

14. Designing Irresistible Packages

Packages appeal to clients because they reduce the number of ordering decision needed and offer good value. They can also boost your bottom line by giving the client strong incentives to spend a little (or a lot) more. But how do you create packages that are irresistible? Let's do an exercise and generate some ideas. We'll start with some brainstorming, then talk about how ways to implement these ideas into your product mix.

Adding Benefits

Let's start with weddings. What are some things that you could offer your clients that would be so irresistible that people would have to be fools not to respond? I want you to remove all obstacles and allow your mind to wander just a bit, okay? Don't worry about cost, or price, or anything like that for now. We will get to that soon enough. For now, just let your mind create. What would compel a potential client to want to do business with *you* instead of

anybody else in your market? Here are just a few ideas to get you started:

1. A complimentary limousine rental when someone books one of your Premiere Collections.
2. A day at the spa for the bride, and perhaps the bridesmaids too—maybe even Mom or Grandma. You could include a massage, a facial, manicure, or pedicure.
3. A complimentary night for two at the finest local resort, including dinner and champagne.
4. A two-volume album set for the bride and groom, an album for Mom and Dad, and a nice 4x5 album for Grandma.
5. Unlimited time not just on the wedding day, but on Friday night at the rehearsal dinner, and Sunday morning when they are opening their gifts in front of friends and family members.



Sara Petty's marketing piece for her baby portraits ensures customers will pick it up and interact with it—not just give it a glance and forget it.

6. A hot air balloon ride complete with a champagne breakfast.
7. Unlimited gift wallets for all guests to send with their thank-you cards.
9. A signature mat for all the guests to sign at the reception.
10. Thank you cards for every single guest, with envelopes *and* postage
11. A DVD slide show of all their images—not just for the bride and groom, but for Mom and Dad, and grandparents, and the wedding party.
12. Here's a big one. What about including their files? At what point are you willing to give your client a disc containing all their images? Is it \$1,000, \$2,000, \$5,000, \$10,000? At what

Should I Sell My Files?

This is probably the question that gets the most amount of debate in our industry these days. For anyone who has been in business for more than a few years, the initial answer to this question has to be absolutely not! But because we now have a new breed of shooter in town, we need to analyze this question much more deeply than we have in the past. Start by asking yourself these two questions:

1. Is it possible for me to use their files as a sales incentive to get them to invest more money with me?
2. What is the true likelihood of my client coming back in and ordering more from those files?

Now, one thing I don't agree with is simply giving the files away with every package for no apparent reason. If you are going to go this route, make sure they earn it! Require an investment in one of your premium collections or a certain minimum investment in portraits. They can't just be handed a disc because they spend \$100 with you. That wouldn't make much sense.

Using the files as a sales tool, however, may not be a bad idea. We all have to do what we are comfortable with; if you are not comfortable, don't sell your files. If, however, you are looking for ways to maximize your sales and give your clients a great value for their money, this may be a no-brainer for you. Today's photographic world forces us to, perhaps, do some things that in the past may not have even been an option.

I'm not saying to do it. I just want you to make sure that this topic is well thought out before you make a decision. And try not to let your ego get in the way of making this decision. It will only cloud your thinking.

point will your client not be ordering any more photographs from those particular files? Or can these files be used as an incentive to get your clients to step up to the next package?

What about portraits of families, children, and seniors? What kinds of things can you offer your potential clients that will entice them to jump up to the next bigger package or come to you in the first place?

1. A \$50 coffee card for all new clients that come to you during the month of February.
2. A complimentary small wall folio for any order over X amount
3. A movie pass for the entire family
4. A new iPod.
5. Free oil changes for a year with a minimum purchase
6. A complimentary twelve-way portfolio for all senior sessions during the month of June
7. Complimentary Christmas cards for all orders placed before a certain date
8. A free stuffed animal from a local children's store for all sessions during the month of December.
9. A gift card to their favorite store.
10. A free cart of groceries from a local store (with a dollar limit, of course).
11. A complimentary DVD slide show of their entire sessions
12. Or, as we discussed before, their files on a DVD.

Any of these items can be used as an incentive to get them to come to you in the first place or enticements to get people to step up to the next package or collection. If Mrs. Jones sees that the difference between package A and package B is \$200, but she receives an additional \$350 of value . . . well, what do you think she's likely to do? If your price list has built-in incentives and enticements, it will be your number-one salesperson, which can take some of the pressure off you. Wouldn't that be nice?

The Whopper Package

In a perfect world, your whopper package—your top-of-the-line, fantasy package—would include all of these

items, right? How much would that cost for you to build a package that included everything on this list? I'll tell you one thing: it won't be cheap! But, it will show your client what *can* be done, if money isn't an issue. As noted in chapter 13, the whopper package will also make all of your other packages look much less intimidating in comparison, and probably encourage a large enough purchase to get at least some of the "whopper" perks.

Take-Away Selling

When selling, you should start with this top-dollar package, then work your way down the list. This is called take-away selling (the smaller the package, the fewer things included in it). Because it appeals the emotions—that sense of "wanting" in our clients—it can be extremely effective if done properly. We all know that weddings, in particular, are very emotionally-driven events that people will spend money on simply because they *want* to. It may not make sense to spend \$25,000 on a hand-woven bridal dress flown in from Italy, but by golly they *want* it!

