

We have all heard the words, “It’s a numbers game” before. And most of us know what it means. In order to get to a certain level, more attempts than successes must be used.

Selling door to door is a numbers game. The more people a sales person talks to, the more they sell. It may take 10 “No’s” to get to one yes. So the goal is to get through those ten as fast as you can to get to the one yes. Knocking on ten doors a day nets one sale. Knocking on 50 doors nets 10 sales.

A ‘numbers game’.

Not much difference in photography, you know.

The more art directors you show your work to, the more chances you have of closing an assignment. The more times you interact with a specific art director, the higher the probability that a gig is forthcoming. The more gigs you complete with excellence, the more excellent gigs you get.

And yet...

I chat with photographers who do none of the above.

They don’t show their work. They don’t ever go back to someone who didn’t immediately hire them. They don’t get enough gigs to make delivering excellence count.

It is... a numbers game.

Of course there are a few givens.

Your work must be top notch. This is a given. All the door knocking and emailing in the world will not work as fast as good work will.

(Now this is where it gets crazy a bit. I think a mediocre photographer who has mad skills at marketing will do better than an ultra-talented photographer who sits in the studio waiting for the phone to ring.)

Why?

It. Is. A. Numbers. Game.

If your work is good, it all falls on you to do the work to get it in front of people who would buy it.

A lot.

Of people, that is.

We have discussed the ways we can find clients before, and how to think about marketing, but in this dispatch, I want to play with numbers.

I recently read where fewer than 80% of photographers spend more than an hour per week marketing. And only a few percent spend more than 15 hours a week marketing.

If we apply the 80-20 rule (20% of the businesses in a niche make 80% of the money) we can see that there may be, just may be a connection between not marketing and losing out on the bulk of the revenue.

We know this stuff works, and yet few of us can 'find the time' or 'get ready' or 'bite the bullet' or fight off whatever last minute resistance pops into our heads that prevents us from moving on this magnificent factoid: it's a numbers game.

Let's stop procrastinating and get to it.

The book is as good as it is gonna be for next week. The site is done, and the images up there are up there. Changes can be made tomorrow, but it is what it is and we move forward. If this is too fast for you, set a date.

April 1? June 15th?

It doesn't matter... set a date and keep that date.

We are going to begin by making three contacts per day, and sending out three emails per day. Three days a week.

We can pass on Mondays and Fridays as these are not traditionally good days for marketing. People are either planning for the weekend or recovering from it. Let's give them some air.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday.

Three contacts and three emails.

Six contacts per day x 3 days equals 18 contacts per week, 72 contacts per month, over 950 contacts per year. To see how that may affect your current status, figure out how many potential clients you contacted last year.

Chances are it is less than 950... substantially less.

And yet we can do that with minimum effort. Three emails per day and three contacts per day is cake! It will take less than an hour – a lot less.

So what happens if we double that?

Six Contacts per day, and six emails. Just imagine.

Six contacts and six emails is 36 contacts per week, is 144 contacts per month. Nearly 1500 contacts per year.

What would that do to your business? What impact would that have on your income?

And how long would it take? Less than an hour a day for three days.

Go ahead, tell me how that won't work for you. Go ahead and tell me that you are so busy not being busy that it is simply not possible to spend an hour a day MAKING YOUR BUSINESS successful.

I am not listening, but go ahead and try. You are only trying to convince yourself.

And really, you are the only one you must convince in order to get this change implemented.

At this point, I will sound a bit rude to some, and I really do not mean it to be rude. However, only you

have the control over whether you play the numbers game or do not. Change from non-engagement to being engaged – or not. And in the end, it only affects you.

There are still lots of gigs to be commissioned. Lots of look-books to be shot. Thousands of pages of editorial and thousands of ads both local and national.

And here is another numbers game for you.

While the chances for getting a gig may be lower than they used to be due to the sheer numbers of competition, the fact is that there is a 100% probability that you will not get hired if they do not know you exist.

So here are a couple of questions for you.

Will you commit to 18 contacts per week?

Will you commit to creating an environment that will help possible clients find you?  
Or will you simply let resistance take you off the grid?

I hope you never let resistance win. I really do.

Just remember...  
It's a numbers game.

**DO THE MATH.**