

# PHILOSOPHIE

*boudoir*

Summer 2022

Traveling  
*for*  
Boudoir  
Sessions

How to  
Market  
*(and Find)*  
Your Ideal  
Clients

Establishing  
Identity *as a*  
Photographer & Brand



by @artistjessicarae  
Ft. New Cover Material Collection  
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# PHILOSOPHIE *boudoir*

SUMMER 2022

Vol. MMII, Issue II

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PHILOSOPHIE *boudoir* is the Magazine of the Association of International Boudoir Photographers (AIBP). AIBP works to promote, inspire, educate and connect boudoir photographers and the art of boudoir photography. [aibphotog.com](http://aibphotog.com)

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# State of the Industry

By Shawn Black, AIBP President

The past two years have been tough on many levels due to the pandemic. It has played havoc on our lives and businesses. The photography industry as a whole has seen its share of challenges from supply chain interruptions to the cancellation and/or postponement of all the major conferences and trade shows.

these conferences. Suddenly, they were all gone with no idea when they would return.

I vividly remember attending WPPI 2020 when Covid was just a couple cases in the US and then 3 weeks later my studio was in lockdown for the next 3 months. This sudden isolation gave birth to our temporary saviors: Zoom gatherings and the virtual conference.

Although these technological distractions may have saved my sanity, they were a pale comparison to the real deal of interacting with other photographers and sharing creative energy face to face.

From the AIBP perspective, this meant that the 2020 Retreat, which I had attended 4 of the previous 5 years, was postponed to 2021. This postponement was a huge gut punch as I look forward to these yearly gatherings. I can whole-heartedly say that these retreats have helped get me to where I am today as an artist and business owner.

Early in 2021, before my wife and I took over AIBP, we had agreed to host that year's Retreat in Boston only to have to postpone it again a few months later as the ability to safely host an in-person event was being threatened by pandemic predictions for the fall. Shortly after having to postpone the Retreat, I attended WPPI 2021 in August, which was small, masked and distanced, but it was in person and it felt good.

It was during WPPI that we acquired AIBP officially and realized two important things. First was that there was a great desire for connection and people to get back to in person learning. Second was that when it came to boudoir learning with the Retreat postponed again there was a great gap in that learning.

One of the primary goals of AIBP is education and from the moment we took over in August of 2021, I began advocating behind the scenes to see better boudoir education at these larger conferences



Personally it has been the disruption to these in person gatherings that I have felt the most, like many others in the industry.

Our job can be very solitary, where the only time we get to gather with peers are at



helping to fill the void left from 2 years of Retreat postponements. With the help of other industry leaders like *The Boudoir Album* we finally saw the realization of what we've been hoping for, specific boudoir education by real boudoir educators at a major conference with the full day Boudoir Summit at WPPi 2022. The sold out Summit and the increased attendance at the conference spoke volumes about the industry's desire for education and to come together once again after basically a 2-year hiatus.

The same patterns have held true for the other majors, Imaging, Shutterfest, and ClickCon. Events organizers have acknowledged the need to be in person and have adapted to accommodate the times. They have also acknowledged that attendees are looking for more focused, authentic learning from those who

are look upon as leaders in the specific genres. This move in the right direction is encouraging to see, but still has a long way to go which is why AIBP's continued advocacy is important to keep things moving forward along with our commitment to providing top notch educational opportunities like the upcoming Retreat. This November, in Boston, we hope our line up of Jen Rozenbaum, Denise Birdsong, Jenn Bruno Smith, Jacqueline Tobin, Jamie Gregory Pfister, Cate Scaglione, and Nino Batista, serves as a blueprint for other conferences as to what the boudoir industry wants and deserves.

For more information on the AIBP Retreat Boston 2022 scan the QR code or visit [AIBPBoston2022.com](http://AIBPBoston2022.com)



**Shawn Black** is president & CEO of the Association of International Boudoir Photographers. He is the owner/photographer of Couture Black, a boudoir studio located on the north shore of Boston, MA.

 [coutureblack.com](http://coutureblack.com)

 [coutureblackphoto](https://www.instagram.com/coutureblackphoto)



# So You Wanna Be A Boudoir Photographer (but you don't have any images to show)

By Tanya Smith

Maybe you've been a boudoir photographer for some time. Maybe you are just starting. Or maybe you are switching genres. But you need to get some boudoir images so you can *show* your work, so people will book with you.

*But if you don't have boudoir images, how do you get boudoir clients?*

This is one of the biggest struggles when switching genres or just starting out, and a lot of people end up shooting for free.

There is a better way to grow your portfolio *without* shooting for free for months on end and that is by using Vouchers and Model Calls.

Model Calls and Vouchers are one of the best ways to get your calendar booked. They build your portfolio as well as organically growing your Facebook group, social media accounts and email list. And you don't have to shoot for free for months on end!

Let's take a look at how to make this strategy work for you.

First of all... when would you use a Model Call or Voucher?

Here are a few scenarios:

- You are a new photographer and need images for your portfolio.
- You have a new set in studio and you want to get images to share and promote it.
- You have a new wardrobe item and want to show that.
- You are changing genres and need photos so you can show what you want to shoot and get more of those bookings.
- You need more images of your ICA or you are changing your ICA- I go deeper into this in Behind the Boudoir, Module 2.
- You want fresh images.
- You have new poses you want to try out.





## Gift Voucher

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Of course, you *could* ask friends to pose for you or you could offer *FREE* shoots. But a better way and a more profitable way is to offer a Model Call or Voucher because there is the potential for you to make money.

When you offer a gift voucher, *you* make up the rules around what is included and it is very clear who you are looking for, as well as what the voucher covers.

A voucher is also better because you have a dollar amount that you are offering thus adding a value for the gift. People understand they are getting a certain amount and nothing more.

Additionally, a voucher gives you the opportunity to actually make some money if your client decides to buy more images than what the voucher covers.



This is what my voucher looks like (see above).

You can get this template free by going to:  
<https://www.profitableportraits.com/VOUCHER%20TEMPLATE>  
 (or scan the QR code on this page).

You will present the voucher as a gift, which just sounds better than offering a free shoot.

Offering a voucher immediately gives the client a more valuable gift than just saying, "Hey, come in for a free shoot."

The total value will be the price of your session fee *plus* the amount you give to use towards images.

There are a couple of ways to use the vouchers:

#1 Give a large credit amount so they get a small amount of images included. You would give a large value if you want to get images to use for your portfolio. You MAY not get paid for these sessions...so yes, you may be shooting for free, *but* you will have images / videos / BTS to use for promotion.

- OR -

#2 You give a small credit amount that will not get them any images. You would use this to get people into your studio so you can make money. You will get paid for these sessions but you may not be able to use any of the images.

For this article, we will be focusing on the first scenario where your voucher will have a large amount, including your session fee plus the cost of your lowest package.

For me, my voucher would include \$395 for my session fee *plus* \$1690 ( my lowest package, which gets them 7 images). The total value of this voucher is \$2085.

This person would get a full luxury boudoir experience with me, exactly like if they were paying for a full priced session,

plus a credit of \$1690 (or 7 images).

At their in person ordering session, they use their credit of \$1690.

So in this case, yes, they could just use the credit amount and choose their 7 images and nothing more... and that *may* happen.

*Or* they can use their credit towards a bigger package.

If I give a voucher with this large amount, they *must* agree to let me use their images for promotional use *and* they need to sign the image release agreement *before* we move forward with the session.

You will *only* offer this large amount to people who understand their images and videos will be used for promotional purposes.

Otherwise, what is the point of offering this large amount where you have the potential to not make any money? The client *could* choose their 7 images and not buy any more, which is totally fine, but you would *only* offer that if you get something in return, in this case, promotional images and videos.





If you don't need images or videos to show, and you want to fill spots on your calendar, and get booked, you would offer vouchers with a lower amount.

For example, include your session fee plus \$100 - \$500 towards their purchase of images.

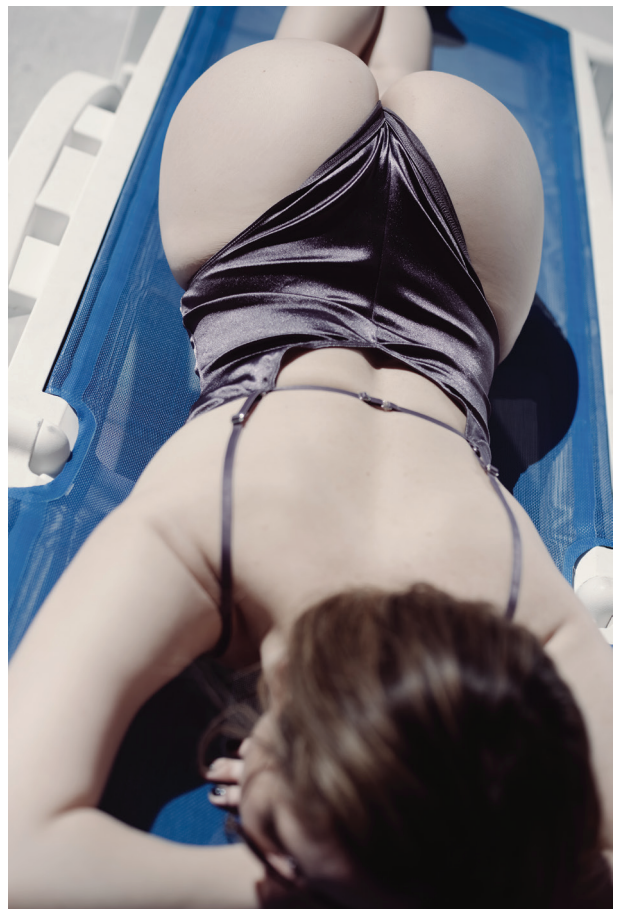
In my case \$395 *plus* \$300... total value of \$695.

*And*, if you've structured your pricing correctly, that \$300 credit will not get them any images.

If you remember, my lowest package (which is also my minimum sale) is \$1690, so they will not get any images with that credit... they will get \$300 off any of my collections.

For this second option of a lower amount, it does not matter if they let me use their images or not because I know I will be making money from the session. The client will be getting a discount off your regular prices, but still need to pay for images. No image release needed.

I like to offer large vouchers to portfolio build instead of "model calls" because using the words "Model Call" can be confusing for clients – they will



think you need to be a model to participate or they think all the images should be free – with a voucher, it's clear what they are getting and what is included.

