

an educational guide by  **PHOTOSHELTER** and **OLYMPUS**

THE INSPIRATION HANDBOOK:



from 50 Photography Trailblazers

TABLE *of* CONTENTS

	5	<i>Staying Inspired: Creating the Five Steps of an Inspired Narrative</i>
PART I	7	<i>Intro</i>
PART II	8	<i>Growing Your Photo Business</i>
PART III	13	<i>Marketing Your Photography</i>
PART IV	16	<i>Mastering Social Media</i>
PART V	19	<i>Embracing Personal Projects</i>
PART VI	22	<i>Understanding Your Finances</i>
PART VII	25	<i>Getting Hired</i>
PART VIII	30	<i>Conclusion</i>

© 2015 PhotoShelter, Inc

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, without the prior written consent of PhotoShelter, Inc. The logos of the companies described are the trademarks of their respective owners. No endorsement is implied.

PhotoShelter, Inc. makes no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties, including without limitation warranties of fitness for a particular purpose. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for every situation.

Dead simple online client proofing.



SPECIAL OFFER

PhotoShelter's brand new client proofing tool, which is now included with all Standard and Pro accounts, dramatically simplifies image sharing and selection for you and your clients.

It's not enough to take a good picture. You need to stand out in other ways. Making your clients' lives easier is hands-down the best way to get hired over and over again. Step One: Help them easily select their favorite images and deliver what they want that much faster.

**READY TO GIVE IT A TRY?
GET STARTED WITH 14 DAYS FREE +
20% OFF YOUR FIRST YEAR**

Learn more & [join PhotoShelter](#) today!

Or, visit photoshelter.com/signup and enter

50TIPS

Questions? Contact us anytime at
212-206-0808 or support@photoshelter.com.

Offer valid for new PhotoShelter users. Get 20% off a monthly Standard account for the first year only.

MYTH:
Mirrorless camera systems
don't have enough lenses.



Image shot with the Olympus OM-D E-M1 and an M.Zuiko ED 8mm f1.8 Fisheye PRO Lens
by Olympus Visionary John Sterling Ruth.



MIRRORLESS TRUTH: With 20 choices, there's an M.Zuiko lens for
any shooting situation.

Lenses are critical to any photographer's creative arsenal. That's why the Olympus OM-D system offers a versatile and ever-expanding selection of Zuiko lenses, including the highly acclaimed PRO Series. Every Zuiko lens is meticulously engineered — crafted from precision-cut glass and painstakingly made to deliver extraordinary resolving power. So get as creative as you want and take on any shooting situation. We have a lens that gets the job done.

Get Power. Get Portable. Get Olympus.

OM-D ZUIKO
LENS SYSTEMS

OLYMPUS

Staying Inspired: Creating the Five Steps of an Inspired Narrative

By [Jay Dickman](#), Olympus Visionary &
Pulitzer Prize-Winning Photojournalist



© Jay Dickman Taken with an Olympus E-M1 with a M.Zuiko ED 12-40mm f2.8 PRO .Exposure 1/320 @f/5.6, ISO 200

Any time that you shoot more than two photographs of any subject, you really are stepping into the world of visual narrative, you're trying to tell a story. And there are five components to doing that.

1 BRING A SENSE OF PLACE TO YOUR AUDIENCE.

If you're doing travel or even if you're doing your own thing around town and you're going to photograph the zoo, for example, you've got to bring that sense of place to your audience. And that's true whether it's the zoo or it's the Tepui of southeast Venezuela or the ice

fields of Iceland or whatever your subject happens to be. Because your audience doesn't have that luxury of context to know what's so exciting about this place. You have to bring that sense of place image to them. That's critical.

2 INTRODUCE YOUR CAST OF CHARACTERS BECAUSE WE ALL LOVE SEEING PEOPLE.

Photographing people is a tough thing to do and it's a learned process that takes some time to get comfortable with. Your characters don't have to be humans either, they can be the animals in the zoo.

3 INTRODUCE DETAIL, AND TO DO THAT YOU MUST GET IN CLOSE. When you have a wonderful landscape that is made up of many details, when you introduce the details of it what you're doing is you're grabbing your viewers by the eyeballs and saying "Look at this big sense of place and look at this detail of it." You're literally pointing them at what you want them to see in your narrative.

4 CAPTURE A MOMENT AND MOMENT BRINGS THAT POWER INTO THE NARRATIVE. Photography is about freezing that moment forever and putting it into the hands of your readership. Part of the intimacy and power of still photography is that the reader can pick that thing up and examine a particular moment carefully. They can let their eye luxuriate on whatever is occurring in there. It's all about moments.

