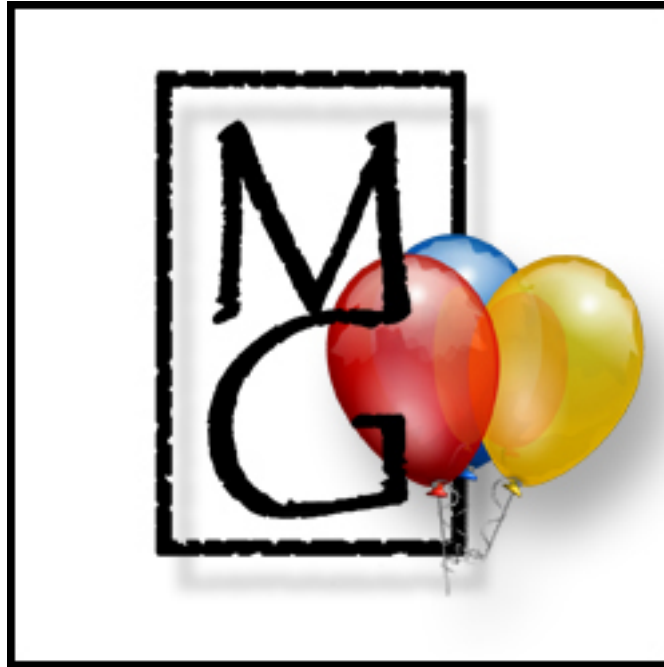


Today is the 1st birthday of one of my photography businesses [Memory Gate Photographic](#). It has been an amazing year for both myself and my business partner Marcin. We've learnt so much, in such a short space of time, and thrown ourselves as far into the deep end as we could.



Being our birthday we thought it was time to give a little something back. This list includes many of the websites, resources and ideas we have used to help grow our business, so hopefully it will help you too!

This list has been inspired by Rosh Sillars' post [189 Business building ideas for photographers](#) on the [New Media Photographer](#) website.

Feel free to print it out, email it, tweet it..... whatever you like!

*It's important to note that these are simply 'ideas' not rules, their success depends purely on your implication of them. There might also be a slight bias to wedding and portrait photographers in the UK. I would also like to point out that we are not receiving any 'kickbacks' from the people or business we mention. That's the way we like it.... unbiased and free!*

- 1. Ask yourself 'Why?' to everything you do** - How will implicating a certain idea benefit your business? - If your answer is "because I think I should" then don't do it.
- 2. Re/Write a business plan** - It doesn't have to be very official one you might take to the bank manager. Simply make a list of things you want to achieve.

3. **Define your target market** - If you're a portrait photographer that specialises in babies then market yourself as that.
4. **Embrace Google** - Too many things to put as one point so start off simple and get an account!
5. **Set your advertising budget for the year and stick to it** - Be sensible, if you only have £1000 to spend don't blow half of it on a yellow pages ad.
6. **Join a professional organisation** - [SWPP](#), [BIPP](#) or [MPA](#) it doesn't *really* matter who, just be active within the community - use the forums, gain



- qualifications, go to conventions etc.
7. **Go to trade shows** - Not only a great chance to see what products are out there but you'll have a wonderful chance to see some great speakers and meet other photographers.
  8. **Organise and tidy your workspace** - "Tidy desk tidy mind"
  9. **Smile** - Even if you do it with your eyes!
  10. **Organise your client database** - Are you tracking your sales, do you know when your clients birthdays are, when did you send out your invoices?
  11. **Send out Birthday and anniversary cards to clients** - Maybe even include a little gift voucher in there too.
  12. **Answer your phone properly** - You wouldn't call your local HSBC and hear "Bank, hello"
  13. **Subscribe to [Seth Godin's Blog](#)** - And while you're at it read a couple of his books!
  14. **Experiment with the [Google Adwords](#) tool** - Just one of Google powerful (and free) tools.
  15. **Start a 365 Project** - [365project.org](#) is a good place to start ..... and free!



