



Introduction

There's that old adage 'You can't sit home and wait for the phone to ring.'

If your work is to be seen, collected, and/or licensed, people must know about it, and that is your responsibility. Whether you've had the opportunity to present your work to industry professionals in person or not, it is essential to build and maintain a presence in the mind of those who can move your career forward. That means planning for self-promotional efforts, sooner rather than later. There is much to consider – before, during and after developing a campaign. The earlier you get an overview of all elements and aspects, the better.

Before you begin to invest in self-promotion, define your desired markets. This is not a time to be shy – ask for what you want! Your business goals should be clear and match the purpose and functions of your marketing pieces. What market is most likely to respond to your work? Do you believe your work will best be received by the fine art community? Advertising or design? Editorial? Can you further narrow down your market to locate the best match for your photographs? Is your work suitable only to galleries who have demonstrated an interest in multi-media work? Alternative processes? Are you interested in licensing your images for fiction covers, and

if so, who are the decision-makers you wish to know your work? In other words, who are the players in your target market, and further, who within that market is a strong match creatively? You wouldn't want to present your work to designers who uses more type treatment than imagery in their work, anymore than you would present your photography to a gallery that only markets 19th century work. Do your homework! A smaller, targeted promotional effort is more effective and has greater potential to be more memorable than attempting to blanket the industry.

The Presentation

I work with many photographers and meet many more at Portfolio Review events, and find that *Clarity of Goals* and *Continuity in Presentation* are the most common shortfalls in promoting one's work. The message you are conveying must be *clear* to the person with whom you are communicating. Presenting your work as a portfolio of images is fine, but what do you want the viewer to do? Do you want someone to know that the work is available for sale? That you are seeking gallery representation? That you have an exhibition ready to ship to a venue? How might a designer know that you would consider granting the rights to reproduce your work in appropriate licensing situations?

By *continuity*, I am referring to your "business identity" in your business card, promotional pieces, letterhead and other components that should have the same design, color scheme and papers. So often I see strong images presented in a less-than-memorable manner. If your presentation is well designed and enhances your work, and a subsequent mailing looks and feels completely differently, you detract from previous efforts on behalf of your work.

Two additional important issues: assure that the manner in which you intend to promote your work is *affordable* and *sustainable*. What

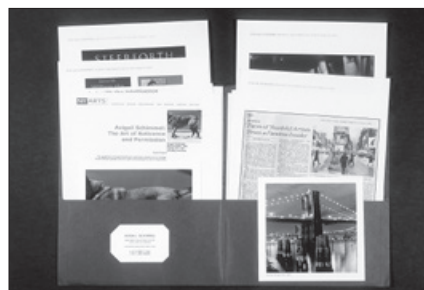
guides you here are your checkbook, your calendar, and your commitment to marketing.

If you intend to print promotional pieces, attend portfolio review events or gallery expos, or make personal visits to meet professionals outside your area, make sure that you plan for these expenses in your marketing budget. If you decide to send mailers to your target audience periodically, insure that this "campaign" is sustainable in all aspects. Don't let your efforts fade due to lack of funds, time, energy or interest. Think through and systematically plan the resource requirements needed to build and sustain awareness of your work.

Build your own mailing list, adding persons who make sense to inform, and grow the list in

a computerized database program for effective use. You may prefer to start with local contacts and build from there, obtaining feedback from personal meetings prior to expanding to a broader scale.

When you decide your work is ready to promote, be sure to mail yourself a sample of your print piece, as well as to a friend across the country; you need to know what it will look like when it gets to a recipient's desk. Remember: when the US Post Office encourages you not to write below a certain point on postcards, they mean it! Review the USPS design/rate guidelines booklet and apply the advice. It's available at your local Post Office or online at: www.usps.com/directmail/rates/govpubs.htm.



Promotional packet is by Avigail Schimmel from FotoFest 2002.



Individual calendar pages from 2002 by John Paul Caponigro, an annual promotional piece.

Websites

I believe all photographers ready to market their work should invest in creation of a one-page website, at the very least, so that potential clients can find you. This is our new 'yellow pages'! I cannot tell you how often, when I can not find a contact number for a photographer, I just try typing in www.theirname.com. Voila! You don't want people to have to take valuable time to find you.

The most common problem I've observed is when a website, like the print promotion pieces mentioned above, does not communicate to the viewer what to do now that they are on the site. Don't launch a complex website until your business goals are clear.

If you're not yet certain of that, or if you can only afford one page now, plan your design for expansion later.