5 FINALLY, CLOSE YOUR STORY AND CLOSE YOUR NARRATIVE OUT. By the way, the only one of the five elements that has to stay in the exact order is the close, that's got to be at the very end. But with the other four components, you can mix them around. You can open with an amazing portrait and introduce your viewers to an amazing character. Or you can open with an amazing moment that brings the power of that moment to your narrative.

What we're doing as photographers is the exact same thing that a writer does, we just happen to be writing with light.

You can find more tips in Jay's book, [Perfect Digital Photography](#) (McGraw Hill).



© Jay Dickman Taken with an Olympus E-M1 with a M.Zuiko ED 40-150mm f2.8 PRO .Exposure: 1/640 @ f/4, ISO 200.

PART I

Intro

If you're an aspiring, part-time, or full-time photographer looking back on the past 12 months, it's likely you experienced a handful of successes and obstacles with your photography—everything from marketing your work to finding clients to mastering your technique. So with a passion for making pictures and a determination to expand your photography career, now is the perfect time to take a step back and think about what business lessons you've learned that can help make this year your best one yet.

The good news: you don't have to go it alone. To help you out, we've reached out to 50 award-winning photographers, recognized photo editors and consultants, and leading industry experts to get their best advice on how you can make this your knockout year.

You'll hear from some of the most influential names in the business including David Burnett, Ami Vitale, Joe McNally, Zack Arias, Brad Smith, Alison Zavos, Jodi Cobb, David duChemin, Jeremy Cowart, and more. Get their photo tips on a wide range of topics, including:

- Growing your photo business
- Marketing your photography
- Mastering social media
- Embracing personal projects
- Understanding your finances
- Getting hired

With a list of 50 contributors who have an exciting range of photography backgrounds and expertise, it's our hope that you'll find nuggets of inspiration throughout the upcoming pages that will get your wheels turning and give you that extra push to make things happen.

Let's get started!

PART II

Growing Your Photo Business

What's the secret to breaking into the photo industry, developing your style, and making great connections? In this section, get advice from Ryan Pfluger, Gregory Heisler, Jasmine DeFoore, Joe McNally, Jeremy Cowart, Art Wolfe, Christian Oth, Peter Yang, and Jade Beall.

I

Ryan Pfluger

Editorial & Celebrity Photographer | www.ryanpfluger.com

II

“I think the key to being successful is not losing yourself at the cost of trying to be proactive. Staying true to who you are as an artist and human being goes a long way. When it comes down to it, the most important thing is to **constantly challenge yourself and don’t get complacent**. No matter how successful you are, nothing is ever due to you and the experience and learning never stops. You have to constantly remind yourself that you’re very lucky to be doing what you love—take full advantage of that, stay humble, enjoy yourself and remember the importance of having a community of creatives you can bounce things off of. Once it becomes ‘work’ you’re doing something wrong.”

III

IV

V

VI

Gregory Heisler

Portrait Photographer | www.gregoryheisler.com

VII

“I’ve been very fortunate in my career and have enjoyed great freedom. Even so, **the biggest mistake I’ve made has been to not listen to my inner voice**. It always leads me to a great place, but I’ve failed to heed its call in the past, choosing instead to please too many masters or second-guess myself creatively. Every time I tune in, listen up, and go for it, I’m happier, my pictures are better, and my career continues to grow. Pretty simple.”

VIII

Joe McNally

Photojournalist & Nikon Ambassador | www.portfolio.joemcnally.com

“I strongly suggest that photographers make a huge effort to make appointments and **show your portfolio to companies that are local to your area**. I always associate getting jobs and doing work with getting on an airplane and going elsewhere, but there’s great opportunity in increasing your visibility to companies and clients in your own community, which are numerous.”



photo credit: [Ryan Pfluger](#)

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII



photo credit: [Art Wolfe](#)

Jasmine DeFoore

Photo Editor & Marketing Consultant | www.jasminedefoore.com

“Figuring out who you are and what you want to shoot is one of your greatest challenges. But it’s also one of the most important things to do when creating a portfolio. You can start by looking back over your work, **and think about which images excite you most or jobs you’ve enjoyed in the past.** This will help you narrow your focus based on what you’re genuinely interested in.”

Jeremy Cowart

Portrait Photographer & Founder of [Help Portrait](http://HelpPortrait.com) | www.jeremycowart.com

“It’s important to keep the gas pedal floored. For me, that means continued work on my **personal projects, experimentation, updating my website, business ideas,** and expanding the audience on my iPhone app, OKDOTTHIS. This industry, more than ever, continues to be an unpredictable roller coaster. I think people assume that guys like me are on cruise control and have it all figured out. But I’m hustling and working harder than ever, even when the jobs aren’t coming in. You simply have to these days to make it all work.”

