

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Welcome to episode number five, how to charge your worth. I'm Nicole Begley and today we're going to be talking about how to build the perceived value of your brand so that clients are willing to pay for the pet photography you offer. Can't wait to dive in.

Speaker 2 ([00:17](#)):

Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. If you're a pet photographer, ready to make more money and start living a life by your design, you've come to the right place and now your host, pet photographer, travel addicts, chocolate martini connoisseur, Nicole Begley.

Speaker 1 ([00:36](#)):

Hey everybody. Nicole here and I'm so glad you're joining me for yet another podcast episode. I hope you've been enjoying the new podcast and if you could take just a few minutes to leave a rating or review or even you're listening, but especially if you're listening on iTunes, I would really, really appreciate it. Really helps get the show found by more people. The thing that's in it for you though is you can go ahead and leave any questions that you have right there in the review. And I will be reviewing those and I'll be taking our listeners questions that they're leaving in those reviews and diving into them into future episodes. So that's definitely one way to get your answers or your questions answered directly by me right here on that podcast. So let me know what's been a challenge for you in your business. I can't wait to help you out.

Speaker 1 ([01:24](#)):

Now, today we're going to be diving into a question that so many pet photographers have, and that is how do I charge what I'm worth? This question comes up time and time again. And part of that reason is because, well, we're our own worst enemies, right? We might be looking at others in our market, and really that comparison is never a good thing. So as you start looking around at others in your market, you might be seeing that, Oh gosh, there's people that are charging less. Oh no one's gonna pay that. Oh, those people that are charging less or actually pretty good. I'm in a smaller town. There's not enough people to pull from. There's just too many photographers around me. Do any of those sound familiar? I have a feeling that some of them might, but here's the truth, that every single community is crowded and getting more crowded by the day.

Speaker 1 ([02:14](#)):

Yes. If you're in a small town, maybe there's two or three other pet photographers, but if you go to a big city, maybe there's 10 or 20 and that number literally is growing all of the time, so quite frankly, it's irrelevant. Who cares what others are doing and what others are charging. I encourage you to focus directly on your business, not to be looking at what everybody else is doing and causing that to second guess what you're in business for in what you are offering your clients. The only limitation that you're facing is actually from you and your beliefs. What you believe is possible in your area. It's not about the competition, but it's about how you share your value to potential clients. You absolutely need to stand out in your market. Whether it's a big market or a small market and we're going to be talking about how to do that right here in this episode.

Speaker 1 ([03:02](#)):

Now, before we jump into this perceived value thing, one thing that we need to make sure that's covered is that you are priced appropriately and I have a question for you. Do you even know what

appropriately is? Do you know what you're actually worth? Do you have any idea what your time is worth? Now I look around and I ask other pet photographers. How did you determine your pricing? You know what? The majority of them say, well, I did research in my market and by research in my market they mean they look to see what other pet photographers were charging and then they pick their pricing based on that. Now that has a whole inherent litany of things that can go wrong there. Number one, do you have any idea if that pet photographer is booking any clients? Do you have any idea if they're profitable?

Speaker 1 ([03:45](#)):

Do you have any idea what their business expenses are? Do you know how many clients they take for year? Do you know what they're selling? Do you know what their profit margins are? No, you have no idea. You are literally just grasping at straws in the dark. You have no idea if that pricing is profitable or not. Well, I do have some good news for you. I do have a free pricing one Oh one class@hairofthedogacademy.com slash pricing one Oh one if you want to go download that, it's 100% free and it will take you through my pricing formula so you can figure out what your target sale needs to be. That is what you can use to build your products, to build your pricing, to really build everything in your business around that number because the numbers will tell you what that needs to be to be profitable and some of the things we take into account for this formula.

Speaker 1 ([04:37](#)):

Are we taken to your cost of doing business? How many costs do you have? What does it actually cost you to have your business in place? How many hours do you have to work? Is this a part time thing? Is this a full time thing? How many hours do you want to work? How many hours does it take you per client? Are you a boutique business that's only seeing a couple of clients a month? And maybe it's taking you 15 hours per client or are you more high volume where it's only taking you two hours per client. Or maybe you're doing like mini sessions that are really an hour per client with your editing time and your shooting time. So there's lots of different models. So that all needs to be taken into account. And then of course one of the most important factors is your income goal. If you don't know how much money you want to make in your business, how on earth are you supposed to figure out how much you should be charging?