16. **Listen to the [Pro Photo Show Podcasts](#)** - Why not check out the forum too?
17. **Start a blog** - I would recommend WordPress but host it yourself. [Just Host](#) is a good place to start and CMS's (such as WordPress) are easily uploaded.
18. **Don't just post photos on your blog** - That's what galleries are for. Your blog should be attracting your target market - so what are your target market searching for?
19. **Check out [Grader.com](#)** - Work out your website grade and lots more.
20. **Go Apple** - You know you want to!

- 21. **Set up a [Mail Chimp](#) account** - There are many other email marketing and email list managers out there but I like this one the best.
- 22. **Buy an iPhone** - I'm sure there are other phones out there.... but once you



go iPhone.....

- 23. **Plan and stick to your days off** - You don't have to work every day, all day to be a success.
- 24. **Talk to successful non-photography business owners** - Not consultants.
- 25. **Take up a social, non-photography related hobby** - Great way to meet new people and hopefully new clients.
- 26. **Get a web address that ISN'T [www.yournamephotography.com](#) - [www.barrowphotography.com](#) is free..... you get the idea.**
- 27. **Tweet** - But not just for Tweet's sake.
- 28. **Embrace [Facebook](#)** - The best thing about Facebook is reminding all your 'friends' that you're a photographer.... keep your name on the tip of their

tongues.



- 29. **Create a iPhone app** - You can do this in 10minutes using your RSS feed at [AppMakr](#).
- 30. **Subscribe to AI Digital's [Internet Marketing Podcast](#)** - Great advice..... and British!
- 31. **Design some new flyers** - Why not stick a limited time only discount code on there as well.

32. **Make it easy for clients to pay you** - Online ordering and payment is always good but a mobile card payment system is even better.
33. **Return all emails within 8 hours**
34. **Return all calls within 4 hours**
35. **Ignore the last two points** - Return calls and emails as soon as possible.
36. **Catch up with old clients** - "I know you were thinking about ordering that second canvas...."
37. **Get a [LinkedIn](#) account** - Some good groups include [Photography Industry Professionals](#) [Canon EOS Digital Photography](#) (I'm sure there's some Nikon groups there too) and [Wedding Industry Professionals](#) (bit



spammy though).

38. **A seminar on business should ALWAYS take preference over a photography one** - unless of course you're a hobbyist.
39. **Start using [FeedBurner](#)** - Analyse, optimise, publicise and monetize.
40. **Track ALL of your enquires** - Helps you keep an eye on what's working. If you're getting enquiries from personal recommendations then give back the love.
41. **Order some car magnets** - Then just make sure you're shopping in the right Supermarkets!
42. **Comment on other blogs** - Always add value and try to build some relationships.
43. **Exchange links from other photographers** - A link can be a powerful thing.
44. **Take your competition out to lunch** - Even the most sought after photographers only have 365 days in a year why compete when you can refer?
45. **Show big, sell big** - Show a client a 5x7 print and that's what you're sell them. Same goes for albums.
46. **Be flexible** - But not too flexible that your working for free!
47. **Value your time** - It's money after all
48. **Value your copyright** - If it wasn't of value then why do your clients want it?
49. **Educate your clients** - "This is what I do... this is how much I do....this is why are charge £xxx for doing that"
50. **Mentor another photographer** - Even if it's teaching an enthusiast some basics.

51. **Understand what your clients want** - Sounds easier that it is. Compare what sells to what what you consider your best work...there're often quite different.
52. **Take a [Guy Gowan Seminar](#)** - He will change the way you approach Photoshop and digital workflow.
53. **Do some charity work** - The more local the better. It's good PR and it

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photographers4charity

[www.photographers4charity.co.uk](http://www.photographers4charity.co.uk)

makes you feel good!

