

# How To Make Photography Into Dollars For You

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## How To Make Photography Into Dollars For You

### HOW TO TURN THE HOBBY OF PHOTOGRAPHY INTO THOUSANDS OF EXTRA DOLLARS FOR YOU

#### FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHY AND YOU

Do you enjoy taking photographs? Are you the kind of person who brings the camera everywhere with you? Do you never miss an opportunity to take a picture? How good are your photographs?

If you possess some skill at camera work and love doing it, then you have a marvelous opportunity in front of you if you wish to take it. There are many people who have taken an enjoyable hobby and turned it into a thriving business. There are others who have simply made a lot of extra cash doing something they would have been doing anyway, pay or not. What about you? If photography is your hobby, your passion, what about exploring the numerous openings out there for good photographic work? People love pictures and virtually any occasion for picture taking is an opportunity for the photographer to earn some extra money.

Cameras are so sophisticated today, you don't even have to be an expert at picture taking, just able to read and follow directions. If you have the motivation, this is an area that has plenty of room for new blood.

Your advantage over professional photographers is that you can charge a lot less and still produce some quality pictures your client will love. At the same time, you can save that individual a considerable amount of money for a fabulous result. What could be better than that?

If you organize your time well, you can spend some nights and especially weekends seeing a lengthy number of clients. It would not be unusual to earn more in your spare time with photography than you do in your regular job. That could be the indication you are in the wrong profession!

Whether it's weddings, portraits, models, greeting cards, newspapers, aerial photography or some other form of photography, the opportunities abound for the person willing to give it a try.

Photography is here to stay. Even as people cut back during tougher financial times, the desire for photos reasonably priced is, and always will, be there. Yes, there is competition, but if you expand your natural market

of family and friends, there are plenty of jobs to go around.

You'll probably even find a certain type of photography that you like best and gravitate towards that almost exclusively. Who knows what could happen once you launch your business?

Books are published annually in the thousands, many of which have a demand for photographs, even if it's only of the author on the back cover. There are specialty books that are produced consisting almost exclusively of photographs and designed for the coffee table.

How about local businesses? They may be doing a sales Photography piece which requires a photograph. An insurance plan that's intended to be used as a savings vehicle for a child's college education likely needs a photo of a child or a teen in a cap and gown for its cover. These type of possibilities are limitless.

The more versatile your photography exhibits, the better chance you have of making a good living. A lot of photography is seasonal, thus your ability and willingness to do all aspects of photography gives you year-round possibilities. While you may have no weddings to shoot in November and December, you could be filming portraits for holiday gifts and cards.

The important thing for you is to set a goal and stay with it. You might want to start out small and work your way up to more and more types of photography and longer and longer hours.

You don't need very expensive equipment to get started. Some great shots can be achieved by a regular camera you can purchase in a retail store. Add to that a tripod and maybe a spotlight for certain shots and you're in business.

A camera is one of the best ways to earn some extra money for yourself or to transport you from active hobbyist to legitimate businessperson. The key is your desire to get the job done.

## SHOULD YOU BE IN BUSINESS FOR YOURSELF?

This is a question you must ask yourself and give an honest and accurate answer to before you can begin your journey towards part-time work or complete self-employment. There is a lot to building your own business and you need

to be committed to this action from the start to make a go of it.

Beginning your business is as simple as establishing an objective for your work. Is it to do occasional portraits only? A few weddings on the side? Photography contests now and then? Or is to do all three in increasing numbers of hours per week?

Only you can answer this question. Your success doesn't depend on whether you do this work part or full-time. The success will come from identifying your end-goal and working towards it, no matter what it is.

You must believe that you have the ability to accomplish the end objective you've laid out. If you lack this self-confidence, there is a better than even chance you won't make your goal. Positive motivation is the stuff of winners. Winners can create successful business ventures on any scale they choose. If it's to earn a couple of hundred dollars extra per week, great! Go for it! If it's to earn six figures and working at it full-time and expanding to a couple of studio locations, then aim for the goal, think positively and set the wheels in motion. Map out a game plan that includes daily, weekly and monthly objectives. The smaller your ambition, the shorter the list. But it doesn't matter. Strive to achieve the level of success you know you want. That's the bottom line.