Speaker 1 ([05:25](#)):

So those are all different things that we go into. And this pricing one Oh one class, it's a quick hour long class that walks you through this formula so that you know what you should be charging and what you should build your business around in terms of pricing and products. So next up, this is where we dive into the value and that is your perceived value to your client needs to match what your actual pricing is. Remember, your worth is only accurate if your clients perceive it to be accurate. It doesn't matter how many times you've said, Oh, I'm educated. Oh, I have these degrees. Oh, I've been doing this for 30 years. It doesn't matter. The only things that matter is the perception that your clients have about your business and your value, and I know there's a lot of photographers out there that we're saying things to ourselves like, Oh my gosh, I create work that's so much better than shoot and burn Sally down the street.

Speaker 1 ([06:20](#)):

But why does she have so many more clients than me? Well, it's because your clients are looking at her business and your business and they're not seeing enough of a differentiation between the value of her

business and the value of yours. They're saying in their mind, I'd rather say 500 to a thousand dollars and choose the cheap but good enough, shoot and burn Sally over a full service experience because you have not been painting the value of what you're offering in comparison to what shoot and burn Sally's offering. My apologies to anyone named Sally. The truth of the matter is that your clients just having a conversation in their head, they're trying to rationalize your extra expense and unless you communicate that they're going to choose the least expensive option. More often than not, and you know this isn't our client's fault. This is where many photographers become a victim.

Speaker 1 ([07:15](#)):

It's my market. It's my competition. No one's going to pay that here. No one values that. Here you're blaming everybody in everything other than yourself, but it's no one's fault but our own. We simply did not paint the picture of the value that we offer. The truth is if they perceived your value to be accurate, they would buy it. They would pay it happily. I want you to think of a time that you splurged on something. For me that splurge often comes down to really good dinners out at nice restaurants and travel. I am happy to pay more for a seat that's more comfortable for a long haul flight. I am happy to pay more when I'm on vacation and I want an experience now the holiday Inn express works great when I'm just traveling and I just need a place to sleep. However, that's not going to be what I choose when I'm on vacation and I want to relax and I want to enjoy the experience.

Speaker 1 ([08:09](#)):

Now I want you to think about it this way. What if there was a holiday Inn express? There was a brand new, it was a beautiful building. It had just a gorgeous building and it included a really nice restaurant with great dinner. It had a spa, it had a beautiful resort style pool, but it was priced at \$500 a night. I have a feeling they would be hard pressed to find people to stay there. Why? Because of the brand value that they have. Their brand is a nice, clean, efficient, easy place to stay when you're traveling, when you are at a business meeting, when the goal of your experience isn't to stay at the hotel all day and like just relax your goal, your need is just a place to sleep. They do that really, really well. They have great breakfast in the morning. It includes cinnamon rolls.

Speaker 1 ([08:57](#)):

I love cinnamon rolls. Great. I'm happy to stay there on times like that, but they don't share, produce the value for what I'm looking for. If I'm going away for a nice relaxing vacation. Now, do I need to spend the night in a nice hotel or eat dinner at a Michelin star restaurant? No. There's plenty of places that will meet my needs for food and shelter at much lower price points, but because I value these experiences, I seek them out and I gladly pay for them. I want you to think of something that you value. What do you value in your life that you will seek out and you will gladly pay more for? Now, this might also start to trigger some of you where this is pretty common too. Once we figure out what our prices need to be, we often think we get fearful that, gosh, no one's going to pay these and we think that everybody has the same money issues and the same money judgment and the same judgment as spending your money on certain things that we bring to the table, but they don't.

