

3. Positioning for Profit

Do you ever find yourself saying, “It seems there are far too many ways for me to market and position my studio. How can I know what’s best?” Photographers do have many opportunities to reach out to prospective clients. The list below should give you some idea of the variety.

What is Positioning?

What does the word positioning mean to you? To me it’s a very simple concept: it means putting yourself in front of the exact customers you want, with precisely the message you want to communicate, at just the right time. The best part about being an entrepreneur is that you can decide all of these things on your own.

Revitalizing and reenergizing your marketing plan—or as I like to call it, your battle plan—is not an easy task. We began the brainstorming process with the Power Market-

ing self-test. We also talked about being able to identify what it is about your business that is unique and special, what it is that separates you from everyone else in your market. We call this a hook, and I trust you now know what yours is.

When you are in an area where several competitors are going after the very same dollars you are, you must have something that separates you from the rest of the pack and makes you stand out. Either you are unique and different, or you are out of business. It’s that simple. Having a me-too approach will not get you very far down the road to being a successful Power Marketer. The old saying “The guy at the top of the mountain didn’t fall there—there’s a reason why he’s there,” holds true.

The ultimate compliment we can get as photographers is, “Boy, what a great experience we had having our portraits done! You made it fun, easy, and very relaxing. We all had a wonderful time. It may have cost a little more than going somewhere else, but it was worth it!” If your clients are made to feel special during the time they spend with you, they will undoubtedly become more emotionally attached to their portraits, which in turn means that they will spend more money on them. The bottom line is to make a profit so you are around to answer your phone when they call to schedule another session.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with making a profit; without it, you have no business. You shouldn’t feel guilty about getting paid well for what you do; it allows you to support your family, take vacations, and accomplish the things in life that mean the most to you, and makes it possible for you to sustain your business so that you can provide the same service when your customer calls back to schedule another session. There is no reason to feel guilty about getting paid well for what you do.

The lesson in this whole thing is that if your clients have a positive experience with you, from the first time you an-

Ways to Reach Prospective Clients

price lists	web sites	pens
brochures	Internet banner	bumper stickers
flyers	ads	calendars
business cards	search engine	newspaper ads
direct mail	listings	magazine ads
signage	gift certificates	merchant co-ops
billboards	welcome wagons	slide shows
gift cards	hospital promos	video shows
auto lettering	mall displays	charity events
table tents	restaurant displays	church directories
bookmarks	library displays	frequent-user
bridal fairs	bank displays	photo clubs
senior fairs	beauty shop	promotional raffles
business fairs	displays	newsletters
county fairs	referral programs	telemarketing
yellow pages	vendor programs	campaigns
chamber	key chains	press releases
directories	coffee mugs	art shows
radio ads	notepads	window displays
TV commercials	refrigerator	sample albums
airplane banners	magnets	. . . and more
hot-air balloons	pencils	

swer the phone to when they pick up their portraits, they will become your best salespeople and will make many referrals to your studio.

Finding Your Niche

Before you can decide on the exact position you want to occupy in your market, you have to know what you want out of your life. In chapter 1, we talked about setting goals, both personal and professional, and how important it is to achieve a proper balance between your work and personal life. Now, if you are the type of person who needs to work seven days a week, from sunup to sundown, then your goals might be altogether different from those of someone who works hard when it's time to work, but wants to spend the rest of their time doing the things in life that are important to them. What is it you need in your life to make you feel fulfilled, complete, and satisfied?

What's your studio's niche? Does everything about your business communicate this special appeal to prospective clients? Photographs and design by Jeff Hawkins Photography.

Whether it's time with your family, time on the lake, or time at the office, you need to have a firm grip on what your priorities are. You must also have passion—passion for your work, for loved ones, and for living. Without passion, life becomes one big blur, and we go from day to day without any real direction or conviction.

I have a friend who is a wonderful photographer and a very hard worker. He loves to shoot weddings—so much, in fact, that he shoots two, three, sometimes four weddings in a single weekend. And that's not just during the prime season. Even in the so-called off-season, he always seems to have at least a couple of weddings booked every Saturday and Sunday. If you were to sit down and have a discussion with him, you would find out it is part of his overall battle plan to shoot that many weddings, and it definitely gives him a rush of adrenaline after he has finished a grand-slam weekend.

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Now, if I were to shoot four weddings in two days, not only would I be practically useless to the last bride and groom, I would also be a lump of burned-out flesh come Monday morning. We all have a place and position to fill in the marketplace; he understands what his is and is very good at what he does.

If your goal for your studio is to photograph four to five hundred weddings a year, then you will need to posi-

tion your business accordingly, carefully selecting everything from the vendors you build a referral network with, to the pricing of your packages. On the other hand, if you only want to cater to the elite and photograph ten to fifteen upper-end weddings a year, your approach will be altogether different. Either way is perfectly fine, you just need to know where you want to be and what your priorities are.

What makes a portrait by





so special?

Planning! Planning is very important to us. The clothing choices and location for the portrait are vital to the "style" of the portrait and it's overall impact.

As you plan your portrait session, consider the intended use of the portrait and where it will be displayed in your home or office. This is a key factor.

Superb artwork is another reason why a portrait created by Bradd and John is beautiful and complimentary. It is their artistic abilities and enhancements that separates them from others. The unique vision and perspective of a true artist is what makes their portraits sensitive and outstanding.

Bradd & John are masters of the tools and techniques which allow them the creative freedom to deliver what other studios only dream of.

On the windy hills of the Appalachian mountains, each morning the sun spills over the mountain tops shedding light and life onto our studio and our faces, where we capture the souls of human life.

The essence of our lifestyle is to capture the precious memories and timeless events throughout our lives.

When you display our fine-art, it will bring to your home and your family a rich image of beauty and a precious piece of art.

The seamless structures of our capabilities and artistic abilities are guaranteed to touch your life and the live's to come.

"To say that I am a photographer is wrong. I am an artist that through the view of my camera I see life as the most precious gift we have. As an artist my goal is to capture life and it's beauty, to present to you a very special moment in time that you can reflect on for eternity."

-Bradd Parker

"The thought of creating something that people will cherish their whole life is why I do what I do. I love being an artist. Everyday is new and exciting to me, whether I am shooting a senior or a newborn. I am able to stretch my imagination and create lasting memories in that persons life. I give the gift of memory, and the process of creation can be overwhelming"

-John Waldron

www.ChatsworthPortraitStudio.com

People have a lot of choices, so why should they spend their photography dollars with you? As seen in these pages from the pricelist of Chatsworth Portrait Studio, clients need to be clear on what is unique about your studio.