

PPCO

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS OF CENTRAL OHIO

NOVEMBER 2008

**Click Topiks
Newsletter**



Our November Speaker Shawn Wright

"Stop Trying to be Perfect and Start being Remarkable"

Shawn loves the business of photography, especially helping other photographers. He serves on the Executive Board for the Professional Photographers of Indiana and has received several awards for photographic excellence.

Shawn started his studio in Southern Indiana with \$200 and a lot of prayer. 17 years later he specializes in creating contemporary images of high school seniors, teams and business portraits. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the Indiana University School of Business where he majored in Marketing. But he claims his best schooling was done at "The School-of-Hard-Knocks". Shawn is a real believer in Word-of-Mouth Marketing and has studied extensively on how business people (particularly photographers) can influence it.

Shawn is a very excited individual who is passionate about great photography and even greater customer service. If you need a shot of high energy speaking combined with practical tips that can help your business grow then this session is for you.

Shawn is also happy to share tips on how he uses some unconventional software and hardware to eliminate all of his cropping, vignetting, logo placement and 80% of his retouching. And all of this is done "hands free" by his computer at 3 AM. Getting your life back from the computer because of his tips is alone worth the trip.

And as a added bonus Shawn can answer questions about in house printing with less fuss and more profit.



PPCO PRESIDENTS MESSAGE November 2008

Hello everyone,

One of the first things our board did this year was to carefully review the last two years of our groups financial situation. It wasn't hard to see that our income was struggling to cover our expenses for our monthly programs as well as other expenses incurred by our group. Aided by an excellent analysis by our former treasurer, Heidi Mechtly, we, as your board decided to reverse the trend of two down years by biting the bullet and raising our annual dues to \$95. We also chose to encourage new members by pricing their first visit at \$15.

This is in keeping with price structures of other photography and professional organizations. We're simply catching up with them in order to become fiscally sound.









A second area that we are working on is our monthly programs. We hope to bring higher profile speakers that will attract new members and keep old members coming back.

A final area is membership. We not only need new members, but want our former members to return. That's where you, our present and loyal membership, can help our group. Although we hear that our attendance is better than many of the other affiliates, we would like to see it return to the size of years past. We want others to learn what benefits, knowledge and friendship they are missing out on by not joining our group. **Would you please bring a new guest to our next meeting?**

We have an excellent speaker that is sure to motivate you with his great tips on how to get your computer to work for you while you are away from it! I don't know anyone that wouldn't benefit from that knowledge. Remember the next meeting is **NOVEMBER 3rd** – a week early this month.

If you don't bring a guest, we know where you live!

I also want to say thank you for all of the kind emails and cards that we received from our members offering condolences for Marianne's dad passing away. Thank you one and all.

<i>PPCO Board of Directors</i>	
	Chairperson of the Board Robert Hughes roberthughes@ameritech.net
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	Elected Member Susan Conover jconover@adams.net
	Elected Member Lisa Farnholtz photoblondie@columbus.rr.com

<i>2008/2009 Calendar</i>
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 - TBA
Jan. 12 Print Competition - Judges TBA
Feb. 9 Round Table & Swap Shop Moderator: TBA
Mar. 4 -9 Mid-East States Convention – Dayton OH
Mar. 16 TBA
Apr. 13 TBA
May 11 TBA BOARD ELECTIONS

Posing Groups

by: Clay Blackmore

During a time when everyone has a digital camera it's time that we set ourselves apart from what the amateurs are doing by creating fantastic compositions. One area in particular that I have found it easy to have the upper hand on the "uncle harry's" is in the area of groups. I have noticed that no matter how great the photojournalism is at a wedding, the clients keep ordering the groups! Let's discuss my thoughts for artistic group compositions and give you the top ten list for making group photography your specialty.

1. Have a plan. Using the circles in the diagram enclosed, we already know where the heads need to be placed for specific number of people we are photographing.
2. Bring posing stools. These pictures will never happen without adjustable stools.
3. Remember, people buy pictures based on two things, how does my body look and what is my expression. This reminds me to keep the heavy people in the back rows.
4. The need for speed. People will get tired of posing so we need to plan our work and work our plan, quickly.
5. Keep the lighting flat for big groups so there are no objectionable shadows. I never work with flash on camera for portrait work. I keep a flash unit just above the camera on a light stand, triggered by a remote sending unit.
6. For bigger groups always try to keep faces on the same plane so that front row does not appear twice as large as the back row. A higher camera position will help in this area. Don't forget your ladder.
7. Learn how to create large compositions using arm chairs. This gives you three rows of faces all on the same plane. Keep the slimmer women in the front row, and then add the slimmer, younger boys and girls on the arms, and stand the men in the back row. I always take the children and use them like cement to fill in areas that might otherwise be distracting.

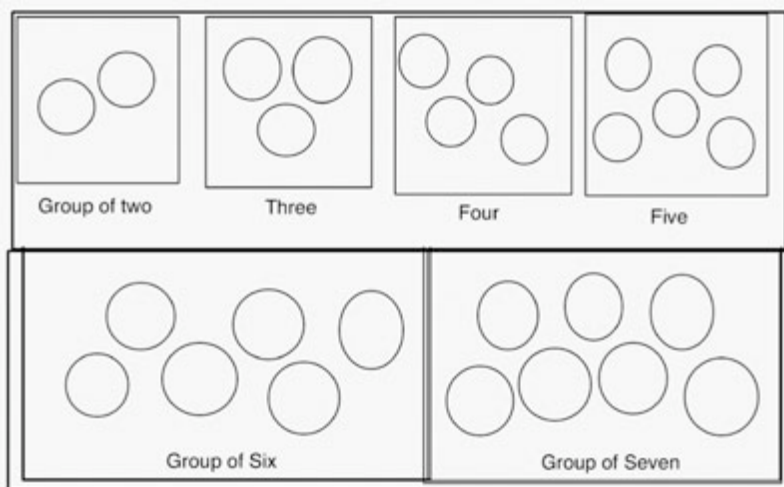
8. Use a tripod. I always have the camera mounted to a tripod for two reasons. First, camera shake will ruin everything, however, more importantly, if I need to go in and make a slight change to the composition, I can step in and out of the group and when I return to the camera, I don't have to recompose.