Speaker 1 ([10:04](#)):

I know there's plenty of people out there that would never go out to dinner and spend \$150 per person at dinner. I'm not doing that every week, but I certainly love to do that every once in awhile when I'm away and when I have the opportunity to eat at restaurants I would never be able to eat to at at home. Same thing with what I'm in Ireland and I want to spend the night at Ashford castle. Yes, why not? But I

know there's a lot of people that would value spending their dollars in another way and that is 100% okay. The thing we need to do is we need to make sure that we are determining, not determining, but we are showcasing our value to those potential clients that value pet photography that value what we offer. You know, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with not wanting to be at that high end of the market.

Speaker 1 ([10:55](#)):

There are plenty of people out there that make a great living doing more of a lower price point, higher volume style of photography. It really depends on how you want to structure your business and how you want to structure your life and going through that pricing one-on-one free training will help you figure out what that looks like because it takes into account how many clients you can serve based on how you're serving those clients with the amount of time that you take per client and the amount of hours that you have to devote to your business because you know there, there's still a very successful market for both. You just need to determine which one you want to be in. The holiday Inn express and the Ritz Carlton are both very successful, but if you look at both of those websites and their messaging and what they offer, they speak to two totally different markets.

Speaker 1 ([11:40](#)):

And even if they're serving the same market, for instance, I would be a customer to both of those markets because when I'm traveling again, when I just need a place to sleep, I love the holiday Inn express, but when I'm on vacation I want an, so I would be looking more for a resort for someplace with service and experience and really just a place to be pampered and I realized that comes with the cost and I'm okay with that. So if you want to charge those boutique prices, you need to be super clear about what you offer and what makes you worth it and what makes you the best in your market. I've got a little spoiler alert for you though. If it's, well, I've been doing this the longest or I create great images or I have more awards, that's not enough. I hate to break it to you, but it's not enough.

Speaker 1 ([12:26](#)):

We need to look at it as what's in it for our clients and then how do we tell them, show them what's in it for them and how we differ from the shoot and burn Sally's down the street. Can you talk about what goes into the creation process? Can you talk about what artwork you were creating? Can you show examples of beautiful finished artwork in homes? Even if it's just Photoshop mockups, can you give a great service of installing the art worker, hiring someone to install the artwork for them? It's okay that all of these things come at a cost and that installing the artwork can be an extra add on if you want or if they spend it a certain amount. You can build your business however you want. I just want you to make sure you are really looking at what value do you bring to the table and how are you communicating that to potential clients.

Speaker 1 ([13:19](#)):

Now there's one other piece to the puzzle here and that is is your brand in alignment with the market that you want to serve? Remember it's not enough just to say your boutique and then offer that service. Just like a holiday Inn express. Can't just say, Hey, we're boutique, we're \$600 a night, come check us out or a resort. It doesn't work that way. Everything around the business needs to point towards that value. It needs to support that value and it needs to provide that experience. You need to walk the talk and all of that starts with brand alignment. I want you to think about a high end hairdresser. What if you

walked into a high end hairdresser, we're talking maybe like, you know, \$100 for a cut can't get out of there for less than \$300 for cut and color and you walked in and there was old hair on the floor.

Speaker 1 ([14:05](#)):

They hadn't quite swept up yet and they had shelves that had just tons of products on it. Kind of like mismatched, not very labeled very well and just like stuffed with things. Maybe there was just ugly fluorescent lighting and you know, it was just very, just not the feeling that you would expect where you're spending that much money and even if they had the best cut and color in the Tristate area, there would be a disconnect and I would imagine they would have a serious struggle trying to stay profitable, trying to bring in enough clients because the client experience the client expectations, the client value is not there. Now, what if they produced a great cut and color, but they were in a beautiful building with chandelier's and pretty lighting, beautifully displayed products, clean floors, warm towels. When you sat down, maybe they put a warm shoulder wrap on you.

Speaker 1 ([14:57](#)):

They gave you water, they gave you tea. Maybe they give you a little scout massage when they're washing your hair. People will pay more for this very, very happily. Of course, the cut and color quality has to be good, but it doesn't have to be the best. It needs to be good. They need to be happy with the quality, but it's the experience they're paying for. It's all the other things that go along with the actual cut and color that keeps them coming back to an experience like that. So what parts of a photography business can be out of alignment? The one that I see most often is a website you guys websites change in the blink of an eye. Google keeps changing and the blink of an eye, Google is going to start penalizing sites that load slowly, Oh, hello photographers with all of our giant images on them.

