

# How to Become a Photographer Vol. 2



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**Blue Atom Studio**

## Introduction and Contents



We're going to take a look at what you need to do to start working as a photographer in any of six specialized disciplines. This is the second volume in a series of eBooks covering the training, work and life of a professional photographer.

Whether your dream is to capture stunning images of athletes in action, work with pets, make portraits of families and babies, or enjoy the freedom of exploring the world as a travel photographer, this book is packed with the information you need to succeed.

In this guide you'll also discover how much you can earn in various fields of photography, what's involved in getting started, the best professional organizations to join for advancing your career in a particular specialty, essential equipment, where to look for employment and how to attract more customers. There's even a section on helpful tips when you're just starting out as a professional photographer.

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# Chapter 1. How to Become an Action/Sports Photographer

It's third down and long yards for the underdog team under the Friday night lights. Barely 20 seconds on the clock. You can feel the electricity pulsing over the field, bouncing off the crowd of fans who know this is the moment that can only be followed by the sweetness of victory or the agony of defeat.

A skilled sports photographer is already one step ahead of the crowd. It's almost a certain bet the quarterback is going to fade back, feint and throw a long pass downfield. Action photographers learn to anticipate what's coming. That's why they're able to capture those spectacular photos of a wide receiver leaping through the air to catch the ball in one hand and land in the end zone. Touchdown. Buzzer. Game over.



The thrill of action. The joy of competition. These sensations are part of the life of an action/sports photographer. Freezing those heroic moments in time is a big part of the job. So is capturing the reaction of the losing team on the opposite sideline.

Action photographers tell stories with their images. They tell the story of the game. They travel to the action, wherever and whatever it may be – from

motocross bikes flying through the air to snowboarders demonstrating their death-defying skill at sliding down a mountain like they were born to do nothing else.

If you love the thrill of the game, the adrenaline rush of action and want to see events in person, not only for free, but get paid well to be there, a career as an action/sports photographer may be what you seek. Read on to learn what's involved in getting started. When the action begins, you'll be ready to document what went down for the sake of history.

In this article you'll learn:

[How much money you can make as an action/sports photographer](#)

[The required training and certifications](#)

[Professional groups to join](#)

[Employment opportunities for action/sports photographers](#)

[Finding clients](#)

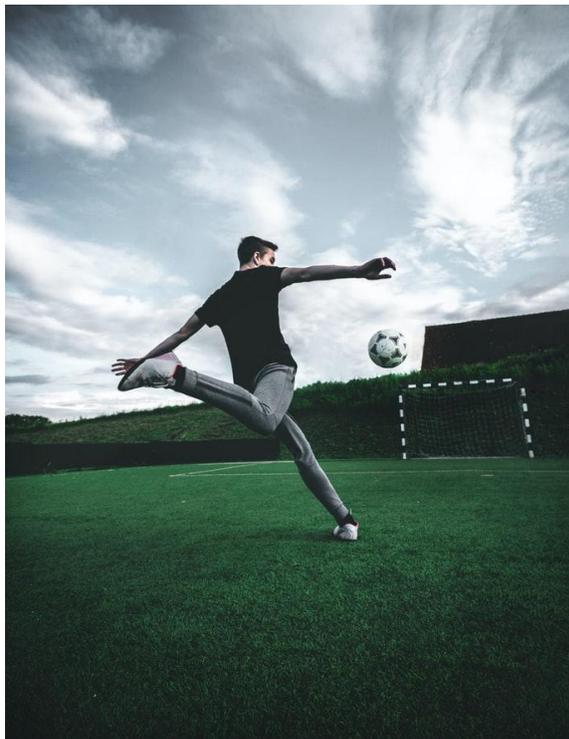
[Plus helpful tips](#)

### **How much money can you make?**

Action/sports photographers average \$30,367 per year, according to [a recent GlassDoor survey](#). Freelancers can potentially earn much more, especially if they are shooting major events such as college or professional football and basketball games, regional and international athletic competitions, including the summer and winter Olympics, and any action event that attracts a large audience and fan base.

### **Training and Certification**

You don't need any certification to be an action or sports photographer. No license is required. But to score gigs as a credible professional, you must be able to shoot expertly with a camera – and have a portfolio of excellent images as proof.



Many classes are available both online and in-person for you to learn action photography. Some courses include a certification of completion for you to frame and display in your office and mention on your business website. Some photographers have a bachelor's degree in fine arts with a focus on photography. Any credential or degree that helps promote you as a professional action photographer should definitely be used. These achievements will set you apart from competitors while showing that you are serious about your work.

A simple Internet search will turn up a wealth of action photography courses for you to review. Some cost less than \$50. More advanced and more expensive courses may include feedback from an instructor, typically a professional in the field. If you're more interested in attending a class in person, check the offerings at community

colleges and nearby universities that offer continuing education.

Visit your local camera shops as well. Often, pro photographers will offer their own classes as a sideline to their photography business. They tend to advertise where photographers congregate – at camera shops and online discussion groups devoted to action photography.

Here's [an example of a course offering in sports photography](#) where students choose a training package from 1 to 10 games. This hands-on learning involves photographing actual sporting events.

### **A few thoughts on equipment:**



There are dozens of books, websites and photography magazines available to help you decide which gear to buy. Your needs may be different from another photographer's, so only you can decide which brand or model of camera suits your requirements.

At minimum, though, you'll need a DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera body and at least two lenses, wide and telephoto. Two camera bodies are even better

because then you won't be spending so much of your time switching out lenses while the action passes you by.

A set of neutral density and polarizing filters will help you manage lighting conditions. Spare camera batteries and memory cards are critical. And you'll need a water-resistant bag to carry your equipment.

Tripods are a rare sight these days at sporting events unless they're holding up heavy television cameras. To stay mobile, most action photographers will use a monopod if they need camera support and stabilization, usually when capturing telephoto shots where camera shake is much more noticeable with a long lens.

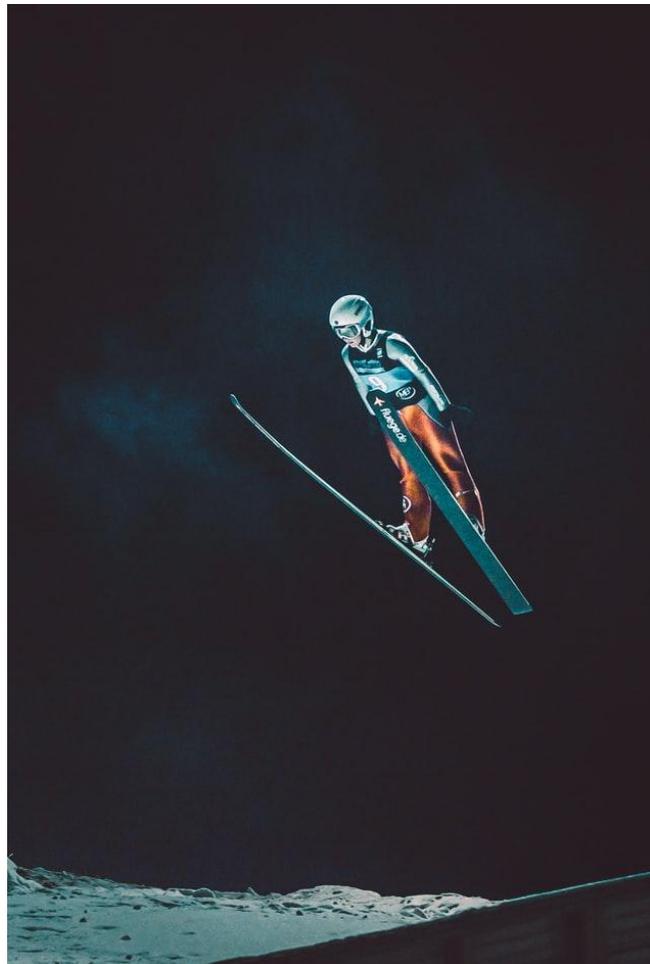
Finally, a computer or laptop loaded with image editing software such as Photoshop will be needed to work on your photographs in post-production. As your photography business grows, digital storage will become an issue. There are many online storage solutions (cloud storage), some of them even free for a certain volume of storage. Google Drive is one example. As a backup measure, though, you may want to invest in external hard drives that can store many thousands of high-definition images. These drives connect directly with a cable to your laptop or computer for immediate access. One advantage of an external drive is you do not need an

Internet connection to access your work. Another is that your work product is always under your control.

### **Professional Groups to Join**

There are many professional photographers' organizations you can join to network with other pros and advance your action/sports photography career. Here are some of the most relevant to action photographers:

If you're covering organized sporting events, consider joining the [National Press Photographers Association](#). While they are dedicated to the support of news photojournalists, that doesn't exclude professional photographers who cover major events such as college and pro sports, or even athletic competitions at the high school level, as these are closely followed by many people in a community. This association offers professional memberships to photojournalists for \$145 per year. The association advocates for the profession, monitors and reports on international conditions for photojournalists and offers networking opportunities for members.



