

00:00:00 Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. I'm Nicole Begley. And today we are talking about the three keys to profitable mini sessions with Megan Murray, from Megan Roddy photography. If you've been considering hosting mini sessions are hosting mini sessions, or even if you've done it in the past. And you're like no way mini sessions aren't for me. Well, no matter what,

00:00:20 you still want to listen to this episode because we are giving you the secret to be able to do them profitably and from a place from ease. And I think you're really going to enjoy it. So 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,

00:00:41 you've come to the right place. And now your host pet photographer, travel addicts, chocolate martini, comma sewer, Nicole Begley. Hey, everybody, Nicole here from hair of the dog Academy here, the dog podcast. And I am here with a guest that we just had on the show, but it was such a great conversation. We had so much great feedback from all of you out there and hair of the dog land that we decided to have her back because we wanted to talk a little bit more about what we started talking about in our long roundabout.

00:01:12 Awesome interview. Last time. That's all I'm going to share about that. You're going to have to go listen to it. It is episode number 63, taking calculated risks with none other than Megan Murray from Megan Murray photography in Houston, Texas. Megan, welcome back to the podcast. Well, thanks for having me back, Nicole. Of course, of course.

00:01:34 So excited to have you back. Yeah. Our conversation was so good about, you know, taking calculated risk, whether that's leaving corporate or different risks in our business or personal life and how it's a really great conversation. So if you guys haven't heard that one, definitely go listen to that. You can listen to this one first, because I don't think either one has to be listened to in order,

00:01:52 but it was definitely worth the listen, if you guys haven't heard it. So thanks for being here. Yeah. Great. Awesome. Awesome. So, yeah, so today we started talking about mini sessions a little bit at the end of that podcast and we're like, Oh man, we just need to do a whole nother episode because you and I are,

00:02:08 you know, soul sisters of the loving, the spreadsheets and the numbers so much. And you and I both have a soft spot for many sessions. Yes. You know, I feel like people either love many sessions or they hate many sessions. And I'm definitely in the love camp because I think that if you're strategic about it, they can serve a need for your clients and your business.

00:02:31 Yeah, absolutely. And full disclosure here, we are going to be calling the mini sessions. However, neither one of us think that you should advertise mini sessions. This is a back end term. Only. This is not a front of house term. We do not advertise mini sessions because

that just there's so many better ways, limited edition sessions. That's what I usually call them artists and sessions.

00:02:54 I've also used the term collector's edition, or sometimes I'll even just Come up with a special name depending on what the theme is for them, for the session Bluebonnet sessions or Lakeside sessions or whatever, whatever the topic is. I love that. So yeah. So we'll be referring to them as many sessions guys, but just wanted to put that out there at the beginning that that's not our marketing term.

00:03:17 That's just for our internal reference only because they are in fact many. Let's talk about these mini sessions. And I think there's so much out there in the photography industry of you listen. And some people are saying, you know, as you said, you either love them or maybe don't love them as much. And as far as the education part, there's people out there teaching all mini sessions are great.

00:03:40 And there's also people out there teaching like, Oh my gosh, mini sessions will run your business under the ground. You can never ever do them. So Megan, why would you maybe recommend someone consider doing a mini sessions? There's several different reasons that I think are a good way to incorporate many sessions. The first one is to just get creative. So if you have a personal project or something that you've been wanting to do,

00:04:05 maybe you test it out on a mini session and see how it goes with your market. The next reason would be to fulfill a client need. So I'm sure all of you have had people calling you in November and December asking for Christmas card photos. A mini session is a great way to fulfill that client need without taking up a complete full custom session on your calendar.

00:04:28 Then there's a lot of ways where you can get in front of a new clientele. So if you partner with a nonprofit or if you partner with a, another business in your area, you can collaborate and create a mini session event to raise money. And you also get in front of a new audience that way. Yeah. I'll go ahead. Go ahead.

