang feel. Noir one day and blanc the next. Dark and light, it seemed edgy to me and truly a departure from my everyday shoots.

Once I had the location set and my idea in mind, I went directly to Pinterest to create mood boards for the shoot. I pinned makeup, hair and wardrobe inspirations. These boards are great to share with your beauty team and models to give everyone an idea of what you envision.

After I rented the location and set up the dates I was on the hunt for models. I don't normally hire models for any of my shoots, and other than when I teach I have never had models in my studio. For this situation though I decided using a model would benefit me because any time I taught a workshop and used a model, I always learned from them. Just like I take inspiration from fashion magazines, models in real life are amazing to watch. They know their bodies and how to move. You can learn a lot about posing from working with one.

There are many ways to find models. Of course www.ModelMayhem.com is very popular. Here you can connect with models, makeup artists and stylists. Many models will work for free if you give them the images (called TFP or Trade for Portfolio). Getting models to work for free is amazing, but the downside I find is that it is hard to get them to show up. I spent a lot of money renting my ideal location; it would be devastating if I didn't have someone to photograph in it. Therefore, I decided to pay two models to ensure they would be there.





Other ways to get models is to put a casting call out on Facebook. Many times women want to work with you but for one reason or another haven't booked you. Believe me when you offer it for free, you will have women lined up. When you put a call out on social media sites, I recommend that you be specific about what you want. For example:

"I am looking for a brunette woman who is 5'5"-5'9" for a shoot on March 4th from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Best if you wear between a size 4 to 8 and please note although this work is not paid, I will provide you with edited digital images for your use. Please send a full body image to jenerationsphoto@gmail.com if you are interested."

If you don't get specific, you will have a lot of emails to sort through that will be a waste of your precious time. Another way to find models is to ask other photographers. I asked a photographer I am very friendly with for a recommendation. He recommended one model and then I asked that model if she had a friend that fit what I was looking for. She referred someone who worked out amazingly for me as well.

Concept, check - Location, check - Models, check. Now it's time for wardrobe. When I made my Pinterest boards I pinned a bunch of outfits from a local lingerie store I work with often. I contacted them about lending me outfits for the shoot, and they happily agreed. Here's where I learned that you really do need to be flexible.

Concept - check
Location - check
Models - check.





A few short days before the shoot, the lingerie store contacted me to tell me they were sorry but they couldn't loan me the lingerie after all. Small panic set in. I was moving the next day and had no time to go shopping before the shoot. Breathe.

I grabbed my purse, asked my husband to watch the kids for an hour and ran to the mall. Not the ideal place to shop for a high-end shoot but I was going to have to make do.

The stores I hit first were American Apparel and Forever 21, both of which are reliable for trendy and inexpensive clothes. Forever 21 is also amazing for accessories. They are so inexpensive you could go crazy there!

After that I went to Victoria's Secret. I typically stay away from Vicky's because it's so common and everyone wears it, but it is holiday time and I love some sparkle so I brought some lingerie from there just in case.

Lastly, I shopped at Anthropologie and Free People. Those two stores are more expensive, but I knew they would have the light and airy clothes I was looking for. In one hour I was able to throw together enough outfits and accessories to make something work. It wasn't exactly what I pictured and it didn't necessarily match my mood board, but I knew it was part of the challenge and if I could make this work it would be impressive.

Prior to the day of shooting, I had a pow-wow with my hair and makeup artists. I wanted to make sure my makeup artist had the makeup I was looking for. In addition, I had an idea for crimped hair so I had to confirm that my hairdresser had a crimping iron. Good that I asked because it was not something she normally carried with her.

The day of the shoot my model showed up at 10 a.m. We laid out all the outfits and made some final decisions with the hairdresser and makeup artist about the looks we were going to create. Thankfully the clothes fit and looked awesome on her. It turned out a little different from my original vision, but I loved it!



“ I felt renewed and energized for new projects down the line. It reminded me that I am capable of more than just what my clients ask for. ”

Now it was time to shoot. I decided to challenge myself further by using a new lens. I had adored the look of the LensBaby Optic Edge 80 for a long time, so I finally took the plunge, bought it and used it for the first time at this shoot. There was a little bit of a learning curve, but I was thrilled with the results at the end of the day.