[Professional Photographers of America](#) is the premiere organization of photography pros in the United States. A full membership is open to anyone living in the United States or its territories and costs \$323 per year. Benefits include:

- \$15,000 equipment insurance policy
- Data loss protection
- Access to all online education courses

- Online referral database listing
- Printed and digital monthly issues of Professional Photographer magazine
- One full registration to Imaging USA during the first year of membership
- Business Resources
- Contracts and Copyright Resources
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### [American Photographic Artists](#)

Benefits include a photographer photo ID card, discounts on Apple electronics, a listing in the association's directory to help new clients find you, and more. Membership tiers range from \$50 to \$500 per year.

### **Employment**

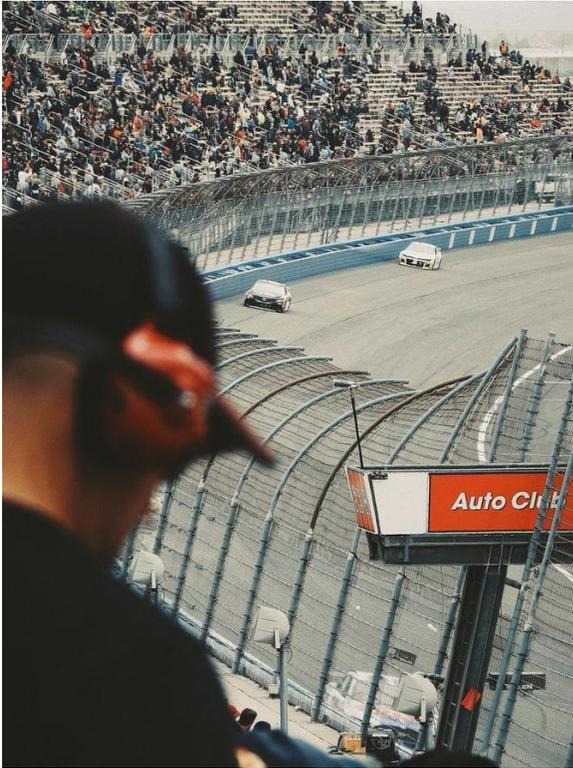
Contact newspapers, magazines and the editors of online sites devoted to sports and action photography. Send them your marketing materials, brochures and business cards. Follow up with a phone call in a day or two. If your contact says he's already working with a photographer, ask if he knows anyone who needs your services. Don't be discouraged by rejection when calling potential clients. The very next call you make could be gold.



Use the networking power of your professional memberships to find assignments.

Develop and maintain working relationships with publications in your area. Be flexible in your schedule. If the local newspaper's sports photographer is suddenly unable to shoot the Saturday afternoon game, you might get a call asking if you can fill in on the assignment.

## Finding Clients



Business cards and a basic website should be the core of your marketing toolkit as an action/sports photographer. The website need not be fancy or expensive, just attractively designed, with photos of your best work, your business location and contact information. No need to include your pricing. You can discuss that directly with clients.

In addition to your business website, the next thing to do is create an Instagram account to showcase your photography. Instagram is the #1 online venue for creative professionals to display their work. It's a free promotional tool that's always working on your behalf.

### **Good to know:**

Here are essential tips from professional sports photographers who've spent years honing their skills.

### **Do your research.**

Always be thumbing through sports magazines, websites devoted to action photography, and regional and local newspapers. Study the styles of images they publish. If you want to shoot for Sports Illustrated you need a current understanding of what they use.

### **ABA: Always Be Anticipating.**

Whether a skydiving event or a basketball game, action involves movement from point A to point B. If you can anticipate where the action is headed, you are better prepared to get the shot. Developing this skill also means you've got time to make adjustments on your camera settings before you have to press the shutter button.

### **Watch for the reaction.**

Capturing the touchdown photo is obviously important. Seconds later, a fan's reaction up in the bleachers may also produce a glorious image.

### **Carry two cameras.**

This way, you're always ready to shoot tight with a telephoto or loose with a wider lens. If you are constantly changing out the lens on a single camera body you are liable to miss more shots than you capture.

### **Compose with clean backgrounds.**

The focus should be on the action at hand, not background clutter. One way to control background "noise" is by shooting at the lowest possible f-stop (aperture) so your backgrounds appear soft and diffuse.



### **Look for fresh angles.**

Whenever possible, get to an event early so you can scout good shooting locations. People see at eye level, so if all you shoot is eye-level images then you're not creating a new or unique style for your work.

### **Get a liability insurance policy.**

And keep it up to date. You may also want to have an attorney set up your operation as an LLC (Limited Liability Company). This affords you many legal protections in the event of disputes.

## **Chapter 2. How to Become a Pet Photographer**

Love being around animals? Enjoy photography? Combine them into a lucrative business as a pet photographer, which you can pursue full-time or as a sideline to your main job.

As a form of portrait photography, taking pictures of pets can be a challenge. Many won't still for long -- or at all. Some will gaze in every direction except the camera. But with patience and a genuine fondness for animals, you will overcome these obstacles to capture images that your clients will cherish for years.



You may find employment working at a portrait studio, although many pet photographers operate their own business and keep overhead to a minimum by going to the homes of their customers to take pet photographs, or meeting outdoors at a public park, for example, where a dog can roam and play, expressing a joyful personality that the photographer will then be able to capture with a camera.

You won't need to invest in thousands of dollars of equipment, either. A good DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera and a couple of quality lenses will cover the basics. Add a tripod, extra battery packs and memory cards, and a set of filters to control lighting, and you're all set.

If you decide to operate your own pet photography business you can potentially make as much money as you like. It depends on your ability to attract a steady stream of clients and willingness to work.

Ready to get started? Read on to learn what you need to do to begin working as a pet photographer.

In this article you'll learn:

[How much money you can make as a pet photographer](#)

[The required training and certifications](#)

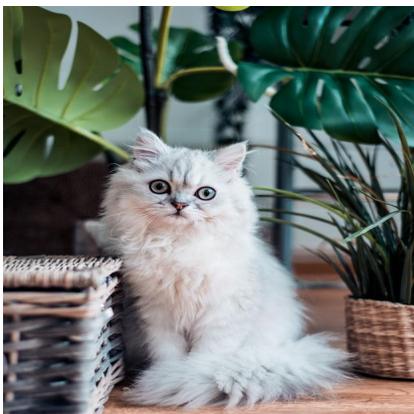
[Professional groups to join](#)

[Employment opportunities for pet photographers](#)

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[Plus helpful tips](#)

### **How much money can you make?**



The average salary of a pet photographer is \$36,685 per year, according to [a recent survey by ZipRecruiter](#). The top 10 percent of photographers in this field are making \$74,500 on average. Working freelance and running your own business, you can write your own paycheck. It just depends on your skill at marketing to new clients and willingness to take on the work.

### **Training and Certification**

You can, if you want, go out right now with your camera and start a business as a pet photographer. There are no regulations or licensing requirements to stop you. However,

you will face competition and that's where training and certification can help you stand apart from other pet photographers.

There are dozens of online pet photography courses for you to discover and look over with a simple Internet search. Many cost less than \$100. In addition, you can self-train by watching free online videos ([here's an example](#)) and by practicing your photography skills. For more formal training, you can check the course offerings at local colleges and call or visit camera shops to find out if any pros in your area are offering pet photography instruction. Look for classes that offer a certification of completion once you finish. These credentials can be promoted on your website, marketing materials, even your business cards to enhance your reputation as a real professional.

### **A few thoughts on equipment**

There are dozens of books, websites, photography magazines and other resources to help you decide which gear to buy. Your needs may be different from another pet photographer's, so only you can decide which brand or model of camera suits your requirements.

At minimum, though, you'll need a DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera body and at least two lenses, wide and telephoto. Two camera bodies are even better because then you won't be spending so much of your time switching out lenses while clients become impatient.

A set of neutral density and polarizing filters will help you manage lighting conditions outdoors. Indoors, you'll need a flash attachment at minimum. Over time, you may decide to invest in a lighting kit with reflectors, lamps and folding stands, all of which fits into a footlocker-type case for easy transport.

Spare camera batteries and memory cards are essential. And you'll need a water-resistant bag to carry your equipment.

A good, sturdy tripod should also be part of your standard kit. To get the maximum stabilizing benefits from a tripod, you should have some means of triggering the camera shutter remotely. Many modern digital cameras are Bluetooth enabled, which allows a radio signal to pass from the camera to a smartphone. Depending on the brand and model of your camera, you download



an app to the phone, which allows you to trigger the camera shutter with your smartphone from distances of up to about 30 feet.