00:04:51 Last but not least mini sessions are a great way to, to bring in additional income into your business. Yes, yes, absolutely. I was going to say I got all excited because the partner, the charity partner businesses, that is one of my favorite ways to market my business for the past 10 years was collaborating with a charity, sometimes a for-profit business too,

00:05:13 and creating sometimes they're full sessions. Sometimes there are many sessions. It really depends on what the goals and the intentions are, but it's always such a win, win, win. It's a win for these new clients that are coming in to our businesses. They get some pet photography at a more approachable price because I think a lot of times for our full sessions,

00:05:35 they get pretty expensive and it can be kind of shocking for someone that's

never priced for any professional photography before. Especially a lot of my clients, I'm sure yours are too Megan. A few of them are young professionals, maybe that haven't even hired a wedding photographer yet. So they really have no idea what professional pet photography or professional photography can cost and can be pretty surprising.

00:05:58 So many sessions are such a great way to start in, introduce them into this world of professional photography. I know one of the things that I teach around mini sessions, and we talked about this briefly before, and we agree there's kind of three main points that we need to make sure that we keep in mind whenever we're doing our mini sessions. Number one is to make sure that we are being cognizant of our time because often a mini session.

00:06:26 Is it a little bit of a lower price point? And guess what? It's not very profitable. If you are still doing 10 hours per client in a mini session, the same as you are for your regular sessions. So therefore as many sessions better be bringing in as much profit as the full session. No, no, no. If we're going to be having these smaller price sessions,

00:06:44 they can have 100% still be profitable, but we need to be really cognizant of our time. And we can talk about some of the ways that we streamline that. And then number two is to make sure that they are in fact profitable. So time is only half of that profitability factor. And the other half is of course what we're offering of our product.

00:07:02 And then my third role is that it needs to be different or specific. So if it's just, Hey, my normal sessions are in the park or here and there and you get 30 images in my mini session. Oh, look, it's the same thing. And you get 20 images. That's not enough of a differentiation. And it really well prevent a lot of people from booking your,

00:07:22 your main session instead of being like a taste. And then they want more later on, it becomes the full meal. That's exactly right. And this is a really great exercise that I recommend that photographers do. If you are thinking about doing a mini mini session, take out a piece of paper and make two columns on it. One is for your regular sessions and one is for your mini sessions and you're going to write down,

00:07:46 you know, what dates you're going to allow, what locations you're going to allow, how long the session will be, how many proofs you're going to show, you know, kind of all of the things will you do planning upfront what's the sales look like on the back end and basically flesh out how your mini session is going to be differentiated from your regular session,

00:08:05 because exactly what you said, these need to be just a taste of your offering and not the complete full custom photography experience. And that's gonna tie into streamlining your workflow and protecting your time going into this. And honestly, I think that's where a lot of photographers end up hating many sessions is because they don't do this exercise. They don't

clearly differentiate their minis from a regular session.

00:08:32 And then they start to get resentful because they're, they're giving more to the client than what they should be for the price. So, yeah, that's my number one goal in, or my number one must do for many sessions is to make sure that it's different. And there's a lot of different ways that you can differentiate a mini from a regular session.

00:08:50 It can be the number of subjects that you allow. It can be the location. It can be, you know, maybe you only offer many sessions on a select dates. Maybe your mini session is themed, whereas your custom session would be fully personalized to what that client wants. So there's a lot of different ways that they can be different from each other.

00:09:10 Yeah. So you could even have a custom product that the mini sessions built around one specific product that maybe isn't available to your normal clients. So yeah, so many different ways to make that different. All right. So yeah. So that's number three. Our like our third rule is definitely making it different in some way. And really, I guess it could start as number one,

00:09:28 because that helps you with the planning. You and I are both huge believers in the power of intention. And I think one of the biggest questions when you start to sit down to plan what your mini sessions could look like, cause you guys, there are so many different ways to run many sessions and none of them are right or wrong. I like to say again that the only two questions you need to ask yourself,

00:09:53 are, am I selling what I want to be selling? And am I making the profit? I want to be making for the time that I spent, if your answer is yes, to do those two things, then your mini sessions are great. Your regular sessions are great. Whatever you're doing is great. It doesn't have to fit in a particular box,

00:10:07 but to start to plan what this might look like for you, I love taking Megan's first step of making that, that list of what's in my regular session. What does this mini session look like? What are the differentiations? The next thing I like to do is I like to sit down and then ask myself, all right, what are my financial goals from this mini session?