After the two days of shooting, I felt renewed and energized for new projects down the line. It reminded me that I am capable of more than just what my clients ask for. Even though I run a business I am still an artist and it reminded me to trust my vision.

It's the time of year to make New Year's resolutions. Mine are to shoot more stylized shoots like this, and to try to prevent the slump in 2013! ■

*Stay Sexy!
XO Jen*

learn more!
Check out this video.

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**SET
GOALS
& SUCCEED
AT KEEPING THEM**

with VANESSA JOY



by Vanessa Joy



It's that time of year when everyone begins setting goals for themselves and their businesses. By late January, most people have made goals or New Year's resolutions and are already struggling to keep them. Personally, I hate goals. Why is it that goals can be so hard to keep? How can we break the cycle of continual disappointment when we don't meet our goals, and instead start achieving them?

In Dave Ramsey's book, "EntreLeadership," which, by the way, is a must-read for any entrepreneur, defines goals as "vision and dreams with work clothes on." Think about that for a second. Most of us set goals or resolutions because we have a dream or a vision for something we want to attain or achieve. It's an aspiration at that point, but to get it to become a reality takes serious work. And to go from visualizing to doing, you need goals.

Let's start at the beginning and identify the areas where we can set goals. For the overachievers out there, I do not recommend setting goals in each of these areas at the same time. Try one or two areas and then build from there. Again, taken from Dave Ramsey's book, the seven areas of life where we can set goals are:

- +Career
- +Financial
- +Spiritual
- +Physical
- +Intellectual
- +Family
- +Social

How can we break the cycle
of continual disappointment
when we don't meet our goals,
& instead **START ACHIEVING** them?



SETTING GOALS

When I first looked at these areas I thought, I've got that covered for some, and then looked at others and was instantly reminded why I hate setting goals. But this made me realize that I hate setting goals because goals point out the areas that we're not naturally good at. If we were naturally good at something, we probably wouldn't need to set goals in that area. However, setting goals are necessary for areas where we do not naturally excel so that we still improve and minimize the weaknesses in our lives and businesses.

As business owners, we may find a lot of our goals fall into the career category, so let's break that down just a little bit more. There are so many areas of our careers that we can focus on for goal setting, all of which will undoubtedly help our businesses thrive. Here are a few that I find beneficial:

- + **Photographic skill**
- + **Marketing, branding and advertising**
- + **Networking and vendor relationships**
- + **Customer service**
- + **Quality of products**
- + **Product delivery speed**
- + **Photographic awards**
- + **Magazine and blog publications**



Go ahead and pick one area of your life in which you'd like to set a goal. If you've chosen to set a goal for your career, break it down even further by choosing one of the eight categories I've outlined above, or even create a category of your own. To start we'll go with something that's moderately difficult, so choose one that's not your natural inclination. Once you have that chosen, put it aside for a moment and let's talk about how to set a goal.

Goal setting fails primarily because it's not set correctly, not necessarily because the goal-setter has a sudden streak of laziness. According to Dave Ramsey, there are five components in every goal that must be pre-set for the goal to have a chance to succeed.

The first two are that the goal must be specific and measurable. Goals cannot be vague. The number one New Year's resolution is to lose weight, but most people fail at that. Why? Because a goal to just "lose weight" is not specific or measurable. You need to state exactly how much weight, or how many inches off a certain area of your body that you'd like to lose.

The third component is there must be a time limit. By what date do you want to lose the weight? Do you want to lose 24 pounds in six months or six years? Defining a time limit helps you break down the goal into micro-goals, giving you stepping stones to reach your ultimate goal. So if you want to lose 24 pounds in six months, you know that you need to lose four pounds per month. Psychologically, setting micro-goals also helps the goal seem more realistic and attainable.





Fourth, your goals must be **YOUR GOALS**. Not your mom's, not your wife's – your goals. You're not going to find much self-motivation behind trying to achieve something difficult that you don't even want to do. Find a goal that you are convicted to set for yourself and that you want to achieve.

Finally, your goals must be in writing. This doesn't have to be a thesis or essay on the goal, but simply a written form of your goal. Use your Notes app, Evernote, or just a pen and paper. Whatever works for you, just write it down. I recommend keeping it in a place that you visit regularly so that you can be reminded of your goal, or haunted by it if you're not taking the steps to achieve it.

