



Getting Clients:

How Photographers Are Using Facebook and Twitter

January 2010

VirtualPhotographyStudio.com
[Twitter.com/PhotoshopTips](https://twitter.com/PhotoshopTips)
[Twitter.com/LoriOsterberg](https://twitter.com/LoriOsterberg)
[Facebook.com/VirtualPhotographyStudio](https://facebook.com/VirtualPhotographyStudio)

A Letter From Lori at VirtualPhotographyStudio.com

In early December 2009, I went out and asked photographers to contribute their best Facebook and Twitter tips and advice on how you can use these tools to help grow your photography business. We asked:

Question 1 – What’s the right way to use Twitter to promote your business?

Question 2 – What’s your best tip for getting followers on Twitter?

Question 3 – How do you manage your time on Twitter?

Question 4– What’s the right way to use Facebook to promote your business?

Question 5 – What’s your best tip for getting followers on Facebook?

Question 6 – How do you manage your time on Facebook?

I accepted answers in a variety of ways, including email, blog commenting, and through Facebook and Twitter. Because of the different formats, you’ll see ideas in various sizes, ranging from a 140 character Tweet to several paragraph explanations.

My goal was twofold. First, I wanted to find out you are doing with social, and how its impacting your business. Second, I wanted to provide a resource for you as a photographer to grow your business using these top free technologies.

Using those two strategies as my guideline, I welcome you to dive into the following pages, learn new ideas and strategies along the way, and discover how you can make 2010 your best year yet using Facebook and Twitter to market your photography.



Lori Osterberg

<http://virtualphotographystudio.com/>

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Question 1:

What's the right way to use Twitter to promote your business?

Michael summed it up best:

“I don't think there is a right way to use Twitter yet. It's too new. Instead its all about trying things out, finding what works, and trying it again. Just because it works today doesn't mean it won't change tomorrow. I plan to just keep trying it throughout this next year.”

At this point in time, I completely agree. I don't think there is a right or wrong way of using social sites like Twitter. While there are some general rules you should follow anytime you are using a social site, for the most part its similar to the wild west. Try a little bit of everything, and see what works.



Jack Hollingsworth– <http://www.jackhollingsworth.com/>

“Keep your signal-to-noise ratio around 5:1 (5 part signal (or content) and 1 part noise (self promotion))”

One of those general rules is to remember social is all about building relationships. It's not about selling. It's not about getting your information in front of everyone you come in contact with.

Instead, its about building up your expertise, and allowing people to really connect with you before they have any interest in finding out more about what you do. As Jack says, give them 5 good quality pieces of advice, or content, before you reach out and do any self-promotion.

Likewise the key to success with Twitter is using it. You can't expect results if you don't use it regularly, or have a high number of people you're communicating with.

Use directories like <http://www.twellow.com/> to find people to connect with. I like Twellow because it not only allows you to search by category, like photography, but also by location. So if you are concentrating on building a studio in Denver, you can link to other Tweeters in Denver.

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And use a service like <http://www.socialoomph.com/> to help you feed quality content into Twitter all day long, whether you have access to the Internet or not. Social Oomph makes it easy for you to have a presence all day long, and stay connected to your followers on their time, not yours. Remember your goal is to add quality content, not self-promotion. If people aren't gaining from what you are giving, you need to rethink your strategy.

Also focus on automation. Social networking shouldn't add a ton of time to your already busy day. Instead it allows you to connect and build relationships on an entirely different playing field.

Mariska Hanegraaf—<http://www.11afotografie.nl/>

“My best tip to use Twitter and Facebook is to connect them. I connected my Facebook account to my Twitter account, so when I update my Facebook, it also updates my Twitter account.

Other than that I'm trying to update as much as possible about stuff that I'm doing and recent photos, so people know what I'm doing and that they can see what style I have.”

The beauty of both Facebook and Twitter is your potential for reaching out to a new client base. And by connecting the two and using them both, you're expanding your marketing potential even further.

Question 2:

What's your best tip for getting followers on Twitter?

Jack Hollingsworth – <http://www.jackhollingsworth.com>

“Create great content consistently and give freely without hesitation or reservation.”

