

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITIONS CAN HELP YOU MARKET

Did you know that entering photographic competitions can help you market your services, too? It's all in how you handle the competition...and your results.

For example, Indigo Photographic's Michael Barton, *M.Photog.M.EI.Cr., CPP*, of Illinois believes in using the International Photographic Competition to better your skills and, thus, your marketability. "I say you can't afford not to participate in competition because the best way to stand out in the market today is to build an identity that's uniquely yours. Photographic competition will help you do that."

Along with helping you fine-tune your eye and your techniques, the International Photographic Competition can actually help you promote your studio to clients. Both Jessica Edwards of Missouri and Michigan's Betsy Finn, *Cr.Photog., CPP*, have experienced this personally.

"My clients love it when I enter their images—they tell all their friends and family members, especially when their image wins an award," explains Edwards, the owner of Jessica Edwards Photography. She uses only client work for her competition entries, so the resulting client chatter keeps building. "It creates amazing buzz about my work, which leads to word-of-mouth referrals."

And Finn has an answer for those who don't believe that clients can understand such competition: "When your images win awards, merits and ribbons, you will be able to promote yourself in the community as an award-winning photographer and that does mean something to clients—people naturally recognize certifications and awards as universal symbols of quality."

Entering photographic competition can reap rewards in your art, marketing and career...and your next chance to enter is now!

The 2011 International Photographic Competition entry deadline is April 27, so don't wait: www.ppa.com/competitions/international.php

to self-check, to really focus. What were your objectives? Were you able to meet them?"

And while winning doesn't hurt, it's shouldn't be the point of any competition, including MarketShare. "It's about the process of trying to think like a winner," says Barbara Barry of In-Vision Studio in Pittsburgh, Pa. "I learn something new from each competition I enter. I've met incredibly talented people along the way, and I'm really inspired to continue to improve—not to get a prize, but to be the best that I can be."

"PPA's marketing competitions have been a great way to share what I do and help others," adds Wendy Rouleau of Buford, Ga. Owner of Portraits by Wendy and a multiple winner of PPA's past marketing competition, she adds that

it's amazing how open photographers are now. "Everyone gives and takes, and marketing competitions are a great way to be a part of it."

However, Rouleau notes that there are a lot of amazing marketing ideas that don't get submitted. With the new MarketShare competition, PPA is hoping to encourage more photographers to share those ideas. It is free and simpler to enter than in the past. And since all entries (not just the winners) will be open for viewing, more inspiration will be had by all!

Learn more about MarketShare at www.ppa.com/marketshare.