



Consumer Insights: Pet Photography

Understanding the purchasing motivations and preferences
of pet photography consumers



Professional
Photographers
of America

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Objectives & Methodology

To better understand consumers of specialty professional photography, PPA is conducting a series of “niche consumer” studies.

This study of Pet Photography consumers targeted consumers who are representative of the general US and:

- Have purchased pet photography in the past 3 years, or
- Plan to purchase pet photography in the next 2 years

The online study took 12-15 minutes to complete and was fielded with two sample sources for a total of 500 qualified completes:

- 385 Past Purchasers
- 115 Future Purchasers
- Overall incidence for the study was 12%.
- Findings for the total sample are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, with an error margin of +/- 4%.

This analysis focuses primarily on past purchasers representative of actual consumer behavior. Where differing and appropriate, future purchaser responses are presented throughout the summary.

Key Takeaways

- Find pet consumers where they “live” with their pets. They shop national pet retailers in-store, but they are also very active online purchasers and participate in pet-related activities and communities.
- Consumers are inspired to purchase pet photography by their relationship with their pet. Special occasions and commemorative photography are major motivations and social media plays a big role in inspiration.
- “Professional quality photography” is the #1 reason consumers hire a pro, followed by the desire for “a unique or special experience with/for my pet.”
- Your online presence is key to helping consumers choose you.
 - Social media content created by photographers is very influential in inspiring purchases.
 - Looking at photographers’ website and meeting in person are key steps in finding a photographer.
- Consumers know (and stick to) their budget, but some trade-up spending does occur.
 - Consumers tend to purchase “packages.”
 - Digital files are expected (but not for free).

To reach potential customers, your marketing should include your:

- Experience: Demonstrate that you are a photographer who can work with pets.
- Unique Feature: Present an attribute that sets you apart from other photographers like style, willingness to be on location, etc.
- Value for Cost: Outline what is included and target a price range that fits the customer’s budget.

Pet Photography Customer Journey

Once in, the journey leads consumers to repeat purchases.





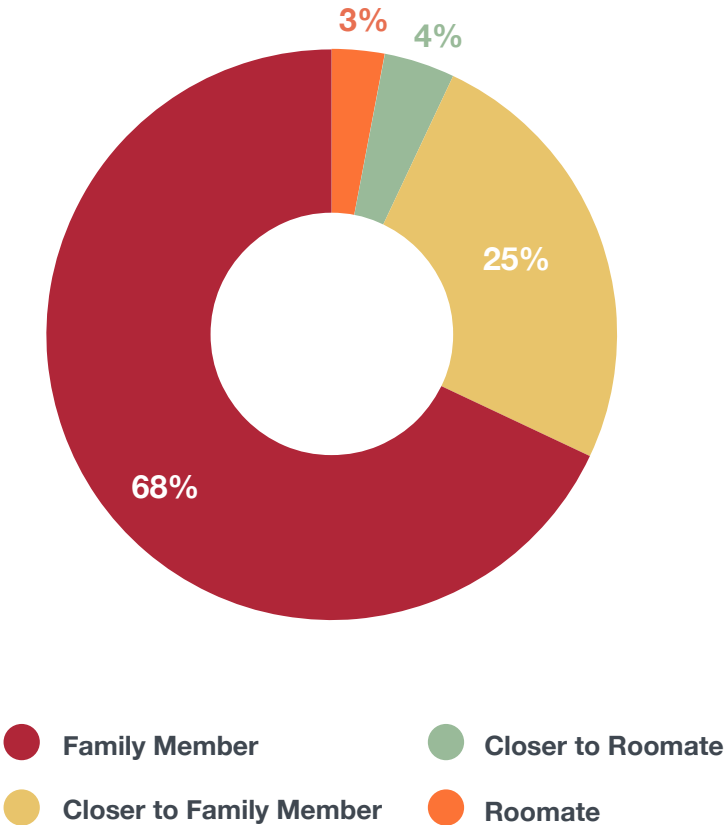
Pet Photography Consumers

About potential customers & their pets

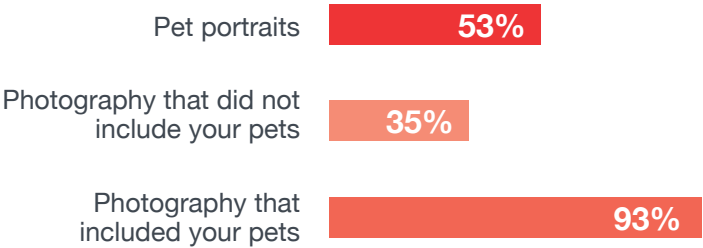
Pets Are Family Members

And are often photographed with the human family.

