

12 Days of P52: Day One

 project52pro2016.com/12-days-of-p52-day-one

Don

We begin our journey soon.

Delve into these posts with an open mind and a desire to prepare. Project 52 Pro is an amazing journey – this is sort of helping you create a roadmap for your work.

Today's discussion is on what it means to be a commercial photographer.

Many people think that photography means weddings and babies. Say to anyone that you are a photographer, and in most cases that is what they think of, so there is somewhat of a meme about our business. Those types of photographers are, of course, professionals. No doubt.

We call them “Consumer Photographers” because their client pool consists of consumers. Everyone is a possible customer if they have a family, need a headshot for work, have a baby or are getting married. The end client IS the consumer of the image.

But we are a bit of a different breed.

We are commercial photographers and our clients are for the most part Business to Business (B2B). Our clients are a much smaller slice of the possible clientele out there and they have titles like “art director”, “photo editor”, “graphic designer”, “corporate communications” and many more.

These are the people who hire us to make photographs they can use to sell their clients services, products, and ideas. Our images are made to sway the consumer, not reflect the consumer.

Our photographs are printed in magazines, brochures, web pages, industrial publications, catalogs, lookbooks and myriads of places to influence the buying decisions of the public. Our images are used to illustrate stories, add importance to text, teach, inspire, and otherwise make the viewer feel or do something as a result of seeing our work.

There is a world of differences between being a consumer photographer and a B2B photographer, and we will not be dealing with consumer photographer challenges much at all in this class.

We will be shooting images that will be used to inspire and inform... and that means much of what we do must be of a higher caliber of approach than the typical photographer. We may have additional parameters to the creation of our images than just to make something pretty or cool.

One thing I will say a lot in this class is “if anyone can shoot it, the client can hire *anyone* to shoot it.”

That means that your work must stretch to be a cut above, a little bit more decisive, a lot more deliberate than whipping the camera out of the bag for a quick ‘pic’. We plan and scale and create with purpose.

Commercial shooters come in many flavors as well. We are not just “product” shooters. Food, fashion, people, architecture, still-life, interiors, automotive, editorial, illustrative stories, travel, liquor, cosmetics and many more idioms are considered “commercial”. All have a bit of different approach, but all are created for a business to use to sell their wares.

ASSIGNMENT:

Begin to look for commercial photographers in your town or region and bookmark their sites. I would use google, of course.

For instance, a search for commercial photographers in Phoenix reveals this page:
Search Term / [commercial photographer phoenix](#)

There you can see a listing of commercial photographers in the phoenix area. I would recommend that when you do it, you check each of the photographer’s sites before accepting that they are indeed commercial.

Let’s look at John Trotto’s site:

We see he does editorial, food, architecture and a few other offerings that are indeed commercial.

I will create a set of bookmarks and John’s site is included.

I would like you to start to create a list of commercial photographers that you like. (If you click on a photographers link and you do NOT like the work, then pass. We don’t want to be looking at stuff we don’t like.)

Our goal is not to copy these photographers, only to have an idea of what is being done in the arena in your area.

So welcome to the world of “commercial” photography, and I will see you all tomorrow for day two.