Art Wolfe

Conservation Photographer | www.artwolfe.com

“In the beginning I was more familiar with the outdoor world than the fine art one, so I approached gear stores like REI, The North Face, and Eddie Bauer—**lobbying for in-store space rather than in galleries.** It didn’t take much convincing to allow me a little space on the walls. So, behind a rack of jackets there would be an Art Wolfe photograph. The visibility worked, and I started confidently pitching to editorial publications. Especially today, photographers need to think outside the box on how to get their work seen.”



photo credit: [Jade Beall](#)



photo credit: [Peter Yang](#)

Jade Beall

Photographer & Founder of [A Beautiful Body Project](#) | www.jadebeall.com

“My best piece of advice for aspiring photographers is to ask questions. I’m a self-taught photographer, and I had to ask a lot of questions. I didn’t understand gear; I didn’t understand what camera I needed. I found a mentor right here in town—a photographer I loved and became friends with. I tried to offer them some business in return for helping me understand equipment and how to light better. **Look for people who inspire you and ask them questions.** Be constantly inspired by other people’s work.”

Winnie Au

Lifestyle & Animal Photographer | www.winniewow.com

“Make sure you understand your strengths and weaknesses. Focus on your strengths, and get help from others for your weaknesses. **Don’t assist forever, and keep on shooting.** The more you shoot, the more you will know what you like/dislike, what works/doesn’t work for your workflow, and it will help you develop your style. If I looked back I would have told myself to quit assisting earlier.”

Peter Yang

Portrait Photographer | www.peteryang.com

“To me, the first step in developing a style is through lighting. Especially when starting out, an aspiring photographer seldom has access to great subjects or great locations. **Thoughtful, deliberate lighting can really help elevate your pictures.** Find your style and stick to it. You don’t need to light everything exactly the same, but your portfolio should feel like a cohesive body of work. I don’t think developing a visual style happens overnight, and it’s often about trying everything you can and stripping away what doesn’t work. It’s a slow but gratifying process, and often times, someone will tell you they dig your style before you even know what it is!”

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V
- VI
- VII
- VIII



photo credit: [Christian Oth](#)

Christian Oth

Wedding Photographer | www.christianothstudio.com

“The secret to growing your business is to offer your client the entire package. Not only does your photography have to be great, **the experience you give your client must always be top-notch.** The guy who takes days to return an email or phone call won’t get the job. Professionalism and quick, attentive communication between you and your client are key. Most importantly, while your artistic style may set you apart from other photographers, at the end of the day, those word-of-mouth referrals only happen if your clients are happy. From the moment they send their inquiry, to the big wedding day, to the delivery of their album, give your client your best. You’ll know you’re doing it right when the bride tells you that you’ve made her day.”



photo credit: [Joe McNally](#)

PART III

Marketing Your Photography

What's the best way to get the word out about your photography and attract your ideal client? In this section, get advice from Rich Clarkson, Hamidah Glasgow, Emiliano Granado, Alison Zavos, Ben Lowy, and John Keatley.

I

Rich Clarkson

NCAA Sports Photographer | www.clarkson-creative.com

"There were times in the past when, to market your photos, you needed an agency or someone to do it for you. But today, you don't need that nearly as much. Instead, you need to attract potential buyers and commissioners of your photography directly to you. And that's a matter of introducing yourself. But more than anything else, **the best way to market your business is through word of mouth** and having other people recommend you. And that's something you can accumulate over time."

Hamidah Glasgow

Executive Director, The Center for Fine Art Photography | www.c4fap.org

"Creating connections with artists and influencers is one of the most important pieces of getting your work seen. **Receptions, talks, workshops, gallery openings, and other events like these allow artists to talk to professionals** in the fields and learn about the industry. But remember, don't try to push your own agenda and be a salesperson. Instead, be genuine, interested, and ask good questions. First impressions can go a long way."

Emiliano Granado

Commercial Photographer | www.emilianogranado.com

"You can choose to market yourself with big, loud tactics. I've chosen a slower approach with my marketing; I'll call it 'white noise marketing.' The secret for me has been to continue to produce quality images and quietly remind people about them. To do this, **I like to send people anywhere from 5-8 postcards a year** and usually write something funny and personalized on the back. I'd hate to be the photographer version of a used car salesman with loud gimmicks and cheap suits. That's not the association I want people to make when they think about my work."



photo credit: [Rich Clarkson](#)

Jen Bekman

Founder & CEO, 20x200 | www.20x200.com

"For emerging photographers hoping to get attention from gallery owners and curators, they must understand that it's a relationship, not a transaction. I look for people who are genuinely engaged, not just in their own practice, but in the field itself and the community at large. It's also really important to me that people educate themselves about my tastes and track record before approaching me, so that they have a clear idea of how their work might fit in with my approach overall."

