

STARTING PHOTO BUSINESS



Introduction



You've been in the photography hobby a while and a number of people have given you good comments. You enjoy going out with your camera. Now, the question comes to you: "Could I make money with this? Could I do this for a living?"

Welcome to a place that many photographers find. This is the beginning of an adventure. As you work through this process, you will discover much about yourself. There are many facets to a photography business, many questions to answer, and many rewards to find.



Know Yourself



The first and most important area is about you. You must know yourself, your strengths and weaknesses. Above all, you must discover what you REALLY love if you are to succeed. In most photography businesses you are selling yourself as much as any photograph.

You must have skill in working with people. They will be your customers and possibly the subject of your photography. You cannot predict or control your clients' needs, yet you must meet these needs with confidence in the outcome and sensitivity to your client. Photographers and buyers agree that it is easier to get and keep customers if it is easy to work with you.

There is a paradoxical element here: as much as you need to be flexible with your clients, when it comes to pricing you must be firm. Know what you are worth and what you need to stay open and stick to it.

There is also much work to be done alone: editing, research, equipment upkeep, planning and management. This will mean long hours at a computer. You will be good at some tasks and not as good at others. Yet, they all have to get done. Probably being creative is what attracted you to photography, but you must do these uncreative things to support the business.

Creativity is required, and while that may sound easy, a creative vision takes continued development. Can you be your own worst critic in a way that helps you improve your photography, not drag you down? At the same time, can you accept honest constructive criticism from others? Will that inspire you to improve rather than give up?

It is good to have feedback from others, yet have enough sense of self so that you can recognize and politely ignore ill-motivated, non-constructive criticism. You will always meet someone whose only way of feeling good about themselves is to put others (you) down. Bonus: can you

recognize and accept the one valid point that such a person may have?—even a stopped clock is right twice a day.

There is a physical element to this business. You may need to carry heavy gear. You may need to spend long hours on your feet, moving with the action. You may need to go hours without a restroom or a full meal. And then there will be those long hours sitting at a computer. Extended periods of sitting can pose problems that you may have to manage.

You must be able to live with a certain amount of risk and uncertainty. It is common for businesses to take 2 years to show a profit. The changing marketplace requires adaptability, not only a willingness to embrace change, but also an ability to see new trends before they happen. You must always embrace learning as positive growth.

Ultimately, you must have a love for imaging, and no one else can tell you that you have it or not. You must really know yourself. To be successful, your plans must be based on your unique strengths and weaknesses, inspired by what others have done but not blindly repeating them.



Photographic Skills



If you have come to the point of considering a business, you probably have decent skills with a camera. Now consider this: is there a type of lighting that you prefer? Will you always encounter that in a money-making situation? Perhaps you will if you are going to work in a studio. If you will be on location, you will undoubtedly encounter a wide variety of lighting and you will need to master all of them to be successful. As good as you may be now, committing to get the shot when clients are paying will up the ante quite a bit. You are now a creative problem-solver. You have to take pictures in any situation, not just the ones you chose as a hobbyist. Remember the job of knowing yourself? Can you see challenges as opportunities and not obstacles? Can you project confidence even as you face a unique situation for the first time?

You are a photographer, and yes, of course you use a camera. But for what? Now you will be solving problems for your customers, telling their story, making them look good, all by the skillful use of your camera. The camera is a means to an end. You need a strategy to get to that end, so you will need the skill to devise that strategy. You should be able to walk into a situation and have a good strategy for photographing it within a few minutes.

No matter how good you are now, you must keep learning and growing to move forward. You must find resources for your continuing education. These resources aren't just time and money, but knowing what best to spend that time and money on. Some options are:

Mentors: be persistent and choose well.

Internet Courses, Webinars, and Training Videos

Safari Books Online: Access up to 10 books per month.

Hundreds of top photo books available.

Workshops: on location and in person.

You must know your camera well enough for all of the relevant controls to become second-nature. You should be able to let someone scramble the settings, take it back, and restore it in a minute or less. Even better, do that in the dark, finding all buttons and dials by touch alone.

Equipment



Details will depend on the type of photography you will do. It will also depend on your style and the look you want. This might mean no flash equipment or a lot of it, as your style dictates. You will need equipment to do the output, or hire a lab for that. You will need backups for all of your essential equipment. Remember, you are paid to get the shot, no matter what happens. The event will not be postponed so that you can replace a failed camera.

Your camera must capture enough detail for the type of output you will be doing. Digital changes how you work, but you still have to be technically adept and creative. Working pros always recommend getting the capture as good as possible. Post is for enhancing, not for fixing what should have been shot correctly in the first place. That being said, you will still need software for image touch-up and management.

Computer technology has become essential to business. The digital revolution has forced many to enter a relationship with a computer who otherwise never would have. Being in business will move you beyond photo editors and file management to word processors, spreadsheets, web sites, and more. You must manage all of this information so that it is easy to find.



Now that you are in business, a fast, well-maintained computer will be a necessity, not the luxury it perhaps once was. Others are paying you to provide products and services, so good backups are a must-do. Your amount of data to store, and thus the number and type of storage solutions you use, will increase dramatically as you become successful. You will need to look at various external hard drive storage options, and possibly pay for online storage. You will need software to help manage business records, create forms, and more.

Approach all of this with caution and reserve. Many new photo businesses report that they overspent on equipment and built up too much debt. It is possible to do quality work with used, mid-range equipment.

Important Features of Your Camera

These will be covered briefly. If any of this is not making sense, you really should stop and get these under your belt first before continuing.

Exposure Modes

These allow control of exposure, depth of field, and motion. Pros can't rely on full automatic.

ISO

Turning up the ISO will allow a better shutter speed to freeze motion, but may introduce noise. Know the limits for your camera.

Exposure Compensation

Use this to correct the auto exposure in scenarios where it is consistently wrong.



Highlight Alert

Commonly known as the “blinkies”, this warns you of areas that might be overexposed.

Custom White Balance

Setting a custom white balance in a tricky environment will save you much time later.

Shooting Modes

Continuous mode will likely become an important tool for you.

Burst Mode and Buffer

If you need to capture action – this could be fleeting expressions during a portrait shoot – your camera should be able to shoot many frames per second and store them quickly. You will need fast memory cards as well.

Focus Modes

Know when to use fixed mode versus auto-track mode. Know how to change this quickly.

Focus Points

Know how to specify which autofocus point will be used.

Custom Placement of Focus Control

In many cameras, you can move the focusing control from the shutter button to another button on the camera. This will allow focus to be fixed for a series of shots while re-composing.

Metering Modes

This includes evaluative, spot metering, and other choices. Know what you are using and why. On some cameras you might be able to move metering to a different button.





Live View

Use of live view will put the mirror on lockup, quieting the camera and preventing motion on longer exposures. The live view screen allows for fine-tuning of focus with a magnified view.

Flash

Know how to control the output of your flash from the camera. Remote operation of multiple flashes is also possible.

Beep Noise

As a pro, you will likely be in environments where this noise is unacceptable. Know how to turn it off.