A good rule of thumb is the bigger the amount of the voucher, the more terms and conditions (or requirements) you can put on it.

Remember, if you are using the voucher to build your portfolio, you need to have them sign an image release agreement so you can use the images. If you are going to offer such a high gift voucher amount, you need to make sure that you get to use the images for promo. If the client does not want to give you permission to share, they would pay the regular price for a session. Or you could give them a voucher for a lower amount with the understanding that they need to pay for images.

Later, when you have an established portfolio, you can be more strategic on how you use them. Maybe you have something new you want to shoot and promote – a pair of wings, a new set or new lingerie in the wardrobe – or maybe you just need to get some more promo videos for marketing.

To be clear, vouchers are to be used as part of your selling and pricing strategy. If someone is interested in redeeming a voucher you will have a pre-shoot consultation with them to explain what's included (and what's *not* included).

Go over your price list so they understand that they are getting a credit off any of your packages but they do *not* get any images. Their credit does not give them any images but they can use it towards a package. If they are not ok with that, then you don't book them.

A lower priced voucher is to be used to get paying clients into your studio. If they are expecting images, you will make it clear what the voucher covers at your in person consultation.

If you are not sure how to run a consultation, I share exactly what to say and all the scripts included in my full business course, called *Behind The Boudoir*, which you can find out more at my website, [www.profitableportraits.com](http://www.profitableportraits.com).

Handle *all* voucher clients the same way you would handle a full paying client by meeting them for a pre-shoot consultation and go over your prices, explaining what the voucher covers.



Do the full shoot as usual and have the in person reveal/sales session for them to choose their images and use their voucher amount.

Offer lower valued vouchers all over the place and offer higher valued vouchers strategically – don't give these out without knowing that they agree to have their images shared. These vouchers work well for a give-away.

My podcast, *Profitable Portraits*, has an episode on vouchers as well and I go into full details with step-by-step on how to structure and run a voucher giveaway in my monthly marketing membership called, *The Society*.



Canada's Premier Women's Photographer since 2011, **Tanya Smith** fell in love with the power of boudoir to change the way a woman feels about herself. Since 2017, Tanya has been sharing her unique approach, mentoring and coaching boudoir and portrait photographers to create impact and generate income. Her online programs have enabled hundreds of photographers worldwide, (in every genre), to grow, and scale a successful business on their own terms.

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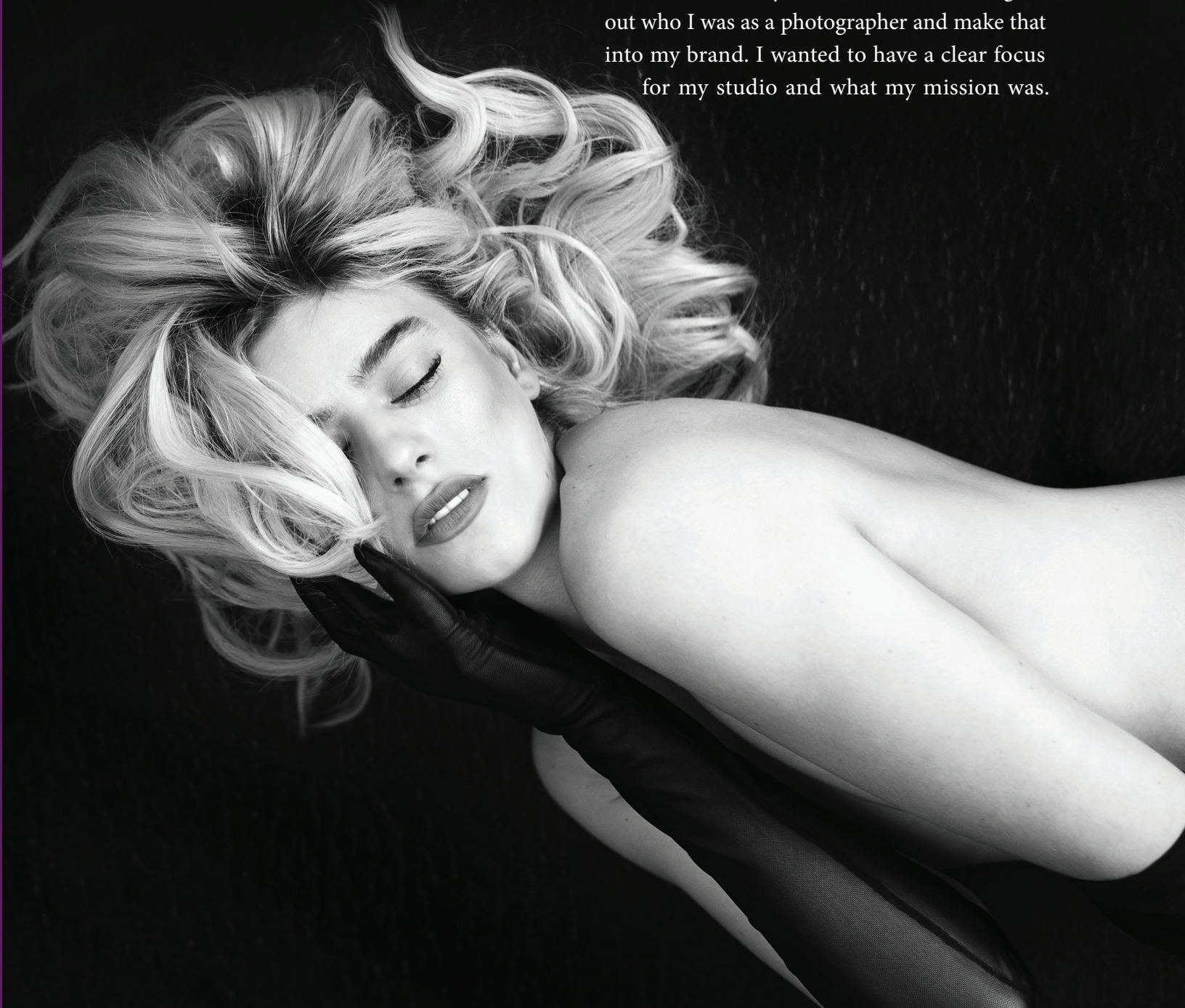
# Establishing Identity as a Photographer and Brand

By Shannon K Dougherty

**W**hen I picked up my camera many years ago, I was the person who wanted to photograph anything or anyone just to understand what I was even doing and to learn anything I could about my gear (which was a lot of hand-me-down or thrifted cameras).

Years later, I decided I wanted to do photography as a business so I asked anyone I could to be in front of my camera for practice. I think I photographed almost everything except weddings. That's when I fell in love with boudoir.

Before I started my business, I wanted to figure out who I was as a photographer and make that into my brand. I wanted to have a clear focus for my studio and what my mission was.





# What is the message to your audience?

I always want to be very clear on what my mission is with my work. When I have a client in front of my camera, I want them to feel strong, empowered, and sophisticated.

We even discuss what these feelings mean for them. It's important to me that my clients always feel they are in a safe space and that they are enjoying their sessions. I believe this shows in my work and can read in the client's face.

I do a full consultation with a client before they ever step into the studio so they know this session will be more than just posing and taking beautiful photos. It will be a full experience they can walk away from

and celebrate themselves beyond their photoshoot day. The customer service part of what I do is very important to me to give to a client the whole way through from start to finish with communication.

The message for me is always that it's "more than just a photoshoot." This is an experience for my clients to have not only a glamorous day in the studio but walk away with prints and images that hold their legacy and they can be proud of having on their walls for many years to come.

Take the time to make notes on what is important to you as a photographer and what you're shooting and what message you want to convey to your clientele.





*We all pour part of  
our personal style  
into our art,  
so take a moment  
to think about  
what that is  
for you.*

## Style

Something that is very important to me is having cohesion with my work. That's not to say you can't change it up and do something completely different sometimes but to have an identity with your work and brand. In my work, I like to do a lot of black and white images. Clients come to me for that and expect to receive that. I'm not the photographer to come to for over the time sets and colors. Clients can see this when they visit my website and social media. I definitely photograph in a style that speaks to me as a person. I think we all pour part of our personal style into our art so take a moment to think about what that is for you. I like there to be emotions, soft expressions, and a relaxed feeling in most of what I shoot.



Part of my style is to also give everyone an editorial look to their photoshoot. I do this with sets, lighting, and directions to my client on posing.

This is important to identify in your brand to keep consistency and show the client what the photoshoot experience will be like in your work.





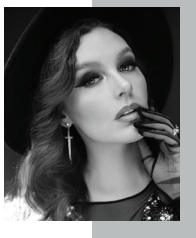
## Products and Packaging

The products I offer my clients are a very important part of the experience. Since I offer a Luxury Photoshoot experience, my products have to reflect that as well.

I've tested many things that I wanted to offer clients with a lot of trial and error. I wanted to see what people were buying, what they weren't buying, and how I can educate them on the value of each product. Quality of the products are important, so I took my time to research vendors and to get samples to test before ordering for a client.

Every client receives their order in beautiful packaging that is in my studio brand colors (black, white, and rose gold) with my company logo and hand delivered if the client isn't out of state/country. It's that little touch of elegance to hand a client something in beautiful packaging.

Taking the time to focus and figure out your brand by just a few keywords is a great place to start. Then, you can move forward with defining your style, your client experience, and what you want to share with others.



**Shannon K Dougherty** is a boudoir and portrait photographer, educator, and retoucher based in St. Louis, Missouri. She has been creating art all her life and fell in love with photography. She specializes in editorial and fashion inspired style in her work.



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# Let Your Failure Lead the Way

By The Boudoir Academy • SPONSORED CONTENT

Urrrrrrgh failure. Frustrating, right? The minute we fail, we start to beat ourselves up. “I’m never going to get it right.” “This is too hard.” You might even wonder if this boudoir photography thing is even for you.

But what if I told you that failure doesn’t have to be this heavy, negative thing? Learning from and actually leaning into failure is a key ingredient to your boudoir photography business. When you know that failure is part of the process on your way to success, then failures or missteps won’t sting so bad. In fact, you should embrace them.

Without failure, you can’t elevate your game.

## Then Why Do We Avoid Failure Like The Plague?

From the moment we are young, we are taught to avoid things that might cause us to feel pain, frustration, or embarrassment. Then, as we grow into adulthood, those habits are further reinforced by our culture and society. And it just becomes a default program we use.

But to understand it even better we have to actually look at how our brain works. Did you know the brain’s main function is to protect you and be super-efficient? When your well-meaning brain tries to talk you out of going for big goals or giving up when things are going to plan, well it’s actually doing its job.

