

10 Ways to WOW your Clients



1. Understand Your Client

Find out who your clients are before they come to the shoot. What music do they like? What food do they like to eat? Be playing their music when they arrive on set, at the location, or at the park. Make this *their* experience and *their* day. You're selling the experience as much as you are the photographs. You want them so thrilled with the experience that they will love the photos long before they even see them.

2. Touch your Client Every Day

People worry when they don't know what is going on. They will sometimes start feeling like things are going wrong even when things are fine because they begin to think the worst when they do not know what is going on. You need to call, e-mail, or text them everyday or more often, if needed, so they are always totally informed.

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Every morning in staff meetings, we talk about who will touch each client that day so they are fully informed. You want your clients to always have the answer when they are asked a question, like when will the images post. If you are doing your job right, you will have told them each day where the process is. The images are being sorted on Wednesday and will be color corrected on Thursday and will post on Friday. On Thursday, you send a text saying the images will post at 10am tomorrow. Now when they are asked on Thursday morning when will their team see the images, your contact will have the answer. This way they are comfortable all the way through the process.



3. How does your Client like to Communicate?

Don't send e-mails when they would rather have a text message. It's bad form to send an e-mail and insist you told them something when they don't like to communicate by e-mail. It's your responsibility to make sure they get your messages, so use the method that will be most effective with your client.

4. Break Bread Together

Go out and eat together. Make yourself available for lunch on your shoots. When you eat together, you gain a more personal bond and connection that will last for years. How does this work for portraits or weddings? Bring in food when they look at the proofs or meet at a coffee shop to discuss the particulars. Make the experience seem more like a friendship than a business relationship. Break bread together.

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5. Remember Holidays and Special Occasions

A wedding studio that sends a happy anniversary card on the anniversary of the wedding will have a client for life. Birthday cards and anniversary cards are time consuming but worth the investment. We always send thank you gifts to the clients during the holidays.

6. Thank your Client & Follow Up Twice

Thank your client at the end of the job and then call them back and thank them once again after the job is delivered and the check has cleared. It needs to be a call that has no ulterior motive. Ask how the experience was and how could you have made it better. It's important in this call to complement them on something that you gained from them in this experience.

"The image of the two of you at the beach is one of my very favorite images that I have ever done of a couple. Will you be OK if I include it in my portfolio?" "You came so prepared, and you were a joy to work with."

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Thank them one more time. Now send a thank you note with a 5X7 of the image you referenced. In commercial work, we try and get a client image at the end of the shoot. We gather everyone around and get an image together on the set. It becomes a great thank you to send them as a final reminder of how great the project was. When I would shoot a celebrity, I would always get a shot of the Art Director with the celebrity. They would complain or act like they did not want one, but I would insist. They really wanted the shot but did not want to say so and are still showing their kids now, I'm sure.

7. Think Ahead of your Client

It's not hard, but it takes some time. If they are coming into town, do a little research on the area where they are staying and send them suggestions on hotels, restaurants, and things they might want to do at night. Be the solution to all their problems. Don't leave a client at the airport. Get them a car service or go get them. Show that you are willing to be inconvenienced to help them

8. When Things Go Wrong (and They will)

When something goes wrong, don't make excuses or waste time placing blame. Just take the heat and start creating solutions.



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9. Make your Estimates very Detailed and Stick to Them

I get compliments all the time from clients saying that my estimates have more detail than they are used to and they love it. Think through the shoot before it happens, and give a good detailed estimate.



10. Deliver Early

Give yourself a reasonable time to deliver but not too long and always deliver early. If the client is in a hurry and pushes you to commit to a quick turnaround, then you had better not be late. Stay up all night and be early if only by a few hours. Never, never be late. Many a shoot that went well and was a success was killed by delivering late.