54. **Know your Unique Selling Point** - If you don't have one you'll be in danger of getting lost in the crowd.
55. **Have an elevator speech** - If you can't sell yourself in 30 seconds then how are other people going to do that for you?
56. **Get a [Free Index listing](#)** - It's free, it's a link, it might even get you



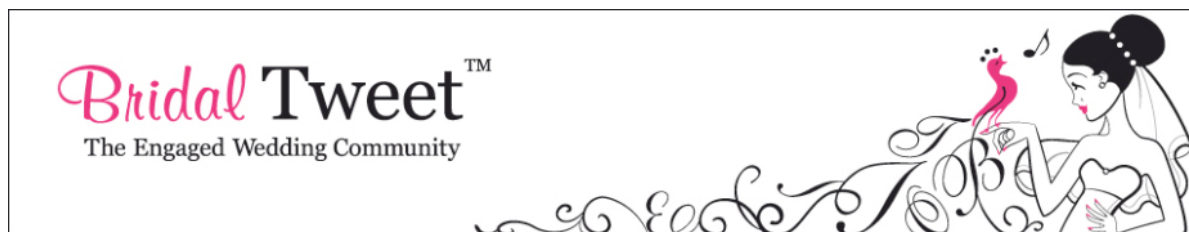
referrals.

57. **Go viral** - Take a leaf out of [Julia Boggio's](#) book.
58. **Prices on websites** - Only put your prices on your website if you occupy the high or low end.
59. **Give surprise gifts to your clients** - You'll be surprised what even a keyring can do for your business.
60. **Decide where YOU want to advertise** - Don't let the cold callers tell you what you need.
61. **Never accept anything less an a 30% discount for printed press adversing** - I would push for 40% though.
62. **Do as much business face to face or on the phone** - It's easier to member a face or a phone conversation than an email.
63. **Set yourself a timetable.....and stick to it** - Monday is blog day, Tuesday network day etc etc.
64. **Set up referral schemes with local businesses** - Offering a commission is sometimes better than shooting something for them for free.

- 65. Order new business cards** - Maybe even some special aluminium ones for 'preferred customers'
- 66. Be truthful** - Inexperience shows so be honest.
- 67. Memorise your prices** - This is especially useful when caught off guard.
- 68. Understand your brand** - Who are you?
- 69. Don't spend too long messing around with logo design** - You're not Jessops..... and what is their logo anyway?
- 70. Dress smart** - It's all about perception, dress professional and the rest will follow.
- 71. Get a good night's sleep** - And for that matter have a good breakfast before a day's shoot.
- 72. Get a [Google business listing](#)** - Free and a great way to attract local business.
- 73. Enter photo competitions** - You might even win some cool stuff.
- 74. Be an ambassador for another company** - Give them some love and you'll soon be feeling it back.
- 75. Build relationships with businesses who are at a similar stage as you** - The help and advice flows a lot better if you're both in the same situation. There's no point in trying to roll with the big dogs if you're a puppy..... the conversations will be one way.
- 76. Control the output of your work** - Shoot to burn is popular and tempting but consider how your final images will be presented to what could be potential clients. Would you really meet a wedding couple with a stack of 4x6 prints from Boots to entice them into a booking?
- 77. Design a wedding album for a friend who had a shoot to burn wedding photographer** - As a one off you could do this for cost. I bet the result will be the most proactive ambassador for your business. THAT is priceless.
- 78. Show slideshows at weddings on a laptop of the shots from the day** - [Gavin Seim](#) can vouch for me on this one!
- 79. Listen to Rosh Sillars** - If you can't see him in person there's always the podcasts - [New Media Photographer](#) and [Prosperous Artists](#)



