



the VENUE BUSINESS BOOT CAMP

Expert-led strategies to elevate your venue business

FROM THE CEO OF HERE COMES THE GUIDE

VBBC ESSENTIALS MODULE 4

How To Curate a Standout Wedding Gallery

Image Curation + Storytelling Strategies

We all know high-quality, professional images are essential, but equally important is backing your photography with a thoughtful curation strategy and storytelling approach.

Here's why it matters: Today's couples have endless wedding content at their fingertips. For your venue to stand out, you need to help them visualize their wedding in your space. Effective storytelling taps into the emotional aspects of wedding planning, creating a deeper connection between couples and your venue.

Random beautiful photos won't book your venue—but the right photos, arranged in the right order, telling the right story will. This guide shows you exactly how to create galleries that don't just showcase your space, but sell the dream of what's possible there.

IF YOU ARE AN ESTABLISHED VENUE

GO THROUGH YOUR CURRENT INVENTORY OF
PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS AND ASK YOURSELF:

DO YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING ESTABLISHING SHOTS?

- External shot of your venue
- Getting ready spaces for the couple
- Favorite first look and / or wedding party locations
- Ceremony setup
- Ceremony shots (may include multiple locations)
- Cocktail area
- Romantic couple shots around the property
- Reception setup (may include multiple locations)
- Reception moments (dancing, cake cutting, speeches, etc.)
- Couple's exit

DO THESE IMAGES SHOW OFF YOUR VENUE'S SUPERPOWERS?

- **What physical features of the property get mentioned most?** This could include event spaces, views or panoramas, flora and fauna, design or décor elements, etc. Make sure your photos highlight the best points about your property—from the wide open views to the thoughtful details.

ARE YOUR IMAGES CURRENT?

- **Updating photos annually is ideal**—perhaps staggering the seasons to capture your venue in all its year-round, seasonal glory.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider including **aerial or wide-angle shots** that show the layout of your property.
- If your venue is more of a blank slate, be sure to include a few **different wedding styles or setups** to showcase your venue's versatility.
- Be sure to pay special attention to **diversity and inclusion**. Couples want to see themselves represented!

IF YOU ARE A NEW VENUE

TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR PHOTO INVENTORY

CONNECT WITH A PHOTOGRAPHER

As soon as you feel your venue is camera ready, you'll want to find a photographer you jibe with! Do your research to find a seasoned photographer with a style and portfolio that matches your venue and vision.

Come up with some type of collaborative plan (maybe you'll pay their rates, maybe you'll do some type of trade). Use this as an opportunity to pick their brain about your property's setup and lighting. If you're not ready to plan a styled shoot, you can still do a lot with basic photos of your property. Even showing off internal "blank canvas" shots of your venue can help wedding planners and potential couples envision the possibilities of the space.

GET HEADSHOTS OF YOUR TEAM

If your team is available when you're working with the photographer, grab a few quick headshots to use on your website or to post on social media. People love getting an idea of who they'll be working with, and smiling photos of your team begin to establish a connection with your venue before couples even reach out.

CONSIDER A STYLED SHOOT

A styled shoot is a photoshoot at your venue of a mock wedding setup, created and designed by a team of wedding vendors. This is a great opportunity to highlight your venue's style and superpowers, to strategically position your visual marketing, and to illustrate the possibilities of hosting a wedding on your property.

These images can be used on your website, blog, social media platforms, and even submitted to blogs and magazines. If there is a popular local publication in your area, you can submit your styled shoot photos to help get your venue some extra exposure and also to build social proof for your business. These shoots provide you with fantastic marketing materials!

SHOULD YOU HOST A STYLED SHOOT?

SOME KEY THINGS TO CONSIDER

WHAT DOES A STYLED SHOOT COST?

Styled shoots are usually collaborative—everyone covers their own expenses and donates their time. However, as the organizer, you may want to cover some vendor costs (travel, specialty products) or provide dinner and drinks for the team.

Styled shoots are also time-intensive, requiring months of prep: curating vendors, creating mood boards, planning logistics, developing shot lists, and researching submission opportunities. Despite this investment, they're invaluable for both new and established venues to showcase your space at its best.

WHO ORGANIZES THE SHOOT?

You have several options: Organize everything yourself and curate your vendor team, collaborate with a local planner or designer, participate in open styled shoots through networking groups, or hire a styled shoot company to coordinate everything. Choose the approach that best serves your venue's needs and timeline.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO HOST A STYLED SHOOT?

Schedule during your venue's peak season. While most industry pros prefer off-season shoots, timing matters—outdoor Virginia venues look bleak in winter (spring is better), while Vermont venues should capitalize on fall foliage.

Time of day matters, too. The lighting can make or break your styled shoot, so get with your photographer to suss out the best time of day to get the gorgeous, glowing photos you desire.

GETTING YOUR VENUE PHOTO-READY

TIPS TO GET THE BEST SHOTS POSSIBLE

FOLLOW THE LIGHT

Carefully consider the time of day when the photo session will take place.

You may need to schedule outside of normal business hours if it accommodates better lighting for photos.

BE WEDDING-DAY READY

Ensure your venue is spotless and camera-ready. Plan logistics in advance—cleaning crew, landscaping touch-ups, removing anything unsightly—to make the shoot seamless.

PLAN CAREFULLY & COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

Create a solid plan and shot list with your photographer. Consider how you'll use images: websites need both portrait and landscape orientations, while marketing materials benefit from copy space for text overlay.

HAVE FUN

Take a deep breath and enjoy the process of procuring new, fabulous images of your venue! Not only is it a great opportunity to build your portfolio and allow your venue to shine, it's also a way to build relationships with talented photographers. Win-win.

PRO TIP

These principles apply to video shoots, too! Short-form video is a marketing essential, so consider finding a photographer who does both.