How Consumers View Their Pets



Why Consumers Purchased Photography Services

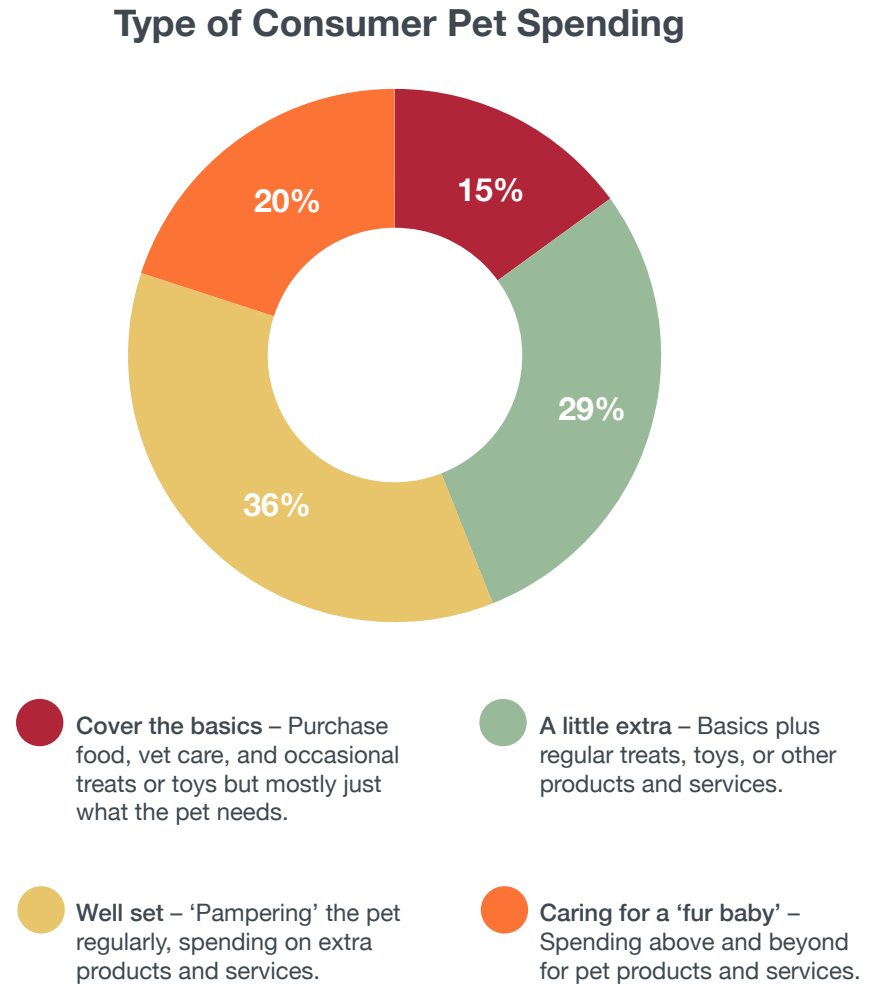
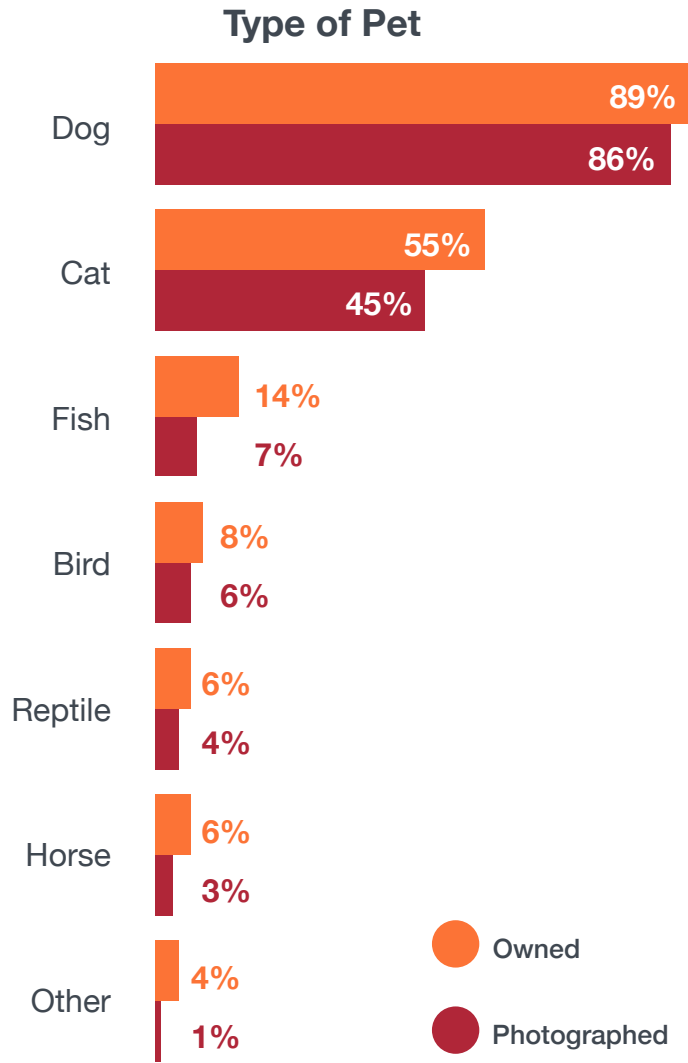


Photography That Included Pets

Family / Child portrait	73%	Commercial	22%
Holiday / Greeting cards	66%	Maternity	21%
Self portrait / Headshot	40%	Drone	15%
Wedding	32%	Boudoir	14%
High school senior	26%	Special occasion (birthday, etc.)	8%
Newborn	25%		

Most Consumers Own Dogs & Cats

And over half purchase premium and lifestyle products and services.



Reach New Customers in Real Life and Online

By meeting them where they already gather and make purchases for their pets.

Where Consumers Make Pet Purchases

National pet retailer in-store (PetSmart, Petco, etc.)	63%
National online retailer (Amazon, Overstock, etc.)	61%
Specialty online retailer (Chewy, etc.)	57%
National pet retailer online (PetSmart, Petco, etc.)	56%
National big-box retailer in-store (Walmart, Target, grocery, etc.)	54%
National big-box retailer online (Walmart, Target, grocery, etc.)	51%
Vet or grooming service	39%
Online subscription service (BarkBox, MeowBox, etc.)	33%
Other	1%

Type of Consumer Activities

Attend pet-friendly events in public (e.g. “pet day” at a sports game)	59%
Belong to online pet-related groups or communities	57%
Participate / volunteer / donate to a pet-related organization	56%
Subscribe to pet-related publications	52%
Belong to a local pet-related group	41%
Other	1%
None	5%

Pet photo purchasers are shopping in-store at national pet retailers, but they are also shopping online.

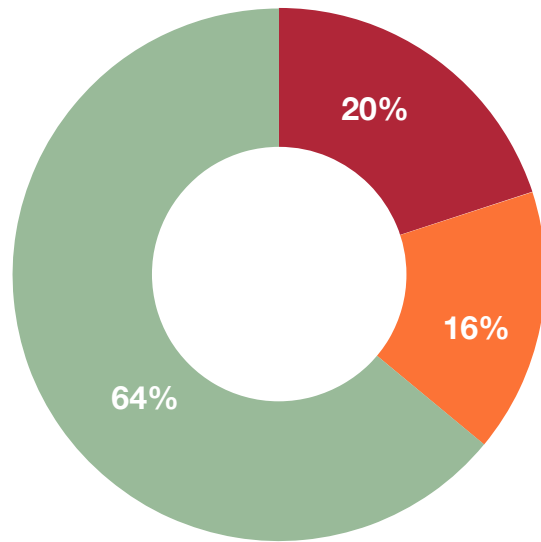
Over half are active in pet-related community events and organizations.

