

MARKETING FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

It's a brave new world

We only had three channels before:

Direct Mail

Workbook style yearly

Personal Appointments





WE MANAGE MORE

Of course we continue with the basics. There is nothing more powerful than a one-on-one presentation. Direct mail still works. Workbook advertising still works.

But there is more... much more.



How Social Media Changed the Landscape

Social media became the default communication tool between creators and those who need the creations. Makers vs Users. This transcended all previous forms of communication.

Email and Dropbox are the new Fed-X.

Slack and Text are the new email.

Photographs are now a visual communication tool

Content creators must expand their view of content

Preciousness is giving way to ubiquitous imagery

BRANDS control the narrative



COMMUNICATION IS NOW PREDOMINANTLY VISUAL



BUT THERE IS STILL A NEED FOR PERSONAL CONNECTION



We Compete for Attention and Time

The most valuable asset any of us have is time. It cannot be replaced, made up, replenished, or controlled. It is a constant. Time is the consistent challenge to the artist and client alike. Time spares no one.

Respect it for what it is.

We communicate visually, so we market that way as well. And that means in everything we do, not just portfolios.



We Compete for Attention and Time

Gaining attention in a crowded space takes more than just stunts and tricks. It takes a steady commitment to the community at large. You must BE a part of the community to gain the attention of it.

“People don’t care what you know. They want to know that you care - about them.”

– Zig Ziglar



THE SHARING ECONOMY

Which of course is not really an economy if you apply the standards of what we learned of as an economy.

But it exists nonetheless.

And it is not going away. So stop whining about it and get to know it.



WHY THE ECONOMY OF FREE IS A MONEY MAKER

Many times we try to forge the rules of the 20th century onto the reality of the 21st century and fail. This is not news, much of the 20th century is out of date, outmoded, nearly unrecognizable. So it is with purely ROI expectations.

To gain attention in the sharing economy, you must share. You must become a part of the ecosystem that your clients are in.

You may not like it, but that dislike comes from the mindset of the 20th century, not the 21st. In order to change your reality you must change your beliefs. IMPERATIVELY so.

"Stock Block"

The equivalent of "writer's block" for image seekers.

You've looked for hours, you can't find the right one, it doesn't have the "right" look. Omg what is that? Too expensive... More of the same... Boring. Curses. Help!

JOIN THE MOVEMENT



Hi, We're DEATH TO STOCK

Death to Stock is a resource, belief system, and call to action for artists around the world who unite in their journeys to make their own way.

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Our mission is to resource the creatives with tools they can use for their projects, teach them what we know, and consistently fuel them.

We believe that everyone can be an artist, because being an artist is an approach to your craft rather than a title you acquire.

We pursue this mission because isolation, inequality, and scarce resources lead us to remove humanity from our art. "Stock" is as much a programmed mentality as it is a category of media.

Death to Stock is not concerned with quantity. Our focus is a member-

DEATH TO THE STOCK PHOTO: REVOLUTIONARY?

A few years ago I ran across something in one of my feeds. A company was giving away free images in return for your email address. They would send you ten free images per month for free. They were not your run of the mill stock images.

A few months later they offered a premium service in which you could get an additional 10-12 images for \$9 a month.

The images were nearly completely released for whatever use you wanted to use them for (restricted from TV and resale).

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WHERE THEY SIT TODAY

Today David Sherry, the photographer / entrepreneur, has over 10,000 premium members and the new monthly rate is \$12. I will let you do the math.*

Thinking of a per image price doesn't work in this situation because it would be laughable - but on scale it is pretty impressive. Wouldn't you say?

David has added stock video footage and very nicely done people shots (released) to the site and it keeps growing.

** my info is over a year old, so there are likely more*

THE UNSPLASH REVOLUTION





THE UNSPLASH REVOLUTION

Unsplash.com is a community site where photographers share their images with each other - and whoever wants to use them for whatever reason they wish. Advertising, commercial, resale... no restrictions at all.

How can that be, you say?

It is not destroying the market, it is actually opening up more markets.



Unsplash for iOS: Your mobile creative companion is here.

We just launched Unsplash for iOS.



Mikael Cho
Apr 4



Medium + Unsplash

Every photo on Unsplash, now available in Medium.



Mikael Cho
Feb 7



Building a way to search photos by colour

Colour search isn't an Unsplash feature (yet) but we've started thinking about it...

