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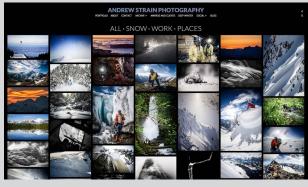
















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PART I:

Introduction

f you want to attract an audience on Facebook, sharing great content—including your images—will help you get there. As Hubspot, an inbound marketing software platform, said, "People are 44% more likely to engage with content on social media that contains pictures."

But why do you want engagement in the first place? As a photographer looking to bring in revenue, you want to grow your reach. A strong Facebook presence that you promote across channels like your blog, or newsletter, for example, will help build your reputation and increase opportunities for word-of-mouth marketing. While Facebook isn't likely to not offer a pool of customers who will convert directly after interacting with your page, it will broaden your audience and help get your name out there better than ever before.

That said, in our recent guide, the <u>2013 Survey: What Buyers Want From Photographers</u>, we learned that is it possible to attract real clients through Facebook. 35.4% of buyers we surveyed told us they have discovered new photographers through social media. Of that group, 56.1% said they discovered those photographers on Facebook.

Because you're a photographer with stream of new and old images in your portfolio and archive, this gives you an enormous advantage to engage with potential clients and expand your reach online.

"People are 44% more likely to engage with content on social media that contains pictures."

You can already get a sense of how important Facebook is to your marketing efforts. But just like everything else, if you want to see results, sharing great content on your page should be part of your daily workflow, not an afterthought. Facebook is the #2 most popular website worldwide (after Google), with 700 million unique visitors a month. This means that there's a very good chance that your target audience is already there, and also receptive to great content they encounter—including yours.

In this guide, we'll break down tips to help you engage your audience and optimize your Facebook page to attract more potential clients and increase awareness about your photography business. Keep in mind, we'll focus only on how to optimize business pages, as personal profiles are less accessible to the public (they require that someone request to be your friend and cap out at 5,000 friends total). Business pages are less restrictive and are available for anyone to follow.

FACEBOOK AND SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

If you're on Facebook (which we hope you are!), you already know that the platform transforms constantly, becoming a more fine-tuned tool to help you connect better through your personal profile as well as your business page. Today, Facebook is also optimized for search engines. This is important to keep in mind because one of your biggest marketing goals should be to raise awareness about your photography business and rank highly in a Google search. Factors including the number of likes your business page has, a well written About section (Google often pulls this information to populate their











search descriptions) and a flow of engaging content on your timeline can all affect your search engine rankings. For more on how your Facebook page can help influence your search engine rankings, check out <u>4 Ways to Optimize Your Facebook Page For Search</u>.

FACEBOOK ADVERTISING

To reach your audience, you can also pay for Facebook advertising including Marketplace Ads, Page Post Ads, Promoted Posts, Sponsored Stories, and Sponsored Results. These range from more typical display ads to the 'social ads' that let you promote posts from your own page.

Facebook ads can be paid as pay-per-click (PPC), which requires that someone actually click on your ad before you are charged. Keep in mind that each advertiser, whether that be an individual or large company, is competing against others as they bid for placements to target a specific demographic.

Advertising on Facebook can be one of the most targeted channels to reach your demographic, so we recommend you experiment with an ad or two and track performance. For more information on Facebook advertising, check out <u>A Comprehensive Guide to Facebook Ads</u> by MOZ, a leader in SEO consulting.

FACEBOOK PROS AND CONS

Like the adage "if you build it, they will come" implies, before developing a Facebook presence, you first need an awesome website to act as the central hub of your photography business. But if you have a website and don't tell anyone about it, you're doing yourself a disservice by creating obstacles which prevent you from expanding your client base.

"For photographers, Facebook is one of the best ways to share your work where your clients already are."

This is one of the primary arguments to use Facebook in the first place. For photographers, it's one of the best ways to share your work where your clients already are.