Considerations for Post-Processing

You will be delivering memorable images to your clients. This will require work in post-production. You will want to minimize and streamline this, because excessive time in post eats into your profit margin and could cost you some business in certain niches. A fast and reliable card reader will speed up your workflow.

A large display, or dual displays, for your computer will help immensely. These displays must also be kept color-calibrated. It is vital that your monitor show you as faithfully as possible the data contained in your image. If it is biased in some way, for example, the blue display is weak, you will mistakenly over-compensate this. When the images are printed by you or a lab, they will be too blue. Color calibration hardware and software will prevent this problem, leaving you confident in the print that you will get back from the file you send.





Post production often involves adjustments using brushes in the software. A pressure-sensitive tablet will considerably streamline this work. It will save you from an extra mouse or keyboard move every time you need to re-size a brush. It can help in applying selective adjustments to greater or lesser degrees.

Another time saver is fast, simple image-browsing software that lets you quickly cull the rejects and categorize the remainder with ratings. This could be done in a full image editor or database program, however those are slower to run. The images you select can be brought into the full-fledged editor later.

Photo-editing Features You Will Need

Straighten

Your prints will be viewed often. Small details such as skewed horizontals or verticals will be noticed.

White Balance

You will need to correct for color casts introduced by the lighting of your venue. It can be done in camera as much as possible, but you will need a backup option in post, just in case.

Exposure Adjustments

Again, you aim to get it on the shoot, but in fast-paced situations you need options in post. This should include differential treatment of highlights and shadows.





Sharpening

Antialiasing and demosaicing can introduce a bit of softness, which will need to be fixed. Softness from noise reduction may need correcting.

Noise Reduction

The need to capture action may require the use of high ISOs, introducing noise. You need software capable of correcting this.

Saturation

There may be a need to make corrections. Desaturation may also be needed at times.

Targeted Adjustments

You should be able to do any of these adjustments on a small area, or perhaps just for a certain color.

Removal of Unwanted Objects

Know your market. This may be prohibited, as in photjournalism, or required, as in most fashion and portrait work. Where required, it needs to be capable and fast.



The Business Plan



Being in business means learning skills in business. There is sales, marketing, business plans, insurance, property management, and a host of other new areas to know and apply. A common theme from working photographers is that business skills are at least as important as photographic skills, and usually much more so.

Of course, you can get someone to help you with the skills you lack. Even so, there is a certain level of knowledge you will need in order to best direct your helpers. You have to know what questions to ask and be able to understand and apply the answers. You are the one with the vision for how your business will develop.

Technically, a business plan may only be required if you will approach a bank or investors for money. However, the process is extremely valuable in helping you to understand all aspects of the start up, to form a plan of action, and to keep you on track.



Elements to include in a business plan.

Business Name: This might be a simple variant of your name, such as Sarah Smith Photography, or a more creative business title. Check the market in which you intend to operate to see what seems to be working best, or what is expected. "Sunshine Studios" may work very well in a portrait business, but will not be taken seriously in commercial work.

Description or Mission Statement

Business Structure: Consult with a CPA or tax attorney to determine whether sole proprietorship, LLC, or some other form of organization is best for you.

Products and Services

Fee structure and Price List

Target Market

Marketing Strategy

Cost of Operations

Projected Sales

Production Goals and Strategies

Competition

Milestones and Progress Assessment: What are some intermediate goals? How will you know if you are on track to success?

This is a daunting task, but it will yield many rewards. The chapters that follow will help you to formulate this plan.



Insurance, Taxes and Forms

A great source of information for startup businesses is the Small Business Administration. A web search on sba.gov with your state's name will yield many resources. Also check local colleges and universities for resources specific to your location. A good source of legal information and forms is Nolo. These sources will help with such initial considerations as whether to work as a sole proprietorship and whether to work under your name or a business name.

Give strong consideration to joining your local chamber of commerce. Membership in a chamber of commerce could bring these benefits:

- ➔ direct mail permit: this still has a place today, but less than in the past.
- ➔ leads for support services, such as lawyers and accountants, possibly with discounts
- ➔ leads and discounts on insurance
- ➔ leads for business: you might be the support service for another business!

Beyond the obvious health and property insurance, you will also need liability. Many venues will require this before you can shoot on the premises. And of course, you will need it if people are visiting your own studio.

A major area you will need to understand is income taxes. You will now need to pay a self-employment tax, which essentially matches what your employer used to pay. There are many deductions that you can claim, and it will be best to seek advice to find all of them and to be sure that you are really entitled. A much misunderstood deduction is the one for home offices. Be sure of your facts if you will use this one.

If you are paying someone to assist you on your shoots, that will have tax implications. Are they a contractor or an employee? You will likely need to consult an expert to be sure. Strong, but not conclusive clues are whether the person does similar work for someone else and whether they are hired on a per-job basis. Your obligations and expenses for a contractor are much less than for an employee – IF you make the correct choice.

Possibly a bigger area to learn will be sales tax. You will need to know when to charge sales tax to a client, and what is not taxable. The flip side of this is that you may not have to pay sales tax on the supplies you buy to make products that you eventually charge tax for. You also likely will be liable for sales tax on items you buy out of state by mail or on the internet.

Are there people in the pictures you will sell? Then you will need model releases, and perhaps property releases as well. Are you a travel photographer? Bon voyage! Be sure to have the releases in the language(s) of your destination country.

You will need other forms as well. Most important of these is the invoice. You can consult many



resources, printed and online, for good templates. It is important to include a clause to the effect that the rights to use the image are not in effect until full payment is made. This can provide leverage in collecting fees.

Other useful forms that may be needed are delivery memos and stock lists. The delivery memo is used when you send material that a client has requested. It outlines what has been delivered and how it may or may not be used at that point. A stock list is a list of available images given by category. Certain buyers may request this.

You will need a system for creating these forms, tracking submissions, sales, and payments. This will most likely be computer-based. This means that you must have a good way of organizing in the computer to help locate things quickly, as well as having a good backup system. There will still be paper, so good filing systems for this are also needed. You must be regular and consistent in their use.

Do not overlook a good system of keeping YOU organized, focused and on track. You will have many projects, each with a large to-do list, and intertwining schedules. A project management and personal organization system will help you to manage this effectively.

Resources

[Small Business Administration](#)
[Nolo](#)



Copyright, Trademark, and Model Release

Copyright

As a creative person, you will need to understand and manage copyright. Your copyright exists as soon as you press the shutter release, however, you must register the images if you are to have meaningful recourse against infringers. Registration is required to be able to sue, to recover legal fees if you win, and to collect statutory damages. Without registration you are limited to the actual cost of the infringement, which will not begin to cover legal costs. Registration can be done online, inexpensively, for many images at a time. As of this writing it is done at www.copyright.gov for \$35. One working pro reports registering thousands of images at once for this fee.

A watermark does not legally confer copyright. However, if the infringer removes the watermark, this will improve your case – IF you have registered.

You will need to think more in terms of licensing the use of your work, not selling it. Determine what your client needs to do with the images and license only the rights needed to do that. Here are some examples:

- ➔ Print Rights
- ➔ Electronic Rights
- ➔ One-time Rights
- ➔ First Rights
- ➔ Serial Rights
- ➔ Exclusive Rights
- ➔ Promotion Rights
- ➔ All Rights
- ➔ Work for Hire

These may be further specified by duration and exclusivity to a particular region or industry.