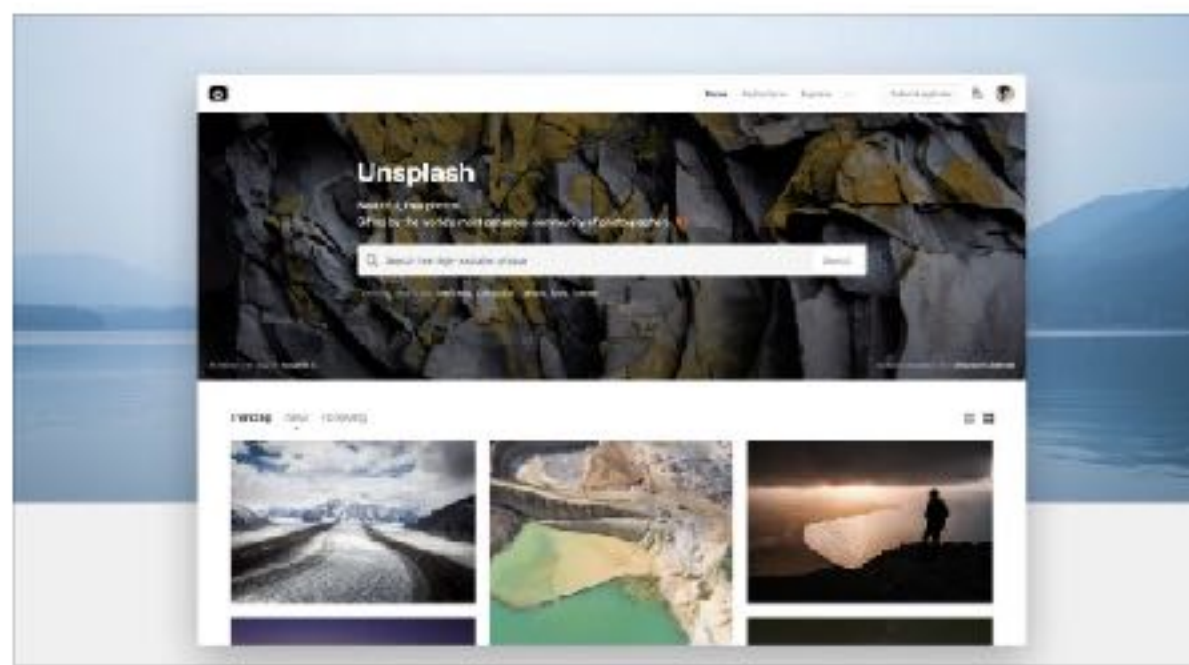


Timothy Carbone
Apr 18



The future of photography and Unsplash

We didn't start Unsplash to reinvent an industry. We started Unsplash because we thought it might be useful.



We just raised \$7.25 million for Unsplash to build a new economy around photography.