- 80. Don't be subtle with your adversing** - Modern life is noise, sometimes you need to shout.
- 81. Make every shoot a great experience** - This really should be number one but it kinda goes without saying.
- 82. Get excited about your photos** - Excitement is infectious... spread the disease!
- 83. Always deliver more than promised** - I think that's what they call giving 110%?
- 84. Make it as easy as possible for people to contact you** - It's all about calls to action on websites, signatures on emails and your info on EVERYTHING (*Michael Shilling [info@memorygate.co.uk](mailto:info@memorygate.co.uk)*).
- 85. Invite some close friends to dinner and show them your work** - We often take it for granted that our friends we've known for the last 20 years actually know (or care) about what we do. Show them your stuff, get them excited and soon they're be pulling work in for you.
- 86. If that fails go to your local pub with your portfolio** - You're always going to find someone in the pub to at least pass your card onto.
- 87. Accept that everything you put online could, and probably will be stolen** - The world wide web is all about consumption, so don't too shocked if you're consumed.
- 88. Open a [Flickr](#) account** - Once you have come to terms with point 87 that is!
- 89. Make your clients your friends** - Build a relationship don't just throw around discounts!
- 90. Ask for referrals** - A good place to start is with your 'new friends.'
- 91. Join [Bridal Tweet](#)** - Christine Dyer has done a great job with this site in the last year and has great ambitions for the future..... and it's free!



- 92. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?** - It's the old favourite interview question, but as someone who is self employed when was the last time you asked yourself this question? More importantly, how do you intent to get there, how many weddings would you need to shoot to make £XXX, how much will need to spend..... the list goes on. Perhaps the question should be

**"Where would you like to be in 5 years and how are you going to get there?"**

**93. Learn to say NO** - Say it with a smile.

**94. Put together some out of season promotions** - Don't be afraid of charging more at peak seasons. After all there are only 4 Saturday's a month.

**95. Start your own Podcast** - Broadcast yourself to the world!



**96. Perfect your workflow** - It doesn't matter what system you use, Lightroom, Aperture or Photoshop droplets..... make it fast and full of quality.

**97. Listen to your clients** - Sometimes it's easy to shrug off negative comments as silly.....but most people are quite silly.

**98. Turn a complaint into a referral** - We all make mistakes from time to time, and sometimes it's not always our fault. These are situations where you can shine. "My supplier let me down, but I'm going to do this for you". Act fast, over deliver, apologise and take full responsibility. My pet hate while working as a manager was having staff who would not accept that they have done something wrong....all I wanted was "sorry boss". Imagine being told that after complaining about a product, that all you get is "it's not our fault". Wouldn't you prefer "we'll take care of that for you."

**99. Buy an A-board** - Put it outside your house if you want.

**100. BE AN EXPERT** - What is your niche? Why are you an expert in that certain area? Put out great content and concrete yourself as the last word in your specialist area.



**101. Know when you have out-grown past clients** - It happens, you may have been working with a business for some years but there will become a point where one of you out-grows the other.... at least in financial terms.... then it's time to say good-bye and thanks.

**102. From small acorns mighty trees grow** - Know that Oak trees take a long time to grow and throw out many acorns (which they don't actually do till there're 20 years old).

**103. Don't be afraid to put your prices up** - Really look and calculate your worth. Most of the time you're selling yourself short.

**104. Throw a party** - It could be a brand re-launch, studio opening or your companies 1st birthday. Invite old clients and prospective ones, don't hard sell on the night... just be yourself... that's enough.

**105. Keep your industry specific language simple** - Don't use words or phrases that your client might not understand, it will alienate them.

**106. Be quirky** - Perfect the art of being the centre of attention (where appropriate). Don't be afraid to play to fool once and a while.

**107. Specialise in an area you love, not one that is most profitable** - Easier said than done but if you wake up in the morning dreading the day's shoot it's going to show. In the end you quality of work will suffer and eventually so will your bookings.

**108. Be a morning person** - We are all at our most creative in the mornings so get up early and embrace it.

**109. Have more than one website** - Chances are that you don't only shoot one particular genre. Separate your specialities into different websites.



**110. Ask clients for advice on your website improvements not photographers** - After all they are the ones work book us right?