A great example of Facebook's influence on traffic to your site is from Fstoppers, a resource for industry news for photographers, which we here at PhotoShelter check out almost daily. According to Facebook's own <u>Success Story Bulletin</u>, Fstoppers gets 50% of its traffic directly from Facebook.

One argument against using Facebook, and most social media platforms to promote your photography, is the potential for image theft, copyright infringement, and image devaluation due to downloading and sharing. Some photographers believe that sharing images dramatically increases the chances that photos will be illegally reposted elsewhere without permission. Others fear that Facebook itself might use your photos for commercial use. What you will have to do is decide whether the visibility you gain through Facebook is worth the potential risk.

As Richard Kelly, former president of the <u>ASMP</u>—American Society of Media Photographers—put it, "The safest thing to do is to put your photos in a black box in your office and never show them to anyone. But that's not why we're photographers. There's a balancing act between how much protection you take to how much you want to share your photographs with the world."

However, there are ways to mitigate image theft on Facebook:

- ▶ Always read the Terms of Service (TOS), before uploading your images and sharing other content. Facebook's TOS can be found here: https://www.facebook.com/legal/terms. Check out additional insights from ASMP on Facebook's TOS and what those terms could mean for you.
- ➤ Consider watermarking your images. This is an aesthetic choice, but many photographers choose to watermark images before sharing them as a tactic to reduce the chance of theft.
- ▶ Downsize and optimize your images for the web. Posting lower-res images can prevent the chances that your photos may be illegally reprinted.

For more tips to keep your work safe online, check out *The Photographer's Guide to Copyright*. The American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP), is also a great resource to help you understand the fine print when joining a site like Facebook.



PART II:

Tracking Success on Facebook

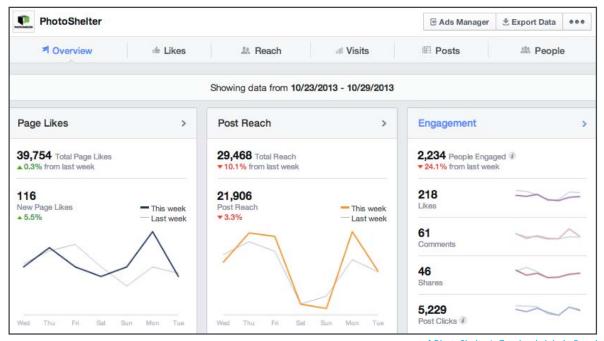
ou may have your business page set up and are in the routine of posting news, photos, and updates regularly. The big question, though, is how do you know if what you're sharing is effective and reaching your target audience? Fortunately, there are many tools, some built right into Facebook, to help you track success and optimize your efforts to increase your reach.

FACEBOOK INSIGHTS

Facebook Insights is built directly into Facebook and can be accessed through the administrator panel on your business page. For a short walk-through of the admin area of your page, check out Facebook's own resource center. ¹

Among various features, the admin panel lets you explore how many people have clicked on your posts, which one saw the most engagement, and what day and times your posts were looked at. A new version of Facebook Insights was recently rolled out in October 2013, and designed to give admins deeper insights into followers who interact with their page. See more information about the new Facebook Insights here.

One of the biggest advantages of the updated tool is it now allows administrators to see not only who you've reached but also who you've engaged through comments and shares. This will be useful for figuring out how your content resonates with different audiences.



¹ PhotoShelter's Facebook Admin Panel

GOOGLE ANALYTICS

One of the most robust and widely used metrics tracker, <u>Google Analytics</u>, allows you to plug in a url and track visits to your website, including where visitors came from, how long they stayed, and how they navigated between pages.

