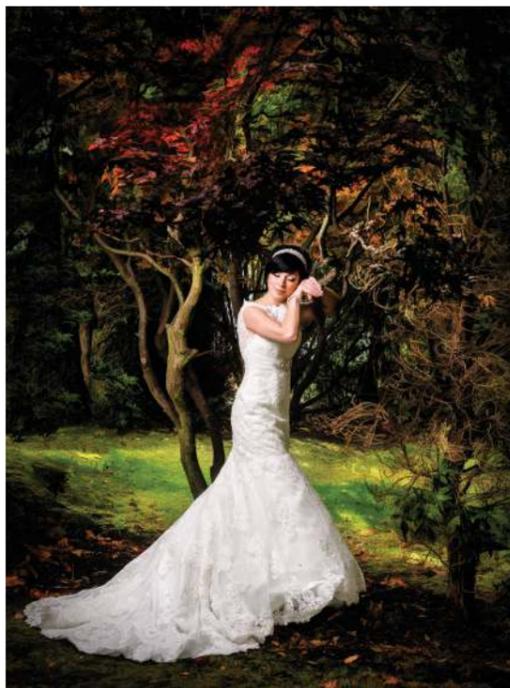


The Bigger Picture

Having established the three fundamentals of marketing that are so crucial to success, Alan Hutchison now looks at how these can be applied across your entire business model.



WORDS & IMAGES ALAN HUTCHISON



IN LAST MONTH'S feature I talked about the three basic fundamentals of marketing that photographers need to follow if they want their businesses to be successful. To recap, these were identifying your target audience, defining your marketing objective and using the principles of AIDA – Attention, Interest, Desire and Action. Having established these three crucial points, I'm now going to look more closely at how you can apply them throughout your entire business.

Let's start with a look at your core product, which is obviously your imagery. Consider those three basic principles and think about how these might apply to your portfolio. Are these the images your ideal client would aspire to have produced for themselves, perhaps in a portrait sitting or for their wedding, or could they be beautiful subjects, such as landscapes, they might consider hanging on their wall?

Look at your portfolio closely. If your ideal client happens to be a 35-year-old high-flying senior executive in a law firm, will those tastefully produced shots of a wedding in the local working men's club be attractive to them?

Next, you need to consider the marketing objective of your portfolio. This is the shop window of your business, and visitors to your website are the 'passing trade.' In the same way that people would physically go window shopping in a town centre until they found a store that enticed them through the door, your aim should be to achieve this same end with your website.

Does your portfolio follow the principles

of AIDA? Well, it should certainly be looking to grab their Attention, it should create Interest and, if it's properly matched to your ideal client, it should also generate Desire. You need to do this with around twenty images since, let's face it, no-one likes a cluttered shop window, do they?

This leaves us with the Action part of the aide-memoire, and this is where you need to tell your client exactly what you want them to do next. What this might be is up to the individual, but if you don't get those first three principles right then your customer won't have reached this stage in any case.

Building your brand

Once you've established your portfolio meets the three basic marketing principles it's time to build your brand. This is everything that makes up your company's identity, and it includes your logo, tagline,

colours, typography, design style, even your personal behaviour. In other words, everything that people will see when they interact with you and your business. Importantly, it also includes the way you make people feel, and it's essentially the personality of your company.

This is where we link back again to our first principle of marketing, identifying our ideal customer. Your brand needs to be an accurate reflection of your ideal customer's values, needs and wants. Using our earlier example, if you're targeting high-end executive clients, your brand will need to convey sophistication and professionalism. Alternatively, if you're targeting families, your brand needs to be warm and friendly.

However you position yourself, you need to be consistent across all touchpoints: your website, social media, marketing collateral, everything. That way, people will start to



recognise and trust your brand.

Your starting point for building a brand is obviously your company name, which will need to be supported by the design of your logo and choice of colour schemes. From here even the simplest of things, such as your choice of email address, reflects on your brand. A generic email address, such as lesley5213@gmail.com, won't really cut it in today's crowded marketplace. It's worth persevering because, if you can build a strong brand, you'll be able to charge more for your products and services

So, how do you develop a brand that accurately reflects your ideal customer's values and helps you to stand out from the crowd? As photographers, it can be tempting to try and do everything ourselves, but this is where working with a professional brand development agency can really help. Many local authorities provide grants to small businesses to help with such things, so it's worth investigating.

Work on your website

As a small business, investing in a professional and high-quality website is hugely important. In the past someone might shortlist three local photographers and then contact each one directly. Nowadays, this selection process starts at a much higher level, involving pages of Google searching and social media ads, and

your potential client could easily eliminate you without you even being aware you were being considered.

As well as looking good, your website also needs an objective. If, for example, I was a fine-art landscape photographer, my objective might be to sell a print. Conversely, if I were a portrait photographer, then my objective would be selling a studio session or perhaps a gift voucher. As a wedding photographer, my objective is for clients to make contact with me, providing the date of their wedding and giving me the opportunity to tell them more and sell my services to them.

You need to be asking what the objective is on each page. For example, on my home page it might be to lead my client to my portfolio. The objective of my portfolio page might then be to lead the client to my reviews section. The objective of that reviews page is to then get the client to contact me. Any time you create content on your website, stop and think what your objective should be, and every page needs to pass your AIDA test, either through an interesting headline or a stunning image.

The last part of the AIDA test is Action, and this is an area that sadly so many photographers neglect. You need to tell your website visitors what to do next. You have that stunning portfolio that your client scrolls through and then what? Your chosen

call to action will guide them on a journey through your website and draw them in to achieve your objective.

These three basic principles of marketing should extend to everything we do. At every stage in your business communications or your marketing stop and think: Is this social media post targeted at my ideal client? What is the objective of this email I am about to send? Is the display stand at my local wedding fayre passing my AIDA test?

By following these three principles of marketing throughout your business you'll ensure that you're a step ahead of your competition and aligning yourself much closer to your target client.

PP

Next Month

Alan looks at basic search engine optimisation techniques and shows how a few easy-to-follow steps can greatly increase your website traffic.

Alan Hutchison

Alan Hutchison is recognised within the industry as an SEO and marketing specialist, and he provides training to help photographers grow their businesses. Pick up more tips about building a successful business at:

■ marketingforphotographers.com