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII



photo credit: [John Keatley](#)



photo credit: [Emiliano Granado](#)

Alison Zavos

Feature Shoot, Founder & Editor-in-Chief, Feature Shoot | www.featureshoot.com

“Many photography blogs, including Feature Shoot, take submissions, so **once a photographer is ready to put his or her work out there, they should start submitting!** Keeping an updated blog, posting new work on Facebook, and staying active on Instagram are also important avenues for up-and-coming photographers to get noticed. I know curators who have found work for a gallery show via Facebook and photo directors who hired people based on the work they’ve shown on Instagram. Don’t underestimate these platforms!”

Ben Lowy

Conflict Photographer | www.benlowy.com

“Branding is a concept that can be elusive to many, but it’s a key element that touches every aspect of your business. **A brand is more than your logo or the color scheme you choose for your website.** Your brand is evident through your niche, your technical style, your website, the way you interact with your clients, and much more. The good news is that, as an artist, you already have a distinct style and point of view, which are essentially what make up your brand. You just need to consciously identify the characteristics of that style and make sure they are apparent throughout all the marketing you do.”

John Keatley

Advertising & Celebrity Portrait Photographer | www.keatleyphoto.com

“It’s really important to create work and great content, but what do you do with that content, and how do you communicate your vision? That’s why email marketing can make a difference. For any email I send, **I believe in catchy subject lines that tell a little about your content;** that it’s something they might actually want to check out. I take an approach of ‘bold, simple, and clean.’ The goal with any email you send is to get your point across as quickly as possible.”

PART IV

Mastering Social Media

With so many people vying for attention on social media, what's the best way for you to stand out and grow an engaged following on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram? In this section, get advice from Jim Richardson, Brooke Shaden, Nicholas Goodden, Daeja Fallas, Elizabeth Griffin, and Melissa Lyttle

I

Jim Richardson

National Geographic Photographer | www.jimrichardsonphotography.com

“Yes, there are real concerns about putting pictures out there on social media. For me, I basically made a pact with the devil to trade control for exposure. My gamble is that getting the photographs seen and making them part of the culture is worth more than any risk of residual loss from people who might be downloading my pictures. I know they are stealing my images. Let them. **I’m betting that the payback will come from wide exposure, not from tight control.** I don’t know yet if I’m going to win the bet or not. But there it is.”

II

III

IV

V

VI

Brooke Shaden

Fine Art Photographer | www.brookeshaden.com

“I have a philosophy that if I put what I do out there with passion, someone else will feel that passion, too. On a platform like Facebook, for example, **you need to be sincere and put your best foot forward.** Understand your unique voice—because everyone has one—and present it. Whether you have one follower or one million, the best thing to do is to train yourself to be grateful for each individual supporter and never let your ego interfere.”

VII

VIII

Nicholas Goodden

London-Based Street Photographer & Olympus Ambassador | www.nicholasgooddenphotography.co.uk

“Twitter is a lot of work, and I spend probably two hours a day on it. **I really believe in social media karma, and I like to promote other people as much as I can.** I also use Twitter to talk a lot about photography and share interesting links. Once in awhile I’ll post a link to my website, but I try to be very conscious and not do it too much. Nobody likes to hear people just talk about themselves.”



photo credit: Brooke Shaden

I

Daeja Fallas

Fashion & Lifestyle Photographer | www.daejafallas.com

“Instagram is an easy way of keeping editors and art buyers that follow you up-to-date in an unobtrusive way. **I would never send an editor weekly emails of what I’m doing, but I do put up posts on Instagram** of my shoot locations or final edits when they’re released. That way, if someone is interested in my day to day, the content is there.”

II

III

IV

Elizabeth Griffin

Photo Editor, Esquire.com | www.esquire.com

“Instagram has become an increasingly important tool for both editors and photographers to post and procure work, so **I would encourage photographers to use it wisely to showcase what they can do.** The app is also something I am constantly turning to as a source for personal and strong storytelling. Again, it’s the immediacy and the directness that Instagram offers—it feels like it’s less restricted than what we pull off wires. Instagram allows me to see exactly what the photographer wanted to post, not what his or her editor was asking for.”