Even after you've followed these five components of goal setting you still have to take action to succeed. If you don't do what you need to do to achieve your goal, you will fail. I suggest telling someone else about your goal so you have people who can keep you accountable to achieve it.

Goal setting is a continual process that we have to master to keep ourselves in the game as business owners. By learning to recognize the areas in our lives that need advancement and setting goals in those areas, we will ultimately see our personal lives and businesses thrive as a direct result.

In the following video I will guide you through the steps to set a goal using my business as an example. Try doing it along with me. Together we can make New Year's resolutions and goals that we will be proud to achieve! ■



© Vanessa Joy



Goal setting is a continual process
that we have to master
to keep ourselves
IN THE GAME
as business owners

learn more!
Check out this video.

SHUTTER  
behind the shutter.com





TOP 10

OFF-CAMERA
SPEEDLIGHT
TECHNIQUES

with Michael Corsentino



by Michael Corsentino



Start the New Year off right with 10 Speedlight tips and techniques guaranteed to take your photography to the next level! Photography is all about light and shadow. Being able to create the kind of light you want, when and where you want it, is where artificial light shines. Using Speedlights opens a whole new world of creative possibilities unavailable with natural light, and frees you from working around the constraints of the sun.

Can you really afford to shoot only three hours a day? As a working pro the more you shoot the more you earn. Shooting outside for only an hour and half in the morning and evening, when the sun's light is best, limits the number of sessions you can shoot and therefore your earnings. Shooting with strobes allows you to control the light, not Mother Nature.

Having a solid grasp of artificial lighting gives your images a more polished, professional appearance, differentiating you in your market. Do you want edgy hard lighting, lighting with soft shadows, flat shadowless lighting, or soft and diffuse lighting? Each lighting style creates a different emotional effect. Knowing which techniques to use and which tools to reach for allows you to make informed decisions and create tailored rather than one-size-fits-all lighting.

Another benefit of having a few key lighting techniques under your belt is images properly lit typically require less work in post. Less time spent post-processing means higher profit margins and more time concentrating on other important aspects of your business.

Let's dig right in and look at my top 10 Speedlight tips and techniques. All work with both Canon and Nikon.

Using a scrim overhead to cut harsh midday sun and speedlight to add fill light to the subject produces great looking results.





1. Take it off!

First on the list is to take the flash off your camera! All other tips and techniques are based on this. You don't need expensive wireless triggers to get started. Extra long ETTL/iTTL cables like the ones offered by OCF Gear are available for around \$50. Off-camera lighting is preferable because of the dimensional, sculptural light it creates. Short light, a lighting pattern where the side of the face in shadow faces the camera, is often favored for its slimming effect in portraits.

Right: Using a speedlight off camera from the side produces sculptural, dimensional, and dramatic lighting.

2. ETTL/iTTL for speed

ETTL/iTTL is a great flash mode to use when working quickly and the distance between the flash and subject is changing. This is because ETTL/iTTL maintains the connection between the Speedlight and the camera's brain and exposure calculations. Remember, you're still in control! You can easily override ETTL/iTTL and use the camera's flash exposure compensation to dial in more or less flash. This works best with the Speedlight on an extension pole operated by an assistant.

3. Manual flash

Setting your flash power manually is a good way to work when your flash and subject position remain constant. ETTL/iTTL are great but can be fooled and inconsistent in certain situations. Manually setting the power output of each flash assures consistent results. Choose a flash power baseline to start with; I use 1/8 power. In time you'll be able to use distance to determine a good starting point; two paces for 1/2 power, four paces for full power, etc.

4. Control ambient and flash contribution

Remember how to control exposures mixing ambient light and flash with this simple rule:

Shutter speed controls the amount of ambient light contributed to an exposure, aperture controls the amount of flash contributed to an exposure.

It's that simple! If you want a darker sky or nighttime look use a higher shutter speed to decrease the ambient light in the exposure. If you want more or less flash in the exposure use a wider or smaller f-stop.