So, at this point you are probably asking, okay, cool, but what does this have anything to do with my boudoir photography business?

It has *everything* to do with it.

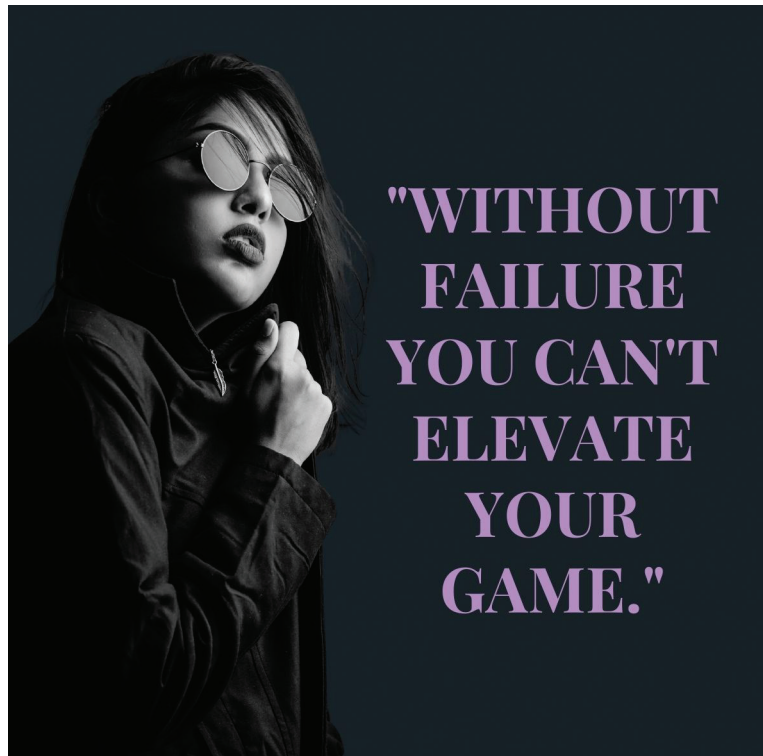
Once you start looking at failure simply as a lesson or a tweak you make on the way to your goal, then you start to show up differently in your business. The fear starts to fade and you become unstoppable. You start hitting

those big income goals, attracting the right kind of clients, and start building the business you really want.

## Why Do We Expect Our Business To Have Zero Obstacles?

We can be extremely hard on ourselves when it comes to our business goals.

Think of your photography business as a baby. Would you ever get frustrated with your baby when it was trying to walk for the first time? Would you say, “Well, you are never going to be able to do this



so you might as well give up.” No. Of course, you wouldn’t say that. You would know that your baby has to fall down many times. It has to adjust and try new balancing. The falling down is actually showing the baby what needs to happen next to get it right.

So why do we do this to ourselves and our businesses? Giving yourself some grace and by using the results to your advantage will start to clear the path for success.

## Tips For Dealing With Failure.

Even when you logically know that failure is part of the process, it still doesn't feel good. In fact, it feels awful. Also, you are not guaranteed success just because you fail. And that can be a scary place. By implementing some strategies, you can reduce the sting and maximize the effort.

### 1 Evaluate!

When you use evaluation techniques during failures, you can assess what needs to happen when moving forward. It is common for people to brush off the lessons learned from their failures. Instead, they might change directions and move on to another thing. But the lessons of our failures are useless if not evaluated and understood. My favorite questions to ask are What worked? What didn't work? And what will I do moving forward?



### 2 Don't take it personally.

When you fail at something, don't let it discourage you from trying again (and again). In fact, use failure as motivation to work harder and improve yourself so that next time around, things will go better for you!

### 3 Take personal ownership of your mistakes and learn from them!

Don't blame others for your failures — take ownership of them instead because only then will you be able to move forward and improve yourself as a bad-ass boudoir photographer.

### 4 Self-compassion.

Show kindness towards yourself and your team involved in the failure. There is a huge difference between admitting failure and beating yourself up about it.

### 5 Remember your why.

Reconnect with the larger meaning behind the goal and use that to drive you forward. Running a business is hard and if you don't have a meaningful "why", then you will want to give up easily.

## Reframing Failure.

Ultimately, failure is what will prompt you to take action, to put your big ideas into action and turn them into an amazing boudoir studio. It'll remind you that nothing good comes easy – that it takes hard work and persistence to get where you want to be – but it's also an opportunity to have some fun along the way. And isn't that what this whole entrepreneurial journey is about anyway?

Remember success is not something that happens to you. It is a decision.



I want to end with one of my favorite quotes about failure. If you can start to see your obstacles in a different light then you will reap the rewards and have the boudoir photography business of your dreams.



Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is a delay, not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead end. Failure is something we can avoid only by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing.”

– Denis Waitley

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**The Boudoir Academy:** Full solution boudoir education. We don't sell band aids, we provide customized full solution boudoir education to achieve the results and the business of your dreams.

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 [theboudoiracademy](https://www.instagram.com/theboudoiracademy)



# The “Cover Story”

By Michal Lepore, *Touch of Boudoir*

## Background

If you asked me 10 years ago what I would be doing a decade later, intimate portraits would be one of the farthest things from mind. I had just dropped out of college in a dual science major that only 3% of people passed. I switched my focus to computer science and had been pursuing that professionally up until the pandemic. Photography was a fun hobby for my wife and I up until our miscarriage in 2014.

Soon, photography became a lifeline for me and handling the trauma of losing a child. We were a self-taught family and wedding-focused and it added some supplemental income that was nice.

Once our first son was born in 2016, my wife stepped back from the camera. I continued to expand my knowledge and abilities with my camera and lighting. I slowly started shooting the fashion model industry to advance my craft with lighting and composition. I have had people request Boudoir, but I feared the stereotypes placed on male photographers in the field, so I always recommended a friend in town that I knew specialized in it.

A couple of years later I attended a Boudoir class with Myla Gonzalez (*Cheeky Boudoir*) to expand my ideas on posing and composition. I remembered hearing how much she was making per session and it was just mind boggling.

I was never set on photography being my main

career. In fact, my uncle, owner of *Eastern Photographic* (Lowell, MA) always tried to talk me out of it, fully knowing the toll and sacrifices one would have to make. However, the more photos I took the more I wanted to pursue it.

Once the pandemic hit, I realized that photography was the one job that never felt like a job. I desperately wanted to leave my soul crushing career in IT, so I

quit dramatically with a 6 months' notice and exit strategy. I will always be thankful for having such an amazingly supportive boss, who knew my heart was somewhere else and wanted me to pursue it, too.

With weddings being canceled and rescheduled, I was looking for something else to start shooting to help make up for the big change in my income. No sooner than announcing my departure and transition of careers did my next request for bridal boudoir come in. At that point, I sat down with my wife and talked it over.

*Touch of Boudoir* (TOB) was born in the summer of 2020. What set me apart was my training to tell a story through the fine details of a wedding alongside creative posing and mastery of body movement from the fashion / model industry. I instantly was able to provide a unique artistic approach that married my past talents beautifully and set my work apart from others.

Since 2020, Boudoir has become my focus, as it maximizes family time while still providing an income as large as weddings.



JD Albro

## The Team

It's crazy how fast TOB has grown. A big component to that success is the glam squad. Without these six women that help pamper and prep our clients, TOB would not be where it is today.

The team consists of three ultra-talented MUA's, two of which are Estheticians- Christy, Marcella, and Hannah. Megan and Cat are our hair and lash specialists who also model (and one is even a burlesque dancer!).

Finally, we have our newest addition to the team. Morgan is our Wellness Coach and she helps prep clients with stretching and endurance for the workout that a boudoir session can be.

The whole team steps in to assist on shoots to allow Michal, the photographer, to remain contactless during the session and provide additional hype up for each client.



## Being Unique

While we are a little biased, we believe our experience is the nicest in town. Your session begins with the gift of a branded satin robe to wear before sitting down to get pampered.

Once ready, Michal starts in with the terrible Dad Jokes and pose demonstrations providing naturally authentic laughs and smiles. Being a male photographer who primarily takes pictures of women, Mike enhances the empowerment experience by having every photo show up live on a large screen.

This serves several purposes. It gives our clients the ability to give instant feedback and also to have a say on THEIR ideal version of beauty of themselves. We focus on what our clients ask us to highlight, so that every pose is uniquely modified for them. The screen allows the client to see how the subtle

movements and angles can adjust composition. This builds confidence and gives a peace of mind knowing that the photos are shot camera perfect.

There is no guesswork or anxiety of not knowing what the photos look like. This instantly creates the HYPE they need to feel empowered. This finally opens the door for discussion of editing and what they would like improved on before editing begins.

Because all of our packages are pre-selected prior to the shoot there is no hidden sales session. The clients know instantly, if they are going to have a hard time picking because they have seen the pictures firsthand. Oftentimes they will choose to upgrade without hesitation. Clients also know that they are getting the largest and nicest products in town, as *Touch of Boudoir* is the only studio offering Floricolor products.



## Behind the Shot

Before every shoot a conversation is had to determine the different looks and mood a client is looking to achieve: Traditional, Glam, Fine art, Bodyscapes, or Film noir.

In this case, Tamara, a young mom, was looking to feel empowered. She trusted in my creative direction, which allowed me to tailor a shoot just for her. She knew I wouldn't give her a cookie cutter set of poses, but instead a fun experience with my innovative vision at work.

For the cover shot, I knew that the King Francis backdrop from Denny's Manufacturing would be the perfect choice in complementing my client's gorgeous skin tone.

For most of my fine art photography, I often pull posing ideas from the Renaissance Era's paint-

ings and sculptures. This artistic style stands out for its ability to tell a story through elegant poses that leaves the viewer in awe. This image was the first pose of the set, and we instantly knew that we had just developed a masterpiece. Tamara has expressed how much this shot meant to her and how this experience was life changing.

Fine art style is my favorite, as I rely on simplicity and minimalism to focus the viewer's attention on the composition of the human form.

The photo itself was shot with 2 Godox / Flashpoint ad6000s; one light overhead in a curved strip box as the key light, and a large 7-foot parabolic umbrella for fill (purchased from Hunts photo and Adorama). For the most part I am a true-to-color photographer. However, I am known to surprise my clients with some more artistic edits alongside the originals.