Finally, a computer or laptop loaded with image editing software such as Photoshop will be needed to work on your photographs in post-production. As your photography business grows, digital storage will become an issue. There are many online storage solutions (cloud storage), some of them even free for a certain volume of storage. Google Drive is one example. As a backup measure, though, you may want to invest in external hard drives that can store many thousands of high-definition images. These drives connect directly with a cable to your laptop or computer for immediate access. One advantage of an external drive is you do not need an Internet connection to access your work.



### **Professional Groups to Join**

There are many professional photographers' organizations you can join to network with other pros and advance your pet photography career. Here are some of the most relevant to pet photographers:

[The Pet Photographers Club](#) offers members a chance to network, plus full access to podcasts, videos, useful downloads of photography tips and more. Membership is \$10 per month or \$100 for a year, paid in advance, with the first month free.

[Professional Photographers of America](#) is the premiere organization of photography pros in the United States. A full membership is open to anyone living in the United States or its territories and costs \$323 per year. Benefits include:

- \$15,000 equipment insurance policy
- Data loss protection
- Access to all online education courses
- Online referral database listing
- Printed and digital monthly issues of Professional Photographer magazine
- One full registration to Imaging USA during the first year of membership
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#### [American Photographic Artists](#)

Benefits include a photographer photo ID card, discounts on Apple electronics, a listing in the association's directory to help new clients find you, and more. Membership tiers range from \$50 to \$500 per year.

### **Employment**

Visit pet shops, the local SPCA and other animal shelters, breeder farms and any other place where pet owners congregate. Ask the business owner if you can put up a flier promoting your pet photography or leave a stack of your business cards on the sales counter.

Contact newspapers, magazines and the editors of online sites devoted to pet photography. Send them your marketing materials, brochures and business cards. Follow up with a phone call in a day or two. If your contact says she's already working with a photographer, ask if she knows

anyone who needs your services. Don't be discouraged by rejection when calling potential clients. The very next call you make could be gold.

Use the networking power of your professional memberships to find assignments.

Develop and maintain working relationships with publications in your area. If you capture a stunning image, you'll already have contacts in the editorial department who may want to buy your photos as a local-interest item for their publications.

## Finding Clients



Business cards and a basic website should be the core of your marketing toolkit as a pet photographer. The website need not be fancy or expensive, just attractively designed, with photos of your best pet photography work, your business location and contact information. No need to include your pricing. You can discuss that directly with clients.

In addition to your business website, the next thing to do is create an Instagram account to showcase your pet photography. Instagram is the #1 online venue for creative professionals to display their work. It's a free promotional tool that's always working on your behalf.

Other strategies for attracting new business:

- Create a referral program with discounts for returning customers who bring new clients to you.
- Ask clients to review your pet photography services online. According to a recent survey, 90% of people say their buying decisions are influenced by positive online reviews.

### Good to know:

This handy checklist of pet photography tips comes from professionals who've been honing their skills in this field for years.

### Work in natural light

Draw back curtains and shades when working indoors to let in as much natural light as possible.

Flash photography causes red-eye, which will add to your time spent on post-production. The sudden flash can also startle the pet, possibly ending the photo session right then and there.

### **Focus on the animal's eyes**

Dogs and cats, especially, have extremely expressive eyes. Focus there when composing the image.

### **Get on their level**

Animals may feel skittish when a stranger holding something peculiar (like a large, unfamiliar camera) towers over them. Instead, crouch to the level of the pet. This not only helps put the animal at ease but enables you to get closer and see the world from the pet's point of view.

### **Concentrate on the animal's personality**

Ask the owner what the pet is like, what the pet enjoys. If the animal has a favorite toy, perhaps include that in the photo.



### **Go for the close-up**

Sometimes the full frame of a pet's face, turned at just the right angle, can produce a photo more captivating than an image of the entire animal at a distance.

### **Catch them by surprise**

A sudden whistle or calling to the pet by name can cause the ears to perk up as the animal goes into full alert mode. This can produce interesting and delightful poses.

### **Plan the photo session around the pet's energy**

A good time for a pet photo shoot is when the animal is sleepy or has just awoken, which is your best chance to get them to hold still for a photograph. If the goal is to capture action photos, plan the session when the pet is typically most active.

### **Patience is a virtue – and essential for photographing pets**

You've probably heard the expression that some tasks "are harder than herding cats." Pet photography can fall into this category unless you have the patience to let the animal relax, become comfortable in its surroundings and settle down for a photo.

### **Get a liability insurance policy.**

And keep it up to date. You may also want to have an attorney set up your operation as an LLC (Limited Liability Company). This affords you many legal protections in the event of disputes.

## **Chapter 3. How to Become a Wedding Photographer**

As a photographer, you'll be hard pressed to think of an event where people are more consistently happy and carefree than they are at weddings. Unless you happen to be the groom.



When you're a wedding photographer, your role is almost as important as the minister, rabbi – or captain of the ship, if you happen to be at sea. The couple is counting on you to preserve this occasion so they can go back through their photo albums and digital scrapbooks for years to come, reliving all those special moments from their wedding day.

You'll need energy, exuberance, patience and sometimes the people skills of an international diplomat to ensure everyone cooperates for the sake of the newlyweds and their photographs. Do this consistently – and with the eye of an artist – and you'll enjoy an income that is traditionally among the highest in all fields of photography. Six figures a year is pretty much standard for the

average wedding photographer. For the above-average photographer, your earnings potential is whatever you want it to be.

Wedding photography is big business and pays serious money. Read on to learn how you can get started in the lucrative field of wedding photography.

In this article you'll learn:

[How much money you can make as a wedding photographer](#)

[The required training and certifications](#)

[Professional groups to join](#)

[Employment opportunities for wedding photographers](#)

[Finding clients](#)

[Plus helpful tips](#)

### **How much money can you make?**

Wedding photographers do very well. The average salary is more than \$104,000 per year, according to [a recent ZipRecruiter survey of professionals in the field](#). The top 10 percent of wedding photographers earn \$127,500 a year, on average. One of the additional financial benefits of this photography specialty is that most wedding ceremonies are conducted on weekends, which means you can pursue other work during the week.



## Training and Certification

Depending on where you live, chances are there are absolutely no regulations or licensing requirements for a wedding photographer. You'll need a business license, which you can arrange by calling your local government offices.

Even though formal certification is not a legal requirement to photograph weddings, being able to show potential clients that you are trained and have credentials can go a long way toward securing steady work.

A simple Internet search will turn up many training courses for wedding photography, many for under \$100. [Here's one example](#). When choosing a course, look for training programs that come with a certificate of completion once you finish. These certificates can typically be customized with your name, downloaded and printed, then framed for you to hang in your office. You'll also want to make note of these credentials on your business website. People notice certifications, which show you are serious about your work. That makes customers more confident when choosing your photography services over competitors.



Along with training and certification, you'll need a portfolio of excellent images to post on your website and to print on brochures when you meet with clients. This may seem like a daunting task when you're just starting out. How do you get new clients for your wedding photography business if you've never photographed a wedding? It's a fair question. One possibility is to offer your service for free or at minimal cost to a friend who's getting married, with the

understanding that the pictures will be used in your marketing materials. You can give your friend a nicely bound photograph album of the pictures as a thank-you gift. Even if you know a couple who've already hired a photographer for their wedding, maybe they will let you take pictures as well. Understand that as a beginner you may not be able to charge \$5,000 or \$10,000 to shoot a wedding if you don't have the experience and portfolio to justify premium pricing. In that case, marketing your services to couples on a budget might be the best way to go.

In time and with practice, you'll build a portfolio that will be the envy of the industry and you can charge as much as the market will bear.

## Professional Groups to Join

There are many professional photographers' organizations you can join to network with other pros and advance your photography career. Here are some of the most relevant to wedding photographers:

The [International Society of Professional Wedding Photographers](#) is the largest organization devoted to this specialized field of photography. To be accepted, a photographer must submit a portfolio for review, agree to operate under the ISPWP Code of Conduct, and have an ISPWP sponsor or two references. And then the applicant must be voted in by current members. Annual dues are \$99 during the COVID-19 pandemic (regularly \$179 a year). Member benefits include:



- \$200 Value in Contest Entry Fees
- Up to five location directory listings (helps clients find you)
- Access to SEO-optimized ISPWP blog to publish
- Daily promotion on ISPWP social media
- Live Interviews, online conferences, vendor discounts and more.

[Professional Photographers of America](#) is the premiere organization of photography pros in the United States. A full membership is open to anyone living in the United States or its territories and costs \$323 per year. Benefits include:

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Benefits include a photographer photo ID card, discounts on Apple electronics, a listing in the association's directory to help new clients find you, and more. Membership tiers range from \$50 to \$500 per year.