5. Use high-speed sync

High-speed sync allows you to use your flash at shutter speeds higher than your camera's maximum sync speed. This is important because HSS gives your shutter speed much wider latitude over the control of the ambient light in an exposure. High-speed sync lets you shoot with both flash and wide apertures, giving you softer backgrounds and bokeh. HSS lets you create moody skies and dramatic nighttime effects. Without high-speed sync mode you'll experience underexposed black bars at the bottom of your exposures.

6. Go vertical

People are taller than they are wide. Using a Speedlight with the head vertically oriented creates a beam of light that matches the body. The result is a narrow, taller column of light that's perfect for portraits. This works for both horizontal and vertical compositions.

7. Zoom it

Most higher-end Speedlights allow you to manually zoom the flash head. This controls the spread of light and focuses its beam. I like to manually zoom my Speedlights to their maximum value. This max value differs between models and brands. Zooming the head causes rapid light falloff and results in a natural looking, in-camera vignette. Give it a try!

Main Image: Manually zooming the speedlight(s) head to its maximum value creates a rapid falloff and natural in-camera vignette.



8. Diffusion and fill

Diffusion panels, sometimes called scrims, cut light and broaden coverage. Use a diffusion panel over your subject to soften the sun's harsh, midday rays. Panels can be set on stands or held by an assistant. Add a flash, manual or ETTL/iTTL, to open shadows and provide additional illumination on the subject's face. This creates soft, even lighting. Pop a reflector behind the subject's head to bounce light back for even more layered lighting. You can also fire your Speedlight through a diffusion panel to soften and broaden the light. Give both techniques a try!

9. Bounce it

Bounce your Speedlight to soften and broaden its coverage. Use a white ceiling, reflector panel or white foam core. Experiment by placing your flash camera four feet from your subject's face and make an exposure. Next use a white reflector in the same position, angled from the side and toward your subject's face. Point the flash at the reflector instead of your subject's face and make another exposure. Note the difference in the quality of light. Increase the specularly and efficiency by using a silver reflector or warm things up with a gold reflector. Combination white/silver and silver/gold reflectors are available.

10. Backlight it

Easily create a sun-like rim light by aiming a Speedlight with a full CTO gel at the back of your subject's head, pair this with a second Speedlight to fill in your subject's face. If you've got bright sun, use it as your backlight and fill in your subject's face with a Speedlight. Lastly, create a cool silhouette by placing a Speedlite behind your subject. Set the Speedlight's power manually, one to two stops brighter than it should be. Then underexpose between two to three stops.

Use the sun as a second light. Here it's backlighting the subject's hair. A speedlight shot through a diffusion panel angled in front the subject provides soft front lighting.



*Under promise and over deliver!
I couldn't stop at just 10, so here are a few more!*

11. Set a baseline exposure first

Determine a baseline ambient exposure before ever turning your flash on. For example, working outside, expose to capture the clouds and deep blue background sky. Your foreground subject will now most likely be underexposed. Now just turn on your flash and dial in the light you need to illuminate your subject.

12. Distance, size and quality of light

Light source, size and distance in relation to a subject have a direct effect on the quality of light produced. Think about it, the sun is a huge light source but it's also millions of miles away so it becomes a hard point light source. The same is true for flash. Basically the closer you put your light source and the larger the surface of that source, the softer the quality of light will be. If that same light source is moved 10 feet back it becomes a smaller light source in relation to the subject and produces a harder light.

13. Two are better than one

If you own two or more Speedlights use them together. Ganging up Speedlights extends battery life and dramatically increases recycle times because each flash can be fired at a lower individual power.

Main Image: Here 2 speedlights in 24x24" softboxes were used camera left. One for backlight and one for front sidelight

14. Trigger it wirelessly

Compared to optical triggers, radio based systems offer considerable advantages including no line-of-site restrictions, increased range and reliable performance in bright sunlight. When you're ready for wireless triggers I recommend those that work in both manual and ETTL/iTTL for maximum flexibility. Two of my favorite brands for wireless triggers are Pocket Wizard and Radio Poppers. For Canon users the 600EX-RT Speedlight and ST-E3-RT Transmitter provide a built-in solution I favor for its flexibility and simplicity.



