Cultivate

Inspiring Women in Their Pursuit of Creativity and Entrepreneurship

Ana Campbell

A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
Liberty University
Fall 2015
Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

______________________________
Harry Sova, Ph.D.
Thesis Chair

______________________________
Monique Maloney, M.F.A.
Committee Member

______________________________
Emily Heady, Ph.D.
Committee Member

______________________________
James H. Nutter, D.A.
Honors Director
Abstract

Cultivate Magazine’s purpose is to inspire and educate creative women in their business ventures. Furthermore, Cultivate serves as a catalyst for our readers’ business by featuring insightful interviews from other creative women and practical advice on how to run a successful creative business. In short, Cultivate’s target market is female creative business owners with occupations such as photographers, designers, writers, entrepreneurs, artists, and bloggers.
References


  https://www.creativelive.com/

Podcast. (n.d.). Retrieved November 8, 2015, from The Influence Network:

  https://theinfluencenetwork.com/category/podcast/


Talks. (n.d.). Retrieved November 8, 2015, from Creative Mornings:

  http://creativemornings.com/talks
cultivate

inspiring women in their pursuit of creativity and entrepreneurship
Two years ago, as an Advertising and Public Relations major, I was contemplating what I should do for my senior honors thesis, when I came up with the idea of developing a magazine for creative female entrepreneurs. At that time I didn’t even have a name for my magazine, but I knew I wanted to create a magazine that would inform and inspire female entrepreneurs, and two years later that mission has not changed. From the very beginning I purposed to not only write the articles for the magazine, but to also take all of the photos, design all of the illustrations, and of course do the layout by myself. This was a big undertaking especially since those jobs are typically done in the magazine publishing business by separate people. Now two years later, I have accomplished my original goal and have done all of the steps it takes to create a magazine including the articles, photos (unless otherwise noted in the article), illustrations, and layout by myself.

The core mission of Cultivate is to inspire women in their pursuit of creativity and entrepreneurship. Volume One of Cultivate serves an introduction to the different elements it takes to run a successful business. The magazine is broken up into three sections: The Creative, The Christian, and The Business Owner.

The Creative features interviews with other creative female entrepreneurs and helpful tips to encourage your creativity. The Christian focuses on cultivating your relationship with Christ and helping you integrate your faith with your business. Finally, The Business Owner features articles on helping you run a successful business. This issue is not meant to be an exhaustive guide of what it takes to run a successful business; rather, it is a small piece of the puzzle. Nevertheless, I hope that this issue will inspire and encourage you in all of your creative and entrepreneurial ventures.

I hope you enjoy reading Volume One.

Ana Campbell
To be honest, I am always thinking about what to design next. Even in my spare time I am processing and brainstorming new ideas for different designs. But I also love to just chill and do nothing, or watch Netflix and movies to clear my mind.

It is actually a long story. I graduated from Liberty University with a degree in Psychology and minor in Graphic Design. It was really when I was in school and was taking my graphic design classes that I just fell in love with design. Plus, I’ve always known since I was younger that I wanted to be a creative of some sort, but I never knew that graphic design existed. During my Junior year, I realized that Graphic Design was really what I wanted to do, but it was too late to change my major, so I decided that I would finish with Psychology and then pursue a career in Graphic Design after I graduated.

I always wanted to be in a creative field ever since I was younger. When I was a kid, I was always drawing, making handmade items, and giving people the handmade items I made. I always had a passion for creating, but I never pursued it as a career until I graduated. I read a lot about graphic design, I interviewed other creative ladies who were running their own businesses. I used to be doubtful of myself as a creative; I used to think, “I don’t think my work is good enough to display or to be charging people for it,” but I had to overcome that, and once I overcame it that was when I started pursuing graphic design as a career.

