

HOW TO MAKE UP TO \$1,000 EVERY WEEK WITH YOUR CAMERA!

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HOW TO MAKE UP TO \$1,000 EVERY WEEK WITH YOUR CAMERA!

As millions of Americans look for greater control over their financial destiny, the dream of self-employment has become more compelling than ever. Just the idea of launching a small business to become their own boss, and financially independent, drives many people to stake their life savings on everything from franchise opportunities to some gadget they've invented.

The entrepreneurial spirit is, of course, a part of our great national tradition. The problem is that many people devote a lot of their time to half-baked ideas and high-risk flings that have little chance of success.

There is always some gamble involved when you start a business, whether your investment is \$50.00 or \$500.00, or more. But once you begin to view your new business as "gambling," the risk-to-reward ratio tilts out of wack! The shrewdest and most successful entrepreneurs know that "taking the plunge" works best when you take along time-tested principles that put the odds in their favor.

TAKE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED AND BUILD YOUR BUSINESS AROUND IT

If you decide to join the ranks of self-employed freelance photographers, you will soon discover there is no magic in being able to earn thousands of dollars every year. Forget about the notion that you can start up a business just because you have a camera laying around you know little or nothing about. If you try the casual "learn on the job" approach with photography, your competitors will capitalize on your mistakes, promoting customers to turn elsewhere for the products and services you market. Then your business will be floundering by the time you acquire the knowledge of what it takes to succeed. Never expect people to pay you while you practice on them and waste their time and money. And never take an assignment you know you can't handle. Being honest with yourself and your customers will be to your benefit in the long-run.

The best approach to starting your freelance photography business is to start off slowly and build on a base of knowledge and experience. In other words, take the knowledge that you presently have about your camera and build a company around it. Start out by offering a particular service where you can be competitive from the first day you are open for business.

YOU DON'T NEED A STUDIO & FRENCH PROVENCIAL FURNITURE TO GET STARTED

You don't have to open a studio with elegant French provincial furniture, glass showcases, and large expensive frames all over the walls, to go into business as a freelance photographer. It's actually just the opposite; you don't need a studio at all!

What you will need is: a camera, a couple of strobe lights, light stands, and a black-and-

white darkroom setup. From there, it's just as easy for you to go to your customers as it is for them to go to a studio.

How much money you make will depend on the amount of time you want to devote to your business. The beauty of being a freelance photographer is that you can create your own markets, and establish your own rates. If you go into freelancing with the intent to earn extra money working on weekends, you should be able to earn \$1,000 - \$2,000 per weekend if you did nothing but shoot weddings followed with package deals. If you decide to go into business on a full-time basis, then you could earn up to \$50,000 and more depending on your specialty. It really boils down to one important thing; you must have the ability to use the equipment you have to produce a good photograph. People are willing to pay top dollar if you produce quality results. They don't like paying for poor work that isn't pleasing or effective.

BEING SUCCESSFUL IS SELLING WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW TO PRODUCE

In this report we are assuming that you already know something about operating a camera, taking pictures, exposure, lighting, composition, and darkroom procedures. That is the production end of it. Turning that knowledge into salable photography is the next step.

The first rule to remember is that if you are offered a job, and you don't even know the basics, you better say "no thank you," and tell your client why you're passing it up. Tell him what you do specialize in at that moment. When the next job comes around, you will have an established reputation of being honest and that same person will be back 1) because he respects your honesty; and 2) because if you say you can do a job, you can.

ADVERTISE YOUR WORK IN A PORTFOLIO

Make up a portfolio of quality 8x10 prints to show your potential clients. It should consist of both color and black-and-white prints. Mount our 8x10 prints on attractive 11x14 boards. That way you can include a few 11x14 prints as well.

A complete portfolio should include some 35mm slides. Display them in 8.5x11 plastic sheets, which will hold 20 slides. If you intend to produce 24x22 transparencies for commercial and industrial assignments, sheets are available.

When you are satisfied with your portfolio, call on advertising agencies and show the art director what you are capable of. Make appointments with the art and fashion directors of department stores and boutiques. Show business and industrial firms, and consider beforehand how their advertising and public relations departments could use your services.

