

00:00:00 Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. I'm Nicole Begley. And today we are talking about sales. There are actually eight steps in the sales process, not just the actual sales session. So I'm going to be taking you through all of them. Stay tuned. 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,

00:00:26 you've come to the right place. And now your host pet photographer, travel addicts, chocolate martini, calmness, sewer, Nicole Begley. Hey everybody, Nicole here. Welcome back to the hair of the dog podcast. Today, we are going to be talking about the eight steps to successful sales. Now these eight steps are important for any type of sales process that you are doing.

00:00:50 Whether it's in-person sales should be called live person sales now, cause it could be zoom or in person, or if you're selling over a gallery, these eight steps are still really, really critical. Now I'm a huge believer in in-person sales, but that's a conversation for another day today. I want to focus on these eight steps that help to serve your client better.

00:01:11 It's really the client education of the experience that helps them learn the value of what they're receiving and also really learn what the opportunities are, what the options are. Because a lot of times when we get asked the question during the inquiry of how much are your digital files or do you sell digital files? That's because they don't know what to ask. They don't even know what we offer.

00:01:37 Maybe they possibly know we have some wall art, but they don't know the specifics of that. They don't know what to ask. They only know to ask what they know, which is usually prints and now more likely digital files. So these eight steps are going to help you from that initial conversation. Actually, even before that conversation all the way through,

00:01:57 till the end of your time with that client from the sales session and beyond. So let's get started. Shall we? Our first step is actually before they even become a client, it's all the way back on that website of ours, because this is where we plant the seed of the sale. Our website needs to speak to our target market and draw them in.

00:02:21 And it should also start to kind of let people that aren't a right fit. See that they might not be the right fit. So our website is really, really critical. It is our storefront. Most of us don't have a retail space. So everyone is going to go through the gateway of our website. So it's really important that we really think about what it is that's on our website and what are we telling people now,

00:02:45 I think the most important thing to have on your website is information about what you sell. Guys. We don't sell photography, we sell artwork, we sell albums. Maybe you sell digital files who knows whatever you're selling. That's what we need to speak to. It's not just the photographs, it's the whole experience. So this is where we start to build the value.

00:03:10 This is where we start to explore how we are different from others. And that can be things like showing Casey and our signature product and also explaining the experience we're selling the experience. We can use storytelling, descriptive words, and talk about the benefits of the experience and our products. This is where a lot of people start to go. Astray is whenever they're start starting to talk about their products and they're sharing the features,

00:03:40 the features would be things like a print. It is a print and it smelled a non styrene with a UV protectant and a linen texture. All right. I might as well speak speaking Greek to most of our clients.

They don't understand what any of that is. So when you start to explain your products, in terms of those features, you're going to lose them.

00:04:00 It's going to go right over their head. They're not going to pay attention. They're not going to see the value. They're just going to kind of tune out and go to something else because that's not terms that they usually think of or hear. So instead of explaining that it's a print mounted on styrene with a UV protectant in a linen texture, I would explain the benefits.

00:04:19 The benefits are that here's the print. It's a fine art archival print. It's mounted on this backing so that it won't bend. You have a UV coating on it so that it won't fade. And I have a linen texture just because it's beautiful. So that's how I explain my prints. You can do the same thing for your wall art, for your albums,

00:04:39 for your digital files, for everything that you're selling, make a list of the benefits. Maybe you can start with making a list of the features. And then what are the benefits for that feature? Don't forget to talk about the intangible benefits as well. Things like, you know, a great way to showcase your relationship with your dog or your horse and something.

00:04:59 That'll be on the wall for you to see every day, every morning, when you come down for coffee, you know, all of those intangible benefits as well. One of the other really critical pieces to be on your website is speaking to your potential clients, objections for dog photography. This is often that my dog is not well enough behaved to be able to do a photography session for 'em or they're also thinking that my dog can't be off leash.

00:05:28 So therefore there's no way I can create these beautiful images of my dog because look, and none of these dogs were on leash. So those two objections should always, always, always be spoken to at every point of contact prior to your client, booking your session. And sometimes even after that, before the session, but certainly on your website, speak to both of those things.