Local pet retailers, pet-related organizations, and online community groups all present marketing opportunities for pet photography. Look for local bulletin boards, events, or enthusiast clubs by type of pet for potential customers. You can also seek out online groups.

Be Ready for Anything

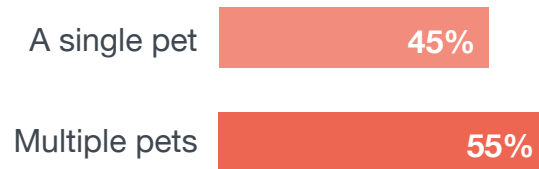
And clearly communicate your capabilities to potential customers.

Style of Photography Purchased

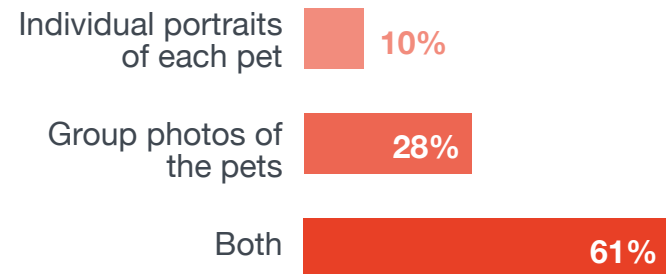


- Formal / posed photos
- Candid photos
- Both

Pets Included in Session



If Multiple Pets

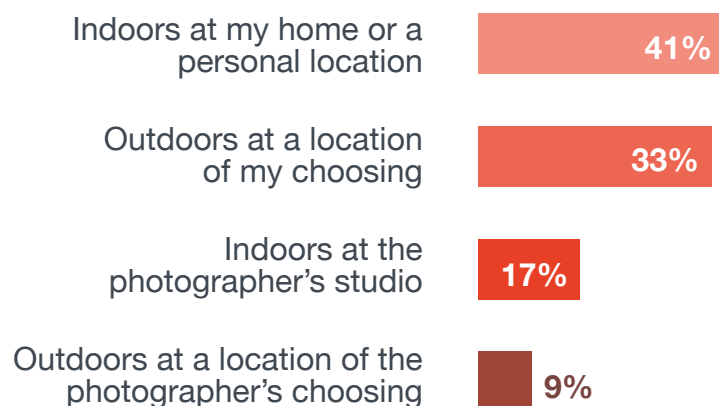


Be prepared for formal and candid photos with multiple pets (individual and group shots).

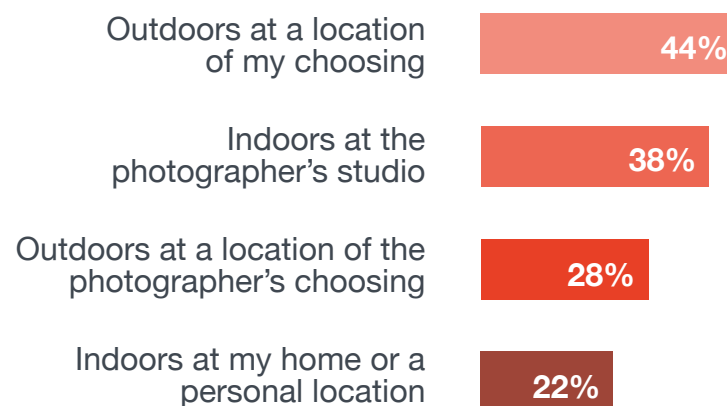
Be Ready for Anything (cont.)

And clearly communicate your capabilities to potential customers.

Primary Location Used for Session



Other Locations Used for Session



The most popular locations are indoors at home or at a personal location, followed by outdoors at a location of the customer's choice. If you have your own studio, it can be offered as a unique benefit for the session.



Finding a Pro and Purchasing

Inspiration, steps taken, and purchases

Future Purchasers Are Inspired by Ideas

But occasions move purchasers to action.

What Inspires Pet Photography Purchases?	Past Purchasers	Future Purchasers
Special occasion: Their pet is part of an event	47%	39%
Commemorative: They wanted images to honor/remember their pet	44%	36%
Social media: They saw images/experiences online	44%	42%
For their pet: To celebrate their pet and/or their relationship	44%	51%
Display/sharing: They wanted images they could use or share widely	37%	38%
Previous experience: They had pro pet photography in the past	35%	24%
Word of mouth: A friend or relative they knew personally had purchased pet photography	35%	38%
Other	0%	1%

Future purchasers are more aspirational. They focus on celebrating their pet, and they use social media as inspiration.

Past purchasers were inspired by a special occasion. They're still inspired by social media and celebration, but including a pet in an event or commemoration is what drove their purchase.

Consumers Are Inspired by Social Media

Social media content helps them see the possibilities for pet photography.

Social Media Source of Inspiration	Past Purchasers	Future Purchasers
Facebook	82%	75%
Instagram	77%	88%
TikTok	52%	52%
Pinterest	51%	56%
Reddit	28%	19%
Discord	18%	19%
Imgur	8%	10%
Other	3%	—

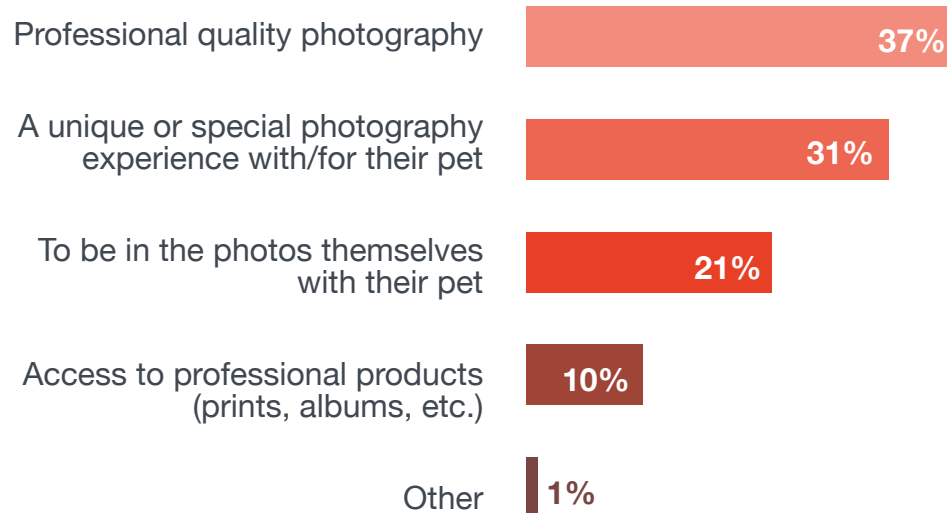
Who Created the Content?	Past Purchasers	Future Purchasers
A professional photographer	51%	40%
A professional content creator (influencer)	24%	31%
A non-professional	17%	23%
A brand or retailer	8%	6%

Consumers say the most inspirational content is created by professional photographers.