Be prepared to show your work to anyone at anytime. Everyone is a potential customer, and you never know who will be needing your services next. Carry your portfolio in the car at all times. If you are proud of your work, show it! Make advertising what you do a part of your everyday life.

KNOWING WHAT TO CHARGE

The first thing to remember is that you aren't going into business to give it away. Being fair to both yourself and your customers is the principle you should follow when setting fees.

The way to do that is to determine what amount will adequately compensate you for your time, talent, and investment in equipment on a job-by-job basis.

Don't fall into the trap of charging less for your work just because you aren't working out of a studio, or don't have brand-new, expensive equipment. You still have overhead!

At times your expenses will seem endless as you pay for photo supplies, office supplies, advertising, travel expenses, water and electricity if you operate your own darkroom, darkroom supplies and equipment, taxes, business license, business stationery, portfolio costs, business cards, and depreciation on your vehicle and photo equipment. Never let anyone convince you that you should work for less because you don't have overhead.

What you ultimately decide to charge for your work is something you will have to decide yourself. The area you live in, the economy in that area, the competition, and how much you need are all influencing factors.

These are basically two ways to set your fees: 1) You can charge per individual photograph or job. On a job you would have to know exactly how many different shots they would require, and allow for differences in your price quote; or, 2) You can charge an hourly rate that compensates you for your time and talent. Your hourly rate does not include the rolls of film you shoot, proofs, processing, or prints ordered by client. Your hourly rate does not include the rolls of film you shoot, proofs, processing, or prints ordered by your client. Your hourly rate is for your time only, starting from the time you leave your home until you finish the job and return home. In some cases charging by the hour just wouldn't be practical. For example, prom sets, graduation packages, dance schools, or Little League Teams where you are further ahead to charge by the photo. Commercial shots on the other hand, where you may be asked to take a single photo that ends up taking 1-2 hours to set up, wouldn't pay if you charged by the photo.

EARN \$50,000 PER YEAR WORKING ONE DAY A WEEK!

Whether it's a good or bad economy, one thing is for certain - there will always be weddings and work for freelance photographers.

Word-of-mouth advertising works well no matter what product or service you are selling. But it works especially well if you are a photographer in the wedding pictures business. When a bride is pleased with the quality of your work, she will pay a \$1,000 for your time, talent, albums for each of the parent couples, wall photos, and her album. But it is her album that everyone she ever knew, or ever will know, will be invited to look at.

Most of your work will come through referrals from brides who were happy with your work. You should also promote your business, however, by showing samples of your work to florists, bridal shops, boutiques, and caterers who normally have a lot of wedding business.

Just tell them you would be happy to send business their way, if they will do the same.

Always sign a contract with the bride so there are no misunderstandings. Specify exactly which photos will be taken, and of whom. Always include a "Release Paragraph" which states that you are not responsible for the loss of photographs resulting from camera malfunction, accidents in

development, or film lost in the mail. You may also want to include a "Model Release" which will give you the right to use any photos as samples for advertising purposes.

SETTING YOUR FEE

Make certain the bride completely understands what your fee is, and what she will receive in return. There are various ways you can price weddings:

- 1) Offer a complete package that includes an engagement photo for the newspaper, formal bridal portrait, and coverage of the rehearsal party, wedding and reception.
- 2) Coverage of the rehearsal party, wedding and reception.
- 3) Wedding and reception
- 4) Wedding only

Weddings can be a goldmine. It's not uncommon for a complete package that includes an 8x10 album for the bride, and a 4x5 album for each set of parents to run \$1,000 or more. Many photographers set a \$500 minimum charge for weddings. Even if you only did two weddings per weekend at the minimum charge, you could easily make \$52,000 per year. Two complete wedding packages per week would earn you over \$100,000 per year. That's working one day per week! Now imagine how much money you could earn working full time!

OTHER FREELANCE JOBS THAT CAN MAKE YOU BIG MONEY!

DANCE SCHOOL RECITALS

Dance recitals are only once a year, but taking photographs of beautiful children in their costumes can mean increasing your bank account substantially.

Dance schools are every where, and they come in all sizes. By offering a photo package of one 8x10, two 5x7's, four wallet photos, and one 5x7 class photo, you can make anywhere from \$1,000 for the smallest classes, up to \$5,000 for a class of 400-500 students. If you make the teachers responsible for posing the students, and offer one pose per child, you can process the largest classes in just a few days.