**Michal Lepore** is the owner and photographer of Touch of Boudoir, based in central New York State.

 [touchofboudoir.com](http://touchofboudoir.com)

 [touchofboudoir](https://www.instagram.com/touchofboudoir)





# Cover Contest Runner-Up

Stacy Maurer, Emerald Photography  
Jacksonville, Florida


 [theemeraldphotography.com](http://theemeraldphotography.com)  [theemeraldphotography](https://www.instagram.com/theemeraldphotography)






## Cover Contest Runner-Up

Cate Scaglione, Life as Fine Art  
Red Bank, NJ

 [lifeasfineart.com](http://lifeasfineart.com)

 [lifeasfineart](https://www.instagram.com/lifeasfineart)

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At UAF Photo Lab Ltd we value hard work, loyalty and integrity. We know how hard you work to capture your clients special memories and moments. Therefore, it is imperative to us that our clients receive the best possible quality that goes into each album creation, photographic print and product.

We're obsessed with quality and are much more interested in focusing on excellence than quantity. We are creatives at heart and completely zealous about what we do.

We pride ourselves on producing the best print quality and finishing: it's the benchmark on which we continue to do business. We simply love to create beautiful things.

UAF Photo Lab is more than happy to consider any type of Erotica, Penetration or Boudoir as Art in our lab.

# You Can Sell

By Anna Johnson, for UAF Photo Lab • SPONSORED CONTENT

Everyone has had at least one negative sales experience...

It could have been that super over-aggressive, pushy salesperson trying to sell you something without ever asking you what your needs are. Maybe it's that time you walked into the place and you walked right out because it smelled like throw-up or worse. It could have been that person that totally over sold you on items and just went on saying "BUT WAIT THERE IS MORE." Then again it could have been that time when the person you were talking to was so insecure about their own product that they actually turned you away. No matter what BAD experience you had, it was a reason WHY you did not purchase that product.

Let me let you in on a little secret...you ready?

Not everyone was born to be a salesperson, but most of us have been doing it our entire life. Many people were never taught how to become a salesperson and because of that, they make something that should be enjoyable into a bumpy ride. However, that is WHY you are reading this (or hopefully that is why). I am going to help you HELP your client have a better sales experience and in return, you will have a better sale.

## The Key to Sales

Here is the first KEY – *The first thing you have to sell your client on is YOU!*

You may be thinking, "I can't do that," but let me assure you that you can and you likely already have. If you're a parent you likely have sold your children several times, like that time you convinced them to eat broccoli. Maybe, it was the time you convinced them that pooping in their diaper was not actually a good idea anymore and it should be done in a toilet. See, right there YOU became a SALES person selling to your child and a repre-

sentative of broccoli farms and toilets all around.

Maybe you don't have children and you are thinking you can't do that. Well, again let me explain. Have you ever had something that you LOVED and you convinced a friend to buy it too? Well, there you go. If you answered "yes," then you are sales person.

Sales is as natural as breathing. However, most of the time, we do not even realize we are doing it. We sell ourselves almost every day on ideas, so pay attention, because you are doing this already.

So, what is stopping you from selling your products to your clients?

It's a few things, but we will start with CONFIDENCE.

I can't really stress enough that having confidence in yourself can move mountains in your life. However, I get that this can take time. It should be

something you are always working on and I know several AMAZING body positive coaches, life coaches and more that can help you with this. It's truly a core of success in just about every aspect of your life! I'm not talking about this type of confidence, mainly because I truly believe that one workshop or workbook can't help with years of beating yourself down.

What I am going to talk about is confidence in the product, in your work, and in what you are creating. Although, I am not a FAN of selling something people don't need, the point of sharing this is, if you are knowledgeable and genuinely excited about your products and your craft, your clients will be, also.

Just like having confidence in your own self is hard, having confidence in your work and product is also hard to achieve. One of the biggest KEYS in gaining confidence is knowing that no matter what you are offering, you likely know more about that product than your client does.

*If you are knowledgeable  
and genuinely excited  
about your products and  
your craft, your clients  
will be, also.*

We have all made that purchase or listened to someone and believed in the product and the person so much. Then, after we learned more, you may have thought, “OMG, what was I thinking, why did I buy this?” *HAHA*.

If they booked you, then you are one step ahead and you have already sold yourself enough that they trust your skill. The next thing is to continue to sell yourself during the session, and after your session, by trusting that the products you are selling are quality and worth what you are selling them for.



📷 Meg Marie Photo

There is no special magic pill to gaining confidence in your craft or product. The answer is that knowledge is KEY. Learn everything you can and get excited about what you are offering. If you believe in it, your client will also believe in it.

Now, let's dive in to making a sale more effortlessly.

The first thing you need to figure out is WHY your client needs your product. I go over this more in-depth in my Branding Course. Once you know WHY your client needs you, then selling that why is easy.

First thing you need to do is get rid of the pre-programmed ideas that you have about selling. Most people have some sort of a negative feeling about sales lodged in their subconscious.

### Take a Moment and Think About:

- What “selling” means to you?
- What do you think about “Sales People”?

- When you think about selling what is your reaction or feeling?

Most of you came up with a lot of negative answers. I want you to think of a positive or good time you bought something. Maybe it's a new home, a car or an outfit. Heck, it can even be the time you got your hair cut and you ended up buying that bottle of shampoo that the stylist SOLD you on.

Once you determine how you feel about a sale you can take a massive leap forward, recognizing that not all sales are horrible as long as you change your programming.

Open your mind and stop telling yourself that YOU CAN'T and that YOU SUCK or even that SALES IS BENEATH YOU. Take a moment and connect with your client on the product they need.

### Connecting With Your Client

This is where you have to take YOU out of this!

Stop looking at the sale as what you would want or need to buy and look at your client's needs. Try to look at the world through your client's eyes and get to know your client.

Take another moment and ask answer the following questions about a past client, and if you don't know your past clients, think of these questions with your future clients.

- What is their life like?
- What do they value and why?
- What do you offer them that can help them?

Many times, I learn most of these answers during the session but you can learn some of these things prior to the session by sending out a simple questionnaire. You don't want to ask the questions directly, but even a simple “tell me a little bit about yourself and WHY you wanted to do this session” can tell you a lot about that person.

You want to understand what is likely keeping your client up at night and once you can determine this, then the rest is fairly simple.

## What “Problem” Does Your Product or Service Sell?

For the boudoir photographer, this could be helping them with body issues, gaining strength to overcome something painful, acceptance or more. If you are a wedding photographer, you may be doing this to help preserve memories, to unite families, or to rekindle love. The family photographer may be offering their services to help families, preserve a lifetime stage, or more. This is where BRANDING falls in line with SALES. KNOW your BRAND.

Example: My Company is about helping women learn to Just BE {*Boudoir Ego*} I want women to be able to just exist as they are, and exactly where they are.

Once you know what problem you can sell, you know without a doubt that YOU have the ability to “help” your client out with their problem. You are now a SOLUTION and thus, you just became a NECESSITY.

### Desperation SUCKS

People can smell desperation a mile away. Remember, not all customers are created equal. You may not want to work with a particular person and you may not even offer what that client needs. It is better for you to then refer this client to someone else in your area. This is WHY building a community of business owners is valuable and important. Trust me, taking a client that is really for someone else will save you in the long run.

### Prepare, Prepare, and Then Prepare Some More.

You should be preparing your client for your sales the entire time during your session. Again this comes from listening to them. YOU are a PROBLEM SOLVER! If your client is talking about how they always feel like crap when they leave the house then you need to determine how you can fix that problem. If your client says they hate this or that part of their body then what is your solution?



Meg Marie Photo

Example: I would have to say about 80% of my clients tell me they leave the house feeling bad about themselves and this is WHY they are doing a session with me. During the session, I make sure to mention “Girl, this image will look so good on your wall.” I hear a response like, “oh no, I could never put an image of me up.” There are many reasons for their WHYS and I have a solution to every single one. During this time, I am prepping my client’s mind for purchasing wall art.

By mentioning what you plan to sell and how it can solve their problem, you are setting them up for what to purchase. It’s not a trick or a gimmick. Remember, you are again helping them

by giving them a solution to their problem.

### Now Let’s Determine What You Need to Say!

How many times have you gotten this email?

*“Hello X,  
I was wondering if you offer X and what is the price?”*

I get this, it’s so frustrating and often times a bit discouraging because you automatically think they are price shopping. The problem, again, is that you need to change your mindset. It’s not your client’s fault that they have been trained by modern marketing and media. They, most of the time, don’t know how to open up a conversation.

*A simple  
“tell me a little bit about  
yourself and why you  
wanted to do this session”  
can tell you a lot about  
[a client].*

What they are really wanting to know is:

*“Are you a likable person? Can I trust you? Do you have a solution to my problem?”*

So an easy response is:

*“Hello X,  
I would love to hear more about what it is that you are looking for.”*

You should go into more details and ask a few questions for them to answer.

Example: Is this for a special date or occasion? What colors did you have in mind? Have you ever had your makeup or hair done by a professional?

Get the client to envision their session with you, by asking questions that pertain to the session. Once you know what it is they are looking for, you are then able to clearly determine if you can offer a solution to their problem. You have also now gotten that client to have confidence in you and be excited about the session.

Keep in mind that if you are asking them to tell you what they need, they probably have NO IDEA. Your job as the salesperson is to give them a solution to their problem. They will almost NEVER come to the solution all on their own.

Ask open-ended questions and listen to their answers. Go into each conversation with what “can I do” or “what do I offer” that can help with this. Get excited by their response and ALWAYS be genuine. You can say things like “Oh, wow really? That’s exciting or tell me more about this”, “How did that make you feel?”, “Why do you feel this way?”

Many fear the *price* question. I know I did for many years, then when I realized the value in what I do I realized I could never put a price on it. Determining why your solution to their problem is important and conveying that importance makes price seem insignificant.

Offer package choices and then guide them to the best choice that will meet your client’s needs. If you leave the choice up to the client, almost every time your client will make the wrong choice. Again, your client does not know what package is right for them. YOUR job is to find the solution to their

problem, not give them choice for a solution.

Educate your client on the benefits of one package or item over the other. Teach them what they will enjoy from purchasing one package over the other. Most importantly MAKE YOUR CLIENT FEEL IMPORTANT. Respect their fears and where they are financially and understand, too, that sometimes it takes someone a bit longer to reach a decision. If you pressure for a quick sale, then you will likely end up with a smaller sale. TAKE YOUR TIME!

