

PPCO

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS OF CENTRAL OHIO

MARCH 2009

Click Topiks Newsletter

March Meeting: Round Table Discussion

The round table discussion is back by popular demand.

So get your notepads out and jot your questions down on such topics as Weddings, Portraits, Lighting, Workflow, Exposure, Marketing, Photoshop, Other Software, Business, Sports, and Seniors.

Our moderator for the evening will be Jim Nardone. The discussions will be timed so everyone has a chance to ask their questions, and get a satisfactory answers.

We will have our swap meet before and through dinner. So try to get your business conducted then.

We need to allow as much time to the round table as possible.

Mar 4-9, 2009

56th Annual Convention, Print Competition and Exhibition

Location: Dayton Convention Center and Crowne Plaza, Dayton, Ohio



PPCO PRESIDENTS MESSAGE March 2009

Hello everyone,

Can you believe that it's March already? Where does time go? Many of you are feeling the effects of the weakened economy! Many of us are working harder than ever before. Have faith and hope that it will be short and it will pass.

Look around your studio and see what you can do to cut expenses. Phone, trash, water cooler, insurance, vehicle, gas, outsource, etc... Digital technology has been good in many respects. But postproduction work is costing more than once thought. Ask yourself where your time is better spent, behind the computer retouching images or marketing your products/services.




Discipline yourself to retrieve email two or three times a day. Email can be a huge time waster. work on your client list, send a letter like "Where have you been?" along with a follow up call. If we spent as much time working on relationships as we did on postproduction our business would be much better off.

Thanks for allowing me to vent a little. It's my hope that it will help us all look at how we should spend our time.

One other item. Please read the bottom of the last page of the newsletter. PPA has changed the entry deadline for the International Print Competition. I just wanted you to be aware of it.

Thank you,

Jim Nardone

| <i>PPCO Board of Directors</i> | |
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| <i>2008/2009 Calendar</i> |
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| Sep. 8 Patrick Rice Seminar : Wedding Photography 2008 The State of the Industry |
| Oct. 13 Alexis Riffle "Creating Cash flow through Event Photography" |
| Nov. 3 Shawn Wright "Stop Trying to be Perfect and Start being Remarkable" |
| Nov. 9 & 10 Fall Two Day Conference - Hilton - Easton |
| Dec. 8 Members Christmas Party - The home of Penney Adams |
| Jan. 19 Print Competition - Judges Bob Davis, Darrell Moll, Gregg Wurtzler, Bob Hughes as Jury Chair |
| Feb. 9 Matt Lydy "Social Media Marketing" |
| Mar. 4 -9 Mid-East States Convention – Dayton OH |
| Mar. 16 Round Table & Swap Shop Moderator: Jim Nardone |
| Apr. 13 Jim Chagares Photoshop Tips and Techniques |
| May 11 TBA BOARD ELECTIONS |

Developing a Marketing Calendar

By Stacey Friedlein

Developing a strong plan of action for promoting your small business is maybe the most important thing you can do. All of the talent, desirable product or outstanding service in the world means nothing, if you can't sell your work.

You will want to schedule time for doing your annual market planning. Most small businesses feel that they need to set-up their marketing calendar to run January through December. There may be a flaw in that thinking. If you were to set-up your calendar in that time frame, you will be forced to do your market planning in the last quarter of the year. For many small businesses it is the worst time of the year for such planning. You are far too busy in October, November and December to be doing market panning. Schedule time to do this during your off-season this is the time of the year when you have time to invest in planning.

Many retailers do as much as seventy-five percent of their annual volume in the last quarter of the year and have little time for market planning. Depending when your slow season is, you can set-up your market-planning calendar to begin at the end of your slow season. This allows you the luxury of doing your annual planning when you have the time to give it the attention it needs instead of in your peak season. A note should be made.

Annual Planning Get-away

Creating the proper environment for your annual planning is very important. You may want to do this away from the business. You can make this a working vacation. Make a reservation at a local hotel or resort for the weekend.

Be sure to include all of your key personnel in this weekend. Their input can be very valuable. After all they have the daily contact with your clients and can offer a perspective that you may not always think about.

This becomes an opportunity for you to show your employees that they are valuable to your business. The weekend also can be viewed as a reward for your employees.

Being away from the business and the phone will allow you to work uninterrupted without the distractions of the studio. Set-up you're planning get-away so that you have a comfortable mix of work and leisure activities. Spend a few hours doing planning, take a break and go swimming or play golf or go shopping then come back and have another work session. These breaks can help keep you fresh when you are doing your planning. This can be a good opportunity for you to unwind and relax with your staff. Just don't forget that the primary reason for the get-away is to do market planning.

