

# WORTH EVERY PENNY *joycast*<sup>™</sup>

Marketing. It's one of the hardest things to learn and implement successfully when you are a business owner. Second guessing every idea. Letting the fear of doing it wrong paralyze you from doing anything at all. When I think back to my years of working at an advertising agency, I remember seeing the same thing client after client. So trust me on this one you guys, you're not alone in this. Most business owners try marketing, but don't do it correctly. So when it doesn't work, they start to build up head trash about why they aren't good at it, or why marketing just doesn't work for them. Jumping from thing to thing. Instagram, Facebook, buying ads, blogging, Pinterest, email newsletters, magazines, TV, radio, sometimes billboards, newspaper, throwing discounts, Groupon. Please don't do Groupon. Usually they don't stick to it long enough for it to work. And then the downward spiral continues. If this is you, it's not your fault. Hang with me because I've identified the top five reasons, your marketing isn't working. And by the end of this Joycast I want you to know why they're not working and what you can do about it.

So the real question is, how are portrait photographers like us able to run a profitable business and still put our families first without selling digital files for cheap and working all the time? I'm Sarah Petty, your host of the Worth Every Penny Joycast. And I went from a stressed out overworked mama with three babies to being named one of America's most profitable photographers without working my kids' lives away. Each week I'll show you how to find and serve boutique portrait photography clients in a world where we compete with free, thanks to everyone having a digital camera in their pocket. Take the first step to adding more joy and profit to your life by downloading your free photography business tools at [joyofmarketing.com/podcast](http://joyofmarketing.com/podcast).

Let me start with my backstory a little bit. I started my career in marketing with Coca Cola enterprises and I loved it. I thought I had won the lottery because I was working for one of the coolest brands in the entire world. But as I went on, there were so many changes in corporate and I just felt like such a small part of this giant machine and that I wasn't really making a difference and my job became less and less challenging. And so I started working on my MBA because I was looking for jobs up in Chicago and all of the ad agency jobs, they wanted

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an MBA and a couple of years of sales experience. And so I did that. I was like, "I'm not going to be disqualified because I don't have this qualification." So I went, I got the MBA and then I got the job being marketing director at an advertising agency.

And I absolutely loved it. Like the thrill of good marketing there's nothing else like it. And I really feel like I'm the marketer I am because of those experiences where you're actually doing and your sort of getting to test and practice on your clients. And again, if we didn't get results, we were fired and they just closed after almost 30 years in business. It warms my heart. They closed right before the... And retired right before all of this hit. And I was thinking, "Oh man, they would have really rocked all the challenges that are coming." But they had most of the clients, if not all of the clients from back when I helped land some of them. And then of course they grew and had new ones, but they didn't turn over clients because we had solid strategy. And one of the biggest things we learned was creative, the value of creative and the value of production, the value of having a plan and doing it really well instead of being proactive with marketing, because every single client that came to us said, marketing doesn't work.

I've tried this, I've tried this, I've tried this. So we started to realize, okay, marketing does work. It's how they did it. It wasn't what they did. And I want to share a story that changed kind of how I looked at everything. There was a client that came to us. They were a big giant tech company in our city and they had a smaller division. They were launching something new and it was business to business software. And they were launching it to a very specific group of people. And that was a good word, right? People. And they were hosting a business breakfast and it was a small group, I think 40 or 50 people possibly. And they said, "We can put something on their plate at this breakfast." And they said, "This is a really important group and a really important meeting. So we're not going to give you a budget and we want to see what you can come up with."

They said something maybe fancy like a trifold brochure. I kind of, put that in quotes because that's what everybody thought was fancy, a trifold full color brochure. Like, you fold it

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in thirds, a piece of paper, which to us was almost fingernails on the chalkboard because we're like, "Oh, that's not even creative. There's nothing fun or exciting about that at all." But the magic words were no budget. So we love those kinds of jobs. So we thought what would be great for this company at a breakfast? So we tracked down the company that made those little milk cartons, you know those little milk cartons that you had that were made of waxy bread and white or Brown and white, and they had the chocolate milk or the regular milk and you'd get them at lunch. They'd be a quarter. And we tracked the company down that made these.

