



*"Success is what happens when 10,000 hours of preparation meet with one moment of opportunity."*

## DO YOU HAVE A PRODUCT TO SELL?

In this edition of ONEView we focus on you seeing yourself as a person in business, and your photography as a product to sell.

If I were at a party and the room was filled with photographers I would be the person asking each shooter "What's your product? What are you selling to your clients?"

Chances are that almost all of the folks responding would look perplexed.

Commercial photographers rarely think the way a business person does. Few photographers think that they need to have a "product to sell".

This is a major problem.

The reality is that your buyers see photography as a product to purchase and as consumers they need to be presented with a product that is easily defined and carries value.

As a manufacturer and service provider you have the potential to offer value in each area of your business.

As a business owner with a product to sell your job is to define, develop, and market your product, making sure that its visual as well as its service value is evident.

Understanding, embracing, and utilizing this one concept can radically change your approach to your business and the success that you achieve. If you don't think you are selling a product because you create and shoot images, think again. As a commercial photographer you are in business and as a business owner you need to clearly show your potential clients what you're offering for sale.





I don't know of any industries (except new home builders) where a manufacturer or service provider goes to market without a full complete product to sell.

Photographers are indeed both manufacturers and service providers yet rarely do they enter the market with the finished product in hand: that would be a developed portfolio that expresses the subject you shoot and your visual approach to your topic.

As a manufacturer of the photography your offering a finished product starts with having a defined vision that is identifiable.

Clients need to see your visual approach in order to know if the assignment they need to fill is right for you.

Your vision then needs to be applied to the section of the market that you choose to service. Your images carrying your visual approach to your chosen topic, need to be housed within your website, in your print portfolio, and be utilized as the visuals for your outreach program and social media efforts.

The second aspect of your business, the service end needs as much attention as the creation of your imagery.

If you've never put much thought into what your service looks and feels like to your clients, review each step of your process, from how you answer emails, to the language you use in your cover letters for bids.

Look and see how quickly you get estimates to potential clients, and examine how timely you are in providing invoices that are complete and professionally organized.

Then take a look and note how often you reach out to clients after shoots are completed to make sure that they're happy and everything went well on their end. Do you ever reach out to your current clients and ask them what you can do to create a better experience for them?

Building and running a photography business, requires a great deal of effort. (10,000 hours of effort...)

Start off right by making sure that you have a product to sell before you begin your marketing program, as that's a step many photographers miss. Then regularly check to make sure you are providing excellent service.



If you are new to the business of photography, or you've been selling and marketing photography for years, take some time now to step back and look at your business from your client's perspective. Ask yourself, "Where shall I begin to improve my business? Do I need to focus on the visual aspect or the service end?"

Then get to work, get busy and make sure you have a complete product ready to market!