

From full-time photographers to those who just got a camera for Christmas and have already opened a new business, this marketing guide for photographers has you covered. We are going to look at the main ways to market your photo business in 2013 and help all the clients belong to you.

First, a bit of background (and bragging):

Who is behind High on SEO? Why should I listen to you?

I was a full-time professional photographer for almost 7+ years from 2003-2010. You can still see my work at [Best Day Photo](#), although I'm not actively seeking clients. I've been #1 on my city name for SEO, I've participated in many types of bridal shows, used Facebook and Google ads, listed on most of the major sites and done guest blogging for WeddingBee and other wedding sites. I've also been a full time digital marketer for almost two years. Our photo business was tremendously successful for years. Simply: I know what I'm talking about, I know how to succeed and now I want to share some of that info with you. You're welcome to learn how to market your photography business from anyone but hopefully I can help you.

With that said, let's talk about marketing. These are not in order because every market and every region is different. Marketing exists where and when you say it exists. Let's talk about your ideal clients another day. We can discuss how you should find what makes you different, yet appealing. We can talk all day about what type of competition you have. Where can you promote yourself? What marketing works for photographers?

Look at this marketing plan graphic. We will focus on the "Promotion" arm of this today.



1) Your website

Why: Your website is probably the most important piece of digital marketing collateral you will own. You control the site. You control your site speed, the branding, content, your image galleries, and every aspect of the site.

On-page SEO comes directly from your site so you control another marketing device simply by what you put on your pages. Your website represents you to a client who has never met you. It has to tell a story: your story.

How to market your website: Think first. Who is your target audience? Who has booked you in the past? You are likely thinking "22-35 year old educated female who spends her days on Pinterest." Maybe you want to target working women who are too busy to interview 10 other photographers and want to hire someone sight-unseen.

Or you could be targeting second marriages. Maybe you have a nationality or religion you photograph frequently (Indian weddings, Jewish weddings, etc.) Your target client may be older - 29-40 year olds who had careers first and now have children. Or maybe you will book anyone with a check that has the right dollar figure attached.

Once you know who you are targeting with your site, figure out what they like. What other websites are they on?

Pinterest's audience is vastly 25-34 year old females with a college education. Check the [Alexa data](#). What other sites fit your demographic? What other sites should you look at for inspiration? Try [SimilarSites.com for Pinterest](#). (That's a link, click it.) Ah, Etsy. And what is similar to Etsy? What is Etsy's demographic on Alexa?

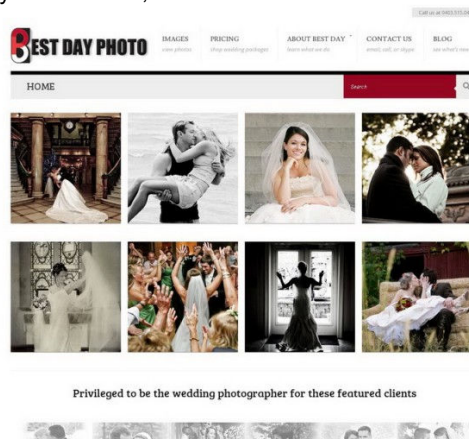
These are the type of thoughts you should be having when thinking about your own web design. Yes, you can put up a page that looks like everyone else's but you know that won't create much interest. Sure, it's safe.

ProPhoto Blog theme, great for SEO, and clients will see it 100 times during their search. Stand out. Do something interesting. Offer them something new, or at least something extremely well-done.

What to focus on: Most photographers will add: galleries, pricing, blog, contact and maybe an about/info page to their site. Do that. Then do more than that. How will you stand out? What is special about your photography? Make sure you have a "reviews" page (not raves, not testimonials, not "what our clients say" or any other BS.) Reviews. Period. Make this page [yoursite.com/reviews](#) It's pretty simple - people search for brands + reviews. Control the discussion. Google "[highonseo reviews](#)" and you'll see. It's full of pages I control.

"Like, duh."

Also, make sure your blog contains microdata (schema.org) so you have connected your Google+ profile to your posts. Go back to that review search. See my mug looking back at you? Do that. Most photographers don't and you will gain a huge advantage by having your pretty face directly on SERP pages. If you can't figure it out, [start here](#) and let Yoast try to help you. Still can't figure it out? Throw a few bucks my way on Paypal and I'll help you. It's important. Put it on your to do list, now.