00:05:49 If you're a equine photographer, then often those objections are more my barn. Isn't pretty. So they're going to see all these beautiful images on your website and think, well, gosh, that would be great. But the barn, my horse is ad is muddy. The fences braking. There's just nothing, all that pretty there. So we need to show them that,

00:06:08 okay, no, we can create beautiful images in any situation. The other objection for this can be dog clients and horse clients, but especially horse clients, because each client clients, the owners tend to be in more images than the dog clients. Sometimes dog clients want just the dog, but equine clients usually definitely want them and their equine partner. And they're worried about not knowing how to pose,

00:06:33 not knowing what to do, thinking the look, you know, they there'll be uncomfortable or they won't look good or that their horse won't behave as well. So all of those things are things we should speak to on our website. All right. Number two, for our eight steps to a better sale is the inquiry. Now we need to install a little bit of an easy button here.

00:06:57 I can't tell you how many websites I've gone to, where you have to dig to figure out how the heck to get in touch with the photographer or how to book the photographer. Let's not do that. Let's

install that easy button right up there on that top right hand section of your website. That's the most valuable website real estate right up there have a button that says,

00:07:18 contact me book. Now some sort of call to action. So people can have a way to get in touch with you that is seen on every single site of yours. So after they inquire now, what now it's time to share some more information. What information are you sharing that with them? Are you having an automated email that goes out immediately after they inquire?

00:07:40 So they get some information right away and in that you can let them know when you can. They can expect to hear from you. What I love to do now is send a loom video or a video or an email where I have my little face in a video in there saying, hello, introducing myself, talking about their dog, telling them, you know,

00:07:59 about the process, asking them a couple questions. I have found that working video into my inquiry process has actually negated the need to have to get my clients on the phone. Not all the time. I still always offer the phone as a way to get in touch with me and a way to move forward. But it's not the only way to move forward.

00:08:21 And video makes that possible. If you guys haven't listened to it yet, listen to episode number 45 of the hair of the dog podcast. And that is when we had Andrew helmet on the podcast and he was talking all about working video into our business and it was just brilliant. 100% recommend. So definitely go listen to that. All right. So we have our inquiry.

00:08:46 We've talked to our clients, we've sent them some information again, when we're sending them that information, we need to speak to those objections. I just talked about. We need to showcase what we do. One of the most important questions to ask any potential client is, have you given any thought as to how you would like to display your images after the session?

00:09:07 Most of the time people are going to say, Oh, I have no idea. Or they'll just say, Oh, maybe some digital files. Then this leaves the door open for you to say, well, what most clients love to do? Most of my clients love to do. That's just really my favorite phrase. Most of my clients, most clients.

00:09:25 And then you get to explain what most clients do. So I usually say most of my clients love, choose to invest in wall art. And then they may add on an album or the digital files. They love the wall art for their homes so they can enjoy their images every day. And usually it's the most impactful image of just their dog or sometimes they choose to put a family photo on the wall.

00:09:45 So this allows you the opening to start to talk about your products, to again, share that value, to start planting the seeds of the sale, because that's what that little phrase most clients or most popular does is it lets your potential client know what most people tend to do. And as humans we want to do what most people do. So that is a great way to start to have that conversation.

00:10:09 Now, this inquiry process is also where we start to pre-qualify the client in order to hold onto your sanity. It's really important that you realize that we're not the photographer for everyone. That most of us could only serve maybe 75 people a year. Like we can't serve everyone. So it is okay that some people are going to get in touch with us and they are not going to be people that move forward with the process.

00:10:35 And I know that's really hard and I know a lot of times we get in our head and you know, I'm raising my hand guilty. I am too. Sometimes every time when I get an inquiry that comes back that says, Oh, it's out of our budget. I start to question myself, Oh my gosh, maybe I am too expensive. I should lower my prices.

00:10:53 And then I like, you know, smack myself gently on the cheek and say, no, your prices are fine. You know what your prices are because you know what you need for a sustainable visit business. And then I snap right out of that and realized that that was not my client. So that is okay if you aren't getting the answer that you're too expensive,

00:11:13 somewhat regularly, then you're probably priced way too low. And you can definitely start to raise your prices. All right, here we are with step number three and that is lead management. So these leads come in, you respond to them, but do you ever follow up again because let's face it. Life is busy. Life's getting busier all the time.

00:11:36 We are just bombarded with emails and phone calls and things we need to do and work can, now that we're all working virtually work just never ends. So life is really, really busy. And even if you have clients that are like, you know, a heck, yes, they want to do this. They are ready to book, but they just kind of forget and they mean to do it.