9. Bring the people forward and keep the people in the middle to the front of the room and let the background be just that, the background. This will add depth to the indoor groups. Be sure and add a back light if necessary, to separate the group from the back wall and remove shadows that might be evident from your main light.

10. Practice! Practice! Practice! Ask family members, or friends from church to come in for some free portraits. The more you practice, the more confidence you build.

Remember that it takes true skill to be photographer of groups. Using these guidelines go out and begin jump starting your business with some new families, creating family groups that will be sure to become heirlooms for generations.

Clay





Two ways to win in a recession as a photographer

by: Charles J. Lewis, M. Photog., Cr.

How's business? Do you have all the great clients you wanted to have for this time of year? Does the economy have you worried? Is the phone not ringing like you want it to right now?

If you had some negative answers to these questions, I totally understand how you feel. I thought you might find this Hot Tip very helpful right now.

But first, I want you to realize that I value our relationship. I am honored that you have studied my secrets, and that you look to me for help and guidance in how to build the studio of your dreams.

Also, I want you to know that even though the news media is hell bent on scaring us all - you don't need to be scared. There are things you can do - PROVEN things - that will not only make you money right now in these challenging times, but will also help you GROW AND PROSPER during these times! Let's talk here about 2 of them.

Here's 2 things you can do to make more money right now with your photography.

1. Realize that there are still people looking for a good photographer right now in your area. Yes there are. (There may be fewer people looking right now - but there are STILL people looking!)

So the first key secret is to realize that you want to get a larger share of those people who are out there looking for photography now.

What's the best, fastest way to do this? Become better on the telephone. Book more of those people who ARE calling you.

How? By asking them questions and then shutting up and listening to their answers. By doing this, rather than trying to "sell" them - you are building trust and rapport with them. So stop talking and start asking.

What do you ask them? Here's some of my favorite questions:

"Who are you thinking of having photographed?"

"If you don't mind me asking, why are you thinking of having a portrait created now?"

"How important are these photographs to you?"

"What's most important to you about _____?" (Where you fill in the blank with the type of photography they are thinking of having created.)

I know you have heard me talk about this before in my newsletters and other materials, but it's even MORE important now!

2. Kick up your marketing - NOW! That's right. Most photographers are thinking of ways to cut costs, and unfortunately for them, most of them are cutting their marketing. No! No! No! Huge mistake!

Here's the really big secret: There are really inexpensive things you can do right now - (some of them FREE) - that are extremely effective in getting HIGHLY QUALIFIED PEOPLE CALLING YOU RIGHT NOW - TODAY!

What you want to do right now, this very minute, is to figure out the best PROVEN, inexpensive or free ways to get your phone ringing with more qualified, excited people who respect you and want to work with your - even though we're in a Recession, and even though you are NOT the least expensive photographer in town!

How? Let me mention a couple of my favorite free or inexpensive ways to get your phone ringing right now:

Telemarketing to your VIP's. Its a proven fact. Calling your best clients with whom you have worked in the past ALWAYS MAKES MONEY! Always! And it's FREE!

Now, you're NOT calling them to "sell" them. You're calling them to let them know you enjoyed working with them in the past, and to find out how everyone is doing. For example, if you photographed their child, Jennifer a year or two ago, you're going to ask how Jennifer is doing? etc.

What you will find is that many of these people, after you have chatted with them in a very FRIENDLY way for a bit, will bring up something like this: "I'm so glad you called. I have been thinking of having another portrait of Jennifer, but I just never seem to get around to calling you. Would it be possible to have something finished by Christmas to give to my husband???......" Take it from there!

Another extremely effective marketing secret - and compared to many other ways of advertising - this is very inexpensive - is to have Exhibits of your photography in places where your Target Market shops, eats, has her hair done, works, etc.

I'm always totally amazed at how few of my members or "students" actually do this! It's an extremely powerful way of marketing! Do this - and do this now! It will get your phone ringing IMMEDIATELY!

Another powerful way to get your phone to ring - that is FREE - is Speaking at women's service clubs. I did this for years when I was struggling to get my studio profitable. It really works. Most service clubs are desperate for a speaker at each meeting they have. and most clubs have weekly meetings!

All you do is go to your local Chamber of Commerce and get a list of the local service clubs, and start calling the contact person listed under each club. It's fast, it's simple, and it works.

You present a free program, about how fine photography is still most people's favorite way to decorate their home. You show examples of your finest photography, tell a few stories, and your 20 minutes is up. And you know what? People will come up to you after the program (as long as you were friendly and enthusiastic) and ask you what you charge, and is there still time to get something for the Holidays, etc. Take it from there!

Oh, here's one last important point: It's vital that you are very careful to not allow the negativity you hear on the "news" programs to cause you to become negative.

You must be positive at all times. When ever someone asks you how business is, you respond that business is really fantastic! (No, you are not lying - in these challenging times, ANY business you have at all is "fantastic." Right?)

Now go out there and TAKE ACTION - nothing happens if you don't take action first!

All the best,

Chuck Lewis