2) Blogging

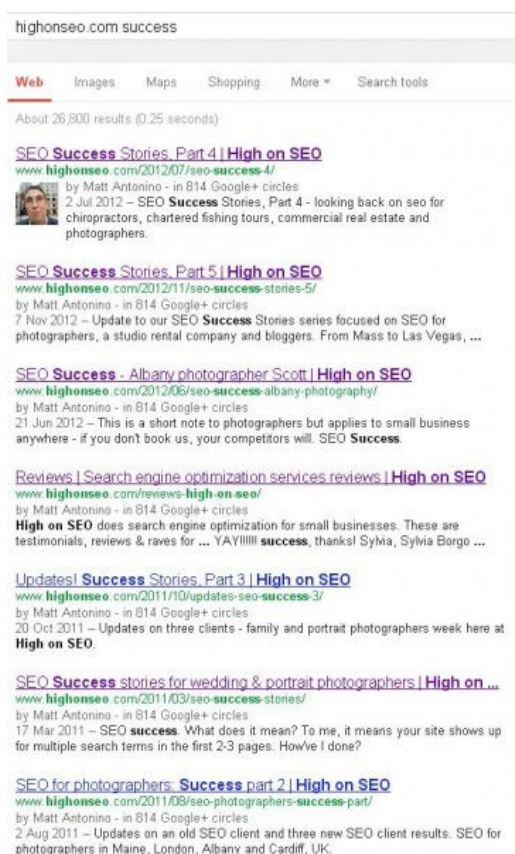
Why: Blogging improves your SEO for many, many long tail keywords. It also keeps your website fresh. It also gives you a personal voice to your clients in a way your pricing and services page can't use. Blogging lets you show off recent work without updating your entire website. Blogging lets you create a landing page for a vast array of topics at your whim. Blogging gives you something to talk about on social media. It gives you content to promote. Blogging lets you reach your audience directly, without paid ads, on any topic of your choice.

You probably get the idea. Blogging is important. Let's make 2013 the year we stop with the excuses, stop with the lame blogging schedule and stop saying "I don't know what to blog about" or "blogging's too hard!" or "I don't know how to blog for SEO" blah, blah, blah. Be as tired of the excuses as we are.

If you hate blogging, hate updating your website, hate writing about your clients, and hate trying to come up with things to talk about with people who are super excited to get married, you're in the wrong business anyway. Go get a job, quit pretending you enjoy weddings and just save yourself the effort. Wedding photography is for someone else. It's for people who are excited about what gowns are in style. It's for people who care about their clients and after spending their *wedding day* with them can't wait to go home and edit photos, write the story and basically tell everyone what a cool couple chose them as their wedding photographer.

Seriously, if you hate blogging, remove the blog from your site and market your portfolio instead. A blog that hasn't been updated in a year looks like you are out of business. Sure, removing the blog will reduce your chances of SEO helping you, or being found for long tail keywords, it will reduce the number of pages you can promote on other channels, you should also then remove your entire social media presence and probably focus on how you are going to spend money instead. Paid ads are the price you pay for being boring, right?

Sorry for the rant - let's move on. Blogging is important. Here you can see just a few of our results for "success."



highonseo.com success

Web Images Maps Shopping More Search tools

About 26,800 results (0.25 seconds)

[SEO Success Stories, Part 4 | High on SEO](#)
www.highonseo.com/2012/07/seo-success-4/
by Matt Antonino - in 814 Google+ circles
2 Jul 2012 - SEO Success Stories, Part 4 - looking back on seo for chiropractors, chartered fishing tours, commercial real estate and photographers.

[SEO Success Stories, Part 5 | High on SEO](#)
www.highonseo.com/2012/11/seo-success-stories-5/
by Matt Antonino - in 814 Google+ circles
7 Nov 2012 - Update to our SEO Success Stories series focused on SEO for photographers, a studio rental company and bloggers. From Mass to Las Vegas, ...

[SEO Success - Albany photographer Scott | High on SEO](#)
www.highonseo.com/2012/06/seo-success-albany-photography/
by Matt Antonino - in 814 Google+ circles
21 Jun 2012 - This is a short note to photographers but applies to small business anywhere - if you don't book us, your competitors will. SEO Success.

[Reviews | Search engine optimization services reviews | High on SEO](#)
www.highonseo.com/reviews-high-on-seo/
by Matt Antonino - in 814 Google+ circles
High on SEO does search engine optimization for small businesses. These are testimonials, reviews & raves for ... YAY!!!!!! success, thank! Sylvia, Sylvia Borgo ...

[Updates! Success Stories, Part 3 | High on SEO](#)
www.highonseo.com/2011/10/updates-seo-success-3/
by Matt Antonino - in 814 Google+ circles
20 Oct 2011 - Updates on three clients - family and portrait photographers week here at High on SEO.

[SEO Success stories for wedding & portrait photographers | High on ...](#)
www.highonseo.com/2011/03/seo-success-stories/
by Matt Antonino - in 814 Google+ circles
17 Mar 2011 - SEO success. What does it mean? To me, it means your site shows up for multiple search terms in the first 2-3 pages. How've I done?

[SEO for photographers. Success part 2 | High on SEO](#)
www.highonseo.com/2011/08/seo-photographers-success-part/
by Matt Antonino - in 814 Google+ circles
2 Aug 2011 - Updates on an old SEO client and three new SEO client results. SEO for photographers in Maine, London, Albany and Cardiff, UK.