Professional Quality Sets You Apart From Amateurs

And consumers are motivated by a unique, special experience.

Most Important Reason Consumers Hire A Pro



Over 1/3 of consumers say professional quality photography is the most important reason for hiring a pro, but an **additional 1/3** prioritize the special experience of pet photography. Both reasons show the importance of the professional's role.

Consumers Find Pet Photographers Online

But in-person consultations and word-of-mouth are key in the selection process.

All Steps Taken Before Hiring a Pro Photographer

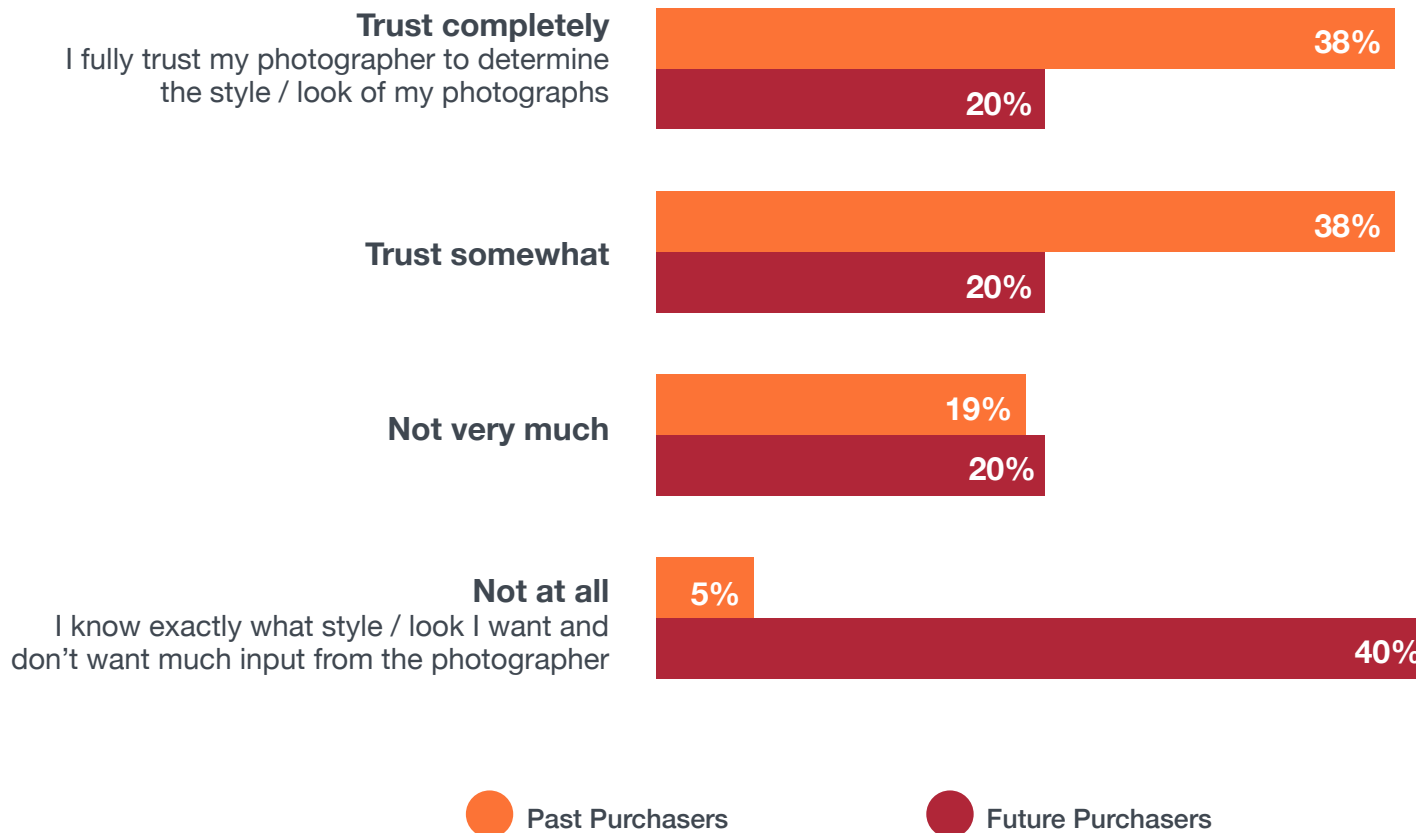
Looked at specific photographer's websites	53%
Compared prices between multiple photographers	46%
Had/used a direct (word of mouth) recommendation from someone they trust	46%
Looked online at recommendation/review sites	45%
Met with a photographer in person	43%
Looked online at photographer listing sites	41%
Called a photographer directly	41%
Did a generic Google search for photographers in their area	36%
Sent an email or filled out a request form of a specific photographer	31%
Other	2%

Most Important Step Taken Before Hiring a Pro Photographer

Met with a photographer in person	19%
Had/used a direct (word of mouth) recommendation from someone they trust	18%
Looked at specific photographer's websites	16%
Looked online at recommendation/review sites	12%
Called a photographer directly	11%
Compared prices between multiple photographers	10%
Sent an email or filled out a request form of a specific photographer	6%
Looked online at photographer listing sites	4%
Did a generic Google search for photographers in their area	3%
Other	1%

Future Purchasers Are Less Trusting of Your Style

And will need examples from you to gain confidence in your creative control.



Win the trust of potential clients by showcasing your unique style.

