

Social Media Marketing for Photographers

Unless you have been living in a cave for the last 5 years, you know what social media is. The effect that Facebook, My Space, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social media sites have had on the daily lives of millions of people has been incredible. I am not going to bore you to death with the history and development of social media marketing. In purchasing this book, I can assume you just want to know how to increase the number of customers you have using social media to market your photography business.

I will try to cover the basics of using social media as a marketing tool without boring those professionals who are already using social media to market their business, and want to increase their results. Everyone must start somewhere, and quite frankly it will be easier for you if you read this book first, then start into social media marketing.

Social media networking may be a new avenue to market to your customers, and this is causing many business people to learn through a great deal of trial and error. Even those of us who are using social media effectively are always trying new things to get better results and increase the return on investment (ROI) of our time invested. This brings up the first misconception of Social Media Marketing, *It's Free*. To be effective you must interact with other people. This is the "SOCIAL" part of social media, and that takes time, and time is money.

Many business owners try using advertising tactics through social media, and they see limited results at best and disastrous results at worst. Twitter is famous for marketers posting one give-away, promotion or free product after another to get you to go to their website. These marketers gather high numbers of friends (Facebook)/followers (Twitter), and then blast one advertising message after another. This creates the endless need to recruit new people as friends/followers as people get tired of all the advertising messages, and un-friend or un-follow the businessperson labeling them a "spammer" (word used in Social media for a person using advertising tactics).

Social media marketing relies on the basic premise that people like doing business with people they know, friends for lack of a better word (or at least people they are friendly with). Basically this is old school word of mouth advertising with a new twist, and that twist is the power of social media sites like My Space, Facebook and Twitter. No matter what type of client you work with, you can target those people as your *friends/followers*.

When the average person starts into social media marketing, they sign up with All of the social sites. Then they start sending friend requests and/or following everyone and anyone that looks like they might be in your target market. No one responds (except for the other spammers wanting to blast advertising to the masses), so they get discouraged and stop. This is using the old world thinking that it is necessary to get your message out to the masses, because so many recipients use your advertising time/messages to go to the bathroom, change the channel or start the fire with.

Traditional advertising is the very reason that social media advertising is growing so quickly. Traditional advertising is losing its effectiveness. The last year we used direct mail to our senior market we saw a decline of 60% in the response rates. The same thing is happening in many other advertising avenues. Radio and television are now so fragmented with all the cable channels, satellite radio, as well as everyone now having an iPod, that they are no longer effective to use in many cases. Newspaper circulation is down the toilet although their rates haven't been reduced accordingly. Displays can be a good idea, but their cost and the poor retention of the average person (potential client) make the cost per client very high. I have been told I have had displays all over our city that I never did. These potential clients just saw a photographer's display from someone who photographed seniors with a style the client liked (that was similar to mine), and they assumed it was mine.