- 111. Stop buying so many new toys** - We're all guilty of that, but ask yourself, how will this new gadget make me money?
- 112. Buy a new prop** - Make it big, make it loud, make it unique to your style.
- 113. Ask someone a generation (or two) older than you to navigate your website** - Try this with a few people and even give them a brief... *"find out about my special offers"* or *"how much do I charge for a portrait session"*.
- 114. Love Uncle Bob** - Yes he's shooting over your shoulder and maybe getting in the way but he's closer to the clients (relatively speaking) than you are. Don't complain about him, use him, after all you're exact same shoots are going to be a hundred times better anyway.... right? If you're really worried about *'all the gear no idea'* stealing your poses then you're in trouble.
- 115. Create your own Photoshop actions** - Make life easier and faster for



yourself.

- 116. Read local papers** - Well the news might not be great but it'll give you a bit more of an insight into your local area.
- 117. Comment on local and relevant news stories** - One of my most popular blog posts on [The Gatekeepers](#) was **'Couple sue wedding photographer Gareth Bowers'** - we hit nearly 2000 views in the first 3 days.



- 118. Follow Damien Lovegrove** - Workshops, seminars, DVDs and a fantastic blog..... [lovegroveconsulting.com](#)
- 119. Keep an eye out for better and newer products** - What suits your style of photography and your speciality?
- 120. Plan your promotions for the year.....NOW!** - Traditionally this time of year is a little quieter for most businesses. Use that time to organise all of your artwork and to plan your strategies for the coming 12 months.
- 121. Hold an exhibition for your work** - You can keep the costs down by getting a group of photographers/artists together for this.
- 122. Sponsor a local competition** - Even better, partner with a local business to help promote your own competition.

- 123. Make sure you understand your costs and profit** - At least you'll know if you really can't give any more discount!
- 124. Get a good accountant** - It's one less thing to worry about.
- 125. Ask clients to ask you questions** - Keep that conversation flowing and make sure it is two way.
- 126. Use attention grabbing headlines** - But back that up with quality content.
- 127. Get inspired by the original [Wedding Storybook Photography Gary Fong](#)** - Probably the most financially successful wedding photographer of all time.... and he does it in JPGs!
- 128. Study the history of photography** - To know where we're going we must first understand where we've been (*bit Yoda, I know*).
- 129. A blog is for life, not just for Christmas** - Good article about this at [www.zimbio.com](http://www.zimbio.com) and an even better PDF at [www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com](http://www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com)
- 130. Embrace the new** - Who knows what 2010 will bring? How big will [Google Wave](#) really get? Keep an eye on trends and embrace them, but don't do so for the sake of it.
- 131. Read [What Matters Now](#)** - Free collaborative e-book written by seventy thinkers.
- 132. Download [Optimisation Step by Step](#)** - Another free PDF from [EcomBuffet.com](http://EcomBuffet.com)
- 133. Use [Google Analytics](#)** - Just don't spend all day, every day playing around with it!
- 134. Join [Photoshelter](#)** - While your there download the free photography reports: [Google Analytics for Photographers](#), [SEO for Photography Websites](#) and [Photography Websites: What Buyers Want](#).
- 135. Make a list of 10 things you want to achieve this year** - Print it out, laminate it and stick it up by your computer.
- 136. Shoot for fun** - It don't have to be for your portfolio or commissioned. Take some time out and go exploring with your camera.
- 137. Write an E-Book** - You have the knowledge and now it time to share it. Simply make a PDF and post it to your website or blog.
- 138. Read a book by [Rick Sammon](#)** - While your at it have a good look round his [blog](#).

