



# Photography Business-Building SECRETS REVEALED

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Charles Lewis here, and welcome to this system for making a great living with photography. I'm honored to be revealing these latest secrets to you, and I know that they will make a great difference in your business and in your life – if you simply TAKE ACTION on these tips!

Let me just get this out of the way right now: Photography is, and always will be, a FANTASTIC way to make a living! No matter what the economy is like, no matter how many new photographers pop up around every corner, there will ALWAYS be a place for photographers like you and me to make well over \$100,000 per year, every year, all from photography! And if you do it right, you'll only have to work between 35-40 hours per week.

FYI, I've survived through 5 major recessions in my photography business, and the one thing I've learned is this – whether it's a great economy, or a challenging one, when I use the right secrets (like those mentioned in this book), the customers come flowing in. It's almost like magic.

Well, think of me as MERLIN, and I'm going to give you my magic-wand and teach you the magic to use to bring in the great customers, and get them investing BIG MONEY for your photography.

Let's dive right in – right now!

***-Charles Lewis  
m.photog., cr.***

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **PHOTOGRAPHY MARKETING**

### **Specific Marketing Secrets To Create A Huge Demand For Your Services, And Get Your Phone Ringing With Qualified Callers**

If you're like most photographers, you dread having to market your photography business. You wish it would just market itself, so you can "focus" on creating wonderful images for your thrilled clients.

However, if you DON'T market, a funny thing happens - - - - NOTHING! That's right, without the right marketing, you won't have any clients, and your camera equipment will be the most expensive DUST-COLLECTOR you ever purchased.

**Remember this: The "Job" of your marketing and advertising is to Get Qualified People - People Who You Want To Work With - To Call You, And Be So "Sold" On You, That They Are Almost Ready To Work With You, Regardless Of Your Prices, Your Policies, Or Your Location!**

The "job" of your marketing is NOT, I repeat **NOT** to "get your name out." It is not to get them to enjoy looking at your pretty photographs! IT IS NOT TO GET YOUR PRICES OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY. It's NOT to build IMAGE. It's job is to **GET THEM TO CALL AND BE ALMOST SOLD ALREADY when they call.** ("Smart Marketing" does most of the selling for you!)

That means your marketing has to get them to **TAKE ACTION NOW!** It must be **PERSUASIVE!!!!** That's the most important requirement of your marketing! It also means your marketing has to educate them, build rapport and trust, tell them what is special about you, and again, get them to take action right now, this minute! Fail on any of these points, and you don't make much money in photography.

Here are several key secrets I have discovered over the years about how to create a huge demand for your photography services – and to get super-qualified customers to hire YOU as their photographer:

**1. Pretty brochures & online marketing don't work. They must be persuasive, too.** A pretty brochure is okay for showing your photographs, but

creating a pretty piece, with lots of "class" that is not persuasive, is a waste of your time and money. It won't work - period. You must use the right WORDS in your marketing in order to be truly successful and effective. This also applies when it comes to you ONLINE MARKETING (your website, email responses, social media, etc.)! Pretty does NOT equal persuasive, and if your marketing does not get them to make a decision NOW, and take an action NOW, then it's failing you, no matter how pretty it looks. Period.

**2. The more you tell, the more you sell.** It's a fact. Proven over and over. The more you tell people about what's so special about you, and what you can do for them, the more people will respond to your marketing, whether online or offline (direct mail). Longer copy way out sells shorter copy - as long as it's written well and is not boring. So do NOT create a marketing campaign with pretty images in it, with a few words about how great you are, and think that's going to bring people to you. It won't. Instead, put your beautiful images in the brochure, or on your webpage, with lots of strong specific copy about what is unique and different about you - why someone should hire you over all the other options available to them in your market area. Now, you never say anything bad about anyone else, you just need to make a very compelling, persuasive argument about how a prospect can benefit by coming to you.

**3. Use testimonials like crazy.** This is a biggie. What your clients say about you is a hundred, no, a thousand times more believable and persuasive than what you say. That's why you want your main points to be made by your clients, rather than by you. When you say it, it's selling. It's boastful. It's arrogant. When your clients say it, it's the truth. Use LOTS of testimonials in all your marketing both **OFFLINE & ONLINE!**

**BIGGIE RULE OF MARKETING:** Never use a photograph without a testimonial from that person or persons, right underneath or next to the photograph. And never use a testimonial without their photograph right above it. So you are showing your photography, yes, but you're also having the clients say wonderful things about you and how thrilled they are with what you created for them.

**4. Use EMOTIONAL WORDS.** Remember, people invest in photography for emotional reasons - not price reasons, and not logical reasons. The sooner you realize this, the more successful you will be in your photography business. So be sure you are using emotional words everywhere in your marketing pieces. Words like love, romance, family, mom, dad, relationships, feelings, memories, tenderness.

**5. A persuasive message is from a person to a person.** A persuasive message needs to be and feel really personal. That's why I always recommend that, when doing direct mail, you have a SALES LETTER (from a person to a person), printed on regular white paper, along with a "Testimonials Brochure" which can be in just black and white, or sepia, or color, which includes

photographs and testimonials from the people in those photographs. You need both. A testimonial brochure with testimonials and showing your work, and a persuasive sales letter.