My mom: she is a fierce lady and is very brave. I love that she is fearless in what she does. She has accomplished so much, even when she was my age, which I feel like I haven’t even accomplished a lot yet. So I really admire her for her fearlessness and fierce personality, which drives me to become someone like her in my creative field. Designers who inspire me are Jessica Hische, Jessica Walsh, and Anna Bond.
I definitely want to excel in my craft. I would like to see growth from where I am today to where I am at in five years. I also want to see a growth in my business, right now I am freelancing, but it isn’t an established business, so I would like to have a business and a design studio.


I definitely want to excel in my craft. I would like to see growth from where I am today to where I am at in five years. I also want to see a growth in my business, right now I am doing freelancing, but it isn’t an established business, so I would like to have a business and a design studio.


What is your favorite piece of art you have made?

There is one piece that I made during my undergrad that I am really proud of; it is called “Camp Fair Poster”. I worked for the Career Center at Liberty University, and I made a marketing piece for them. It was an out of the box idea. I usually use design software for all my projects, but I wanted to get outside of the software and do something different. So, I incorporated and used a whole set of handmade origami; it was something that I did out of the box, and I am really proud of it. It also gained a lot of attention on Pinterest. I’ve been afraid of making another one similar to that because I am afraid that I can’t top that one.

What are your favorite programs or tools you use on a regular basis?

Photoshop and Illustrator. Recently, I have been going back to using basic tools when I am painting or doing hand lettering.

Who inspires you to keep going in your designs?

My parents; they give so much, and this is something that I feel like I can succeed in and make them proud of me. I would also say myself; I am always learning, growing, and challenging myself, so I am motivating myself to always be better at my craft.

Where in your career would you like to be in five years?

I definitely want to excel in my craft. I would like to see growth from where I am today to where I am at in five years. I also want to see a growth in my business, right now I am doing freelancing, but it isn’t an established business, so I would like to have a business and a design studio.

Describe your brand in three words.


FIND SIMPLYSUI DESIGNS

Behance: /simplysuidesign
Etsy: SimplySui
Facebook: /simplysuis
Instagram: @simplysuis
Twitter: @simplysui
Elisha Dudley is a wife, mother, and owner/creative director of Petal Flower Company. Based in Lynchburg Virginia, Petal Flower Company specializes in organic, loose, and garden-inspired wedding flowers. Petal Flower Company has been featured on Style Me Pretty, Green Wedding Shoes, and The Wedding Chicks.

What made you start doing wedding flower design?

My undergrad degree was in interior design, and my first job out of college had a lot of paperwork and business stuff, so really I needed a creative outlet. I had a friend that did wedding planning, and she did flowers for one wedding. Someone told her that she was really good at weddings flowers, and she should keep doing wedding flowers. So she asked me if she could help me with my wedding, so she did my wedding flowers, and I helped her with a few things after that. Then one day she told me that she wanted to do wedding flowers full time, and asked me if I would be interested in doing it, and I said, “Yes; let’s do it!” Literally we woke up one day, and we were like, “We are wedding florists!” We’ve learned a lot since then. I wish I could take that many risks like that now, but I am glad I did then. It was a lot of trial and error for a long time, until we figured out what we were doing. So, we did it as a partnership for the first two years, and then she moved, and I kept doing it by myself.

Getting training: biting the bullet and spending money. It was totally worth it: it made me confident in my abilities, taught me tricks and new things. I am so glad that I invested in training.

What is one of the best decisions you have made in your business?

[Laughs] to be honest I don’t have a lot of spare time. Right now in my spare time, I work on Forage, which is a blog that I started with some people not too long ago, and if I have time, I like to write for Forage. Otherwise, I like to watch TV with my husband, spend time with my kids, and go do fun things with my family. Gardening is something that I have started now that we have a house. Plus, now I can use what I am planting and growing in my business.

When I first started out, I let people dictate what I did. I wished someone would have told me to find out who you are, find your style, do it well, and don’t be afraid to say “no” if a potential client doesn’t fit your style. Don’t be forced to do something that isn’t your style because if you do, you are not going to be happy, and you are going to lose passion for what you do.

