

Marketing yourself as an eco-friendly photographer

Brand it green

Consumer demand and corporate responsibility are giving rise to the popularity of environmentally conscious services and products. Photography business owners have a great opportunity to harness these trends within their own businesses, and to establish an eco-conscious client base. Marketing yourself as an eco-friendly photographer makes good business sense on more than one level.

The basic rule of branding is to portray yourself as who you are. Your values have value. Bringing your environmentalism into your business can differentiate you and attract

“Your values have value.”



desirable clients—eco-conscious consumers who are generally well-educated, value quality, and are discerning about what and from whom they purchase. They’re willing to spend a little more for products and services that support their social and environmental responsibility and they want to feel good about minimizing their environmental impact.

Implementing eco-friendly practices begins with thinking through the choices you make every day. Every business purchase you make and each stage in your workflow presents an opportunity to make greener choices. If you outsource your printing to a lab, for example, make sure the lab adheres to federal and state environmental regulations. Choose ground shipping versus air to reduce the carbon footprint of each order. Shipping via air uses almost seven times more energy than ground delivery, no matter what distance the package has to travel.

Minimize your use of proof prints; print only what your client orders. Consider alternatives to traditional prints, such as giclee and canvas prints. Traditional photographic prints, made from resin-coated (RC) paper, don’t decompose. Fiber-based paper, such as cotton rag and cotton canvas, is one alternative.

We all purchase gear throughout our career. Think about the use of energy and raw materials that go into producing that gear. Buy only what you truly need, and consider buying used equipment when you can. Likewise, sell your idle gear. Research your options for safe and responsible disposal of unusable or outdated electronic equipment. Have your gear cleaned and

checked regularly to increase its longevity.

Being a greener photographer is a matter of being mindful and taking a series of small steps. Photographers who are making greener choices for their business should take the next step by branding themselves as such. The following suggestions for doing that take more time than money:

1. Compose a statement about what you’re doing to protect the environment, and display it prominently on your website, e-newsletter and promotions. Let clients know what you are doing to protect the environment.
2. Join a local green business association or start one. Many cities have a program that certifies green businesses. If your town does not, consider networking with like-minded business owners to found one. You can also consider joining Green America (greenamericatoday.org).
3. Offer greener product options and call attention to that aspect. Stress preservation and investment in heirloom works.
4. Establish marketing relationships with other local green businesses. Advertise in local green guides and look for opportunities to partner with businesses like eco-home consultants.
5. Design an overall look for your brand to reflect your green values, and use it consistently in everything associated with your business, from signage to packaging. Make it easy for potential clients to see your green. ■

Visit greenerphotography.org for more ideas on running a greener business, and actively participate in promoting greener practices in photography. Members get additional privileges and materials for greener photography branding and promotion.

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