It is rare to find a great graphic designer who is also a great web programmer. And vice versa. Unless you have found one of these rare individuals, consider a designer to design the site, and a programmer to implement and administer the site. The graphic designer will more successfully bring the goals of your business to life via your business identity, and ensure that the graphic look of your business card, letterhead, promotional pieces and website are uniform and will not confuse clients. Many times I will consult with a photographer

on their career goals, and at the close of a session, we'll look at their website, only to find that it seems to be promoting a completely different photographer! Know your goals, and understand that design is not the place to cut financial corners.

I am often asked whether photographers should use their names as their website domain name versus a studio name. I believe it's always easier to remember a photographer's name than a studio name (like "midnight sun," "morning light studios" etc.). My best advice is *brand yourself*. It's *you* that people should remember and be able to easily find! Purchase as-soon-as-possible!

Related thoughts

Attending portfolio review events can be extremely effective in terms of introducing yourself and your work. Be ready to promote yourself, meet professionals and your peers. Have clear goals. Give and get business cards, and have promotional packets ready for those who wish to remember your work.

If you are targeting the gallery market, plan to attend a Gallery Expo to "shop" for a representative. You must understand that this is not a time to promote your work to gallery owners, but rather, to inform yourself of which galleries handle which types of work, and which of those best match your work. Remember that the exhibiting galleries have made a considerable investment for a presence at these Expos, and it is inappropriate to introduce your work to them at this venue. Gather business cards, and

introduce yourself, only to say you appreciate the work they show and you'd like to contact them in a few months (give them time to fol-



Promotional holiday card and CD-Rom, Winter 2002, James Nakigawa.

low-up from contacts made at this event) to ask about their *submission guidelines*.

Share your work with others, frequently; if no local photography "salon" exists, consider starting one! There is nothing better than an on-going dialogue with peers.

Register the copyright on all images especially if published in print or on web (see www.editorialphoto.com for info and to download forms). Be conscientious of gallery/museum calendar and plan visits to staff accordingly.

Be true to your work, your expectations and your abilities, and the marketing message will be clear. Best of luck with your promotional efforts, and remember to give back to our field when your career is on a path to success!

Self Promotion Tool Kit Essentials

- Strong body of work! Professionally designed business identity (business card, letterhead) with information that is current.
- Mailing list built upon marketing goals. Shipping cases/labels and related products. Presentation boxes/books/folders – whatever functions well, has a long life, and in terms of design, suits the work and your overall identity.
- Promotional piece(s) that have the overall look of your business components. Computer with applications for building mailing lists, producing labels, creating client records, correspondence, grant writing, and web research.
- Print, scan, slide storage for ease in access and safety from loss or damage.
- Budget for your self-promotion efforts should include: Purchase of website domain name(s); Fee to register copyright on all published images (print or web), at a minimum; Funds for assistant to

manage areas of technology for you, if necessary. Graphic design services; Office hardware-software; Presentation materials (multiple copies); Postage.

- Note: a marketing budget does NOT include your budget for producing work! You must allocate for these costs within your expenses.

You should also have funds allocated for

- Continuing education on new technologies, funding sources, other items as your career and our field evolves
- Attendance at industry events, gallery expos and portfolio reviews (entrance fee, travel costs)
- Professional memberships; Subscriptions to industry publications; Submission fees and shipping costs to enter juried shows, apply for grants to continue to grow your body of work; Art storage materials.



Front page from Ann Fessler's promo packet (installation) from FotoFest 2002.

Resources for Marketing your work

A clearing house of information on conducting business, including forms for registering copyright, cost of doing business estimators, sample contracts:

PORTFOLIO REVIEW EVENTS: Check these websites for current information and application procedures:

Art Directors Club of New York. Annual, fall event. Invitational event limited to 100 photographers. Reviewers are art directors, photo editors, art buyers and others who hire photographers or license their imagery commercially. www.adcny.org.

Center for Photography at Woodstock. Events held in NYC. Two separate one-day portfolio reviews each fall season, open to 12 photographers only. www.cpw.org.

FotoFest and The Meeting Place Houston, Texas. March 12 - April 12, 2004. Every other even numbered year. Applications sent out in July 2003. Event includes exhibitions and educational offerings. www.fotofest.org.

Fotofusion, sponsored by the Palm Beach Photographic Centre. Delray Beach, Florida. January 2004. Annual event includes exhibitions and educational offerings. www.fotofusion.org

Photo Americas and Review Americas. Portland, Oregon. April, every other odd numbered year. Event includes educational offerings. www.photoamericas.com.

The Print Center, Philadelphia. Held throughout the year. Critique & Conversation; space is limited. www.printcenter.org.