Yes, a LETTER. Which has a strong headline on it, and then says, "Dear (insert their name)" And is signed by the person who wrote the letter. Just like a real LETTER. Never mail out or hand out a brochure without a letter with it. This also goes for ads in magazines, too.

**This also applies to YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY WEBSITE!** The temptation online for a lot of photographers is to just make it visual, and not speak on an emotional level from person to person. That is a huge mistake! Just because we're using the technology of the web does NOT mean we can't be personal. Use this same principle when writing the emotional words that will go on your website!

**6. Always have a "call to action."** For example, for weddings: "Call (xxx) xxx-xxxx immediately to see if your date is still available! I only photograph one wedding a day, and book up 12 to 28 months in advance! Do not hesitate! Call immediately, or your day may be gone! You are not calling to reserve your day, and you don't need to pay any money. You are simply calling to see if your day is still available or not. Then you can take it from there. There is no charge and no obligation for this call. Call (xxx) xxx-xxxx right now.

**7. The headline is the single most important part of any marketing piece or ad.** I saved this one for last. The headline is the "ad for the ad." It is what has to stop a person in her tracks, and get her to look further. It has to be compelling. For example, here are a few examples for wedding photography headlines:

**"How To Have The Most Romantic, Beautiful Wedding Day Of Your Dreams."**

**"How To Guarantee That You And Your Husband Have The Most Romantic, Wonderful Wedding Day Of Your Dreams!"**

**"How To Guarantee That You Have A Ball At Your Wedding!"**

You see the benefit that is right there in the headline? It's important. Most good writers say they spend as much time on the headline as they do on the entire rest of the piece. That's how important it is.

Now, I realize that marketing and advertising may not be one of your favorite subjects, but the fact of the matter is that it is one of the most important money-making aspects of your business. Here I've given you 7 MAJOR tips you can use to get that phone ringing like crazy with great customers and clients!

## **CHAPTER 2** **STUDIO DESIGN**

### **"Nine Powerful Studio Design Secrets For Maximum Profits"**

**"Quality is not any single thing but an aura, an atmosphere, an overpowering feeling that a company is doing everything with excellence."  
--Jack Welch, recently retired CEO and Chairman of General Electric**

**NOTE: Whether you work out of your home, out of a store-front studio, or out of an office building, THESE SIMPLE STUDIO DESIGN & LAYOUT SECRETS can help you to make more profits than you ever thought possible from photography.**

My wife Cheri and I recently returned from an "In-Studio Consultation/Coaching Session" with a husband and wife photography team. Here are the 9 key points, or secrets, that came out of that visit.

#### **#1. You sell what you show.**

When we walked in the studio, the first thing we saw was this very nice wall display of 4x5's. Then there were other "folios" of 8 4x5's sitting on various pieces of furniture. Then there were 11x14's and larger portraits on the walls.

You see, the client or prospect sees all these small images, and instantly becomes aware that you sell lots of those smaller sizes. It happens subconsciously and instantly - your clients and prospects don't even realize it's happening!

The whole point to my philosophies is that you want to work LESS hard, and make MORE money. That's what I stand for and believe in. So the way to do this, is to have more of your clients invest in **wall portraits**. And the way to do that, is to ONLY show wall portraits! Nothing else!

So we recommended that they **immediately** remove **EVERYTHING** that is smaller than a 20 x24.

Now, I know what you may be thinking. "But Chuck, how do I show off all the variety that we offer our clients?" Well, you do that by having a sample book of 8x10's or 11x14's - each sample book is of ONE PARTICULAR SESSION

TYPE - for example, you have one for seniors, one for families, one for children, etc.

Then, all you do is bring out the ONE book of the particular client type with whom you are meeting. Don't have all the books sitting out in the studio. Only have the one book that applies to this client.

### **Secret #2. The first impression is the lasting impression.**

Really, everything we're going to talk about deals with this law. That's the major reason we put wall portraits in our studio. That's why we dress nicely for our clients. We only get one chance at a first impression.

But what I mean here is that you want your studio to look like you are successful. Remember, "NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESS." If you want to BE successful, you must FIRST LOOK successful.

Now, I don't mean you have to go out and buy all new furniture for your studio, and a new car, etc. But what I do mean is that you want things to look like you are really successful. I learned this way back in the beginning, when Cheri and I didn't have hardly any money, but we wanted the studio to look really nice.

So we took the furniture out of our home, and put it in the studio, so the studio would look "successful." It wasn't super furniture. But it wasn't bad. It was a start.

You can do the same thing. Simply take everything that doesn't look "successful" out of the studio client areas. You don't want anything to distract from the feeling of success. For example, don't have any camera equipment, mail, props, bare prints, etc. laying around. This is clutter. And that kind of clutter does not "say" success.

What conveys success is having everything very neat, clean, orderly. Having nothing out in the "lobby" or other "client areas" that isn't absolutely imperative to the look and feel of the environment.