15. Modify it

Softboxes, barn doors, snoots, beauty dishes, octabanks, strip banks and umbrellas all modify and shape light. They create different qualities from specular to hard and soft. Invest in one modifier at a time and get to know it inside out before getting your next. Then you'll know exactly which one to reach for. Start with a collapsible, convertible umbrella like Westcott's 43". Other favorites are Mola Softlights Demi Beauty Dish, Lastolite Ezybox and Strobe modifiers, the Expoimaging Rogue line, and Westcott's Asymmetrical Strip Magic Slipper Kit.

Main Image: One speedlight side lights the hair and another fired through a shoot through umbrella illuminates the subject's front. This provides a natural, layered look.

16. Put in on a bracket

There are tons of specialty flash brackets available. Three are always in my bag: Manfrotto Magic Arm (allows the flash to be attached to poles, ledges, etc.), the The Lovegrove Flash Bracket MkVII (compact and tough-as-nails ballhead bracket for vertical flash orientation), and the Gemini twin Speedlight bracket for using two flashes. Lastolite has many innovative multi-flash brackets available.

17. Change your white balance and gel it

Next time you're shooting outside try this cool technique. Set your camera's white balance to Tungsten and use a Full CTO gel on your Speedlite. Now when you make an exposure the ambient light in the background will become a dramatic blue and your foreground subject, lit by the flash, will remain properly white balanced. Increase the warmth of the foreground subject by adding additional CTO gel to the Speedlight. ■

© Michael Corsentino



“Thank you Adorama, for leading the industry with practical resources and unending support for photographers. Adorama is my go to for the tools I need and the foundation I want.”

Jennifer Rozenbaum
Jenerations Photography

Photo Credit:
Ananda Lima Photography



S&A

with
SAL
CINCOTTA



with Sal Cincotta



Q. How are successful photogs selling CDs/digital negs? All my clients want them, but I'm scared it will hurt my sales?

A. First, you have to understand you might be going after the wrong clients. Clients who see you as an artist aren't looking for shoot and burn services. Instead, they want an end-to-end service and experience. Successful studios like ours offer digital files on a CD. We have no choice; clients believe they want them or need them for archival purposes, their phones, slideshows, etc. All that is fine. However, we cannot work just to sell a CD. We offer our clients a CD of images only if they are included in a package or price point. That is the best way to keep your clients while ensuring you are getting paid properly for your time.

Q. Do you ever get in a creative rut, and if so how do you get out of it?

A. I get burned out all the time! We shoot over 50 weddings a year, plus 75-100 seniors and various other shoots. When I feel myself getting burned out I recommend you do one of two things. First, step away. Take a week off from shooting. Or second, start working on personal projects to keep you going. This is a great way to experiment and bring new life to your day-to-day work.

Q. How do you gain permission to shoot on location without the \$50 handshake?

A. I don't. I get yelled at, chased out, cursed at, threatened to be arrested, sued, you name it, all the time! I keep shooting, smile, apologize, and move on. Gotta learn to run and gun. That means moving quickly and knowing your equipment. You don't have time to jack around with gear. It's time to shoot. Plus, your clients will laugh and enjoy the experience.

Q. Is it OK to feature several different brides and weddings within one sample album so I can show a variety of styles? Or is it better to show one wedding throughout the whole album?

A. Either is ok. When I was starting out I created a "best of" album because I was still building my portfolio. Today, we have 7-10 sample albums to showcase our work and show what a final album will look like. This has really helped us sell albums and is a worthwhile investment once you have the portfolio.



Q. Pricing

when starting out...

*where do I start and
how can I have the
confidence to*

*charge correctly,
and what I am worth?*

A. This is the million dollar question, isn't it?

Everyone wants to know where to set their price. There is no easy answer. It depends on your skill, your product offering, your geography, your client base, etc.

Here is what I would do. Put a framework together. We use the same framework today that we used when we first started out. Sure, our prices have gone up as we see what the market will bear. But the framework is the framework.

What do I mean by that? Our session fees are just that. Session fees. They don't include DVDs of images, prints, canvas, etc. we started out with our session fees at \$50. Today, that same session is about \$299.

