

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS 101- CHAPTER 1

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS 101: CHAPTER 1. HOW TO MAKE A PHOTOGRAPHY BLOG

Dear friend,

If you want to make a 'career' out of teaching photography workshops, let me try to give you straight-up useful knowledge-- information I wish someone told me.

1. Make a photo blog

My theory:

If nobody knows who you are, the best way to build your name and following is through a photography blog -- NOT through social media like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.

Why a Photo Blog? Because it is indexed by Google. And Google owns the internet.

Some trends:

1. Google Chrome is the most used browser in the world, and will be adopted by more and more people, because Android is open-source, which means it is on (and will continue to be on) more devices than iOs. And people who use iPhones also prefer to use Google to find information.
2. Google has a monopoly on information.
3. If you do high-quality blog posts on photography that are informational or educational (for several years), Google will rank you higher, and therefore when someone on the internet searches for lets say 'Photography [Genre] Tips' -- they might see your site.

The way I see it-- if you build your platform and following on Facebook or Instagram, you are building your brand, name, and identity in quicksand.

Why?

Facebook first of all-- owns Instagram. If you have a platform *only* on Facebook or Instagram, you are a slave to their platform.

Let me give you an example. I have around 90,000 fans on Facebook. If I post something, only 1,000 of my fans will actually see it. If I want more of my followers to see it, I need to 'boost' (aka, pay money to Facebook) to promote the post to show it to more of my followers.

Now, Facebook is not evil for doing this. Facebook is a business that makes 90%+ of their income from advertising. If they give you a 'free' platform to advertise on-- of course you will need to (eventually) pay Facebook to 'unlock' access to 'your' followers.

Solution: Build an email mailing list, which you actually PAY for the service. I recommend mailchimp.com. With email, you typically have 'open rates' of around 30%+ -- much higher than the abysmal 1% 'open rates' of Facebook posts.

So **first principle: with building your own photography business and marketing channels, make sure to PAY for your services**-- otherwise you will end up being suckered later.

2. How to build a photo blog

My recommendation: register a website via 1and1.com or bluehost.com. I currently use 1and1.com (it is cheaper, and this is what I started on), but I think bluehost.com offers better support.

Regardless, you can use these platforms or another 'web hosting' platform.

When you register, make your own domain name. My recommendation:

FirstnameLastname.com [erickim.com]

Or if it is already taken,

FirstnameLastnamePhoto.com or FirstNameLastNamePhotography.com
[erickimphotography.com]

The best way to 'brand' yourself is to use your own REAL NAME. Be like Calvin Klein, Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, Alexander Wang, etc. People remember first name and last names better than obscure brand names.

And the truth is, if you ever meet people in real life-- and you tell them your first and last name, they're going to 'Google' you when they get home.

3. Use wordpress.org (or wordpress.com if you're lazy)

I recommend using the open-source and free wordpress.org platform. Why? You have more control, flexibility, customization, settings, and freedom.

Wordpress.com is a good platform -- but the downside of Wordpress.com is that they are censored in several countries (China, some parts of Vietnam, etc) and also, there is less customization.

- Wordpress.com is like Apple. Everything just works, but you have less flexibility and customization.
- Wordpress.org is like Android. More customization, more difficult to setup, but will help you more in the long-run.

If you use 1and1.com or bluehost.com, it is easy to setup a wordpress.org account.

Option 2: Just signup for a photography website/blog via wordpress.com, and then pay the monthly or yearly 'pro' membership -- to register your own domain name (www.firstnamelastname.com) and for the more 'advanced' features.

4. Themes to use

I personally recommend the 'Genesis' framework (a paid wordpress theme). To me, it is the best theme on the market, that offers lots of customization, and is fairly intuitive.

Otherwise, just use the default Wordpress themes, and customize them as you see fit.

In terms of website design, my suggestion:

Less is better.

I prefer 1-column or minimalist 2-column designs. Try to put *less* widgets, and signup forms on your site. Keep the site clean, minimalist, and professional.

The truth is-- the more minimalist your website, the more professional it looks.

For example, high-end fashion stores only show a few products for sale. Cheap places (Walmart for example) show TONS of products.

The benefit of showing less: there is a perception of 'artificial scarcity' -- which means, people value the *few* things you have on view. If you show *too much* -- they think you're cheap.

For real-life examples, go to high-end designer stores vs cheap 99 cent stores. See how they highlight their products differently. Then apply that to your website design.