How to market your blogging:

"I don't know what to blog about other than photo sessions!" - how about bridal shows that are coming up in your area. Go Google [2012 Melbourne bridal shows](#). We show up page 1. Brides search for shows to attend. Help them out, tell them which ones you'll be at, link everything, and be a resource. One thing you should focus on with your blogging is giving brides what they are looking for so they come to you, not Pinterest, Etsy or your competition. Do a post about 2013's most popular wedding hair accessories or bridal dresses. If you're out of ideas, also see our [Planning Blog Topics](#) with plenty of info on how to blog and what to write about.

"Ok, I wrote my post, now what? Nobody viewed it." - Promotion is the name of this game. How did you promote your post? Did you put it on your Facebook page and your Facebook profile? Send it to some wedding-industry Twitter users and ask for a tweet? Did you post it to Pinterest and then follow up by commenting on a bunch of other people's pins so they come view yours? Social media is give and take so make sure after you give them something to talk about, you take the time to help others, as well.

Do you use social bookmarking sites such as Digg, Stumble, Reddit? Now may be the time to drop one of your new posts on there. Are you a part of a referral network, a vendor network, a blog circle, a Google+ group for self promotion? Have you gone and left relevant comments on other people's blogs lately? Blog commenting is a trade off. You must do something for someone to get them to do what you want. What are you doing and how often are you doing it? Do it more - and do it now!

What to focus on: We have a video on Youtube all about the Perfect Blogging for SEO below so check that out. Try to follow the guidelines and just write good content. It is more important that you write regularly, update often and write about things other people want to share than writing "photography, photographer, photographers, pictures, photo" on every blog post you ever write. Focus on quality and the links will come.

(Youtube Embedding in PDFs doesn't work - to see
the PDF, please find us online.)

3) SEO & Local SEO for photographers

Why: Read what Marketing Charts had to say: "63% of consumers and small business owners turn to the internet first for information about local companies and 82% use search engines to do so, only 44% of small businesses have a website and half spend less than 10% of their marketing budget online." Yes, we're a bit biased because we are an SEO agency. But realistically speaking, your business should be on page 1 of Google if you want to get as much money as possible. Local searches are a powerful and accessible medium you should definitely be using in your photographer's marketing plan..

How to market with SEO for photographers: We could talk about what makes great SEO all day but you need to be familiar with the basic structure of SEO. You can optimize the on-page SEO stuff, such as the content you're writing about, the usefulness of that content to brides, how long they stay on your site, etc. You can also optimize the off-page stuff such as where you are found by other sites, how your listing appears on niche directories such as WeddingWire, TheKnot, etc.

Blogging will help your SEO, as will promotion of those blog posts.

What to focus on: Overall, what you need to remember is that you are focused on writing great content, promoting it well and being helpful to your audience. You should focus your energy on creating something worth sharing. You should make sure other sites link to it. And you should make sure you read as much of the High on SEO blog as possible.

4) Paid Ads on Facebook and Google Adwords

Why: Adwords are effective. For most businesses, Facebook is not. This doesn't make sense so people keep mindlessly throwing money at Facebook. Let's look at why Facebook usually falls flat.

Ads found through Google's Adwords program are found on the sidebar during a search and relate to the terms you search for. You are looking for an answer and hey! There's one possible answer. So you are likely to check it out.

Facebook Ads show up on the side of your social media homepage. You are having a chat with your friends and being asked if you want to join Zoosk or buy a new car. You aren't in the right mindset when the ad is delivered.

The biggest difference between Google and Facebook is intent. Good Google ads promote your business because your audience is in the right frame of mind to find you. Facebook ads are (mostly) a waste of marketing money because you target people when they don't want or expect an ad in their face. There are exceptions. It makes sense for game companies to advertise on Facebook. You are there to waste time. Why not click an ad for CastleRock2? But are you ever just randomly reading friends posts thinking "I should book a photographer for my wedding now!" It's unlikely.

How to market using paid ads: Focus on Adwords. Build lists of keywords and negative keywords (such as "how to become a wedding photographer" or "how much are Kansas wedding photographers paid?") You don't want to show up on those searches when you're advertising to brides. Test your Adwords and learn as much online as you can about Adword campaigns and what makes for a successful ad. A/B test (2 different ads) for