Establish your limits early. Are you willing to work weekends? Are you able to travel? Do you want to specialize? These are the types of questions you need to ask and answer in order to develop a proper game plan. Without this information, you will be operating without really knowing where you're headed and what track you're on.

Do you need any additional training? Do you know how to photograph a wedding? Are you familiar with light ranges? Should you take a couple of photography classes from the local community schools or programs?

Make this assessment carefully, because you may not yet be ready to proceed if you still feel that you need some schooling. Build this into your initial game plan. You may still be able to practice your photography on the weekends, taking shots which you can submit to newspapers (perhaps) and photography contests. Knowing what you need is as important as knowing where you ultimately want to go.

There are a wide range of photography magazines that you can review at the local library or subscribe to on a

regular basis. Education is as important as anything else in running a business and you'll need to keep abreast of the latest developments. Some of these magazines can give you job ideas as well as important details on new camera types and techniques. Here are a few of these magazines:

American Cinematographer  
A.S.C. Holding Company  
P.O. Box 2230  
Hollywood, CA. 90078

American Photographer  
1515 Broadway  
New York, NY 10036

Collector's Photography  
9021 Melrose Ave. #301  
Los Angeles, CA. 90069

Darkroom Techniques  
7800 Merrimac Avenue  
Niles, IL 60648

Modern Photography  
825 Seventh Avenue  
New York, NY 10019

News Photographer  
1446 Conneaut Avenue  
Bowling Green, OH 43402

Outdoor Photography  
16000 Ventura Blvd. #800  
Encino, CA. 91436

Photo Lab Management  
1312 Lincoln Blvd.  
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Photo Marketing  
3000 Picture Place  
Jackson, MI. 49201

Photoletter  
Photosource International  
Pine Lake Farm  
Osceola, WI 54020

Popular Photography  
One Park Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

Professional Photographer  
1090 Executive Way  
Des Plaines, IL 60018

PTN  
445 Broadhollow Rd. #21  
Melville, NY 11747

The Rangefinder  
1312 Lincoln Blvd.  
Santa Monica, CA 90406

Shooter's Rag  
Havelin Communications  
P.O. Box 8509  
Asheville, NC 28814

Shutterbug  
5211 S. Washington Ave.  
Titusville, FL 32780

You have identified your market, set your objectives, analyzed your educational needs, checked your equipment, selected the areas of photography that you could start out with and established daily, weekly and monthly objectives for a specific time frame, like 6 or 12 months. It sounds like you're ready to go!

## WEDDINGS

A wedding is the most important day in the lives of several people. For that reason, it is an occasion they wish to remember forever. What better way than with pictures to look back on this favored day?

Part of the wedding preparation is the selection of a photographer. While all couples want to remember this day in pictures, a number of families cannot afford the services of a top-notch professional photographer. They are willing to spend some money, however, which makes it a good opportunity for the photographer willing to work a wedding.

The first thing to establish is what the bride and groom and their families want in the way of pictures. One would assume they'll want before, during and after pictures, all dressed out in a memorable album or two when it's over.

You should know what your costs will be for the film

and albums you'll need to process the photos and complete your task. You should then add to that an hourly rate (\$50, \$75, \$100?) based on the estimated number of hours you'll be working. This will help you arrive at your total costs to charge the family.

They should know this number ahead of time and you should prepare and sign a contract so that everyone is aware of what you are charging and what they have to do. Sample types of contracts should be in your local library to review. Once you set up a standard contract for your business, you can use it for most occasions.

Make sure you identify all of the various people who will be at the wedding. The couple and their parents may have specific people they want you to take numerous shots of during the affair. Be sure you ask all the right questions to find this information out. This album is important to them and you want to be sure they are getting what they want to the best of your ability.

Other contract features should include a disclaimer for photographs that don't come out due to equipment failure through no fault of your own. In addition, you should keep the negatives and the contract should contain a release allowing you to use those photographs in advertising for other wedding business.

Get as many photographs taken before it all begins. This way you avoid competing with other "photographers" who are snapping pictures at the same time. Walk around the church ahead of time and find out where you can stand and where you can't to get the pictures you need during the actual ceremony. Some churches restrict your photographing area, so know this in advance and plan accordingly.

