

00:00:00 Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. I'm your host, Nicole Begley. And today we are talking about the \$15 digital file. That's it. Could you imagine a client coming into your business and buying one digital file at \$15? Well, it's possible with this particular company, let's discuss, stay tuned. Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast.

00:00:27 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 addict, chocolate martini connoisseur, Nicole Begley. Hey everybody. Welcome back to the podcast. I wanted to take the time today to talk a little bit about an ad I saw on Facebook.

00:00:54 This was in a couple of weeks leading up to Christmas. I had seen it a little bit here and there in the fall, and it was an ad for a company that was offering a free photography session. And then you could purchase only the digitals you want starting at \$15 per file. That's right. You could get a free session and buy nothing.

00:01:18 Or if you wanted just an image for your credit area for your Christmas card, 15 bucks, that's it out. The door actually gets even better. Because naturally when I saw this, I had to click over and take a look. It's \$15 in each, if you want individual photos, but if you want packages of 10 or more, you save 20% and they're \$13 each,

00:01:41 or you want that full gallery of 40 images. That'll be 275 bucks. Now I can see when you hear things like this half of you guys out there, it might've just been like, oh my gosh, Nicole, forget it. I'm going to hang up my camera. There's no way I can compete with that. It's ruining the industry. This is just hopeless.

00:02:01 No one is ever going to pay my prices. Hold on, hold on. Don't be so quick because this is simply a chosen business model. And quite frankly, I think it's kind of a brilliant business model. It's kind of the same business model that Uber Airbnb and all of these other companies have chosen, which is the business of connecting. They're essentially creating this platform for photographers,

00:02:28 the water and some money to connect with some people that want to get some pictures taken and they connect them and they take a cut of all of the money that's made. So they pay the photographer some, and then they, you know, keep the profit and they're don't have really any staff because all of their service vendors and then Airbnb and Uber and this company are all independent contractors.

00:02:52 So you don't have payroll, which is generally one of the highest costs in any business. So it's actually pretty brilliant. And you know what? It serves a need in the market because there are always, always going to be, there's always going to be a segment of the market that is looking for something to fill a certain purpose. They may be just need one card for the Christmas or one photo for the Christmas card,

00:03:18 or they just want to get a couple images of their family, or maybe they really want to get some family images, but they can't afford to have a higher end boutique experience. That's fine. We should still allow them to do this because there is room throughout the levels of the market for every type of business. And I also want to say that there's still room.

00:03:40 If you wanted to have a higher volume, lower price business, it can be profitable. It can be a great business model, as long as you are choosing that business model with intention. And you're not just backing into this business model because you think that's all that you're worth or that's all you can afford. That's the only way to get clients in front of your business or you're charging these prices,

00:04:04 but offering so much that it's just, you know, the numbers don't make sense. So anyway, please, please, please hear me. I am in no way disparaging this company, I'm in no way, disparaging photographers that are doing an all inclusive business model. I just want you to know your numbers. I want you, if you're doing this all inclusive,

00:04:29 a smaller price point business model to really truly understand your cost of doing business and how much time you're putting into your business and what that breaks down to for your actual pay. After you pay taxes and pay for all your business costs. That's, that's what I want to make sure that you have. And you know, we can definitely help you. If you guys are a member of the academy and hair of the dog academy,

00:04:52 we can help you break down those numbers. Just jump on any of the coaching calls and we will do that with you. But anyway, let's jump back over to this. There are all these different buzz business models that we can have. I personally am a fan of a boutique experience, a higher priced, lower number of customers, higher service, higher quality images,

00:05:13 higher quality products. And that's what I choose to model my business on. Now, as I think about this, I think the reason that a lot of people might see an ad like this or see this type of offering and get a little nervous is really based in like a fear of competition that they believe if there is somebody offering this at this level,

00:05:36 in their market, that it's going to take away the desire for clients to have that higher level experience. And I have found that is just not the case. You guys, if you were in this business, you need to accept that there will always, always, always be someone cheaper, giving away more digital files for a lower price point. And it is just going to continue to plummet because digital files on their own are a commodity and we can't compete on price.