Google Analytics is also an essential tool to understanding how your Facebook page is funneling your fans to your website and any other social platforms that you use to promote your photos and business. To find out if Facebook is driving people to your website, just log into your Google Analytics account and go to Acquisition → Social → Network Referrals. ²

If you're not set up with Google Analytics to help track your site's traffic, check out our guide, <u>Google Analytics</u> <u>For Photographers.</u>

SHORTENED URLS

Even when you share photos, you should always link out to your website or blog. As we mentioned, images get shared more than other content on Facebook, which works in your favor. We recommend that you include a link with each photo, so if a follower is interested in learning more about your work, they don't have to do any extra digging. When you link out, be sure to use free services like bitly or the Google URL Shortener, which let you easily shorten URLs and track their performance to find out the number of people who clicked on your link, or even the time of day they clicked.

FACEBOOK'S ALGORITHM

Facebook also has an <u>internal algorithm</u> that determines which posts you'll actually see in your News Feed. "Edgerank" is what this algorithm used to be

Socia	Network	Visits ↓	Pageviews
1.	Facebook	7,663	15,736
2.	Twitter	2,148	5,960
3.	WordPress	700	3,216
4.	LinkedIn	489	1,117
5.	Blogger	414	966
6.	Tumblr	318	905
7.	Pinterest	314	1,021
8.	Ameba	158	330
9.	tinyURL	145	374
10.	Google+	> 116	288

² Google Analytics: Example Social Referral traffic

called, though technically the term is now used more as a nickname. But regardless of its name, the framework for determining what you see or don't see in your feed still exists.

So what does that mean? What Facebook decides to share with followers is important because once someone has liked your page, statistics show that they are unlikely to ever revisit your page again. Instead, they will only see your posts that show up in their News Feed—and there is no guarantee that your post actually will.

However, if your post is engaging and has garnered a good number of likes, comments and shares, your chances of exposure in others' News Feeds increases. And lucky for you, posting photos hugely increases your chances for engagement. For example, as compared to text-only posts,

Mashable, a major technology and social media blog, points out, "Posting photo albums, photos, and videos get 180%, 120% and 100% more engagement respectively."

Although Facebook notes there are over 100,000 factors that can affect what a follower sees in his or her News Feed, this article from Marketing Land sheds light on a few factors that do play an influential role in helping your content get out there.



PART III:

4 Ways Photographers Can Rock Facebook

Check out our top 4 strategies you can use today to engage people on Facebook and ultimately help get more potential clients through your door.

#1:

Show Off Your Personality

egardless of Facebook's transformation over the years, its use is still rooted in friends sharing information with friends. Although the platform today serves as a key tool for businesses, it's still important to approach Facebook as a channel that can help you connect and give those who follow you a sense of who you are.

From a photo buyer's perspective, potential clients also want to know who they're hiring, so Facebook can be a great way to help them find out more about a photographer's work ethic and personality. Buyers also told us that they look for personal qualities before they hire including a great attitude, creativity and flexibility.

The takeaway: buyers do turn to Facebook to find talent, so if your page is bare, and you give a poor sense of your business and personality, there's a chance you may be overlooked.

So, how do you show off your personality Facebook?

Then think about the type of content you can offer up that matches those traits.

- **▶** Do you have a sense of humor?
- ➤ Are you intellectually curious?
- ▶ Are you dedicated to great customer service?
- ➤ Are you a gear-head?
- **▶** Do you closely follow the photo industry?

"A person's social media 'voice' should be a combination between the needs of the audience and the personality of the individual," says <u>fashion and portrait photographer Lindsay Adler</u>. "In other words, figure out what is useful, engaging information for your target audience and provide them with this content. This helps draw the relevant group of potential clients to your work. Then, use your personality to help these potential clients connect with your work and business. People need to feel they can trust and be comfortable with the photographer they hire, and your personality in social media can help achieve this."

If your page is bare, and you give a poor sense of your business and personality, there's a chance you may be overlooked.