You should construct a standard list of pictures the bride and groom would want you to take. This will make it easier for them to select the pictures they want.

Here's a standard list, put together by various wedding photographers:

**PRE-CEREMONY:**

- Bride with her mother
- Bride with her father
- Bride with both parents
- Groom with both parents
- Bride with her immediate family
- Bride with grandparents
- Groom with grandparents
- Bride with maid of honor

- Groom with best man
- Bride with flower girls, etc.
- Groom with ushers

#### JUST PRIOR TO CEREMONY

- Groom's mother entering church with usher
- Bride's mother entering church with usher
- Groom's father entering the church
- Bride with father, about to walk down the aisle

#### CEREMONY

- Bride's and groom's attendants as they walk down aisle
- Bride with father walking down the aisle
- Bride with father approaching groom at altar
- Shots of wedding party at the altar
- Shots (if permitted) of bride and groom at altar
- Bride and groom kissing
- Bride and groom leaving altar

#### POST-CEREMONY

- Bride alone at altar
- Bride and groom at altar
- Bride and groom with bride's family
- Bride and groom with groom's family
- Bride and groom with minister, priest, rabbi, etc.
- Bride and groom with wedding party
- Bride and groom kissing - Bride's attendants (all) alone
- Ushers alone

#### RECEPTION

- Entry of wedding party
- Different shots of guests (table to table)
- Different shots of guests not at tables
- Bride and groom dancing
- Parents of bride and groom dancing
- The wedding cake
- Bride and groom cutting the cake
- Bride feeding groom
- Groom feeding bride
- Best man's toast
- Bride and groom kissing
- Bride tossing the bouquet
- Groom removing bride's garter
- Groom tossing the garter
- The band
- The servers
- The "getaway" car, especially if decorated
- Bride and groom driving away in car

These are the essential choices that usually comprise



a wedding album. Couples and their families will modify these standard pieces to suit their needs. In addition to these standard shots, you should try and take as many unusual pictures as you can, especially those that will add some humor and/or sentiment to the day. Remember it is a memorable occasion for the participants and your ability to capture the moments as naturally as possible will get you many recommendations and referrals.

You should collect a deposit before you begin work. This should cover the cost of the supplies plus at least an hour of your time. The balance can be collected when you deliver the album(s). You might want to split the payments up into two even amounts. If the total bill is \$750, collect \$375 before you begin and the balance when you've completed the album.

Speaking of weddings, don't forget wedding anniversaries. Oftentimes, the couple will come back for shots on their anniversary, especially the 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th and so forth.

The 25th and 50th anniversaries are often marked by parties and celebration that may include your services. Don't overlook the wedding anniversary market as it is a natural extension of the wedding market for you.

Keep an eye out for anniversary announcements and contact the couple to see if they'd like a professional touch to the festivities. They probably will!

## PORTRAITS

With so many young families today placing a renewed emphasis on family gatherings, the art of portrait-taking is as in vogue as ever. With virtually every household in your area a potential portrait customer, this portion of the photography business is too large to overlook.

Families keep portraits forever. Parents use them to watch their kids grow up and then remember those days years later. Not only is every household a prospect, but a well-done first portrait can bring you repeat business from the same family for years.

You don't need a studio to do portraits. You can rearrange one of the rooms in your house and accomplish the same thing for no overhead! Earlier, we suggested a tripod and a floodlight or two. The only addition to those items to set up a portrait studio at home would be some kind of colored background material you can tape up on the walls.

Presto! A home studio!

This is not only a home studio, it can serve as a traveling one, too! Bring your background material, your lights and your camera and tripod and you can do your portrait almost anywhere: a client's house, an office, a school building. You have to be prepared to hide any "alien" elements like other lights, tables, pictures, whatever might distract from the centerpiece: the picture of the family members/individual.

In portraits, it's important to have everyone doing the right things. With several people, be sure they are arranged properly so that no one is blocking anyone else. Ask the kids to smile, not to make faces. You can take a serious shot or two as well. You're in charge, although you must do it in a manner that is pleasant, controlled, but firm. After taking a few portraits, you will know what works best, not only in photography, but how to make the discreet suggestions to clients to better ensure a portrait the people will be pleased with for years to come.