## Give GOOD ANSWERS

Your client will expect you to be friendly and professional. In all honesty, it’s the bare minimum you can do for customer service. They also expect you to know what you are talking about; this means knowing each product you are offering. Pause and listen to them and they will always leave key pointers to inform you of their needs.

Example: If your client mentioned several times they are vegan and do not use animal products, then you may not want to start off by offering them the genuine leather album. This tells that client that you listened to nothing they said.

## Now, let’s talk about closing the Sale.

Sales is often described as a beautiful, elegant “dance.” Asking a client for the sale is almost like asking someone to sleep with you before they have ever met you or before the first date. This is ONE BIG reason why I do every sale after the session. I never want my client to feel forced into buying something they did not need or want. This is just uncomfortable for both of us! Now, there are sales methods where you sell ahead of time, I happen to not sell in this way.

So say things like:

*“Based on how many images you LOVE, I think this package or item would be best for you.”*

*“So, you told me about X. I believe this package is perfect for your event.”*

*“Is there anything else you wanted that is not included in these packages?”*

You can close the sale by saying something like:

*“Ok, let’s do this!”*

*“Alright, let’s get started with the designing process.”*

Remember, you want to be authentic. I happen to be a bit chill and extremely relaxed and cheeky, so my conversations usually end with “HECK yes girl, let’s get ‘errr done” or something similar.

## Rejection

Look, it’s going to happen. We all get rejected but as I love to say:

**Glass ceilings are made to shatter and guess what? when it does, it sparkles and turns into a freaking diamond.”**

The NOs are what’s going to help you learn how to change!

They will teach you what needs to change to perfect what you’re doing. Remember, sometimes a NO means a *NOT YET*. Don’t take every rejection as a stab in the heart. Keep in touch with your client and offer them something later down the road. Most people will say “NO” because they are just not ready or they need to think about it longer. Don’t take it personally; they are saying NO to what you are offering at the moment, they are not personally rejecting you.

I have clients who have told me they have been following me for 8+ years and they were just not ready. Then, one day they were ready and they reached out.

## CONSISTENCY is KEY!

If the problem is money, you can say:

*“I can see this is a bit of a stretch right now for you, let’s look at some alternatives.”*

You should ALWAYS have alternatives (solutions) to their problem.

*“We can start off with this package, later down the road, if you decide you need or desire to change it, we can do so.”*

Be flexible and sometimes just saying this alone will make the sale: *“We can go ahead and spread your payments out”* or *“We offer payment plans.”*

Again, give a solution to their problem.

Sometimes money objection is because they can’t see the value in what you are offering. Remember to dig deep into the problem of why they do not want to spend and offer a solution.

## Check your Attitude!

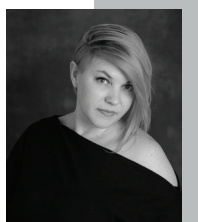
Your money values are NOT theirs, and it’s not cool to project your money problems or assume a person has the same money problems as you do. Never make assumptions about your client’s financial situation. Believe that what you are offering has value and exceeds the price of what you are actually offering.

## Promises

Never make a promise to your client at the expense of your company. If you are offering a sale or an incentive, then you need to make sure you are still making a profit. If you don’t, not only will it put your business in a dangerous situation, but it also will only discourage you.

A deeper understanding of your finances will help keep you from making promises or business mistakes. This is where I HIGHLY recommend getting a CPA to help you out with money management.

Sales should be fun and exciting for both you and the client. Enjoy the process and again take time to learn and enjoy your client.



**Anna Johnson** is an internally featured boudoir photographer with over 11-years in the photographic industry. Her mission to help women learn to just BE themselves and embrace who they are has extended into a passion for teaching other boudoir photography professionals, where she champions her students to find their personal voice to improve their client experience. She believes in sharing the wealth of knowledge acquired through her experiences and perseverance and never holds back when it comes to her teaching technique.

 [boudoirego.com](http://boudoirego.com)  [boudoirego](https://www.instagram.com/boudoirego)

 [uafimaging.com](http://uafimaging.com)  [uafphotolab](https://www.instagram.com/uafphotolab)

# AIBP Weekly Choice Image Competition

Sponsored by UAF Photo Lab

*Congratulations to the winners from the 4th quarter of 2021!*

Every week, the Association for International Boudoir Photographers in partnership with UAF Photo Lab, feature photos from our members in a weekly competition. They are recognized for their work on the AIBP blog, across social media outlets and are published here in *PHILOSOPHIE boudoir*. Winners are also gifted an acrylic block courtesy of **UAF Photo Lab** where they can have their image printed and displayed in their space.

We would like to thank all of our amazing guest judges and all who submitted images.



The winning images for the 1st quarter of 2022 follow. We look forward to seeing more of your beautiful art this year.

**Want to enter your own images?  
We'd love to see them!**

Log in or create your account at **AIBPhotog.com** and you'll find details on how to submit (scan the bar code at left to be taken directly to the submission page).

Good luck!

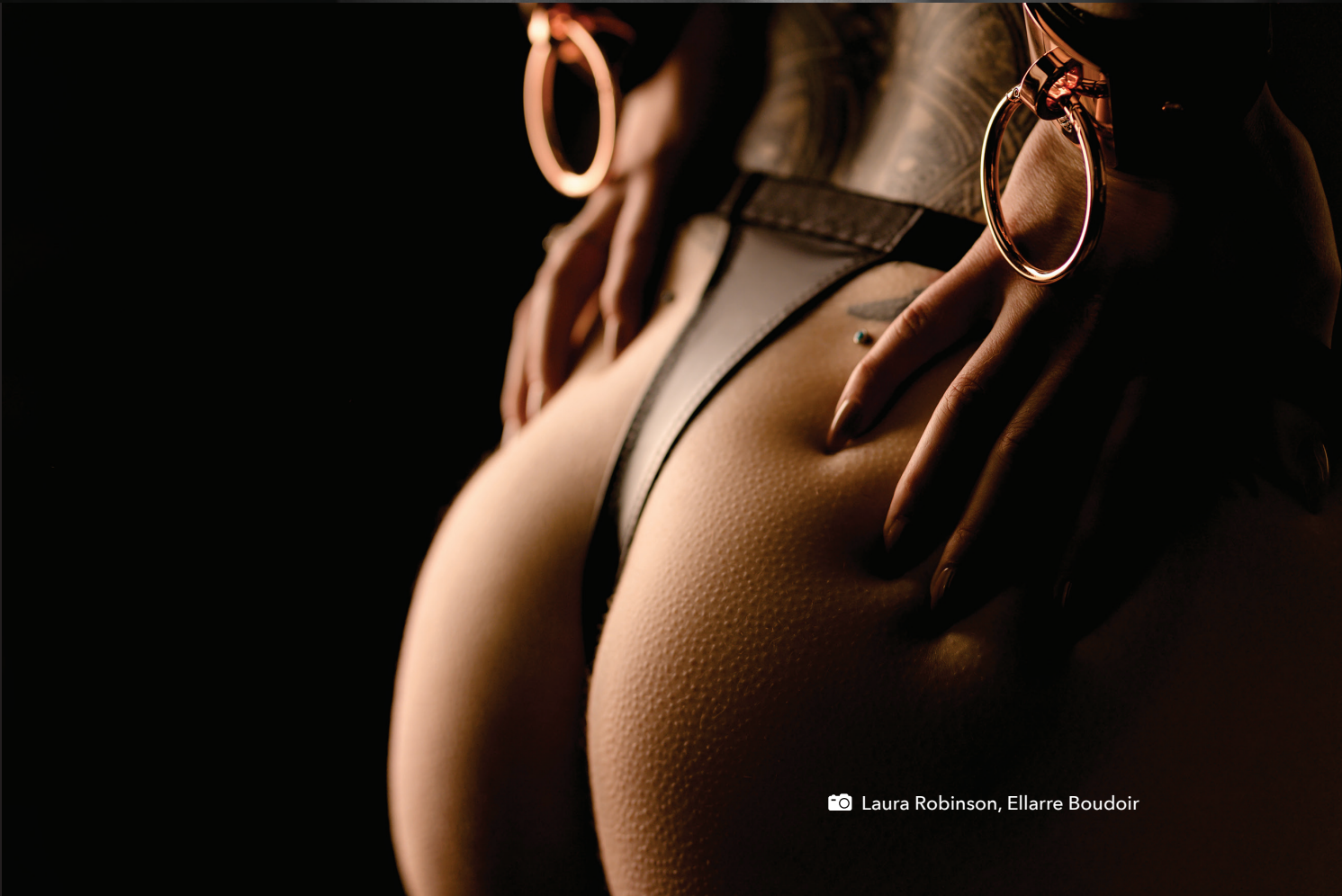








📷 Yvonne Renckens, Powervrouwen netwerk



📷 Laura Robinson, Ellarre Boudoir





📷 Ashley Layden & Christie Conyer - Modern Muse Studios



📷 Brianna Ellis, Brianna Lane Boudoir





17HATS MEMBER Q&A

TANYA SMITH ON RUNNING A BUSINESS:

# “You learn that you can do hard things.”

Tanya Smith is a women's portrait photographer specializing in boudoir in Ontario, Canada since 2011. She also offers business education for boudoir and portrait photographers.

17hats COO, Amanda Rae, had an important conversation about Tanya's business journey and how using her CRM has changed the way she does business.

**Q:** LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR OWN BUSINESS JOURNEY. TAKE ME BACK TO THE VERY FIRST DAYS IN YOUR BUSINESS.

**Tanya:** "... I picked up a camera, like a lot of people, when my eldest was born so I could take better pictures of them. Then I went through a very not fun divorce, but as I was going through that, I did my own boudoir shoot. I wanted it, and I needed it for me. Everyone was saying how great it makes you feel, and I thought, okay, I'm going to try it ... and it was amazing! I loved it. I showed my girlfriends, and they were like, can you photograph me? ... This one friend kept bugging me to do it. So I said, I'll try it. ... She's gorgeous. How hard could this be?

And it was terrible, awful. And this beautiful woman who, I don't know how I did it, but I made her look worse than she does. So I thought, okay, I'm not a person who takes photos of people ... I tried it once, I'm giving up. It was weeks later that I pulled [the images] up again. And I thought, you know what? This one is almost good. Maybe if I stepped over here to the right, this would have looked good? So I said to her, let's try it again. ... I brought her back in and I slowed down, and I paid attention, and looked at the angles. And when I looked at the photos again, they still sucked, but they weren't as bad as before. And I showed them [to her] and she loved them. She cried when she saw them. So that was the first time I was like, wow, this is really something. This is why Boudoir has my heart, because it really changes the way a woman sees herself."