By the way, everything I'm saying here applies whether you have a store front studio, or have a studio in your home. Always remember this: ***You DO HAVE A STUDIO - whether it's on main street, or in an office building, or in your home! The "studio" is your experience. Your talent. Your expertise. A studio is NOT a building.***

### **Secret #3. Have your studio look like a home.**

You want your studio to look and feel like a home. You want "home" type furniture around. This does two important things:



First, it helps a client feel comfortable when she walks into your studio. And if she feels comfortable, she will be much more likely to work with you, and invest in more photographs.

Second, it helps her immediately see how nice your fine photography looks on the walls of a home. She can think to herself, “Gee, I have a sofa about that size in my home. Boy, a portrait would look nice over that sofa, just like it looks so nice here....” That’s the beginning of wall portrait sales.

**Secret #4. Keep the colors in your studio very soft and muted.**

You want your portraits to be the most colorful items in your studio. So, if you specialize in color portraits, I highly recommend you keep all the other tones in your studio very soft, such as off white, or beige, and soft golds, etc. You want the eye of the viewer who walks into your studio to go immediately to your beautiful portraits on the wall.

**Secret #5. Don’t have samples of different sizes of the same image**

Don’t get trapped into this one! What this photographer (that Cheri and I visited) had done was take one family portrait, and print it in all sizes, from 11x14 up to 24x30. They hung them side by side, (IN THE PROJECTION ROOM!) so people could see the differences. They honestly believed that this was being helpful to their clients.

All this will do is confuse your clients, and sell you a lot more of the small sizes. So our strong recommendation was to IMMEDIATELY take all those images down, simply use the projecting to show the clients what the different sizes look like - using the client’s portraits.

**Secret #6. Never, ever have photographs sitting on the floor.**

This is so important. I understand that as an “artist” you want to have lots of different images available to you to show perspective clients. You want them to see how versatile and creative you are.

However, don’t do it. Not if you are dead serious about making MORE money with LESS work. Have each of your wall portraits beautifully framed, and presented on the wall, where they belong. Do NOT ever set photographs on the floor, leaning up against the wall. This is totally disrespectful to your work, and conveys non-verbally to the client that you do not place a large value on your talent and imagery.

**Secret #7. Each photo must occupy it’s own plane of space.**

You want each portrait on the wall to occupy it's own plane and space. (I learned this from the great photographer and salesman, Ken Whitmire.) By this, I mean that you don't want to have two 20x24's hung side by side in your studio. Because both of those images would be occupying the same "plane" of space. It will be a hundred times more powerful and "artistic" to take those two images down, and replace them with only ONE 30 x40.

Now, sometimes, you will have a long wall, which has a door in it. Okay, now you can display one wall portrait on one side of the door opening, and another wall portrait on the other side of the door opening. Because the door "breaks" up the single plane.

### **Secret #8. Be sure your portraits are well lit**

Always have some effective lighting, either in the ceiling, or track lighting hung down from the ceiling. In our studio, almost the ONLY lights in the client areas, are lights which are aimed at the wall portraits. Remember, you want your portraits to be the brightest items in your studio.

Also, NEVER, EVER have ANY fluorescent lights in your client areas. Remember, you want your studio to look and feel like a home environment.

### **Secret #9. Clean up - everything must be spotless**

This is obvious, isn't it? But keep everything spotlessly clean. floors vacuumed. Everything dusted. Windows and doors perfectly clean. No clutter.

The neater and cleaner everything looks to the client, the more they will want to work with you, and honestly believe that you will take good care of them. That's why it's so important that you dress really sharp, also. Remember we deal in an appearance profession. Be sure you show your clients that you know how to look good yourself. They will be much more likely to hire you, and listen to you.

Now, you can dress more casually if you want. But keep it "professional casual." Slacks, not jeans. And never, ever a T-shirt, etc. Nice shoes. Nice everything. Believe me, it's very important to the ultimate success of your studio.

I hope this has helped remind you of some of the important aspects of your studio design. Do this correctly, and prosper beyond your wildest dreams! Do this incorrectly, and work way too hard for way too little money. It's that important.

## CHAPTER 3

# PHOTOGRAPHY SALES SECRETS

"The Sales Presentation - Part 1 - Six Secrets To Amazing Portrait Sales Without Pressure or Trickery!"

**The single most important decision you will EVER make in your photography business is how you are going to present your images to your client. All other decisions fade in comparison to this one.**

We know in human psychology, that **the first image is the lasting image**. Therefore, it is vitaly important to your financial success that you use this fact in your photography business. Be sure that first image your portrait clients see of their photographs is a very appropriate size.

We also know that **people invest in photography for EMOTIONAL REASONS - NOT PRICE REASONS** - and we also know that **the single most emotional time for a client is the FIRST TIME THEY SEE THE IMAGES!**

Therefore, we are going to use these important psychological facts by projecting our images, rather than showing the clients small paper "PROOOOFS" (you want to call them "Originals") or showing our clients the Original Images on a computer monitor.

**Here are six key points:**

**1. Spend at least as much time PRESENTING the images to your client and you spent CREATING the images in the first place.** This is one of the most common mistakes I see in our profession. A photographer will put so much time, effort, creativity and talent into creating beautiful, artistic images, and then mess up when it's time to present the images to the client, by not allocating enough time to make the correct presentation. Do not underestimate how important the sales presentation is to your business success.