00:10:28 So how many clients am I going to have on that day? What, what amount of money do I want to make as a gross profit and a net profit, and then, you know, start to do some math and start to figure out how we can build the offering to hit those numbers. Exactly. Yeah. So once you set that first financial goal for the whole day,

00:10:50 and you determine how many clients you can take on for that particular mini session event, then you can just do some simple math and determine what your sales goal per client is. And that's going to vary because if you plan a mini session event at a studio where you

can photograph all day long, you might be able to photograph say up to 20 dogs,

00:11:08 and that's a pretty big event. And maybe your sales average per client might be a little bit lower, but you know, if you are restricted to, or maybe your mini session event is an outdoor session and you're restricted to only shooting at golden hour, well, you probably aren't able to shoot 20 different clients during that time. It might be three or four.

00:11:29 So that's going to play into how your financial goals for the mini session event. Yeah, absolutely. And so then we figure out our products and the pricing. What has been your experience for in-person sales or all inclusive for many sessions? Do you have a preference? I know I've done both, but would love to know what you've done Typically for the many sessions that I do in my I do in-person sales and I highly recommend that.

00:11:57 I think it gives more of a personal touch kind of looping back around to protecting your time. There are ways to protect your time. So maybe for your regular session, you do in-person sales at the client's home. So there's a lot of driving and personalized time involved there. Well, maybe for your mini session to protect your time, you're kind of stacking all of those sales sessions one after another,

00:12:19 on the same day, or maybe you schedule them over zoom. So you're still having that face-to-face interaction and more, a better service for your clients. But yes, I definitely recommend in-person sales for all of my mini sessions. Nice. Yeah, I've done both. And I definitely the in-person sales ones that I had done where I felt better service to the client and then it translates to also being more profitable as well.

00:12:46 The only time that I would still probably do packages is if I was doing one of those more high volume situations that I've done in the past too, is like a fundraiser. And there, you know, 15, not even like 10 minute sessions and it's just for a couple shots and it's really packages, they kind of choose one of three packages. So for those that are just really,

00:13:07 really streamlined, but yeah. Anything else, especially if it has artwork involved, I do like to have that, that in-person touch and yeah, that was some great ways to streamline that a little bit. Yeah. That I have really liked to doing is selling a base package for my mini sessions. So the base package would include at least one product.

00:13:30 So when it gets to the in-person sales appointment, it's really easy. It's what do you, what image, or what type of artwork do you want for that product that's included? And then at that point you can ask, if they'd like to add on and most clients, do You give them the option to kind of trade in that base product to say,

00:13:48 you know, it included, I don't know, 16 by 24 frame print. They're like, Oh, I really want a 30 by 40, can they just kind of trade that in to trade up? Oh yeah, Absolutely. Yeah.

You can just use that amount and apply it to the larger piece. Yeah. Perfect. I love it. Yeah.

00:14:02 Sorry. So that's great. So we are watching our profitability and as far as profitability goes, the same rules for many sessions apply as regular sessions where we want to keep our cost of goods sold below 25%, ideally quite a bit below if possible, because again, as smaller sale amount, you know, the percentage wise, the actual dollar of your profits is going to be,

00:14:28 you know, if it's a \$500 sale of now, I'd have to do crazy math. I should've done. I was going to do a thousand dollars sale is, you know, \$750 profit at 25%. But a \$3,000 sale is a lot more, man. I'd say, yeah, I need, I need math. My daughter has been doing, she has her,

00:14:50 Oh, she has math one. She's in seventh grade, but she's doing like freshman year math and they have their big, like final coming up next week. And so I've been trying to help her on that. And I like math and I like numbers, but man, Megan, this is now Thursday in the week. It's been a stressful math week and the Begley house.

00:15:12 What I was trying to say, that's what calculators are for exactly what I'm trying to say in all of this is the 75% profit on a smaller number is a much smaller, actual gross profit number or net profit number. Then the profit, when you have a much larger order. So since our mini session sales are smaller, we really want to be cognizant of that cost of goods sold.

00:15:35 And ideally, I mean, I'd like to have it at 10 or 15% if possible, but my ballpark is at least below 20. Yeah, exactly. I try to aim for that 10 to 15% of cost of goods sold. Do you add in some digital files into your minis to help build that value and keep that cost of goods sold low? Yeah.

00:15:54 I think anytime you add digitals, it definitely boosts the value of a product in the client's eyes. So yeah, I think that's a great way to add value and to be able to increase your prices for that. Yeah. Yeah. I agree. I love adding on digitals to things to help build that value. All right. So remember our three rules that we have want things unique.