V

VI

VII

VIII

Melissa Lyttle

Non-Fiction Photographer | www.melissalyttle.com

“One major thing I think photographers are doing wrong on Twitter is not understanding the beauty of social media. That simply means, being social. When it’s a one-way street and all photographers are doing is pushing out their own links, highlighting their own accolades and talking about themselves—**it’s not only boring, it’s a turn off.** Photographers that have figured out that Twitter is a great space for initiating dialogue, retweeting and sharing other people’s work, and commenting on articles and issues, seem to be the ones who are building a following, broadening their network and connecting with potential clients.”



photo credit: [Daeja Fallas](#)

PART V

Embracing Personal Projects

How important are personal projects to distinguishing your own voice? And will a project on the side help catch the eye of your dream client? In this section, get advice from David Burnett, Ami Vitale, David duChemin, Dixie Dixon, Scott Strazzante, Dianne Debicella, and Jonathan Gayman.

I

David Burnett

Photojournalist | www.davidburnett.com

“As an emerging photojournalist in the early 70s, my focus was on trying to create stories for magazines to the exclusion of almost everything else. I wish someone had told me then that the most personally important pictures you’ll ever make are those about you and your life. I’m glad I had the chance to work for some great magazines, but I really miss those little everyday images, the ones that take place in and around your own life, which will never make the news. **Don’t sell yourself short: photograph your own life, not just everyone else’s.**”

Ami Vitale

Photojournalist & Documentary Filmmaker | www.amivitale.com

“Perhaps one of the most important aspects of building your business is to develop a body of work on the subjects you care deeply about. I think **one of the biggest mistakes photographers make is not having work that defines their interests and strengths.** No one is going to hire you for what you say you like to do. You have to show them that you are capable of it first. For example, if you only take portraits for corporate clients, National Geographic will never hire you. So sometimes, it’s better not to accept every assignment and use that time to work on a project that you are passionate about and create that body of work that will get you future assignments.”

David duChemin

World & Humanitarian Photographer | www.abeautifulanarchy.com

“I’ve always found **more success concentrating on personal projects and then leveraging those into shareable work** (books, blog posts, social media, etc). It’s taken me years to recognize, but that’s what grows my audience and brings in new work and new opportunities. So heading into this year, my marketing budget for time and money is all going into my new work in the Canadian arctic and continued work on my humanitarian projects in Africa.”



photo credit: [Ami Vitale](#)



photo credit: [David duChemin](#)

Dixie Dixon

Commercial Fashion Photographer & Nikon Ambassador | www.dixiedixon.com

“It’s important to take the time to organize and master your marketing plan. On my end, I plan to send out more unique promos and set up more meetings with my dream clients ranging from advertising agencies to brands. I also plan to update my website and portfolio with all of my recent work and continue to build my lifestyle portfolio and directors reel through personal projects. **In the commercial world, it’s so important to always be shooting personal work** because it keeps your vision fresh and attracts your dream clients to you.”

Scott Strazzante

Photojournalist, San Francisco Chronicle | www.blog.sfgate.com

“I thought that my only path to success was to photograph an Olympics or a natural disaster in a far flung land or have access to the President. In reality, it was only after **I embraced the moments happening in my backyard while trusting my own voice**, did my work start to be noticed. When I look back at my career now, it is my personal efforts—my project Common Ground, my Shooting from the Hip blog, and my iPhone street photography—that I am most proud of.”

Dianne Debicella

Senior Program Director for Fiscal Sponsorship, Fractured Atlas | www.fracturedatlas.org

“There are **no shortcuts in fundraising money for your personal photo projects**. It’s hard work and takes time to build relationships. Make sure that when you approach donors or apply for grants, you are able to articulate your value, including the value of your work, and how these values relate to your donors. Be specific in what you are asking a donor to do, be patient, and do your research before making an ask.”

Jonathan Gayman

Commercial & Editorial Photographer | www.jonathangayman.com

“I always have a greater goal in mind when working on personal projects. Right now I’m doing a lot of editorial work. I’ve been shooting food just over two years now, and before that I was still doing a lot of corporate portraiture. One of the goals of this lunch tray project was to broaden my scope to the more lucrative commercial area. **I like to keep in mind when doing personal projects that I’m doing it not just for me** but also to have work that can speak to the type of clients that I want to work with and show the type of work I want to be doing.”



photo credit: [Jonathan Gayman](http://www.jonathangayman.com)

PART VI

Understanding Your Finances

As a working photographer, how do you figure out your cost of doing business, determine your tax write-offs, and develop a profitable pricing structure? And should you ever work for free? In this section, get advice from Zack Arias, Matt Whatley, Ken Kaminesky, Gary Crabbe, Bill Cramer, Corey Rich, Jennifer Chaney, and Jody MacDonald.