There are thousands of memories stored away in pictures and that's a lot of responsibility on you to get it right. But you can do it! Work with a child to make him or her happy, even if you know (or it's obvious) they would like to be somewhere else. Years later, these precocious young clients will be pleased with the effort you made to get the portrait right, as they pull down an old album.

If you're in the position of trying to build up a portrait (or photography) business, you can try an idea many photographers use to get started. They advertise a free or low-cost \$1.00 portrait special for a family member. You sign up as many as you can take and then, as they sit, snap a few different shots of the person. You then do your free or low cost portrait framed (their choice of photo) and then you offer the additional shots and sizes that good pictures are likely to encourage. Not many people can pass up wallet- sizes, for example, of a good portrait. Your add-on sales should make up for the giveaway, generate your own portfolio of portraits you've done to show other potential clients and get your name about town as a competent portrait photographer.

Children also have their pictures taken at school. The school photos are often done by a portrait photographer -- like yourself! Get down to each of the schools, put a bid in to do the portraits and leave samples of your past portrait work. Large towns have several schools as prospects. In addition, drive out to schools that are off the beaten track, but within a comfortable driving distance

from you. They may not have someone they use regularly and your professional approach may attract a few offers to do the school portraits.

It may come as a surprise, but portraits don't have to be only of people. Families keep a lot of valuable items and heirlooms in their homes. Unfortunately, crime being what it is today, these luxury pieces are often the target of thieves.

To assist with a potential insurance claim if any of these precious items is stolen, a good picture with the current date on it can be critical evidence in not only identifying the object for the police but in appraising it for the insurance company. Be sure you get a complete shot, brand name (if appropriate) and any specific identifying marks that can help recover the good.

In addition to material things, people often like pictures of their pets. Humans' obsession with their pets certainly extends to photography. If people will dress up a pet or have a special burial plot as if the animal were a family member, you can assume that a portrait is part of the process of pet ownership, too. If you're particularly fond of animals, then it makes sense to pursue this part of the photography business for yourself.

Along with your normal advertising, you can leave your card and a sample pet shot or two at pet stores, grooming places, veterinary clinics, kennels, any place where a pet owner is bound to turn up. People that have show-dogs are good candidates for portraits as our breeders looking to show off their pet, too.

Getting pets to sit for their portrait may require a special touch. If you have a toy for the animal to play with or some proper food, that can usually put the animal into positions from which you can get a good portrait.

If you get some good shots, don't forget to get a release here, too, from the owners as you can use those shots in advertising or there are a number of pet magazines that may be interested in paying you for the photo. Here are a few:

American Farriers Journal  
P.O. Box 624  
Brookfield, WI. 53008

America's Equestrian  
PO Box 249

Huntington Sta., NY 11746

Appaloosa Journal  
P.O. Box 8403  
Moscow, ID. 83843

Aquarium Fish Magazine  
Box 6050  
Mission Viejo, CA 92690

Cat Companion  
Quarton Group Publishers  
2155 Butterfield #200  
Troy, MI. 48084

Cat Fancy  
Fancy Publications  
Box 6050  
Mission Viejo, CA 92690

Cats Magazine  
P.O. Box 290037  
Port Orange, FL. 32129

Dog Fancy  
Box 6050  
Mission Viejo, CA 92690

The Greyhound Review  
P.O. Box 543  
Abilene, KS. 67410

Horse Illustrated  
Box 6050  
Mission Viejo, CA 92690

Horseplay  
Box 130  
Gaithersburg, MD. 20877

I Love Cats  
Grass Roots Publishing  
950 3rd Avenue, 16th FL.  
New York, NY 10022

Lone Star Horse Report  
P.O. Box 14767  
Fort Worth, TX. 76117

Pets Magazine

790 Don Mills Road  
Don Mills, Ontario  
M3C 3S5 CANADA

Pure Bred Dogs  
American Kennel Club  
51 Madison Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10010