Note that in the last 2 cases you give up any possibility of future use of and income from this work, and you had better price accordingly.



As you scrutinize a contract for licensing and copyright matters, also be on the lookout for mediation and arbitration clauses. These can dictate that disputes will go to binding arbitration, shorten the time allowed to initiate a claim, and prevent a case from being heard by a jury. This may have the effect of mitigating some of your rights under copyright law. Arbitration can also get you a favorable result with less expense than a court case. This is truly a matter to take up with an experienced lawyer.

Be vigilant when you use social media sites where you will be uploading photographs. Check the Terms of Service (TOS) carefully. The act of uploading a photograph may automatically transfer copyright or confer licensing to the host company. You will have to decide carefully on the potential benefits in overall marketing versus the risk of infringement and devaluing the marketability of the specific image. As you read a TOS, keep in mind that the host company has certain legal needs in order to provide the service.

Trademark

A trademark or service mark (often lumped together as “marks”), protects the reputation of your company or brand. Customers associate a mark with a particular company or one of their products. They have a certain expectation of quality and experience attached to the mark. If another company uses a similar mark, the customer is no longer sure of the product.





Titles of creative works and website domain names generally cannot be registered as trademarks. “Joe’s Wedding Photography” could be a good business name, but would be a poor trademark. The “Wedding Photography” portion is too generic a description. Joe would have to disclaim any interest in that term if it doesn’t appear with his name.

There are 2 stages to attempt to clear a trademark so that you can use it. The first is performed at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office website. There is a “Search pending and registered trademarks” option which will let you find any trademarks similar to or the same as yours. If the trademark you want does not turn up, you will still need to order a comprehensive trademark search. The right to trademarks can be acquired through use and never be registered, a so-called “common law” trademark. You need a comprehensive search done if you want to be sure. If you are going to do expensive marketing around your trademark, you do want to be sure. Subsequent registration of your trademark will enable you to use the trademark symbol and recover damages for infringement.



Model Releases

Model releases are covered by state law. There are few generalizations that can be made here. It is best to check with an intellectual rights specialist in your state.

Resources

[The Copyright Zone](#)

[The Little Book of Plagiarism Judge Richard A. Posner](#)

[Electronic Frontier Foundation](#)

[US Patent and Trademark Office](#)

[Terms of Service Tracker Track TOS changes of many services](#)

Pricing



Pricing is a source of anxiety for many beginning businesspeople. You are selling yourself as much as any visual product. Pricing really brings home the idea of your worth and value. Much has been written about how a proliferation of good cameras and competent photographers has brought marketplace prices down. As you start out, you will often debate whether you should accept a smaller fee in exchange for building a portfolio or other considerations.

Break-Even Point

Your first step is to determine your break-even point. How much do you need to make in order to stay in business? This will include your business expenses as well as what you need as personal income. The purpose of the business is for you to make a living. This is the most important step you will take to determine if a photography business will be viable for you.

Be sure to be comprehensive in this. Under business expenses you may have office or studio rental and utility expenses, transportation, office equipment and furnishings, your photographic equipment, marketing expenses, taxes, and perhaps salaries. Expenses that are specific to a particular job or project can be billed to that client. Don't forget to factor in some return on the time and money you invested in your start-up.

Next, add in your personal expenses. Again, be sure to be all-inclusive. This will include housing expenses, medical expenses, insurance, car expenses, food, clothing, retirement savings, and general living expenses.

Once you have an annual total, you will need to get to a day rate. But wait! – don't divide by 365. You will need support days, probably one per week, for office and support tasks. You will need to allow for possible sick days, and you will want to figure in some vacation weeks and time for workshops and other continuing education. You might deduct these weeks from 52, then divide by 4 to account for the support day, to come up with how much you must bring in on an average day to stay open.



The Marketplace

Now is the time to look at the marketplace. You can join a professional organization relevant to your photographic niche. They will provide guidelines, which will have to be adjusted to reflect costs in your geographic area. You can check with photographers in your area. They should welcome the idea that you do not want to price-gouge. Once you find a range, if you are an unknown you should aim for a little below the mid-point. You should quote job-specific expenses separately.

The final result may be a much bigger number than you expected, but remember that an experienced buyer working with a pro photographer is expecting this. This is why you aim for a bit below mid-point. If you charge a lot less, they may doubt your understanding of the project and your ability to deliver. They might give you the job, but they will have you pegged as someone who works for cheap and you will never get what you deserve from them. Ultimately, your pricing reflects how you value your work and yourself.

The reality is that for an unknown photographer, you may have to offer an initial discount. A good strategy is to time-limit it to a fixed number of jobs. For example, shoot 3 portraits in the next 2 weeks at 50% off for an agency.

Bids and Estimates

In many photography fields you must know the distinction between a bid and an estimate. Essentially, a bid is the final agreed-upon price for the project. You are bound to honor the price in the bid, even if your expenses are greater than you planned. On the other hand, you can still collect the bid price even if your expenses are much less than you budgeted.

With an estimate, if your expenses run higher you can bill up to 10% higher than the estimate. However, if you have significant savings in expenses you are expected to pass that along to the client.



When asked for a bid or estimate, be prepared with a list of questions for the client. You are first and foremost establishing a connection with this potential client. A list of focused questions will help you get what you need as quickly as possible. The buyer on the other end is probably busy with many projects. You will project a sense that you are competent and easy to work with, and that you know how to think about their project. You need the information to give you detailed understanding of the project. You get this in a focused conversation, establishing a connection where the potential client will share information. One must-get piece of information is the intended usage, so you can determine what rights to license. Try to find out a budget for the project and how many photographers they are asking for bids or estimates.

In fields such as fine art photography and stock, the price for your work is determined by the marketplace. You will need to be aware of the break-even point that you determined earlier, and make adjustments in volume or diversify your products to make the income you need.

Price Structure and Fee Structure

One last distinction is your price structure versus your fee structure. The price structure is what you actually charge for your services and products. This is where actual dollar amounts are seen. For example, a portrait studio may have a price for the sitting and then prices for the various print products.

The fee structure describes when payment is due and what the payment covers. Our example portrait studio may have a fee structure that specifies 50% due when the sitting is booked and 50% due at the sitting. That may include one print. Other prints are ordered with 50% at time of ordering and 50% at time of delivery. It may include shipping and handling. Specific dollar amounts are not included in the fee structure.

Resources

[NPPA Cost of Doing Business Calculator](#)
[American Society for Media Photographers](#)
[Professional Photographers of America](#)

Marketing: The Web Site

Marketing is all of the means you use to bring clients to you and create the opportunity to sell them something. When you do meet a client, ask them how they found you. That marketing worked! You need to know this as you design future campaigns.

Your biggest tool for marketing (and perhaps sales) will be your web site. Start with a memorable, descriptive domain name, or URL. It could be your name, but remember the memorable part! Not everyone is blessed with an easy-to-remember name. Registration of the name and building a web site on it are distinct steps often billed separately, but both can be done with the same vendor. Your domain or hosting plan might give you multiple email addresses. You can use this to your advantage by creating different reply addresses for your various marketing campaigns, thus being able to track the relative success of each one.

