

We are coming in hot in 2026 with the marketing and sales information here, and I am pumped about it. I'm excited that you clicked on this episode because this is a juicy one. This is one that I hear over and over and over again, and that is a lot of photographers come to me thinking that the problem is their marketing.

They're telling me I just need more reach. I, I'm trying to get in front of new people. But when we peel back the onion a little bit, there's more to it. And in reality, there are actually two sides to this coin. The other side. On the opposite of visibility is the sales and the conversion on the backend.

The other side is what I actually wanna talk to you about today. This is what happens after the inquiry comes in. And for many creatives, it's the invisible sales leak and the reason why clients don't respond, seem to get a little less interested, aren't getting on the discovery call. Why you don't actually need more visibility until you fix this thing.

It's not gonna matter if you get in front of a lot of people this year. If you don't have this part dialed in, you're listening to Call to both the podcast for ambitious women chasing both business dreams and little ones. I'm your host. Join Michelle. I'm a wedding photographer, turned business coach and founder of Photo Bos.

I have helped thousands of photographers and creatives grow their businesses. Here on the show, I teach about topics like visibility, marketing, mindset, productivity, and going after your dream life. So if you're a photographer or an entrepreneur, there is something here for you. This is not another business and marketing podcast telling you to do more.

But rather how you can build your business and your income in less time and with greater ease. Join me here each week for bite-sized and actionable episodes that will encourage you on your call to both journeys.

So today we are fixing the invisible sales leak that is costing you bookings without you even realizing it, and you can fix it in this afternoon. So when a potential client reaches out, they are warm, they're excited about the possibility of working with you. They might have spent some time on your social media or your website and decided, Hey, I'm gonna fill this contact form out.

I'm gonna reach out to them and get some more information. But somewhere along the way. A leak might be happening, and I wanna talk about like, how does this happen? How does it happen that someone could reach out on your

website, sound like a really great lead, say all the right things and then never respond.

So I wanna share with you the five reasons that I see most often. Like there are lots of reasons why this could happen, but the five that I see most often that are gonna be things that you can look at in your process and how you are dealing with your clients. Could be the reason why your leads could be going cold as well.

Reason number one is that the response time is too long. And I remember hearing a report, this was years ago from the Knot, that the top most booked vendors, they gave the reasons, they asked a ton of couples, like thousands and thousands of couples, why did you book the vendors that you booked? And so they gave those top reasons.

And the number one basis for why a vendor was picked was response time. This really stuck in my mind. I like grabbed onto that was like, this is fascinating. It wasn't being the cheapest vendor. It wasn't having a perfect collection that matched what they thought something would look like. How many hours of coverage or whatever it might be.

It wasn't about being really popular on Instagram. It was about response time. Your response time to a lead really matters. The second thing that I see. Where a leak can take place is that the response is just kind of myth, like it is generic. It is unhelpful. It feels super templated, and it thus does not stand out, or it doesn't even feel like a real human is behind it, right?

Like we all know behind each of these emails hopefully is a person, but sometimes it doesn't even sound like a person, and I think that that can really affect the response. The third reason. That there is no nurture sequence or follow up happening to keep this going because there's momentum, there's excitement, and I wanna ask like how many times do you follow up?

That is a question I have asked so many creatives and so many photographers, especially this past couple of years, working very closely with photographers, and I'm gonna share something with you. It is almost never enough times. Oftentimes the follow up is like nothing or just once. If your answer is Mm, I don't know.

It depends, like it depends. If the lead sounded really good, I'm on follow up. If it doesn't, I don't, then it's not enough. That's number three. Number four, there is no clear next step or call to action in the email. And when it's not clear

exactly what they should do next, like there's a lot of information being thrown at them.

It's not a hundred percent clear. They'll just skim that email and probably say like, I'm gonna come back to this later. And then they never actually do. That is a really, really common one is like we throw everything at them, we have just a lot of information and like FAQ and just a lot is happening. And while you may think that, that sounds super helpful to give your whole story of how the clients book and.

What are the most common things and here's my outfit guide and here's my location guide and like to give them a lot of information. It is not helpful. It's actually super overwhelming, and then it's not clear what the next step is. Leak number five is the experience feels super cold instead of personalized.

And the more that I've dug into this, the more that I have just come to realize and learn that I think we all, when we're buying something and we're working with someone, especially a personal brand, is that we want to feel chosen by the professionals that we hire. I mean, isn't it just the best, like when you work with someone and you can really feel like they actually care?

This might sound so basic, and truthfully, this is basic, but when something's basic, that doesn't necessarily make it common. So simply putting more care, a little more personalization, more of your humanness into your communication can make a massive difference here. That is why I'm always a big proponent of customization, maybe sending a voice note back.

If I'm getting an inquiry in the dms, I'm going to sit and actually think about, what am I gonna say? Even if there's a template involved, I'm gonna customize the template because I want them to see that I care. And in this day and age, it could feel I, I often hear from people that it feels very saturated.

It feels like the competition is at an all time high. I will tell you that care and effort is at an all time low. So if you can care and you can put a little more personalization, a little more thought, go a little bit beyond just the basic template of everything, you will stand out and that is a huge, huge thing that we need this year is to stand out.

Alright, so thinking about these five things I wanna ask you, how long is your average response time from someone inquiring to getting that first piece of communication? How many times are you following up? Is it an overwhelming

amount of information or just the important stuff? Here's what clients actually need in order to stay engaged.

Three things Your clients need to feel chosen. They want reassurance that they're making the right decision and they want clarity and not more research. So a lot of times I think we're throwing a lot at them and it's not giving them clarity in order to make that decision. Our aim right here is to maintain that excitement, maintain that momentum, and move them simply to the next step.