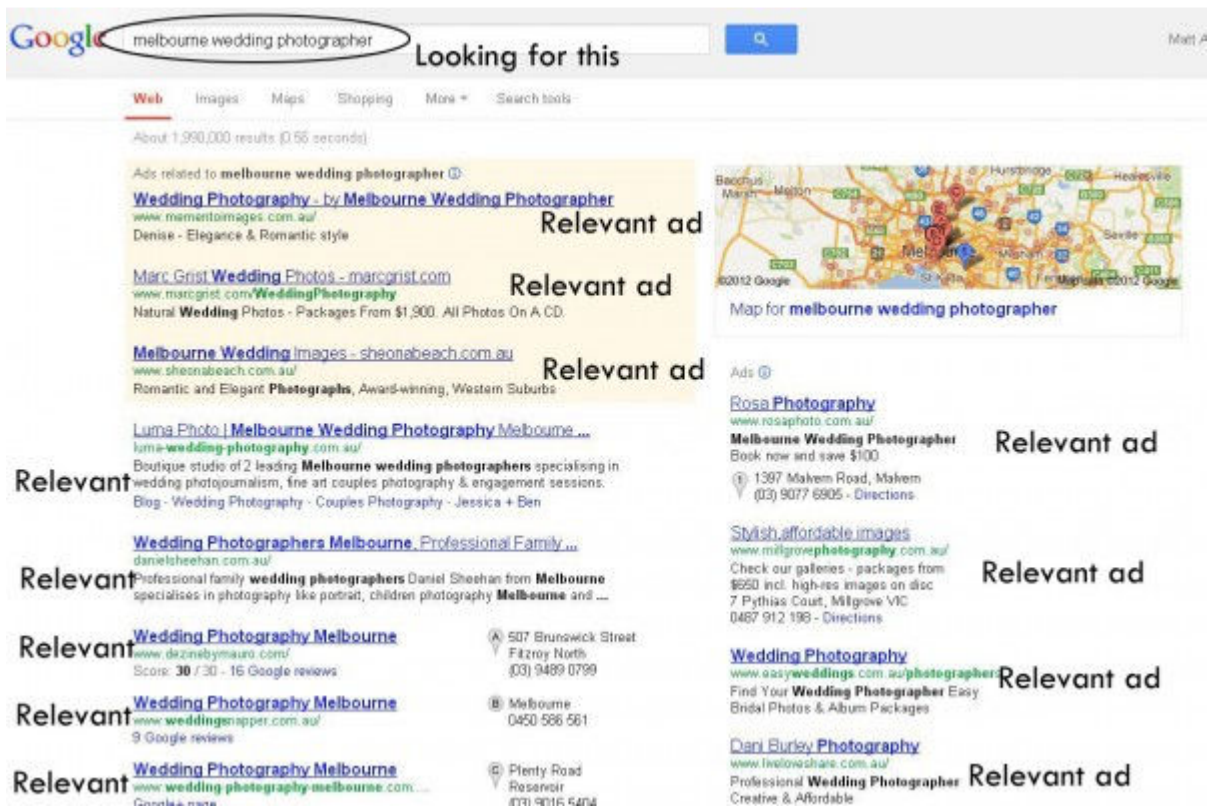
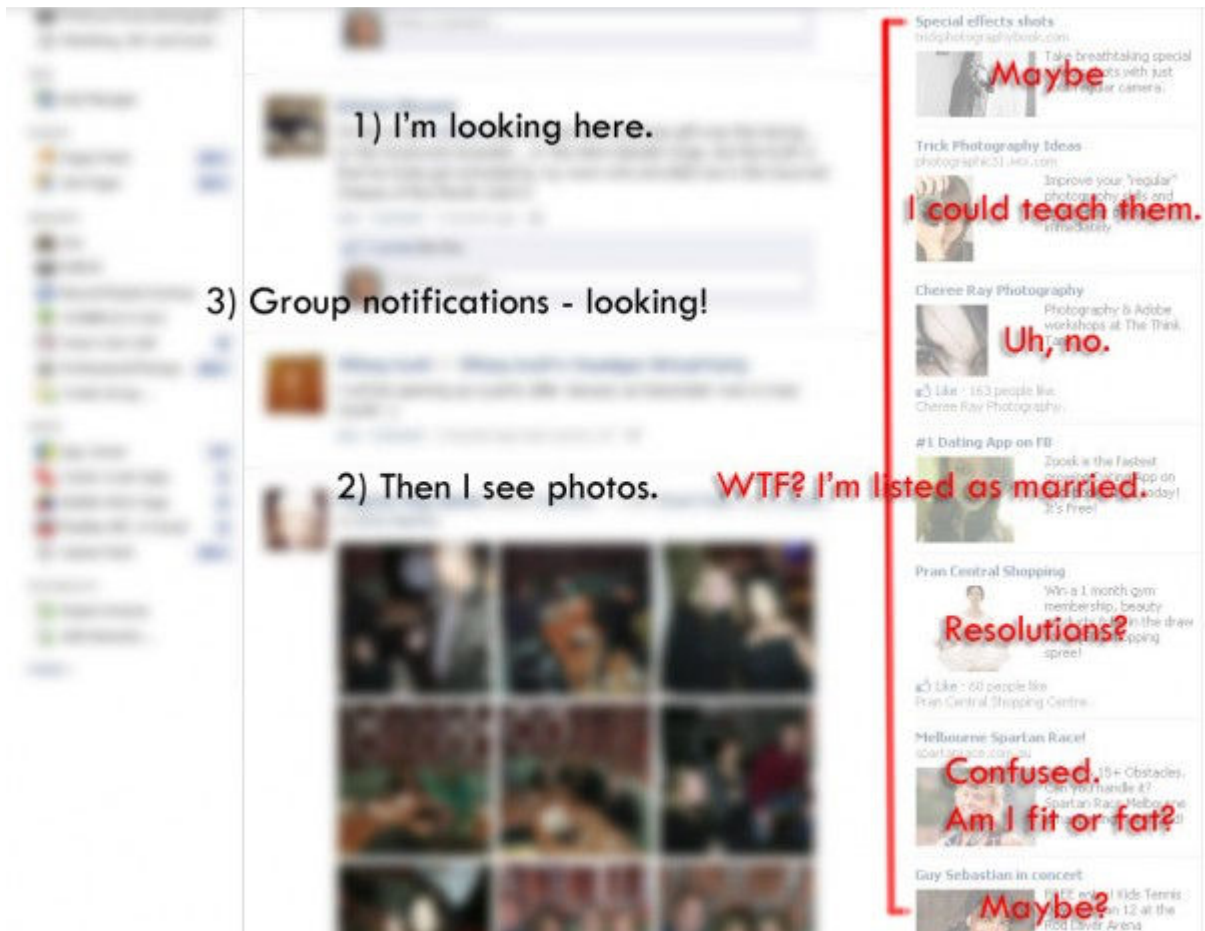
awhile and find out which one gets higher conversions and which leads to more clients calling you. Adwords, done right, are an extremely powerful way to find new clients. Many photographers have no problem with paying \$250+ per month for a Knot ad but don't use Adwords at all or spend \$3-5 a day.