Zack Arias

Editorial & Commercial Photographer | www.beam.zackarias.com

“The best piece of advice I have for photographers starting out is **know your numbers and your cost of doing business**. How much money do you need to live every month? Use the [cost of doing business calculator](#) so you can begin to answer these questions and set up a pricing structure for your photography. I’m telling you, if you don’t have an accountant and you don’t know your numbers, you’re setting yourself up to fail.”

Matt Whatley

The Tax Ninja | www.taxninja.com

“Know your tax write-offs. This is what stumps photographers the most. But figuring out what you can and can’t write off can be as simple as reviewing an itemized tax form. If you want a little help, check out the [Tax Ninja’s form](#). The general rule is, **if it’s ordinary and necessary for your business and the generation of its income, it can become a write-off.**”

Bill Cramer

CEO & Founder, Wonderful Machine | www.wonderfulmachine.com

“When you’re getting started as a freelance photographer, it’s impossible to know what fees, expenses, and licensing are “fair,” without understanding what other publications offer and what other photographers accept. As you gain experience, **what other people do will become less important as you begin to understand your own value more and more.**”

Gary Crabbe

Outdoor, Location & Travel Photographer | www.enlightphoto.com

“To price your work, photographers must first decide where they want to be seen in the marketplace. After you decide, to then price your work, you must consider all your costs of doing business. Factors include the time and production required to create your prints. **You also must consider the profit margin you want, just like any other business** does with a product they want to sell.”



photo credit: Ken Kaminesky

Ken Kaminesky

Lifestyle & Travel Photographer | www.kenkaminesky.com

“**Working for free is something I consider a major mistake.** If you work for any client for free, they will always expect you to do so and you’ll be labeled as the “free” or “cheap guy.” As soon as those clients have a budget to spend on photography, they will go elsewhere because they’ll think that they can get someone better.”

Corey Rich

Adventure Sports and Outdoor Lifestyle Visual Storyteller | www.coreyrich.com

“When considering the budget, you have to also consider insurance, including equipment insurance, general liability, property coverage, etc. And keep in mind, insurance goes up when shooting video because the crews are larger and the production is in general riskier. **A good rule of thumb is that usually insurance is between two and four percent of the budget.**”

Jennifer Chaney

Family Portrait Photographer | www.jenniferchaneyphoto.com

“If you’re setting a new pricing structure, consider starting out with a basic session fee. This should be determined by what you need to make per hour to stay in business. Also take into account what your target client can realistically pay. When deciding this fee, you should factor in travel, number of subjects you’ll be working with, and time spent back in the office preparing and delivering files.”

Jody MacDonald

Documentary & Action Sports Photographer | www.jodymacdonaldphotography.com

“When it comes to understanding what will sell, I go with my gut. I start by doing my research and finding a story that interests me. **And because I work primarily with magazines, storylines are an important aspect of my photography.** For example, when I was in India working on another project, I saw a movie featuring Rajan, “the world’s last swimming elephant,” floating in tropical blue water. I remember thinking, ‘I have to experience that.’ I have to go see if I can find this elephant.’ And I did.”



photo credit: [Corey Rich](#)



photo credit: [Jody MacDonald](#)

PART VII

Getting Hired

What are photo editors really looking for from photographers? And how can you make connections with potential clients and land gigs? In this section, get advice from Brad Smith, Elizabeth Krist, Emily Shornick, Kendrick Brinson, David Walter Banks, James Bellorini, Stuart Pilkington, Alexandre Buisse, Kate Osba, Kristina Hicks, Lindsay Adler, Elizabeth Weinberg, and Jodi Cobb.

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V
- VI
- VII
- VIII



photo credit: [Brad Mangin](#)