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TIPS TO SHOW-OFF YOUR PERSONALITY:

1. Be a person.

This is probably the most important rule of social media behavior in general. On Facebook, you want to operate as you would in the real world. This means you should refrain from constantly selling your services, use language that is approachable, and share content that is interesting. If you're not sure what constitutes as interesting content, ask yourself if you'd be inclined to like, share or comment on that post if you saw it on your News Feed. See example from freelance travel photographer Gavin Gough (right). ³

2. Tell a (short) story or interesting one-liner about your latest shoot and include an image.

Keep in mind that Mashable says, "Posts between 100 and 250 characters get 60% more likes, comments and shares than posts over 250 characters."

3. Give a behind-the-scenes look at your shoots: the set-up, the gear, yourself shooting on location.

This can give people an idea of how you work. Also think about giving a shout-out to the people you worked with that day. This shows you're a team player. Adventure photographer Corey Rich does a great job at this. Check out his page here.

4. Have a consistent voice when you post.

This means that the general tone, content and visuals are recognizable and don't feel random. Regularly posting in this way will also let your audience know to expect content from you, which will improve engagement.



³ Travel photographer Gavin Gough gives insight into his personality and lifestyle.



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5. Pick the right photo.

This should be a photo that strengthens your voice (which you've thought about and defined)—it adheres to your aesthetic by way of style or content, etc., and shows off work you love. We recommend sharing at least one photo per day, versus creating an album of photos to share. One image often has a greater impact than multiple images strung together because a single photo is easier for your followers to consume and engage with (e.g. like share, repost) ⁴

6. Choose a great Facebook cover that highlights your unique shooting style.

For those who like your page for the first time, it will likely be one of the first things they notice, so you want to make a great first impression. Read over Facebook's <u>guidelines</u> for appropriate cover images before choosing yours. ⁵



⁴Example: Single Image - Nico Morgan



⁵Example: Cover Photo by food photographer Jonathan Gayman



#2:

Share content from others

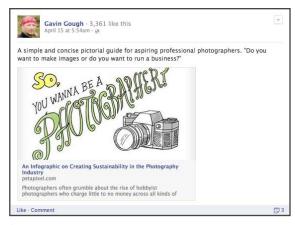
paging others and sharing their content on Facebook is just as important as posting original content from your own blog and portfolio. Sharing blogs, stories, videos, or images you find interesting shows that you're not self-consumed, and you also have a real interest in the industry.

Keep in mind that Facebook is an "inbound" marketing tool, which means you're drawing your audience in by way of the things you're offering. What you share should always be interesting tidbits that would appeal to your target audience, and these tidbits can come from outside sources.

For example, do you photograph dogs? Is there an article you read in the New York Times about dogs' emotional lives you could share? Or, do you aim to provide educational resources to help your audience expand their Photoshop skills? Who in the photo or tech industry—individuals or companies—do you admire and is posting interesting work or stories on their own Facebook pages that you could share?

And whenever you can, team up with a brand, company or a vendor to cross promote. If you're a wedding photographer shooting a wedding cake, find out who the bakery is and tag them in your Facebook photos. If they share your work, you'll be reaching a whole new group of people in a related market. ⁶

Sharing blogs, stories, videos, or images you find interesting shows that you're not self-consumed, and you also have a real interest in the industry.



⁶Example: Share work from other pages - Gavin Gough

TIPS TO SHARE CONTENT FROM OTHERS:

1. "Like" pages from leading photo blogs, and other photographers you follow.

For inspiration of blogs to keep tabs on, check out our own wrap-up of the best photography blog posts of 2012. Keep in mind that once you like their Facebook pages, their content will start to appear in your own News Feed. When you see a post that you think might interest your audience, hit "share."

2. Sign up for newsletters and subscribe to feeds.

Some examples include Pro Photo Daily, plus other photo-industry weekly newsletters like PDN. That way, you won't miss posts from publications and industry thought leaders that are most important to you. A service like Feedly will also let you aggregate your favorite blogs in one spot so you can quickly skim for interesting news and updates.

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3. Let people know you've shared their work.