## Q: SO AS YOU STARTED GOING AND GETTING MORE CLIENTS, I'M SURE YOU HAD TO FIND WAYS TO CUT TIME.

**Tanya:** "Yeah. So one of the things I always tell people that are starting out in any portrait business is to get a CRM. Because I waited - because, "I can do it myself." How hard is it to print up an invoice? Right? But honestly, as soon as you get five clients and three inquiries, you will drop the ball. So I found 17hats. Once I got 17hats set up ... and once you know [your workflow] it's so much easier. And to get a little ping on my phone that I've got an inquiry, I'm like, "YES!" It's so much easier just to see what I need to do every day."

## Q: WHAT ARE SOME OTHER WAYS THAT NEW PHOTOGRAPHERS CAN BUY BACK SOME TIME IN THEIR DAY?

**Tanya:** "The only thing we can't get back is time. We've heard all the cute little sayings and stuff, but it's true. And what I try to talk about is, when you're a photographer, you want to get bookings. So what used to happen was I would be super busy with shoots and editing, and then I picked my head up because I finally finished, and now I have nobody in the books. So then I'd put my head back down and I'd market, market, market. So it was cyclical, and I wanted it to be constant.

When you have something in place that keeps everything organized ... and when you save time, in any area, editing or outsourcing anything, you have the time to keep your marketing consistent so that everyday you're marketing. You can outsource your editing, which is a very, very big step for people to do, but it's a huge time saver.

But one of the biggest time savers that I found was online scheduling. ... And when I automated online scheduling. Here's the link, find what works for you. Yeah, the end. I'm done. I use the [online] scheduling for my hair and make up artists and my assistant. So, they're users in 17hats and they have their calendar, and we sync all our calendars together so they immediately know when someone's booked a shoot. It saves more time than having someone edit [your images], if you can believe it."

## Q: WHAT'S SOME ADVICE YOU'D GIVE TO SOMEONE LOOKING TO GET STARTED IN THEIR SMALL BUSINESS?

**Tanya:** "Honestly, look into a CRM. That's the one thing that I would have done is set it up before I started. I did it when I needed it, which meant I was already too busy, and I should've got it before. So definitely look into a CRM.

For shooting, just shoot. How do you get better at shooting? You get better at shooting by shooting. ... Also ease off the gear. You don't need it when you start off. You just need to shoot more, and then you will learn what you prefer and how you shoot.

And the biggest thing is, just keep moving forward. Keep going. It's going to be hard, especially that first year. It's a lot of hustle. It's a lot of disappointments, but just keep going because it's pretty awesome when you get it. ... And you'll get through the hard thing, and then another hard thing will come, but you will get through it."



**Listen to the full interview on YouTube.**



# Limiting Beliefs Aren't Just a Client Problem

By Christine Tremoulet for AfterShoot,  
Photography by Jacklyn Greenberg of JAG Studios • SPONSORED CONTENT

**A**s a boudoir photographer, a big part of your job is convincing those clients to come through that door the first time. You KNOW what a boudoir session can do for them; you've seen it through your lens and with your own eyes!

You've seen the transformations, the tears... and hopefully, you've had that moment where a client looks at you and tells you that what you do is worth every penny.

So, why is it that so many people have those limiting beliefs?

**Limiting beliefs are commonly held beliefs or assumptions about ourselves, others, or the world around us.**

Limiting beliefs hold us back from achieving our full potential and getting the most out of life.

These beliefs can be deeply ingrained in our minds and influence our behaviors and attitudes. Sometimes they are apparent, like the client who believes they have to lose 20 more pounds before they feel good enough to do a session.

Photographer Jaclynn Greenberg of *JAG Studios* frames this beautifully:

*"Making the choice to grow is something you have to do more often than you might feel comfortable with. If you can break through your limiting beliefs once, you'll start to trust yourself and move forward in your business & your life."*



## How to identify limiting beliefs in your potential clients.

There are a few ways to start to identify these beliefs in your clients.

One of the most effective methods is through client surveys, questionnaires, or interviews before their session. Asking open-ended questions about their boudoir experience and what they hope to gain from it can surface some of these beliefs.

As you get to know your clients and their boudoir goals, pay attention to their language. Phrases like “I don’t think I can do that” or “I’m not sure if I’m ready for this” often indicate a limiting belief.

Once you’ve identified a limiting belief, you can help your clients overcome it by reframing the situation.

For example, suppose a client is worried about baring their body in front of the camera. In that case, you could remind them that boudoir photography isn’t about baring skin - it’s also about celebrating confidence.

You can show them photos of others like them or who have identified with the same problem.

You can also share testimonials from past clients who talk about how they felt the same way before a session, and how they felt after the session. This can be powerful stuff; the human mind is wired to connect with other “like humans.”

By reframing the situation, you can help your clients move past their limiting beliefs and achieve the boudoir experience that they deserve.



*By reframing the situation,  
you can help your clients move past  
their limiting beliefs and achieve the  
boudoir experience that they deserve.*





## How are your limiting beliefs as a photographer hurting your business?

Now let's flip the switch a little!

We're human, so we all have limiting beliefs. Over the years, I've seen many photographers struggle with them to the point that it was seriously hurting their business.

While they are preaching to clients to trust them, they often are not trusting themselves.

And just like the client who somehow believed that they needed to lose weight before their session, I've heard the same limiting beliefs about business from photographers.

*"I can't afford to \_\_\_\_\_"*

*"I don't have enough clients to justify \_\_\_\_\_"*

*"Clients are hiring me for my style, so it has to be me doing \_\_\_\_\_"*

*"Clients in my area can't afford that".*

*"I'm not a real photographer if I have another job."*

*"Nobody wants to buy \_\_\_\_\_ from me."*

*"If I don't cull and edit myself, I'm not a real photographer?"*

## Identifying your limiting beliefs

One of the best ways to identify your limiting beliefs is to simply listen to yourself and your language. If you find yourself making excuses or putting up barriers, there's a good chance that it's related to a limiting belief.

One strategy that can help is to seek out advice and feedback from others. Asking your peers or mentors for their perspectives can be a powerful way to gain some insight.

Another effective method? Reframe the situation. As we talked about with clients, this involves changing how you see the problem.

For example, if you're struggling with the belief that you need more clients before you can invest in marketing, try reframing it as an investment in your business. You'll see that it's actually an essential part of growing your boudoir photography business by making this shift.

*"You can be incredibly profitable if you let yourself be. You have to get out of the fight or flight mindset. We have access to so much information right now, so you're really doing yourself an injustice not to find ways to bust through those mindsets to grow your business."* – Jacklyn Greenberg, JAG studios.



## How to squash those limiting beliefs in your business!

**1. Reverse engineer your financial goals.** If you want to gross \$200,000 a year, figure out how many sessions you are willing to do per month. If you're not charging enough, you will struggle to hit your goal and doubt yourself. For example, if you want to do 6 sessions a month, you'd need to have an average sale of \$2778 to hit that \$200,000 mark...but don't forget, that's before taxes and expenses.

**2. Know your expenses.** If your goal is to get a dedicated studio, you can't just think about things like rent. You have to consider everything you will spend money on, from heating/cooling and the light bill. Once you know these numbers, you can make a plan based on your income to decide what you need to do to pay yourself and pay the expenses.

**3. Stop projecting your own beliefs.** If you believe that no one in your area has money to spend on a boudoir session, then look around. Are people using iPhones? Do they drive nice cars? Do they have big-screen TVs, or dine out regularly? People spend money on what they value, so it isn't always true to assume they have no money. Stay out of your client's wallets and focus instead on your goals.

**4. You don't have to be a full-time photographer to be "legit."** Are you running a legal business? Are your clients happy? Do you deliver what you promise and what they pay you for? Are you enjoying what you do? If the answer is yes, then you're a photographer.

**5. Stop paying attention to what your competitors do.** That photographer that is running mini sessions may have an entirely different business model than you do. Don't get caught up in someone else's game!

**6. You only sell what you show and what you have enthusiasm for.** Get rid of it if you're offering something

because you "should," but it's not serving you. The more you sell things that align with your brand, you'll find that it doesn't feel like selling; it feels like serving.



**7. You don't have to do it all yourself.** There might be a better option for your post-production workflow. Back in the days of film, many people had a lab develop their images, but now we've set an expectation that you have to do them yourself. This takes up hours of your time, and that eats into your business profits.





It's ok to let it go & find a better solution. We initially created *AfterShoot* after hearing from so many photographers like you that culling was the least favorite part of their workflow, and often the biggest roadblock in getting the photos delivered so you can make money. We created software that uses Ai technology (also known as the Magical Unicorns) to choose the best photos for the final edit based on their preferences. We often hear from our clients how when they discovered that *AfterShoot* could work for them while they were spending time doing what they love, it was a game-changer for them.

*"We shoot, edit, and reveal, all on the same day. The fact that I could take a break between the shoot and reveal by using AfterShoot was brilliant! It shortened my day, it made me a happier photographer and I wasn't so burned out at the reveal, which meant that I was selling more successfully!"* – Jacklyn Greenberg, JAG studios.

Overcoming limiting beliefs is an ongoing process in life and business. Letting go of the things that are holding you back as a photographer will free you.

If culling is dragging down your workflow, we'd love for you to try *AfterShoot*. We offer a free 30-day trial to check it out! It's super easy to use; you'll be able to run your first batch of photos within minutes of downloading the software.

Are you an AIBP Member? There is a special discount for you in the member's area! Be sure to use the exclusive member code when you sign up.

Let us help you get your time back so you have more time to grow your photography business.

Visit [www.AfterShoot.com/AIBP](http://www.AfterShoot.com/AIBP) to get started today!



**Christine Tremoulet** began her professional photography career in 2007. Her Superpower? Helping you Grow your Confidence and Rediscover your Beauty. She does this while holding a camera or when working with photographers to help them build a business that they love. She joined the *AfterShoot* team in 2021, and is enjoying sharing Magical Unicorns & changing lives worldwide.

 [aftershoot.com](http://aftershoot.com)

 [aftershootco](https://www.instagram.com/aftershootco)



# How to Market (and Find) Your Ideal Clients

By Cate Scaglione

*Y*ou've finally found your "signature style."  
You've got your production running like a well-oiled machine.

Your pricing is locked and loaded.