#### **Employment**

Contact wedding planners, bridal shops, formalwear shops, and even bakeries where people order wedding cakes. Send them your marketing materials, brochures and business cards. Follow up with a phone call in a day or two.

Use the networking power of your professional memberships to find assignments.



Depending on your budget, you can also sign up for online listing services. Sites like [WeddingPro](#) and [TheKnot](#) maintain directories of wedding service providers, including

photographers, so consumers can find you by searching state and city listings. Shop around and do your own research on the sites where it makes the most sense to advertise, if you choose this route. Some of these sites charge several hundred dollars a month for listings, so you'll need to be established and have a steady cash flow.

### **Finding Clients**

Business cards and a basic website should be the core of your marketing toolkit as a wedding photographer. The website need not be fancy or expensive, just attractively designed, with photos of your best wedding photography work, your business location and contact information. No need to include your pricing. You can discuss that directly with clients.

In addition to your business website, the next thing to do is create an Instagram account to showcase your photography. Instagram is the #1 online venue for creative professionals to display their work. It's a free promotional tool that's always working on your behalf.



Other strategies for attracting new business:

- Create a referral program with discounts for returning customers who bring new clients to you.

· Ask clients to review your services online. According to a recent survey, 90% of people say their buying decisions are influenced by positive online reviews.

### **Good to know:**

Use this handy checklist compiled by professional wedding photographers to avoid making the mistakes it took them years to overcome.



### **Get a liability insurance policy.**

And keep it up to date. You may also want to have an attorney set up your operation as an LLC (Limited Liability Company). This affords you many legal protections in the event of disputes.

### **Use contracts.**

Here is [a guide to creating your own wedding photography contract](#) template that you can download and print. Review it with an attorney who is experienced in contract law and small business operations to ensure you haven't overlooked anything. A contract protects both you and the couple hiring you to photograph their wedding. Don't perform work without a signed contract. You'll also want to secure a deposit from the clients in advance of the wedding day. Many photographers stipulate the deposit is non-refundable. This protects the value of your time. Say, for example, that you book a Saturday afternoon and evening for a wedding, which could well consume 6 or more hours of your time, only to have the couple

cancel on you. Then you've lost a weekend of work and will not likely find another client to fill that slot with short notice.

### **Get to know the couple.**

You'll need to have a sit-down meeting with every client to go over their needs, determine a price and sign the contract. A follow-up meeting or at least a phone call or two will help you get an even better sense of their personalities and answer any follow-up questions they might have.

This shows you care, that you are interested in them and in making their special day the best it can be through your role as photographer.

### **Make a shot list.**

Knowing the coverage you'll need the day of the wedding will make your life much easier. There are obvious shots you'll need of the couple together and individually, along with various combinations of family members posing together, plus the ceremony, the kiss, the couple's first dance at the reception, cutting the cake, more kissing, tossing the flower bouquet – the list can seem endless. But unless you make a list you cannot be certain you've gotten everything you need. The couple may also have specific ideas that you'll need to include in your planning. On the plus side, the events of a wedding typically follow a sequence so you should always have a pretty good idea of what's next on the list of vital shots.

### **Scout the location.**

If you possibly can, check out the wedding venues in advance, preferably around the same time of day the ceremony and reception will be held. This can help you plan shots as well as getting a feel for the lighting conditions. You might notice a balcony at the venue where the reception is to be held. If you can access the balcony, it could result in some nice elevated shots of the crowd on the dance floor, for instance.

### **Use flash as necessary, but only because it is necessary.**

Some people may enjoy the flash of a camera. Perhaps it makes them feel like celebrities walking the red carpet. Others may find it tiresome long before your work is done. Use available light when you can, typically at the reception, and adjust your camera settings to suit the ambient light. When you have to, use your flash or strobe.

### **Be on time, be friendly, be unobtrusive.**

Show up early so you can set up and be prepared. A wedding can be stressful. It's supposed to be among the happiest days of a couple's life, but behind the scenes any number of things could be going wrong. Don't let your photography be part of the problem. Patience and flexibility are key to dealing successfully with people in situations where emotions and expectations are running high. If you see the couple arguing with the caterer who forgot to bring the champagne, that is obviously not the time to step in and start snapping away. Diplomacy is the order of the day.

### **Get the formal shots in the can as soon as possible.**

This means capturing all posed shots of the couple and their family combinations immediately after the ceremony. The flowers will be in place and everyone you need is right there. If someone slips away or you miss a shot, good luck rounding up subjects at the reception, where your candid photography skills will come into play.

### **A few thoughts on equipment**

There are dozens of books, websites, photography magazines and other resources to help you

decide which gear to buy. Your needs may be different from another wedding photographer's, so only you can decide which brand or model of camera suits your requirements.

At minimum, though, you'll need a DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera body and at least two lenses, wide and telephoto. Two camera bodies are even better because then you won't be spending so much of your time switching out lenses while clients become impatient.

A set of neutral density and polarizing filters will help you manage lighting conditions outdoors. Indoors, you'll need a flash attachment at minimum. Over time, you may decide to invest in a lighting kit with reflectors, lamps and folding stands, all of which fits into a footlocker-type case for easy transport.

Spare camera batteries and memory cards are essential. And you'll need a water-resistant bag to carry your equipment.

A sturdy tripod should also be part of your standard kit. To get the maximum stabilizing benefits from a tripod, you should have some means of triggering the camera shutter remotely. Many modern digital cameras are Bluetooth enabled, which allows a radio signal to pass from the camera to a smartphone. Depending on the brand and model of your camera, you download an app to the phone, which allows you to trigger the camera shutter with your smartphone from distances of up to about 30 feet.

Finally, a computer or laptop loaded with image editing software such as Photoshop will be needed to work on your photographs in post-production. As your photography business grows, digital storage will become an issue. There are many online storage solutions (cloud storage), some of them even free for a certain volume of storage. Google Drive is one example. As a backup measure, though, you may want to invest in external hard drives that can store many thousands of high-definition images. These drives connect directly with a cable to your laptop or computer for immediate access. One advantage of an external drive is you do not need an Internet connection to access your work.

## **Chapter 4. How to Become an Event Photographer**

Event photographers, as the title suggests, take pictures for clients hosting or sponsoring special occasions. These may be one-time events, such as a speech, or recurring events, such as college reunions or the annual meetings and conventions of large organizations. The scale may be mammoth, such as the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, or you may be asked to shoot a more intimate gathering, such as children at a birthday party.

Some of these events may be exciting; others, considerably less so. The event photographer's job is to capture the essence of what happened in compelling images that please the client – and ensure you get called back for the next event.

The pay is quite good for an event photographer. Many professionals in the field can set their own rates after a few years of experience. Another perk is the work day is never the same. Each event is different, presenting new challenges and requiring creative ways to approach the assignment. With steady work you'll never be bored.

Another advantage of working as an event photographer is that many of your assignments will likely fall on weekends, meaning you will have time to pursue other work during the week.

Read on to discover what it takes to be a successful event photographer.

In this article you'll learn:

[How much money you can make as an event photographer](#)

[The required training and certifications](#)

[Professional groups to join](#)

[Employment opportunities for event photographers](#)

[Finding clients](#)

[Plus helpful tips](#)



## How much money can you make?



A professional event photographer typically charges between \$100 and \$250 per hour with a 2-hour minimum, [according to FASH.com](https://www.fash.com), a search service for consumers looking to hire event professionals. A birthday party, for example, might be worth \$300 to \$500 for an afternoon of work. By working independently, as a freelancer, you can make as much money as you desire. It really depends on your marketing skill in attracting new customers and how much you wish to work. One of the marketing challenges to overcome is convincing people that a professional event photographer is a worthwhile investment for a special occasion. These days, everyone with a smart phone thinks they're a photographer. Stunning images in your portfolio and on your business website can persuade people that excellent photography is worth paying for.