If you share content without using the share function (so, instead, by simply linking to an article, resource, or gallery, consider shooting that photographer or blogger an email or Facebook message to let them know that you've shared their content. People appreciate when you help them spread the word about their work, and taking a quick moment to let them know may leave a lasting impression and make them more likely to share your own content sometime down the road. ⁷



⁷Example: Share other's work - Andy Biggs



#3:

Be social

eing active on Facebook doesn't solely mean pushing content to your audience—what you're trying to do is build a community, or a conversation, around your photography brand or what inspires you. With that in mind, think about how you can generate conversations that will last. Conversations can help produce more likes, shares, and of course, comments, which all help increase your Facebook exposure.

But how do you get the ball rolling?

To encourage people to actively engage with your content, try asking questions or feedback from your community. Most people like to help and give opinions, so open-ended questions are an opportunity to let them do that. For example, is there a portfolio review you want to ask if your community thinks is worth signing up for? Is a photographer battling a copyright lawsuit and you want to ask people their thoughts on the issue? Are you curious to know what people are shooting over the weekend? In the same vein, you can also offer your opinion about these same topics. If your opinion is different than most, your post may attract even more attention.

Whenever you do pose a question, make sure you keep tabs on comments so you can respond in a timely fashion. Nature photographer and PhotoShelter member Mike Cavaroc says, "It's best to respond promptly whenever someone communicates with you on Facebook. This gives the follower a sense that they're communicating with someone who's actively listening. People want to know that there's a real human behind the screen, and they're not talking to a brick wall."

The advantage to real dialogue on Facebook is that you may also make some excellent connections that can translate offline. You may even connect with your favorite established or emerging photographers by keeping tabs on how they're evolving both their businesses and techniques. If you feel comfortable engaging in a dialogue about these issues, share your opinion and ask for theirs.

Also keep in mind that posting content and asking questions that are relevant and timely will likely guarantee your post a spot in your followers' feeds. Examples of relevant posts may be a big sports event (think the World Series or the Super Bowl), an event of interest (the Royal Wedding or an election), or the death of a beloved celebrity (Farrah Fawcett, Michael Jackson). Is there a way to reference these topics that can relate to your photography business and what interests you? How can you talk about these subjects in a way that will engage your followers in conversation?

Most people like to help and give opinions, so open-ended questions are an opportunity to let them do that.

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TIPS TO BE MORE SOCIAL ON FACEBOOK:

1. Respond to comments, react to your audience and actively engage whenever you can.

Also visit other pages and engage with their own content through likes, comments, and shares. For example, check out this post from the photography blog, Petapixel, asking "which type of photographer are you?" The question asks you to engage with the link they've posted and respond. When you read through blogs or share your own posts, think about what questions you can ask in connection to an article that would open the floor and encourage responses. Also see this great example from wildlife photographer Elliot Neep.

2. Use hashtags.

A more recent feature, Facebook hashtags operate in a similar way to Twitter. By adding hashtags that are relevant to your Facebook posts (ie: #photography, #photojournalism, or the hashtag of a specific photo event you attended), this will move your content into a larger conversation that others can look for in the Facebook search bar. Here's a short beginner's guide to optimizing hashtags on Facebook.

3. Tag people or vendors you've worked with.

A great way to keep people interested in your page is by making them literally a part of it. By tagging your clients in session images, or a vendor you worked with, you'll give the friends of your clients a chance to see your post (friends of friends can usually see the image you posted of them once it has been tagged) even though they may not follow your page. Because of this, images that are tagged are far more likely to be shared. Not sure your client wants to be tagged? Send them an email first and ask.

Award-winning wedding photographer Lisa Devlin has mastered tagging her clients, and also vendors like floral shops, make-up artists, shoe stores, parks, and locations, which all dramatically increase engagement. 8



⁸ Example: Tagging - Lisa Devlin



#4:

Offer giveaways and coupons

f you sell directly to consumers, one great way to get people engaged with your business is to offer them a sales incentive. Giveaways and coupons are one of the most effective ways to get people excited about making purchases and signing up for your services.