**2. Be sure you project** - no matter how you do it - just be sure you do it. It's become very inexpensive and easy to project images now. The important thing to remember is: Be sure you're projecting **INTO A FRAME ON A WALL OVER A PIECE OF FURNATURE** (preferably a sofa). Digital projectors can be found very cheaply on e-bay and through other places online – you do NOT need the most expensive, best digital projector out there! Then, you either create the images digitally and project them using a digital projector, or you can still use film to create your images, and then have them put onto a CD, and project from that. Trust me – this one decision will make such a HUGE difference in your photography profits, you will NEVER go back to non-projection.

**3. Never, ever show paper Originals, or show them to the client on a computer screen.** It will completely kill your sales and profits. Why? Two reasons:

1.) Because, as I said above, it's a proven fact that the first image is the lasting image. If the first image is a 4x5, that will be the lasting image instead of the fantastic 40x50 you show them later! NO! Show them the larger size FIRST – that will stick in their head.

2.) You sell what you show. I know this is really obvious, but many photographers miss this critical point. You sell what you show, so be sure you are showing what you want the client to invest in.

**4. Don't let the Originals leave the studio.** This is a huge mistake I see many photographers still making. I highly recommend you not do it. By letting your Originals leave the studio, you are totally out of control of the presentation process, not to mention that you are saying, nonverbally to your clients, that your Originals have no value, so just take them home and spill coffee and tea on them, and bring them back when you are ready to "place your order." Doing that is crazy. You're letting the "inmates run the asylum." These are your Originals, your talent, your blood, sweat and tires went in to producing them - and they do not leave the studio at any time.

**5. NEVER, EVER put the Originals on your web site** so everyone can see them. My son, Todd and I are always saying, "**Just because we can do something, doesn't mean we should do it.**" This is one of those instances. At least don't post the Originals onto the Web until after the first, primary sale has been finished and paid for. If you want to do it after that, it at least won't totally kill the original sale. (Well, unless the client already knows you will be posting them onto the Web. If she knows this, it still could very well kill your sale.) Best advice: don't ever put the Originals onto the Web. Learn how to sell (without pressure or trickery) when the client first sees her Originals, and close the sale then and there and be done with it.

Remember, we are NOT trying to be a high-volume, low-priced studio here. We are going after people willing to invest good amounts of money with us for adequate-sized portraits. By following the tips I'm giving you here, you will do just that!

**6. Project into a 40x50 frame over a sofa with canvas in it.** I mentioned this briefly earlier, but it deserves it's own tip right here. This is the really powerful secret! It lets your clients see just how beautiful their portraits will look in their home! Never ever project onto a plain wall, or a screen, or anything without having a frame, hanging on the wall, to project into! And always have a sofa for size perspective underneath the frame. This really helps your clients, as they have a sofa, too, at home, and are familiar with it's size. It actually makes a 40 x 50 look "perfect".

## How To Double Or Triple Your Sales Averages, FAST!

"The Sales Presentation - Part 2 - Seven Powerful Sales Laws To Amazing Portrait Sales Without Pressure or Trickery!"

**Good selling is not pressure or trickery. Good selling is finding out what people want, and then helping them to get that, using proven sales and psychology laws.**

I'm a strong believer that the really big money in photography, is made through the sale of "adequately sized" wall portraits for home decor. That is what I have devoted my 45 years in the photography business to doing - wall portraits.

Plus, and this is really important, I absolutely believe in my heart and soul that a wall portrait is the single way your clients will get the most enjoyment and benefit from your photography. I honestly believe this. The only time your client will enjoy and 8 x 10 is when she is dusting it! Because that's the only time she's close enough to the portrait to see it and appreciate it.

One of the most powerful facts of the business of photography, is that it doesn't take any more time to write "1-30x40" on the order envelope or digital file, and send it to the lab, than it does to write "1-8x10" on the envelope or file, and send it to the lab. And yet, you can get a whole bunch more money for that 30x40 than you can for that 8x10!

Here are Seven important, powerful, proven, little known secret "Laws" of selling, which have made me an enormous amount of money in my studio, and I know they will do the same for you - if you use them!

**1. The "Sell Down Law"** - This says that it is much more effective to start high, with your highest priced, finest product and service, and slowly, very slowly, move down, than it is to start with your lowest priced product or service, and try to move up.

So when showing your client her portraits for the very first time, you always begin by showing her your largest size, most fantastic finish - first. This means projecting her images into a 40 x 50 or 40 x 60 frame, with canvas in it. And, as we discussed last month, this framed canvas must be over a sofa, for size prospective. You will get much higher average sales by doing this than you'll ever get from doing it the other way (starting low and going up).

**2. The "Soaking Law"** - This law says that it takes time for a substantial, significant price to "soak in" with a prospect or client.

You want to set up your sales presentations in such a way that there is time allowed for the client or prospect to "get used to" the price, before you just move on to a lower priced product.