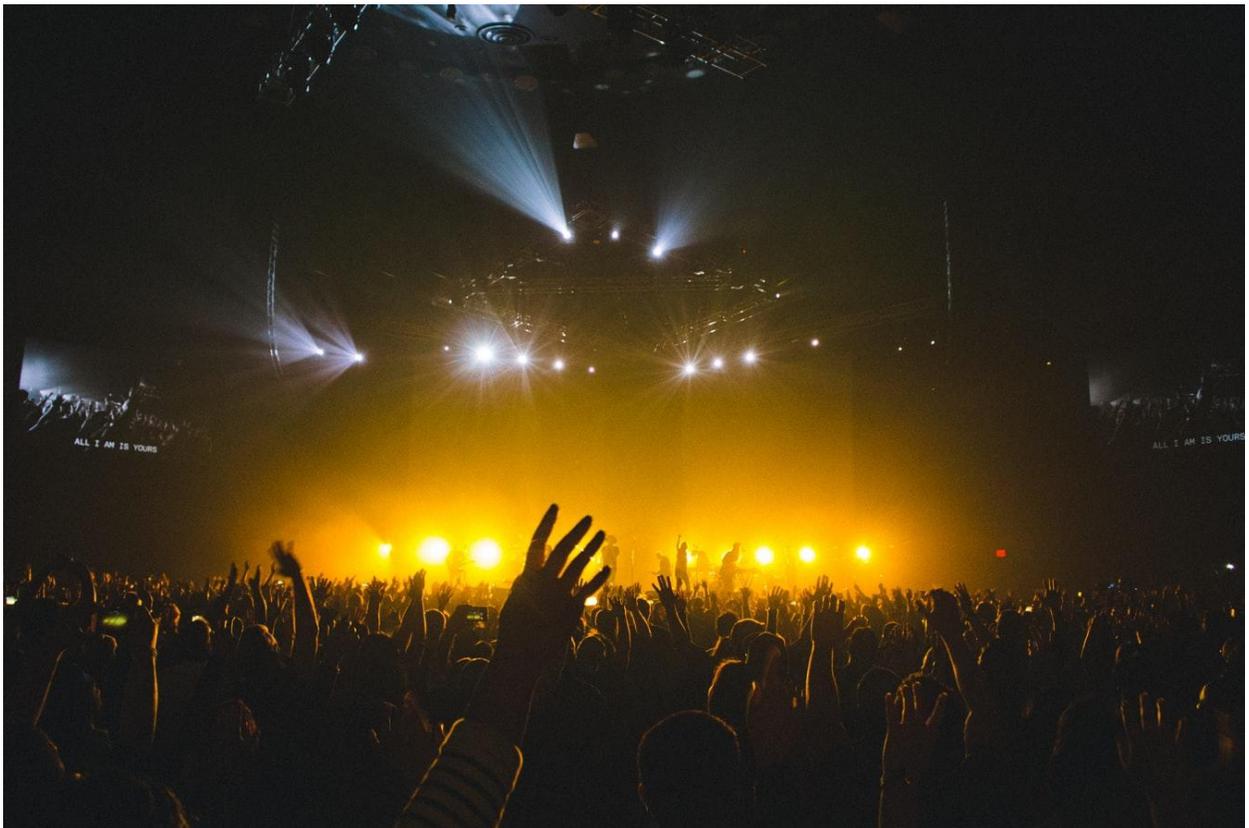
### Training and Certification

You'll need a business license to offer professional services in most localities, but there are no license requirements or regulations governing event photographers. You may still want to pursue training and a certification or two just to build up your skill set and establish credentials as a serious professional.



A simple Internet search will turn up numerous training courses for event photography. You'll find many for under \$100. [Here's one example](#). When choosing a course, look for training programs that come with a certificate of completion after you finish. These certificates can be customized with your name, downloaded and printed, then framed for you to hang in your office. You'll also want to mention these credentials on your business website. People notice certifications, which show you are serious about your work. That makes customers more confident when choosing your photography services over competitors.

Along with training and certification, you'll need a portfolio of excellent images to post on your website and to print on brochures when you meet with clients. This may seem like a daunting task when you're just starting out. How do you get new clients for a photography business if



you've never photographed a major event? It's a fair question. One possibility is to offer your service for free or at minimal cost to the promoters of an event, with the understanding that the pictures will be used in your marketing materials. You can give the promoters a thumb drive of the pictures as a thank-you gift. Another option is simply to show up at an event and start taking pictures.

In time and with practice, you'll build a portfolio that will be the envy of the industry and you can charge as much as your market will bear.

## Professional Groups to Join

There are many professional photographers' organizations you can join to network with other pros and advance your event photography career. Here are two of the most relevant:

[Professional Photographers of America](#) is the premiere organization of photography pros in the United States. A full membership is open to anyone living in the United States or its territories and costs \$323 per year. Benefits include:

- \$15,000 equipment insurance policy
- Data loss protection
- Access to all online education courses
- Online referral database listing
- Printed and digital monthly issues of Professional Photographer magazine
- One full registration to Imaging USA during the first year of membership
- Business Resources
- Contracts and Copyright Resources
- Access to Member Discount Program
- Weekly newsletter

## [American Photographic Artists](#)

Benefits include a photographer photo ID card, discounts on Apple electronics, a listing in the association's directory to help new clients find you, and more. Membership tiers range from \$50 to \$500 per year.

## Employment

Contact corporations and area businesses big and small. Send them your marketing materials, brochures and business cards. Follow up with a phone call in a day or two. If



your contact says he's already working with a photographer, ask if he knows anyone who needs your services. Don't be discouraged by rejection when calling potential clients. The very next call you make could be gold.

Use the networking power of your professional memberships to find assignments.

Develop and maintain working relationships with publications and other photographers in your area. If you capture a newsworthy image, you'll already have contacts in the editorial department who may want to buy your photos as a local-interest item for their publications.



## Finding Clients

Business cards and a basic website should be the core of your marketing toolkit as an event photographer. The website need not be fancy or expensive, just attractively designed, with photos of your best event photography work, your business location and contact information. No need to include your pricing. You can discuss that directly with clients.

In addition to your business website, the next thing to do is create an Instagram account to showcase your photography. Instagram is the #1 online venue for creative professionals to display their work. It's a free promotional tool that's always working on your behalf.

## **Other strategies for attracting new business:**

- Create a referral program with discounts for returning customers who bring new clients to you.
- Ask clients to review your services online. According to a recent survey, 90% of people say their buying decisions are influenced by positive online reviews.

## **Good to know:**

### **Carry liability insurance.**

And keep it up to date. You may also want to have an attorney set up your operation as an LLC (Limited Liability Company). This affords you many legal protections in the event of disputes.

### **Do your homework before the event**

Where is it? What is the event about? Which parts are the most important? Talk to the client to be clear on expectations. Once you know, you'll be able to prepare a shot list – the essential images that will be needed from the event.

### **Bring the right gear – and only the gear you need**

There may not always be a secure space to lock up equipment you can't carry with you, and you could get tired lugging around a lot of unnecessary kit. Bring your camera, a wide and a telephoto lens, your flash attachment, extra camera batteries – and always pack a couple of spare memory cards. That's probably all you'll need. A second camera is a nice luxury if you have one because it means you won't have to switch out lenses on one camera throughout the event.

### **Focus on action shots**

If someone is speaking, wait for the person to make a hand gesture or change expression. Pictures of people simply standing behind podiums are boring. Think in terms of storytelling. A sequence of three photographs can tell the beginning, middle and end of a story. For example, if someone is being presented with an award, you might take a shot of the announcer, a picture of the winner's surprised face then a two-shot of the announcer greeting the winner onstage.

### **Get close**

A photo of an auditorium full of people is not as visually interesting as two or more people talking together excitedly.

### **Compositions**

For informal and candid shots, try to group people in odd numbers, say, 3, 5, 7 and so on. Groups of even-numbered individuals tend to convey a more formal look.

### **Shoot in RAW format**

This gives you the best image quality your camera is capable of producing and is more flexible

to work with in editing software like Photoshop. Yes, the RAW format eats up more memory, but that's why you brought those extra memory cards.

### **A few thoughts on equipment**

There are dozens of books, websites, photography magazines and other resources to help you decide what camera gear to buy. Your needs may be different from another event photographer's, so only you can decide which brand or model of camera suits your requirements and budget.

At minimum, though, you'll need a DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera body and at least two lenses, wide and telephoto. Two camera bodies are even better because then you won't be spending so much of your time switching out lenses while the event is underway.

A set of neutral density and polarizing filters will help you manage lighting conditions outdoors. Indoors, you'll need a flash attachment at minimum.

Spare camera batteries and memory cards are essential. And you'll need a water-resistant bag to carry your equipment.

A good, sturdy tripod should also be part of your standard kit. To get the maximum stabilizing benefits from a tripod, you should have some means of triggering the camera shutter remotely. Many modern digital cameras are Bluetooth enabled, which allows a radio signal to pass from the camera to a smartphone. Depending on the brand and model of your camera, you download an app to the phone, which allows you to trigger the camera shutter with your smartphone from distances of up to about 30 feet.

Finally, a computer or laptop loaded with image editing software such as Photoshop will be needed to work on your photographs in post-production. As your photography business grows, digital storage will become an issue. There are many online storage solutions (cloud storage), some of them even free for a certain volume of storage. Google Drive is one example. As a backup measure, though, you might want to invest in external hard drives that can store many thousands of high-definition images. These drives connect directly with a cable to your laptop or computer for immediate access. One advantage of an external drive is you do not need an Internet connection to access your work.