00:16:14 We talked about that we've talked about profitability and how to come up with those numbers to figure out our goal for the day, the number of clients we can serve Dukes and quick division, and then figure out whether it is we're going to be selling. And then the other big rule on there is our time. And like you mentioned, this is where a lot of people,

00:16:33 I think start to get really stressed out about mini sessions because they feel like, Oh my gosh, I'm doing all of these things in so much time to prepare these clients. What are some ways that you've streamlined that process? Yes. So I think the first place where you can save a lot of time is before the person books a session. So typically I do not put full pricing on my

website for my custom sessions.

00:16:59 Now, when it comes to, when I'm marketing mini sessions, I will, I will put the full pricing for that many session offer. It's a separate, you know, I just make a separate page on my website because I want the client to know all of the information upfront. They can book directly from the website that way there's, it eliminates the back and forth email and phone conversation that I typically do with my custom clients.

00:17:23 So that's a great way to save time on the front end at the session itself. Obviously you're stacking several sessions back to back. So I do not recommend scheduling one or two, many sessions, you know, scattered over several days, the whole point. And the reason that we're doing many is so that you can stack them on the same day and you're going to eliminate drive time and eliminate,

00:17:47 you know, your you're just your shooting at the actual session. And then on the back end, I mentioned already about ways to streamline the sales process, whether you do it on zoom calls, or if you stack the sales appointments back to back on a different day, you know, if, if you are running an event at a location where you're able to show the images right after you shoot them,

00:18:11 or maybe you enlist an assistant, that's a great way to, because that way you wrote and you have to come back for a separate ordering appointment, you can just do it on the same day. So that's a great time savings as well. Yeah, I think that's probably the, the, the biggest time savers that have worked for me. Yeah.

00:18:27 I do the same where for a mini session, I want all of the information on that mini session page so they can see all of the things, see all of the pricing and I'm not going back and forth with inquiry questions. I'll still, of course answer a question, but most people can answer their own questions. The other thing that I love to do too,

00:18:45 is the streamline the actual booking piece. And this is so easy with so many of the different softwares, but you guys, you don't need to have some fancy CRM, Divisadero, TAVI studio, Ninja studio, cloud, whatever, all the different things. You don't have to have. One of those. I have used software called jot form. I don't know.

00:19:05 Do you don't make it just like Google forms. Can you work in payments to Google performs? I don't know that I use JotForm as well. And then my web website is built on Squarespace and I can set up a product and take payment that way, which is how I've been doing that recently. Yeah. Nice. Yeah. So I would have on JotForm,

00:19:22 basically they would on the page has all the information and then there's a button, Hey book now. And on the jot form, then it takes them to a jot form. They put in their

name, their address, email, all that kind of stuff. They also put in all their dogs, you know, basic things. And I'm not asking as much as I usually do for a full session.

00:19:44 I'm asking just the basics, like the type dogs, name, dogs, behavior for new situations, dogs for light. I have to look and see what else. Just like really the important stuff is allergies. Really. I think that might be it just the basic basics about the dog. I just want to know how the dog might behave when they come into the session.

00:20:02 And any allergies are like my two biggest things because it's not this full custom session. So they give me their info. So it's like the booking info, plus my client questionnaire condensed plus then I have all the contract stuff on that form too. And then it ends with the payment. So in that one thing, they are registering, they are giving me the client information form.

00:20:27 They are signing their contract and they are paying the registration fee. So there is zero back and forth, which is so incredibly helpful. The other thing that I find really helpful, especially if I'm doing a well, actually, if I'm doing a day of like 20 dogs, like an all day mini mini session versus even a day with three or four and maybe an outdoor location,

00:20:48 I still kind of ask them to rank their preferences for time and I assign it. So that is something manual that I do because I don't want to end up saying I'm doing three days of mini sessions. And the one day I only have two clients, but ones that the first deployment ones on the last appointment, no, no, no. We're going to make them both towards the last one.

00:21:08 The light's the best, or you don't want a full day. If I'm not going to sell out, I, you know, try to block them together. And it also saves room for those really micro days that it's one dog per appointment. So if somebody is coming with two dogs, I can keep sets of appointments, blocks, open for them.