We have some big news today. Unsplash

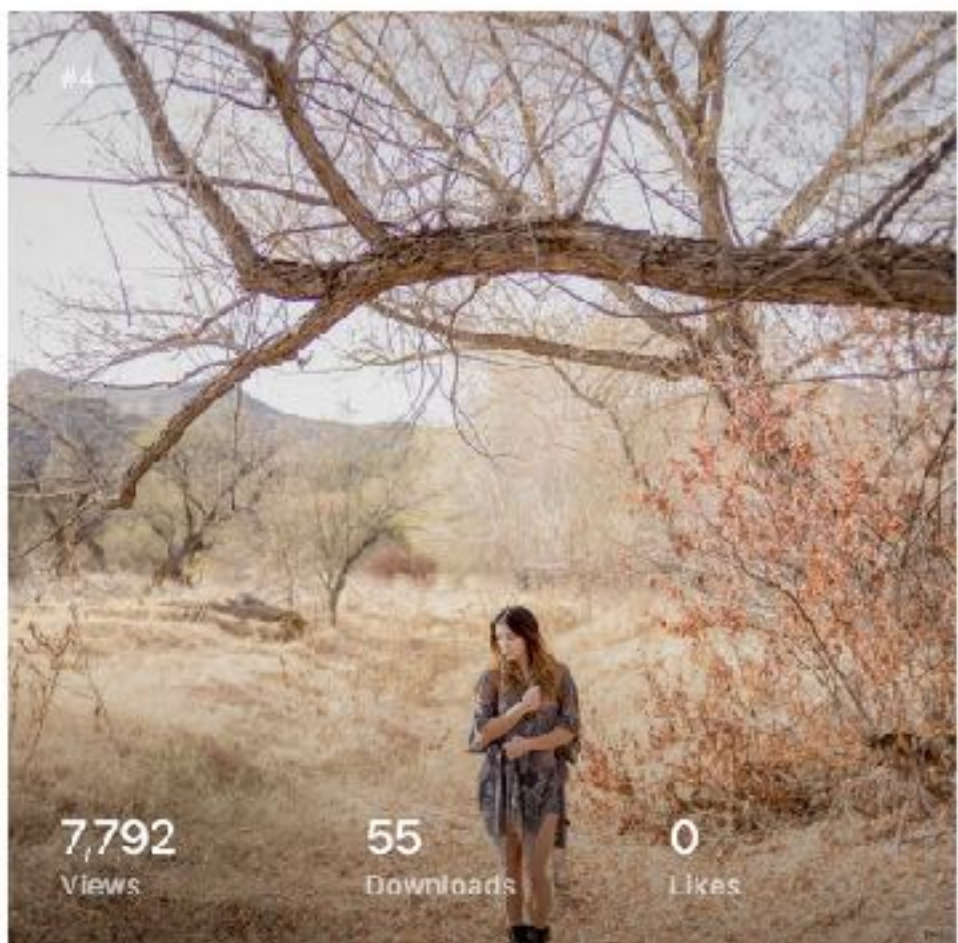
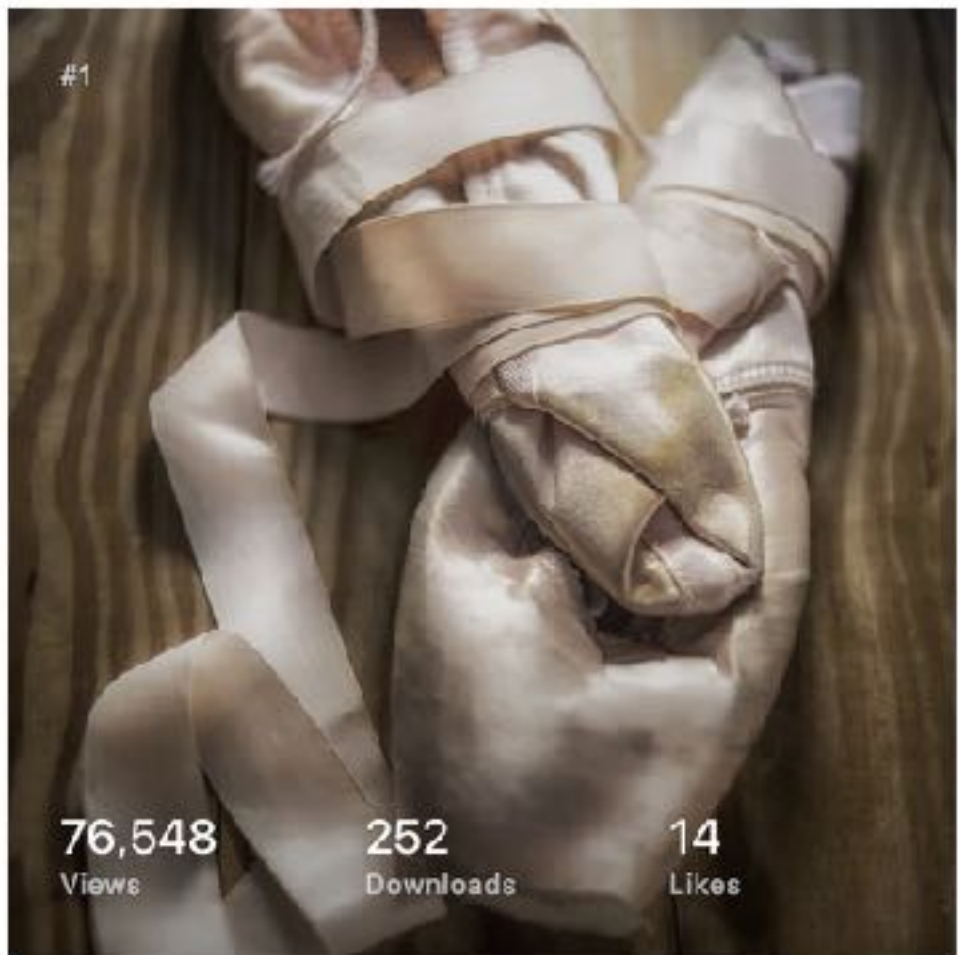
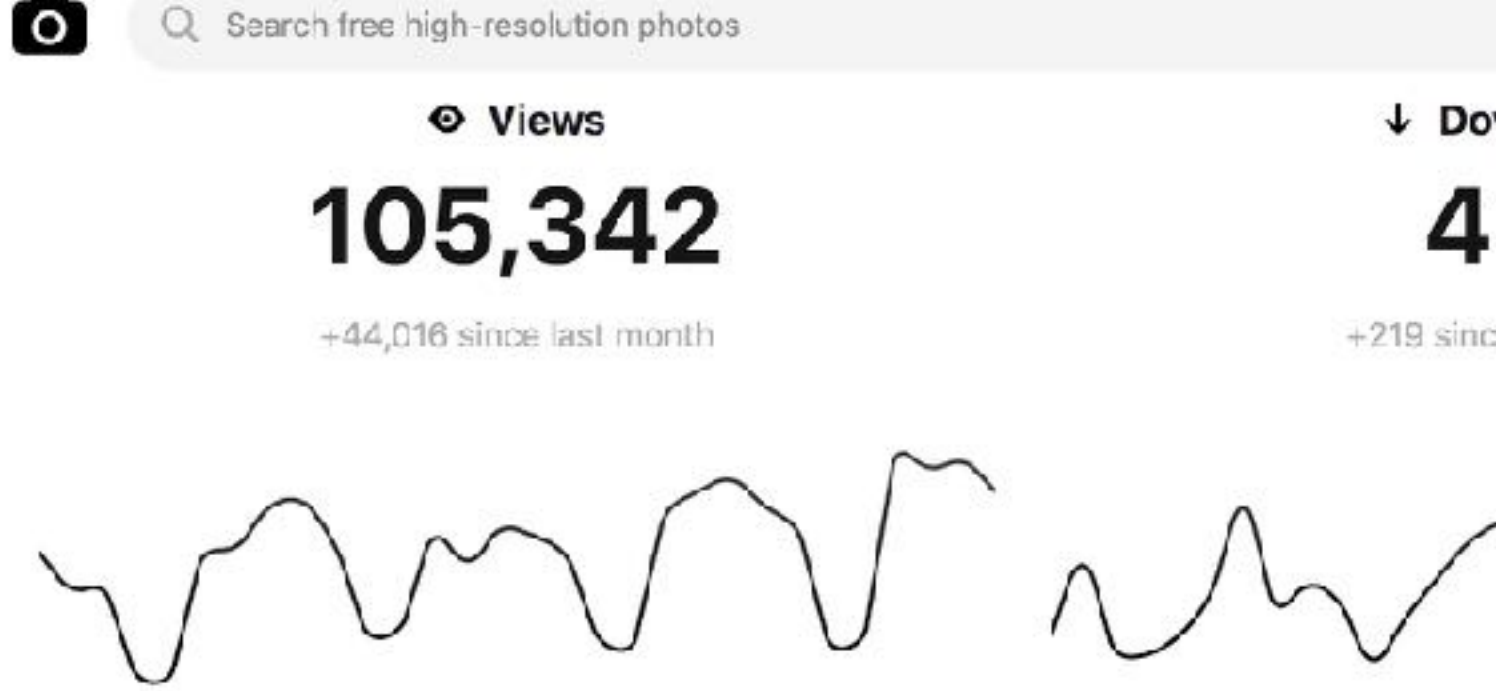


Making Unsplash for iOS

The story of how we built our new app.