Once you have a domain name, you will need to connect that to an actual website. The site has to be hosted on a web server, which you pay for with a hosting plan. You can hire someone to do design and build your site. Pricing on this can get expensive if they are coding everything from the ground up.

If you don't have the budget for that, there are options for you to do this on your own. You can use a content management system such as Wordpress, Drupal, or Joomla to build the site. These systems have much of the infrastructure done for you. Your task is to find the package that will give you the look you want and add-ons that give you the functions you need. Many options are available to connect your site and blog to your social media accounts. You can also hire people to help you with this, which will likely be less expensive than having them build from scratch. One thought here: do you have a need for more than one website? This might be the best way to work in more than one area of photography. If you buy your own hosting plan you can put more than one site on it. However, that does lock you in to the build-it-yourself or hire out options.

The other approach for a do-it-yourself website is to use pre-made templates. There are several companies offering this that are oriented toward photographers. These include Photoshelter, Zenfolio, Squarespace, and BetterPhoto. You can use your own domain name with these plans. In this scenario you sign up with the company and they offer you a wide variety of site templates. These are easy for you to customize and fill in your content. They will also have good e-commerce abilities integrated into the site. The cost for this can be similar to the cost of the hosting plans you would use on a custom-made site.

Here are some recommendations from a variety of photo buyers and experienced photographers:

Do not use Flash on your site. It adds needless complexity and slows the viewer experience. It cannot be viewed on iPads and iPhones. Most importantly, any content displayed with Flash cannot be indexed by search engines, making it difficult for customers to find you in a web search.



No music with the slide show.

Let the viewer go through the slide show at their own pace.

Include your location. This is important to buyers. Most projects do not have travel budgets, so they need to find someone local to their job.

Display contact information prominently and often. Your web site is designed and meant to get them to want to talk with you. Make sure they can get the phone number and email address to do it. This is a common complaint of buyers who look at many web sites.

One feature to look for in a web site is responsive design. This is the ability of the site to scale properly on anything from a smart phone to the largest desktop monitor. Your customers may be viewing from any of these devices.

Now that you have a site in place, what do you put on it? Your best images, and only your best. Think of this as a portfolio. It will be judged by the poorest images it contains. It should have a consistent theme. If you work in several areas, have a different portfolio for each. Be sure that the menu navigation is easy to follow.

Your images should be large enough to have impact, at least 800 pixels on the long side. Image theft is a concern, but making a good impression is a bigger concern. Many successful photographers do not use watermarks, because they interfere with the visual content of the image. If theft is a strong concern, there are methods of digitally watermarking, usually a paid package. You can drag one of your images into a Google image search and it will be found on other sites, if it has been taken. Your images should have your contact information in the metadata to help well-intentioned users to find you. Good keywording in the metadata will help customers find your image in a web search.

Speaking of theft, be careful in how you provide an email address. If this is simply entered on a web page, it can be harvested by spammers using automated programs. There are ways to include it with scripting so that it is clickable, yet not able to be read by harvesters. You can also have a contact form, where the message is entered and sent directly from the site. After your prompt reply, the customer will then have your email for future contacts.



Setting up a Web Site

Your Domain Name

Your web site will have 2 extra components: the domain name (URL) and the hosting plan. The domain name is the web site address you use in a web browser. You'll need to register your domain with a registrar such as GoDaddy, Register.com, or 1&1. Such companies also provide search tools to help you find out what domain names are available.

The cost should be about \$12.99 per year to register a domain name.

It is a good idea to register the domain name on your own and not through a third party. The domain name will be a vital part of your online branding, so you'll want to be sure to have complete control of it.

You can register the name on your own with the same company that does your hosting, just make sure that you are the owner of the name, and that this ownership is not tied to the hosting plan. This way, as your needs change, you will be able to move to new hosting plans without interruptions.

Your Hosting Plan

Your hosting plan is essentially rental of space on a web server that houses your website and allows people to view it. Website template companies provide website hosting along with their templates. It's ideal for your website template company to host your website and it's easier to support if there is a problem. Otherwise you may want to have an independent host for your website. In this case you can set up a hosting plan yourself with a company such as GoDaddy, Register.com, and 1&1.

Your Website

Custom web site designs can cost well in excess of \$1000.

If you have time and a do-it-yourself spirit you can build a website using content management systems such as Wordpress, Joomla, and Drupal at little or no cost. It will take lots of time and learning, though.

The most popular choice for photographers these days is to use pre-made web design templates like those provided by Creative Motion Design.



Template sites such as this allow photographers to spend their time figuring out what to put on the site, not how to put it on the site. It is a cost-effective way to launch a website quickly.

