

## Marketing Ideas for Professional Photographers

### **MARKETING IDEA #1: DESIGN CUSTOM CARDS/INVITATIONS**

As photographers, we too often think that our only skill to advertise to clients is our photography. If that's you, then you are missing out on a ton of business. One great way to get clients to seal the deal is by showing added value that you—and only you—can provide.

When clients see your messaging that merely offers engagement photos, they may think that Uncle Bob could do just as well (he has a really nice camera, after all). But when potential clients see that you not only do engagement photos, but that you'll custom design their wedding announcement... they are more likely to take the bait.

Photography is one skill that photographers have, but most professional photographers are also very competent in Photoshop and could do a much better job creating a beautiful custom wedding announcement, Christmas card, senior announcement, etc, than others could. So advertise that skill too!

### **MARKETING IDEA #2: SHOOT FOR CHARITY**

Look up your local newspaper online and find the community calendar. Call the coordinators of a few charity events and ask if you can come photograph the event for free and pass out some business cards. Shoot the event and network, network, network. If you do this right, it would be doubtful that you could escape without booking 2 or 3 family photo shoots.

### **MARKETING IDEA #3: THE WEDDING GUIDE**

Photographers who have been around for a while know a lot of things about local venues that brides would LOVE to know! How about creating a pop-up on your website asking for your client's email address. If they enter the email address, they get a free download of your "15 Little-Known Tips for Getting Married in Boise" (or whatever your city). In the PDF guide, you can include what venues have the best lighting for great wedding pictures, your favorite places to shoot bridals, a money-saving tip for getting great flowers, etc. Wedding photographers often know many little tips that brides would love to know. By teaching them, you set yourself up as the expert and brides will want to book with you!

Obviously, you could apply the same principal to other types of shoots: Family portraits, baby pictures, senior pictures, etc. Once you get the email address, you can immediately send them a personal message and ask how they liked the guide and if they would like to hire you! Building an email list of clients is the smartest thing you can do as you're getting started.

### **MARKETING IDEA #4: WOMEN ONLY!**

For female photographers, one GREAT way to get into the baby or family photography business is to join a local group of moms. Almost every city large or small has mothers groups. Search [meetup.com](http://meetup.com) for your city and you are guaranteed to find a group or two (there are at least 30 in Boise...). Go join the free groups and NETWORK NETWORK NETWORK! Be sure to bring business cards along with you!

### **MARKETING IDEA #5: PHOTOS FOR POSTS**

Once you get your first couple of customers, you'll see that most of your future customers will come from one source: REFERRALS! Consider offering your clients one free 16×20" print (only costs you a few dollars) if they will write up a quick testimonial of their experience with you so you can post it on the blog and then have them share that post with their Facebook friends. When a friend receives a testimonial like this, you are very likely to get their business if they are considering hiring a photographer.

## **MARKETING IDEA #6: REMEMBER THE LITTLE THINGS**

If you get organized with an online calendar like Google Calendar or iCal, you can enter in the birthday or anniversary of those who you photograph. It would only cost you about .75 cents to mail them a short pre-printed note wishing them a happy birthday or anniversary and offering them a 15% off coupon for their next family photo. It is much easier to retain your existing clients than to go out chasing new ones all the time. This little trick can work wonders to book more shoots with your existing clients.

## **MARKETING IDEA #7: GO OLD SCHOOL**

Many professional photographers attend wedding fairs or other similar events to drum up business (and it's a great way to book shoots, by the way. Most photogs book 2 or 3 at a typical bridal fair). After the event, you'll have a list of names, phone numbers, and contact information. Most of the brides will get several calls, so how can you stick out from the crowd? IMMEDIATELY after the event, send out a pre-printed portfolio to your clients. No one uses physical portfolios anymore, but there is still something captivating about holding a physical print.

Print off 6 or 7 of your very best shots in a small size and include a card with a coupon for your services. As soon as the event is over, put an address label on the envelopes and send them out to your potential clients. After the client receives your physical portfolio, call them and close the deal.

## **MARKETING IDEA #8: DECORATE AN OFFICE**

Have a friend with a local business? If you sit down and think, you probably know a few people with small businesses in town. Offer to print beautiful local landscape photos for their office if they'll let you put a small business card-sized ad on the bottom corner with your contact information. In fact, you could even put a price on the photo and allow patrons of the business to buy it right off the wall!

## **MARKETING IDEA #9: STAMP YOUR PRINTS**

Spend \$20 for a simple custom stamp at Office Depot (or wherever else). Then stamp the back of every print you ever sell with something that says, "Love this print? I keep copies of all the photos from this shoot on my hard drive. If you ever want to order more, contact me at email@yoursite.com." Something as simple as that could get you sales years from now when the customer looks at the print and decides they want more of the photo memories that you captured.

## **MARKETING IDEA #10: HOLD A "NO BLINKING" PROMOTION**

Everyone's style of running a business is different, but if you have a fun personality and want to do something that will make your clients smile, then how about running a "no blinking" promotion? Advertise on your site that you'll give any client a free print if they have their eyes open in every one of the photos in the shoot. Virtually no one will win this prize, but it will be something fun and different to do. It will show some personality to your clients and help them to have fun during the shoot.

Sending proof of a blink after the shoot could be a fun thing to post on your company's Facebook wall and remind others of the "for fun" promotion.

## **MARKETING IDEA #11: GIVE IT AWAY**

Not long ago, I gave a free hour of photography services to a charity. The charity was doing an auction and people could bid on the photography session. By giving away that one simple shoot, I was approached that night by many others who were interested in doing a shoot. It's good for charity and it's good for business. Seek out opportunities to give your work away, and you'll find work coming back your way (that rhymed! bonus!).

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