Your client policies and service philosophies are fine tuned to your brand philosophy.

**...But is your marketing strategy successfully synchronized with your brand?**

One of the greatest challenges most photographers struggle with is how to secure bookings. We all want a full, robust calendar. But truthfully, it's a smaller percentage among us who can accomplish that mission painlessly.

As business owners, we know in general the "types" of clients we want to attract. We may have a history of success with one key demographic or another. But many times, the bigger issue is "finding" these types of clients – then putting our most sensible marketing plan to the task.

So why are some photographers successful at keeping an endless stream of leads – and more importantly – bookings, while others are not?

Over the past decade coaching and mentoring other photographers, I've found that it often comes down to one important imperative:

*How well do you understand your ideal client?*

Big brands spend millions of dollars building the "ideal client" profile, researching their habits, understanding their lifestyles, testing marketing channel ROI. And while we don't have this luxury, we can apply some of the same frameworks the "big ones" do in order to stimulate our inner marketing genius.

## Think Small

That's right, think small! While it may seem counterintuitive, it is possible to achieve greater success with a more targeted approach.

Most of us have learned marketing more broadly, from a macro view, where we think "the more the better." Our wide net and wide reach can make us feel so powerful! But it's not necessarily as effective. Let me give you some examples:



50,000 Instagram followers from around the country may feed our ego just fine. But having 5,000 very attentive local, engaged followers is more likely to get you greater booking success with each inquiry. And likely waste less time on futile communications and leads.

- National TV media coverage will surely make us

feel amazing with such a wide reach! However, a local newspaper feature with readership would get you greater success. In fact, a localized targeted blog complete with links is more likely to get you direct bookings. How do I know? I learned this after a National TV show featured me in a whole episode!

- A Facebook VIP group of 20,000 random people from all over the country is bound to be less booking-worthy than an interconnected, engaged network of women in your local metro area.

Now, of course there are exceptional stories of people killing the game despite all these examples. But it's more so the "unicorns" doing this than the broader population.

## Think Specific

Recently, I had a discussion with a photographer mentee about the importance of understanding her Ideal Client.

The photographer responded "I've done this exercise before, the problem is the demographic is too big, the geography too big."

That's when I reframed her thinking — from a macro level to a more micro, specific level. Stop thinking about demographics and start thinking about the actual INDIVIDUAL person who is ideal. If you understand one single ideal client and create a "template" or "avatar" for that person, it becomes so much easier to find more just like them.

I asked her:

- Who was your favorite client you loved working with who was also a high spender?
- What are the specific attributes of their lifestyle? I mean, the nitty gritty aspects of their lifestyle right down to hobbies, where they shop and how they're spending every free moment they have.
- What makes them ideal or better than other clients?
- Now, let's do this for THREE different people. Now you have three ideal client profiles.

Years ago, I had a client named Mary. I really enjoyed all aspects of working with her, right down to the very large purchase she made. Because of this, I set out to understand what made Mary so great.

- What does she do for a living? Does she work from home, in a big city office or somewhere in between?
- What does Mary do in her free time? (Yoga! In fact, she runs a yoga-based nonprofit.)
- Where does Mary typically shop?
- Who are Mary's friends? How well does she know them? What are they like?
- What's important to Mary? (Does she have kids? Do they play sports? Does she enjoy home decor?)



All of these things, by the way, were things I'd learned about her through casual and friendly conversations gathered during the consultation, photo session and viewing appointment. While I was initially just being friendly and getting to know her, I soon recognized the innate value of this reconnaissance mission!

Now these bits of information aren't your typical "demographic type" marketing observations — but that's the whole point. By getting to know these things about Mary, I was able to formulate "ideal clients like Mary" tactics to my marketing plan. For example:

- Mary's home decor is important to her, which means that having wall art well showcased and laid out gorgeously and marketable on my social media and product offering was helpful.
- Mary is a yogi, which means other women like her are hanging out at yoga studios in my area. This gave me a whole strategy to market my work within prominent yoga and Pilates studios.
- Mary shopped at an upscale boutique I am familiar with. They often host events in-store! I was able to find my way into these events, make acquaintance with the owners and get my own table/experience within their events!
- Mary's friends are similar to her and they meet for lunch often. It gave me the premise of how important it is to get mobile app albums into the hands of every client — for that lunchtime bragging. Referral system galore!

The more you narrow down your ideal client and their behavioral patterns (not just geographically where they live!), the more you can formulate creative tactics to find them. I found a Mary! And, I repeated this process to develop two other "ideal client" profiles.

## One Channel Does Not Fit All

As photographers we are constantly marketed to, many promising a "Magic Bullet" formula to getting all the clients every single day. I have fallen victim to this myself.

As studios, we are not all homogeneous, and yet many of us will look to a "homogeneous plan" to resolve our issues. Because it's "easy"

and it's "proven" by others. But is it bullet-proof for you? Here's a good sanity check:

- Do they have the same business goals as you do?
- Are they in the same geographic situation as you (what if you're geographically dispersed from clients?)
- Do you have the same infrastructure as they do to fulfill the volume of leads, level of service and bookings?
- Do you have the same IDEAL CLIENT?

Unless the answer to all of these questions is YES, then it's nearly impossible for THEIR formulaic approach to be exactly right for you.





# Are You Focusing on the Right Media?

*“Energy goes where your attention flows.”*  
- Tony Robbins

This is one of my favorite quotes because it serves as a constant reminder to me to stop wasting my time and attention on things that aren't getting me the results I want. This includes my marketing channels.

Over the years, I've come to recognize marketing channels and how they correlate to my ideal client “avatars.” Some channels might get me more clients like Mary and others will not.

For example, I know that my ideal client “Mary” is not spending her time in Facebook groups and doing contests, etc. Mary doesn't value that. She values her precious time more! I know that I am more likely to find more “Mary's” in the social networking settings or at the yoga studio. Or, she will browse Instagram to keep in touch with friends and local things that relate to her business. Referral programs are critical for Ideal Mary.

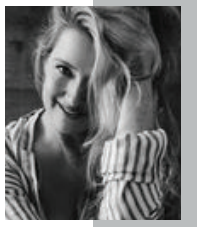
Conversely, I also know that many of my high-end Millennial brides are NOT spending time on Facebook at all. In fact, many of them do not even HAVE Facebook. For me, the curation of Instagram is a perfect place to find a discerning bride.

Facebook and Google ads have not been successful for me personally, even when I outsourced this task to “the pros”. I run a boutique studio, looking for only 8-10 bookings per month. To me, quality is less important than quantity. Using that model for my boutique infrastructure, I spent more time fielding inquiries and lukewarm leads who were not even close to my ideal client than I did nurturing the channels I know my ideal client resided within.



## In Conclusion

Get to know your clients. Find out what makes them tick. It's the single most important aspect to designing a marketing strategy that delivers. And don't ever hesitate to ask a client “How did you find me?” You'll soon find that aggregating this type of information across the board will lead you on your very own path of securing a plethora of ideal clients seamlessly.



**Cate Scaglione** of Life As Fine Art Studio, NJ, is an award winning boudoir photographer since 2010, specializing in fine art and editorial style intimate portraiture. In addition, she works with small business owners to create visual brand identities and content imagery. Previously, Cate was a Director of Advertising + Brand Management for a Fortune 500 luxury brand for over a decade. Cate and her work have been featured on Bravo TV, VH1, The New York Times, Rangefinder Magazine, Professional Photographer Magazine. She is also brand ambassador for Floricolor and a frequent presenter at conferences about women's empowerment, business branding and client experiences.



# Traveling for Boudoir Sessions: You Can Do It!

By Sarah Witherington

“Do you travel for shoots”? That is a question that I’m sure a few of us have gotten before, especially if you’ve been shooting for a few years. If you’re just starting out in your boudoir photography journey then it’ll only be a matter of time before you start to get asked about traveling.

There are many reasons photographers start traveling for shoots. You could be exploring a new market/area out of necessity (ex: you know you are going to move to said area and would like to establish a client base), you could be planning a longer vacation and would like to book sessions while you’re in a new place, you could really want to explore a creative idea that isn’t able to be accomplished in your regular shooting space, etc. Everyone has their own reasons for wanting or needing to branch out of their local clientele.

In early 2021 I had just gotten word that I’d need to leave my current studio space due to some rezoning issues. I had been in a studio for the last 10 years, but I was also feeling a little stuck in my work, like I was

always just a hair short of making a perfect photo. We’re always the hardest on ourselves, but I knew that my work needed work; I was feeling so uninspired. I luckily recognized this before I got too buried in a rut, and so I started brainstorming on how to re-strike that creativity match. I came up with the idea to do a “2022 U.S. Tour” for my boudoir studio. This tour’s purpose was and is to strengthen my creativity while giving clients around the country an opportunity to work with us. I chose my tour stops based on my creative needs, but I also was strategic about cities that I knew I had connections in! Those connections include friends, family, past clients, and past clients’ friends/family. If you’re interested in traveling for shoots then your connections are going to be the biggest help to you with regards to booking shoots.

My 2022 U.S. Tour is the second time I’ve intentionally booked sessions outside of my local clientele, the first time being in 2016. If traveling for shoots is something that you’ve been trying to figure out, or if you would eventually like to explore life on the road, then here are my tips for a successful venture:



## 1) Connect with your connections

Remember when I just talked about how I strategically picked my tour cities based on connections? This is the single biggest helper to getting my calendar booked for my tour stops. If you've been in business for at least a couple of years, whether you photograph boudoir or shoot weddings/portraits, you absolutely have connections that you can use. We do a lot of 'get to know you' work with our clients before their shoots, and this is really helpful when determining where our largest potential markets are. If this isn't something you're doing and you're starting

from scratch, I'd suggest sending your clients a poll with a few 'get to know you' questions, or including this poll in your pre-planning questionnaires. Having this information on-hand is extremely helpful when brainstorming on where you'd like to go!

If you have an idea of a place you'd like to have sessions, but you're unsure if clients would be interested/have connections there, then posting on social is a great way to gauge interest/viability for the location. My suggestion: use the 'questions' feature on Instagram to ask about certain cities and locations ideas!



## 2) Select your cities

Now that you have a solid (or somewhat solid!) idea of which cities/location vibes will be most successful for you then it's time to start making selections and finalizing your schedule.

Even though you may not, and likely don't, have any bookings yet for these other cities you will need to block off time on your calendar so that your local clients cannot book sessions with you while you're gone. You'll want to avoid having to tell a client that

you can't shoot her boudoir shoot because you'll be in Miami instead of Norfolk.