It is rare if I double book a wedding, and if I did double book it would have to be a smaller wedding. I don’t want to overcommit myself so much that I am not able to give my best.

What is your advice to those who are starting a business or are even seasoned business owners?

Find Petal Flower Company
Facebook: /petalflowercompany
Instagram: @petalflowerco
Pinterest: /petalflowerco
Website: www.petalflowercompany.com

Where do you draw your inspiration from?

I like to stay relevant, but that does not necessarily mean Pinterest. I find really good florists that I like and see what they do. Other florists may be where I draw my inspiration from, but no matter how much I try to copy what they do I could never do it just like them. Plus, we do a lot of foraging around here. When you are outdoors gathering things, the inspiration hits you and you see more of what is real in nature and then you tend to copy that.

What is one thing that you wished you knew when you started your creative business?

I wish someone would have told me don’t ever do a partnership; I loved my partner, but honestly it was because we were so close that we were able to move past being partners and to be friends to this day. I don’t think a partnership is biblical or wise, and I think it is really difficult. I would say be 49% and 51% before you are ever 50/50, and be willing to give over control. Also, I wish I would have gotten training a little sooner, so that I felt confident in what I was doing, or I wish I would have at least asked someone who has been in the industry for a while for their help.

How do you set boundaries in your business?

I wish I would have gotten training a little sooner, so that I felt confident in what I was doing, or I wish I would have at least asked someone who has been in the industry for a while for their help.
As an artist or entrepreneur, people often times expect you to be bursting with creative and innovative ideas. Sometimes maybe you are a fount of creativity, but at some point in our lives, we will reach a point where thinking of a creative idea or being inspired seems impossible. Here are a few helpful ways that you can move beyond your creativity block and cultivate inspiration in your life.

**Go online**

Through the Internet we have the ability to be inspired by others’ work with just a simple click. The Internet is an incredible source of inspiration: websites like Pinterest and Behance are a great place to find ideas from other creative individuals. Nonetheless, make sure that you do not fall into the trap of copying another individual’s work or comparing yourself to someone else.

**Pray to God**

This is probably the most overlooked yet the most important tip for finding inspiration. As believers we should run to the Lord first, since He is the author of all creativity, before we go to anyone or anywhere else. If He can create the entire universe, He is certainly able to give you insight and creativity.

**Take a break**

I think one of the biggest downfalls of being an artist and entrepreneur is that we want to work all the time and never take a break. However, overworking ourselves actually hinders creativity. Instead of hitting your head against the wall over and over, trying to get a fresh idea or inspiration, simply step back and take a break.
Go
Go somewhere that inspires you and takes you away from your normal everyday environment. For me this means going outside to watch a sunset, hiking a mountain, or driving in the country. But for you this may mean going to the city or going to a coffee shop. If that is the case, go wherever it is that inspires you.

Check your sources
As mentioned before, the Internet and social media are a great way to be connected to other creatives and be inspired by their work. However, sometimes the places we go for inspiration are the very places that causes us to be uninspired. Maybe for you right now, social media is more of a hindrance to you because of all of the time you spend on it, or maybe it is harmful to you because you are comparing yourself and work to others. Be diligent to constantly check your sources of inspiration, and if need be, permanently or temporarily cut out those sources that discourage your creativity in order to encourage and cultivate creativity in your life.

Be patient
In the end, know that a good idea can take time. Sometimes the process of finding inspiration is instant and spontaneous, while other times it can be slow and agonizing. No matter how long it takes, stick it out; be patient in the process, and I promise you will reap your reward.
It is no secret that our culture idolizes the American dream and puts all those who have attained it on a pedestal. As Christians, it can be difficult sometimes to live in a world where success is commonly measured by how much money you make, how influential you are, or how well known you are. Nevertheless, as Christians, we should not be concerned about trying to measure up to the world’s definition of success; rather we should be concerned with living according to God’s definition of success.