00:11:57 But then the week goes by and then another week and then a month, have you gotten back in touch with them? So it's really, really important to follow up with our leads, just to reach back out and say, Hey, Nicole, here just wanted to check back in to see if you had any other questions or if you are ready to move forward and book a session and that's it.

00:12:13 Sometimes people will get back to you and say, Oh, I can't move forward right now. Okay. No problem. Thank you then for getting back to you and then move on and maybe they still won't respond. Okay. I'll respond three times. I'll follow up three times. And sometimes they respond and say, Oh my gosh, thanks so much for getting in touch.

00:12:30 Yes. I definitely want to move forward with this. I just clicked the link to book. So follow up, but we need to do is create a way to keep track of those leads. You can do that with things like a client management software like<inaudible> or TAVI or sprout studio, or you can even do something as basic as a spreadsheet or an actual written list.

00:12:54 Or one of my favorite things to do is this software. It's called you go to a website it's called follow up then.com follow up. And then T H E n.com and sign up it's free. And what you can do then is in your email, when that inquiry comes in, you respond to it and then you can forward their inquiry that came into your email to four days@followupthen.com.

00:13:19 And in four days, it pops back in your inbox and you're like, Oh, that's right. I need to follow up with these people. Or if they booked, obviously just delete it. You don't need to follow up with them. So that's a great way to be reminded of your followups. It also works really well for when you're booking airline tickets.

00:13:36 You can follow up, you know, to come into your inbox the day before your flight. So there it is when I need to check in car rentals, hotels, all that kind of stuff. I love follow-up then.com

works really, really well. Totally free. You're welcome. All right. Step number four. Let's educate our client. Now you might have said Nicole,

00:13:55 we were already educated in our client. Yes, but now we're going to do it again. So the theme of this podcast episode shouldn't have been necessarily eight steps to sales. It should have been educating your clients in eight steps. So step four, educate your clients. This is critical. This is the education that happens after they've booked, but before you shoot the session,

00:14:18 and this is where the sale is made, not in the sales room. So what is your communication plan with that client prior to the session? Do you give them any printed resources or digital resources? What do you do for me after they book their session, I send them to a Calendly link and they book a zoom call with me zoom consultation so that they can,

00:14:43 we can plan the details of our session. And during that time we do all the things we finalize the date, the location, the time I talk about leashes and what to bring and what to expect and all that stuff. But we also talk about, okay, you mentioned before that you were thinking of doing X, Y, or Z with your images.

00:15:03 Are you still thinking that, can you send me some images of your living room with a piece of paper over the couch so that I can, you know, properly size this area? I can see what it looks like, talk about how they decorate their house. You just talk about what you're going to create together. And then they get excited. They get bought into it,

00:15:23 and that is what they're going to do. And it just works really, really well. And it allows you to serve them better because you now know what they are going to want. You know, what area of the house you're shooting for. Maybe they don't have a big horizontal area, but there's this really neat spot of the house. Would they want to put something on that wall?

00:15:45 And it needs to be tall and skinny, or maybe it could be three squares and a vertical arrangement, you know, all sorts of different things like that. Or if they're shooting for an album, they want to do an album. Okay. I'm going to have to photograph an album session differently than someone that just wants one big, beautiful print on the wall.

00:16:02 For instance, I've had clients that have booked me and they literally want one wall piece. That is it. And that is fine. I am happy to do those sessions all day long. We shoot for 15, 20 minutes. It is done. We have these beautiful images. We create one big, beautiful wall piece. I love doing that, but it depends.

00:16:20 You have to have that conversation because I wouldn't just do that. And then just expect them, they're going to do a wall piece or then try to sell them an album. Like you need to have this conversation before. So you have an idea. And even if we're going in for one wall piece, I will still ask, Hey, would you like me to do some extra ones of the dogs?

00:16:36 And sometimes they'll be like, Oh no, I really just want that wall piece. Sometimes they'll say, you know, yes. And I'll shoot a little bit more. So there's still some room to, to upsell some other things. If they would like some additional things as well. But having that conversation is absolutely critical. All right, we're at step five and now it's time for the session.

00:16:53 And this is the most exciting part. Right? So during the session, share the excitement. It's okay to show them a favorite image on the back of the camera. Just make sure it's one. That's gonna make the cut because a lot of times people think, Oh my gosh, my dog is not behaving. My dog is just running around. This is not going well,

00:17:10 what are we going to do? Oh, I knew this wasn't going to work. So I'll sometimes when I get a really good expression, really great image, I'll just go over and be like, Oh my gosh, look how cute fluffy is. These are turning out amazing. And the client's like, Oh my gosh, that's so good. I love it.