We have a great resource to assist you with your market planning. You can learn about our Market Planning Calendar and Workbook at <http://www.inthespiritconsulting.com/Company%20Store.htm>.

Be Prepared When the Telephone Rings

by Stacey Friedlein

How you answer the telephone may be the single most important factor in successfully booking sessions in your studio. You need to realize the phone ringing is not an interruption in your day. Instead understand it is your lifeline. When the phone rings it is an opportunity for your business. So, take a deep breath, relax and answer the phone pleasantly.

How do you react to that inevitable question, “How much is an 8x10?” Your response can make the difference between booking a session or hearing an immediate “thank you” and click of the receiver in your ear. People ask this question because they do not know what they really need to ask. It becomes your responsibility to lead the conversation to booking the session.

One of the most effective ways to deal with phone requests for information about your services is to answer a question with a question.

By using this method you will begin to get to know your client. Be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm. If you are excited about making the customer's portrait, they will become excited about having you do it for them.

It's important to get the name and phone number of the person calling. Get this information early in the conversation. This way you will be able to call them by name. And more importantly, you will be able to follow up on the lead later.

A good method for tracking this information is the use of a pre-portrait questionnaire. This type of form allows you to record the needed information and assures that you don't leave anything out. (Please contact us if you would like a sample.)

Show genuine interest in their portrait. Ask who will be photographed and where they would like to have them made. Do they want to come to the studio or would they prefer the comfort of their own home. You may also want to suggest an alternative location. Many people have probably not even considered the possibility of having their portrait done somewhere other than the studio. This gives you the opportunity to point out the advantages especially if it is children or a family that you will be photographing. People are generally more comfortable in an environment they are familiar with.

Ask if they are considering a formal or casual portrait. This will have some bearing on location and background selection.

Find out when they would like to have the portrait made. Is this being done as a gift or for a special occasion? You will want to be sure that you can produce the final images in the time frame they need.

This might be as much information as you will be able to get from the first phone conversation. Be honest with the client. By taking this approach you have taken the emphasis off of price and put it on creating something of lasting value. At some point you will need to discuss price. Now it is a secondary consideration and may not be nearly as important to them.

A clothing consultation is essential. There are a number of issues you will want to discuss at this time. You will want to coordinate clothing and props with the type of portrait being done. Nothing is worse than to photograph a family group where half the family is formally attired and half is in casual clothing. Find out if there are any special hobbies that can be included in the portrait session. This helps personalize the portrait. When this is done the subject(s) will be more inclined to buy more and larger portraits.

When planning a group portrait you will want to discuss coordinating colors. Be sure that subjects are in the same color tones and keys. Avoid loud patterns etc... You need to discuss this with the client. They will not necessarily know to do this. Poor clothing selections can kill additional sales because the images will not be visually appealing. You may want to have the subjects come in to the studio prior to the session to discuss clothing and show you what they plan to wear. It will be much easier to make these decisions early instead of the day of the session.

Find out the last time they had a portrait made, where they were photographed if it was not by you. This allows you to learn more about their experiences and expectations in having a portrait made.

Discover where the portrait is to be displayed. This will have some bearing on the type of photography you may want to do. It is also a good time to plant the seeds for wall portraits. Most people have not considered where they will place the portrait. By discussing these options they begin thinking in terms of a wall portrait.

Find out who the portrait is for. This will help in the selection of backgrounds, props and mood of the portrait.

Good preparation is essential to successful portrait sessions. Communication on the key items outlined here can help make the session.

A Message from Gary Gerheart

Its been too long for me to get back to PPCO - its a good time for me to come back.

"I served PPCO for a number of years. From board member to President - and Chairman for 3 years. It is in the philosophy of Woody Hayes ' you can never pay back, you must always pay forward" that I offer this. For 12 days of my year, I will work for one of you. It might be shooting - washing windows - cleaning - labeling - it does not matter. Each one of these days is dedicated to helping whoever you may be, with whatever I can do.

Without ever hesitating, Heidi and Kerry, John Cafaro, Glen and many more have always helped me. Its a part fo the spirit of PPCO - and moreover - just great hearted people. Email me for your day soon.

gary@gerheart.com

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Gary Gerheart

Owner.Photographer.Teacher.Artist.Father.Friend.