Reptile & Amphibian  
RD3, Box 3709A  
Pottsville, PA 17901

Tropical Fish Hobbyist  
TFH Publications, Inc.  
211 W. Sylvania Avenue  
Neptune City, NJ 07753

The Western Horseman  
Western Horseman, Inc.  
PO Box 7980  
Colorado Springs, CO 80933

As with all publications, you should contact them first with a letter and self-addressed, stamped envelope requesting writer's/photo guidelines. This will get you information about their submission procedures and what they are likely to be currently interested in receiving. You should also check the library or bookstore (or request a back issue from the publisher) to see what kind of photography is typical in that particular magazine. Understanding the style of the particular publication can increase your chances of having your photographs accepted for publication and earn you a decent royalty!

For more listings of potential magazines, check "The Writer's Market 1995" or "The Literary Marketplace" down at your local library.

You may reach a point in your portrait photography career where it makes sense to open your own studio. Many photographers have progressed beyond their own home studios to a building in which they can set up a specific portrait studio.

You would have a foyer with the walls decorated with previous portraits and maybe one or two rooms used for portrait photography, complete with a number of varying backgrounds. You should locate in an area that is convenient for your customers to come to. Moreover, you should always maintain your ability to bring your portrait "show" on the road with you. Flexibility is often the key

to success in any business. Photography is no exception.

## CARDS

The holidays are great occasions for pictures, not only portraits but for cards that are mailed out by the millions. Whether it's Christmas, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day or another holiday, photos and photo-cards are very much in the mix of holiday mail.

You must be well organized to be sure your card assignments are completed on time. Pictures must be taken, developed and converted into "cards" (a photo lab can help with this) well before the holiday to leave the client plenty of discretionary time to mail them out.

Here is an approximate time table in which to prepare your "card" business:

### Holiday Month Pictures Should Be Taken By

Christmas	August
Easter	November
Mother's Day	January
Father's Day	February
Valentine's Day	October
Birthdays/Anniversaries	4 months prior

In addition to the cards, you should encourage portraits or other pictures as a holiday gift. There are many memorable moments when a picture arrives of a grandchild, a nephew, a niece, a cousin. You can earn substantially more by processing picture and portrait orders in addition to the card work.

The other card opportunity is with new babies. Most of the time, the new parents like to notify their relatives and friends of the new addition to their family. What better way then with a birth announcement card, complete with picture?

This is all part of working with and staying with families over the years. There are so many special picture moments in the lives of people that a good photographer can almost be like a member of the family, having participated in all of the special memories that dot the landscape for all of us. Don't ever underestimate this! Remember your clients on their special days. Sending out cards is entirely appropriate to commemorate the holidays or a birthday or anniversary. If you took the wedding photos, you will know when an anniversary is coming. If you took a

birthday picture, you will have that date. Get as much information about your clients that you can. Not only will they appreciate the remembrance, the opportunity to keep your name in front of them will work to your advantage the next time an important picture moment arrives.

So, cards have two meanings here. First, you can build a nice business creating holiday picture cards. Second, a card and a note to honor special occasions in the lives of clients can remind them that you truly care about them. Both are important!

## NEWSPAPERS

Think about it. You buy the newspaper regularly, don't you? As a photographer, the photos in the paper are probably of special interest to you. While others linger over the headline or perhaps even the story, you are studying the picture to look for technique or maybe how you would have taken the shot.

Small towns have publications that go beyond the scope of normal news reporting, preferring to concentrate instead on the events that affect the local community. It might be a Friday night or Saturday afternoon football game, a charity ball, a church bazaar, a historical commemoration event, these are all local news stories that weekly publications will have an interest in covering. This means pictures! Smaller publications, especially of the free variety, are not likely to retain a full-time photographer, so freelance work is relatively easy to come by. Good pictures often sell these publications, especially with locals who like seeing their faces in the local tabloid. Keeping track of school events, whether it's sports activities, talent shows, plays, dances, contests and, of course, graduations can keep you busy from week to week. There are also important community meetings which are held such as council or school board events. Someone will be there with a pen to record the proceedings, but a photograph to accompany the story is always welcome. Many writers would prefer to write and leave the picture taking to someone who is professional and reliable rather than have to worry about both story and pictures.