It doesn't hurt to test as many ads as you want. Set a budget and Adwords will follow it. Run 4, 8, 12 ads - whatever you feel you need to test. Then test, test, and test again. Don't just assume your ad works. Run it against another variation and be scientific about it. Run it using different options such as accelerated delivery, etc. Maybe you want to test on the Content Network (weddingwire, etc.) but maybe you want to stick with Search Network only. Your tests are the only way to know what is best for your business, in your market. (For our photo business, we stuck to Search Network, accelerated delivery, usually 6-10 ads at a time, almost no budget 6 months a year and a heavy Adwords budget from Dec 1 through April 30. But you may get different results.)

What to focus on: Focus on what's in it for your client. Why do they care? You're a nice, sweet person with a great "eye" for photography, blahblah everyone else is too, blah! There are very, very talented photographers in almost every market. I know most of them. Stop bullshitting yourself that you are super unique and special because you aren't competing with the 1980s websites and the 1980s hairstyles wedding photographers any more. Everyone has nearly the same gear, nearly the same blogs they've ready for 3 years, and nearly every Photoshop action the same. We know you all get your books from Millers, Asuka, Apollo, or Graphistudio. So does everyone else. You print at Mpix, Millers, SmugMug or some local shop.

So how do you differentiate? Be specific and be a real business. How do you decide which tablet or PC or phone or car to buy? You compare facts. How do you decide which plumber or gardener to hire? Or tax accountant? Figure out what matters and sell that. Does every photographer in your market sell the high resolution DVD? Then stop bragging about it. Businesses should have a USP - unique sales (or selling) proposition. What separates you from the crowd? Write ads based on that and you will succeed. And use Adwords - unless you know Facebook makes sense for you. (Side note: Facebook Ads are great for promoting your page and getting new fans. They just suck for selling services. Don't mistake the two. I'm talking about service sales here.)

Compare these two screenshots. Tell me why Facebook Ads underperform again? (*Click for larger size.*)



5) Paid Listings (Knot, WeddingWire, etc.)

Why: Paying for any type of ad - Adwords, Knot, Wedding Wire, etc. gives you "instant credibility." Oh, you're on The Knot - surely you must be a professional photographer. Only professional photographers are on the Knot. Your ads show that you belong, right? Maybe. They do get you in front of brides. It then becomes your job to close those brides and create revenue.

Knot, WeddingWire, PartyPop, WedPlan/Alert, MarketingTool, WeDJ - these are all listing sites that make you pay for the best listing spaces in your local region. The problem is, they're often not cheap. I looked at this type of ad one year and we easily spent \$700 per month on listing sites. That's \$8400 for the year. We booked 3 or 4 weddings from it so most people would say "they paid for themselves!" right? No!

You would be correct that they were paid for - but they were bad investments. We spend \$8400 to make \$10,000. In that \$10,000 are gear costs, overhead, cost of albums and products, time spent, taxes and insurance. We probably made \$100 on four weddings. We spent a good 10 hours at each, 20 hours pre & post ... so for 30x4 = 120 hours we got \$100. Yes, flopping Whoppers would pay much, much more. We paid the advertisers. They made money. We did not.