Olivier Collet
Apr 5



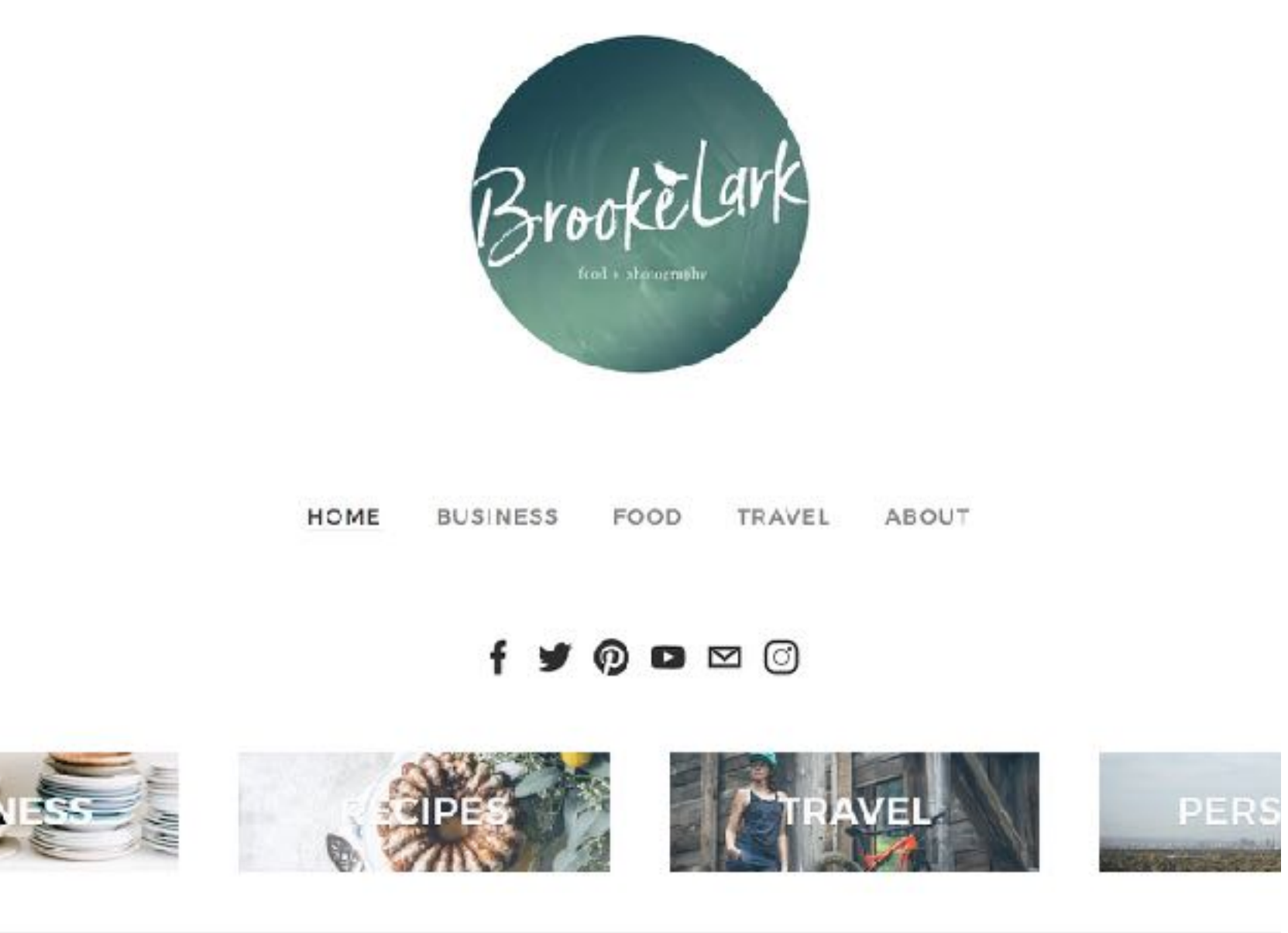
HOW DOES A PHOTOGRAPHER MAKE MONEY ON UNSPLASH?

What if I told you the majority of the photographers who are on unsplash don't give a damn if they make any money from being there? What if money were not the end game for a lot of photographers? What if there was more to the community than making a buck?

And would that actually be so bad?

Remember, attention is what we are looking for before monetization. With attention, we have more access - and access is the most difficult thing to gain at this moment in time...

Because - time.



BROOKE LARK

Brooke is a busy photographer in Salt Lake City. She has well over one hundred images on Unsplash.