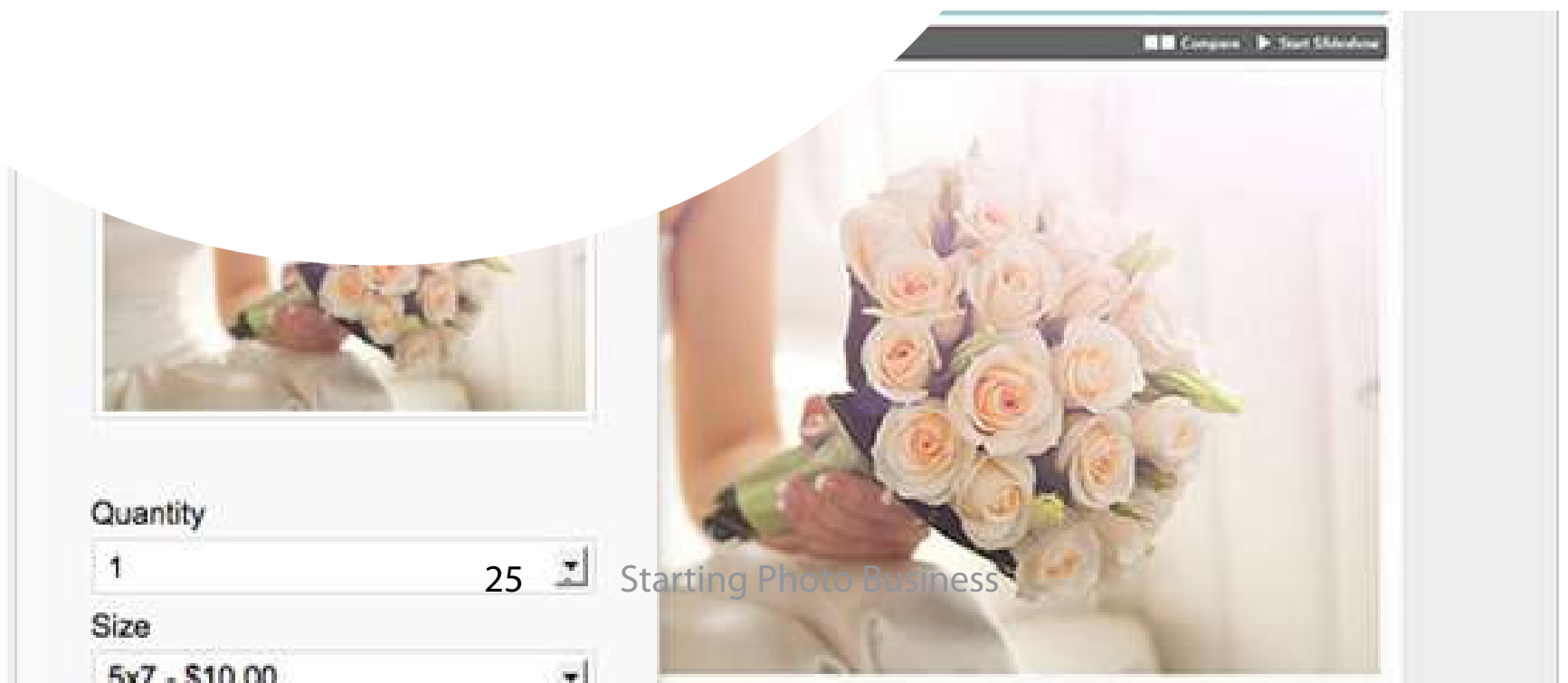
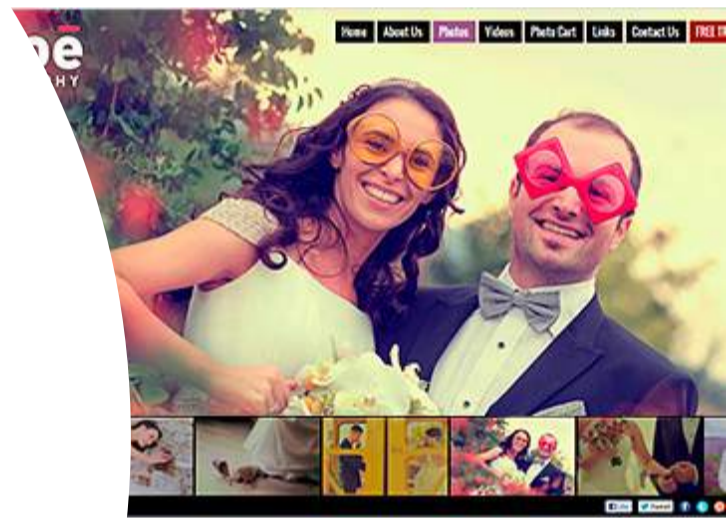
Creative Motion Design offers a choice of amazing website templates for just a few hundred dollars. They also provide website hosting for \$100 per year, about the same price as other hosting companies.

Selling Your Photos Online

Each **Creative Motion Design** website also comes with a professional Photo Cart so that you can easily sell your images and products online.

Free 10 Day Trial

For a 10 day free trial of their website designs and photo cart just visit their website at **creativemotiondesign.com** and see how easy it is to get up and running.



Marketing: Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization, or SEO, is one of the leading buzzwords in website marketing and management. When you do a web search, the results you see on the first page, aside from the paid ones, are there because they ranked well for the keywords you used in your search. SEO is the practice of giving you the best placement possible for the keywords that your customers will use to find you.

Much SEO strategy revolves around keywords. These are the words and short phrases that potential customers will put into their search engine. Brainstorm a list of a few dozen keywords that you would like to rank well for. This will range from general to specific, and should include some that reference your location. Include colloquial terms for your region as well as specific suburbs of major cities. Tools such as the Google Adwords Keyword Planner will help you judge the effectiveness of these keywords. Consider spending some money on Google Adwords or similar services. This will buy you a favored position in search results for the keywords you select.

Armed with this list, you now know how to handle the content of your pages. The keywords should be included in a natural way whenever possible. For example, rather than use “Click here” as the text for a link, use a phrase with a keyword whenever appropriate. Links to other pages on your site are fine as long as the context makes sense. Do not stuff keywords in. This will be detected and penalized by the search engines.

Every page on your site should have a unique title. Again, this is a place to include keywords in a natural way. Have the important terms come first in the title, and limit it to 70 characters. If you want your business name in the title, put it last. People will still see it but search engines will give a better ranking.

Use header tags on your page, again with keywords wherever appropriate. Header tags are the section titles throughout your page. The URL of your page should be human-readable, with keywords where appropriate.

The meta description is the technical term for the text that appears with your listing on a search engine result page. You should craft this to describe clearly to the human reader what your site is about so they actually click on the link. However, it should also skillfully employ keywords to help with the page rank. If you do not provide a meta description, the search engine will place text from the page in that area, which likely will not describe your site well.

You might think that you should let your photography

speaks for itself. That might work for the human viewer, but with SEO, you can't let your photos speak for themselves. Search engines cannot "hear" photos. They need descriptions, captions, and alt tags. Keywords should be included in all of these.

The alt tag is meant to be displayed if the image is not available, and it is read to visually impaired users. This is where the search engines will learn about your image. Be sure to include a good description of any gallery you post. If getting found in Google Images is important to you, you should have readable file names with keywords, not dscn1234.jpg.

Your site should load quickly and have a site map. Tools such as Google Webmaster and Google Analytics can help with this. A Google Places account for your business will earn it a spot in the location-specific results with maps. This is becoming common in Google searches.

If you are hiring a web designer, you should check that they will build a strong SEO site, in a way that you can maintain after they turn it over to you. Content management systems will have many SEO solutions available as add-ons to your site. The companies offering hosted templates usually have strong SEO features.

What we have covered so far has been on-page SEO. Next comes building backlinks. If you join professional sites that offer a profile page, you can put links there. You can also link from your blog, which is a pretty good reason to have one. You can get other sites to link to you. The key is that the site you link to should be relevant to photography or other aspects of your business. One way to earn backlinks from relevant sites is to post interesting content on your blog. Do not consider buying backlinks from other sites. This attempt to beat the system will be detected by search engines and penalized. Your major backlink strategy will be through social media and your blog.

Resources

[MajesticSEO Site Explorer](#)



Marketing: Social Media

Social media will be a major way that you will direct viewers to your website. This will form a large portion of your SEO strategy. Your activities on these sites should be aimed at attracting visitors and getting others to send links to their contacts on the network. Beyond announcing your own activities, you should be providing quality information that makes you and your site seen as a valuable resource. Limit your sales and promotions to about 10% of your activity. All of the Likes, Tweets, +1s, and similar accolades are highly correlated to good search ranking, as well as directly bringing you clients.

It is worth repeating here to examine the Terms of Service for each platform carefully. Each service will require you to grant them certain rights. This creates the possibility that an image you upload to a site may be used without your permission and without compensation to you.

Your social media efforts will be more fruitful if you have goals and benchmarks you can use to assess your effectiveness in reaching these goals. Google Analytics can be a powerful tool in helping you to check your progress. You can see detailed data on visitors to your site including whether they are coming from a particular social media site.

Facebook

Facebook is where the people are. Hundreds of millions of people are using it, many of them daily. The average Facebook user is connected to over 100 other people. Used properly, Facebook can be an effective way to spread the word about your work.