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One you have described in detail what is entailed in your whopper package (which you'd want to call something like your "Elite Collection"), the bride will *want* all of the features—and she'll have already taken mental "ownership" of them. As a result, when you drop down to the next collection that doesn't include the image files, or the romantic getaway, or the balloon ride, or albums for the grandparents . . . well, it almost feels like she is giving up something that she already bought. And the next collection down includes even fewer items that she has decided she just absolutely *must* have if she is to have the perfect day.

The Smallest Package

So, what does the smallest collection include? Not much. In order for a package or bundling strategy to work in your studio, there must be a reason for a client to go up



Adding incentive items like photo jewelry, ornaments, or DVD slide shows can create an incentive to upgrade to a larger package purchase—especially if those items can't be purchased à la carte. Top photo by Christa Hoffarth. Bottom two photos by Sarah Petty.

into the next larger package. If you give them everything they want in the smallest package, there is no incentive for them to invest more.

If your bottom senior-portrait collection includes a session, some gift wallets, one of those big ol' 8x10s for the wall, and an eight-way portfolio for Mom, that's going to

Have a Few Laughs

Don't get so bogged down in the nuts and bolts of selling that you forget this should all be enjoyable for both you and the client. All things being equal, people want to do business with their friends—and all things being not quite so equal, people *still* want to do business with their friends. Throughout this process, it's okay to make your clients laugh and have fun! Humor is relaxing and it creates a more open atmosphere. This is what will begin to breed friendship and respect.

satisfy the needs of many people—and that bottom package is all you're going to sell. Instead, if they want an 8x10, make them earn it. If they want gift wallets to give to their classmates, make them earn it. If they want the 8-way portfolio, make them earn it.

The idea is to create a stepping-stone concept in your packages. Each package increases in small steps, with more and more bonuses and enticements along the way. This technique can be applied to just about any category of photography.

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You have a blank canvas. It's up to you to determine what is included in each collection you offer your clients. Obviously, there are costs associated with building irresistible packages like this, and you need to identify those costs, include them in with your calculations, and make sure that there is sufficient profit built in. I think it goes without saying that if you are going to give away an iPod, you will have to have some sort of minimum package or investment level associated with it in order to qualify. You and I know that these items aren't really free, someone has to pay for them, but if you position it correctly, the perception will be exactly that.

Added Value in Your Presentation

You also need to make sure you are adding value in the way your packages are literally *packaged*. This will allow you to charge a higher price—after all, you can't sell gold

from a paper bag. Without proper packaging, the best products in the world will lose some of their appeal and their value.

One of our high-value products is called First Edition Prints. The name alone suggests prestige and importance. We increase this by placing the prints in a beautiful velvet-lined box. When a wedding client comes to pick up their set of First Edition Prints at our studio, we also add to the magic with a special presentation routine. As we walk out of the back room with their image box filled with their First Edition Prints, we wear white gloves, and say:

Mrs. Jones, before you see your First Edition Prints for the first time, I want to go over a couple of things. Although we can always make more for you, there is something very special about the first printing, so I encourage you to treat all of these prints with the utmost respect at all times. I have taken the liberty of making a personally monogrammed set of gloves for you, and also a pair for your husband. Before you handle these prints in any way, do me a favor, put your gloves on and only handle the prints very carefully. Try not to handle them by the corners or edges as you may increase the chance of damaging them, and I wouldn't want to see that happen. Now, each of these beautiful prints comes with a lifetime guarantee, so if anything should happen to them—including a damaged corner or an accidental spill—we will replace them at no charge to you. But we still don't want to run the risk, do we?

I then present their box to them along with the pairs of monogrammed gloves. By now, the anticipation is so high that they can't wait to get see what magical creation is waiting for them inside the box. I have had husbands reach to pick up a print without their gloves on only to have their wives slap them and say, "Didn't you hear him? He told you to put your gloves on before you touch any-

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We guarantee all of our Portraits against any product or workmanship defects.
We will also replace any Portrait that is damaged by careless handling, no questions asked!

Our lifetime guarantee add extra value to each purchase.

thing!” I have even had brides call me months later in a panic because they have somehow misplaced their gloves and need another pair—or brides will call and ask if we can make a pair of gloves for their mothers and grandmothers.

Over the years, we have positioned our First Edition Prints as something that is nearly irresistible! To our clients, these prints have so much value that they would do just about anything to keep them protected; they have a very high perceived value.

How Many Packages Should I Offer?

I once knew a senior photographer who offered *forty-seven* packages in his price list. The entire thing was about twelve pages, and must have had at least five thousand words. By the time most people got to the good part, they were probably so tired and fatigued that the last thing they wanted to do is spend any money. All the emotion had been frittered away!

A good number to start with is five. With this scenario, you would have your whopper (see chapter 13), then what we call the “drop package” (the one that, according to the “take-away” selling philosophy, we anticipate people will skip over on their way to a happy medium), then what is called the “target” package. This is where you want your clients to end up. It should be a combination of products and services that will motivate people to buy, and it should be priced at wherever you want your average sale to be. For example, if you are currently bringing in an average of

\$750 on your senior portraits and you would like to raise that average to \$900, your target package should be priced at \$899. It’s that simple.

So you have your whopper, your drop, your target, and then two other packages that bring up the rear. Obviously, the more they invest, the better the packages become. And, again, you don’t want to include all of the things they want in the lower packages. Otherwise, those are all you will ever sell!

Stand Out from the Crowd

What type of enticements would work in your marketplace? Spend some quality time and come up with your own list of irresistible offers that you can use to beef up your studio’s reputation as providing things that your competitors *do not*. In today’s highly competitive world of professional photography, you must do things differently than your competitors, or people will have no choice but to compare your price—and in that scenario, the true professional will lose out every time.