

7 Ways To Make Your Studio Website More Sellable

*“I put up my website a few months ago,
and I’m still not at the top of the search engines.”*

*“Why isn’t my website working?
I’m still not making money online.”*

If I had a dollar for every time I’ve heard these phrases! Unfortunately many people still believe putting up a website will be the answer to their marketing problems. If you’re having trouble getting people in to your business using traditional marketing methods, chances are you’re problems will carry through to your online marketing methods as well.

Thousands of websites are being added to the Internet everyday. By doing a recent search on Google I discovered:

- 66,900,000 pages exist with the word “photography”
- 9,270,000 pages exist with the words “photography studio”
- 1,450,000 pages exist with the words “wedding photography studio”
- 991,000 pages exist with the words “professional wedding photography studio”
- 196,000 pages exist with the words “California professional wedding photography studio”

And if you’re beyond the top 20-30 pages, chances are you’re never getting in front of your potential customer. So where do you go from here? How do you use your website to get in front of a good, qualifying potential customer?

A successful website is not something you build over night. It is a work in progress, something that you should work on week after week. To start you off, here are 7 ideas to help grow your website and the potential it has to market your business.

1. **Create a professional site.** This is probably the first thing you see in any list talking about how to build up an Internet presence. Yet it’s amazing how many sites are out there that still have a homemade appearance.

Your website is an extension of your business. Not only should it be informative, it should be entertaining, and provide people with exactly what they are looking for. You are a photographer. Show people your work. Make them feel the emotion of your photography, and the service you provide to your customers. A gallery of a dozen images that each take seconds to load is not emotional. Professionalism comes from knowing what your customers want, and giving them more than they expect.

If you can’t create a professional website by yourself, hire it done. Because you

earn your money through photography, don't expect yourself to be good at all forms of creative graphics. Websites are a marketing tool, not a creative extension of your business. Foremost, your website is a sales tool that can bring in unimaginable profits to your business – but only if you use it as such.

2. **Pricing on your website.** The biggest debate on the Internet for photographers is whether to list pricing information. On one hand, listing your pricing will guarantee only truly motivated people will contact your studio. On the other hand, every customer you have will be calling you solely based on your pricing.

I myself prefer to not list pricing, or do it in a very discreet way. I want my customers calling me because they love my work. I want them to feel the passion of my art, and call me because they can see themselves in my photographs. Price is secondary.

If you still feel pricing is something you have to list on your website, list it only once on your services page. After you describe what services you offer your customers, list a phrase like “starting from \$3900”. This gives your potential customer a basis for your services, yet doesn't make the main goal of your website price.

3. **Creating a purpose.** What is the overall purpose of your website? Is it to get a potential customer to contact you? Is it to drive your existing customers to a place to purchase your photographs? Before your website can be successful, you have to discover your number one purpose. Then use every page to motivate people towards your purpose.

Again, your website is more than a brochure. It is a member of your sales team that ‘talks’ to your potential customer. When you talk with a person in person, or on the phone, your ultimate goal is to get them to make some type of commitment. Your website should have the same goal.

4. **Showcase your work.** You're a photographer. Showing a dozen images doesn't show a potential client what you do. Pull your customer in by providing them with a wealth of information on your website. Clients come to you for photographs; show them photographs! Photography is one of those rare industries in which you can't have too many graphics on your website, providing they are small files that load quickly.
5. **Use motivating text.** Are you writing to your customer in a professional manner? Does your website use the same language you use when meeting with a person face to face? Your website is your sales tool. Treat it as if it were a 24/7 sales person, and let your website do the talking for you.

On the Internet, the one thing you can't do is hide. Depending on how a person searches, every website is a potential find. Because someone from New York, or California, or even India may pull up your site, how are you talking to him or her? Instead of writing your text from your perspective, write as if you are a person in a far away country that knows nothing about your industry. Her sole purpose is to find out more information on wedding photography. Are you educating her? Are you telling her what she wants to know AND what she cares about? (Most people don't care what type of cameras you use; they only want to know how they benefit.)

6. **Create links to other sites.** Is your site a useful resource? Think of yourself as a mini-wedding coordinator or parent advisor. Depending on the type of photography you specialize in, provide your customer useful information to go beyond just hiring your services.

A wedding photographer can provide links to caterers, florists, and reception halls. A family or children's photographer can provide links to schools, clothing and sports stores, and community events.

Tip: When you're linking to other websites, have them link back to you as well. This boosts up your ratings in the search engines!

7. **Get your site listed on other sites.** There are hundreds of ways of getting your site listed on other websites. Linking is one of the easiest methods. But beyond linking, you may try other means.

Purchase banner ads. Many sites offer paid advertising, usually at very reasonable prices.

Purchase classified advertising. Many newspapers and magazines offer a deal where you purchase an ad in their print edition, and you get a website listing for free. For example, we have a Colorado Parent magazine in our community. By purchasing an ad in the classified section, you also get a listing on the website.

Find community directories to list your services in. Larger communities have at least one directory online that makes it easy to find resources within your area. Join at least one, and always be on the lookout for others that may benefit your business.

Keep your eyes open for opportunities to advertise your website, both online and in traditional marketing methods.

Lori Osterberg has created three successful businesses in the past 10 years, and along the way discovered the secrets of taking a local small business and turning it into a worldwide success. She now shares this passion with people all over the world, and

speaks, writes and mentors on using technology to grow your business – and stay small at the same time! Receive her FREE ezine at www.VisionOfSuccess.com.