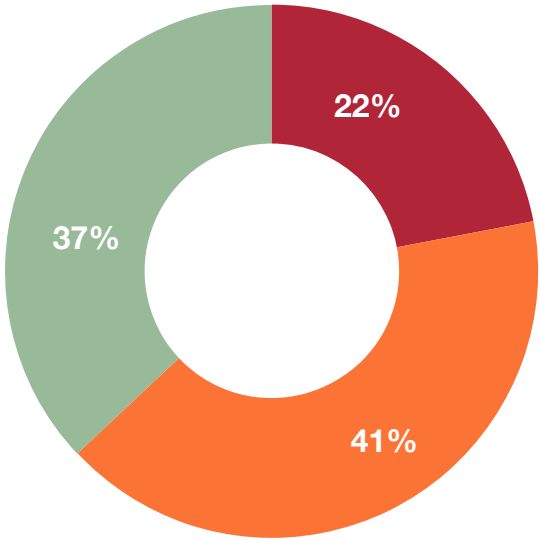
Some Trade-Up in Spending Occurs

But mostly consumers stick to their budget.

Amount Planned vs. Amount Spent

Price Range	Planned	Spent
Less than \$250	16%	12%
\$251–\$500	29%	32%
\$501–\$750	19%	22%
\$751–\$1,000	15%	16%
\$1,001–\$1,500	10%	8%
\$1,501–\$2,000	5%	6%
More than \$2,000	4%	3%
Don't know / not sure	3%	12%

Times Hiring a Pet Photographer



- Never (first time)
- Once before
- Two or more times before

There isn't a big difference between what purchasers planned to spend vs. what they actually spent for their photography. In other words, budget does drive the purchase decision.

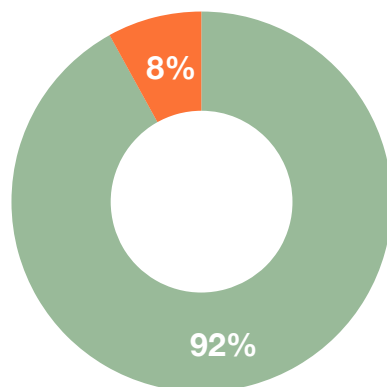
Also, past consumers of pet photography are very likely to purchase again.

Consumers Expect Digital Files To Be Offered

But they don't expect them to be free.

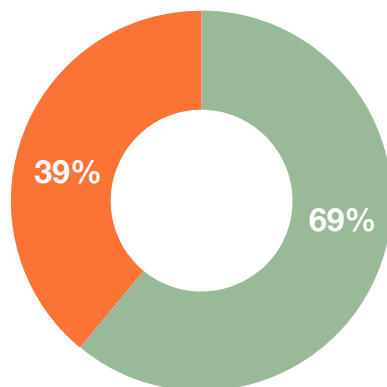
Expectation of Digital File Offering

- Expect
- Do not expect

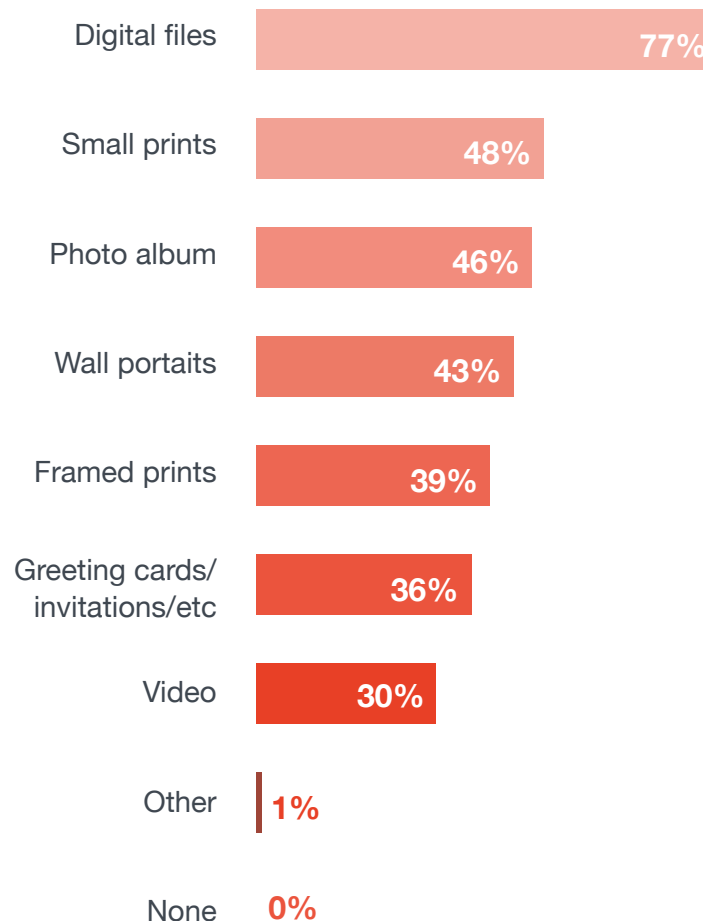


Consumers Purchased

- A "package" that included the session and products
- A session fee, plus the additional cost of any products purchased