Your confidence will build over time and it's something all photographers struggle with. But I can tell you this. Your price point will without a doubt say more about your brand than you can imagine. Price too low and you will get the bargain shoppers who want everything for nothing. Price higher and you will attract a more high-end client. But you'd better offer them the caliber of products and services they are accustomed to.

Q. *How do you build relationships with competition that is widely considered a "bully" in your area (most popular, biggest clientele, etc.)? Or should you?*

A. Hmm, interesting question. I think you will find our industry to be a little hush-hush. People don't like to share. For some reason they are afraid you will learn their top secrets and steal their business. It's kind of funny actually. I would look to chummy up to your competition as much as I would look to find and build a network of peers you can trust, ask questions of and bond with. We all need peers and people who can help us grow; however, don't be a mooch. Make sure you pay it forward and give back to the newbies coming up under you. It's good karma.

7. *What is the best way to invest your marketing and advertising money for the greatest return? (Types of advertising or marketing like mailers, etc.)*

A. The short answer is it depends. Every market and every segment is different. You have to experiment and see what works for you and your brand. I know that is probably not the answer you were hoping for, but unfortunately, it's the truth.

When we were starting out, we took risks, some small some big. It all depends on your tolerance. When you are starting out, you don't have much wiggle room, but think about the goal of your advertising. When you are beginning, the goal should be to make people aware of who you are.



We make mistakes
all the time,
the key is
can you
learn from them?
*those are
good
mistakes.*

Have a question for Sal?
Follow us on Facebook
& watch for our monthly call for questions!



[click here to follow us now!](#)



Q. I need help with all things legal and taxes! Any helpful tips?

A. Yes. Get an attorney and an accountant. Don't be a tight ass. One mistake in this area will cost you 10 times more than what you will pay for good legal and accounting advice. Right from the beginning, we had an accountant and attorney helping us get set up and it has been without a doubt one of the best investments we could have made during our formative years.

Q. Do you ever have down times and if you do what do you do to get the business in the door?

A. Yes, I think the nature of our business is seasonal. Enjoy it! This is all the more reason you have to charge correctly – you have to make enough money to carry you through the slow months.

For us, we use downtime to plan for the upcoming year. Don't underestimate this exercise. If you want success you have to plan for it. Use this time to recharge and reinvent your business...every single year!

Q. What has been your greatest mistake-turned-lesson in this business?

A. Wow. So many. We make mistakes all the time. The key is, can you learn from them? Those are good mistakes. Bad mistakes are the ones you keep making over and over.

That being said, the biggest mistake I made was back in 2009/2010. It was our third year in business and I was hungry. I was taking business anywhere I could get it and the sales numbers were through the roof! But we were not happy and neither were our clients. Service dropped because I had spread the team too thin. We had to learn from that. We had an amazing brand that was in demand, but we didn't have the staff to handle it and we tripped. We quickly adjusted and tried to make it right wherever we screwed up. Luckily our clients were very understanding.

The change we made? Raised our prices. Sounds crazy, right? Well, supply and demand. By raising our prices we pushed back some of the demand and ensured we could handle the client base and give them the attention they all deserved. ■





EDITOR



SAL
CINCOTTA

www.SalCincotta.com

LOCATION: O'Fallon, IL

PASSION: Weddings & Seniors

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

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

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

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

Q&A

Getting in Sync



ROB
ADAMS

www.RobAdamsFilms.com

LOCATION: Freehold, New Jersey

PASSION: Weddings

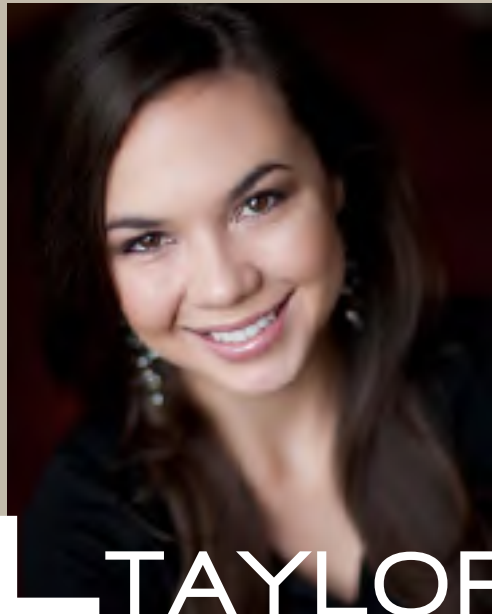
“Wedding films are my life. It’s all about the the story-telling. The art of seeing action, drama and beauty unfold and then harnessing the emotion of it all and the making it come to life on screen...that’s why I do this.”