How to market with paid listings: Keep your listing updated. Add as much content as the site allows, then try to add more. Make every contact a good one and do your best to book any inquiries from expensive sources. You likely need to book 10+ weddings from TheKnot or WeddingWire and 5+ from others to make them worthwhile. Keep that in mind and just focus on enhancing your listing as much as possible. Note: If you are going to pay for a listing, get the best. Don't muck around with these mid-tier listings that everyone else has because it's cheap. If you're going to throw money at a problem, throw enough to make a difference. Go Gold, go Platinum. Don't sit in the muck with everyone. Be a star!

What to focus on: Focus on your goals. Know that you need to book X number of weddings for an ad source to be profitable. Know your numbers, keep your goals in mind, and don't forget to ask people where they first saw you so you can give proper attribution when you are making next year's marketing budget. I know it sounds like I'm "down" on paid listings but there is a valid reason for that. It's expensive and most people do not make their money back on these sites. It's mathematically impossible for most Knot photographers to book the required number of weddings - even if EVERY wedding in a market booked through the Knot, the math would be close. And not even remotely close to "all" brides do use the Knot or WeddingWire. If you know your goals, you can easily evaluate how profitable these sources were for you.

And yes, we definitely recommend spending your budget in other places. We would love to run a comparison test for any photographer on a \$250 per month Knot listing vs. our \$225 per month SEO package. We know we are very biased but I would bet my entire business that I could get a photographer more weddings through \$225 per month SEO than any paid listing for the same price. So yes, watch your spend here very closely. (If I had to pick one paid source for wedding photography, I would take WeddingWire every day and twice on Tuesdays. Your ad appears on Bride, Martha Stewart Weddings, Project Wedding, WeddingBee, and more of the top wedding planning sites.)

6) Social Networking with: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.

Why: Social media marketing (SMM) has grown up over the past two to three years. We have evolved from random business success to tools dedicated to getting your message out. People listen - we know social can sell and social can provide all the "proof" a client needs about your business. You want to compete with the people who just started their wedding photography business after getting a camera for Christmas? Point out your 1400 fans vs. their 24. Point out the 50 weddings on your blog and in your Facebook photo albums. This type of positive reinforcement for your longevity and professionalism is called "Social Proof." Having 5000 fans means you aren't a new kid with a camera.

Social media also enables you to have conversations with vendors, potential clients, and their friends. Use social media to network and "show off" your talent. You can also answer questions about wedding planning, direct people to the resources they need, and generally be helpful to stressed out brides. They appreciate that.

How to market on social media: Choose the right networks to play on! Twitter is not a playground for wedding planning. Facebook can be. Pinterest and Etsy are. If you're a wedding photographer and you're not on Pinterest but you are on Twitter, you're lying to yourself. You are lying that you spent your time wisely in the past, and you're lying that you know what needs to be done in the future. Brides have pushed Pinterest to be one of the fastest growing sites on the whole Internet. What are you waiting for, next year? It's almost next year now. Forget next year - join now.

Once you are on the right networks, learn about them. Tailor your content to those who want to receive it.

Follow and you shall be followed. You know the Golden Rule - do unto others? Well do! If you want interaction on your pins, interact on someone else's. If you want to have a conversation, start a conversation. Social media is like friendship in that if you don't return your friend's calls, you never make the first move to initiate plans, and you generally treat them like a pawn to be played, they'll dump you faster than that girl you fell in love with in 7th grade. Make the effort.

What to focus on: Be useful. Nobody cares about you or your motivations until you care about them and theirs. You want to start a conversation with the top wedding planner in your area? So does every photographer within 100 miles. And some within 250 miles. Why you? Well, you commented on her post and taught her how to use Hootsuite. You showed her your favorite 3 Pinterest groups and where to find affordable centerpieces on Ebay and Etsy. You are being social. Who doesn't get the "featured vendor" listing? "Hey, I saw you are a wedding planner. Can I take you to lunch?" That's not social. That's bribery. Everyone knows what comes next. "So, can you add me to your list?" At the best, "Here's some of my work, I think I'm a good value, can you add me to your list?"

How about you take a vendor out to get to know them? Find out what they did over the holidays, take an interest in their life. Find out what they need and how you can help them (legitimately help, not just help enough to get them to help you.) My best wedding vendor friends were always friends first. Send me 10 weddings or send me 1. I'm still going to ask about your business and care when you say you need help. I will offer some ideas and suggestions if you want, or a shoulder to cry on if you just need to complain about a problem client. Yeah, some photographer took you out to lunch. Fine by me. There are a lot of photographers in our town. If you only like me because I was the last one to give you a sample album, it will only last until someone else does anyway.