And of course it was expensive to do a run, a very small run, but they were selling a very expensive technology. And that wasn't an issue for them. Not all of our clients, weren't that way. We had a lot of super frugal, tight budgets, which was great. That's where you really roll up your sleeves and you learn marketing. But with this one, we designed the milk carton to promote their business. And so the ingredients had all of the things that went into their company and the straw looked like a pen. And it said like got milk, it said, got their company name with a question mark. And it was amazing because when you put something creative into a field where they're typically not creative, the response is even bigger. These serious business people who were techies and they weren't creatives, they freaked out.

They came into the breakfast and they were like, "What is this?" And they were holding it and looking at it. And what happened when the sales reps would call on them, sales reps or customers that they couldn't even get appointments with. They were running to the door, grabbing their hand, dragging them to their bookshelf, showing them where they save that milk carton. That was so creative. And the next year we did the little cereal boxes. Remember the little ones you'd buy in an eight pack when you're on vacation. And we printed stickers that went on them and they were a follow-up and it just launched them. It got their attention. It stood out in the crowd. And that's where I really learned the basis for a boutique marketing. It's taking your budget. And instead of trying to do everything, which I see so many photographers doing, it's doing one thing really, really, really well.

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So that was great. That was other people's money at the advertising agency. We could be creative. We had big budgets. It was amazing. Well, then I started my business and I had to do my marketing all by myself with no budget. I'd left my job, my career, we were living on two incomes and we weren't living a crazy lifestyle, but we had a house mortgage that we had two of us paying on. And now there was just one. So I didn't have a big budget. I didn't have all the things that I'd had with other clients. And so first off I didn't have a budget, but secondly, I had feelings that I'd never felt before because I loved marketing. And it was my passion. But then when I had to market myself, it was totally different. All of a sudden I was like, "Oh, I'm really not that good."

I shouldn't be marketing. I was embarrassed. I thought, "Oh, I can't promote myself. I can't call myself a professional photographer. I didn't go to school for this." And so really when it came to marketing, I was so busy, busying myself with other things that I would just take opportunities that came at me, people would call and say, "Hey, would you sponsor this?" Sure. I'd throw things out the door, and they wouldn't work. And I knew in my mind that they should work, but I was sort of being like, "It's okay, because I'm really not ready, I'm not worthy, I'm not good enough." I haven't paid my dues. I really don't know what I'm doing. So if the marketing worked, that would make a worse problem, right? Oh goodness. Well, I'm so glad you guys are here with me because I want you to learn from my mistakes and see that you don't have to wait until you're ready because you're never going to be ready.

So I'm going to share five things with you that you guys can be doing that are going to help your marketing, okay? I'm just going to tell five reasons your marketing is not working and then what to do instead. Okay first, number one. And I would write these down first and probably most importantly, I think that your marketing isn't working because you're treating the symptom, not the problem. Think about that. You're treating the symptom, not the problem. In Keith Cunningham's book, *The Road Less Stupid*, I love this book. He compared it to weight loss. And he said, "If you came to me and said, Hey, I'm 50 pounds overweight. I have a problem." He would say, "Look, that's not your problem." Right? Being 50 pounds overweight,

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isn't your problem. So buying a Peloton bike, or I always think those late night ab commercials where you do the little crunch and you're going to have this six pack body.

Those aren't going to help with your being overweight because that's a symptom of your problem, right? You can't buy a Peloton bike and eat donuts for breakfast and pizza for dinner and terrible eating habits. The Peloton is not going to help your problem because that's really the symptom of your problem. The problem is you're probably an emotional eater. You have bad eating habits. You're eating more than you're putting out. And there's no way a Peloton bike could put out as much as you're putting in. Okay? So the problem is emotional eating. It's your eating habits. The symptom is that you've gained 50 pounds. Same thing in business. Everybody tells me, "Sarah, I just need more clients, I need more clients, I need more marketing. I need more marketing." And they go straight to the tactic looking for that Peloton bike I'm going to get that marketing.

