

11. Mitche's Power Selling Tips

Now it's time for Mitche's Power Selling Tips—a series of quick-hitting, fast-paced ideas that can revolutionize your business literally overnight. Grab a pen and paper, a hunk of cheese, and open up your mind to some new ideas—and maybe some old ideas that you forgot about.

Study Advertising Trends

Study your competitors' advertising as well as advertising of other industries. Pick up your local paper, or magazines,

or mailers. See what trends are hot, what fonts are in, what styles are cool. The more you learn, the more you will earn!

Educate Yourself and Implement New Ideas

Reading about marketing and sales will often remind you of things that you already know but have failed to put into action. Did you know that the average business person uses only 12 percent of the available marketing resources to promote their business? What would happen to your

You don't need to reinvent the wheel in your marketing—study the ads in magazines and the marketing materials used by other photographers, then use their ideas to inspire your own designs. This piece is from Chatsworth Portrait Studio.





From the moment they walk in the door, every element in Christa Hoffarth's studio presents a coordinated look. Even her product packaging (see facing page) meshes with the overall design.

business if you could find a way to add some new techniques on a regular basis and get your studio using even just 25 percent? You would do twice as well as you competitors, that's for sure! So . . . do you want to be average or successful?

Invest in a Top-Shelf Business Card

Get the best that money can buy! This is your number-one tool in creating your image. It only takes five seconds for a prospective client to decide how much they feel you are worth and if they want to do business with you. Are you willing to risk that on a business card that you printed with your inkjet printer on paper from the half-off bin? I certainly hope not. If you look at your business card and it doesn't give you a "wow" impression, get rid of it! Any other response is not enough. If you aren't sure, ask several other people what they feel about it. If the response is lukewarm, take my advice and start from scratch. Put foil on it, emboss it, get a new logo designed, use multiple colors—do whatever you need to do to elicit an over-the-top reaction.

Hang Around Successful People

Stay away from hockey pucks that are always trying to bring you down. You deserve everything life has to offer. Sharing ideas with other like-minded people can reinvent your business all by itself!

Have Some Fun

Go to a movie with your spouse or a friend and eat popcorn until you are sick. Watch your favorite movie again—for the hundredth time. Get on the ground and roll around with your kids. If you don't have kids, your dogs. And if you don't have dogs, a big fluffy pillow will do!

Get Some Perspective

Take a day off and visit some art museums or galleries. Give yourself a fresh new perspective on your place in the photographic universe. Continue to challenge your intellectual brain cells with ideas from outside the box.

Rearrange Your Office

I bet your office looks the same as it did the day you opened your studio. Give yourself a clean start by going

through and completely overhauling your work area. If you don't have the guts, have your spouse or an assistant give a helping hand. You will notice a new-found energy as soon as this project is finished.

Embody Success

Dress and look like where you want to be tomorrow. If you want to eventually be known as *the* photographer in your market, then you better start acting like it today! Remember that perception is reality. What people think is true, *is* true. Start creating the impression you ultimately want everyone to have.

Study The Big Boys

Study the success of the big boys, companies like Starbucks, Domino's Pizza, Nike, Turner Broadcasting, Mi-

crosoft—the list goes on and on. Read books about business success and figure out how you can adapt their business models into your own business. Hey, Ray Kroc started with a single hamburger store, and Bill Gates started in his garage.

Invest in the Best Packaging

Spend more on your packaging than you do your prints—the mount board, the box, the tissue paper, the bow, and everything else that goes into making your prints look their best. If you can raise the perceived value of your prints, guess what? You can charge more! Do you think that Victoria's Secret just tosses your purchase in a cheap plastic bag? If you are not going above and beyond, customers will go elsewhere. Always be looking for ways to deliver value-added service to your customers' experience.

Christa Hoffarth's packaging materials are neatly arranged and coordinate with the rest of her image (see facing page).



Have a Complete System

You must have a complete system for running your business. This will eliminate most problems before they occur and will return you higher profits—and a better quality of life.

Practice Talking About Benefits

As we've already discussed, people buy benefits, not features. Get in the habit of playing the feature/benefit game throughout the day—driving in your car, sitting in your favorite chair, at the store. The more proficient you become at selling the benefits of your products, the higher your sales will be.

Don't Stop Learning

Continue to invest in your education—seminars, workshops, tapes, DVDs, books—anything you can get your hands on that will make you a better businessperson. It requires a lifetime commitment to truly be the best you can be and attain every goal you have ever dreamed of.

Learn to Say No

Accept the fact that not everyone can afford you and not everyone is meant to be your customer.

Make a Top-Ten List

Why you? Why should customers spend their hard earned money with you instead of any other photographer in your market? If you don't know why, how can you expect them to know why?

Regard Your Business as an Art

Just like your photography, start thinking about your business as an art. True success will come when the two are blended together into one amazing creation that can be nurtured and developed over time.

Manage Your Time

How you spend your time is more important than how you spend your money. Money mistakes can be corrected, but time is gone forever. I did a survey recently, asking photographers from all over the world to give me their input on how the digital age had affected their business and their life. I was absolutely blown away by what I

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found out. The average photographer works 67.5 hours per week, and an average of six days a week in their studio. That is 291 hours per month, and 3494 hours per year. And do you know where that time has come from? Our families, our hobbies, our personal lives—that time came from our lives! The only way we can get that time back is to take control of our businesses instead of letting our businesses control us.

I don't expect you to tackle all of these projects right away, but I do expect you to make a good college effort to accomplish a good number of them over the coming days and weeks. Don't let your enthusiasm wane and your energy level subside. Begin to make changes as soon as you show up for work tomorrow—or else you run the risk of everything going back to the way it always has been. Don't let that happen. Embrace the idea of a new day, a fresh try, one more start, with perhaps a bit of magic waiting somewhere behind the morning. That's what keeps life exciting!