Many editors of small publications don't necessarily have the time to get to every event to shoot the necessary Photography film, either. They are usually a one-person band and need any and all help they can. They probably have a small budget for pictures and once you develop a reputation for being there with your camera and getting good shots, you'll have regular work.

Start by taking a few shots of events and bringing them in to the editor. An editor will want to see examples of the types of pictures the paper is most likely to want, hence the importance of attending events and snapping shots. The editor may well be interested in what you've already taken and you can discuss fees at that point. You may want to even give a couple of the shots away in exchange for ongoing work. If you live in a small town, you will be familiar about where to get information about events of interest to the paper. The editor may give you assignments, but you can often come up with your own ideas. Visiting the local businesses regularly can get you both the town gossip and news about potential photo opportunities. You may even find potential advertisers for the paper!

Awards ceremonies, neighbors' hobbies, church youth programs, library-sponsored readings, almost anything you can think of has the possibility of being a photo-worthy event. All you need is your camera. Low overhead. Great potential. What could be better than that?

## SPECIALTY PHOTOGRAPHY

Have enough ideas yet? No? You'd like a few more? There are many other specialty opportunities for ambitious photographers.

**ATTORNEYS:** There is a series of detective novels out that features the adventures of a private detective who can't pay his bills, so he moonlights for a liability attorney. His job: to photograph accident victims and locales to return to the barrister to see if there is sufficient evidence for a lawsuit.

These novels may be fiction, but most writing is grounded in reality. Certainly that is the case here. How many trials revolved around photographs of evidence or victims?

Attorneys need this kind of photography. In many cases, it isn't for the weak stomach. There are car crashes, fires and other difficult situations into which you'll be thrust. You have to want to do this type of work. If you do, there's plenty of it out there for you.

Start by contacting attorneys in town and send them a resume and samples of your work. While they're not looking for great art with these photos, they want reliable pictures. Photography and photographers who will know what



angles to shoot and who can make snap judgments at a scene.

Scheduling flexibility will be important here. If you hold down a regular job and are running your photography-based business part-time, this may not be a practical area of specialty. Lawyers can't necessarily predict when these photos will be needed any more than you can forecast the weekend horse races. An accident will occur and you'll be needed. Expect late night calls and the need to drop what you're doing (within reason) and rush to a scene.

Since this information, may well be used as evidence, you will need to be accurate in your written description of the photograph as well as precise in noting exact time and date for the record. Sign the back of your photos so that you can easily identify them if called on to testify in a court of law. It also prevents other pictures from being slipped in and misidentified by you as you'll only swear to the authenticity of the photos you signed.

You'll probably be paid (as the detective in the novels was) on a per scene basis plus mileage expenses. You might also work out an hourly rate instead as it could be time consuming work in some cases.

Either way, there is a substantial amount of legal photography business. It's another area to explore.

**COMMERCIAL:** If you've set up a portrait studio in your home or otherwise, you can likely find work in shooting products for businesses to use in advertising and sales brochures. Almost any type of written work published by a company has some type of artwork to it, at least on the cover. Often, this artwork takes the form of a photograph.

Unlike people and animals, products will sit still. No need to get the product to smile. Consider it a "still-life" shot and arrange the product or subject to photograph in the most appealing manner.

The shots could be for a catalogue, or a brochure, a manual, a trade show layout, inventory, I.D. pictures. There are endless possibilities with businesses.

You probably know the larger sized businesses in the area. Call on them first, armed with your portfolio. They are usually utilizers of commercial photography. While they may have a photographer as an employee, there could well be too much work for one person to handle. It's not enough extra work to justify hiring a second employee, but sufficient to hire a freelancer - you!

Your local Chamber of Commerce can give you a listing of area companies ranked by size. Work your way down that list. The need for pictures are there and it's merely a question of who's going to shoot it.

**CHURCHES:** Just as school graduations are an excellent time for photos, so, too are "graduations" in church. Confirmations, bar mitzvahs (in the Jewish faith) are all important life events for the participants.

If you belong to a church or synagogue, let the minister, priest or rabbi know that you are available to do photographing. In addition to the "graduations", there are youth activities, prayer meetings, bake sales and other special events that these religious institutions hold that are meaningful to them to be remembered in pictures.