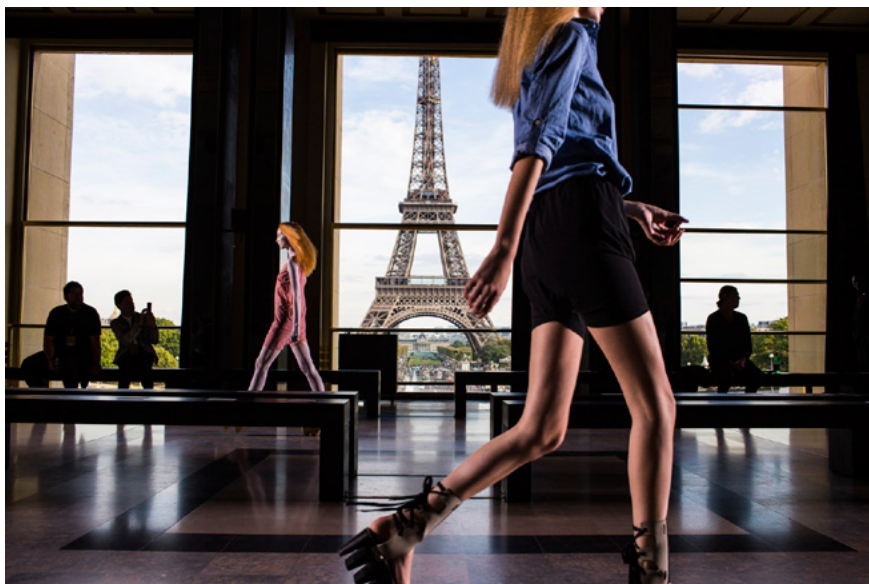


photo credit: [Landon Nordeman](#)

Brad Smith

Director of Photography, Sports Illustrated | www.si.com

“I am **exceptionally interested in a photographer with original story ideas.** That’s one thing you can’t put value on. Some ideas might be cliché and have already been done, but I remind photographers that when you pitch an idea, the worst thing that can happen is someone says no. Don’t be shy about sharing.”

Elizabeth Krist

Senior Photo Editor, National Geographic | www.nationalgeographic.com

“The most important feature I look for in a photographer is dedication to long-term projects. Another major plus is having access to rare events or hidden worlds, and nowadays, expertise in video as well. Photographers who happen to focus on needed specialties—like archaeology—have a better chance of attracting my attention, too. **Securing a referral before you contact me, and putting that in the email’s subject line, is another good way to reach out to me.** Underlying everything else, I would say the most crucial quality is integrity.”

Emily Shornick

Photo Editor, The Cut | www.nymag.com/thecut

“I like people who are professional, who turn their contract in on time, and who take direction. They also have to have a strong eye. The ability to meet a deadline is number one, however. When you’re working in digital and something is half an hour late, it’s really late. It’s old news.”

Also, this may seem very obvious, but pick up the phone. If I find a story that needs to be covered in two hours and a photographer doesn’t pick up the phone then I’m going to call someone else. **This is not dating; this is digital photography.** You can’t play hard to get.”

Kendrick Brinson & David Walter Banks

Commercial Photographer Team | www.brinsonbanks.com

“It’s essential to research a client before a meeting. We like to find out what campaigns they’ve worked on, what awards they’ve won, or, at the very least, what type of work their company does. Also, Google is your friend. If you’re walking into someone’s office, **it’s vital to know what he or she needs from you** and explain exactly why you’re the person to meet those needs.”

James Bellorini

UK-Based Commercial, Editorial and Documentary Photographer | www.jamesbellorini.co.uk

“As often as I can, I will give something extra the client isn’t expecting and I don’t charge for it—like an additional re-sized image, for example. I know that might go against the grain of a lot of advice people give, but for me, **my services have to be about the experience the client is getting**. So anything that might be memorable or meaningful to them is positive in my book. It increases the chance that they will use me again or recommend me to other potential clients.”

Stuart Pilkington

UK-Based Photography Curator | www.stuartpilkington.co.uk

“What trends do I see from photographers today? My main focus and love is portraiture, and although I keep my ear to the ground with other genres, I’m drawn most to photographers who concentrate on people. And I’m seeing a movement grow in portrait photography today. I don’t have a word for it, but the best example of it is the collective called [The Ones We Love](#). The use of light, composition and expression is often wistful, pensive and warm. It is a joy to behold and **I’m seeing more and more of this style of image making.**”



Photo credit: [James Bellorini](#)

I

Alexandre Buisse

Commercial Mountain Photographer | www.alexbuisse.com

"When I started out, I really didn't have any sales skills or experience, and this was probably toughest for me to learn. What helped the most was going to two big European outdoor trade shows, approaching people I didn't know, and taking note of what worked and what didn't. Each day I ended up absolutely exhausted, but **I had a great deal more experience putting myself out there and a list of very valuable contacts.**"

Kate Osba

Photo Editor and Curator for **this is the what** | www.thisisthewhat.com

"I am pretty conservative when it comes to what I like to see on a photographer's website: white background, simple functions, large images, easy to navigate. What I do not like: a site that makes my window larger or smaller, anything super flashy. **A successful site will showcase your style through your images, not through an overly designed site.** There are, of course, exceptions to this, but in general I want to remember your work, not your website."

