

Better Photos More Often

Most photographers getting into stock appreciate that you need a large volume of images to make it work consistently. The numbers involved can actually be quite intimidating when you first start but don't let that put you off. Here's a simple system that will increase your output exponentially and ensure the resulting images are highly marketable.

Most photographers never really get around to it, but the more time you put into identifying your markets and researching them, the more saleable your work will be. There's no big secret there: the best marketers in any field are those who identify a market, research it and create a product that their new customers simply have to have.

The good news is it's quite straightforward to apply that approach to your photography. The added bonus is that when you do take this approach your volume will increase significantly as well!

It's a simple three-step process that you can start now and keep adding to for years to come. I'd suggest you get yourself a ring folder so you can add extra pages to various sections as required. Don't let the simplicity fool you; this is very powerful. Here's how it works:

1. Make a list of your main subjects ... aim for about 10 for now. You will add to this constantly, so for now just write down a few of the main subjects you like to shoot, those you shoot well and those you'd really like to shoot more often.

Write each one down at the top of a fresh page. If you are using a ring binder, make these the divider pages so you can insert additional pages between them.

2. Now make a list under each of those 'Subjects' of the kinds of photo buyers who might be interested in photos of that material. Write these under the 'Subject' heading and be as specific as possible.

3. Now set up a page for each of those Subject-Buyer combinations. You need to go looking for specific examples of that buyer type using an image of that subject. You need to find examples and really study the image to try and work out what was about each image that the buyer just had to have.

Make a note of any technical details of interest if you like, but your main focus should be on the content and composition. You are researching your market, so some study of the competition is useful, but the real value here is in understanding what your potential customers are spending their money on.

In every published photo you see there will usually be one or two elements that the buyer simply had to have.

Even when the photo is a fairly 'bland' portrait; human, animal or object, there will usually be some specific trait or feature captured and conveyed that caused the buyer to select that particular image.

Other times it won't be a physical element, but something less tangible: a mood or emotion or other message. They are the ones you need to study closely so you can see not just the message, but how the photographer used the physical elements of the image to convey it?

Has the photographer used props to add to the story? Are there more subtle symbols in play? How do all the elements fit together? How has the photographer used mood or emotion?

Until you start to recognise these kinds of elements in other images, it will be hit-and-miss whether you capture them in your own work. However, once you do start to look for these elements in other images, you'll start to see them in your own photo opportunities, and then you can start include them in your own work.

When you do that I'd almost guarantee you'll find yourself shooting much more marketable shots. You'll also find you're shooting a lot more prolifically as well!

Over time you might end up with notes on dozens of potential buyers for any subject you like to photograph, so when you're faced with the opportunity to shoot a specific subject, you'll have an extensive list of what buyer-types might be interested in images of this subject, and you'll have specific information on the images they want.

Instead of getting one or two 'photographer' shots you could easily walk away with dozens of highly marketable images, each custom shot for a different specific market! Matt Brading is CEO and Founder of Ozimages Stock Photography Library. Get 4 of his free photography eBooks:

<http://www.StockPhotographyProfits.com/>

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