Yes, it is widely recognized that many people automatically follow those that follow them. Following is the only way for you to communicate through the direct messaging function, and the only way for you to both be able to see what the other is talking about. Keep in mind that things can get crazy once you start following even just a few hundred people. It's impossible to keep up with all the conversations, or respond to everything that is being said. Which

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is why I recommend using an application like <http://tweetdeck.com/> or <http://twhirl.org/> to make posting easier. Tweetdeck allows you to categorize your followers and put them in various groups. Twhirl makes posting and searching easy, and allows you to control everything from a small section on your desktop.

Aaron Riddle - <http://www.acriddle.com/>

“Twitter is a resource, not a promotional tool. Meaningful interaction with others is the best way to gain followers. If a photographer is asking a question on twitter, give them an answer to help. If a photographer is seeking feedback, provide them with some meaningful critique of their work. Well thought-out responses will make for long-term connections with those you are following and will in turn lead to more followers for you.”

Another way to find clients is to monitor the buzz on Twitter. Start by using the internal search function on Twitter. <http://search.twitter.com> Type in keywords related to what you do, and find out in realtime what is being said on Twitter. As I was typing this, I searched for “photography contest” and received hundreds of results—here’s a sampling.



[TheLocalAccent](#): [#Northern Neck](#) [#Virginia](#) [#Photography](#) - The Local Accent photo contest was a huge success. View entries <http://short.to/12i6h>
about 2 hours ago from web · [Reply](#) · [View Tweet](#)



[andreaketchmark](#): You voted, and the results are in! Congratulations to John Stehle, winner of the 2009 PA Photography Contest!... <http://bit.ly/5Pq5KZ>
(expand)
about 2 hours ago from Facebook · [Reply](#) · [View Tweet](#)

Try typing in things related to your specific market. As you find results from people that may be interested in what you do, follow them, and hopefully start building the relationship.

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Question 3:

How do you manage your time on Twitter?

Travis - <http://www.travisjohansen.com/>

“I use the free iPhone app ‘echofone’ and since I have to check it to receive updates, I am now constantly getting interrupted by tweets.

I make it a point to go through and read all of my missed tweets before moving onto my next thing. So sometimes I’ll have 200 unread tweets but after flipping through them quickly- 5 minutes later I will feel much more accomplished and up to date on people I care about. I also follow other influential /big photographers and companies that post a ton of free links and resources.

I find so much knowledge and insight from the people I follow that I have a long list of ‘favorites tweets’/ resources built up. Lots of good stuff.

All in all, 5 minutes once a day- that’s all it takes.

I have a handful of people I subscribe to via SMS messaging. I get those instantaneously, but the others can wait and it keeps me relaxed.”

The key here is scheduling time every day to connect. Bottom Line: You can’t expect something to work if you don’t use it.

Jack Hollingsworth - www.jackhollingsworth.com

“spend at least 1 hour a day on Twitter. I also have twitter/desktop client open in my browser all day long:)”

I listened in on a teleclass recently on growing your business with online tools. The whole premise of this teleclass was to become more effective at what you do, and be able to measure the return on every source you are using to generate leads. In it they talked about things you should be using: Pay Per Clicks, direct mail, seminars, etc. But the hosts of this program shared their minimalist approach to using social media on a regular basis—its just too costly in terms of time, and you simply can’t quantify the exact number of leads it generates. I disagree.

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Is social media costly when it comes to time? Maybe. But spending an hour or so a day marketing your business is fully necessary to grow and to stay in business. Social media is free, meaning it doesn't cost you anything to open up a Twitter or Facebook account, and use it as much as you possibly can.

By growing our Twitter lists into the thousands, we can instantly generate traffic anytime we choose directly to our sites. If we have a new product to re-release, we can send hundreds of people to it in a matter of minutes. We've seen our traffic double every single month during 2009—yep, double every month.

Decide what your overall marketing strategy will be for bringing in leads to your business. If its using Twitter, sign up for your account, read everything you can about Twitter, and make a commitment to use it every day. Write it into your schedule if you have to (i.e. Monday through Friday, 7 to 8 a.m. I work on Twitter) Once you start seeing the results, I guarantee you'll be using it every day.

Question 4:

What's the right way to use Facebook to promote your business?

Because each of these accounts is so new, and we're all still trying to figure out how to use the tools in the best way possible, I would highly recommend following others who are having some success, just to find out what they are doing.

Learn from others. Try what they are trying. And make your own choices. Somethings work well for some; some don't.