00:06:08 We actually need to compete on value so we can lean into what we do differently. If you hired this company, there is no way they are going to remove leashes. There is no way they're going to help you print a beautiful acrylic for your home. There is no way they're going to do any sort of editing other than some quick color correction. We have so

much more that we offer and we need to let our clients know about that.

00:06:37 The other thing that we're offering that this company doesn't is service. This company works great for somebody that has the time and the expertise and wants to DIY ordering their own images. My clients don't have the time or expertise, and they want me to create this artwork for them and print all their pieces and make sure it's perfect and deliver a final piece to them.

00:07:03 That is another point of differentiation. That is another place that we compete, not on price, but we compete on value and we offer more value. And there are always, always, always people in the market that want to take advantage of that extra service. And I don't mean take advantage as in like take advantage of you, but they want to have that service offered to them because they are very busy and they have more money than time because let's face it.

00:07:37 Everything in this world is going to cost you money or time. And sometimes it costs you both, but it always costs you one of those two things. And generally, if you have more time than money, you're going to figure out the DIY. You know, maybe if it's something you love, you love home improvement. You love painting or, you know,

00:08:01 putting a new fixtures. Even if you have the money you're going to choose to do that because you find some sort of value in it. But generally, if you have more time than money, you're going to look for a DIY approach. If you have more money than time, meaning time is your limiting reagent. You work, you know, 60 hours a week.

00:08:22 You have kids. You want to go to their sporting events. You have dogs to take care of you're traveling. You're just a busy person. Then sometimes it is worth it to spend more money, to save yourself time. That is when I would hire an electrician or a handyman to come put in that light or a painter to come paint my house.

00:08:41 I'm certainly capable of painting my house, but I would rather spend my time doing something that makes more money or is more fulfilling than painting my house. So those are the kinds of clients you guys are looking for. Those are the clients we want to attract to our business and they are out there. They're out there in every single market. I don't care how small your market is.

00:09:09 If you need proof that they are in every market. Listen to my podcast with Tracy Munson, whose town does not even have a stoplight. And she is now running a full time pet photography business in that town. We can do this anywhere because that level of the market is never crowded and it is always available. And we just need to find those people and share that value.

00:09:36 So, Nicole, how do we find them? Well, that comes down to making connection. Every time, every time I talk to a pet photographer that is crushing it, do you know what they

have in common? They have in common that they are out in their market, that they know people that they network with people, wait, Nicola just moved.

00:10:03 I don't know anyone in my market. That's fine. That doesn't mean they always knew all the people that means they get out from behind their computer. They go out into the world and they actually talk to other humans. And that you guys is the secret of finding the people that value what we do. I promise that there it's a long game. It's a long game,

00:10:26 but it is a game that we can win. It just requires consistency. It requires showing up. It requires sharing this value and it requires getting out from behind our computer. For instance, I just received a note from a client of mine in Pittsburgh. I had photographed their dog five or six years ago and they had just sent me an email. The dog had unfortunately passed away about a year ago.

00:10:52 It said that, you know, for about a year, they would walk up the steps and just have to turn away. They couldn't really look at the photos that we had hung on the wall, but now recently they can again, and they wanted to send me a note to let me know how much those images meant to them, that they are just so incredibly valuable.

00:11:12 Now with this time has passed and they will continue to become more and more valuable with each and every year. Here's the thing, guess how this client found me. Remember? I said we did our session five or six years ago. Well, I had found that client five years before that at an event at a community event where I had a table and I got their email address.

00:11:35 It took five years to make that session and took another five years. You, not that they didn't realize how valuable it was for, for them to reach a whole new level of appreciation of what we created together. So like I said, this is a long game, this marketing that we're doing, these emails, we are collecting, these that we are building are often things that take time to develop.

