

Getting Photography Customers Tips That Work

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Getting Photography Customers – Tips That Work

Getting customers is a big challenge when starting a photography business. Actually, it is one of the biggest challenges for most businesses, not just photography businesses. Even large, well financed businesses can find getting customers challenging.

So, as struggling photographers, we shouldn't feel that we are *going-it-alone* when it comes to getting customers. We can learn by modeling our marketing efforts after the larger businesses. More on that later in this report.

Marketing Is A Process

I've had some success finding methods to get customers (and keep them returning) by long-term trial and error. However, my great successes began once I learned the *real* value of marketing my photography business. Like so many other unaware photo enthusiasts, I was under the mistaken impression that *great* photographs sold themselves. However, photos don't sell themselves. Nothing does.

Think about the last few purchases that you've made. In most cases, you chose the brands that you did due to your familiarity with the product/service. Successful marketing strategies build familiarity with customers. [Marketing is a process](#). It is not a series of advertising activities or specials. Marketing, at its core, is about consistently communicating your message (branding) to customers.

Model Your Photography Marketing After The 'Big Boys'

Consider the marketing habits of successful businesses such as Nike, McDonald's, Southwest Airlines, etc. No matter what you may think of their products, you must admit that the consistent marketing strategies that they use are very effective at building familiarity. The formula that they use is: that in order for customers to make a willing buying decision, they must see their marketing message 7 – 9 times. In order that we see the message 7 – 9 times, they must get their messages in front of us 25 – 27 times. As photographers, it is important that we practice similar strategies. Research demonstrates that photographers need to get our messages in front of customers 8 - 10 times for the same level of familiarity with them as our

customers. They need to be exposed to our marketing messages 8 – 10 times in order to see it 3 times – to make their buying decision.

We don't have to spend the large sums of money that large businesses spend to keep their images and brands in front of us, the customers. What is the significant component of successful marketing is repetition of your marketing message. Keeping your name in front of your customers through multiple methods is a successful strategy used by the larger businesses.

Many methods don't require money. Some methods cost small amounts of money. And others are pricier. What's important is that your photography business name/image is repetitively in front of customers. If you do spend money, make sure that spending money will guarantee you more customers/traffic, or don't spend your money!

Business Cards

I think that many photographers miss major opportunities with their business cards. Business cards of photographers should display their best work (if you're going to have your photos on your business card). I've found that customers enjoy getting business cards from me.

I print my own on a HP inkjet printer with glossy perforated business cards. I found that customers hold on to my cards because of the photos on them. They sometimes ask me for my business card although they already have one or more of my cards. The card info includes my name, telephone number and website address (I don't include my email address because I prefer to be contacted through my website).

Business cards are very cost effective. I especially like being able to print my own cards and they look very professional. I find that customers tend to keep photography business cards longer when the cards have great photos on them.

I include website addresses to my online galleries, depending on where I will be passing out my cards. For example, sometimes I'll put the address to my model galleries. Other times, I'll put the addresses to my portrait galleries, my stock gallery or my events gallery. Also, depending on where I am shooting, I print my business cards with "appropriate" photos. If I'm going to be around pet owners, I print photos of pets on the cards. If I'm going to be around families, I print photos of toddlers and families on the

cards. If I'm going to be around professionals, I print photos of Executive Portraits and business stock photo images.

I think that you do yourself and your business image a disservice when you have a cheap looking and/or flimsy photography business card. Take a good look at your business card and ask yourself if it is serving you well as a photographer.

You can have business cards professionally printed. However, technology has put more flexibility and control in our hands when it comes to our business cards. I prefer to use HP inkjet printers. I use, Avery Glossy Business Cards (I find that they're sturdier and don't have the perforated edges – very crisp look!) As mentioned in the earlier paragraph, I self-print my business cards based on situations. That particular flexibility provides photographers multiple opportunities to 'share' our work/image/brand, to 'display' our work and increase our name recognition. And it is very affordable!

Community Events

I keep track of and attend various community events that usually take place at city halls, public parks, malls and on the grounds of non-profit agencies. I attend and shoot photos. I identify the event contact person or public relation person and later give them a CD with the photos of the event. Yes, most of the time, I *give* them the CD of photos – along with my contact info. This is part of my *'over-delivering'* way that I provide 'customer service.'