You're not trying to get the credit card number, you're trying to move them to the next step. Okay? So here is your three step fix to keeping those leads warm and eventually booking them. Number one, your initial reply should happen either immediately or as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 minutes.

What I mean immediately. I mean, you are leveraging your CRM to have something that fires off immediately upon getting an inquiry into your business. So if you're not somebody that's able to get into your inbox very often, or you don't want it on your phone and you don't wanna be in this game of constantly getting in there, then I do encourage you to have something templated that you acknowledge as a template.

They, you're like, Hey, I got this inquiry. It just landed in my inbox. I will be reviewing this shortly. You'll be hearing from me at this time. This doesn't need to be long. It doesn't need to be detailed, but it should be fast. It should be warm, and it should be humid. So this is gonna have, ideally if you customize this, it's gonna have a personalized line.

It's gonna have something specific to ask them to keep that conversation going. And the point of this email is going to be the next step, so a direct link or a next step. This might be your discovery call, like a meeting call link. A lot of times people will have just a booking calendar. Whatever that next step is in your client journey, that should be abundantly clear in that email.

So fast reply, either immediate or within 30 minutes, or as quickly as you can manage. Now, obviously if you're asleep. In the middle of the night, someone reaches out, you're not getting a reply within 30 minutes. I'm talking about within business hours, normal business hours. Now, if you can't do that and you're like, no, I don't wanna get a notification, I don't wanna sit there and customize it, then I do encourage you to turn on an automatic and instantaneous reply so that people do get something from you immediate.

The second thing to implement is a 48 hour follow up. So you're checking in, you're saying, Hey, I wanna reiterate that CTA from that first email, here's my availability to get on a call. Here's where I meet clients, here's where you can come by, whatever the thing is, whatever that next step is. That's what we are reiterating.

But I think like a lot of times we're waiting too long. Like a week feels way too long. So much is happening in a week, so 48 hours, that's when we're doing that initial follow up. Number three to fix the sales leak. Stop hiding. The most essential information, and this is a big one. One reason I think that people lose interest in us as professionals is because they're really not getting the information that they came for.

Most of the time, not always, but most of the time, this is pricing based. Your pricing does not need to be completely out. You don't need to have an itemized list of everything you offer before you meet. That is not what I'm saying. You can still give an indication and a reference for your clients before they make that next step and give you any more of their time.

You could have your average investment, you could have your starting investment. You can give them some idea so that they feel confident to move forward or to say, Hey, this is outside of our budget range. So you could share like, Hey, here's what most of my clients end up doing. Most of our families, most of our couples, most of our own, you know, clients come in and they spend this for full day coverage.

You get this for one hour, you get this, whatever it is that you're selling. Think, give people a frame of reference. And if they asked anything specific, so in the contact form, maybe they shared a little bit of information, they had a hesitation or question in that initial response from you. If they don't get.

Anything back about that? Like they took the time to write that. They asked, Hey, is this something you can do? Do you offer video? Do you do this? Do you shoot in this location? Whatever it is. If they didn't actually hear back about that, don't be surprised if they ghost and lose interest because they probably reached out to three other people at the same time.

And if they got better information and that loop was closed for them mentally with someone else, they've probably moved on. And honestly like when I reach out to people and I ask a question, if they won't answer it, it can lead to a lot of frustration. Look at your own client journey and think, would I enjoy going through this client journey?

I think sometimes we've, we really do start like replicating things that we've heard or believe our industry standards, and we just think like, this is how someone did it, or This is how my personal photographer did this years and years ago, so this is just how I'm doing it. And we stop. Putting it up against like the litmus test of like being a person.

Like, do, do, would you like that? Would that process make sense to you? Like really sitting and saying like, have I answered the information? Have I given them actually the essential information that they want before moving forward? And I think that that can really help and go a long way to getting a response from your client so they stop losing interest.

Okay, quick recap. You are going to respond quickly, either an automatic response or as quickly as you possibly can, ideally within 30 minutes to an hour. Number two, you're gonna follow up within 48 hours. Don't wait a week. Don't skip the follow up altogether. Follow up within 48 hours. And number three, stop hiding the most essential information, especially if it's something they literally asked in your inquiry form.

So ultimately you don't just need the visibility. You don't just need inquiries coming into your business. You do need a stronger process for your sales as a whole and for the conversion to take place. I wanna invite you to think about one small upgrade that you could make today to this part of your sales process.

One way that you could make this easier or faster or simpler for your clients. And I really think you're gonna see a massive, massive difference. Before you go and run and do this thing to fix the sales leak, go ahead and take a quick screenshot of this episode. Share it on Instagram. If you do, please tag me.

I love to see what episodes you're listening to and how you are implementing things that you've learned here on the podcast. So I would just love that if you did share. And since you're here at the end of the podcast, I'm gonna go ahead and give you one other episode that I think would be a fantastic next listen for you.

Now at the end of December, last year, just a couple episodes back, I dropped an episode about what I would ask you if we were sitting down to coffee and we were digging into your business together, what questions I would ask you. And I got some incredible feedback about this episode. And so I really wanna make sure that everyone has a chance to listen to this.

And so I wanna point you back to that episode because I truly feel like this is the perfect time of year. To really be thinking about these questions so that you can have the best possible year in your business. Yet, this episode is 1 63 here on the podcast, so I'll make sure it's linked down below, but you can just scroll back, go to 1 63.

If I were coaching you today, here is what I would ask and I'll see you over there. Thank you so much for listening to the show. If you enjoyed this episode. Please help me get the word out about the call to both podcast by taking a screenshot of this episode right now and sharing it on your social media.

I would also appreciate it if you would subscribe and leave me a five star review. Thanks again and I'll see you in the next episode.