00:12:00 So if you started your business like last week, last year, even two years, and you're like, man, and it's not where I want it to be yet. I'm not at six figures. It's impossible to get to six figures in a year. Yes, it's possible, highly unlikely. It takes time. I just want you to give yourself some grace.

00:12:17 And I want you to start to look at your business and a way of how, or what can I do? What actions can I take that will lead me to this next level, because it's not going to be overnight. It's a journey that takes some time, but it is a compound effect of how much we get out there, share what we do,

00:12:40 share why we do it, share our value that it just compounds and compounds. And before you know it, you have a full stream of clients. I feel like people are always looking

for this one magic marketing solution and it just doesn't exist. There are different things we can do from charitable marketing or calendar contest, or all sorts of different ways to get people in front of our camera.

00:13:09 And yes, those are great ways to start our business, to get leads into our business. But if you don't actually put any attention towards those relationships, with those people and nurture those relationships, all those leads aren't going to go far. So that is my plea to you, which was not really the plan of this podcast. When I started this podcast,

00:13:31 it was mostly just about this, this other company and the fear that so many photographers tend to get into when they see an offering like this, that is so inexpensive feeling like it is going to take all of their potential clients and all of their potential clients are going to make their decision solely on price, which they don't. I would like you to think back to a time when maybe you made a decision solely on price,

00:14:02 and then maybe another time when you don't make a decision solely on price. I'll share an example of some of mine for something that I'm making a decision solely on price is often groceries. Now, even this actually had a really hard time finding things that I make the decision solely on price, because there's always value in my pricing decision. And one of them is groceries though,

00:14:29 but that still doesn't mean I'm getting the cheapest milk. We get the organic pasture-raised milk because my family and I have a commitment to trying to make sure that the animals that come from the food animal industry in which we partake have a better quality of life than factory farming. That's a value that we choose to put some money behind when we purchase things. But there's other pieces that,

00:14:54 you know, maybe I do like to spend save some money on. For instance, I usually stock up on all the packaged goods, like the cereals and the snacks and things like that when I'm at target, or we can do a grocery delivery from Walmart or something like that, because the price of the package material at Walmart is much less expensive than the package material at,

00:15:19 or the package price of like cereal and things at our local grocery store. Now there's still a value. Remember that money time thing I was talking about, I'm not going to go out of my way to go into Walmart or target to go get a box of cereal. When I just need one box of cereal, thereby spending an extra half an hour of my time,

00:15:40 where I could just spend an extra 50 cents 75 cents and buy it when I'm at the store, getting the things that I needed to get at the grocery store. Anyway. So again, this is that money value, time, money, time value proposition, that we're always weighing things against. But generally if I have a lot of things that I need to order a lot of packaged things,

00:16:00 and I'm going to these places where they're less least expensive, I'm going to

stock up on them there because I am making that purchasing decision solely on price now for value. Gosh, there's a ton of things that I will spend more on because I value it. It is no secret that I value food, travel, things like that. But you guys know that I do not value purses and shoes,

00:16:29 but yet I do. Let me explain. I don't value purchasing designer shoes, just because of the name or something like that. But I do value purchasing nice shoes that are comfortable because guess what? I value comfort a lot as I'm recording this podcast in PJ's, but anyway, I will spend more money on shoes. I'm not looking for the cheapest shoe.

00:16:57 I'm looking for the most comfortable shoe. And if it costs a little bit more than so be it, I'm going to spend a little bit more. When we were looking for centers for our recent trip to the Galapagos, we're going to be out in the sun quite a bit. And we're on the equator on the water. I don't want to get burned.

00:17:11 I want to protect my skin. And so I'm going to be wearing these different centers and these different sun pants, and it was going to be warm, like I said, so I wanted something to light. We ended up buying some clothes from a company called free fly. They mainly create fishing like clothes for fishing, or just outdoor water activities. So incredibly comfortable and so incredibly light.