00:21:24 So I would just ask them, you know, on a full day one, it would be, when do you prefer your appointment? You know, nine to 11, 11 to two or two to four. And then I would assign them a time. And you know, you can do kind of the same thing with the more on location stuff too.

00:21:41 Yeah, Yeah, no, that's exactly, that's a great way for time-savings to, to incorporate all that into one. Yeah. Yeah. And it doesn't, you know, you guys should, doesn't have to be this big tech crazy thing. I mean, I love my automation. That's no secret, but this one really doesn't require any, you could even probably sign up for JotForm for one month if you wanted to use it just for that.

00:22:04 There's other softwares like acuity, I think could do all of those things too. And that's like \$10 a month. If you wanted to sign up just for the month that you're organizing those

mini sessions, a little software, like that is really, really helpful. I agreed. Yeah. All right. Well, should we talk about marketing mini sessions? Oh,

00:22:25 of course. Let's do it. Okay, good. I'm going to loop back and talk a little bit about, well, some of the reasons why to offer many sessions, one of the things that we talked about was working with a local nonprofit or a partner business. I think this is especially helpful if you are new in business and you do not have a robust or a very big email list because when you're new,

00:22:49 you know, you might need to rely on other people to help you spread the word. So when I'm thinking about marketing, if it's a kind of a new offer, or if I'm partnering with a nonprofit or a business, I they're helping me get the word out now, after you've been in business for a few years and your email list has grown then,

00:23:08 and that's why it's so important to start collecting those email addresses. Then I have found that my email list is probably the biggest source of filling up my mini sessions. So the other thing that I like to do is any time I work with a client or I'm talking with a potential client, and they mentioned about one of the mini sessions that they've seen me do in the past,

00:23:33 I will make a little note of that somewhere so that when the next time registration is about to open for that particular mini session, they're going to be the people that I reach out to first, they have already asked about it. They have, let me know that they're interested. And honestly, I think last year when I was marketing my holiday sessions,

00:23:52 I filled them about 80% solely off of people who had mentioned to me earlier in the year about holiday sessions. So then it was very easy to, to market and fill those just because I was paying attention to what people were telling me all throughout the year. And I kept that little running list of, of people to reach back out to, Oh,

00:24:13 that's brilliant. How many of you guys out there let's be honest, how many of you are actually keeping track of potential leads of people that mentioned something like this in passing and you know, and so you can follow back up with them in the future. Very few of us, or we're like, Oh, that's a great idea, but then we don't actually do it.

00:24:33 If you guys take one thing away from this episode that has already so much media stuff in it, that is a huge one. Agreed. Yeah. And especially I find that inviting past clients back is way easier than trying to go out and market to a whole new group of people. So I think it's a great way to number one, make them feel special because you remembered that they mentioned that they were interested in it and they're getting first dibs before you announce it anywhere else.

00:25:02 So it's just a great way to kind of build that relationship with your past clients. I

love that. Well, where are you calling them two collections? No, the another name for many sessions, but it sounded like collector's edition collector's additions. Yes. Cause I'm like, Oh man, that sounds like, Oh, I want to collect all of them.

00:25:20 So I want to do all of the mini sessions, which is just a brilliant bit of branding. Yeah, no, that's exactly right. Okay. So Let's talk about other ways to market your many sessions. Obviously your website. I talked about creating a dedicated page to have house all the information about your mini session. You can include a navigation link.

00:25:44 You can include an announcement bar, you can write a blog post about it. So there's lots of different places on your website where you could, or you can market those obviously social media, you know, kind of, and the thing about many sessions and especially with social media, people like to be the first to know. So if you can start teasing it,

00:26:02 even before registration opens, then people are starting to think about it that way, when registration does open, they're more excited to jump on it. I've seen this work very well to start kind of teasing it ahead of time. Are you when you're teasing it, are you sending people to a waitlist page where they give you your email to be first, first in line to know about it?