You should do this on a Facebook page that is specific to your photography business, not your personal Facebook page. You want people to know you as a person, but it is best not to entirely mix your personal and business life. Plus, if you grow enough, you will find a limit on the number of “friends” you can have on a personal page (currently this is 5,000). A Facebook Page for your business will also appear more serious about business and not put off customers who might feel too awkward in your personal space.

Do show off your photographs and write about your business, but also be sure to promote the content of others that your clients may find interesting. It is important to be seen as a source of good information and not just a self-promoter. Ask questions, ask for opinions, inform, and entertain. Be responsive and maintain a regular presence. It doesn't have to be daily, but you want to appear active. No one will interact with you if they think you won't answer for 2 weeks. On the other hand, don't post too much, or people will feel cluttered by your feed and un-follow. Once a day is good. Definitely use this page for sales and promotions you are running in your business. Note that you can use Facebook as your business page. That is, all of your posts, likes



comments, etc will be seen as coming from your business page, generating benefits for the business.

Key Features of Facebook

News Feed and Edgerank.

The news feed is the center column of a homepage constantly updating with items from the people and Pages that you follow. Whether an item is included is determined by its Edgerank, a measure of interest and popularity based on Likes, Shares, and Comments.

The Photostrip

The Photostrip shows above the wall and shows photos that the Page has been tagged in. You can click the x in the upper right hand of a photo to remove it from display.

People Talking About This

This is a measure that goes beyond likes to include photo-tagging, mentions in posts, commenting, and other interactions.

Facebook ads.

The use of Facebook ads may be of great benefit to your business. It will depend on the exact nature of your business. Fine art photographers may not use it, but portrait photographers may find that these ads reach the correct target audience.

Facebook Insights

This is a way to get data on who you are reaching. You can find information on many useful traits.

- ➔ Cities and countries
- ➔ Gender
- ➔ Where your likes are coming from
- ➔ A broader view of the number of people you are reaching, tracking posts by others and not just yourself.



Google+

Google+ was started in 2011 and is growing fast. It has become a preferred place for photographers, as it is more oriented toward photo sharing. Because it is run by Google, there is great potential for a strong Google+ presence to have a direct boost on your website SEO.

One big distinction with Google + is the depth of control you have over who sees your posts and photos. This is done with Circles. You can add people to specific circles, and assign posts to those circles only. In this way a single proprietor can manage their business presence from their personal account. With skillful and careful use of circles, the two areas can be entirely distinct, or overlap to the exact degree you prefer. Google+ company pages are available for larger companies.

Many of the same principles apply here. Be sure that your content and activity is about more than yourself and your business. Posting photos is important here. Give them good captions and provide camera details. Provide as much detail in your profile as possible to help people know you better. Post often but not too much. One picture per day, with an informative narrative, is plenty.

Google+ offers user groups and themes that can be used with your posts. Each one has a hashtag that can be included with your content, helping it to be found by interested people. There are many good photo-related themes and groups on Google+.Key Features of Google+

The Stream

The Stream is the central location featuring content from your Google+ community. It is visible to users when they log in, so showing up here is key. Your content appears in the streams of the members of circles you share with. It will also show you content from someone who tags you in their content, but is not in one of your circles.

What's Hot

As you might imagine, this shows you the topics that are of interest to a large number of users. Many topics relevant to photography can be found here.



Hangouts

This is a unique feature that allows video chatting with a group of other Google+ members. It includes an option to share your screen and place calls.

+1 Button

A +1 is similar to a Facebook Like. It is your way of noting the content that interests you. More importantly, a +1 button on your website allows others to publicize your content in the Google+ community.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a platform specializing in business relationships. It is a great venue to use if you are marketing services to other businesses (B2B). This is a professional forum, so do not post about your latest meal or other trivia you might share on other networks. This site includes many potential clients and business leads such as art directors, art buyers, graphic designers, and photo editors.

LinkedIn is a strong factor in Google searches. A detailed profile with good keywords will be very effective. You then must make your profile public. By default, only people connected to you can see your profile. You want the Linked-In network at large and the search engines to find you with a public setting.

Key Features of LinkedIn

LinkedIn Answers

This question-answer forum provides an important way to be active and boost your visibility.

Recommendations

You share recommendations with your contacts. These are important in the LinkedIn network.



Groups

There are many groups with an emphasis on photography in LinkedIn. They are valuable sources of leads and a good way to interact and build connections.

In Mail

Think of this as private email within the LinkedIn system. It is important that these be customized and personalized to the recipient.

Updates

Updates are similar to Tweets, 140 characters or less, that let you broadcast news to appear on the homepage of your contacts.

Skills & Expertise

Use this area to find connections to individuals and groups connected to photography. Use specific search terms to find more highly relevant content.

Job Listings

Need we say more? These listings can be exclusive to LinkedIn. You won't find them anywhere else.

Twitter

Twitter allows you to broadcast messages of up to 140 characters, called "Tweets". Billions of tweets are sent each year, so it can be intimidating to think of being heard and finding relevant connections among this clamor. But it can be done.

Many guidelines are the same. Your activity should be mostly about providing and sharing useful information, with just a bit of direct promotions. You can "retweet" content that you think your followers may have missed and will appreciate. One tip in choosing a Twitter handle: it is better to avoid numbers in the handle, as these are likely to be considered as spam by search engines and not contribute to your SEO.



This is one platform where multiple entries per day will work well. They are short, and can become buried within hours by a mass of new tweets. But don't despair, Tweets can also be found by searches, so think of good keywords and use them often.

If you are limited to 140 characters, it can be difficult to fit links into your tweets. The solution to this is to use URL shortening services, such as bit.ly. You can also use the Google URL builder to append a standard URL with code that allows Google Analytics to track clicks on that link. It is a great way to measure the effectiveness of your tweets.

Twitter is a place where you can follow anyone: national and local media, industry leaders, customers, and more. You can connect to many influential people in the world of photography. You can build connections by following back the people who follow you. You can group and rank your contacts using the list feature.

Instagram

Instagram is a smartphone app that lets you capture photos or video, enhance them, and share them on the network. It can be a useful marketing tool, as membership has skyrocketed since it was founded. You can follow and be followed by others and automatically share to other social networks. You can include the link to your website as a comment under the picture. Use hashtags to find content related to your photographic interests. Create hashtags for your work to help others find it easily.

Flickr

Flickr is a leading photo-sharing site. Its Terms of Service explicitly forbid the use to exploit for commercial purposes. However, you can still let others know who you are and show them what you do photographically. You can give a web site address in your profile. Join and participate in relevant groups. Just be sure that the commentary you include is about the photography and not the product. It is a way to get your work noticed by photo buyers if done correctly. Flickr and Getty Images have partnered to form the Flickr Collection, which is an opportunity to license your image as a Getty stock image.



500px

500px is a newer photo sharing site with features aimed at pro photographers. The portfolios, even in the free edition, look professional and have many features. 500Px does not demand as many rights in exchange for uploading your picture. In fact, they have a market to help you to sell your pictures. There are the usual avenues for commenting and approving the work of others

StumbleUpon

StumbleUpon is a web “discovery engine”. Users of the service rank and submit sites that they find. Others can then search with keywords to find these recommended sites. As with other sites, it is vital that you are not just promoting your work or business. You must be a true participant in the community. Only then might you submit a like on one of your own works. You can also sign up for a paid discovery service. Of course, your website must have engaging, useful content to inspire members to recommend it in the network.

