

The Florida Professional Photographers, Inc. Presents:

Let\$ Make Money

A MARKETING, FINANCIAL & BUSINESS PRACTICES GUIDE FOR FPP MEMBERS – Issue # 33, 2004

Photo Stamps Have Arrived!

There is an exciting new offering you can add to the services you provide your customers – Photo Stamps!

Photo Stamps are real U.S. postage that can be used just like traditional postage stamps. They have a special coding technology so the mail will be processed without being postmarked, which preserves the photo.

You can offer these to your customers for mailing wedding and baby announcements, or any special occasion. Each sheet contains 20 stamps, and the more sheets you order the lower the cost per sheet.

Your customers could order themselves, but most will not because they are not aware, not technically savvy, and/or they wouldn't have your digital photo to use!

Stamps.com, a USPS-approved provider of on-line postage since 1999, is the company behind Photo Stamps. You can purchase Photo Stamps by going to <http://www.photo.stamps.com>.

Copyrighting

Copyright is a property right. Under the Federal Copyright Act effective in 1978 and amended in 1989, photographs are protected by copyright from the moment of creation.

Even though your work is copyrighted when it is created, as a business person it is probably still in your best interest to register your work with the U.S. Copyright Office. By registering your work you protect your right to sue in Federal Court and collect damages.

Since your work is protected by registering within 90 days of first distribution, you should register your photos once per quarter as a routine course of doing business. You can register an entire CD of photos for the same fee.

To get more information go to: <http://www.ppa.com> and <http://www.copyrightdefense.com>.

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Copyrighting (continued)

As the photographer, you are the first line of defense for copyright protection. Steps you can take include:

- Mark the back of your prints as copyrighted.
- Include a statement about copyright in your contracts / sales agreements and invoices.
- Include an "Important Notice About Copyright Protection" flyer with all previews and orders (pads are available from PPA).
- Add a copyright symbol (©) in the title of your file names. In PhotoShop CS you can do this by:
Automate → Batch Rename → In 1st File Naming field paste © (copy from MS Word or Clipboard).
- Add a watermark in PhotoShop CS (Filter → Digimarc → Embed Watermark).

Sources: PPA, Copyright Defense, "Copyrighting & Protecting Your Work" Seminar at PhotoShop World Orlando Sept. 2004

Defining & Protecting Your Business Image

Take some time to write a short statement that clearly expresses your philosophy about the practice of photography. It will help you keep your priorities on track, and will also help potential clients understand why you are in business and what makes you unique. Here is one example:

"Steve Kozak, photographic artist. Creative photography is the ability to capture the feelings of the moment in an image. I strive to create photographs that are as individual as you are. I enjoy creating images that express imagination and sensitivity, and I prefer locations that enhance the artistry of your photograph. That's why I often work in the client's home, outdoors, or a location other than my studio. The setting for the portrait is essential to the story."

Your image should be consistently reflected in everything your client sees and touches:

- Studio and gallery are organized and clutter-free. Examples of your work are professionally framed and properly lit.
- Consultation / sales area is comfortable and well organized. Bottled water and soft drinks are available to your clients.
- You are dressed to impress for client consultations. It is okay to dress casually for most sessions, but dress up for weddings and formal affairs.
- You speak the language of your practice. Try using *previews* rather than *proofs*, *images* rather than *pictures*, *enlargements* rather than *blow-ups*, *sessions* rather than *sittings*, and *collections* rather than *packages*.

Marketing materials should be well-designed and printed on good paper. Establish consistency in the look of your materials and use logos and images. Write moving text.

Source: Excerpts From Steve Kozak, Business Section, *Professional Photographer*, Aug. 2004

Field Perspective

Shortening Your Selling Cycle

On July 13, Mark Fitzgerald presented to TAPPA (Tampa Area Professional Photographers Assoc.) on shortening your selling cycle.

Becoming a great sales person requires doing two things: (1) meeting a constant stream of strangers, and (2) getting people to make decisions.

Meeting strangers goes against everything you were taught as a child, i.e., “don’t talk to strangers.” However, you must swim upstream against this advice since friends are insufficient and you typically give away or discount your work to them.

Getting people to make decisions means getting people to: “yes” or “no.” “Maybe” is the worst outcome. The world is full of people that will never buy what you sell, and the sooner you figure out who these people are the better so you don’t waste time and expenses on them.

Why do people say “now is not a good time” or “I want / need to think it over”? Some reasons may include:

- They don’t want to hurt your feelings (people are nice).
- They don’t want to tell you what the objection or problem really is (don’t like confrontation; afraid you will start arm wrestling with them).
- People love their own ideas and people resist the ideas of other people (so *you* should be the one to raise objections).

Regarding this latter point, never hide from the things that will kill the deal; great sales is about being brutally honest. And, the sooner you get to this the better.

People find the \$ for what they value, and there are plenty of examples of people buying luxuries before necessities (e.g., buy a swimming pool for their children yet not have life insurance).

If you are trying to be the low-price leader and think low prices will help you sell, you are wrong.

Raising prices a lot cures a number of items:

- Makes you more desirable because people look for ways to buy expensive stuff.
- Don’t have to prospect as much or sell as much.
- Get a better reputation.
- Referrals will be other people with \$ (people with \$ know other people with \$).
- If you stand out vs. competition you will generate interest, i.e., be “exclusive.”
- People want the good stuff. Will everybody pay for it? No, but that is okay.

You need sufficient margin to spend time and effort to do high quality work. With a bunch of low margin clients your quality goes down and/or you lose \$.

Think about the biggest objections that cause people to “think it over” and practice starting conversations with those objections. Yes, this is scary. Start with a prospect you don’t think you will get anyway and see what happens!

Field Perspective (continued)

Pet Photography

On August 10, Michael Joseph presented to TAPPA on pet photography. He discussed his 19 years of photographing people and pets that started with "Pet Photo Days" road shows with Purina.

Each pet session lasts 20-30 minutes, and he doesn't bond with the animal before or during the session, staying focused on photography. During this time he takes 12-14 film or 18-19 digital photos. Attention needs to be taken to lighting to keep the air temperature low (62° F).

Also, he only uses squeaky toys as a last resort since they can only be used once. In the three live photo examples during his presentation, throwing a handkerchief in the air seemed most effective.

And, most animals bond faster to women so have a female assistant.

Note: This is the Editor's perspective on takeaways. The individuals / studios profiled did not contribute or review articles.

BUSINESS BAG

Leaf Season

Planning on capturing the fall foliage? Yankee Magazine's fall travel web site has an interactive foliage map that tracks the spread of fall color throughout New England. Go to: <http://www.yankeefoliage.com> → Fall Tracker Tab → Interactive Foliage Map.

Small Employers Rule

More than 450K start-ups were launched in 2001 when the economy was in recession. That gave the USA 24MM businesses at year's end. About 5.7MM had employees, with 78.1% with < 10 employees.
– Source: SBA Data

Checks Clear Faster

A new Federal Law, nicknamed Check 21, makes it legal for banks to process checks as digital images. That means starting Oct. 28, banks can clear checks in a day or less. No more counting on float!

Photo Subjects

Digital pictures adults store on their PCs:

- Family – 76%
 - Self – 63%
 - Friends – 59%
 - Pets – 45%
 - Places – 42%
- Source: Click IQ Survey

eCrime

Has the security of your co.'s computer system been threatened in the past year?

- Yes – 49%
 - No – 49%
 - Don't Know – 2%
- Source: Hewlett-Packard

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