Kristina Hicks

Photography Consultant

"The most important thing to do when approaching a buyer is selecting your best images for your portfolio and showcasing the type of work you want to be hired for. When it comes to choosing images, get a second set of eyes on your selections. The images you're using don't have to have been for a paid job. **What matters is that the images are consistent with the look and feel of your website, portfolio, or printed book.** The images you choose to send out should exemplify what it is that you do."



Photo credit: [Alexandre Buisse](http://www.alexbuisse.com)

Elizabeth Weinberg

Commercial & Editorial Photographer | www.elizabethweinberg.com

"The most important thing to remember is to keep making new work, even if you feel like you're in a slump. The internet now affords you unlimited free gallery space. You want as many eyes as possible to see your work. **Come up with new projects and see them through.** Make zines, do print giveaways, keep yourself active on social media, go to openings (and be a nice person!)—jobs can come from the strangest places and it's all about staying visible and keeping your name floating above the noise."

Lindsay Adler

Fashion & Portrait Photographer | www.lindsayadlerphotography.com

"Rejection isn't failure. It is a chance to learn and to grow. Rejection seems extremely difficult because our work is so personal to us, but that's exactly what makes it so brilliant. **Not everyone will like your work**—and not everyone is supposed to. Know when to take critique and when to ignore it!"

Jodi Cobb

Photojournalist and Freelance Photographer for National Geographic | www.jodicobb.com

"It's a wild world out there, but then it always has been. The earliest advice I was given seems to still hold:

1. Nothing ever happens when you're ready. You'll always be in over your head. Embrace it. Learn to love the fear.
2. Network like crazy, find a mentor, go to workshops and photography gatherings.
3. Be nice. People—editors, clients and your photography subjects—want to work with people they like and who will make life easier for them. Be ethical, follow up, don't promise what you can't deliver.
4. And from my mom: "No great chasm was ever leaped in two small jumps." Go for it. Don't look down."



Photo credit: [Lindsay Adler](#)

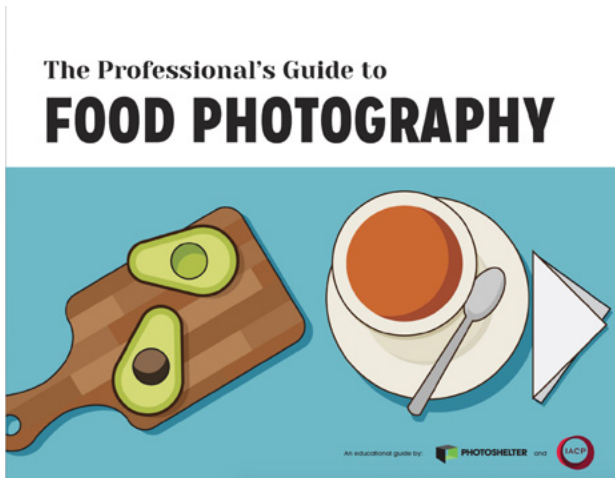


Photo credit: [Jodi Cobb](#)

PART VIII

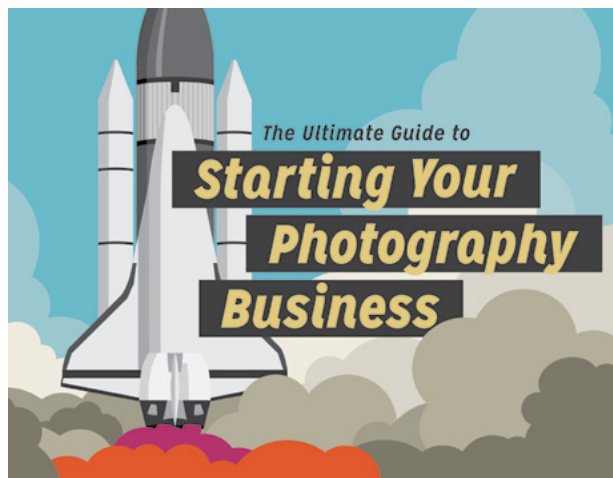
Conclusion

We hope the 50 stellar photographers and industry pros you met in this guide have inspired you to think about your photography from a business perspective and be smart about the decisions you have ahead. Use these tips to market your business better, build your social media presence, tune up your finances, understand what photo editors want, embrace personal projects, and of course, grow your photo business to establish you as the go-to photographer in your niche. Ready to make this year count?



CHECK OUT PHOTOSHELTER'S
library of free photo business
and marketing guides

Get them all: www.PhotoShelter.com/resources



FIND PHOTOSHELTER *online*



www.PhotoShelter.com



www.facebook.com/PhotoShelter



PhotoShelter guides



www.vimeo.com/PhotoShelter



[@PhotoShelter](https://twitter.com/PhotoShelter)



www.instagram.com/PhotoShelter