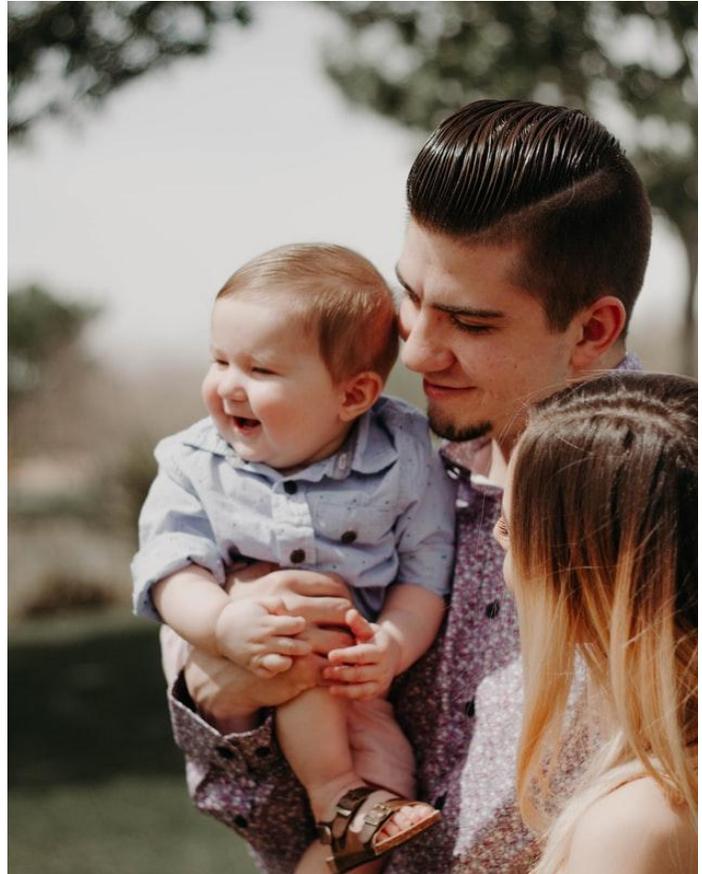
## **Chapter 5. How to Become a Family/Baby Photographer**

Families are the foundation of every society on earth. Babies expand and continue the family line, drawing couples closer together and shining a brighter light on the future.

Only photography can capture and preserve a family's precious moments in time. Yes, people snap away with the cameras on their smartphones all the time, but skilled portrait photographers are still in high demand for families who want a formal document of their milestones.

Anyone with a camera and demonstrable skill can pursue a career as a family/baby photographer. There are no special licenses or government requirements, although practice and independent training is valuable to develop your talent quickly so you can produce steadily better work, gaining more clients along the way.

Family/baby photographers essentially follow one of two career paths: either working as a salaried employee of a portrait studio or as a freelance portrait photographer who is self-employed. The latter route will usually lead to greater income, although the burden is on you to buy and maintain your own equipment, carry business insurance and handle all the marketing and promotion. But with that also comes the freedom to set your own hours and work a schedule that best suits your lifestyle.



Good people skills and the ability to communicate in a friendly but persuasive manner are essential skills to go along with your mastery of photography. Patience will also be a valuable trait on the days when young children refuse to sit still or the adorable baby who arrived cooing in his car seat is now crying inconsolably as you set the lighting for the photograph. This comes with the job. The joy of helping people preserve their legacies and loved ones in photographs is also part of the portrait photographer's work. It is also arguably the greatest, most satisfying aspect of the art and craft of family/baby photography.

Read on to discover how you can get started as a family/baby photographer.

In this article you'll learn:

[How much money you can make as a family photographer](#)

[The required training and certifications](#)

[Professional groups to join](#)

[Employment opportunities for family photographers](#)

[Finding clients](#)

[Plus helpful tips](#)

### How much money can you make?



A portrait photographer on average makes \$30,367 annually, [according to a recent GlassDoor survey](#). Photographers on the high end of this specialty make \$45,000 annually and up. These are individuals employed mainly by large portrait studio chains.

There's less competition today than in years gone by when major retail stores often had an on-site portrait studio where special pricing on photo packages was routine. With the near-collapse of brick & mortar retailing, there are fewer of these retail-chain portrait studios that could

offer rock-bottom pricing due to their size, marketing budgets and buying power, in terms of photographic supplies.

Today determined freelance photographers focused on family and baby portraits can make as much money as they wish, depending on their willingness to put in the hours it takes to market and run a business.

### Training and Certification

You don't need a license or certification to go out with your camera today, right now, and offer your services as a family/baby photographer, but some training is probably a good idea. Beyond talent with a camera, good people skills are necessary to get subjects to cooperate for the photo shoot. This is especially true of little children who may not be inclined to take direction, and babies, who definitely won't.



There are dozens of online portrait photography training programs for you to pull up with a simple Internet search and review. Most are well under \$100. [Here's an example](#). These courses teach good composition, how to light a scene, getting your subjects to pose, working safely with babies, creating inexpensive photo sets, basic image post-production skills and more.

To learn more about your clientele and how to manage them for best results, consider reading a few books on infant development, child psychology, family dynamics and so forth. This can enhance your people skills and help you develop strategies for getting the perfect portrait as timely and efficiently as possible – so you can move on to working with the next client.

### **Professional Groups to Join**

There are many professional photographers' organizations you can join to network with other pros and advance your portrait photography career. Here are two of the most relevant:

[American Photographic Artists](#) offers “inspiration, education and advocacy” with local chapters throughout the United States you can join for networking. They also hold regular events and photography competitions. There are several membership tiers ranging from \$60 to \$500 per year, each with different benefits. All memberships include a photo ID card and a listing on the member directory, which can help new clients find you when they search by city and state. The more expensive membership levels provide access to insurance, discounts on equipment, ongoing education opportunities and more.



[Professional Photographers of America](#) is the premiere organization of photography pros in the United States. A full membership is open to anyone living in the United States or its territories and costs \$323 per year. Benefits include:

- \$15,000 equipment insurance policy
- Data loss protection
- Access to all online education courses
- Online referral database listing
- Printed and digital monthly issues of Professional Photographer magazine
- One full registration to Imaging USA during the first year of membership
- Business Resources
- Contracts and Copyright Resources
- Access to Member Discount Program
- Weekly newsletter

## Employment



Contact portrait studios, churches and other places of worship, local clubs, the PTA and civic groups, letting them know of your services. Send them your marketing materials, brochures and business cards. Follow up with a phone call in a day or two.

Don't be discouraged by rejection when calling potential clients. The very next call you make could be gold.

Use the networking power of your professional memberships to find assignments.

### **Finding Clients**

Business cards and a basic website should be the core of your marketing toolkit as a freelance photographer. The website need not be fancy or expensive, just attractively designed, with photos of your best work, your business location and contact information. No need to include your pricing. You can discuss that directly with your clients. You want to sell customers based on the quality of your work, not the price you charge. To do that, you'll need to meet with them in person.

In addition to your business website, the next thing to do is create an Instagram account to showcase your photography. Instagram is the #1 online venue for creative professionals to display their work. It's a free promotional tool that's always working on your behalf.

Other strategies for attracting new business:

- Create a referral program with discounts for returning customers who bring new clients to you.
- Ask clients to review your services online. According to a recent survey, 90% of people say their buying decisions are influenced by positive online reviews.

### **Good to know:**

#### **A few thoughts on equipment.**

There are dozens of books, websites and photography magazines available to help you decide which gear to buy when you're starting out as a portrait photographer of families and babies. Your needs may be different from other portrait photographers', so only you can decide which brand or model of camera suits your requirements and budget.

At minimum, though, you'll need a DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera body and at least two lenses, wide and telephoto. Two camera bodies are even better because then you won't be



spending so much of your time switching out lenses while the subjects of your portrait grow impatient.

A set of neutral density and polarizing filters will help you manage lighting conditions outdoors. Indoors, you'll need a flash attachment at minimum. Over time, you may decide to invest in a lighting kit with reflectors, lamps and folding stands, all of which fits into a footlocker-type case for easy transport.



Spare camera batteries and memory cards are essential. And you'll need a water-resistant bag to carry your equipment when you go on location. Some families may want their portrait taken at home or perhaps in some natural setting like a park. You'll need an efficient way to transport your gear on these occasions.

A good, sturdy tripod should also be part of your standard kit. To get the maximum stabilizing benefits from a tripod, you should have some means of triggering the camera shutter remotely. Many modern digital cameras are Bluetooth enabled, which allows a radio signal to pass from the camera to a smartphone.