For example, running a discount for a limited time can be a great way to create buzz and draw in customers. Do you want to offer a special 20% off holiday print sale during the first two weeks of December? 30% off for New Year's Day? What about 15% off your products to the first 10 people who share your post? There's lots of room to get creative. To run a promotion, Facebook also has specific Promotion Guidelines which let you know what you can and cannot do. Those are important to check out before you get started.

While directly offering products and services for sale can be an effective way to convert Facebook visitors into paying customers, this strategy should be handled with tact. Social media is intended to be a two way dialogue, and regularly screaming "Buy my photos!", even at a discount, will turn people off fast. However, people do know that this is a hub for your business, so they should expect some level of promotion, which you should take advantage of.

If you first build trust and credibility by participating and listening, and adding value, your followers will even appreciate some self-promotion on your end—especially if they have an affinity for the brand you've created. The common rule of thumb? You should promote your sales and services about 10% of the time. That's 1 out of every 10 posts.

TIPS ON PROMOTING GIVEAWAYS AND COUPONS

1. Think about what day of the week and time of day you want to promote your giveaway.

The best time to post is the time your audience is online, and this will differ from photographer to photographer. The "posts" tab available in your own Facebook Insights has an option to see exactly when most of your fans are online. Check out this article, FAQ: What's the Best Time To Post On Facebook?, for more information about relying on your page's own data to inform you of what day and time you should post your promotions (or posts in general). 9

Giveaways and coupons are one of the most effective ways to get people excited about making purchases and signing up for your services.













⁹Example: Surprise your Facebook followers - John Keatley

2. Map out your calendar and note major holidays, events, or personal mile-markers that happen throughout the year.

Brainstorm all occasions from New Years to Thanksgiving to the Valentine's Day to the Olympics. How can you brand your sales discount to sync up with relevant upcoming events? Facebook puts greater weight on content that's relevant or newsworthy, so attaching a promotion to these occasions will likely increase your posts' exposure.

Also think through how you can surprise and delight your Facebook fans with free stuff. See this great example from advertising photographer John Keatley.

3. Experiment.

For any giveaways or coupons you promote, we also suggest you try the option to "Boost Post", which is a choice on the bottom right hand corner of every post you share. Experiment by spending \$5 on your next post and see if your likes, comments, and shares increase. ¹⁰



¹⁰ How to boost your posts

When <u>nature photographer Jim Patterson</u> spent \$5 to promote <u>this post</u>, it received 671 likes and 52 shares—the most he got all year. This boost can be particularly helpful when applied to a promotion or discount you're hoping to spread the word about.

PART IV:

Examples of Great Facebook Pages

ow that you have a sense of why you should have a Facebook page for your photography business, check out some awesome examples of photographers who are doing it right—posting content regularly that is engaging and interesting to their audience. We selected a handful of photographers' pages who we thought do a great job of showcasing how the platform can help illustrate your brand, engage an audience, and drive people back to your website. They're using great tactics including: posting regularly, asking interesting questions, showcasing compelling photography, tactfully promoting their work, and providing their audience with an excellent sense of their personality. Take a look:

Neil Weaver Photography



Tomas van Houtryve Photography



Caught the Light Photography



Brighton Dog Photography











Fine Art by Yew Kwang



Brian Smith Photography



Michal Fattal Photography



Brooke Shaden Photography



Lindsay Adler Photography



John Keatley Photography



Elliot Neep Wildlife Photography



Corey Rich Productions



Jade Bealle Photography











Carli Davidson Pet Photography



Jim Patterson Photography



James Bourrett Fine Art Photography



Jimmy Williams Photography



Jim Jordan Photography



Solas Weddings and Portrait Photography



Robin Moore Photography



Lisa Devlin Photography



Quintin Lake Photography













Matt Brandon - The Digital Trekker



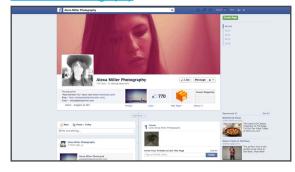
Free Roaming Photography



John Dunne Photography



Alexa Miller Photography



Gavin Gough Photography



Nico Morgan



PART V:

Conclusion

ow that you know the benefits of having a Facebook page for your photography business, it's time to put it to the test. Experimenting is the key to finding out what works (and what doesn't) to ultimately help you optimize engagement and grow a quality following.