Speaker 1 ([15:42](#)):

That's something we should start looking at. Google's already been penalizing sites that weren't mobile responsive because something crazy, I'm pulling this number out of the air, but a majority of people, I won't even say a number. The majority of people are actually browsing on mobile more than desktop. So you need to make sure that website experience speaks to the value that you're, that you're offering and that that website feels in line with your brand, that it feels in line with the price point of what you're selling. Now if you are maybe buying \$1 million home or selling your nice home and you hired what you were told was the best realtor in the area, they're very, very successful and they showed up in like a 15 year old car with rust around the wheel Wells. Well that's going to be a brand disconnect and I think many of us would be like, Oh wait, they don't seem to really be knowing what they're doing because um, yeah, if they did they would be much more successful from that.

Speaker 1 ([16:42](#)):

So our website needs to speak to that to the successful business that we are or we aim to be and it needs to be clean easily to navigate and needs to have the value on there. How we serve our clients, how we're different, all the things we talked about so far in this episode. The other place that I see a lot of businesses be out of alignment is with their email addresses@gmail.com email address does not speak to a high end luxury experience. It speaks to, Oh this was free and somebody just set this up recently. It's so easy guys to get. You can, you don't even have to pay anything extra. If you have your own URL, your own custom domain name. Usually email comes with that and you can with a little bit of tech and a little bit of tech support, you can route that email into your Gmail address, but it sends from

your domain URL, so like Nicola, Nicole, begley.com it would send from that set of Nicole Begley photography@gmail.com things like that make a huge difference.

Speaker 1 ([17:40](#)):

They add up in the perceived value of your business. The other place that I see a lot of people struggle is with the inquiry process. Okay, so we've created this beautiful business. We have a nice website, we have our branded email address and somebody inquires and we send them a PDF that's like flat together or a word document that's not really pretty with our pricing and we're not reaching out to them. We're not talking to them. We're not finding out what their needs are. We're not attempting. I know that you can't always get everyone on the phone, but we should attempt to actually reach out to our potential clients and see how we can serve them. Because at a higher level experience, it's all about the custom service. So you want to make sure your inquiry process is easy, it's straightforward, and that you are offering the highest level of service possible.

Speaker 1 ([18:31](#)):

And same thing with your products. You want to make sure you're offering high quality products that are unique, unique. You don't want to be offering products that they can get at Costco, they can get at Shutterfly. You want it to be unique. And last but not least, wrapping it up with that packaging that really literally is the bow on top of their experience to when the last things they're going to remember. If they just spent \$4,000 for their order and you show up and give it to them in like a plastic bag that just does not compute. Think about if you wanted to Tiffany's and bought their \$800 14 karat gold paperclip, which they sell it. There must be a market for it. I guarantee you it doesn't come in a little plastic bag. They're putting it in a beautiful box with a beautiful bow into a paper bag that is branded with lots of their blue tissue paper.

Speaker 1 ([19:19](#)):

The act of buying it becomes an experience. What you just bought becomes like a beautifully wrapped present. So what is your presentation that you are offering your clients when they're picking up their products? I hope you guys found this helpful and gives you another perspective on ways that we can start to increase our value to our potential clients. Don't forget to grab that pricing one-on-one freebie if you aren't exactly sure how you came up with your pricing or your, if we're not sure if your pricing is actually based in numbers and science based on your business, just go to hair of the dog academy.com/pricing one Oh one and please don't forget just to go ahead and subscribe, leave a review, leave your questions in the reviews and I would be happy to come back to those and answer some of those questions just for you. Until next time, have a great week. And remember, progress is always better than perfection.

Speaker 2 ([20:13](#)):

Thanks for listening to this episode of hair of the dog podcast. If you enjoyed this show, please take a minute to leave a review and while you're there, don't forget to subscribe so you don't miss our upcoming episodes. One last thing, if you are ready to dive into more resources, head over to our website@wwwdotharropthedogacademy.com. Thanks for being a part of this pet photography community.