So what we do, is present the first image (which we feel is going to be her favorite image from the session) projected into the 40 x 50 frame, with canvas in it, over a sofa. Then, if we get an enthusiastic response (and we almost ALWAYS DO) we then volunteer the investment for this image - right up front, with great enthusiasm and confidence. What this does is "plant" this number in her mind, so it can begin "soaking" as we go through the other images.

**3. The "Volunteer Law"** - This law states that when you volunteer the price, before you are asked, and when you do so in a very correct, carefully formulated, confident manner, it says two things to the prospect or client: 1) It says you are worth what you charge. 2) It says you are proud of what you charge.

This law is why it is so much more effective to volunteer the investment, or "price" relatively early in the presentation. To bring it up yourself, positively, before your client asks you for it. (Plus, then the "Soaking Law" takes over, and that price begins to shrink in her mind)

**4. The "Big Decision Law"** - This is very powerful. It says that a big decision is made up of a series of little decisions.

So what you want to do, is carefully craft your sales presentations so that the client is making small, easy, unthreatening decisions, one at a time, the sum total of which, leads her to the main decision which is best for her.

**5. The "Stay Focused Law"** - If you want to sell more wall portraits, and earn more money, you must carefully stay focused on the wall portrait first, and nail down the wall portrait, BEFORE getting into other images and decisions that could throw your client off track, and have them end up not investing in a beautiful wall portrait.

**6. The "Guarantee Law"** - You must become good at getting the decision today, and collecting the money. The best way to do this, is to reduce the risk, by using your powerful 100% money back guarantee.

You want to talk about how you absolutely guarantee that she will love this size, and this image, when it's completed, or you will do whatever is necessary to see to it that she does, or you will refund all her money, which ever she prefers. This removes all the risk from her, and makes it much easier for her to make the decision today.

**7. The "Whopper Law"** - This says that you always want to have a "Whopper" - something that is "so big, so expensive, so enormous, that no one in their right mind would ever invest in it." That's the definition of a Whopper.

And you will notice, in #1 above, that you began by showing her your "Whopper" right up front, and you also volunteered the investment right up front. This way, everything else looks small, and sounds positively inexpensive. This law is amazing, and has resulted in our studio earning enormous amounts of money! Use it!

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **PHOTOGRAPHY TELEPHONE BOOKING SECRETS**

7 AMAZING TELEPHONE SECRETS FOR GUARANTEED SUCCESS - HOW TO BOOK THE DIFFICULT CALLS.

***Your telephone is the single most important tool in your studio. It's much more important than your camera, Use your phone smartly, and prosper. Use it incorrectly, and you will struggle your entire career.***

Here's the problem most photographers face: They are able to book the "easy" calls that come into the studio. No problem. But they aren't able to book the "difficult" calls. And you know what? There's not enough "easy" calls to pay the bills and make a great profit.

So, to make the big profits, you're going to need to book the more "difficult" calls. Here are the 7 secrets that 95% of all photographers don't know, and never will know about the telephone!

First, it's very important that you understand that at no time are we trying to trick anyone, or manipulate them, or pressure them. That's not selling.

**Selling, is finding out what people want, and helping them to get it.**

One other important point: This is NOT a win/lose proposition where if she books with you, you win and she loses. No way. If you are able to book the prospect, she doesn't lose. She wins! You offer a good product, at a good investment, and she wins, as well as you. Selling a product and service which you believe in 100% is totally a win/win deal.

**SECRET #1. People Invest In Photography For Emotional Reasons - Not Logical Reasons. Not Price Reasons.**

I mentioned this earlier in this book, but in all the consultations I do with my students, this is one of the most often overlooked areas. So, I thought I'd better stress it again. We get so involved with our "craft" that we forget this is a very **emotional** thing to our clients and prospects. Emotion is the name of the game! Everything we humans do is a result of emotion. Everything! Photography is no different.



So it's so vital that you formulate your telephone selling skills around this important point of **emotion**. If a prospect is EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED with you and your craft, she will be much more likely to hire you, regardless of your prices. It's that simple, and that clear cut.

You will see in many of the following key points how much we use emotion in everything we do at the studio.

**SECRET #2. The Person Who Asks The Questions Is The Person Who Is In Control Of The Call.**

By asking questions, and then waiting for the answers, you are in control of the conversation. If she begins asking the questions, you are completely out of control!

Plus, by asking the right questions, you can get her and keep her on the emotional side of the brain (the right side.) Remember, again, people invest in photography for EMOTIONAL REASONS.

So the "secret" is to have a bunch of proven questions which you can pick and choose from, while you're on the telephone with a prospect. You CAN NOT trust this to your memory. You must have a very carefully orchestrated list of questions from which to choose.

For example, one of my favorite questions is what I call the "Qualifying Question." I use this every time someone is hesitating to do whatever I'm asking her to do on the phone, such as come in and "chat" with us, etc.

Here it is: **"If you don't mind me asking, how important are these photographs to you?"** The answer to that question immediately tells you whether or not it's going to be worth continuing to try to get her to hire you. If she says, "Oh, not all that important. I just need something fast...." then you know you probably aren't going to want to pursue this if your goals for the studio are to charge very substantial prices, and do the finest job money can buy.