**139. Subscribe to [The British Journal of Photography](#)** - The Professional's Weekly



- 140. Buy a decent compact camera** - Something small and light you can carry with you everyday - The [Powershot G11](#) is a good start.
- 141. Take a second look at your contracts** - Is everything there that should be?
- 142. Create a Screencast** - It's a quick and easy way to share your techniques and information. Snow Leopard users can use Quicktime or have a look at [Jing](#).
- 143. Start using [TweetDeck](#)** - It really is a simple and fast way to experience Twitter.
- 144. Subscribe to [Web Pro News](#)** - Worth signing up for the email alters as there is lots of great information here regarding social media, marketing and technology.
- 145. Create your own online social network** - This can be done very easily and effectively using [Ning](#).
- 146. Create an offline social network of local photographers** - Together we can grow!
- 147. Try speed networking** - It's fun and there seems to be more and more of these events popping up. Just remember to follow up those contacts.
- 148. Identify a local business that needs your business** - And approach them.
- 149. Don't let great feedback go to your head** - While at the same time don't let bad feedback get you down.
- 150. Offer incentives for on the spot ordering** - Make it a positive incentive not a negative one - "If you don't order today we'll delete your images" leaves a bit of a bad taste in people's mouth.
- 151. Always do viewings** - If you just leave images online it's unlikely to sell as well.
- 152. Let your clients know how long you intend to keep their images for** - RAW files take up a lot of space that = a cost to you.
- 153. Make a list of things you need to do that week** - Stay on top of things and don't let it spill over to the next week!
- 154. Make a REALLY good viral video** - Just like [Joey L.](#)

- 155. Take that flash off the top of your camera!** - You know who you are!
- 156. Be open to new ideas and opportunities** - Even if it's not really your area.
- 157. Monetize your website or blog but don't over do it** - [Here's 101 ways how](#)
- 158. Teach yourself Joomla!** - A wonderful open-source Content Management System (CMS). Time for a new website? Design it yourself!
- 159. Never judge a book by its cover** - Nine times out of ten this statement is wrong, but 10% of the time it's good advice.
- 160. Hug your clients** - If not physically then metaphorically!
- 161. Use Google Reader** - Set up Google alerts for your name and business name.
- 162. Take a look at Gavin Hoey's blog Gavtrain** - Photoshop tips, tricks and how to videos - Only started in March 2009 but there's some really great free content.
- 163. Subscribe to Lynda.com** - The Mecca for training videos.
- 164. Design your wedding albums using InDesign** - It's not cheap but it'll save you time and money in the long run.
- 165. Do a audit of your photography business** - [Download free template](#) - If you can't fill out all of the sections then ask yourself why not!
- 166. Make an Animoto video** - The end of slideshows?
- 167. Inspire others** - Even into booking you!
- 168. Create a new photographic style or approach** - Just remember to give it a name!
- 169. Work out how much each new client costs you** - Marketing spend / clients = cost per client.
- 170. Watch the Generation Y video** - If those are your clients what are you doing to 'hang' on their turf?
- 171. Meet Mitche Graf** - Failing that he has a podcast out soon.
- 172. Look at a Jerry Ghionis wedding album design** - Not the stuff from ten years ago though!
- 173. Act on opportunity** - Spotting it is only halfway there.
- 174. If you have a good idea then share and discuss it** - chances are someone will help you make it better.
- 175. Know you're limits** - If you're ability to execute a job to the standard it requires is lacking then don't take it.

- 176.If no.175 happens ask yourself why** - And make sure you're ready to take the next job.
- 177.Seduce your clients** - Perhaps not physically though!
- 178.Understand light** - You could even learn the inverse square law (double the distance = quarter the light)
- 179.Sign your wall-art** - It might at least add 'perceived' value.
- 180.Know that 90% of selling is done before the client sees their pictures** - Then ask yourself how you're selling along the way.
- 181.Keep your clients for life** - Works pretty much in the same way you make a friend for life.
- 182.Ask yourself what kind of manager you are** - Even if you are a sole-trader.
- 183.Be reliable** - Grow a reputation for this.
- 184.Always listen to your wife** - Ignore your husband
- 185.Give back to the communities you've learnt from** - [Kevin Mullins](#) has done just that.
- 186.Don't rely on on-line sales** - At least as your main source of income from a shoot.
- 187.Comment on this post and leave a link to your website** - How about sharing a few of your ideas?
- 188.Follow PhotoCreative36** - Download the free [iPhone app](#) follow the [tweets](#) and why not join the [Facebook page](#)?
- 189.Create a list of 189 things you can do to improve your business.**