

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF STYLED SHOTS

& THE #1 MISTAKE MOST PHOTOGRAPHERS MAKE



by Blake Nelson

WELCOME— I AM SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE.

In both the wedding and fashion industry, especially as a photographer, I have seen countless styled and test shoots. I've also watched as my industry peers have planned their own with teams of all different sizes.

Although these styled shoots can be very advantageous when it comes to portfolio building, I believe there are so many damaging practices and byproducts that it is difficult to become aware of until it is too late. and you are on the other side, feeling those negative effects.

Continue reading for my biggest advice to consider when taking part in a styled shoot or collaboration of any kind, as well as the #1 mistake I see most photographers making when it comes to projects like this.

xx, 

No. 1

CAN BE USED TO MARKET TOWARD DREAM DESTINATIONS

Because you are in control of all of the location and styling details, pay close attention to the ways that the content might be able to be repurposed and interpreted across all social channels within the context of your brand's visual identity. If there are dream destinations, or even specific visual tastes that you're drawn to and would like to work more of, this is the time to show that to your audience.

For example, you might consider specific styling touches that appeal and attract couples' that value travel and appreciate European culture. Seeing your work in the context of a specific destination or aesthetic will help those clients whose taste is aligned to see what their celebration might look like if they were to hire you.

By strategically considering these pieces of design as you move through the planning process, you will be able to make choices (in things such as venue, design elements in detail imagery, etc.) that move the needle in your business instead of just having aimless portfolio imagery.





No. 2

ONLY TAP INTO COLLABORATIONS THAT ARE ALIGNED

Teaming up with vendors and brand partners that are aligned with your business direction and brand will make all the difference in the results of a styled project.

Whether you are submitting for editorial or shooting as a portfolio building piece, it is important that the entire team is aligned on priorities and aesthetics to bring something of value to life.

View this is an opportunity to build relationships and discover new clientele that would book you together if they come across this content. My team has brought to life one styled concept that I had a very particular vision for. I knew my dream vendor team for this specific project and be collaborating with all of them at once, I was able to show what it might look like if future clients were to hire a collection of us together to work on their wedding celebration.



No. 3

DON'T JUST PIN PRETTY PHOTOS

.and then expect your shoot to look like that just because you made a mood board and shared it with the team. If you are anything like me, early on in my journey I thought that mood boards were a foolproof way to ensure everything was visually aligned.

But then, I would arrive to set or a shoot and be very disappointed with how everything came together. Why does this happen?

Because you didn't dig deep enough. Rethink the way that you create vision boards as you are

planning styled content. What will the end result communicate about you? What pieces of the shoot are going to communicate that? Get specific and continue coming back to center throughout the planning process so that you don't stay away.

Gather inspiration with specific purpose on how you will incorporate pieces of the imagery into your styled content, do not just pin because it looks pretty. This is a creative trap that will leave you in a desperate, disillusioned cycle of visual disappointment.

No. 4

BE STRATEGIC WITH YOUR GOALS

Picture this.

You've poured hours and hours into a styled project. You have invested your resources, including but not limited to, time, money, physical and emotional labor. you get the picture. You have brought such an incredible team of your dream vendor and brand partners to collaborate on your vision. Shoot day arrives and you absolutely blow the team away on shoot day, leaving with imagery that you are

confident in and feel so excited about. You edit the photos. Deliver them to the vendors. Put together the perfect Instagram post.

Crickets.

You have, yet again, shouted into the void of the internet...adding to the noise of your industry with no specific purpose or goals in sight. You created pretty photos, but the project really just ends there.

A nightmare, right? But this easily and accidentally becomes the reality of many styled projects because there is little to no strategy involved.

Why have you decided to bring this styled project into your business? What are you shooting for? Are you looking to submit? Create imagery for portfolio? Have you thought about how it will be used in or alongside a specific marketing message in your business?



Don't just create perfectly styled photos with no end in sight.

Set vision and center your mindset surrounding styled projects.

Tap into aligned collaborations that elevate your brand within the industry.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN IMPLEMENTING, A PERSONAL NOTE FROM YOURS TRULY

Don't forget why you are doing this.

I don't mean styled content, I mean all of this. Any of this!

Styled content may not be the answer to the problems and tension you feel in your business at the moment. Although there are many advantages and ways that it can further your brand and business, your business and life goals must be working together in tandem. Not against one another. If you are styling content that will book you more work out of the country but desire to spend more time at home and in your own neighborhood, it is time to re-align your heart with your business.

But if you're looking to bring to life the most beautiful styled shoot and don't even know where to begin, I've got you covered. Keep an eye on your inbox. Mean it, trust me. We've got lots of goodness coming your way.

If you are interested in one-on-one mentorship by Blake, email us at blake@blakenelsonphotography for more information.

sending you love...

Keep an eye out for more free education as well as exclusive early access to future launches very soon, right to your inbox. We're just getting started!

Sending you love, I'm proud of how far you've come.

xx,

Blake Nelson



BLAKE NELSON

A New York based self-taught photographer and creative director, Blake travels worldwide providing a warm and poetic approach through digital and film mediums.

Born and raised in the south, Blake built a six-figure business that enabled him to move across the country in pursuit of an artistic, expansive lifestyle.

He spends his mornings centered by writing and sunlight, is found in galleries and cafes by afternoon, and may be anywhere in the city covered by the moon as evening falls. Blake has been named a Top Wedding Photographer in America and New York City.

Follow @theblakewnelson on Instagram

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