Review Santa Fe, sponsored by the Santa Fe Center for Photography. Annually, mid-July. Event includes educational offerings. This event is juried; applications with slides are due in February with notification within a month. Scholarships are available.

Society for Photographic Education Annual National Meeting. March 2004. Newport, Rhode Island. Portfolio reviews are offered as a part of conference programming.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS:

A consortium of international photography festivals list events on this site:

Festival of Light. International directory of photography festivals Rhubarb-Rhubarb, every July in Birmingham, England. Includes exhibitions and educational programming

GALLERY EXPOS:

If you can't attend, consider buying the catalogue to these events for current lists of dealers and what work they carry.

Photo San Francisco and Photo LA. Dates TBA for 2004. Info at: www.stephencohen-gallery.com.

The Armory Photography Show. October 17-20, 2003. North Pavilion, The Javits Center, NYC.

The Association of International Photography Art Dealers. A membership organization, hosts its annual Expo each February at the NY Hilton; educational offerings as well.

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:

If you want to locate graphic designers in your area, consult American Institute of Graphic Artists (AIGA) for regional chapter roster. www.aiga.org.

JURIED EXHIBITIONS/COMPETITIONS:

Afterimage Magazine is an excellent source for funding and exhibition opportunities. www.vsw.org and click on Afterimage.

Arts Calendar. www.artcalendar.com. Good magazine on business for artists.

Art Deadline. www.artdeadlines.com. A free area, as well as subscriber section.

The Photo Review. www.photoreview.org, Fotofile Magazine. www.fotophile.com and Nueva Luz Photographic Journal. www.enfoco.org are excellent sources for information about opportunities for artists.

GRANT INFORMATION:

Foundation Center. www.foundationcenter.org.

NYFA. www.nyfa.org information about grants, juried shows, jobs, etc.

PORTFOLIO REVIEW EVENTS:

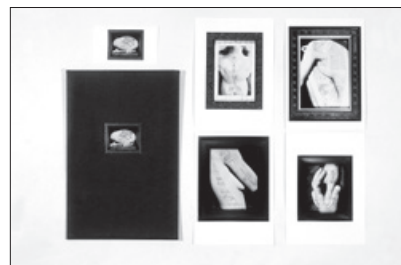
Review Santa Fe, Juried, and the Project Symposium. Information at www.photo-projects.org. Annual, juried acceptance process.

Fotofusion. January 2004. www.fotofusion.org. Delray Beach, Florida.

FotoFest 2004. www.fotofest.com. Theme is *Water*. Dozens of shows all over Houston! On March 16 and 21, program repeated, is a Workshop: *Strategies for Success: Managing*



Mary Virginia Swanson teaching a workshop in Tucson, Nov 2002.



Promotion piece by Mary Daniel Hobson from Review Santa Fe 2002.

Your Career as an Artist coordinated by Mary Virginia Swanson. Registration forms on-line, bi-annual event.

Photo Americas. www.photoamericas.com. March 2005, bi-annual event.

Rhubarb. www.rhubarb-rhubarb.net. Terrific review event, held in Birmingham, UK.

EUROPEAN FESTIVALS

Both held in the south of France, annually. www.rencontres-aries.com. Fine art.

www.visapourlimage.com/anglais/ Photojournalism and documentary.

GALLERY EXPOS:

Association of International Photography Art Dealers. www.photoshow.com. Held mid-February at the Hilton in NYC.

PhotoLA. Mid-January 2004. Photo San Francisco. Late July 2004. Coordinated by Stephen Cohen. Details: www.stephencohen-gallery.com.

ON-LINE EXHIBITION & PRINT SALE VENUES

Photographers Showcase. www.photoeye.com.

Meter Gallery. www.metergallery.com.

Your Wall. www.yourwall.com.

Lens Work. www.lenswork.com (see Special Editions)

TRADE MAGAZINES with an emphasis on photography:

Afterimage. www.afterimageonline.org.

Aperture. www.aperture.org.

Art Calendar. www.artcalendar.com.

Art on Paper. www.artonpaper.com.

Black and White Photography. www.bandwmag.com.

Blind Spot. www.blindspot.com.

British Journal of Photography. www.bjphoto.co.uk. The UK's PDN.

Camera Arts. www.cameraarts.com.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY & IMAGING

Digital Photo Advantage.

www.digitalphoto.com.

Double Take. www.doubletakemagazine.org.

Lens Work. www.lenswork.com.

Photo District News. www.pdnonline.com.

Photography in NY/International.

www.photography-guide.com.

Photo Insider. www.photoinsider.com.

Photo Review. www.photoreview.org.

The Photography Collector. www.photoreview.org/collect.htm.

The Photographic Art Market.

www.photoreview.org.