My recommendation is to block your calendar off a year in advance so that you have time to market to these different locations. Remember that blocking your calendar off does NOT mean that you cannot unblock it. Google Cal, Outlook, and iCal do not make you sign your calendar in blood (that I know of), and so if a city doesn't work out for booking then you can always silently remove it from your calendar and book your local clientele instead.



### 3) Pinpoint your pricing

Travel sessions will almost always cost you more to execute than your local sessions. There are a few major expenses that you'll want to consider! The largest tangible expenses will be your means of transportation (planes, trains, automobiles), shooting locations (Hotels, Peerspace, outdoor permits, etc), and meals and groceries. These expenses are all in addition to the normal expenses and costs that it takes to execute a session. For this reason I've found that it is more helpful to have a set price for travel sessions rather than have clients book off of my standard pricing sheet, that way I know that all of my expenses will be covered.

Before you start marketing your sessions make sure you know how much it will cost you to have sessions in that city. Do your research on the plane ticket, the hotel pricing for a hotel you'd actually like to shoot in (no Holiday Inn Expresses please), food/drink in the area, hair/makeup if applicable, and any additional transportation costs like an Uber or Taxi.

Once you know the average cost traveling to your desired location then you're ready to price out your sessions. As you start to pinpoint your pricing you'll need to ask yourself if you're looking to break even on the session fee, if you're willing to take a loss on the session fee, or if you'd like to secure a profit before you even step foot into the airport. Price yourself based on what works for YOU and for your business and your goals. My goal, as I stated initially, was to reignite creativity. My local calendar had already been booked pretty solidly and I knew based on past years how my local bookings would work out. For this reason I chose to break even on my travel pricing. As long as I could get to a city and not lose any

money then I consider that a great success. I also made every client pay up-front for their sessions so that I knew the exact amount of \$ I had to work with. Bottom line: do what is best for your business, but have a set price for these special sessions.

### 4) Double that "Rule of 7" for your marketing

The Rule of 7 for marketing states that 'a potential customer must see a message at least 7 times before they'll be provoked to taking action.'

If you've ever noticed the number of ads you're getting for a certain brand of socks, an all inclusive resort, or some new dog bed you googled ONCE then know that you're a part of this Rule of 7 in your own life. You're also being marketed based on your interests, likes, and connections so you are pretty likely to at the very least have these products and experiences top of mind when you ARE ready to purchase.

For traveling sessions I've found that doubling this 'Rule of 7', turning it into a 'Rule of 14', is one of the best ways to ensure that you get interest and bookings for travel sessions. Because you'll want to get your message out for each city at least 14 times I would recommend that you start marketing a year in advance if possible. If you are

having to shoot in different locations out of necessity then a year in advance might not be possible for you, but the marketing rule still stands. The biggest fear you might have is the fear of being annoying to your client base. I'm guilty of that fear for sure, but then I'll have someone ask me if I'm coming to Chicago this year after I've already posted about it 10+ times and so I know that there is still work to be done.

All of this being said, do not forget to market locally and keep up with your local clientele. They need to know that you're still operating in your current location!





## 5) Rinse and repeat

I mentioned above that I decided to start marketing for my U.S. Tour about a year in advance. This allowed me to go through the last 4 tips repeatedly so that I am more set up for success.

If my connections to other cities weren't working out then I moved on to reaching out and connecting with local businesses in those cities that might have a similar clientele. I began reaching out to bridal salons, boutique workout studios, and wedding planners.

If my selected cities weren't getting a lot of traction, and I didn't NEED to shoot there, then I started taking them off of my calendar. I only did this after I was confident that I'd worked my marketing muscle as hard as I could.

If my pricing started to not serve me as well as I had planned (hello rising costs!) then I looked at ways that I could reduce my costs so that I would take less of a hit.

**Let's assume that you've gone through the above tips and steps and you've now started booking sessions!**

Congratulations... but what now?

You might find it harder to connect with your out of town clients because they'll seem more disconnected from your regular operations. They may also feel more disconnected from you, which isn't ideal when your ultimate goal is to make sure they are comfortable enough to capture intimate images and portraits.

What are your next steps with your out of town clients? At the bare minimum you should schedule a video chat with them to talk about the session, their goals, wardrobe, etc. While you may push this meeting as a 'planning session', it's really just a way for the two of you to put faces to names and get more comfortable with each other.





Make sure you stay in contact with your out of town clients about the decisions you're making for their session. Let them know when you'll be booking the location, and then when you book your location let them know where it is so that they can make travel plans if needed. Ask them about their hair/makeup preferences if that is a service you're offering. Communicate with them about parking and how to arrive.

Constant communication is the key to success with clients, whether that be your local clients or the clients you book out town. Clients won't always respond, but we're all guilty of reading an email and saying 'got it' to ourselves while never responding to the sender. Keep in touch on your end and over communicate to your clients.

### Here are a few last tips for making your travel sessions a success:

#### 1) Get a credit card with travel benefits.

Booking your travel with a card geared toward travel will usually come in incredibly handy during your sessions. I recommend the Chase Sapphire Reserve and/or the Amex Platinum. Please get a credit card at your own risk.

Travel cards can/will:

- Give you travel insurance. The travel insurance you buy from the airlines or 3rd party sights is a scam.
- Give you baggage protection
- Give you rental car insurance
- Include late check-out (like, 4pm!!!) which allows you to shoot longer/sleep in/etc
- Include a food/beverage credit
- Provide faster TSA clearance
- And more!!

#### 2) Try to refrain from using third party sites like Expedia, Booking.Com, etc in order to book travel.

These sites do not always have the most up to date availability with regards to hotels, and if your flight is delayed or you miss it then it can be a nightmare to get the airline and the 3rd party sight to be able to come up with a solution. It is almost always better to book directly through the airline or the hotel unless you do have a credit card that gives benefits for booking through their portal.

#### 3) Get a solid gear tote for traveling.

I have had a ThinkTank Airport International for over 10 years and it has seen it all. It fits in the overhead bin on most planes, and it fits under the seat on others. This way I can always have my camera with me. For light-stands/lighting I use a hard-sided golf bag travel case.

#### 4) Pack additional lighting just in case you need it.

#### 5) Check out your hotel/location on TripAdvisor before booking.

Make sure to look at 'guest photos' so that you can see how the rooms and venue REALLY look. Looking at tagged photos on Instagram is also a great way to check out a location and make sure it's what you're really looking for.

#### 6) Plan to show up a day early.

This will ensure that you have wiggle room for any flight delays, you can scope out the nearest drug store or grocery store for last minute needs, you can change rooms/locations if you need to, are well rested, etc.

Remember, no matter the reason you are traveling for sessions your first goal should be to give your clients the best experience possible! Traveling for shoots can be so much fun and really help you get out of a creative rut, but it IS a lot of work. Take care of your business and your clients and make sure to set realistic expectations for this new venture.



**Sarah Witherington** is the owner and head photographer of OWN Boudoir Studio located right outside of Atlanta, GA. OWN Boudoir has been one of the top boudoir studios in the southeastern U.S. since 2009 and has photographed over 2000 clients in the last decade. Her clients book her for the full, hands-on experience that she provides along with the diversity of clientele that she has in her portfolio. For 2022 she is on tour around the United States, exploring creativity and reaching new clients.

 [ownboudoir.com](http://ownboudoir.com)

 [ownboudoir](https://www.instagram.com/ownboudoir)





Established in 2009, AIBP has become the leading boudoir photography association worldwide. In an ever growing and changing industry, AIBP provides a community space for photographers to enhance their craft, build their business, network with colleagues and explore educational references.



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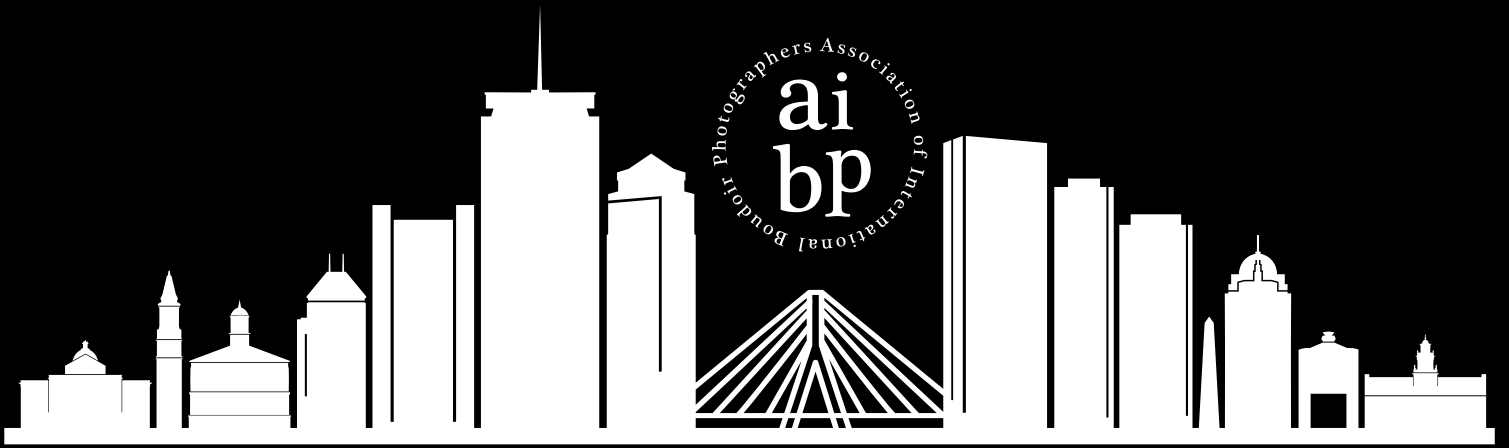
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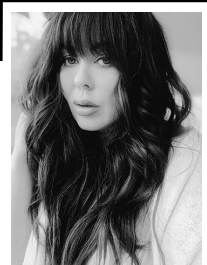




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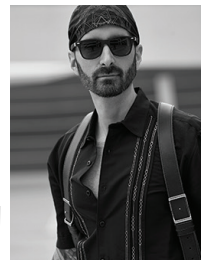
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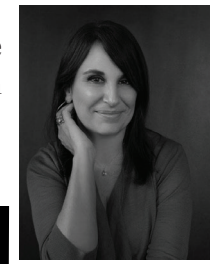
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