These institutions also honor their own memories in anniversary celebrations. Picture books are often sold as a means of fund-raising. There is a substantial amount of photography involved with a commemorative edition type of project.

As you photograph these events for the church, try and think about how you might use the photos otherwise. Remember, local newspaper publications may publicize a church or synagogue event. This means you can be hired by both the institution and the newspaper to get the same photo. Twice the pay for a single work!

You'd be surprised at the number of photographers and writers who "double up" on their work; in other words, get paid twice for the same job. It's called using your time and talent well. There's nothing wrong with this unless one of the entities has an objection. But, usually with a public event, this is not the case.

**AERIAL:** A real specialized area is the taking of aerial photographs. If you're not someone who likes hanging out of a plane or helicopter, this isn't the right idea for you. For those that don't mind the high-wire stunt-like activity of aerial photography, it can be a well-paid area of endeavor.

Who needs aerial photographs? Cities and towns, for one, for land development planning. Engineers, for the same reason. Real estate agents, to advertise a property. Newspapers, on occasion, for a story.

If the pilot is unfamiliar with the landscape, you should have the client accompany you to identify the

correct object for photograph. It's not easy to pick out your subject from the air. It's definitely not the same as looking at it from the ground.

You'll probably hover some 800-1200 feet above the ground and you'll be moving. Practicing this type of photography first can ensure the desired results. It's not easy, but if you work at it, you'll make a good living at it as the pay scales are high.

You may have to pay your pilot and a rental fee for the vehicle, but you build that into your rates. If you build a rapport with a particular pilot, all the better. There is a lot of trust and instinct in this specialty photography area, so it helps to be working with a familiar face.

The picture postcard business can be a source for these aerial photographs. Even if you are on another assignment, there's no reason not to shoot all the film you have up there. If you get a couple of good shots out of it, you can get paid twice again: once for the assignment and secondly if you sell a second shot to a postcard company or magazine or newspaper. Try to maximize your time in the air. If you have several assignments, try and do them all on one trip. That way you only pay the pilot and rental fee once for several paying jobs. Arrange your schedule accordingly and work out the flight plans in advance with the pilot.

Aerial photography can be a financially rewarding and exciting business -- especially if you like to fly!

There are probably other specialty areas you can work in, but these are the most common. Almost anything you can think of has a need at some time or another for a picture. The possibilities are both endless and lucrative.

## MODELS

Fashions may go in and out of style, but fashion photography never will. The demand is always there for a fashion photographer, whether it's a catalogue advertising clothes or a magazine doing a layout.

Modeling the latest fashions to simply posing near a featured landmark all present photographic opportunities. Once you contact local department stores and catalogue publishers (there are thousands), you should have a lengthy list of prospects.

Since a multiple of shots are requested, the time

spent and the money earned can be sizable. Moreover, you will meet models who may have portfolio needs of their own. You may even have a modeling studio in your town. Visit it! Chances are there are subjects needing photographs there right now!

If you do a good job on a model's portfolio, he or she will obtain work and chances increase they'll meet other models to whom they can refer you for business. Modeling is a whole network of its own and you can work full-time in this phase of photography and make an excellent living.

If you've done portraits, you will have some experience in posing models. It's somewhat different with models, but if you keep them moving and keep the camera snapping, you are very likely to get the photographs you and the subject both want.

## COPYRIGHTING YOUR WORK

When you take a picture, you own the rights to it unless you have made other arrangements via a contract. Since you own it, no one else is authorized to use the photo without your approval. You are also entitled to a royalty on subsequent usage, unless you waive that right.

A copyright signifies an original work. You own what you create, namely your photographs. You took them, they're yours to own, distribute and sell. To receive the full rights of copyright protection, you will need to file the work with the Copyright Office at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

The copyright protection lasts for the originator's lifetime. A work is considered protected from the moment of creation.

The process begins by obtaining an application from the Copyrights Office (phone number is 202-707-3000). You then complete the application and make a \$20.00 check out to the Register of Copyrights. Send that back to the Copyrights Office.