Ron - <http://www.photographerandmodel.com/>

“Here's one I learned the hard way. Don't connect your Twitter tweets to your Facebook Statuses. They are two different kinds of streams and generally you are posting a lot more to Twitter than you should to Facebook.

If you do this people will unfriend you or hide your updates because you are showing up in their feed too much. Happen to me and hard to come back from.

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Now I use TweetDeck to handle my posting and just post things to Facebook that should go there and not everything.”

What doesn't work for one, works well for another:

Mariska Hanegraaf <http://www.11afotografie.nl>

“My best tip to use Twitter and Facebook is to connect them. I connected my facebook account to my Twitter account, so when I update my Facebook, it also updates my Twitter account.

Other than that I'm trying to update as much as possible about stuff that I'm doing and recent photos, so people know what I'm doing and that they can see what style I have.”

A lot of it comes down to knowing your clients, what they want from you, and what they expect to hear from you. Don't do things one way because it's the easiest for you; do it multiple ways to please your client.

I often put information into a variety of places: my newsletter, my blog, on Twitter and in Facebook. I manually put it into the systems different ways, knowing what each of the people following me expects in each area. Does it take more work on my end? Definitely. But I want to keep all of my followers happy, no matter where they are following me.

Peter - <http://www.peterwallburgstudios.com/>

“Facebook is about subtle promotion. Posting photographs and events on Facebook more as a FYI then as a way to club people over the head. It keeps your name out there.”

One key point to remember with Facebook is they have three separate ways to connect: your profile, your fan page, and a group. When you originally signed up for Facebook, it should have been a personal account, not a business. Your profile is all about you. Use your name, your facts, and your information.

Lori says:

“One great way to use Facebook is to create a page to showcase your business, this allows your friends and others to view your business.”

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Once you have your profile in place, then you can create a fan page all about your business.

Pamela Paramour says:

“I just started my FB business page through my personal page; therefore, it would be more beneficial to keep your personal page clean and professional as people will connect with you there, as well. I started to connect by inviting my friends and so far I have 31 people that are fans and 2 are not on my friend list. We must remember that anything we put out there; stays out there and is there for all to see. My photography business is me; therefore, I feel that I should conduct myself in a professional manner at all times. Think First Write Second!”

While your profile only allows you to have 5,000 friends maximum, your fan page is unlimited—perfect for a business that can end up with thousands, even millions of fans.

On your fan page, fill it up with information specific to your business. People expect to learn more about your business, so give them what they want. You can add pretty much anything with the Facebook widgets—Flash presentations, photos, videos. If you can create it, you can get it on to your Facebook page. While you should have a variety of things related to your business on your fan page, make sure you are posting great information on your wall and through your notes. Create a strategy and stick with it. If you provide daily tips, make sure you post one every day. Become reliable with your information, and give people what they want. And if you don't know, ask them. It's a great way of getting immediate response from people that already have a relationship with you.



Then start a group. Groups are all about connecting people based on a common interest. We started a Professional Photographers group a couple of years ago to allow people to chat about anything related to growing a business in the photography field.

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Question 5:

What's your best tip for getting followers on Facebook?

Though I did get a wide variety of answers and tips, the one thing I noticed more than ever is Facebook is still a very new tool, and with its newness comes a lot of confusion.

Jenny says:

"I hate to even share a tip as I'm one who'd love to have these tips given me! I've been trying to get going with a campaign on Facebook. But I really want to receive the tips list you come up with.

I jumped right in. The first mistake I made was not understanding how it all works. I didn't know a group and a page were not the same thing. I also was not sure about friends and ads. Third I didn't really like the privacy settings and still do not know what to do about this. Every time I update my page to keep it interesting and up to date, it blurps out to all my fans; I wonder at what point, this becomes annoying. I don't know how to update the wall only (not feeding through to live and news feeds. I'm working with an ad now. My first ad was accepted but got 0 clicks. I really wish I knew more about doing this before I was doing it and making mistakes.

So my tip..."Learn as much as you can about marketing your studio on Facebook "before" attempting to do so."

Yet in an answer like this I see a ton of positive as well.