Pinterest

Pinterest is a sharing site where users “pin” content – often photographs – representing their interests to their Pinterest page. Self-promotion is against the terms of service, however some photographers in the wedding and portrait niche have used it to generate leads. Clients pin photos that are inspiring to them as they plan the shoot with the photographer. Followers of that client see the work and contact the photographer, possibly generating further business. Currently, there is a serious drawback in that photos can be pinned in full version without a backlink to your site and without the metadata that contains your contact information.



YouTube

YouTube has become the second largest search engine for people seeking content. Photographers can use this for generating leads and traffic to their website. You can have subscribers, comments, and likes just as with other platforms. The viewer does not have to be a member with an account to see your content. Videos can be keyworded, and they show up well in search engine results. While you may not need a video production studio, there is still considerable skill and time needed to produce an appealing product.

Vimeo

Vimeo is another video hosting service. It has a following in the arts community and may be a more appropriate platform for some photo business niches. It may also be a place to host private video for clients. This can be done on YouTube, however, Vimeo may project a more professional image for some markets.

Reddit

Reddit is a form of social bookmarking board. Their tag line is "The Front Page of the Internet." Users submit links of interest and start discussions around them. The feature of this site is the ability of users to up-vote and down-vote the items. There are many discussion areas, or sub-reddits, where questions can be answered and people can be interviewed. Many are relevant to photography and you can start one of your own. There is opportunity to contribute meaningful input and have that connected to you and your website. As with other platforms, blatant self-promotion will be quickly down-voted and can get you banned.

Marketing: Blogs



A blog is a chronological collection of posts. Posts usually contain personal thoughts, behind-the-scenes looks at shoots and images, and of course the images themselves. As with social media, the content should also include useful information for your audience. It is a place to engage an audience on an ongoing and timely basis. It is similar to a social networking site that you set up with your own look and your own rules. A blog also exists to direct traffic to your portfolio website.

If you host your website with a content management system such as Wordpress, you can have a blog as part of your website – or you can have a few portfolio pages as part of your blog. If not, there are many ways to create an independent blog that can be tailored to the look that you prefer. They are customized by finding and installing appropriate themes and plugins. Many of them are free. These platforms include:

- ➔ Blogger
- ➔ Wordpress.com
- ➔ TypePad
- ➔ Movable Type
- ➔ Tumblr

Once you have a blog set up, you need to post content. It is best to formulate a plan to help you organize and sustain this. A prime foundation block in this plan is to identify your audience. You want to reach potential clients and customers, as well as build an audience who will respond with comments to your posts, link to them, and otherwise help the SEO of your website. People will be much more likely to like, +1, or send a link to a post with useful or thought-provoking content than to send a link to an entire website.

Another part of your plan will be how frequently to post. Consistency is generally more important than frequency – although once every 6 months is almost certainly too infrequent. Once a week could be plenty, especially if you give your audience something really good to anticipate. Google's search engine does have a component that favors recent content.

Now comes the hard part: having that really good content. A good strategy is to keep a list of ideas, and a calendar schedule for posting them. You can populate that list with specific examples of these general ideas:

- ➔ A look at how you visualized, shot, and processed a particular image of yours
- ➔ An image you really liked from another photographer, and a discussion of why
- ➔ Reviews of gear, books or web sites.
- ➔ A how-to post featuring one of your images
- ➔ Tutorials
- ➔ An opinion piece that will stimulate discussions
- ➔ Run a contest
- ➔ Do a poll
- ➔ A list of resources on a particular topic
- ➔ Interviews
- ➔ Guest blogger

One way to generate ideas is to think of topics and especially keywords. Do a web search on this. Examine the results and look for things people may be asking, sites that are good resources, etc. Look at the answers to the questions you find. Do you have anything to add to the discussion? Provide a guide to the best of the results.

While creating your content you should use the methods discussed earlier to maximize your SEO. Use your keywords as much as possible in a natural way. Use them in the anchor text of any links you create. Your post also has a title and a meta description, just like the pages on your website. Be sure that your images have keywords in the file names, the alt attributes, and the captions.



Event Photography



Event photography is a popular photographic specialty. This includes sports, weddings, Bar Mitzvahs and Bat Mitzvahs, birthdays, or any event where someone wants photographic memories.

You can do this work without the expense of a studio, since you will be shooting at the location of the event. However, this may be offset by the need for extra remote-controlled flashes where allowed by a venue. A sports photographer will need a fast, long telephoto lens; others may suffice to have short and medium focal lengths. It will be a great benefit for your camera to be capable of shooting at high ISOs with little noise, to allow catching action in low light without flash. There will be no time to change lenses, so a camera body for each lens may be needed. Fast burst rates, large buffers, and fast cards are also a great benefit.

What you save in studio costs will probably be repaid in the time you take to master varied lighting situations. You may need to take pre-visits to the venues. You will need to understand the white balance complications caused by mixed sources of lighting.

It is vital to have a detailed understanding of the event you will be covering. There are certain moments in the ceremonies that people expect to be preserved in a good image. These will also be the times to get reaction shots of family members. In sports, you must know the game well enough to predict action before it occurs.

There is a high expectation of fast turn-around times in this market. Many event photographers shoot jpegs for faster burst rates and faster post-processing. They are masters of exposure and lighting and do not need the adjustment benefits that raw can provide. Your web site will likely need some form of private online galleries for your clients to view results and order prints.

Most importantly, you must be mindful that you are a storyteller and historian for events that often have high emotional impact in the lives of the families. You will need to show understanding of this and demonstrate how seriously you approach their big day.

The market is competitive. Your marketing must show the prospective client how you are unique and stand out from the competition. You will probably need to offer packages with a variety of products such as prints, albums, books, photo CD shows, and more.

Fine Art Photography



Fine art photography is truly an area where “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” A fine art print represents a physical object that someone wants in their space. They will look at it almost every day. Most importantly, they are willing to pay a premium price for the work. In fine art the physical presentation is as important as the visual content. The paper, printing, matting, and framing must be of exceptional quality.

Your need for a studio will depend entirely on the subject matter of your art. This specialty is more defined by the client you are trying to reach than the actual content in the photograph. The nature of your art will also influence or even determine the equipment that you will need. For example, if your vision or subject matter demands a high level of detail, and if you would like to produce large prints, you will likely need medium format equipment, which is much more expensive.

Since you are seeking a premium price for your work, your web site and other promotional material must be of the highest visual quality. Printed portfolios, books, cards, and mailers are still important in this market, although they are not sent as often as in the pre-digital age.

Your portfolio should be tightly edited and represent your highest quality work. You will be remembered by worst and the last image you show. It should show a series demonstrating the ability to consistently produce quality pieces of the same theme. The portfolio should be physically manageable if you will be taking it for showings. Also plan at least the core of what you would like to say and bring something

to leave behind when you leave. Always follow-up in a way that is memorable but not intrusive.