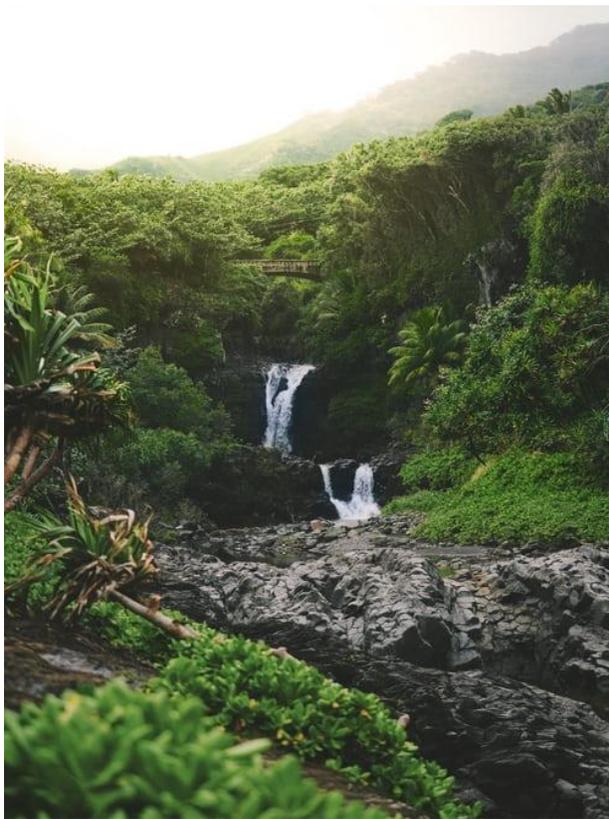
Depending on the brand and model of your camera, you download an app to the phone, which allows you to trigger the camera shutter with your smartphone from distances of up to about 30 feet. This is especially helpful when photographing babies because you can step out from behind the camera to move closer to the child while you manipulate a squeaky toy in one hand to capture the baby's attention while activating your camera shutter with your other hand holding a smartphone.

Finally, a computer or laptop loaded with image editing software such as Photoshop will be needed to work on your photographs in post-production. As your photography business grows, digital storage will become an issue. There are many online storage solutions (cloud storage), some of them even free for a certain volume of storage. Google Drive is one example. As a backup measure, though, you may want to invest in external hard drives that can store many thousands of high-definition images. These drives connect directly with a cable to your laptop or

computer for immediate access. One advantage of an external drive is you do not need an Internet connection to access your work.

## Chapter 6. How to Become a Travel Photographer

Imagine escaping a cubicle and getting out on the open road, or at sea, or airborne en route to some exotic locale. You've got a duffle bag packed with comfortable clothes and a camera bag stocked with everything you need to take stunning images at your destination, where you're being paid to travel, by the way.



The life of a travel photographer is one of adventure, but also hard work. There is excitement. And also flight delays. Monsoons. Long lines getting through customs. Sketchy water that you probably shouldn't drink, especially if you're about to board a plane for another 12-hour flight to your next assignment.

Wanderlust and a camera will bring you into close contact with different cultures, areas of fabulous natural beauty, the earthly pleasures of new cuisine and greater knowledge of the human condition around the world. Those who love to travel understand that their journeys open up new worlds and experiences that enhance their appreciation of life. Getting paid to do it just makes the life of a travel photographer that much sweeter.

Aside from reliable photography equipment, you won't need to make a huge investment in training, nor are there any hard and fast licensing requirements for a travel photographer. What you do need is a portfolio of stunning travel photography. That comes with practice and experience.

Grab your passport, pack your camera gear and read on to learn how you can join the ranks of professional travel photographers who get paid to explore the world.

In this article you'll learn:

[How much money you can make as a travel photographer](#)

[The required training and certifications](#)

[Professional groups to join](#)

[Employment opportunities for travel photographers](#)

[Finding clients](#)

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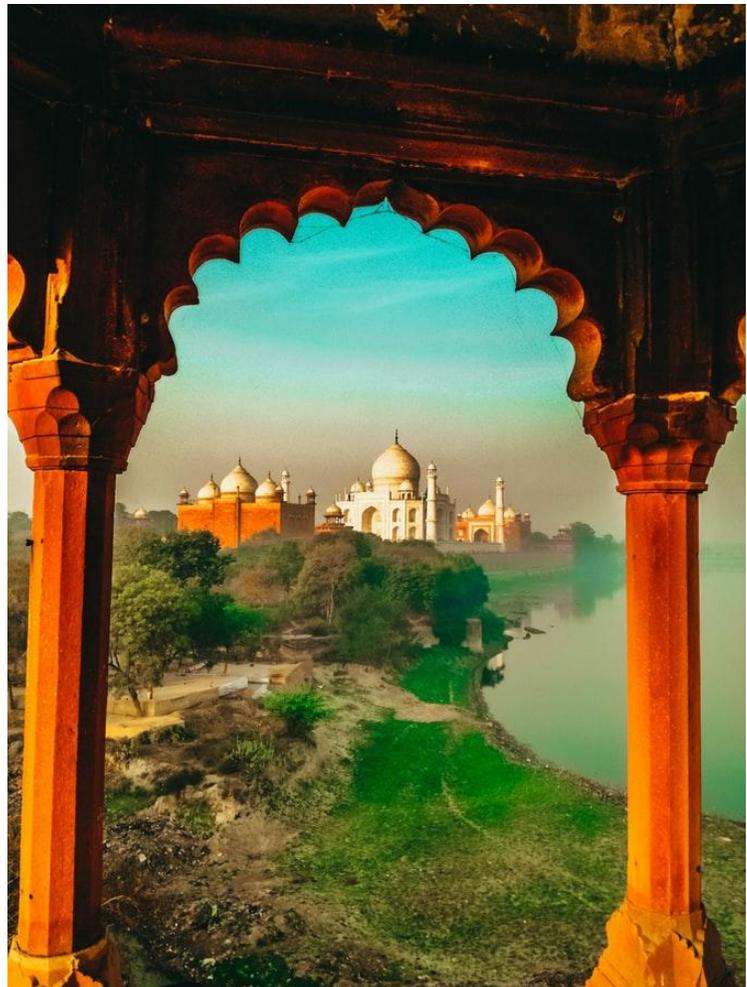
### **How much money can you make?**

The average travel photographer salary is \$45,581 annually, according to [a recent survey by ZipRecruiter](#). The top 10 percent of travel photographers are making more than \$100,000 a year. These are typically individuals with several years of far-ranging experience and a solid portfolio of award-winning images.

### **Training and Certification**

No formal training or certification is required to be a travel photographer, but if you don't have much or any experience in this field, training won't hurt, either. Courses to suit every budget are available both online and in-person for as little as \$35. [Here is a sample online course](#).

You can find in-person courses by reviewing the catalog from the local community college or a university's continuing education program. Check with area camera shops as well. Often, professional travel photographers will design and sell a course they teach themselves, then promote the offer with flyers at local camera shops.



You can also pursue free training and keep up with the latest news in the field by watching online videos and joining discussion groups.

If you find that your travels consistently take you to some of the same regions on earth, consider studying the languages of the countries you visit. For instance, a travel photographer who specializes in Central America, Costa Rica, or maybe the Yucatan Peninsula on the eastern coast of Mexico (Cancun, Cozumel) would do well to become fluent in Spanish.



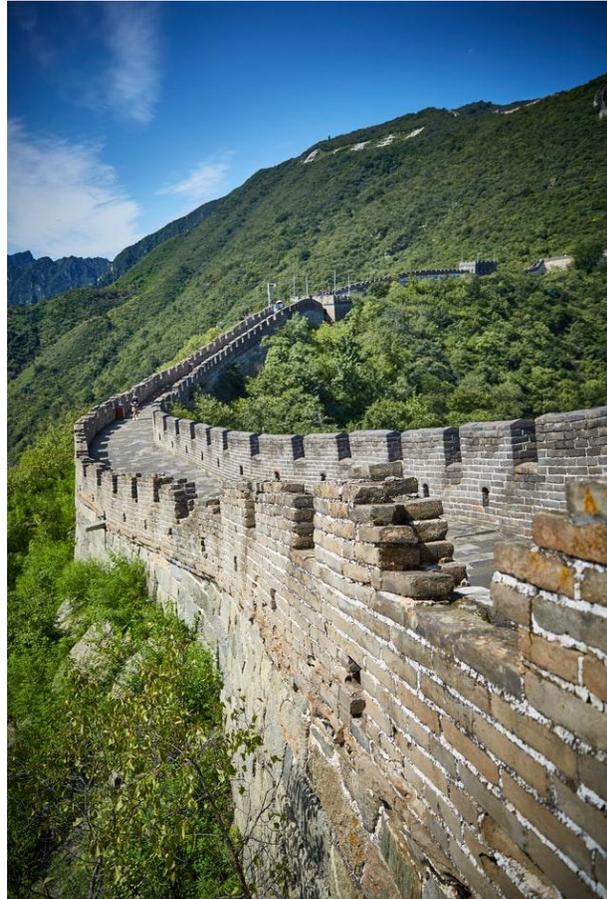
### **Professional Groups to Join**

There are many professional travel photographers' organizations you can join to network with other pros and advance your photography career. Here are some of the most relevant to travel photographers:

The [International Travel Writers and Photographers Alliance](#) is the premiere organization devoted to this field. For a \$99 annual membership you get to network with other professional travel photographers, access to assignment openings that can help you get work, educational materials, including insights on marketing your business, plus discounts on travel supplies and gear and other perks.