**SECRET #3. The "Magic Question" Is The Single Most Powerful Question You Can Ever Ask A Prospect On The Telephone.**

Here's the one, single most powerful question you can ask anybody, in any situation: **"If you don't mind me asking, what's most important to you about \_\_\_\_\_?"** Where the blank is filled in with whatever type of photography she is calling and asking about.

This is so powerful, that I call it the "Magic Question." Because it truly is magical. You are showing her that you honestly care about her when you ask this question.

Plus, it helps her work out in her mind exactly what is truly the most important thing to her. That's the DBM - the "**Dominant Buying Motive**" - which you absolutely must find out, if you are going to be the least bit successful at selling - both on the telephone and in person. (Remember, selling is finding out what people want, then helping them to get it!) And the way to find out, is to ASK.

#### **SECRET #4. The More You Listen, The More You Sell.**

This seems backwards to the way we would expect it to be. If we are untrained in the selling profession, we assume that we do all the talking - telling her how great we are, how many awards we have won, how much money she can save with this special offer, etc.

But the fact of the matter is this: The more you listen, the more you sell. That's why asking the right questions works so well! You ask a question, then shut up and listen to the answer. Then you acknowledge what she said, perhaps comment on how much you agree with her, and then you ask another question, etc.

The more she talks, the more you will end up selling, because the more "rapport" you will have built with her. Rapport is my favorite word. It means to be involved in a TWO WAY COMMUNICATION BASED ON TRUST. She does most of the talking, and you do most of the asking of questions. This way you are in control of the conversation, and guiding where it is going, but she gets to talk to you, and express her thoughts and feelings.

Whenever I have a call that did not go well, I always ask myself, "Did I do too much talking?" And the answer is ALWAYS "yes!"

#### **SECRET #5. "Trial Closes" Are Crucial To Being Successful On The Telephone (And Also In Person!)**

A "trial close" is a question, the answer to which indicates where the prospect is in the buying process. That's why "trial closes" are so important - because they let us know "where the prospect is" in regard to our sales process.

The more "trial closes" you use, the more effective you will be. It's just that simple.

Here are my favorite "trial closes":

- 1. "How do you feel about that?"**
- 2. "How does that sound to you?"**
- 3. "Does that make any sense?"**

So be sure to use "trial closes" often on the phone. It's the only way you're going to get the feed back from your prospect as to where she is in the buying process.

For example: Let's say that you say, "One of the unique things that separates us from all the other studios in the area is this: we take the time to do it right. We aren't going to rush you through here like a factory - we're going to take the time to really create the most lovely portraits you have ever had created. How do you feel about that?"

See how ending the statement with the above trial close, and then shutting up, will let you know immediately where she is in the buying process? It's very powerful.

### **SECRET #6. Never Give Price Out Of Context**

Your business is not like a retail store where the client can come in, pick up the "product" and look at it, feel it, and touch it, and look at the price and make a decision. Your business is one that requires you to give your complete presentation on every single phone call!

You can't just tell them the prices and ask them to book with you. No way! You must build the rapport and trust with her, and then ask her to work with you.

If you have anyone on your staff who simply gives the prices when asked - get rid of them - or at least take them off the phone and schedule regular training meetings, at least one each week, and help your staff learn the techniques that are absolutely necessary to being successful on the telephone in a photography studio! You know that your telephone is the funnel through which most of your business travels. Mess it up, and you are not going to be able to earn the kind of money you know you deserve.

### **SECRET #7. Nothing Succeeds Like Success.**

This is a very important point. It's an amazing psychological law: "If you sound like you need the business, you won't get the business!" You have to sound like you don't really need the business - without sounding arrogant. This is such a fine line. You need to sound like you really WANT to work with her, but that your business doesn't depend on your working with her. You WANT to work with her on an emotional level - but you'll be just fine, financially, if you don't work with her.

Do you see the subtle difference? You never want to come across as arrogant or stuffy, but you do need to somehow let her know that you are really busy and successful.

Here's how I do it: I rustle through my appointment book, desperately looking for a time when she could come in and "chat" with us. As I'm rustling through the pages, very noisily, I say something like this: "Wow, we are just swamped! I'm not complaining, I love my work, and it sure beats being bored, but we sure are swamped. Wait, here's one! I have next Friday, the 15th at 2:30, how's that sound?"

I learned this from the great photographer and business person, Mr. Donald Jack. It's amazingly effective! Use it.

**BONUS KEY SECRET #8:** There are 24 MAJOR secrets to telephone success. I just can't stop with only sharing 7 of them with you. Let's do two more, as a free bonus for you!

**SECRET #8: A big decision is made up of a series of little decisions.**

What this means is that, in my humble opinion, you will be MUCH more effective, if rather than trying to "book" a prospect right over the telephone, you instead simply set up a time for her to come in and "chat" with you about the possibility of working with her. There is no charge, and no obligation for this "chat." (Do not call this an appointment. That sounds like it costs money, and has obligations with it. Just call it a "chat.")