Often, they have already hired a photographer for their events. I don't allow that to dissuade me. I shoot photos of the event; put the photos on a CD; and give it to the contact person. Needless to say, when I give them the CD of photos, they remember me. Eventually, they call me for photography work. This particular method is one of my most consistently successful. And it is very cost effective. I get more repeating customers from this tactic than, almost, any other method I've used. I invested \$10 for a CD label printing program and I put attractive labels on the CD. Generally, I will select a photo from the event and include it on the label – or I will put a photo of the business on the CD label. Either method adds value. And, most of the time, your competition isn't doing this.

I get calls from non-profit agencies as well as businesses when I get clients from this method Also, I get event jobs. While I get calls and jobs from

businesses and agencies, I also get calls from individuals that have seen my work offering me other photography jobs that they want done. I include the many photos from the community event shoots in my stock photo collection.

Many of the organizations that receive a CD of photos from me also use the photos in their literature. Often, they give me the credit for the photos. Sometimes, they don't. However, by giving them the photos of their events, on an attractively labeled CD, gives them something to show others as they're showing them the photos and telling them about me (giving them my contact info). This method allows them to view the quality of my work. By the way, I include a photo slideshow that starts automatically on the CD. They love it! And they remember and call me.

Know The Process

Finding new photography customers can be challenging. Business minded photographers (full-time or part-time) can use no-costs and low-costs methods with proven, consistent and profitable success. It helps to know the benefits of marketing and the process of marketing. Many photographers have it backwards and wrong. Some of us try to sell services that we think that the customers should want and be willing to pay for. But, the buying-process simply doesn't work that way in the photography business or any other business, for that matter.

The Process:

1. Find your target audience
2. Find out what they want
3. Give/sell it to them

That's it!

Marketing Process Questions for Photographers:

- Who do you want to sell to and be your customers?
- What type of photography are they buying now or want to buy?

Based on the answers to the questions, your marketing message must convey that you have (or can produce) the *photography experience* they want to buy.

The Small Business Method

Many businesses and organizations need photos of milestone and commemorative events of their businesses/organizations. Some of them remember to hire a photographer for their events and activities. But, most don't do so until the last minute, or they assign the photography tasks to an employee with a camera. Also, businesses and organizations get the attention of print media and often don't have current photos when requested by the print media. (Usually, the photos taken by employees don't quite *project the image* that they want projected.)

I visit small businesses and ask the owners if they have enough current photos for their marketing and advertising needs. They, almost always say they do, or they tell me that someone on staff has a camera all of the time – something like that. I leave my contact info with them and I ask if I can take a few shots of their business (I carry my camera with me when I visit).

If I'm in a retail store, I shoot displays of product and employees serving customers. I ask the owner if I can take their picture. If they tell me no, I tell them that I understand. I ask them have they had any recent requests from local media for photos of their business or other recognition. (Sometimes businesses and organizations participate in and sponsor local community activities. Too often, the photos that are used are '*snapshots*' instead of quality photos.) I don't expect to make a sale at the time. I just want to get them thinking about their photography needs and to remember me as helpful.

Within the week, I take them copies of the photos that I took of their business. Sometimes, I use the photos and make some advertising literature for the business owner. I give them the literature when I give them their photos. They remember me and they call me.

Become Their 'Go-To' Photographer

Often, when they call me, they don't know what type of photography they want. They just know that they need photos taken and when they thought of '*the*' photographer, they called me.

They describe to me the type of photos that they want. I determine whether I can do the job or not. They call me because I market to them in a way to

establish my image/brand as their 'go-to' photographer. (By the way, they don't ask if I'm a full-time or part-time photographer. Neither do they care whether I refer to myself as a professional photographer, an amateur photographer, a photography hobbyist, or whatever.) The resulting fact that they call me and offer me the jobs is because they view me as *'their go-to'* photographer based on my ongoing marketing strategies.

This is a very low-cost, yet very effective marketing strategy. For one full year, I tracked this method where I approached 4 businesses per month for a total of 48 per year. Within the year, half (24) of the businesses called/contacted me for photography work (I did not take on all of the work for various reasons). This is a long-term method. But, it pays off for the long term and beyond.

Make The Correct Approach

When approaching business owners, don't tell them that you're a "photographer looking for work;" tell them that you're a "photographer that is offering marketing services to other business owners." Business owners don't always know that they *need* photos, but, somewhere in the back of their minds, they've heard something about *'marketing.'*

This is a very successful method for getting photography customers. Often, businesses fuel word-of-mouth stories about you and your photography with this method. The costs are very low. You can do it on your own schedule. Tip to keep in mind: rarely did business owners tell me that they needed my services on the first visit. Some of them didn't call me for six months to a full year, *but* they *did* call. I keep in touch with all of the business owners that I approach with this method, either by stopping by their businesses to see them or by sending monthly post cards (with different photos on them, of course).