Each image is indexed by Google, so she has a very high ranking when searching for food photographers in Salt Lake City. In addition, she uses her attention control to create a broad spectrum of income channels from photography (naturally) to illustrating children's books, to teaching and running a popular food blog.

Attention = access. Access is imperative.

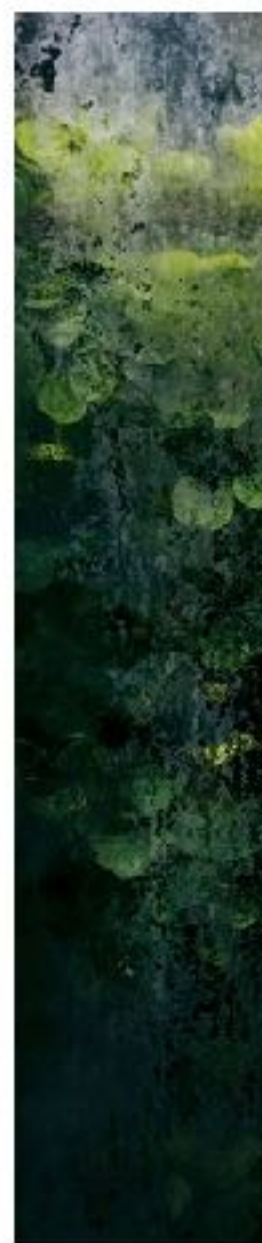


SAMUEL ZELLER: SWISS PHOTOGRAPHER

“Designers all around the world have been making album covers, posters, article headers, blog posts, adverts and billboards with my images on Unsplash. Like many photographers I chose to turn what was idle on my hard-drive into a useful resource for other creatives.”

THIS IS NOT YOUR TYPICAL PHOTOGRAPHER’S MINDSET.

Sam reports in an article on Medium that he has had several engagements made possible by his sharing on unsplash. But most of all he is just happy to be a part of a community that is growing in a different way than Instagram is... far different.



Dear Sam,

I'm writing you on behalf of a client of ours. We used the pictures below from **Unsplash** for their Annual Report. Even if the pictures from **Unsplash** are free to use for commercial usages, our client want to reimburse you for the usage of it. He likes to pay you 500 Swiss Francs/each for the usage and as a sign of appreciation for your work.

You can send me an invoice or your IBAN number for the payment?

We would be happy to receive your feedback whether you are willing to accept this offer.

Many thanks and best regards,
/Marcel





WHY I DO NOT FEAR UNSPLASH

The images range from very good to incredible - but they are mostly all personal work. They are not assignment work, nor will they be in the coming future. Assignment work is precisely assigned and with parameters that are achievable within budgets that are attainable.

For instance, a blogger wants to use something that is illustrative of an article she wrote on hanging on to sanity when the world is crazy. At unsplash she finds a great shot of a woman rock climbing. Now, she makes about \$1300 a month from advertising on her blog.

The cost of this image to be assigned would be thousands. Not in the cards. But the quality of the work ups the game and that moves up the chain of imagery to more pro sites.

Try finding these images on unsplash:

Bank building at 24th and Camelback.

Mayor of Tempe having coffee with a business leader.

Pineapple upside down cake with the ingredients

An avocado with jalapeño chilis

And anything you want to a specific layout.



THE INSTAGRAM CONUNDRUM

Instagram has changed. From the photo sharing site to a corporate money machine owned by Facebook. There is no desire to be a simple sharing site, they are now controlling access, forcing users to pay for connections, and creating recommendations based on ad revenue instead of engagement.

There may come a time when we mention Instagram in the same sentence as MySpace, or Flickr.

But you cannot ignore Instagram as a photographer who wants to get some reach. Just know that there are considerable odds against that reach being meaningful unless you work it to death.

And you may not want to do that.



DO YOU WANT TO BE AN INFLUENCER OR A PHOTOGRAPHER?

Sooner than later you may have to make that choice on Instagram. Where once there were only a few with over 50,000 followers, there are now thousands of them. Where once you could grow a few dozen followers per day, you may be lucky to get that in a month.

But you may want to look at Instagram the way I do: It is a place for an archived collection of images and if you get followers fine, and if not also fine. You want to be there so when the art director clicks your instagram link they see images that YOU WANT THEM TO SEE.