Test out running promotions, follow other photographers and publications on Facebook, and join the conversation. Also, remember to plan ahead. Check the calendar for potential holidays, personal mile markers or big seasons in your market that would be a good time to leverage someone else's audience. For example, if you're a portrait photographer can you find a local makeup artist who might want to get some portfolio shots of kids faces painted in the early autumn? Then maybe you can both run the images on your Facebook pages in time for Halloween.

Also keep in mind that although images are highly sharable, like any content, if there's an overabundance it loses that "special" quality, and runs the risk of becoming white noise. When you launch your page, you don't need to fill it up with all of the images in your gallery, or use it as a dumping ground for everything you can't fit in your portfolio. Instead, aim to post at least once a day. If you're an avid Facebook-er already, try to reduce to posting three times a day at most.

In the end, don't forget these takeaways:

- ▶ Facebook is a huge community and it's important for your business to have a presence there. Why? Because it's likely a go-to destination for your target audience.
- ▶ Facebook is optimized for search engines, which means someone searching for your business will have an easier time finding you if you have a Facebook page that is updated and full of engaging and shareable content.
- ▶ Facebook is an opt-in platform, which means that by liking your page, fans and clients are agreeing to receive whatever information you want to present them with via their News Feeds. Balance sharing information you think will be interesting to your audience with news and promotions relevant to your own business. If you provide great content, when you decide to promote yourself directly, people will be more inclined to listen and follow through.

Ready to get started? When you feel like your page is in a good place, shoot us the link at marketing@photoshelter.com. We'd love to take a look.

PART V:

Resources

MASHABLE: Facebook Marketing: Why Less Is More

INC.: How to Create an Effective Company Facebook Page

MASHABLE: The 10 Most-Liked Brands By U.S. Facebook Users

HUBSPOT: Demystifying How Facebook's EdgeRank Algorithm Works

FSTOPPERS: How To Size Your Images So They Show Their Best on Facebook

SEARCH ENGINE WATCH: Facebook Photo Sizes Cheat Sheet for Marketers: Apps, Ads, Albums & More

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY SCHOOL: How to Promote Your Photography Using Facebook

ZENOLOGUE: 7 Reasons Why Your Photography Business Needs A Facebook Page

POPULIST PHOTOGRAPHY: How I Use Facebook To Market My Photography

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY SCHOOL: What Every Photographer Needs to Know about Facebook

PHOTOSHELTER: The Photographer's Social Media Handbook

PHOTOSHELTER: SEO for Photographers: Bootcamp & Guide

PHOTOSHELTER: Google Analytics for Photographers

PHOTOSHELTER: The Photographer's Guide to Copyright

TOOL: Bitly URL Shortener

TOOL: Google Analytics

FACEBOOK: How To Set Up Your Facebook Page

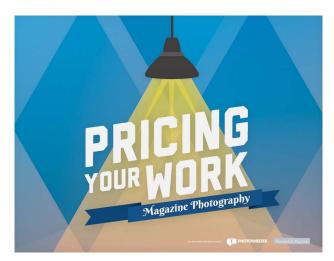
FACEBOOK: How To Optimize A Business Page

FACEBOOK: How To Use Hashtags

FACEBOOK: Marketing Classroom







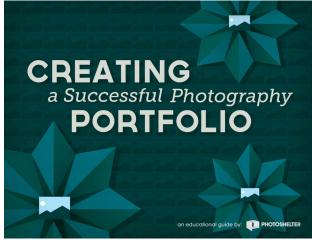


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