

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

Quick Guide
Written by Karthika Gupta



As zealous fans of photography, most of us get into this field to pursue our passion for the art. Very soon, the lure of making money and creating a business out of what we love to do takes over, and we start planning our businesses around our passion. But once we start to hit roadblocks along the way, we realize the old adage 'Build it and they will come' does not always work. Focusing on social media is a great way to build an audience and generate clients for your business.

Good pictures do not always mean paying clients right out of the gate. Many times, it takes thousands of great pictures, plus hours of social media networking, interacting, and investing in building a community to get a small trickle of clients that may come your way. But don't lose hope; if done right, this approach to building a photography business will slowly work its way to providing a steady stream of clients. Social media is a great way to build an online presence and gradually work towards those paying jobs. Not only does it provide you exposure to your target audience, it also helps you connect with industry peers and grow your business with new opportunities as people start getting exposure to your work.

Here are some tips that we will discuss for making the most out of social media, especially for beginning photographers.

- Understanding Social Media Platforms
- Be selective - you can't do them all
- Identify where your potential clients will be on social media
- Blogging versus Website
- Create a plan
- Engage your audience
- Create quality content
- Have some fun with it!



Recommended Reading: If you'd like to learn how to create amazing portraits, grab a copy of Photzy's premium guide: [The Art of Portrait Photography](#).



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

UNDERSTAND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Let's be real. There are what seem like hundreds of social media platforms out there, and new ones sprout up every day. You have to understand that a social media platform that is appropriate for me might not be the right one for you. Different genres of photography have different characteristics, and even photographers in the same genre gravitated towards different platforms based on their personalities. The best place to start is to understand where photographers in your industry live online and how they are utilizing those platforms.

I do lifestyle and small business branding and a lot of my clients find me via social media (Facebook) because of lifestyle product photos like the one on the left.



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

PICK THE ONES THAT ARE RIGHT FOR YOU, NOT OTHERS

In order to make an educated and informed decision about where you want to spend your time online, it is very important to understand the following things:

Know Your Brand

Who are you as a photographer, and what does your brand stand for? Are you an adventure loving outdoor photographer? Or do you love architecture and street photography? Perhaps you are a fashion photographer? Based on what type of photography you want to specialize in and what brand message you want to convey, pick social media channels that make sense to you. For example, my wedding and lifestyle portrait brand is light, bright, fun, and organic imagery. I rarely deviate from that style because it reflects who I am as a person and a photographer. My preferred social media channels are [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) (especially for all my photography writing assignments).

Know Your Ideal Client

This one is very crucial to understand, not just for social media but also to effectively build your photography business. If you are a corporate photographer that wants to specialize in headshots and corporate events, LinkedIn and other professional channels might be the best place to invest your time and effort. However, if you are a wedding and lifestyle portrait photographer, LinkedIn might not be the best place to be. Instead, sites like Instagram and/or Snapchat might be a better place for you to showcase your talents and make connections because that is where your ideal clients are spending their time online. My clients come from various channels as well as referrals from past clients.

Know Your Audience

My audience for my wedding photography business is brides-to-be, wedding planners and/or family

members who are helping future brides plan their wedding. My audience for my lifestyle portrait photography business are families who want family photos, where as my audience for editorial photography are brand managers or business owners who want visual imagery that accurately reflects their brand. Knowing who each of my potential customers is and communicating directly to their needs via my imagery will help me book my ideal client and grow my business.

I am starting to move more into the lifestyle, travel and culture space and hence my social feeds for the past year or so has been more focused on these areas. But elsewhere I still target lifestyle and weddings clients. Just pick what works for you.



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Photograph by Karthika Gupta

BLOG VS. WEBSITE

This is the million-dollar question and something I questioned and struggled with early on in my business. Yes, technically a blog is also a website! There are many businesses that do extremely well with one or the other. There is no right or wrong approach here, no matter what you decide. For me, my website showcases my work – my imagery – whereas my blog is where I get to showcase my personality – my writing style, my passion projects

and my everyday photography life. I direct my clients first to my website and then say something like 'If you want to check out some of my more recent work, you can follow my blog'. And don't feel like once you pick a platform you have to stick to it. My first website was a free blog site and a few years later I created a website and then integrated the blog into it.



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

CREATE A PLAN

Just like your business, your social media should also have a plan of action. Get organized with what platforms you want to target (It is absolutely okay to pick just one, to begin with). Create a roadmap for your posting schedule – Are you going to post once a week? Are you going to post one picture a day? Do you have a theme for each post? No matter what you choose, make sure it is manageable and not overwhelming. It is better to start slow and pick up the pace over time. Get organized with your content. Use the imagery that you have to create the content for your website and/or blog.

There are also many automation tools out there to help you manage your time. Use them to your advantage. For example, if you have a Facebook Business page you can schedule your content ahead of time so you are not spending time each day to post to your business page. If you have an Instagram account, you can use apps like Later and Planoly to schedule your content, similarly to Facebook.



Screenshot by Karthika Gupta



ENGAGE WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Remember that social media is all about being social with your media! Engage with your audience. Don't just post something on your social media and disappear until the next time you are going to post online. Over time you will find that people who follow you and your work want to engage with you. They want to feel like they know you and can interact with you, ask questions and know a little bit about you. Make it easy for them to do so by answering their questions and engaging with them.