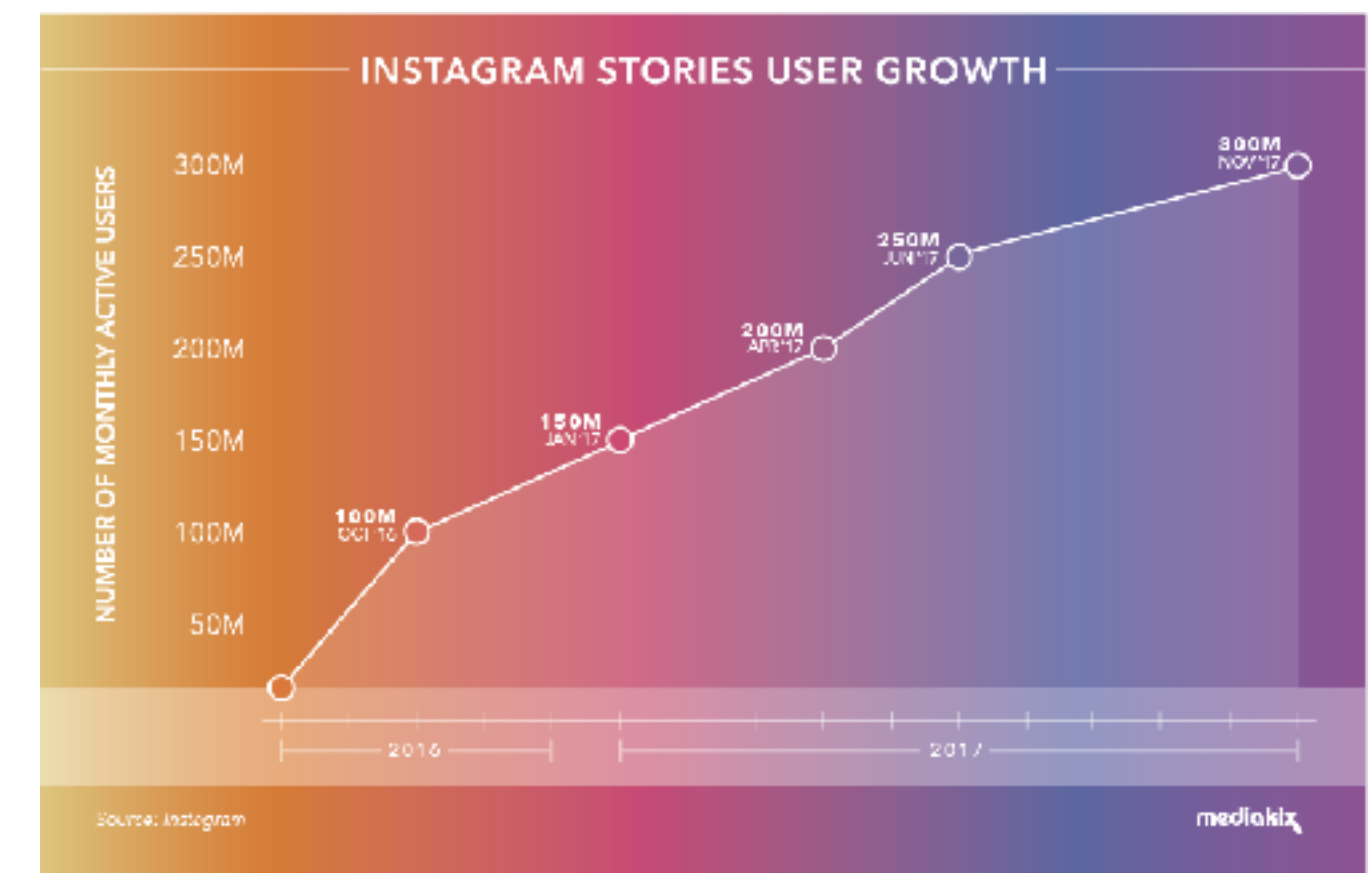
Photos of the dog getting a bath, or your newest rubber ducky may not be a great way to instill confidence in your skills... but you should also keep it light, fun, and a reflection of your personality.

