

## **Location, Location, Location.**

**(The Real Estate Sales Person's Mantra)**

And it can be quite effective for photographers as well. Your location can say a great deal about your viability to do the work you want to do.

Shooting high-end still life may be much easier to do in New York City than Birmingham and nearly impossible in Peach Springs, Arizona (pop 345).

There are many other examples but I think you get the idea. Where you work can determine a lot of the choices you are going to have. Your location within the city or town may also play a contributing factor toward your viability to do the kind of work you want to do.

Let's say you live in a fairly good-sized city (Cincinnati or Austin) and want to shoot advertising. Can you imagine that having a studio near the downtown area where most of the ad agencies are located could work to your advantage? Now, for sure, it is not the most important determining factor for getting hired, but it couldn't hurt could it? And if you find a great space for a fantastic price in a neighborhood that most people wouldn't want to go in after dark, which may also play a factor in your getting work.

With all that being said, some photographers choose to work from a home office or a shared office space. Even some still life/table-top shooters I know in Phoenix have moved their operation to the living room or air-conditioned garage. This is for convenience for sure, but there may be issues with neighbors if the shoots start containing large contingents of account executives, stylists, and craft services (craft services are the caterers and assorted folks to bring breakfast/lunch and snacks).

Now consider the work of a location shooter or a travel photographer. There may be a significant advantage in living in areas that are not crawling with other photographers. You may be the only shooter in the middle of Nevada who can handle shooting a helicopter test run for a large company. Staying in touch with the magazines that hire photographers for location assignments becomes more important than the air-conditioned garage. So look around and ask yourself, "Where do I live?" I mean really examine it. Is it a large city with a lot of ad agencies? Google is your friend, so google for ad agencies in your city.

Are you in a small town that has a few industries and a handful of graphic designers? Is there a congregation of small towns within your driving range (50–75 miles) that can add to the pool? Are you in a rural area and looking for editorial work with travel involved?

Once you have this information, ask this: Does my location create any unique marketing and sales challenges/approaches/advantages to or for my work?

Sometimes we can use where we are to great advantage if it is unique. Modesto, California, is in the

middle of the central valley and is close to many large cities and vacation areas. Omaha is in the middle of a big corn field in the heart of America's food basket. Charleston, North Carolina, has a huge historical record and is close to the heart of the south.

Where do you live?

What is unique about it?

What are the challenges it brings to your work and the style of work you want to do?

What advantages does it bring as well?

Is there a "season" to the work you do? In other words, is there a huge seasonal change in the place where you live?

Are there places or venues close by that can help you through any seasonal challenges you may have?

Is there anywhere close by that would be better suited for your "official" residence while marketing? For instance, let's say you live in Clear Forks, Idaho. No one has ever heard of Clear Forks, Idaho, and that may be a distraction for your marketing efforts. But Clear Forks, Idaho, is only 45 minutes from Boise. Would it be better to locate your "business" in Boise and work from your home to market your business? Everyone knows where Boise is, and there is no distraction and no explaining to do when marketing your work. Clear Forks may get snowed in and be tough-going a few months of the year, but Boise keeps on chuggin' and, with an airport, may be all you need.

These are just some things to think about when looking at how where you live can change the choices you have in front of you. I think a photographer in Clear Forks may have more luck shooting lifestyle and corporate, maybe some travel, than fashion or glamour. Don't you?

We need to complete our Market Analysis by looking at how we are going to implement the marketing messages we need to get in front of those clients we seek.

Where do the customers you want to work with find information on creative and photography that they may want to hire?

Ad agencies have source materials. From national and international directories, to websites and aggregators of work online, there are many companies and artists vying for their attention. How else do you think they find out about photographers?

How do you know? Ask them...seriously. Ask them. They will most likely tell you where they go to be inspired and to look for talent.

Then make sure you are there the next time they go looking.

How do the successful photographers in your area promote and advertise themselves? Again, Google is your friend...use it. Dig and research where you find the other photographers showing their work.

This does not mean you have to market yourself like they do. Not at all, in fact. However, they have (hopefully) done some research to find the venues they have chosen, so an investigation into the viability of it working for you is definitely something worth doing.

Look at the top five competitors in your area or vicinity and find out what they are doing to market themselves. This will take some googling and maybe some Facebook searches/Twitter searches/LinkedIn searches, etc., but it is also a way of finding out what the competition "believes" works for them.

1.

2.

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5.

This is raw data at this point, and what you do with it is up to you. Maybe you think that being where they are makes the most sense. Or possibly you believe that in order to stand out, you must zag while all others zig.

It is okay, you have done your research at the beginning of week 15 and on into week 16, so you are armed with real data of what your prospective clients are doing to find the photographers they work with.

We have done a lot of research, worksheets, investigations, and soul-searching to get to this point: the point where we start to put it all together and get 'er done.

You have your genres and niches; the things you want to shoot.

You have identified your channels of clients and how your work could and will be used. You have created a strong sense of who you are and who the clients are that you are going to be working for. And we have looked at how geography could play a part in the decisions as we move forward.

And moving forward we are.

Gather up the materials you have been working on and write a four-paragraph description of what you do, who you do it for, why you do it better than the others, and what unique properties you bring to the work you do.

**Cover:**

What you do. Who you do it for.

Why you do it better.

What uniqueness you bring to the work.

Take your time. Work it until it is a concise four-paragraph "About Me" page. We can use it on your biography or website 'About Me' page or on social media profiles. This super-packed four-paragraph tome is perfect for so much.

But mostly it is a synthesis of all we have been discussing to this point. It will help remind you of what your strengths are and where you get your energy and why you stick it out week after week – doing the best work you have ever done.