CHILDREN'S SPORTS PHOTOS

Children's sports, such as Little League baseball, football, hockey, soccer, and basketball offer a very profitable opportunity to make fast cash for a freelance photographer. Every team (and the hundreds of parents in the stands) all want group shots and individual photos of every player. Most leagues will have at least 8-10 teams, with up to 30 children on a team, depending on the sport.

The person to approach for working out arrangements for a photographic session may be the coach, a director, committee, or sponsor. Dealing with one person works best. Check with the city or county recreation department. They will know who is using their facilities.

REAL ESTATE & ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Some of your best clients can be real estate agents, residential and commercial contractors, and architects. Real estate agents know that photographs are more effective in advertising a home or business than the typical classified ad. Doing all of a real estate agency's listings can add substantially to you income.

INSURANCE PHOTOGRAPHY

Insurance companies will reimburse a policy holder only for those items they have documented. Increasingly, insurance adjusters are urging clients to photograph everything that's covered by their policy on their home or business. It's difficult to argue with a photographic inventory and for that reason people will pay you to photograph their possessions and file them away in a safety deposit box.

FAMILY PORTRAITS

When you take family portraits it's best if you don't use a studio. People always act and look more natural in their own homes or yards. Family pets are also easier to include when they are in familiar surroundings.

You can promote your "on location" family portrait service in the Sunday newspaper. Note the fact that they won't even have to leave the comfort and privacy of their home, because you will come to them. Charge an initial fee, which includes the first portrait (16x20s and 20sx24s are not uncommon) plus travel expenses and other shooting costs. Always promote the Christmas card portraits, which the labs will offer.

CHURCHES & SYNAGOGUES

When church members become old enough to become regular members they are confirmed and officially admitted to the church. Churches usually want group shots of the entire class plus individual photos for each family.

A bar mitzvah in the Jewish faith is similar to confirmation. When a boy turns thirteen, he then becomes a recognized member of his religion and the synagogue in a ceremony. With a confirmation and bar mitzvah are joyous occasions that are followed by a reception for family, friends, and religious members.

ANIMAL SHOWS & PET PORTRAITS

Pets and animals add up to a multi-billion dollar business in America. What animal and pet owners spend every year on food, grooming, pet-sitting, pet-walking, health products, and accessories is staggering. Offer your services as a pet and animal photographer and they will buy that also. There are freelance photographers who make a good living just going from one show to another that features horses, cats and dogs. Get in touch with your local veterinarian, who should be able to provide you with the names and addresses of sponsors for the various shows and organizations.

ANTIQUe DEALERS & AUCTIONEERS

Some large antique dealers have photos taken of their items for sale, and send the photos or color slides of special or unusual pieces to other dealers or customers.

When auctioneers are hired to auction off items from an estate, bankruptcy, a large business or industry, or any other large job that has valuable items on their list of sale items, they will often use color slides for TV, ads, brochures, and other promotional pieces.

GOLF COURSES & COUNTRY CLUBS

You can make some fast cash by making arrangements with a golf course or country club to have action photos taken of golfers when they hold tournaments and there is a crowd. Set up your camera on the first tee for foursome shots and action shots as each player swings.

PONY & CHILD PHOTOS

Back in the 1940s and '50s photographers would travel the country and go door to door. For a fee, children could put on a cowboy hat, vest and chaffs, and climb onto a saddled pony to have their picture taken.

All you have to do is rent a gentle-natured pony, have a three-piece (one size fits all children) cowboy outfit, and an assistant standing by just in case the pony gets skittish, or the child decides to jump off. Then make arrangements to appear at 'crazy days' festivals, school carnivals, family reunions, shopping mall promotions, parades, or any other place where crowds gather.

PHOTOGRAPHING SCHOOL & COMMUNITY BANDS

Make arrangements with the band or booster club and make arrangements to take color group photos of the band and individual members. Mail sample prints to band directors outside your area and arrange for appointments to show your work and explain package offers and fees.

GRADUATION PHOTOS

Contact the senior class advisor and make arrangements to take graduation photos of seniors in their caps and gowns as they practice before the actual graduation ceremony. If you don't have a portable background, use the stage curtains. Borrow a diploma from the school that each graduate can hold.