Also, learn to use social media wisely. Trudge through our [Twitter tools list](#) and find out how to automate some of your post schedule and spend more time on the conversations and replies that need personal attention. Don't beg, don't whine, and remember, tell people what's in it for them, not what's in it for you. (These Twitter searches

are always good if you need to throw up. "Please, please, PLEASE LIKE ME ON TWITTER! And follow me. You can help me by following and tweeting and doing lots of crap for me." G A G. H U R L!

Results for "please like us on facebook"



Tweets Top / All / People you follow

-  **Popular Blog Site** @PopularBlogSite 4m
Like us on Facebook - If you have a Facebook account can you **please Like us on Facebook?** Our Facebook page is right... [is.gd/mcXnze](#)
Followed by Squime! Social, LLC and 6 others
Expand
-  **Juan J. Ramirez** @HOTSMART 29m
Microwave it ONE min. stays hot for over 1/2 HOUR. Will you **please like us on Facebook?** Safe handling [amzn.to/M6PTo5](#)
Followed by Gautam Trivedi and 8 others
[View summary](#)
-  **Michael Shelton** @MichaelShelton 2h
Please like us on Facebook too! - [ow.ly/qm0tU](#)
Followed by Jared Beard and 12 others
Expand
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Hey . **PLEASE..Like us on Facebook** - [on.fb.me/wp8f8B](#)
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Please 'Like' us on #Facebook [facebook.com/NjiMagazine](#) then post your #Facebook link and we will 'Like' you back :) RT
Followed by Andrew Keir
Expand
-  **Voxeet** @Voxeet 6h
Please like us on Facebook :) [facebook.com/Voxeet](#) We'd love to connect with you! #Facebook

Results for "help me by"



Tweets Top / All / People you follow

-  **louis tomlinson** @TomlinsonTALY 13h
[#directionertokwparty](#) 100 more followers to reach 4700 followers. **Help me by** RT this. Follow me as I do follow back! xxx
[Reweeted 14 times](#)
Expand
-  **OneDcal/memayba** @OneDcal/memayba 22m
I just really want 350 by the new year. **Help me by** rt this or giving me a shoutout pleaseeeeeeee?!?!?! xx
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-  **kia houston** @ragheal212 24m
Good Evening [@BoyzMen](#) #SOLZ Can you please **help me by** signing this very important petition. [change.org/petitions/hud...](#)
Expand
-  **GREGORY Jackson** @2010prophet 2h
Hey tweet fam I need 20 followers ill be at 9 hundred followers
[#TEAMFOLLOWBACK](#) letssss go **help me by** Retweeting this thanks!!!!
[from Cincinnati, OH](#)
-  **Tangz 6a** @1Dtributor 3h
I wanna reach 600 followers today. I don't know if it is even possible. Can u **help me by** RTing this? I followback
Expand

7) Bridal shows & Lists

Why: Bridal shows tell you everything you need to know about you and your business in about 4 to 8 hours. You will meet a few hundred brides, get instant feedback through facial expressions and body language, and immediately know whether your marketing was successful. Bridal shows give you the opportunity to show off your stellar personality and all that unique quirkiness you think makes you awesome. You can explain your portfolio and talk about their weddings. You will get a fair shot at most couples and you can often win people over who may have chosen someone else a day before or a day later.

How to market at bridal shows: Stick to the biggest shows. Everyone who goes to a small (50-150 bride) show will go to a big show. Don't let the marketers fool you - you won't be the only photographer, you won't be booking 50 brides at a "small" show - fewer people walk by to show your stuff to and the bottom line is numbers. Be prepared for the show. Have handouts and promotional materials they can take home.

Make sure you are memorable without being annoying, pesty or generally anything bad. You're a photographer so show photos - don't show them video unless you do it. Don't show them a slideshow - it looks too much like video. Show what you want to sell because brides buy what they're shown. One year we brought only flushmounts and sold more flushmounts (but fewer overall albums) than any other year. The next year we brought a mix and sold a mix.

Bring what you wish to sell. Don't bring 15-20 page albums hoping you can upsell them on a bigger size and three times the pages later. It sucks. How do you feel if you go to the car dealership, buy the new car, go back to pick it up and they say "well, your car isn't here ... but we found you one that's exactly what you wanted, just \$3000 more"? You feel like crap. Wedding photography is an emotional business. Do not make your potential clients feel like crap. Do not make your clients feel like crap after the wedding, either.

What to focus on: Them. You probably get the theme of this Marketing Guide for Photographers by now, right? What is in it for the client? What do they get, what should they expect, how does it solve their problems or make their life better? What do you do so amazingly well that nobody else does?