00:26:23 Yeah, Absolutely. Absolutely. Direct people to get on your email list. That's a great way to do it. Yeah. Yeah. Cause you know, people are busy so we can remind them, Oh, that day this is going to happen, but they are probably not going to sit down and write it down, but they might definitely be like,

00:26:39 Oh, I do want to do that. Yes. I'll give you my email address so that you can remind. So this is huge guys. I think a lot of times photographers in general look at something and they're like, okay, I'm going to do a mini session and I'm going to announce it tomorrow. And then like two days from now, they're like,

00:26:57 why did it fail? Well, you just created it and announced it. Like there there's so much more that goes into it. And you know, you almost have this kind of runway area before where it's like a Christmas card menus are coming. They're coming, get on the list. Bluebonnet minis are coming, Lakeside minis are coming, get, we're not calling the Mid-East,

00:27:16 whatever we're gonna call them collectors additions. And so they get on that list. And the other really important thing that I see a lot of people make a mistake is when they're mentioning this on social media, for instance, like Lakeside sessions are coming and see my link in the bio, but then the link in their bio goes straight to their main website.

00:27:36 It really, really needs to go to a specific page on your website about that session because otherwise people will get to that main website and get lost and just click away and you've lost them. Yes. And so I'm going to take this opportunity to, to move into kind of a plan

and talk about planning it because you don't just create the mini session today and advertise it tomorrow.

00:27:58 Right? I think if you look at your overall marketing plan for the year, I think most of us have months where we are typically slower than others and we've got months where we're super busy. So if you kind of take a step back and look at it from like the 10,000 foot view, you probably don't want to be scheduling a mini session event during your busiest times of year.

00:28:21 Right? You're busy for a reason because people want that custom session. They're willing to book the custom session on those months. So I would recommend that you plan your to do these mini session type events, when is typically a slower time of year for you. And that goes into taking a step back and looking at it from that, you know, bigger view rather than,

00:28:42 Oh gosh, I'm going to play in it and I'll advertise it tomorrow. And I think that that will also help you plan effectively so that you can fully fill the event as well. Actually, one of the biggest, I guess, failures of many sessions that I had my first year in business, I wanted to photograph at the Christmas tree farm for the holidays,

00:29:01 but I have never, never photographed there before. And so I had no images to show for my marketing images and guess how many sessions I booked that year, a big fat zero. But if I had taken the time ahead of, you know, ahead of time to get those marketing images and to plan appropriately so that I had something to show when I was asking people to sign up,

00:29:24 then, then I probably would've had a different outcome. And so that's exactly what I did. I took that time that I had reserved at the tree farm. I took models out there. I photograph them. So the following year I was able to fully book that that particular mini-session event. So Great point. And I'm so glad you brought that up so important.

00:29:44 How far in advance do you recommend kind of starting to plan for these mini? So you can kind of go through a checklist of, you know, making sure you have everything all lined up. So when I do my annual planning, which is usually in December for the full following year, I have a general idea of where my mini session events are going to take place,

00:30:06 you know, late March, maybe one late summer. And then the holidays, I only typically do two or three a year, but I think to really get into the nitty-gritty of planning each one, I like about six to eight weeks out. That way it gives you plenty of time to get those marketing images. If you're partnering with a nonprofit or a business,

00:30:27 then you have time to collaborate with them and get them on board. Yeah. So that way you're not rushed. I think, you know, if you fail to plan in. Yeah. Yeah. And by having that Planned out ahead of time and having those marketing images, I can't stress how important

those little teasers to your community, or if you're working with a nonprofit that they start mentioning it because people have to see these more than one time.

00:30:59 Very rarely is that the first time they see something, they're going to jump on it. A couple of those people are out there and we love those people, but most people need to see it a couple of times. So having that lead time and knowing that you're like, okay, I'm laying the groundwork for this event. And I have essentially a day when registration opens and I'm going to remind people during registration time that it's going on.

00:31:21 Because I think a lot of people, the other mistake I see a lot of people making is they take the time they get the marketing image. They haven't planned, you know, maybe even they do the lead up a little bit, but then on registration day, they announce it. And when it doesn't completely fill from the one announcement or it doesn't completely fill from the one announcement,

00:31:40 they start to get frustrated and they're like, ah, it's not going to work, but you have to follow up and you have to remind people and sending a couple emails about this to your list is not bad and posting about it a couple times on social media is not bad. I mean, what's the life, the Time-Life half-life of an Instagram post,

00:31:58 like 10 minutes, I think. So might be shorter than that. Yeah. So people miss these things. So we're going to feel like we are just saying it again and again, and it might start to feel salesy and yucky, but we have to, I think check our mindset of, of what we're actually doing. And we're not, we're not selling,

00:32:19 we're not tricking like the, the, I think that fear of sleaziness and selling comes from thinking that we're like tricking people into spending money with us, but we're simply saying, Hey, I have this opportunity. Are you interested? It's an invitation. And so if we can remember that, we're just inviting and we just want to make sure knows about the party.