It is important to know about ways to get your work seen by potential buyers. One important avenue is the portfolio review conference. These are opportunities to meet with top-level buyers, curators, and editors for a personalized 15-20 minute meeting and have them look at your portfolio. The reviewers often are connected to some real marketing opportunity or possible sales. The conferences last for several days and can cost many hundreds of dollars, not including travel, lodging and meals.

Some top examples are:

<http://www.fotofest.org/2014biennial/>
[photolucida](#)

[Freshlook LA Month of Photography](#)
[Palm Springs Photo Festival, also in NY](#)

[LensCulture Paris](#)

[photolucida Critical Mass: a remote, digital version](#)

Art fairs can be of two types: where galleries are displaying and selling, and where artists can display and sell work directly. The former is a good way to look for galleries that might display and sell your work. However, you must respect the fact that they are there to sell, and not to look for new artists, and be appropriate in your interactions. If you go to a fair to sell your work, be sure that it is a fair that targets the high-end art buyer, and is not more of a craft fair.

Portrait Photography

Portrait photography can run the gamut from babies and children to seniors, corporate executives, and celebrities. A business will usually concentrate on one of these sub-specialties.

A portrait photographer might have a studio, or they can travel to location, often with portable lighting equipment. The camera must have enough resolution to deliver the highest size print that you intend to market. Portrait work does not require a wide range of lens focal lengths, perhaps as few as 2 will suffice. A detailed knowledge of lighting is required to create different looks and to respond to the conditions when on location.

While there may be high demand for portraits, there is also a lot of competition. Your marketing must set you apart both in your product and the manner of delivery. Your web presence must be engaging and your SEO must be top-notch so that clients can find you. It is best to have a diverse product line ranging from framed pieces to albums and photo books.



Editorial Photography

Editorial photography is the production of images that illustrate stories in magazines, newspapers, and other media outlets. The editorial content is basically the stuff that isn't the ads. This is an area where pay and opportunities are famously declining, however quality markets still exist. Much travel photography is editorial work.

You will most likely be working on location, going to wherever the story is that you are trying to illustrate. Your need for equipment will be dictated by the types of subjects you need or want to document. Lenses may range from close-up to long telephoto. Flash equipment may be simple external strobes and reflectors, or lights on stands where needed and appropriate.

Before the work of shooting, there will be the work of proposing stories and getting assignments. A premiere tool for identifying and learning how to approach quality clients is the annual Photographer's Market, published by North Light Books. It gives information on pay rates and submission guidelines for a wide range of publications and other markets.

The reality is that you will fund a lot of projects on your own at first while building a portfolio that will land you an assignment. Do not overlook other avenues of marketing. Your subject matter may be marketable in galleries, for example.



Commercial Photography

Commercial photography is the production of images used to promote or sell a product. The subject matter can include such areas as fashion, food, automotive, real estate, and architecture. The projects are often complex and involve many other professionals such as models and stylists.

The costs to operate in this specialty can be formidable. Medium format cameras are often required. You will need whatever lens it takes to get the shot right. An expensive studio with a full complement of equipment will likely be needed. All marketing must be attractive to high-end clients. Your web presence must be strong.

This is an area where pros recommend to start out by assisting at an established studio. This is not so much to learn photographic skills as to learn all aspects of doing business in this field. It is important to observe a seasoned pro interact with clients, creative directors, and talent on the set. You will see projects develop from estimate to shoot to delivery. Success is as much about developing relationships as it is about actual photography, and working with a successful pro gives you a front row seat for learning these skills.



Nature Photography

Nature photography is defined by its subject matter. Usually there is no studio needed, although what you save in studio costs you may make up in travel costs to get to the best locations. A good quality DSLR should suffice. Your lens kit may be large, ranging from macro for insects and flowers to long telephoto for wildlife. A tripod is often needed for sharp, detailed landscapes. You will need a pack system to carry your gear out in the field.

Nature photography can be marketed in many ways. It can be displayed in galleries and sold as fine art prints. You can market it for editorial use. It could be licensed as part of an ad campaign. A major outlet is in stock agencies. Successful nature photographers often specialize, either in subject area such as birds or in a geographic region such as the desert southwest.



Stock Photography

Stock photography is essentially submitting images to a pool, with the anticipation that someone will need them and want to license them. Licensing fees can range from under \$1 to many thousands at some agencies.

The types of licensing discussed previously are called rights-managed licenses. Stock brings a new form called royalty free. This confers a right to use the image as needed (but not re-sell) without continually re-licensing. It is a very popular method of purchase for many buyers. Microstock refers to agencies that charge very little and pay a small share to the photographer. The photographer must have thousands of images in microstock agencies to make any money.

Stock images may be licensed for editorial or commercial use. The subject matter is often used to illustrate a topic or concept. They are usually presented in a cheerful, upbeat style to inspire the viewer to look favorably on the product being sold. They must have model releases to be used commercially, and need to be of the best quality.

Stock images can be marketed by submission to an agency, which then is responsible for attracting buyers and handling the purchase. In exchange, the agency keeps a portion of the sale. Some photographers prefer to run their own stock web site. In this case they are also the ones to promote the site, issue licenses, and collect payment. It is extra work, but they get to keep all of the sales proceeds. Buyers also look for images directly with image searches in their search engine.



Buyers have to find your work, so extensive keywording is required. You might be thinking, "No problem, I took care of that with my SEO." But it isn't that easy. Your SEO keywording exists in the web page code where the search engines can read it. The keywords for stock image searching must be in the images themselves, in the IPTC data.

Your keywording must be even more extensive than for the SEO. You should think of every concept the image may convey, every possible way to describe the subject(s) in the image, predominant colors, people, places, and so on. Your goal is to think of every way the picture may be applied and provide the keywords so that the buyer finds it. The same image can be used by many buyers unless a more expensive license with exclusivity is granted. You want as many buyers as possible to find and use the image. A well-keyworded image may have over 100 keywords! Professional keywording services are available for this. It is worthwhile to have them do a handful of images to see how the stock agencies view your work.



Conclusion



You have seen a lot of information, sometimes painting a picture of hard work and long hours. This is not meant to scare or discourage, but rather to let you know what you will need to think about for success. Much of this has been distilled from photographers who shared what they did, or more importantly, what they wish they did or what they wish they had known.

If you consider carefully all that is presented and apply it realistically to your situation, you will have the foundation for a long and prosperous business career.

Good luck and have fun!





Resources

Safari Books Online: [Access up to 10 books per month. Hundreds of top photo books available.](#)

B&H Photovideo EventSpace: [Learn from working pros by viewing in-depth seminars and talks.](#)

Photographer's Market: [An annual guide with details on professional markets, how to approach them, and how much they pay. Each edition also has articles and interviews.](#)

The Photographer's Market Guide to Building Your Photography Business: [Vik Orenstein](#)

Best Business Practices for Photographers: [John Harrington](#)

Photoshelter [provides many informative guides covering web sites, SEO, and other aspects of marketing.](#)

Digital Photo Pro: [A magazine and website covering business matters and trends in the industry.](#)