This "chat" also really will improve your photography. You'll meet with the prospect, find out what she wants, help her with her clothing, makeup, etc., and basically just have a much better chance of creating images which she will truly love.

**SECRET #9: Always have a list of your "Unique Factors" with you, so you can pick and choose which ones to talk about, based on what the prospect is saying to you on this call.**

This is so very important. You see, people subconsciously want to know what it is that honestly separates you from everyone else in your market area. They just don't usually ask you outright.

So by bringing it up yourself, and volunteering a couple of your Unique Factors, you become much more persuasive on the telephone.

So if you haven't already done it, make a list of the things that honestly separate you from all the other photographers in your area. It's really important.

These 9 powerful secrets will greatly increase your booking percentages on the telephone.

Now, let's talk about pricing and packaging secrets in the next chapter...

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **PHOTOGRAPHY PRICING & PACKAGING SECRETS**

### **8 Major Secrets To Pricing And Merchandising Your Photography For Maximum Profits!**

*"The human mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains it's original dimensions." - Oliver Wendell Holmes*

I've spent over 45 years discovering what I call "Maximum Profits Shortcuts" - those secrets which will cause you to earn the greatest amount of money in photography with the **least amount of time and work**. It's not that you or I are lazy. It's that you want to create the finest photography possible, with the least amount of work, and earn the greatest amount of profit for your efforts.

**Now, Let's Get Into THE EIGHT MAJOR SECRETS TO PRICING FOR PROFITS! (NO, I'M NOT GOING TO TELL YOU TO DOUBLE YOUR PRICES!)**

This is one of the areas that really drives us photographers NUTS, right? Are we charging too little or too much? Do we raise prices or lower them? Do we set our prices just a little lower than all of our competitors so we get lots of business? What to do...

**It's very important that you realize right here, right now, that we are NOT talking about taking advantage of people here. We are NOT talking about charging more than you are honestly worth. We are NOT EVER using manipulation or trickery to make more money. You do not build a long term, successful business by doing any of that!**

What I am talking about here is how to use known, proven, psychology principles and techniques to honestly improve your profits. You have an honestly good product and service, and it's perfectly honorable to earn a substantial profit from it. You deserve it. Don't be afraid to earn a great living with your photography!

Let's dive into some key points on pricing & packaging:

**Key Point #1. The investment determines everything.** Think about this. If you charge a low amount for your work, then your client does not respect you. She doesn't listen to you. She won't take your advice. She's late for her appointments..... etc. This dramatically affects your work, because with no cooperation, how great can your images possibly be? So quite honestly, the

more you charge, the more respect you receive, and the more cooperation, and thus your work is better.

**Key Point #2. The "Price/Value Relationship."** This says that the more you charge, the "better" you are perceived to be. People automatically make this giant leap of faith. If you're expensive (whatever "expensive" is to them) then you must be "good." Use this law in your studio! It's powerful. Don't try to be the cheapest - it will just lose you money and drive you nuts, and work you to death.

**Key Point #3. It's not the investment amount, it's how you present it.** This means that the actual numbers you charge aren't really important at all. People watch you and follow your lead. If you can look them in the eye, with confidence and enthusiasm, then they "know" you are worth what you charge, or at least they know that you honestly feel you are worth what you charge.

On the other hand, if you're looking at the floor, speaking quietly and timidly, and sweating, then they "know" you're prices are too high - whether they really are or not.

So it's NOT the actual investment that makes all the difference, it's **how you present the investment to your prospects and clients.**

Knowing this, I recommend you raise your prices twice a year, 10%-20% each time, no matter what. This is so important! An important part of my "System" is to put everything about your business on "Auto Pilot" that you humanly can. Certainly one part of this is your price increases. So all you do is set this rule - and abide by it for the rest of your career: Every January 1st, while you're watching the Rose Bowl Parade, you're raising your prices somewhere between 10% and 20%. Then every July 4th, while you're watching the fireworks, you're raising your prices another 10% to 20%. That's all there is to it. Do this, forever, and watch how your profits grow, without your losing hardly any clients at all! (I have found that the market place will "handle" prices which are much higher than I ever thought they would!)

What this does is SLOWLY, but SURELY, increase your prices for you. Not a lot at one time. But rather a little at a time, twice a year. This way, you and your staff can become used to the new amounts, a step at a time, and realize you are worth those amounts. This way, they can more easily present and sell the investment to your prospects and clients. And the results are fantastic.

**Key Point #4. If 2/3rds of your clients are not complaining about the amount of the investment, your prices are too low.** I learned this one by studying a completely different industry! Wow! Did this ever open my eyes! I was always trying to keep my prices as low as possible, in fear that "someone" would complain about them. I just couldn't handle such "rejection!"

Well, have I ever changed! Now that I understand this "2/3rds Law" I am not at all afraid of someone complaining. In fact, I expect it! It's the only "gage" I have as to whether my prices are anywhere near where they should be! Honestly, your prices are probably lower than they should be and could be.

The key here is to understand that in most cultures, it is normal to complain about price. It's what we do. It's almost a natural thing now. So don't let that affect you. Plus, remember, you can not be all things to all people. As the great photographer and business person, Donald Jack taught me, "In order to be successful, you must be willing to send some people away."