Another tip: if you try this method and also take photos of the businesses, make sure that you shoot quality shots and not 'snapshots.' If in doubt, study the composition in advertising photos that you see in magazines and newspapers.

Other “Getting Customers” Tips

I've mentioned post cards as marketing tools. Greeting cards work as well. Most desktop publishing programs can produce greeting cards that you can put your photos on. Mail them regularly to potential customers, current customers as well as past customers. By accident, I've found that customers also hold on to my greeting cards longer. My greeting card photos include colorful flowers, landscapes, skylines, shorelines and crashing waves, etc. The interest in my greeting cards *'almost'* tempts me to sell them. (My research informs me that publishing and selling my own greeting cards wouldn't be profitable, at all.) As marketing tools, however, they're as *good-as-gold!*

Chances are, your competition don't use greeting cards that includes their photos as part of their marketing strategy. You doing so clearly gives you an edge and a much better and realistic possibility of name-recognition and resulting business. That's how great marketing works.

Self Promotion Tips

1. Use all media to spread the word about your photography business and yourself
2. Include your contact info on everything you mail, present or show to the public
3. Be prepared to contact someone at least seven times before they start to pay your efforts any attention
4. Don't sound or appear desperate – customers don't like doing business with *'needy'* businesses
5. Use dramatic and startling photos with high impact on your marketing literature and materials.
6. Feature only your best work.
7. Over-deliver on service to customers
8. Include testimonials from satisfied customers in your literature.

You may have noticed that, so far, in this report I haven't told you that you need to be a very good photographer in order to do great photography business. I haven't done so because that simply is not the case. Successful photography businesses (full-time or part-time) aren't necessarily the best photographers. Successful photography businesses are the best at business. Taking great photos is helpful. But, unfortunately or fortunately, the reality of selling your photography and yourself as a photographer is in how well you practice the tips provided in this report – and other good business practices.

I strongly encourage you to continuously practice your photography. Also, I just as strongly encourage you to develop and practice some basic business methods such as what you're currently reading. Whatever your source was for this report, do yourself a huge favor and keep in touch with that valuable resource!

Impress your family and friends – give them a copy of this document. You have my permission to share this publication with others.

[Recommended Photography Resources](#)

The “[Best Amateur Photography Tips Digest](#)” Ezine – more photography marketing and business tips for photography enthusiast that enjoy photography and making a few dollars from their photography. Tips and examples on how to start a photography business, photography marketing, and the easiest money-making photography niches.

[PhotoStockPlus](#) – When it comes to photography business solutions that lets you “*hit-the-ground-running*,” [PhotoStockPlus](#) cannot be beat. If you are like most photography enthusiasts, you probably have lots and lots of photos in your collection. Also, like most of us, you've probably considered looking into selling your photos. [PhotoStockPlus](#) is the perfect fit. They're also the perfect solution for Event Photography. [PhotoStockPlus](#) offers automation of ‘workflow,’ of promotion, of marketing, of selling your photos and selling photography products. On top of that, they provide a “*push-button-easy*” to manage ecommerce-enabled photography website. The best part is that they provide great marketing tools to complete this perfect photography business solution package. And they're very affordable! You can “*hit-the-ground-running*” right now! The methods provided in this report

are designed using [PhotoStockPlus](#) as the photography business 'infrastructure.'

[Cash-For-Your-Camera](#) Not quite ready to "*hit the ground running?*" No problem. Maybe you'd like to know more about selling your photos in the stock photography market and you want more information about stock photography and how it works. [Cash-For-Your-Camera](#) is a great introduction to selling photos in the stock photography market. It introduces you to stock photography; provides examples; provides sources where you can sell your photos; provides the "*how-to-steps*" and tips; and "*holds your hand*" while you learn and make extra money.

["Learn Digital Photography Now"](#) has to be the best method of building **photography confidence** by learning how digital photography works. Technology makes taking great photos push-button easy. But, that's only during "*normal*" conditions. What if there are glaring lights and/or harsh shadows? The "push-button-easy" automation doesn't help at all! That's why [learning how digital photography](#) works will give you the skills and confidence to manipulate the camera controls to compensate for the conditions and produce great photos. Learn Digital Photography Now is the "ultimate digital photography confidence builder!" I promise you that this will boost you head and shoulders above your competition. Confidence has a tendency to do that.

["Freeze, I Have A Camera And I'm Not Afraid To Use It!"](#) is a free photographer ebook that I wrote. It contains the information that I wish I had when I first decided to try to make money with my photography. It also offers great tips and resources for photographers.