You will then receive notification of copyright approval. From that point, you will have three months to supply two copies of the registered work, one for registration and the other for the Library of Congress.

The major forms are:

TX: covers non-dramatic literary works such as fiction, nonfiction, textbooks, reference works,

directories, catalogues, advertising copy and computer programs.

PA: material to be performed, including music and lyrics, choreography, motion pictures and audio-visuals

VA: visual arts including "pictorial, graphic or sculptural works, graphic arts, photographs, prints and art reproductions, maps, globes, charts, technical drawings, diagrams and models

SR: sound recordings

Formal copyright protection is a good idea for you as you create more and more works and get paid for it. It is the only way to ensure full protection under the law. There are many opportunities for misuse of other works and this happens. For further reference, check:

Copyrights, Patents & Trademarks  
Liberty Press, McGraw Hill  
1-800-262-4729

## ESTABLISHING YOUR BUSINESS

Are you convinced that there's enough here for you to make a part or full-time living as a photographer? There are certainly scores of chances to take photographs and get paid for it. With this much variety, you're bound to have an interest in one or more of the various areas of specialty.

How do you get going?

As mentioned earlier, overhead can initially be quite low for you. Other than film, a camera, a tripod and a floodlight or two, and perhaps some material to use as a background, you're in business. The camera itself can be a regular everyday camera as people would buy in a store. The models are so good and do so much without your intricate involvement, you can easily get by with a store-bought camera for starters.

You have equipment. Now you need clients. We've made several suggestions already, but it comes down primarily to networking. You have to let people know what you do and concentrate on getting the word around to as many individuals as possible.

Networking is often a reciprocal arrangement. You leave your business cards at a modeling studio and you refer models to the studio. You take "food" pictures for a

restaurant and you patronize it. That's the simplicity of it. You build up a group of customers and they do the same through people like yourself. Many towns have "Referral Clubs" for this express purpose. It works well for all concerned.

Networking is an ongoing job. You are always on the lookout for new clients. Rare is the individual freelancer that isn't taking on a new client or two whenever possible. New work is critical to success and can be financially rewarding when coupled with your repeat business. New clients are future repeaters, as some of the earlier clients inevitably drop off for various reasons.

Sending cards to your clients, an earlier idea, is a form of networking. Anything done in the quest for new clients can be considered networking.

You can encourage existing clients to bring you new ones by offering a discount on their next service or additional copies of photographs you've already taken. New people are the lifeblood of any business and rewarding your clients with freebies or discounts is well worth the cost since it will be more than made up by the new work. It also encourages continual referrals due to ongoing discounts you may offer. Keep those clients coming!

You can work part-time or full-time under your own name for the business, or you can create a "company" name for yourself such as "Picture Perfect". If you do decide to name your business, you will need to acquire a business license (usually a simple process). Once you have the license, establish a new bank account in that name and "Picture Perfect" is ready to operate.

If you use your home as your studio/darkroom, you'll need to check with your local city and/or county council to be sure you aren't violating any zoning ordinances by running a business out of the house. Don't ignore the codes, especially as you'll be having clients come to the house.

If your city/county prohibits your home-based business, you can either open up your own studio in a commercially zoned site or you can do photography which is done away from home like aerial, weddings, etc.

If you do run a home-based business, be sure you acquire liability insurance for the home in the event a customer has an incident there. Make sure your home/studio is safe and free of any objects which a client could stumble over or otherwise come in contact with and incur an

injury.

You can advertise your business in a number of ways from leaving business cards at area stores to taking out a full page advertisement in a local paper. You may be able to "trade-out" advertising space for photographs and not have to spend any money other than on film and development, which you would have done anyway. This gets your name out at the lowest possible price.

Keep accurate business records. If you have an accountant, meet with that professional to set up the record keeping for your business. You will need to accurately record all of your expenses as many of them will be deductible. This will offset your tax liability on the earnings you receive for your photography.

Set up separate statements per client. Write down all the work you do for that individual or company especially if you are on an hourly rate. This is the best and most accurate way to keep track of your time since depending on your memory recall can be unreliable.

You're ready to open your own photography business. What was once an interesting hobby can be the way you make your living. What could be better than that?