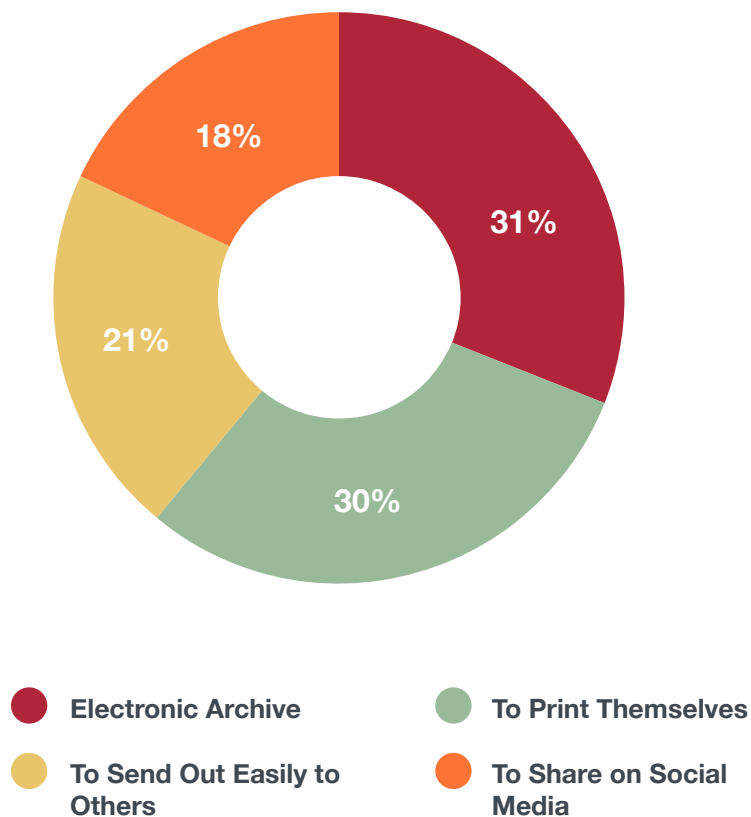


Products Purchased By Consumers

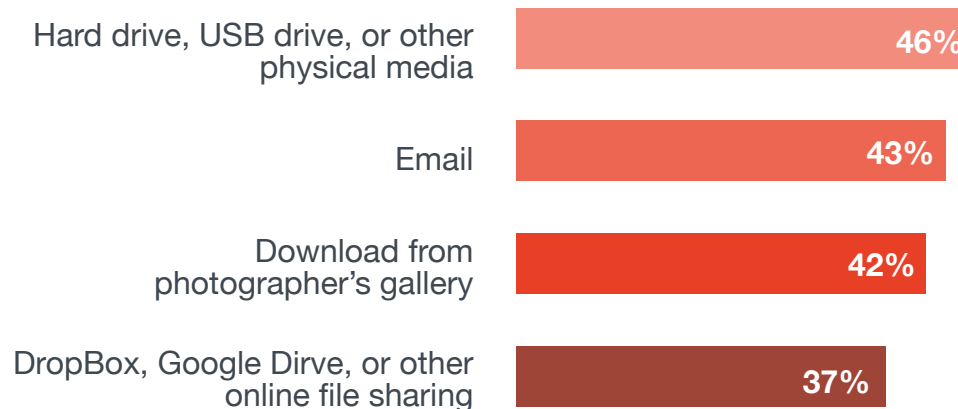


Archive and Printing Drive Digital Purchases

Most Important Reason Why Consumers Want Digital Files

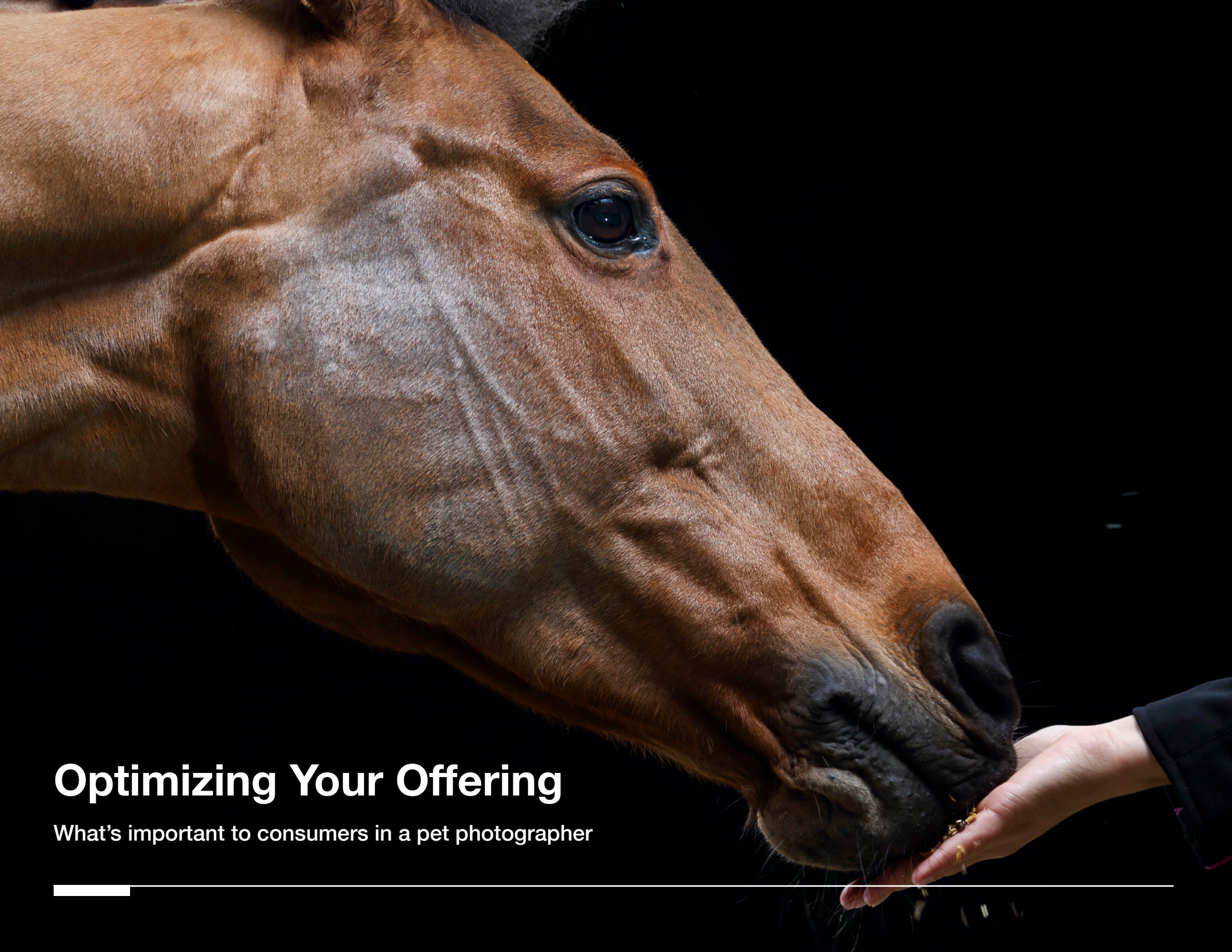


How Consumers Received Digital Files



In addition to keeping an electronic archive, consumers want to print photos. This gives you an opportunity to demonstrate the value of professionally printed photographs over the quality of at-home prints.

These results come from consumers who explicitly stated they purchased digital files.



Optimizing Your Offering

What's important to consumers in a pet photographer

What's Important When Choosing a Photographer

Through survey design and analysis, we can see what consumers look for in a professional pet photographer.

These scores are helpful because they show relative importance.

Tier 1 attributes have a greater weight in the decision-making process than Tier 4 attributes.