- Decide what tools you'll be using.
- Learn everything you can. If its Facebook, search online for training and classes to learn more.
- Head over to Amazon (or your favorite bookstore) and buy several books on the subject. I've read over a dozen books on Facebook and Twitter combined. Granted, they all start looking the same because of the newness of the subject matter, but even a few tips can change the way you look at something.
- Work at it a little every day.

Yes, I know, I'm starting to sound like a broken record here.

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But the more effort you put into it, the more you try it and work with it, the greater success you'll have with it.

Wendy Sellers says:

“I am not yet a professional photographer but working toward that so my answer may be different!

I think the best way to get followers on Facebook is obvious: Post lots of pictures and TAG them! When you tag your clients in the photograph it causes your post to be linked not only to your client's page, but their friends get a notification in their news stream as well! Posting interesting pictures, of people they already know is going to draw them to your Facebook page and perhaps entice them to "friend" you and perhaps become a customer in the future!

Thanks for all the work in your newsletter! It has been helpful to me as I start out this journey!”

Thanks Wendy. Even without being a true professional yet, you already have a great idea. As a photographer, you should be putting up new photographs all the time. Share your latest engagement shoot. Put up the baby image that won an award. Let people see your newest family portrait. And tag each of your images with the people in them. This motivates people to want to become your friend/fan, and will also motivate others to find out more about you.

One caveat to this tip—make sure you have a model release in place that allows you to place a clients' images online. Possibly include a statement that allows you to place the images on social sites like Facebook and Twitter, and gives you permission to tag them for marketing purposes. (Check with your lawyer to make sure you have a sound model release.)

Debbie Ellis - <http://www.debbieellisphotos.com>

“On Facebook, I have noticed Business pages are a great tool, post relevant news and specials (but not too often) and recent examples of work! I am following a bunch of different photographers and learning so I can set my own up soon.”

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Suki - <http://www.sukibrownseniors.com>

“On Facebook I have my own personal page as well as a Fanpage. I mostly shoot seniors and I have them friend me as well as join the Fanpage. It helps me to get to know them and chat with them on FB (ie build relationship). As far as time tips, scheduling time daily as well as keeping it to a decided amount of time helps.”

Your Facebook Pages will become your best strategy for growing your fan base.

- Start by opening up your profile—that’s all about you as an individual.
- Build your fan page all about your business.
- Feed in your blog posts, and write on your wall consistently. Stay active to keep people engaged in what you are doing.
- Post photographs regularly. Keep the images small, and make sure they don’t interfere with your purchases.
- Join other groups and pages, and connect with others to grow your own page.
- Try out the advertising. This is the only thing you pay for on Facebook, and at this time is still pretty affordable. Make sure you give them a reason to want to click through on your ad.
- Create goals for Facebook page. 5,000 fans by December is a doable goal. Remember, you can’t promote your business to 25 people. Those 25 are probably friends and family, and won’t impact your business. You need hundreds or even thousands to create a great pool for potential business.
- Stick with it. Nothing works unless you work at it.

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Question 6:

How do you manage your time on Facebook?

Adam G says:

“My Facebook page emails me when I get something directed toward me individually. But I do drop in at lunch and around 7 or 8 pm to post a few notes and see what is happening. I don't play games, or return the many many gifts, causes, etc. from all those apps. I don't have time. I spend my time leaving notes to others about their wall. It keeps me visible but not obnoxious like selling something. Most days I spend an average of maybe 10 minutes total on Facebook. If people see you on there all day- they think you don't have anything else to do...(they are probably right)”

I couldn't agree more. Always keep your mind focused on what is important. Connecting with people is where your time should be spent. Games are a luxury. If you're working a full time job, and trying to build up your photography business in your off hours, spend your time being productive. And if you are running a full time photography studio, connecting and bringing in potential business should be the primary focus of every task you do. (And if you are going to relax and play games once in awhile, make sure you set a timer so you don't get caught up in the moment.)

Mollie - <http://mollieplummer.com/>

I find an egg timer an excellent tool for setting time boundaries on Facebook. Some days I have a mere 15 minutes.....other days, the luxury of an hour. I never spend over that luxurious hour though.... disciplining my time makes me very efficient.

I'm going to add a great comment I received from photographer August Michel. He had such great information on Facebook and MySpace, I thought I would include all of it here. Though these questions didn't pertain to MySpace, I found his answers exciting, and actually made me want to try out MySpace again. I haven't used my MySpace account in quite awhile, as I'm finding more results with Facebook and Twitter myself. But with August's answers—well, you decide:

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August T. Michel Photography:

“This landscape you are asking for input on is changing so rapidly that articles written just 6 months ago stating positions of companies like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are now obsolete.

