



YOUR 1 YEAR BLUEPRINT TO
ELEVATE YOUR
PHOTOGRAPHY
BUSINESS STRATEGY

Introduction to guide



This is a VERY extensive guide full of questions & action steps to take to structure a thriving photography business of your dreams!

Make sure to think through each question and establish things that work well for YOUR business and your life, not just based on what others might do!

I recommend on working on a few things each week or each month. Don't feel the need to check off EACH item in this guide!

Take some time to scroll through it and pick out things that you think would best up-level your own personal business!

If you have questions while going through it, be sure to reach out at manalisontakkephotography@gmail.com

THE YEARLY OVERVIEW FOR YOU TLDR; LOVERS

JAN - CRAFT A VISION OF WHERE YOU WANT TO BE 1 YEAR FROM NOW!

FEB - BRANDING & MESSAGING

MAR - SHOOTING WELL IN-CAMERA

APR - NAILING DOWN A POSING SYSTEM

MAY - CULLING & EDITING QUICKLY

JUN - AN EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGY

JUL - FORECASTING & FINANCES

AUG - DEMONSTRATING VALUE

SEP - CRAFT AN INTENTIONAL CLIENT EXPERIENCE

OCT - WORKFLOWS FOR LIFE

NOV - WEBSITE UPDATES

DEC - SYSTEMS FOR LIFE!

***Be sure to pick a couple of topics that you think would BEST up-level where you are currently!**

NOTES

QUARTER ONE

JANUARY - VISION

Determine your vision of where you want your life & business to be in 1, 3 & 5 years in life AND business

Map out 3-5 goals for this year to help make that vision a reality

List out 3-6 action steps for each goal! If you're stuck on this, reach out to a friend or mentor to help you out

Take this quiz to figure out your motivations! You want to make sure that you're building a business AROUND this in order to be happy & fulfilled with your work!

Let's define ENOUGH in your business! How much money do you NEED to pay yourself on a monthly or yearly basis? From this, you can set your yearly & quarterly sales goals

Pick 2-3 services that you will promote to HIT these quarterly sales goals!

Your business should support your LIFE! I want you to take a BLANK week and map out which spots you want to be working on your business!

Create a YES / NO list! What will you say YES to and what will you say NO to this year?

We're going to put your goals & your spots you're trying to fill somewhere you'll see them EVERY. DAY!

BONUS: Check out the [Powersheets](#) / [Simplified Planner](#) for organizing your months & days!

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QUARTER ONE

FEBRUARY - BRANDING

Determine 1-3 brand values! What are values that are personal to you that you couldn't live without & that your ideal client cares about?

Create a Pinterest board with 1-3 restaurant, cities, clothes, accessories jewelry, home, your own images! You can look at this and pick out 2-3 colors that you can use consistently across your channels!

We're going to pick 2-3 words that will help you curate your portfolio of work on your website!

Update your portfolio! You want to include 3-5 galleries with 25-40 images each! You don't need to show EVERY single portion of the wedding day!

We're going to pick one serif font for headings, one sans for sub-headings and one accent font for fun! Try to stick with these throughout your website & emails!

Now let's think through your strengths, skills that come to you naturally, and what you want to be known for!

Let's think through your ideal clients' location, emotional descriptors (are they elegant, relaxed, adventurous, eclectic, modern, etc.).

What do they value in life? What is their biggest dream / desire?

What is their biggest pain point when it comes to photography?

Let's create your message. I help { X TYPE OF CLIENTS } with { TYPE OF PHOTOGRAPHY } without {THEIR PAIN POINT}

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QUARTER ONE

MARCH - SHOOTING WELL IN-CAMERA

[Check out this guide ALL on shooting well to edit quickly!](#)

Spend some time this month digging through your camera's user manual to make sure you have your focusing set to what you need it to be!

Choose whether you'll use an ExpoDisc or Kelvin to manually set your white balance.

The #1 thing you can do to shoot well in-camera is to find GOOD light! This means your subject has the same lighting from head to toe & the same lighting as the background! Find a light or dark background based on your shooting style & make sure that it's clear of distraction!