Tier 1		Score	1.2x
Clear outline of what is included in the cost of the experience		7.10	
Price that fits their budget		7.08	
Experience with pets		6.92	1.5x
Tier 2			
Style of photography they want		6.15	
Understands / accommodates their pet's needs		6.08	
A pet expert (a photographer who specializes in pets)		5.81	
Offers digital files		5.67	Tier 1 Attributes are 2x more important than Tier 4 Attributes
Will come to their home or other private location for the session		5.61	
Recommendations/reviews from other pet photography customers		5.54	
Tier 3			
Willing go to outdoor/public locations of their choice for the shoot		5.00	
Portfolio with examples of pet photography		4.82	
Offers a consult to meet them and their pet before the session		4.75	
Experience with their type of pet		4.72	
Flexibility in scheduling		4.26	
Tier 4			
Personality that connects with the consumer		3.98	
Training and/or certifications in professional photography		3.74	
Suggests locations that would be good for their shoot		3.45	
Clear cancellation / refund policy		3.44	
Offers print products		3.29	
Dedicated photography studio		2.60	

Consumers Want a Photographer That Can Clearly Communicate Cost, Experience, and a Unique Feature About Themselves

Having and communicating all three aspects will increase your potential market share.

Experience. Showing consumers you have experience with pets is key. You don't have to be a pet expert, but you need to know what you're doing and be able to demonstrate that in your work.

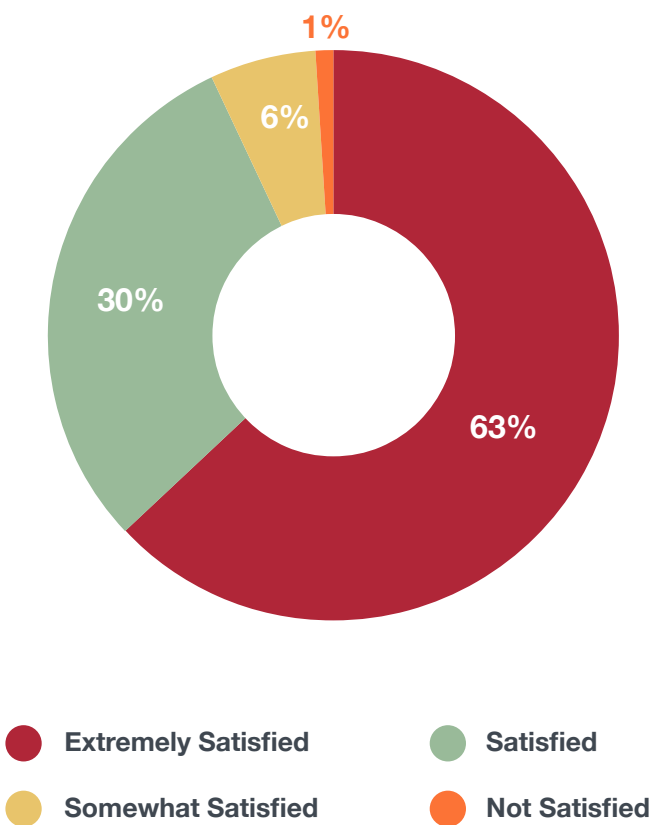
Uniqueness. Beyond price and pet experience, consumers consider other attributes. This could be your photography style, how you accommodate needs, or any other detail that sets you apart.

Cost Clarity. It's no surprise that consumers want a price within their budget, and they want to know what they're getting for their money. This gives you flexibility when creating and pricing your packages (the preferred way to purchase).

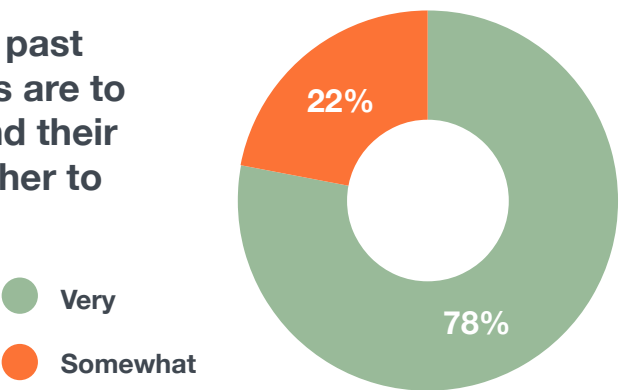
Past Purchasers Are Likely To Be Very Satisfied

And they're likely to recommend you to other consumers through word of mouth.