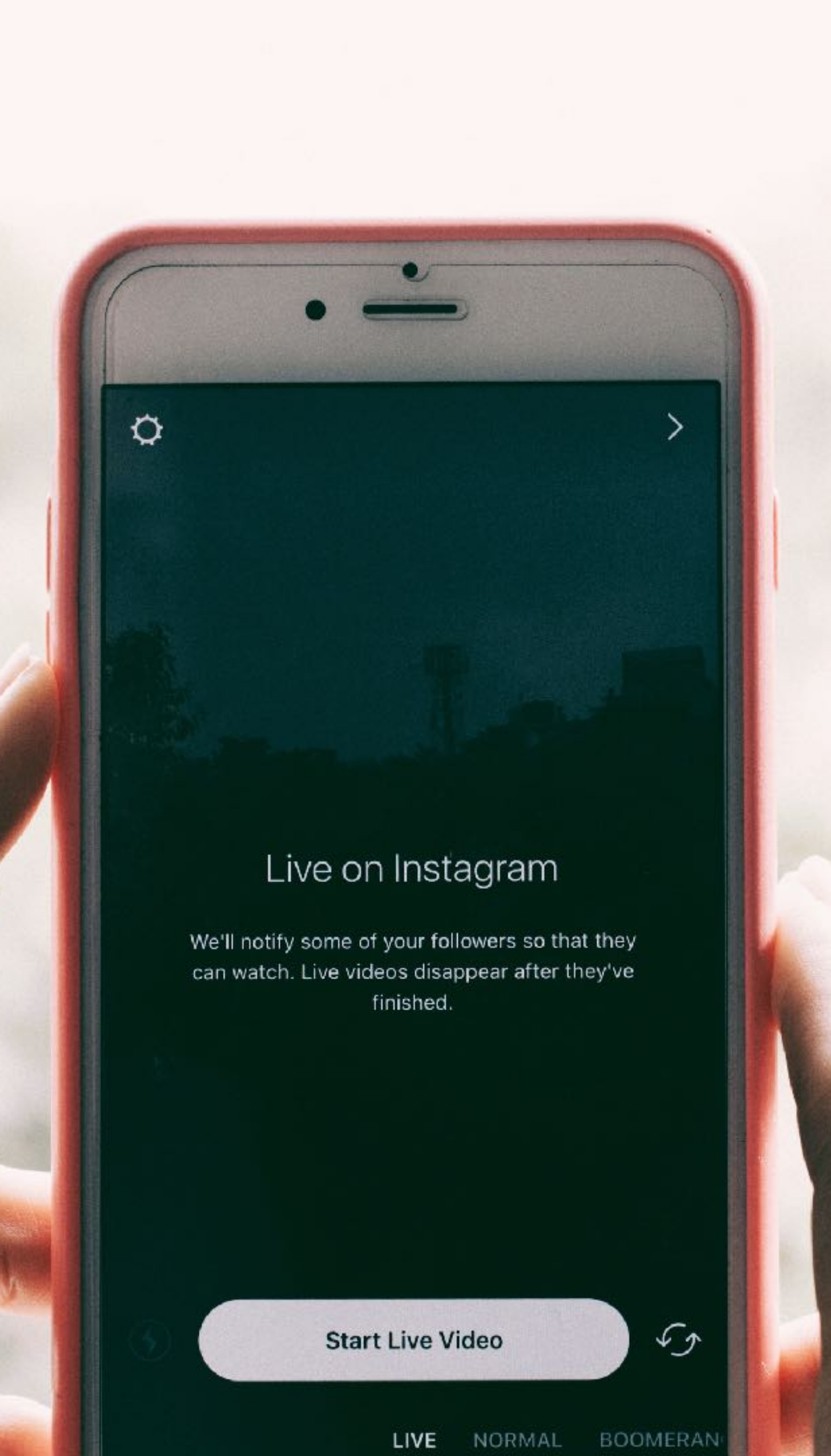


INSTAGRAM STORIES: WHERE THE ACTION IS

Instagram created stories as a way to get in on the video revolution. Everyone is a filmmaker and video is very popular. Many photographers are choosing to put their images in stories instead of the feed because the stories are getting more attention. I suggest both.

Instagram stories are a huge part of viewers attention, and they can become quite viral. I suggest you save your stories for later use in Youtube, but for now consider a story as a way of getting more engagement with the same content.





INSTAGRAM IS A PLACE TO ARCHIVE WORK FOR VIEWERS

I don't recommend you trying to be an "Instagrammer" or an "influencer" unless you wish to take on that level of engagement.

But I do recommend you have an archived and growing set of image on Instagram that will be there when someone sees your work and heads up to Instagram to find you

Instagram should lead the viewer to your website. It is an outpost that has its own traction and viewership. AD's, CD's Editors, and Art Buyers go to Instagram and look around for new talent. It is faster than 'surfing'.

Remember what we said about time?



INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK LIVE VIDEO

This can be a very powerful way for you to connect with people and a much easier and time saving way to get engagement. If you do get more followers, you get higher ranking and higher ranking means more views.

By using Facebook and Instagram LIVE, you can quickly and instantly connect to your fans and clients with good, solid content. If you blog, this may become a way for you to blog visually.

Facebook archives the LIVE videos, while Instagram is only live and then gone. I would consider doing both. Laptop for FB, cameraphone for Instagram. Both platforms have their devotees, and you want to reach as many people as you can... fast.



THE LINKEDIN CONNECTION

Linked in is the quiet one. The one few people talk about. It is like Instagram's buttoned up big brother in a Brooks Brother's suit.

But it is extremely powerful for photographers to make connections



LINKED IN PROVIDES LOTS OF ACCESS

Linked in may set up a few roadblocks as asking how you know someone, but it also lets you contact someone to ask to be a friend on Linked based on working in the same industry

Linked in can be deceptively simple, but I recommend you take a lesson or two from those who use it as a power play. There are lots of classes in how to use LinkedIn, just search them out.

With the professional level, you can indeed contact art directors, designers, editors and the like with notes and connections requests. But make sure your LinkedIn profile is ready to go. The information they need to make a decision, and samples of your work - with how you solved a problem - to keep them interested.



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BEHANCE LINKS WITH LINKEDIN

One of the problems with LinkedIn is the lack of visual presentations. Here is where Behance comes in. Behance will let you hook up a portfolio to your LinkedIn account so you can now offer imagery in your profile.

LINKEDIN COMMUNITY BLOG

LinkedIn's powerful community blog is a great place to publish content that can be of interest to possible clients. Keep it general, don't 'sell', and above all don't try to teach photography. You would be astonished at how few people give a damn about your new 50MM 1.2. Seriously - they don't.



BEHANCE THE STEALTH CONTENDER

I am surprised at how many photographers do not have work on Behance. It is free from Adobe, and if you have the cloud, you have increased storage capacity.

Behance is where designers and art directors have a place to put what they are working on... so we know that clients and possible clients are already coming there to see the work of peers and other artists.

It is really a no-brainer.



BEHANCE ALREADY HAS THE KIND OF EYEBALLS YOU WANT

It is a very powerful place for professionals in the visual arts and they go there to see what's new, who is doing what, and to get ideas. Your work there should be of a personal or highly influential nature.

Personal projects, highly interesting work, stuff that may not be in your portfolio for any number of reasons.

Behance is your playroom, and all the kids are high achievers. Keep it to your best and most interesting work. Change it out on a metered basis (once a month, once a quarter...)

And engage with the people who may want to hire you one day.



YOUTUBE YOU GOTTA BE HERE

It is the largest search engine in the world. Only Facebook has more users. But YouTube has more engagement... at this point.