[Settings for a wedding day & finding good light!](#)

NOTES

QUARTER TWO

APRIL - NAILING A POSING SYSTEM

Look through these slides to see a breakdown of my [posing system](#)

[Check out Katelyn James' Guide for getting a lot of variety in your poses within one location](#)

Let's customize this posing system for your OWN business! WRITE IT OUT! I feel like this helps solidify it in your own mind

Write out what you'll tell your clients before you start EVERY session to help ease their nerves!


Create a board on Pinterest or an album of images on your phone you can refer to or a checklist on the Reminders app for iPhone JUST IN CASE you blank on a session!

Practice watching your clients to see what they NATURALLY do for posing during their session! Also think through what you see in movies or what you naturally do with your significant other if you have one!


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QUARTER TWO

MAY - CULLING & EDITING QUICKLY!

 Use [PhotoMechanic](#) to cull your images! Cull BACKWARDS, you usually take your best shot on your 3rd try! Tag your images to keep & those you want to put on your blog right there!

 [Look through these slides to see a breakdown of my editing workflow](#)


 Make sure you've created your base preset that's applied on import in Lightroom


 [Check out Stephanie's video](#)


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QUARTER TWO


JUNE - MARKETING STRATEGY


 Make sure you know your yearly revenue income goal & your quarterly breakdown with how many of X types of sessions you want to market for each quarter!


 For Each Quarter Let's Think of 6-12 Topics that You Can Cover that speaks to WHY your clients should purchase X session with you, how to prep for their session or helpful tips for their session.


 Decide on where you want to showcase this really helpful information to establish yourself as an expert & create trust for your clients! I call this the hero platform!


 Decide how frequently you want to post your hero content & on which day/date! (Weekly, every 2 weeks, every month, etc.) What's sustainable & FEELS doable to you?

 Look at your analytics for how you're getting traffic to your website AND where your bookings are coming from! This will help determine WHERE you distribute your hero content to.

 Decide on the frequency & DAYS that you'll post to your distribution channels!

 Figure out WHEN you'll create the content! Mark it on your calendar as a repeating event!

 Now write out all your ideas & create a content marketing map! You can use Google Calendar, Trello, Asana, a good ol' paper planner, an Excel doc to get a birds eye view of what is going when!

 I recommend auto-posting using tools like Plann/FB scheduler/Planoly/Tailwind so you can schedule it out all at once and then focus elsewhere!

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QUARTER THREE

JUL - FORECASTING & FINANCES

What are your monthly expenses in your personal life? What is your monthly budget? This tells you how much money your business needs to pay you! List out all of your monthly expenses & how much they are so you have a CLEAR idea! If you're not sure, go through your last 3 months' bank statements!

What is your yearly revenue goal for your business! It should be about 2x what you need to pay yourself on a monthly basis.

Figure out the price point that you want to have each of your photography services at & how many you need to hit your yearly revenue goal

If you're calculating & you realize you need to increase the value of your sessions based on your availability, brainstorm some things you can do to increase your demonstrated value for each! See August for a couple of ideas

Create a spreadsheet & a folder where you're tracking your expenses and receipts on a monthly basis. Consider signing up for Quickbooks, here's my referral code for 50% off!

Use this [template](#) to forecast your income & see which months you need to market more heavily in to hit your sales goals!

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QUARTER THREE

AUG - DEMONSTRATING VALUE

Create an investment guide with helpful information, your process & the investment for EACH type of photography service you offer!

This is where it'll be helpful to niche down to 2-3 types of photography! I used PPT to do this initially but you can check out [Davey & Krista's templates](#) or Pinterest/Etsy/Creative Market for these!

Make sure to list out everything that your client receives from working with you in the guide preferably in bullet form.

Here's links to my [weddings](#) vs. [portait](#) investment guide to get an idea of what to include

Think through 3-5 frequently asked questions you get and include the responses to them in here!

Link to these guides in your inquiry response! Avoid writing the cost in emails since having it listed in the guide makes it less negotiable!