Also, focus on the medium. With any of these marketing tactics, make sure you tailor your message to where the audience sees it. They are seeing you - so be professional, smile, be happy and fairly upbeat. Don't expect to book a lot of weddings at a bridal show if you sit on your butt and hand out flyers while the photographer 8 booths down is standing up, giving presentations, smiling, and frankly, a lot hotter looking than you. She did her makeup, she cares about her appearance and she is offering something they want - a connection. Too often, people sit in their seats, answer a few questions, go home and don't book much of anything. Then they think "well, we're better photographers than her so why did that happen?! Brides must be stupid if they can't see how awesome our work is."

You are selling a service and a product. How you market and present those in a face-to-face setting matters very much. Every other method will get you an interview. Bridal shows ARE interviews. You must be able to close sales to be in business. Practice your spiel before the show to your family & friends, coworkers, and your mirror. Make it professional, helpful and direct. Don't be afraid to sell because that girl 8 booths down just said "If you book us today you get \$250 off and a free engagement session." That's going to tempt these people ... and now they're headed your way. Change their minds.

8) Get Referrals, Reviews and WOM

Why: Reviews, referrals and word of mouth recommendations of your business are easily the single most important piece of marketing you can do in photography or any other small business. It's free, it's powerful and it's direct to a potential client. You should encourage word of mouth marketing and reviews at any possible stage. Most of our own (SEO) business is based on referrals. I am currently working with FIVE clients in one region in the US, all in different businesses. One photographer found us, sent us another business friend, who referred us to two clients, one of whom referred us to another. The process works when you are referable.

How to market for referrals and word of mouth: I wish you could plan and promote this stuff. All you can do is either a) ask for referrals or b) be so amazing at your job that people refer you naturally. Or both. I often ask for reviews - I'll do it again soon, too. I usually do it when someone has already complimented us, though. My client the other day said "you are absolutely the best thing that has happened to my business this year!" I said "I should make you write that in a testimonial!" And he will - I will add that to our reviews page soon, as a matter of fact. So if you see the opportunity, take it.

Let's be honest - in wedding photography, referrals aren't what they used to be. Sisters don't want to use the same photographer. They want to be unique. Friends want to plan "their own" wedding, not have the same vendors a friend had. Word of mouth used to mean "you're getting a wedding photographer you can rely on." Now, it just means "nah, I probably won't use yours. I can see these other 100 are pretty good. I'll have *my* photographer."

What to focus on: So how do you drive word of mouth? Some photographers run contests. We did this with disastrous results twice. Nobody likes to lose. "They cheated!" "I won, didn't I? I was winning yesterday!" "What does second place get?" Oh, stop me before I continue. Contests can be fine but be careful about running them on Facebook (there are rules!) and people misunderstand the rules. (Yes, again, those are links. View them, come back.)

Just remind people (who you have already performed for, helped, and otherwise already gave to) that you could use a referral or a review if they would like to give you one. If you did everything right, booked the client, kept them happy, fulfilled your obligations, and were pleasant to them, most likely you just got a great review for your website and possibly WeddingWire or your Google Plus Page.

9) Wedding Site Submissions

Why: Many other websites want your great photos to show off on their site. Examples include: TwoBrightLights, Junebug Weddings, Elizabeth Anne Designs, Southern Weddings, WeddingGawker and WeddingBee. By submitting your weddings, you are promoting your website, giving the couple some (usually fun) exposure, and broadening your chances of getting links back to your site, follow up pins on Pinterest, and other marketing benefits. You are also reusing content so the creation time is nearly zero and the return is possibly high. [WeddingGawker](#) is a fantastic site to start with if you want to get your feet wet on "wedding submissions." They only require one image and the guidelines are quite easy to understand.

How to market for site submissions: Volume. Don't leave any posts out. Some submission sites require exclusivity so submit to the best ones first and work your way down the line - but never have content that hasn't been submitted. Go back and submit all your old posts, one every third day, to WeddingGawker. Then submit a few weddings to your favorite "real weddings" sites. See what sites work best for you and stick with those.

Remember to market your absolute best work on these sites. You get *one* photo for WeddingGawker and the better it is, the higher on the page it will show up when it's approved. So make it amazing and clickable.

What to focus on: Again, just get it done. This is work but it's good work. You can build links (SEO), make great social connections with those who run the sites (social media), advertise on these sites if they use Google (content network, partners) and generally get more eyes on your work. None of this is ever bad so just do a lot of it.

10) Other ways to market your photography business

Brainstorm this. Press releases, email lists, referral programs, commenting on other photographers blogs, become a valuable forum member for a local forum, join the BBB or Chamber of Commerce and participate in their events. Go to Meetups, network at church. Really, your imagination is the limit as far as marketing. I won't rehash every other way to market but I will give you a great direction. Jodi at MCP Actions created a list of [50 Marketing Tips for Photographers](#) so check that out, too.

You should also view some of our old posts about marketing. Try these:

- [46 Useful List Posts You Can Use Now](#)
- [60 Working Twitter Tools](#)
- [SEO vs. Marketing: Basic Strategies](#)
- [Planning Blog Topics](#)