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

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

6 Cool Things Photoshop Can Do With Video



TAYLOR

CINCOTTA

www.SalCincotta.com

LOCATION: O'Fallon, IL

PASSION: Weddings & Seniors

Taylor is a business school graduate, only picking up a camera in the last 5 years. Catching the bug from Sal, Taylor has fallen in love with the romantic side of wedding photography and photographs 20+ weddings per year, along with, running the sales side to their studio.

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

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

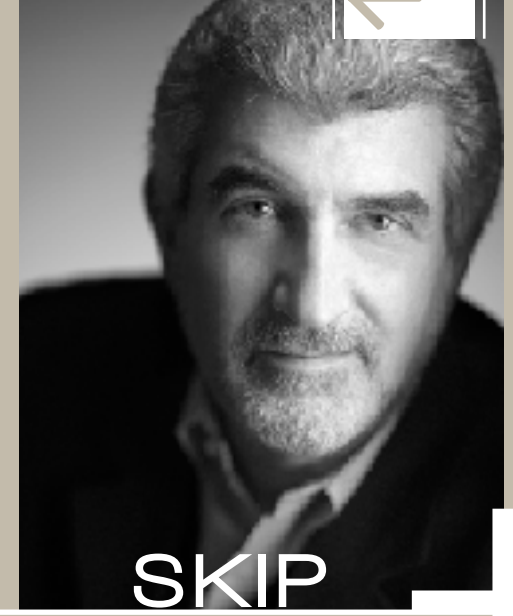
FEATURED ARTICLES

Preparing for An Engagement Session



© Taylor Cincotta

CONTRIBUTORS



SKIP

COHEN

www.SkipsPhotoNetwork.com

LOCATION: Sarasota, Florida

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

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

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

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

Getting the Most Out of Your Tradeshow Experience



MICHAEL

CORSENTINO

www.CorsentinoPhotography.com

LOCATION: Petaluma, California

PASSION: Lifestyle Photography

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

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

Top 10 Off Camera Speed Light Techniques





DAVE
CROSS

www.DCross.com

LOCATION: Tampa, Florida

PASSION: Photoshop

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

Not-So-Obvious Automation



KRISTY DICKERSON

www.KristyDickerson.com

LOCATION: Atlanta, Georgia

PASSION: Weddings & Engagements

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

Hold Yourself Accountable



JOEL GREEN

www.SandbergPhoenix.com

LOCATION: St. Louis, MO

Joel P. Green and Lori E. DaCosse are business attorneys working with Sandberg, Phoenix & von Gontard, P.C., a full service, regional law firm headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Their practice is focused on general business, real estate transactions and estate planning and administration. They represent businesses and individuals in the selection and formation of various business entities, contracts and commercial transactions, real estate transactions, estate and succession planning. Both are members of the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, the Missouri Bar Association, and the Illinois Bar Association. Mr. Green received a Bachelor of Science from Bradley University, his Juris Doctor from Saint Louis University School of Law and his MBA from the Saint Louis University John Cook School of Business. Mr. Green is also an Illinois licensed real estate broker. Ms. DaCosse received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Illinois/Urbana, graduating summa cum laude and received her Juris Doctor from Pepperdine University School of Law. Mr. Green and Ms. DaCosse are dedicated to addressing each client's unique business planning objectives in an efficient and cost-effective manner. For more information, please visit www.sandbergphoenix.com or call Mr. Green or Ms. DaCosse directly at (618) 397-2721.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Licensing Your Images



VANESSA
JOY

www.VanessaJoy.com

LOCATION: Freehold, New Jersey

PASSION: Weddings

14 Years of Photography, Eight Years of Shooting Weddings, Three Years of Business Ownership (Not to mention Five College Degrees)