[Professional Photographers of America](#) is the premiere organization of photography pros in the United States. A full membership is open to anyone living in the United States or its territories and costs \$323 per year. Benefits include:

- \$15,000 equipment insurance policy
- Data loss protection
- Access to all online education courses
- Online referral database listing
- Printed and digital monthly issues of Professional Photographer magazine
- One full registration to Imaging USA during the first year of membership
- Business Resources
- Contracts and Copyright Resources
- Access to Member Discount Program
- Weekly newsletter



### [American Photographic Artists](#)

Benefits include a photographer photo ID card, discounts on Apple electronics, a listing in the association's directory to help new clients find you, and more. Membership tiers range from \$50 to \$500 per year.

### **Employment**

Contact newspapers, magazines and the editors of online sites devoted to travel, photography and both. Send them your marketing materials, brochures and business cards. Follow up with a phone call in a day or two. If your contact says she's already working with a photographer, ask if she knows anyone who needs your services. Don't be discouraged by rejection when calling potential clients. The very next call you make could be gold.

Use the networking power of your professional memberships to find assignments.

Develop and maintain working relationships with publications in your area. If you capture a stunning image while traveling, you'll already have contacts in the editorial department who may want to buy your extra photos for their publications. Your main client may not buy every picture you take on an assignment; no reason you can't sell the leftovers to the local paper.

### **Finding Clients**

Business cards and a basic website should be the core of your marketing toolkit as a freelance photographer. The website need not be fancy or expensive, just attractively designed, with photos of your best travel photography work, your business location and contact information. No need to include your pricing. You can discuss that directly with clients.



In addition to your business website, the next thing to do is create an Instagram account to showcase your photography. Instagram is the #1 online venue for creative professionals to display their work. It's a free promotional tool that's always working on your behalf.

Contact every single individual you can find who is in need of travel photography -- magazines, websites, even major travel agencies. The marketing departments at major airlines are another avenue to pursue.

Other strategies for attracting new business:

- Create a referral program with discounts for returning customers who bring new clients to you.
- Ask clients to review your services online. According to a recent survey, 90% of people say their buying decisions are influenced by positive online reviews.

### **Good to know:**

Check out these tips from professional travel photographers so you can save time by learning immediately from their experience.

### **Practice**

As with any art, your skill at photography will only improve with practice. Become a master of your camera. There should be no feature, button or setting that you don't know how to use.

### **Work on Your Portfolio**

This will be your primary marketing tool for persuading clients to hire you. Photographers can talk all day about their experience and skill, but images speak for themselves. In the end, prospective clients will base a decision on the work you can show them. Your portfolio should be a perpetual work in progress as you add great new shots and possibly remove older images that may not reflect your current skills.



### **Show Off Your Photos**

Just like a musician, an actor or a ballet dancer, a photographer needs an audience. Get your photos out there for the world to see. Enter photography competitions. Update your Instagram account with fresh images as often as possible. Send your shots out to media contacts for their consideration. As for contacts, keep an up-to-date list. You don't want to harass anyone, but you don't want to be forgotten, either. In time, you'll find the sweet spot for how frequently different contacts wish to be called.

### **Take pictures that tell a story**

Travel photography by definition involves a specific place and time when the image is taken. Great travel photographers use their pictures to present a theme or tell a story. Maybe it's the local Junkanoo (street parade) or progress being made at an archaeological dig site. Telling

stories with images shows that you can fulfill a clients' needs when they ask for something specific at your travel destination.



### **Consider Stock Photography**

All photographers will have images in their portfolio that they are unable to sell to a magazine or website. They may be excellent photographs, but just aren't suitable for a client's needs at the time. Uploading pictures to stock photography sites is a great way to make extra money from your photography. But don't just start uploading anything and everything that you haven't been able to sell elsewhere. Check out the various stock photography websites. [Alamy](#), [Getty](#) and [Shutterstock](#) are three of the best known, although there are many for you to consider. Find out what's hot. See if you can find categories that are missing or lacking. This will help you determine which of your own images to upload for sale. Be sure to read and understand the terms and conditions on stock photography sites, and know how much you can expect to be paid – as well as how much you'll be paying the stock site for hosting your work.

### **Carry liability insurance**

And keep it up to date. You may also want to have an attorney set up your operation as an LLC (Limited Liability Company). This affords you many legal protections in the event of disputes.

### **Buy travel insurance**

If you're paying for your own travel expenses up-front, with or without eventual reimbursement from a client, protect your investment with travel insurance. If the trip is canceled for reasons

outside your control, you won't have lost hundreds and potentially thousands of dollars on tickets, reservations, guides and other expenses.

### **A few thoughts on equipment**



There are dozens of books, websites, photography magazines and other resources to help you decide what camera gear to buy. Your needs may be different from another travel photographer's, so only you can decide which brand or model of camera suits your requirements and budget.

At minimum, though, you'll need a DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera body and at least two lenses, wide and telephoto. Two camera bodies are even better because then

you won't be spending so much of your time switching out lenses when you could be shooting pictures.

A set of neutral density and polarizing filters will help you manage lighting conditions outdoors. Indoors, you'll need a flash attachment at minimum.

Spare camera batteries and memory cards are essential. And you'll need a water-proof bag to carry your equipment. Water resistant bags won't be good enough for this work. When you're traveling, your gear is your lifeblood. You need foolproof storage. That means waterproof.

A good, sturdy tripod should also be part of your standard kit. To get the maximum stabilizing benefits from a tripod, you should have some means of triggering the camera shutter remotely. Many modern digital cameras are Bluetooth enabled, which allows a radio signal to pass from the camera to a smartphone. Depending on the brand and model of your camera, you download an app to the phone, which allows you to trigger the camera shutter with your smartphone from distances of up to about 30 feet.

Finally, a computer or laptop loaded with image editing software such as Photoshop will be needed to work on your photographs in post-production. As your photography business grows, digital storage will become an issue. There are many online storage solutions (cloud storage), some of them even free for a certain volume of storage. Google Drive is one example. As a backup measure, though, you might want to invest in external hard drives that can store many thousands of high-definition images. These drives connect directly with a cable to your laptop or computer for immediate access. One advantage of an external drive is you do not need an Internet connection to access your work. Internet access may be spotty while traveling abroad,

but with an external hard drive you'll still be able to do post-production work until you can get to an area with a reliable connection to transmit your images to the client.

## **Final Thoughts**

When you become a photographer in any of the 6 disciplines we've covered in this eBook, you've taken the first step on a career path that can provide you with a lifetime of artistic achievement, professional satisfaction and the opportunity to make a good living.

Joining one or more professional organizations will help you stay current in your photography discipline, network with other experts and enjoy a sense of community that can be vital to lifelong enjoyment of your career. Membership in any of the many different professional groups we've covered in this eBook is also an effective way to develop and advance your career because you are able to create relationships with other professionals who can recommend you for employment and refer clients to your photography business.

In addition to affiliations with professional organizations and networking with other photographers in your field, as with any business owner you'll need to carry liability insurance coverage for self-protection when you decide to open your own business and become self-employed.

As more and more clients come to you for photography you'll also need a way to bill and get paid. You'll need an app for scheduling appointments. If you try to do all these things yourself, it can eat up your time and soon become overwhelming.

The best use of your day ought to be spent working with clients and shooting pictures, not distributing bills and appointment reminders and trying to stay on top of a busy photography business. What you want is peace of mind. Get an app or business software to manage the financial side. This will free up much more of your time on the creative side.

We hope this eBook will give you a great start in preparing for your career as a professional photographer. Here's to your success!

## **About the Author**

Stephen Evans is an American investigative journalist, author, photographer, communications professional and film historian. A Poynter Institute for Media Studies Fellow, Evans has received first place awards for feature writing from the Virginia Press Association and Tennessee Press Association. He has also received numerous awards from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) for excellence in academic writing and publishing in higher education.

His writing and photography have appeared in more than 50 print publications, including The Wall Street Journal, The Los Angeles Times, The Richmond Times-Dispatch, The Miami Herald and The Washington Post, as well as scores of online publications.

He is a graduate of the University of Virginia master's degree program for studies in classical rhetoric and communication theory. During his time at UVA he received the departmental award for outstanding teaching in his work with undergraduates. Evans received a bachelor's degree with honors in journalism and political science from Virginia Commonwealth University.

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