I'm going to do that mini session. They're looking for this magic answer in which I always say, "That's not the magic answer." Okay? Marketing's job is to make the phone ring. And selling's job is to book a client. So I'll always say, when people are calling, so they'll say, "My marketing's not working. I mean, I talked to a lot of people, my phone rings, but they just want digital files." And I'm saying, "Hey, your marketing got people to call you. What are you saying to them? What products are you offering that thrills your clients? Are you telling them what makes you different?" All the things that you have to do way before you start marketing. And so I want you to see that differently. So instead of guessing at marketing, make sure before you market and tell people your boutique, you have the excellent products to sell.

You can clearly explain what makes you different and why they should come to you. And you have a super smooth selling and serving system. If you don't, your lack of clients and the fact that your marketing isn't working is a symptom, most likely of the problem. So instead of asking yourself, what marketing activities should I be using because none of them work? Take a pause and fix the other problems first. Like learning what to say when the phone rings.

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Okay, so number one, stop treating the symptom, treat the problem. Number two, I see so many people spreading their budget too thin, trying this, trying that, being reactive. I need clients and somebody called me about sponsoring something. Okay. That sounds cool. Okay. My friend who doesn't run a business or doesn't know anything about business told me I should be doing Facebook ads this way, or I should be doing this.

Or someone wants me to work for free for exposure. Okay. I always tell people, go run down the street naked, if you want exposure, don't do that. That was a joke. But the promise of exposure is usually meaning you're going to do a lot of work for free, and you're going to be really angry about it later. I had a student, Olivia Pritchard from New Orleans. She did one marketing activity, one. Didn't spread her budget too thin. And she hit \$235,000 in her business in just three years. She added a hundred thousand to her gross sales that next year, right? She worked with charitable events to donate to their silent auction. This is just one of many things I teach. And most photographers say, "Oh, I did that. It didn't work." And there are so many moving parts, right?

They have to be perfected. You keep working that one thing until it works every single time before you walk away and say, "Oh, I tried it and it didn't work." Okay? She didn't need to add more activities. She'd been doing things wrong, building up head trash, telling herself I'm overwhelmed. I'm not good at marketing. Instead, she just followed exactly what I told her to do. When it didn't work, she'd go back and say, "Hey, what did I do wrong?" She tweaked it, tweaked it, got it working and is rocking. Once she got that boutique strategy down, she was the photographer at the events that got the best client. She got the results, okay? So instead of spreading your budget too thin, focus on one activity until it works. And then if you want to add another grade and you may not need to ever add another.

Number three, reason your photography marketing isn't working is that you're designing things yourself. Stop it. I had to put on my soap box hat here a little. Is that a thing? I think it is. You can stand on a soapbox and wear a hat, but if you're not a trained professional designer

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and you're designing your own things, you're probably communicating in your marketing that you're an amateur. When we are in business, people judge us on everything. And when they haven't hired us yet, they can only judge us on what they see. Think about it. Think about going into a restaurant and you walk in and before you order, you look at the menu and it's tacky. It's designed with horrible fonts and it's dirty and it's gross. And that's your first impression. And you think, Oh my gosh, what's going on at this place? They don't know what they're doing. Typically, when you're at those places you leave, right?

You get up and you leave. Is there food high quality? Do I even want to stay here? Am I going to have a good experience? Likely not. And if you can't hire a professional designer, I recommend holding off and doing a different activity that doesn't require excellent design, okay? Or find a way to trade with the graphic designer who can help you. There is a way to get it done if you have tenacity. And I'm talking about that all the time in my community, with my students. Tenacity. Write it down. Tenacity. You have to have tenacity. So is it easy? No. But if it's easy, everyone can do it. Putting out a discount, being cheap. Everyone can do it, which is why it doesn't work anymore. Right? So make sure you have the highest quality of design.