00:32:40 Then I think it becomes an easier mindset to, to continue to have that information out there. Yeah. That's a great way to look at it. The other thing that I like to think about as far as my mini sessions is I think it's a VIP perk instead of, you know, if you are planning it last minute and trying to book it last minute,

00:33:00 it kind of takes on a little bit of an air of desperation. Whereas if you look at it like this is a perk, this is, you know, a really exclusive special event. I think you'll start to attract people more. I actually know some photographers who their mini session events are only available for people who have booked a full session within the last year.

00:33:24 And that's a huge draw, right? Because if you want one of those coveted sessions, you know, then you have like a full session. Okay. I love that. There's another way. It's

kind of the opposite of that, that a friend of mine, she was a portrait photographer, but it would certainly work for any John rhe of portrait photography,

00:33:40 including pets. And that is for her Christmas minis because everybody wants the card photos. So she sets up like a really tastefully, nice studio thing. She does it over like two whole weekends or one like two Saturdays, two weekends in a row. I'm not sure, but she fills the whole day. And it is a complimentary session all wait for it though,

00:34:01 if when you book your following year's portrait session, so to get one of these minis, you can't buy them. You have to book a full session for next year, which I think is brilliant. And you know, and even if somebody doesn't follow through with that full session while they've paid, whatever her retainer was that paid for her time for that mini session event.

00:34:24 So yeah. It's, I thought it was brilliant. Yeah. That's a great way to do it. Yeah. So many exciting ways. I, I just, I think many sessions are fantastic and I like, like we mentioned before, there are so many different ways whether you're new in business and you're using these to get your name out, or if you've been in business for a while and they are exclusive only to your past customers,

00:34:50 it's a great way to encourage people to get on that email list. And you guys have, you don't have an email list yet, please. I'm begging you if you want to be in business, start that email list because it is the life blood of any photography business, really any business. Cause we don't own any, any connections on social media and it's getting harder and harder for our stuff to be seen there,

00:35:15 even if you're paying for it. So yes, love the email. I've got a couple more small little tips that I wanted to share as well. So, you know, we didn't really talk about different mini session themes, but I would recommend if you're planning any kind of seasonal or holiday theme, think about if there's a, that you can incorporate a more neutral set or backdrop so that you can photograph them both in the seasonal theme and in something a little bit more neutral,

00:35:46 because I think that will help you on the back end was sales because most people are probably not going to buy a large piece of wall art of their dog in a Halloween costume, But they might More likely to do it if it's, you know, if they've got the cute Halloween costume, but then you can also show them something on a neutral backdrop And it can always be a,

00:36:08 an add on of like, Hey, if you purchase the, the wall piece, then you get your complimentary Halloween digital file to share away or a little set of like happy Halloween cards or something. Exactly. Yeah. I love that. Tip two with many sessions is I have used them in, you know, when I have just felt like I was in a creative slump and I needed to try something new just

for myself personally.

00:36:35 And it's been a great way to, you know, just add something new to your portfolio and to just try it out in a mini session environment. Yeah. I will say this Nicole and not every mini session event that I have tried has been a hundred percent successful. So it went back to kind of like the, your businesses, a big experimentation.

00:36:56 So just figure out what works and do, do more of what works and less of what doesn't. So I've definitely had to scrap a couple of my great mini session ideas because they didn't pan out, but I never would have known if I didn't try. So Exactly. I've had the same experience, my very first mini session that I tried to set up.