Portfolio slide shows, introduction to your work and studio, interviews, behind the scenes, and tutorials are very big. And showing your professionalism there can be very advantageous.

And the more professional your presentation, the more it is picked up by those who want to see great content. The videos can also be embedded into your websites and blogs to give clients an idea of how you work.



YOUTUBE GIVES YOU A VOICE TO GO WITH THE VISUALS
And right now video is pretty popular, with no sign of losing its appeal. More and more videos means more and more quality being forced to the top. YouTube can help grow your visibility, while providing you with content that is multifaceted.

Just keep in mind who you are targeting. You want clients to see your methods and the ways you handle the work. You are not there to teach photographers how to light a model on a white background. Do that after you retire... God knows we need a few thousand more of those videos.



THE WORK YOU CAN DO ON YOUTUBE IS NEARLY UNLIMITED

I am again not asking you to be a YouTube star, or celebrity channel owner. I want you to be there to add credibility to your work and your professionalism.

People like to work with people they know. While an “About Me” page is vital for your website, it means little when compared to an ‘about me’ video. People begin to see you, your personality, what you think and do in real-life as opposed to a still photograph.

Do not skimp on these “Meet me” videos. Take the time to put them together with real artistry and professionalism... and that means you gotta learn sound a bit. Sorry.



BUT YOUTUBE HAS ITS COMPETITION NOW - AND IT IS BIG

If you haven't heard of Facebook Watch, you will soon. It is fast overtaking YouTube for content viewing although in a bit of a different way. There are standards at Facebook Watch that do not exist at YouTube. And that makes it have its own brand. Look for series from photographers on Facebook Watch. This will be big. Really big.

Don't wait until something is so big you cannot work into it (Instagram may be there at this point). Instead examine and produce for platforms with little expectation of ROI... that is where you will find more action and more engagement.

If it shakes out to be good, great. You are there. If not, you still have the content your produced.



PERSONAL ASSIGNED PROJECTS

If you are not shooting for a client, or marketing, you should be knee deep in personal assigned projects. Whether it is a pour shot in the studio, or some environmental portraits taken on a short road trip, it is all about keeping your eye fresh, and your images flowing.

Never underestimate the power of showing new work to an existing client or using personal projects to gain entry into a place that has been difficult.

These do not have to be multi-day projects with lots of expenses. They can be simple, sublime and cost effective - but they still must have visual punch.

Self assigned projects are the best way to fill your portfolio with new and exciting work.



AND NOW THE NITTY GRITTY

In a recent study / questionnaire 100 photographers were asked how much they marketed their work.

The answer was not surprising to me at all. I have worked with photographers my whole life.

80% was less than once per month

10% was 3 times a month or less

5% was 10 times a month or less

The balance was over ten times per month.

It has been said that 20% of the photographers make 80% of the money.

Do you see any correlation with those two above?



THREE CONTACTS PER DAY... THAT IS ALL I ASK

Perhaps it is one email, and two direct mail pieces sent.

Perhaps it is three emails. Maybe you make a call to a possible client to get an email, and send two direct mail pieces.

Three contacts per day

It takes less than 5 minutes to do this, so the “I don’t have time” whine is pure crap. If you aren’t working, you should be marketing.

And there is no rule that says you can’t spend ten minutes a day and make 6 or 8 contacts per day. None at all. Have at it.



WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU.

Big marketing pushes take a lot of time. And I still think you should do them, for sure. But this content drip drip drip approach provides an incredible benefit to you. Let's run some numbers.

3 contacts per day = 15 per week = 60 per month = 180 per quarter = 720 per year. In five minutes a day. You are deep into that top percentage of photographers who market. It is after all a numbers game. But you have to have the numbers to play the game. This is on top of the big marketing campaigns 3x per year.

The big marketing campaigns sometimes make you believe it is over. You did your thing for the quarter, and now you can relax. No, you cannot.



THINGS TO STRIVE FOR MEDIA ATTENTION

Write articles, have viral content for websites (personal projects), create something for or with the community.

Find ideas that can draw people together. Having others interested in your promotion makes it more viral than you think. They bring their friends and their friends bring their friends.

Join business groups and offer your expertise as a photographer to help them get the best work possible - EVEN if they are using a competitor. Be gracious - never 'Sell'.

If there is a cause you are passionate about, there must be others as passionate. Find them and help bind them with the power of visuals.



WHY EMAIL DOESN'T WORK FOR YOU *Because you are asking instead of offering.*

These people get sales emails all day long. Give them something with an offer. Perhaps you are giving them first peek at a project you have been working on with a community outreach program. If you know they just got a new client, and you have some great images that would work for that client, send them a couple that they can use for Instagram if they want.

Find ways to offer instead of asking. No, you don't have to buy them coffee (BTW, that doesn't work anymore), but you will have to be very creative to break this 'sales' habit. Do it soon.



THE WORLD HAS CHANGED, MARKETING TOO

You have to let go of proprietary this and ownership that. You have to forget about ROI and do it for the thrill of the process. You must stop waiting for an assignment and create your own. You cannot continue ignoring the changes, while standing in quicksand of old thinking.

Share. Share often. Share without expectations.

Create. Create often. Create for the sheer power of creation.

Engage. Meet people online and in the real world.

Offer. Stop expecting and start offering your best to the world.

Be consistent. Put out new work as often as you can.

Be brave. Be strong. Be patiently impatient.