MAGAZINES:

Popular Photography. www.popphoto.com

Photo Techniques. www.phototechniques.com.

Shots Magazine. www.afterimagegallery.com/shots.htm.

View Camera. www.viewcamera.com.

ESSENTIAL INDUSTRY EVENT:

Photo District News PhotoPlus Expo. www.photoplusexpo.com. Annual event, Halloween weekend in NYC.

Essential Resource, on doing business as a Editorial Photographer. www.editorialphoto.com.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY RESOURCES:

Advice and tips for digital photographers. www.digitalphotographers.net.

A digital printing and imaging resource. www.dpandi.com.

Equipment reviews, photo critiques, message boards. www.photo.net.

Buying guides, articles, contests. www.phototechmag.com.

The photographers site, links and workshops. www.johnpaulcaponigro.com.

The photographers site, information on creating digital negatives. www.danburkholder.com.

Online courses on digital photography. www.shortcourses.com.

Henry Wilhelm's findings on photographic permanence. www.wilhelm-research.com.

INDUSTRY ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

American Society of Media Photographers. ASMP. www.asmp.org. Student memberships are available. Check out White Papers on site; much to learn on line at this site!

American Institute of Graphic Artists. www.aiga.org. AIGA members are your prospective clients! Attend their regional/national events, see their exhibitions, and gain a current understanding of issues and trends that affect your professional life. National office in NYC; be sure to check the website for local and national offerings get out and meet your clients!

Advertising Photographers of America. www.apanational.com. Student memberships available, pricing survey available on line.

National Press Photographers Association. www.nppa.org. Student memberships, sponsors industry workshops and conferences including The Flying Short Course. Sponsors the annual Women in Photojournalism conference. Recommended!

Picture Agency Council of America. www.stockindustry.org. This organization now includes stock photo agencies and photographers who manage their own stock sales as members. Holds conferences, promotes industry standards to buyers of stock.

Professional Photographers of America. www.ppa.com. PPA is the oldest/largest not-for-profit association for professional photographers. The website lists upcoming trade events, analysis of the media marketing industry and other information.

Society of Photographers and Artist Representatives. 60 E 42nd Street #1155, NYC 10165. To receive a list of members, contact Katherine Hunt at bpsgroup@home.com.

Society for Photographic Education. www.spenational.org. Student memberships available. Submit papers by June of each year to speak/present your work at the following years event. Regional conferences are held each fall; details are available on line.

Women in Photography International. www.WomenInPhotography.org.

Resources featured in this article are excerpts from Mary Virginia Swanson's 50+ page Marketing Resources for Photographers handbook available from the author on her website. This bound booklet, written and compiled by MVS is updated constantly to include the dates of upcoming portfolio review events, gallery expos, juried exhibitions, grants to photographers, and is rich with advice on marketing your work to the fine art and commercial markets. www.mvswanson.com.

About the Author: Mary Virginia Swanson

Mary Virginia Swanson is a leader in the fields of licensing and marketing fine art photography. After receiving an MFA in photography from Arizona State University in 1979 she served as workshop coordinator for The Friends of Photography, and was the founding director of the American Photography Institute at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and headed Special Projects for Magnum Photos. It was during her tenure at Magnum that she recognized the opportunities for artists to develop second markets for their work, and in 1991 she founded Swanstock, alternative agency managing licensing rights for fine art photographers. Now consulting, lecturing and conducting workshops, Swanson is committed to bringing photography and photographers

to new markets. She frequently lectures and teaches workshops, and serves as a marketing consultant to photographers and agencies. Swanson is a contributor to "Ask The Experts" on Photo District News' new title for students, and will be teaching Professional Practices for the MFA and BFA programs at School of Visual Arts (NYC) Fall 2003.

Swanson serves on the Board of Directors of the Santa Fe Center for Visual Arts, the Board of Fellows of the Center for Creative Photography, the Advisory Board of Photo Alliance, the Boards of Advisors of the Center for Photographic Arts and the Texas Photographic Society, and the National Advisory Board of Photo Americas.



Mary Virginia Swanson
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The Texas Photographic Society is a nonprofit organization of amateur and professional photographers whose purpose "is to support contemporary photography as a means for creative expression and cultural insight." With over 990 active members from 41 states and 5 countries, TPS focuses on the education and artistic development of its members and

the community by providing exhibitions, publications, education and outreach programs. Tech Sheets, a benefit of membership, are edited by Jean Caslin and D. Clarke Evans. © Mary Virginia Swanson and the Texas Photographic Society. Reproductions in any form of any of the information in this Tech Sheet is strictly prohibited without written consent. For in-

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