00:17:35 And it's not inexpensive. Like the pants are like 80 bucks. The shirts are about 70 or \$80. Plus it's kind of expensive for clothes. When I usually purchase my clothes at Costco for like \$15. So sometimes I will spend more money because of the value these things bring to me. So this is our job guys. This is our job with our business is to showcase this value to our potential clients and how this value can benefit them.

00:18:08 And for any of you, that might still be a little bit nervous about like, man, I still feel like these inexpensive companies are going to take away. My business. I asked you is McDonald's taking away business from Ruth's Chris or from Capitol grill. No, not at all. Which by the way, a public service announcement for anyone in this,

00:18:30 in the Charlotte area, the best steak you'll ever have in your entire life is it Duckworth's seller in uptown. Go check it out. Sorry. I just had to share. It was really truly amazing. Ironically, this is actually pretty funny. Duckworth is a company that's like a bar food sports bar kind of thing. Like basic food. It's good.

00:18:52 It's good. But it's just like basic normal like salads sandwiches, fried stuff, but they have this one restaurant it's actually in the cellar of another restaurant. They have the regular restaurant upstairs and this is down in the cellar underneath kind of like a speakeasy atmosphere, but these steaks are like dry aged aged. So I don't even know, I don't know what they do to them.

00:19:13 Some sort of magic process that makes them the most delicious, amazing steaks you have ever tasted it. Guess what? They're significantly more expensive than ordering a steak from upstairs because they have a whole different value. And I choose to make a decision on my spending versus my value, like what I want to get out of the experience. And for me, spending more money for a better tasting steak in that situation is a hundred percent worth it.

00:19:45 Now, if I was like just driving through and I needed to quit a quick bite to eat, yeah, I'm going to stop at Arby's or Chick-fil-A or some fast food and just grab something else. And you know, there is a time and place for both experiences. So all this to say, wrap this up in a nice little bow, there is always room in the market for both ends of the spectrum.

00:20:08 If you want to be a higher end high service boutique business, there is room for you. You just need to make sure you are finding people, talking to people in articulating that value. If you want to run a higher volume, lower costs business there's room in the market for that too, you can definitely do that. That can be very profitable.

00:20:32 You just must, must, must truly understand your numbers and truly understand how much time is involved in your business so that you really have a handle of how much you're making per hour to make sure that it really truly is profitable and not just looking profitable on paper. So that is for you guys. And actually for everyone, we should always, always,

00:20:57 always be trying to improve our craft so that we are offering the best possible version of these images for our clients. We're able to create images that they love, that, you know, marks this point in time in a beautiful artistic way so that we can again be building the value that we offer. So, anyway, I hope you guys found this helpful,

00:21:23 please, please, please reach out to me. Let me know if you found this helpful, you can find me on Instagram at hair of the dog academy. Go ahead and DM me there. I, I looked through all those DMS and you know, definitely let me know what you think was the most impactful. You can also join us in our new free hair of the dog community.

00:21:48 This is our big community that we have taken off of Facebook into its own off Facebook container. That is just so much easier to manage, to find the information, to find the free resources to connect with each other. So definitely come over and join us over there. We do occasionally offer some free trainings inside of that community as well. You can get there by www.hairofthedogacademy.com/community.

00:22:16 That's it. I hope you guys have a great week and I'll see you next time. If you enjoy this podcast episode, go ahead and take a screenshot of this episode on your phone and post it up there on your Instagram stories and be sure to tag us at hair of the dog academy. And

we would just love to see how you're listening and a full disclosure.

00:22:38 Sometimes we just like to give away a little pet photographer swag in the form of hair of the dog t-shirts and sweatshirts. So what are you waiting for? Go ahead and share that screenshot of this episode. And don't forget to tag us at hair of the dog academy. And while you're there, maybe you want to jump on over to our account and see what we're up to on the gram would love to connect with you.

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