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QUARTER THREE

SEP - CRAFT A CLIENT EXPERIENCE

Write out your client experience process from start to finish: Inquiry to Booking, Onboarding & Session Prep, Session Editing & Delivery, Backend

Go through your last completed client project & pull out all your emails from it.

Now for each communication with your client, create a template email from what you had sent. You can leave spaces to personalize it for each client.

Here are my [canned email templates](#) that you can pop into Gmail Canned Responses for an easy workflow!

Have one CENTRAL place where you can track where your clients are in the process, deadlines with you with easy links to email templates! You can use my client tracking template here.

Decide 1-2 ways you'll overdeliver on set expectations!

For client gifting, I recommend keeping your budget for this at around 3-5% of their package price! Here's my [blog post](#) on advice on picking out what to gift. Decide on 1-3 things for weddings & 1 for other portraits

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QUARTER FOUR!

OCT - WORKFLOWS FOR LIFE

Let's set up some workflows & systems in your business to get you time back to live your LIFE!!

For each type of client service that you provide, let's make sure you have all the steps written out where you can easily access not only the steps but any emails / resources that are related to these!

You can do one service workflow per week to keep it attainable! Make your schedule on which week you'll tackle each service in your business! Ex: Week 1 - Couples, Week 2 - Weddings, Week 3 - Albums, Week 4 - Seniors

For each type of service you provide, search the email of the last client whose project you completed. This should bring up all your emails back & forth. Use this & your knowledge of your backend process to write out all the steps you took to complete this project!

For each email, make it a template. Think if you need to add any more information to better educate your client upfront.

Now create your workflow with a date for each step along the process. This can look like sending an onboarding email when they book, sending a session prep email 1 week before their shoot, etc.

House your workflow in a project management system! Look into using Google Keep, Reminders on iPhone, Trello, Asana, or HoneyBook! [Here's my code for 50% off your first year of HB!](#)

After you've done the hard work putting together your workflow, I recommend going through to see if there are any parts that you can automate!

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QUARTER FOUR!

NOV - WEBSITE UPDATES

Update your home, about & services page with your tagline that you created as the last check item in February

We're going to use the colors & wording you chose in February to curate your portfolio to make sure it's speaking well to your ideal client!

I recommend including 1-3 galleries of your BEST work for each type of work that you do (Ex: Up to 3 wedding galleries, Up to 3 portrait galleries) each with 15-40 images!

Some questions to consider as we curate your portfolio:

- Are your images edited consistently?
- Let's aim to pick pictures that are in the same type of lighting for the most part for visual consistency
- Are the backgrounds & edges of your images clean and non-distracting?
- Do these images convey the emotion you want your couples to feel on their wedding day?
- Do these images compass your photography aesthetic / brand colors?
- Do they showcase your couples' values?
- Do they give you a general feel for what the wedding day looked & felt like?

Don't be afraid to go back and re-edit images before uploading them to your portfolio to make sure they look visually consistent!

Update your social media accounts & your website with a headshot of you looking at the camera! Trust is built through the eyes!

This blog post covers my [best tips](#) for each page of your website!

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QUARTER FOUR!

DEC - SYSTEMS

Choose ONE place to house all your tasks / ideas / project files (Trello, Asana, Google Drive, A Folder on your Desktop (but please back it up if this is the case!))

Choose somewhere to house all of your emails / collateral & overall workflow for your clients

Create a list of everything you need to accomplish each week, each month, each quarter & each year! This can start out with 1-3 things but keep it in an easily accessible & updatable spaces

How many hours are you planning on working each week? Write it down & set some boundaries! Include these in your email signature!

Let's make sure you have a way of structuring WHAT you will do WHEN! This is arguably the most important step!

List out ALL the tasks you do in your business. Group like tasks together. Now decide when you'll do each task group during each week!

Obviously there'll be some weeks where you can't QUITE stick with the schedule but having some structure saves so much time guessing / wondering what you should be working on & increase your productivity! Check out [Ashlyn's Guide to Batching Tasks](#) for a super thorough walk through of this process!

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