00:17:24 And then it just calms them down. It also can help build an excitement, letting them know the session's going well. And you can also, you know, sometimes be like, Oh my gosh, this will be so beautiful on your wall. Or I can't wait to see, you know, all these different wall options for your house. These are going to be so great.

00:17:41 So just sharing that type of excitement as you photograph all right now up the sales session. Okay. All right. You guys, if you haven't done these five steps prior to this, this can get really, really awkward because you know, you want to make sure that you've had this conversation. You want to make sure your client has seen the pricing.

00:18:03 I do know some photographers that they don't share pricing until they get in the sales room. I'm not saying there's right and wrong. I'm just for me. I don't like that. I don't like the uncomfortable situation of not sharing pricing until the sales room, because my pricing is not necessarily inexpensive and that can just be awkward. So I am of the belief for me,

00:18:23 for my business to share my pricing at the beginning, throughout the process. So once we get to the sales session, they already know exactly what they want to purchase. Now, if you want to go through a wholesale session that I do, I have on the hair of the dog Academy. If you go to hair of the dog academy.com/sales session, just one word lowercase.

00:18:48 There are three videos on the blog that I walk you through my entire sales session. So definitely go check that out. If you want to know what happens in the actual sales session, that is hair of the dog academy.com/sales session, it'll take you to the first one and then there'll be links underneath to go to the other two videos. All right? But the sales session itself should be the fun part.

00:19:12 The major purchasing decisions have already been made. They already kind of know what they're going to get. We share the images. We guide them through the process and it's just fun. All right. Step seven. You're like, wait, Nicole, you said there were eight steps. And we already got to the sales session. That's right, hang tight,

00:19:30 step seven delivery. This is fun. This is where you get to share this beautiful image, these beautiful pieces of art that you've created together. So just have fun with that. Thank them. Include a special gift. You can have some little art care cards, digital file uses cards, referral cards, all that stuff. If you don't have any of that marketing,

00:19:49 and you're a hair of the dog Academy member, we have all of those marketing and templates in the Academy. We have session preparation, guides, product guides, inquiry, guides, all of the things. So if you're an Academy member, definitely check out those templates. If you're not an Academy member, well, you should join us in the Academy,

00:20:06 but that's the delivery. Just a fun way to share the artwork with your client. And then step eight. This is keeping in touch. This is following up sending holiday cards or small gift at the holidays. You know, maybe you send gotcha day cards to your, for the dog scotch a day. Something you can ask when your client is onboarding,

00:20:24 when your client is booking their session and just keeping in touch with your client and shooting out a note. And you know, sometimes, maybe a year later, you're going through some images and you just send a little note, Oh my gosh, I was just cleaning up some files. And I saw a picture of fluffy. And I just wanted to say,

00:20:40 I'm thinking about you guys help fluffy as well. Hope you're well, have a great week. Those little things like that. Keep you friend of mine. It keeps them excited to share you with additional people because you guys referrals in our business are absolutely huge. One of the other things you can do as well as to have a survey check in after their delivery can ask open-ended questions,

00:21:00 you can link to your Google business page and ask them to leave a review there. Things like that really are just the icing on the cake of your sales process and then helps build value and social proof for future clients that come through your processes. So there you have it, eight steps to better sales. I hope you guys found that useful. We are actually going to continue on this little sales sales binge next week.

00:21:31 Join us. We'll be talking about sales objections in the sales room, as well as what you actually need for in-person sales. So we're going to talk a little bit about that. Again, it should be called live sales now in a pandemic world because things are not in person so much anymore, but anyway, in person zoom, live, whatever. We're going to talk about what you need to start to move from.

00:21:55 Maybe galleries to that. Why you might want to move from galleries to that pros and cons of both and those objections. And then the week after that, we're going to have your very favorite guest, Heather Latin and back. And we are going to talk about the fear of selling and getting out of our own head, getting out of our own way and feeling good about the service we are offering to our clients.

00:22:16 So stay tuned. We can't wait to see you next week. Have a great week. Everyone. See you later. 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,

00:22:37 if you are ready to dive into more resources, head over to our website@wwdothairofthedogacademy.com. Thanks for being a part of this pet photography community.