You can also form some amazing industry connections via social media. I have connected with florists, invitation designers and planners on my social media and have collaborated with them on some of my most interesting creative projects. Be visually engaging and heartfully genuine.

Create conversations and give your audience a way to participate. Ask questions, engage and create dialogue. I gave my audience a way to participate by asking their opinion here about which image they preferred – a messy one or a perfect frame.



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

My typical style of shooting and editing.

CREATE QUALITY CONTENT

Photography is a visual art form, so in order to be true to that art form, it is very important to understand all the technical elements that go into creating an impactful image. When you post your work on social media, make sure you are paying attention to all the elements that go into making a great image. Be aware of the lighting and composition as well as the editing you do to your images. It is very tempting to take a quick mobile phone image, slap on a filter or two and post it online as a representation of your work and your brand. But I challenge you to take a step back and ask yourself if the image you are posting is a true representation of your work before you post any image.

I am very intentional about what I post online under my brand. The aesthetic in my work, as well as my life for that matter, is fun, fresh, organic and genuine. I like images with lots of light and emotion. Across all my social media platforms I post examples of my work that reflect these same emotions. Yes, occasionally I might post a darker, moody image but I have a very good reason why I am deviating from my brand and am very clear about communicating that to my audience. Use captions to create a personal story that your audience can relate to.

HAVE FUN WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

If you have made it this far down the article and are still intrigued with social media and how you can use it for your photography, I applaud you! One of the most important aspects of social media is to engage and have fun. If you are just starting out in photography, don't be intimidated by it. Instead, use it to inspire you creatively and connect with fellow artists. Above all else, be genuine in your thirst for creative growth, inject your personality into your work, and don't worry about the numbers.

Don't focus on the numbers; focus on letting your personality show. I shared a small story – fair warning my captions tend to be short form stories! – and, to my surprise, the engagement on this post was higher than a few before and after this image. Goes to show

people don't want perfectly curated feeds; they want authenticity.

I end with one of my absolute favorite photography quotes in life and in work: 'Be yourself, because everyone else is already taken!'.

If you want to connect with me further about photography, social media or life in general, feel free to reach out via my social media channels. Drop a line or two and start a genuine conversation!



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Photograph by Karthika Gupta



karthikagupta
India



karthikagupta Keep it real! This is one of my most 'terrible' photos...shot at around 3200ISO and severely underexposed because I literally had less than 2 secs to click this. BUT one of my most beloved memories.... Here is the backstory

We were walking a path in the mountains and suddenly I hear this intense squaking behind me. We turn and see this lady holding this chicken and gosh what a racket he was making. She was being so patient with it and also holding him really delicately and speaking calmly to him. So we just assumed it was a pet and asked her where she was going with it. She said home and when we asked her why she was talking him home, she answered



Liked by **sandy.noto** and **508 others**

6 DAYS AGO

Self-Check Quiz:

1. How can focusing on social media help you improve your photography?
2. Where is the best place to start when picking a social media platform?
3. Why is it important to know your brand, ideal client, and audience?
4. Is a blog also a website?
5. Name two apps that can help you schedule content posts.
6. Why is it important to engage your audience?
7. When building an online audience, what should you focus on - numbers or personality?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Karthika Gupta is a wedding, lifestyle, portrait, and editorial photographer based in Chicago. Her style of photography is fun, fresh, and organic. She strives to capture authentic emotions and interactions among her clients and emotive imagery in her commercial work.

She loves connecting with other creatives and photographers and is always ready for an engaging conversation about photography and the art of storytelling.

She can be found online at www.karthikagupta.com and on social media at:

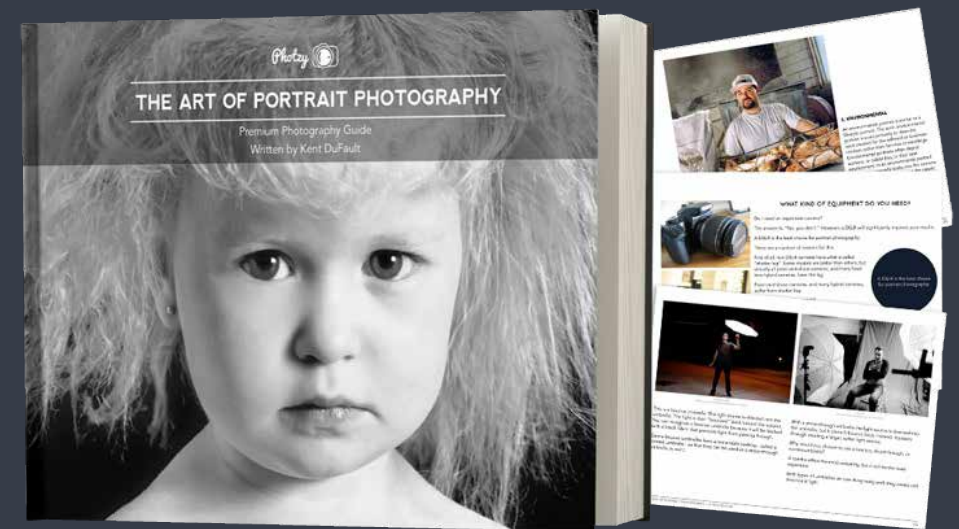
Instagram: www.instagram.com/karthikagupta

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