So you must, right here and right now, accept the fact that some people are going to complain about your prices - no matter what you charge - no matter how little your charge, or how much, and that's perfectly okay. If, after you have appropriately "justified the investment" to her, she still feels you're just too much money, accept the fact that she will not at this time become one of your clients. That's perfectly okay. You can't work with everyone. There's not enough hours in the day.

**Key Point #5. Don't have a printed price list that you hand out or mail to prospective clients, or put on your web site.** This is hard for many photographers to understand. Why, they wonder, don't we want to have a printed price list to hand out, or mail out, or put on our web site?

I mentioned this briefly earlier, but it bears repeating. Here's why you DON'T give out your prices online or offline. (Again, I didn't learn this from a photographer! Most photographers don't know this!) You see, your price list exists for **one and only one reason**. Do you know what that reason is? It's to HELP YOU SELL BETTER! That's it! That's the ONLY reason it exists! It does NOT exist so people can take it home and compare your prices to your competitor's prices! It does NOT exist so you can mail it out to people who call and ask you to! It ONLY exists to help you sell better!

So you have one, nicely printed price list, on parchment paper, and placed in a nice leather book. This is your "studio copy" price list. It's obvious that people don't take this home with them. But this way you do have a printed price list, so everyone knows you don't "make the prices up" as you go along.

No, this is not being "dishonest" or "shifty" or any other bad word you can think of here! This is being "SMART!"

The only exception I make to this is with high school seniors. I do have a printed price list that they take home, for them, but I'm still not sure why. I guess we all have areas of our business that still need work. Me included, of course. But we do NOT, EVER send it out in the mail! And it is NOT on a web site.

But for all other types of clients, I do NOT have a printed price list that they take home with them. (Plus, as you know, I do not allow ANY Originals to leave the studio at any time, so there really is no need for a printed price list for them to take home.)

And, by the way, if you are handing out your price lists, and you are perfectly happy with the results, then just ignore this Key Point. But, trust me, it **IS** costing you a LOT of lost business. But my way isn't the only way, and I fully understand it you don't agree with this. It's okay.

You, of course, talk openly and honestly at all times with your prospects and clients. You just don't have printed price lists to hand out, send out, or put on your web site. It's just not good business.

You see, you do not deal in pieces of paper. You are creating and capturing the emotions, relationships, personalities and feelings of your clients and their loved ones. If you have printed price lists you pass out, you reduce what you do down to pieces of paper, and you encourage people to compare your prices to everyone else's prices. It's just not smart. Period.

**Key Point #6. Always have a "Whopper."** A "whopper" is something that is so big, so expensive, so crazy, that "no one in their right mind would ever invest in it." That's the definition of a "whopper."

In my opinion, you MUST have a "whopper" for every product line you have. For portraiture, it's a 40x50 or 50x70 portrait. For weddings, it's your \$7,000 or \$10,000 (or more) package that includes everything - the works! After your "whopper" everything else looks and sounds much more "reasonable." Which brings us to the next Key Point, which ties in with this one.

**Key Point #7. When discussing your prices, always start with your best and work your way down slowly.** Always on your price list, and also when you are talking with a prospect, start with your finest sizes and products, and work your way down very slowly. Never, ever start with your least expensive and try to work your way up! There's many psychological reasons for this, but just trust me here, and do it this way!

**Key Point #8. Have more than one product line or level of service.** You want to have at least two or three product lines for your portraiture. Have your finest line maybe be a beautiful water color effect on canvas. Then your middle line maybe a more traditional style presentation on canvas. Then your lower line be not on canvas, but on masonite or mount board. You get the idea. Then always start with your best, as I mentioned above and work your way down slowly. (By the way, it's very important that even your lowest priced product line be of the finest quality you can humanly produce. The finest retouching, enhancement, etc. Never, ever let ANYTHING leave your studio that isn't the finest you can produce - because it has your signature on it!)



The same goes for your weddings. I highly recommend you have packages (or "collections") for the prospect to choose from. I recommend a total of about five collections, including your "whopper." Any more than that will confuse your prospects, and a confused mind makes no decision.

I sincerely hope that these eight major pricing/merchandising secrets will be helpful for you. But remember, nothing is helpful, if you don't take ACTION on the ideas immediately. No action means no growth.

And, again, I want to be sure you realize that I don't expect or want you to agree with everything I say. I'm just trying to share with you the major "Maximum Profits Shortcuts" which I have discovered to be true over my long career in this great profession of professional photography.

## **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

### **What You Should Do Next:**

In this book, I've given you some INSTANT things you can start taking action on right now, and see more customers coming to you, put more profit in your bank account, and have a renewed sense of excitement and pride in your photography business.

Nothing breeds excitement better than success, so don't stop now! Take action on the things you discovered in this e-book right now, and start yourself in the right direction.

If you have any questions or comments about this e-book, feel free to find me and my photography team on facebook by [CLICKING HERE](#). I always like to hear from my photography students! Join us on Facebook, and see all we're sharing!

GO FOR IT, and have the photography business of your dreams!



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