00:37:16 I also sold exactly zero. I think that's probably pretty common, cause we're all just like, Oh, I see every people doing this. I should do this too, but you don't realize the other pieces that go into that. So it is always an experiment. And then we always need to try again. And I think the best way to set yourself up for success in this experiment is number one to really get clear on your intention for the day for the goal is your intention to get more visibility because,

00:37:47 you know, we were talking to mostly about mini sessions to make money like mini sessions for profitability, but you can also do a mini session type thing with the business. We talked about it on that episode, 63, a little bit where the goal of that was a bit more awareness, which I know that's like a buzzword it's like, I can't work for awareness and I can't work for visibility,

00:38:06 but sometimes we actually do when it's our choice and there's an actual benefit, not just some random person saying, Oh, but you'll get visibility. No, no, no. We have to decide that it's worth it for us. But you know, there's so many different ways that we can approach these mini sessions. And the most important piece is to figure out what that goal is before you even pick up the pen and start planning at all,

00:38:33 know what that intention and what that goal is, and then figure out how it comes to how it becomes different with what your regular sessions what's different about these many sessions, figure out what the profitability needs to be, how much money do you want to make? How many clients can you have? What's that average sale? What products are you going to put into there in order to reach that sale?

00:38:52 Then number three, figure out how to streamline that time so that you're not spending, you know, hours per client back to that streamline to the other thing that I do too, is for my mini sessions, I don't have a priest consultation call. It depends what they are, but the really like studio like really basic streamlined, that's all an education.

00:39:14 Like I, at this point I would record a video before it was a written email with all the things they needed to know. So that also saves time too. The same thing, you know, I also create a little PDF guide. It's a very shortened version of what I use for my custom sessions, but it's just enough to let them feel prepared coming into the session without me having to do the in-person consultation.

00:39:38 Yeah. That's perfect. That saves so much time. Yeah. And then it becomes a, an experiment of testing things out. The other most important piece is on the backend. So we have that intention setting, figuring out the planning at the beginning. I think it's also incredibly critical to break it down at the end and look at your event and figure out what worked,

00:40:01 what didn't work. What did I learn if I do this again? What do I want to continue? What do I want to change? Because you think you're going to remember all that, but you don't, you have to take stock of that and write it down right. When it's done. And then when you go to do it again, then that following year you're,

00:40:17 you're set up to be so much more successful. Yeah. That's a great suggestion to do with any marketing, promo, not just many sessions, that's super helpful to keep those notes tucked away for the next time you want to try it. Yeah. Yeah. And you know, marketing promotions, even sessions, like we encourage our, some of our students in elevate.

00:40:36 You're one of our coaches in there too, just to even break down a sales session, what worked, what didn't work, what did they buy? What, you know, did you want them to buy something else? What was the profit? Just to make sure you're looking at all those numbers. It's so important because we just, it's too easy to say,

00:40:52 okay, that's done moving onto the next thing without actually taking any of the lessons so we could have learned from the situation. Exactly. And I still do that every sale session I want to be getting better. Maybe it's just a small little phrase that I said differently that came across better or, you know, a certain offer. Maybe I changed the order of when I show them wall art designs.

00:41:15 I'm constantly tweaking my own process as well to, to try to get better every time. Yeah. I love it. I love it. All right. So do you have any, I guess final words of advice for anyone out there that is ready to start diving into the mini-session side of the pool? Yeah. I give it a go see if you,

00:41:35 if you like it. And if you've been in one of those photographers who have been in the Haight mini session camp. Yeah. Maybe take some of these tips and see if you can incorporate that to make a successful event. Yeah. Perfect. I love it. Thanks so much. So yeah. So Megan is one of our coaches and elevate. She also runs Megan rife photography in Houston.

00:41:55 So Megan, let us know where people can find you out there on the interwebs. Yes. My website is Megan Marie photography.com and you can find me on Facebook and Instagram at Megan Murray photography. Excellent. Thanks so much. And you'll also, like I said, find Megan in elevate and she's also really active in the Academy as well. And if you guys are listening to this on the day,

00:42:16 it comes out today is the last day to enroll in the hair of the dog Academy before our doors close for open enrollment. So come join us in there. Megan. Thank you so much for being with us again. This was another incredible conversation with so many actionable tips and tricks. You guys probably I should have told you at the beginning to probably grab a pen and paper.

00:42:36 Well, you can replay it and start all over with the notepad. Yes, yes. For sure. All right. Thanks again for being here, Megan and everybody else. We'll see you next week. Thanks for listening to the hair of the dog podcast. If you want to check out the show notes for access to any of the links that we shared in this episode,

00:42:52 as well as any additional resources, simply go to www.hairofthedogacademy.com/six nine. 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 online. If you are ready to dive into more resources, head over to our website@wwwdothairofthedogacademy.com.

00:43:23 Thanks for being a part of this pet photography community.