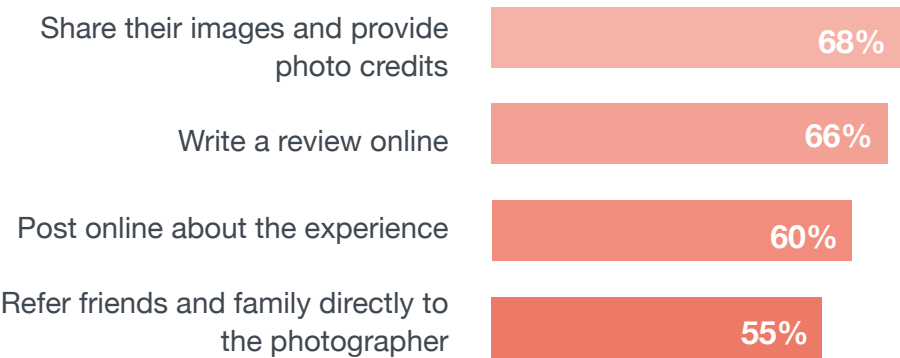
Satisfaction of Past Purchasers

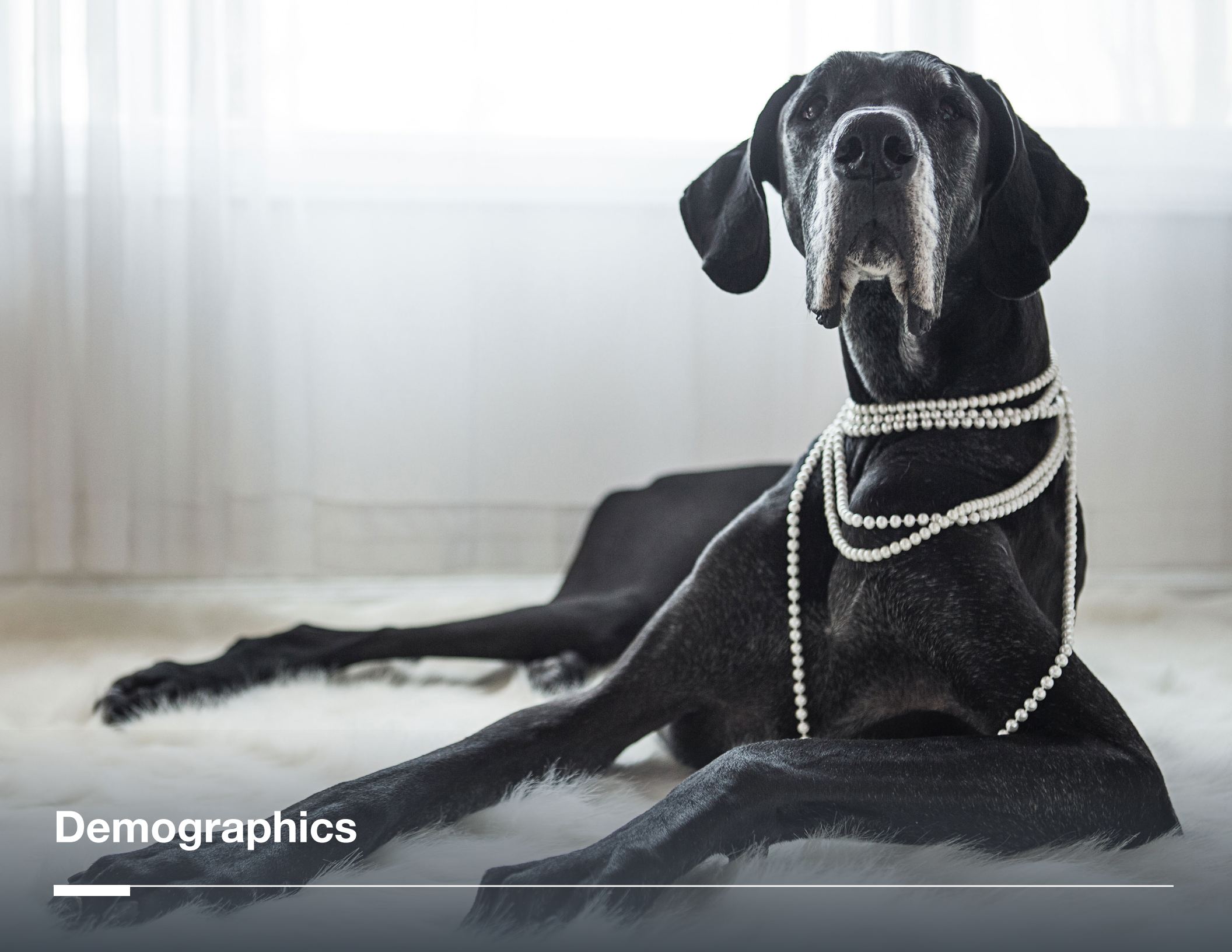


How likely past purchasers are to recommend their photographer to others



How Past Purchasers Share Their Experience With A Professional Photographer

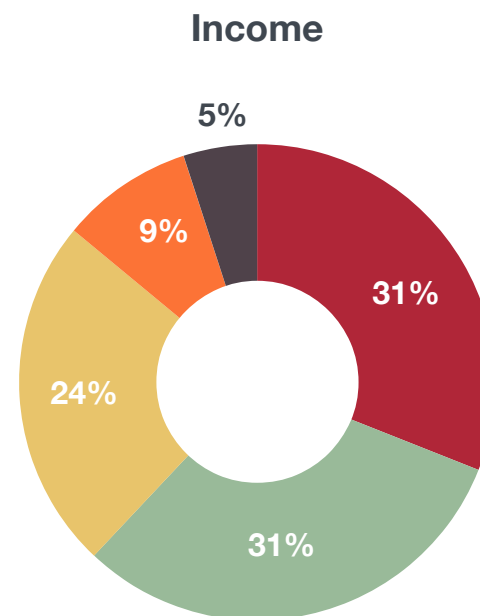
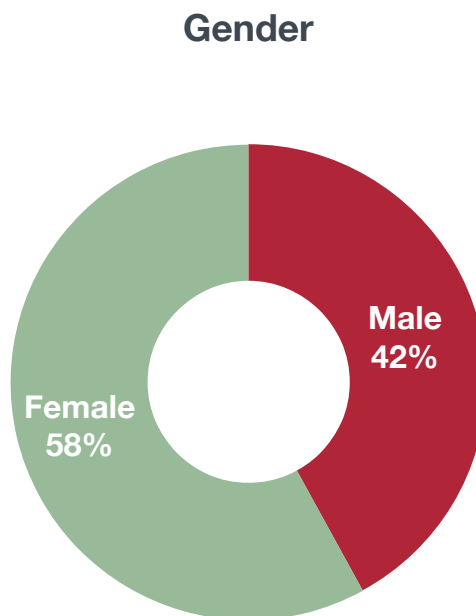
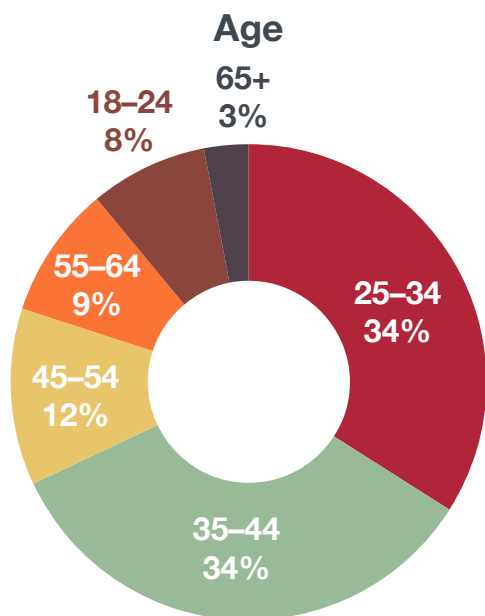




Demographics

Demographics

Who we talked to, how old they are, and their annual income.





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PUBLISHED JANUARY 2022

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PPA's mission is to create a vibrant community of successful professional photographers by providing education, resources, and industry standards of excellence.