When you can Twitter, Facebook, email, surf, talk, buy a movie ticket and NOW actually make your camera take a picture with ONE DEVICE (only the iPhone at this time) and you and I do this daily, its hard to imagine someone not even knowing how to set up a Facebook. I assure you they are out there. There are probably more out there who are clueless, than are actively using this technology.

I am using Facebook and MySpace as mediums for getting the word out about my new business.

It really us much more simple than many might imagine. Its also magical, when you can reach out to someone you have never met, have them reply and become a customer! It's also magical that it does not cost a penny. However, this is where simple and easy answer part of your question on how to manage your time. I will explain it this way. If I asked you to sweep your kitchen floor, that is a simple and easy as a task. If I ask you to sweep everyone's kitchen floor in your neighborhood, the act of sweeping is still simple, however the task is not easy.

Making a Facebook is simple. Gaining customers is another story. Who should you request as a friend? How do you search for them? What do you do when Facebook limits the number of friends you can add daily? Is a MySpace better?

Lori, there really are pros and cons to MySpace and Facebook. Here is my take. MySpace is more like being able to create a real web page. It offers so many more possibilities to make it "look" fancy. This can be good for those who know how. However, MySpace has some simple tools built in that make it pretty simple to create a nice looking profile. My personal top suggestions here would be to use their templates to create a nice background. Use their slideshow tool to create some nice slideshows of your photographs to post on the front of your profile. Last but certainly not least. Also a tip, I hesitate to share is called Friend Blaster Pro. This program allows you to automatically add friends, send out emails, even add comments to a specific list of new friends you are looking to add, or specific friends you already have. There is a free

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version that will allow you up to 50 uses daily or for \$25 an unlimited version. USE this tool! Last tidbit I will say about MySpace that I really LIKE, is their friends search tool. This even allows me to search for single, engaged, or married, within a certain distance of my zip code even. Its an amazing tool if you are looking for potential clients. How much easier can it get to specify all those within 50 miles who are engaged???

Facebook, is much more limiting in that you can not modify the look of your profile. You cannot search like you can on MySpace, however this lends to one of the pros to Facebook. Its much cleaner look keeps this one much more on the professional looking side. You really have to be creative on how you search and look for potential clients on Facebook compared to MySpace. To that end, you are much more likely to find that professional, or stay at home mom who really wants higher end photos of her kids. This is my opinion, but seems to be more of the case. I am not sure why other than Facebook is automatically set to strict privacy and is "cleaner" looking. If its worth anything, for my 20th class reunion this summer I went looking for my old friends. For every 3-4 I found on Facebook I found 1 on MySpace. Very unscientific, I know... take that for whatever its worth.

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For those that are on MySpace, Facebook and Twitter, there are "tools" out there that will allow you to make one post and it automatically updates all of your profiles. Nice time saver.

Lori, if I had to give my best tips for Facebook, they would be the following. First, define the customer you are going after. Senior portraits, weddings, families, etc. Then, the best tool to use on FB is

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the high school or colleges search. For senior portraits this is almost a no brainer on how to search. Weddings you have to broaden your friends requests. Families, even broader.

As you make a friends request, you SHOULD add a small note as to why you are asking them to be your friend. Using the copy and paste feature will save a lot of time here. When they add you as a friend, then send them a small thank you email. Within this email again explain in a little more detail what you are offering. Then periodically add a comment to their page. Make sure you do NOT over use this, as your comment is on their personal page. What I have found is that their friends are reading their comments and will see yours. I have had quite a few new friends added and a few new customers from this. Its like word-of-mouth advertising. Even though Mary is not really your friend, she is your friend on Facebook. Now your comment is on Mary's page, even though it is not necessarily an endorsement from Mary, its still your comment on her page. So, when Lucy looks at Mary's page and sees your comment, that can be all that is needed.”

Thanks for being a part of this project.

If you have any input, strategies, tips or case studies on how Twitter or Facebook have worked for you, I would love to hear them. Please send me your stories at:

[Twitter.com/LoriOsterberg](https://twitter.com/LoriOsterberg)

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