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Thoughts about Poverty and Photography in the 1930's

Provided by John Holliger

These are thoughts from Daring to Look by Anne Whiston Spirn about Dorothea Lange's work for the government in the early 1930's. I was surprised to learn that she was a high paid portrait photographer in San Francisco or Berkeley. She was looking out her window one day and saw the long lines of people walking by looking for work. She thought she would take her camera out of her studio and down onto the street to see what she might photograph. And that was the beginning.

She has remarkable reflections about how she interacted with the people she photographed in the migrant camps and the tents and cars people lived in, as they were blown out of the mid-west by the dust storms.

Here is Dorothea Lange: "Real poverty is when life doesn't meet the human needs... and can't, no matter how the people struggle. No country has ever closely scrutinized itself visually that I know of... I know what we could make of it if people only thought we could dare look at ourselves." (my bold emphasis)

In another place she speaks of how she interacted with those she wanted to photograph.

Often it's just sticking around and being there, remaining there, not swooping in and swooping out in a cloud of dust; sitting down on the ground with people, letting the children look at your camera with their dirty, grimy, little hands, and putting their fingers on the lens, and you let them, because you know that if you will behave in a generous manner, you're very apt to receive it... I have asked for a drink of water and taken a long time to drink it, and I have told everything about myself long before I asked any question. "What are you doing here?" they'd say. "Why with your camera? What do you want to take pictures of us for? Why don't you go down and do this, that, and the other?" I've taken a long time, patiently, to explain, and as truthfully as I could.

In another place Lange writes,

In one of his poems, Wallace Stevens says: "I am what is around me." In the same way, the objects with which people furnish their homes can speak more clearly about them than anything else, even more clearly than the people themselves. Of the woman whose home is an unmade bed, a view of that bed can sometimes tell more than her face. The same is true of the man whose home is a bar stool. In photographs particularly, a still life can often declare more about people than a portrait... So although these ought to be pictures OF people, they ought also to be pictures WITHOUT people... We ought to know beyond a doubt that to some people the things we look at in these pictures are the most important things in the world--that to them, this desk or this garden, this bottle of pills, this racing form or this box of candy is home.

The author of that book, Anne Whiston Spirn, notes that "The word landscape in Nordic languages and Old English combined the root LAND (both a place and the people living there, as in country or nation) with a suffix related both to the verb to SHAPE and to the quality of association or partnership. The modern definition of landscape as "a picture representing a few of natural scen-

ery... a portion of land the eye can comprehend in a single view" has lost that deeper meaning. Spirn quotes from her book, the Language of Landscape.

Lange's images are black and white, and sometimes high contrast to match the shrill voice of someone speaking into a megaphone to a crowd, other times they are low contrast and light and soft, like the image of a mom sitting with her kids, just looking into the fields.

In another place Lange writes, "Your viewer, and he is a very mysterious person, you have to keep him in mind, always, and you don't know him. When he looks at such a wall [of photographs] on relationships, my hope would be that he would say to himself, "Oh yes, I know what she meant. I never thought of it, I never paid attention to it." Or... "I've seen that a thousand times." But he won't miss it again. You've told about the familiar, the understood; but in calling attention to what it holds, you have added to your viewer's confidence or his understanding, and the most complimentary thing... that anyone could ever say to you is, "I saw something today that you would have liked." Then you know you have reached him... If they say that, you know that you have reached them and given them something."

"I myself... see things, many things, many things that I never would have seen... had not... some people [who] lived with cameras in the world showed it to you, brought it to you, gave it to you, contributed it. (by Anne Whistler Spirn)

On the essence of a photograph, Lange observes: "What is it in the end? It is a mounted piece of paper with a photographic silver image on it. But in it there is an element which you can't call other than an act of love. That is the tremendous motivation behind it. And you give it. Not to a person, you give it to the world, to your world... an act of love--that's the deepest thing behind it... The audience, the recipient of it, gives that back."

International Print Competition

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION RULES

ENTRY DEADLINE IS MAY 1, 2009.

ONLINE REGISTRATION WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON.

The purpose of this competition is to allow the entrant to demonstrate their electronic imaging skill and expertise in pursuit of the PPA Master of Electronic Imaging Degree.

ELECTRONIC IMAGING COMPETITION RULES

ENTRY DEADLINE IS MAY 1, 2009.

ONLINE REGISTRATION WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON.

The purpose of this competition is to allow photographers to enter photographic prints, CD albums and/or traditional albums to be judged relative to the 12 Elements of a Merit Print. PPA members are eligible to achieve PPA Exhibition Merits toward the Master of Photography Degree. These rules pertain to images entered as prints created by traditional photographic processes as well as those captured electronically with a digital camera or scanner.