5. Build a mailing list

As mentioned before, I recommend using mailchimp.com to build a mailing list. To start off, it is free. Then pay money as you go. And trust me-- the money you pay is WORTH IT. I currently have a few thousand subscribers on my mailing list and pay around \$75 a month for mailchimp. But it is a small investment-- considering I make thousands of dollars off workshops.

Anyways, to get subscribers for your mailing list-- give people a reason *why* they should sign up for your mailing list. Consider, what is in the best interest for your subscriber.

Also a tip -- don't integrate that annoying pop-up shit asking me to signup for your newsletter. I will never visit your website again.

Keep your newsletter signup in a place where it is subtle. You can do it 'After Entry' in the Wordpress Widget space, or just have a link in your menu saying 'Subscribe'.

6. Social media is a waste of your focus

I deleted my Instagram, and have found *MORE* focus on blogging, which has helped me build my platform, online popularity, and Google search results higher.

Sure, Instagram is free marketing-- but you will end up wasting the most valuable thing you have (your time, attention, and focus). Rather than building up your Instagram following, focus on your own photography blog.

I think it is a good idea to have a Facebook fan page-- because you can share links. But, only use it to post links to your articles. Really really really, don't waste your time building it up. You will waste valuable time.

Once again: your most valuable marketing channel is your email newsletter.

Unfortunately people check their email hundreds of times a day. When they wake up, take a shit, or go to sleep. So if you want a good way to keep in touch with your followers, email newsletters are the way to go.

7. How to build an audience

Some ideas:

1. Do guest blog posts on other popular photography websites: Make these guest posts really good, and put a link back to your own photography blog.
2. Interview influential photographers: Hopefully these photographers will share the interview with *their* followers, bringing more folks to your photo blog.
3. Write useful educational knowledge/information: If you are hoping to teach photography workshops (educational) you're going to want to create useful,

empowering, and practical photography-based information. I say, try to make your blog posts, articles, and e-books, or YouTube videos 10x better than what you see online. That means hustle hard, do deep research, and be practical and useful. The best tip is to ask yourself when writing your own article: "If I read this online, would it help me?"

8. Tactics

a. Quantity and quality

With photography blogging, focus on quality *AND* quantity. You can do both.

b. Don't edit.

Personally, I never edit my text. I just go back and do basic spell check.

Editing is overrated. Just write in a flow-of-consciousness, and try to write like you talk. Casual, information, and personal.

c. Writing tools.

For writing, I recommend using 'IA WRITER' app on the Mac, or on iOS. IA Writer is also available on Android for free.

Or whatever writing tool you use, I recommend writing on the most minimalist, least-distracting, word-processor, and using something called 'Markdown' to format your posts (just search about it on Google).

d. Blog everyday for 1-2 years

It will take you at least 1-2 years of consistent blogging to build a small, yet dedicated audience. For me, I didn't start getting traction on my blog until after 365 blog posts (1 blog post a day for a year). I started this blog in 2010, and it took off around 2011-2012. From 2010-2017, I've written over 2,800+ blog posts, and I have no intentions on stopping.

e. Fuck perfection.

Don't aim for perfection. Just do your blog posts 80% 'good enough' and hit publish.

You will never make a blog post perfect. Every time you write a blog post, it is just an 'essay' or an 'attempt' (original word for 'essay' was 'assay').

So a blog post is just an *attempt* for some deeper knowledge or truth. Therefore, just try to make each blog post a better attempt.

And to be frank, you'll never write a perfect blog post. My suggestion is to just try to be a little more profound, a little more useful, and a little more concise every time you write.

9. What are you waiting for?

Ok, just get started. Remember the saying by Publilus Syrus:

The rolling stone gathers no moss.

So if you *already* have a photo blog, just keep posting, publishing, and sharing ideas, knowledge, and information. Keep pushing that snowball, and it will become enormous after days, months, years, and decades.

10. Work hard, and be patient.

If you want to make good money teaching photography workshops, it will take you a long time.

For example, I built my following from 2010-2017 (7 years, blogging 1-2 blog posts a day, 7 days a week, and over 500+ videos on YouTube) and I can *finally* charge \$2000 USD+ for a workshop. Now I make good money, but it took a lot of crimson blood, sweat, tears, pain, and tenacity.

If you need more guidance, post on [ERIC KIM FORUM](#).

BE STRONG, ERIC

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