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

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

FEATURED ARTICLES

Setting Goals



LORI NORDSTROM

www.NordstromPhoto.com

LOCATION: Winterset, Iowa

PASSION:
Babies, Families, Weddings & Seniors

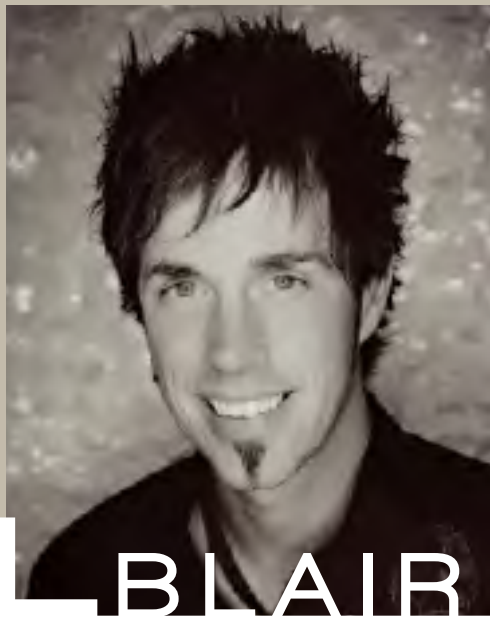
Lori Nordstrom {M.Photog.Cr., CPP, ABI} owns a boutique studio specializing in children and family portraits located in the picturesque town of Winterset, Iowa. Lori is a PPA approved business instructor and marketing consultant for Studio Management Services. Sharing with other photographers and small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

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

FEATURED ARTICLE

The 1-Year Session





BLAIR PHILLIPS

[wwwBlairPhillipsPhotography.com](http://www.BlairPhillipsPhotography.com)

LOCATION: Landis, North Carolina

PASSION:
Seniors, Babies, Families & Weddings

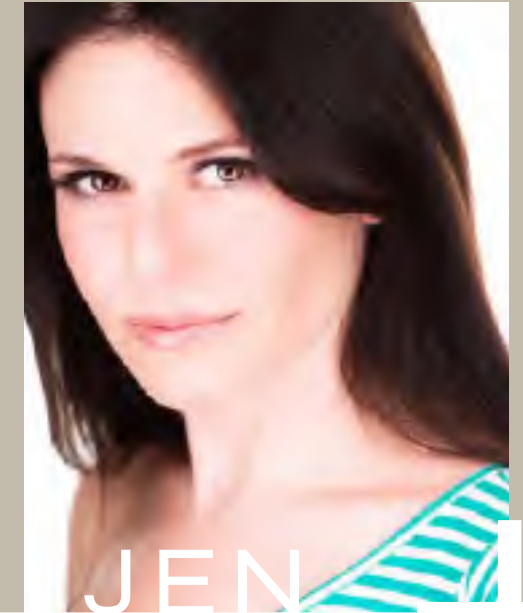
Blair's team includes four employees plus Blair, who photographs 20 to 30 weddings and 500 studio sessions per year. Blair has a passion to teach photographers how to express themselves in ways they can't find with traditional training. He speaks to and teaches thousands of photographers and digital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

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

FEATURED ARTICLE

Seniors: The Glam Session





JEN
ROZENBAUM

www.Jenerations.com

LOCATION: New York

PASSION: Boudoir

Jennifer Rozenbaum is the eye, talent and sultry force behind Jenerations, THE Woman's Photography Studio. Her artistic background lends an almost sixth sense when it comes to the aesthetics of boudoir photography (which is only half the reason for her extraordinary success). In just 3.5 years, Jenerations has found a burgeoning audience in the market for women's photography (specifically Boudoir), due largely to Rozenbaum's magnetic personality and her unique ability to make women feel beautiful, confident and strong. Her clients are her biggest supporters, having gone through what they describe as "a life-changing experience" after seeing the results of their portrait session. "They feel stronger, they feel gorgeous and most importantly, they had fun!" says Rozenbaum. Empowering women with a renewed sense of self-confidence and beauty is the inspiration and motivation behind Jenerations.

FEATURED ARTICLE
Stylized Boudoir Session



LAURIN THIENES

www.EvolveEdits.com

LOCATION: Portland, Oregon

PASSION:
Weddings & Engagements

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

FEATURED ARTICLE

Defining Your Style in Post Production



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- + Top 10 Most Influential Photographers
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