

5 Ways to PCS-Prep Your Photography Business

FROM A PHOTOGRAPHER WHO IS ABOUT TO MOVE **AGAIN!**



#1

Conduct your pre-PCS overall audit.

Rerun your cost of doing business.

The [ETP Business Calculator](#) makes this really easy! Some of your costs will change in the new area and it's important that your prices reflect them. Once you run your numbers, compare them to other photographers in the new area to see where you fall.

- **IMPORTANT:** Don't set your prices based on anyone else's! Knowing others' pricing is an important point of reference, but your numbers should be based on your costs and income goals.

Update your website & CRM automations.

This a great time to optimize your website for your new location and refresh your portfolio too. Additionally, if you have any automations set up that are specific to your current location, determine when you want to turn those off or transition to new ones.



FUTURE LEADS

You should also think about how you want to handle inquiries for your current location after you leave. Do you have someone to refer clients to?

#2

Begin searching for your ideal client.

Leaving a strong base of ideal clients is one of the most heartbreaking parts of moving. But if you built a tribe once, you can do it again!

Get active in Facebook groups to get a feel for where your ideal clients are - as well as where they *aren't*! You may also have success searching for specific Instagram hashtags related to the new location.

Once you start to identify where your people are, give them a reason to connect with you. I recommend creating a freebie to attract clients in the new area to begin to build an email list before you even arrive!



FREEBIE IDEAS

It doesn't have to be location specific! Think what to wear, how to prepare, how to get kids (or husbands!) to cooperate, etc.

#3

Perform market research.

You can start exploring your new market before you leave the old one! Google and social media are great ways to browse for popular locations and busy seasons in that area. If you're arriving close to a busy season, you want to know that ASAP so you can start marketing before you move. For example, if you're moving to the DC area in February, you'll want to be prepared for cherry blossom sessions in March and April!



SPEAKING OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS...

DC cherry blossoms are overwhelming!! Check out [this blog post](#) for my top tips for cherry blossom family photos if you're headed to the NCR!

#4

Seek out connections.

Before You Go

You don't have to wait until you move to begin forming connections! Start by simply following and interacting with other local photographers and businesses on social media. Joining local milspouse Facebook groups can be useful too. The more active you can be in both of these contexts, the better. Don't just join/follow and watch from afar. That isn't helping people get to know you!

After You Arrive

Now is the time to turn these digital connections into real life ones! Invite a local photographer to coffee. Go to your squadron events. Even if spouse nights aren't your thing, go meet people! (I booked a change of command ceremony at a wives coffee meetup that I didn't really feel like going to!) As you begin to connect with people, talk about what you do confidently and genuinely. Don't be pushy. The right clients will come.



THINK BIG!

Who else can you connect with? Your school's PTO?
Your church's youth group?
Your kiddo's soccer team?
Think beyond individuals!

#5

Square away the legalities.

This isn't the fun part, but you'll want to make sure that you are moving your business legally. Your new state's Secretary of State website is a great resource for learning how to operate as a sole proprietor or LLC in the new state.

If you are an LLC, two common options are:

- Keep your LLC in the old state and register as a foreign LLC in the new state.
- Dissolve your LLC in the old state and register as a new LLC in the new state.

Once you register to do business in the new state, be sure to create the account(s) you need to pay sales and income tax as well. Stick with .gov websites for reliable information!



OVERWHELMED?

It might be time to hire a small business lawyer or CPA to help you with these tasks!

#6

Bonus!

Plan your final hurrah.

There's no question, you're going to be busy with everything the end of an assignment brings. BUT, I highly recommend packing your calendar as much as you can with repeat clients before you go. Hosting a couple days of mini sessions is an efficient way to do this. You want to make it manageable for yourself, but the goal is to bring in as much "extra" income as you can before you leave to help ease the transition. It could be a couple months before you're settled and booking consistently again, so giving yourself some cushion ahead of time is a smart financial move.



MINIS AREN'T YOUR THING?

Running a print sale is another great way to bring in some extra income.



Hey there!
I'M ERIN.
AIR FORCE WIFE.
MAMA. EDUCATOR.
PHOTOGRAPHER.

I'm a milspouse photographer with a really big dream.

Let's be real for a minute. Running a business is hard work. But running a service-based business that has to relocate every few years? That takes 'hard work' to a whole new level.

What if we could make it a little easier? What if there was a community of milspouse photographers who were committed to supporting one another, sharing local knowledge, and offering insight on any of the million questions we ask ourselves when we get orders to a new location? **I'm on a mission to make this happen.**

I can't do it alone though. My family has only been stationed at a handful of bases around the country, so my expertise only extends to a few cities. But with your input, just think of what we could create. A helpful and supportive community that makes PCSing a little easier on all of us... that has a nice ring to it!

So, what do you say? Shall we make this happen?

COUNT ME IN!