Number four. Number four reason, why your photography marketing isn't working is because you're guessing. One of my favorite episodes of the Brady Bunch... Does that date me? I know some of you are Brady Bunch watchers, but I'd come home from school and I would sit down and I'd watch Brady Bunch and Partridge Family. And I love the episode where Bobby Brady, he's small for his size. He's short and he wants to be taller. So he goes out to the jungle gyms, and he hangs, and he stretches. And remember that music? It had that little music and he's stretching, stretching, stretching, and he'd go inside. He'd measure himself on the wall and he wouldn't grow and he'd go back out and stretch. And a bit later, as the show goes on, his siblings are moving the tape to try to make him feel like he's growing. And then it comes out at the end that they did that. And they're like, Bobby, we love you just like you are. But I call this sort of Bobby Brady marketing when you're like, "Oh, that looks like a good idea."

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I mean, if you're a kid and you're like, "Hey, if I hang, I should stretch." That would work, right? And what we know about trying things without a plan, without a system, without any direction, you're going to end up like Bobby Brady, like with sore arms. And if it does happen to work, say you're like, I'm just going to do shoot and burn to make some money, sell digital files for a couple hundred bucks. Well, I learned this other way and it does happen to work what he did, then he's going to have Orangutan arms. It's not even accomplishing the objective that he had, which was to grow taller. He's just going to have arms dragging on the ground. So stop guessing. If you don't have a system and the exact steps don't do that activity. Okay, same thing, some activities are easy. Some are hard. Pick an easier one or invest in getting a system, finding someone who's doing it. Don't just guess it's not going to ever serve you.

And number five, fifth thing, you're probably marketing, your photography marketing isn't working is because you're sizing the rounder. That's what they do in retail. When you're at a store, you see clerk standing there and they're sizing the round or the big round rack with clothing on it. And they're putting the extra larges together and the larges and they're tidying and they're making everything perfect. You're sizing the rounder, right? You're hopping on Facebook, pretending like you're marketing and you're watching kitty videos and you're reposting things that aren't even contributing to anything. I've done it, believe me I know. And I look up and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I just wasted two hours of my life that I can't ever get back."

Okay passive marketing, posting things on social media or doing discounts, or just putting things out there, hoping that someone will see them and call you and telling yourself that it's marketing, that's sizing the rounder, okay? That doesn't make customers come in. That doesn't make customers buy anything. You're just tidying up, staying busy, making things look pretty versus active marketing, where you're going out and you're making relationships. You're partnering with other business owners. You're doing things that help actually market your business instead of hiding and staying busy sizing the rounder, right? I would love if you guys could share with me, if this is happening with you, you can post in the comments in iTunes or wherever you're listening to this Joycast, because I would love to know which one of these you

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are guilty of. And instead of sizing the rounder, instead of doing all of these things, I want you to realize first that you're doing them and then go do the things that I shared to do instead.

I gave you actionable things. Look, don't beat yourself up because this is the first time you've tried marketing and it didn't work for you. We have a saying in both of my companies, both Joy Marketing and Sarah Petty Photography, that it's actually really good when something isn't easy or it doesn't work the way we want the first time, this means that 80% of others are going to give up. They just are because it's hard, right? And they are going to go back to sizing the rounder because it makes things look pretty, right? It makes things look pretty. No, this is why most of the other photographers in your market follow the shoot and burn model because it's easy. For the most part when it's easy and cheap to do everyone does it. And then it quits being profitable. Stay the course with boutique, trust yourself, and be willing to do hard things. It's going to grow not only your business, but it's going to grow your abilities. I believe in you.

Hey, photographer, it's Sarah again, and really quick I wanted to give you the chance to work with me for five days for free. You heard me right inside the Joy of Marketing community. I'm hosting a free challenge. We call it the five day booking boost. This challenge is for you, if you're unsure who your ideal client is. You just know you aren't like them, or maybe you have a lot of doubt and you can't quiet the voice in your head that tells you people only want digital files where I live, or if you're paralyzed by marketing, always second guessing yourself and putting it off, then hop over to the five day booking boost challenge right now at [5daybookingboost.com](http://5daybookingboost.com). That's [5daybookingboost.com](http://5daybookingboost.com).

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