In God’s definition of success, it doesn’t matter how much money you make, how many followers you have on social media, or whether or not you own a well-known company. But instead, it is about being faithful to what the Lord has called you to and living your life in a way that pleases the Lord. In essence, that means that as a Christian, your success and worth is not determined by your degree, your occupation, your life experiences, or your connections, but rather it has to do with whether or not we are living our lives in absolute surrender to Jesus Christ.

Success in personal life

How we view success not only affects how we approach our careers, but also our daily lives. I don’t know about you, but I am a typical American and have a set agenda for what I want to accomplish each day. I am a planning addict. In fact, I have a planner, a daily to-do list, and if that is not enough, I have a weekly to-do list. If for whatever reason my day does not go according to my plan, I become discouraged and feel like my whole day has been wasted. I have come to realize that my definition of what a successful day should look like will often cloud my vision. Now don’t get me wrong, I think it is very beneficial to strategically plan each day, but it is also important to be flexible.

My personal definition and view of what a “successful” day is, entails getting all of my tasks checked off of my to-do list. But I have learned that the things that take me away from my to-do lists are often times meaningful “interruptions,” such as conversations with friends, spending time with my family, or taking the time to encourage someone. In the end, which one do you think has more eternal significance? The fact that I completed everything on my
to-do list while neglecting the others around me, or attending to the needs of those around me and neglecting my to-do list? I do not think that any of us when faced with eternity will regret that we spent more time with those around us instead of completing our to-do list.

But again, how we view success determines how we live our everyday lives. May we live lives that are not so concerned about our to-do lists; rather let us live purposeful lives that are flexible and attentive to the needs of others.

**Don’t let failure stop you**

I think if many of us were truly honest with ourselves about what is keeping us from surrendering our life and career to the Lord, it would be the fear of failure. As a culture, we define failure as being the opposite of success. Pastor Steven Furtick said in his sermon *How To Be Brave: Hold That Thought*, “The opposite of success is not failure: the opposite of success is unfaithfulness. So, if you are faithful to what God called you to do, then even failure will work for your good.” As Christians, we don’t have to fear failure since we can be assured that nothing is wasted in God’s hands. Romans 8:28 so truthfully states, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (ESV). In addition, Psalm 18:25 says, “To the faithful you show yourself faithful...” (NIV). Even if the worst thing happens and you fail, the Lord will be faithful to you and will hold you safely in His hands.

**Fear God**

During the summer before my last semester of college, I was overwhelmed with fear and anxiety at the thought of graduating from college. My fear of graduating was completely illogical: deep down inside I was truly excited about graduating from college, but yet I was overcome with anxiety whenever I thought about my life after graduation. One day as I was on my way to my internship, I was listening to a sermon on fear, and in that moment I realized that I really wasn’t afraid of graduating, I was afraid of “failure” and what others would think of me. In that moment, I was allowing the fear of man to control my life and my thoughts instead of walking in the freedom that Christ has intended for my life.

In reality, the fear of man says that our life has to look a certain way to be considered successful. The fear of man stifles creativity and encourages uniformity. The fear of man is a cage to our very souls. As Christians, our solution to battling the fear of man...
is simply to fear God. Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...” (ESV). Not only does the fear of the Lord bring wisdom, but it also brings freedom. The fear of God takes the pressure off of us because it reminds us that we are not in control and to instead put our hope in the one who has the ultimate control.

Career versus calling

So if we completely redefine what success means, we can then redefine the essence of what a career is. What if instead of thinking of a career as having a steady job at something you may or may not enjoy, what if we think of it as a calling? What if we stopped looking at a career as something we do during the week to make money, and instead thought of it as a ministry the Lord has called us to? If we thought of our careers as really being a calling, then we would no longer separate our lives into the secular and sacred. Instead, we would see our work as an extension and platform for our ministry.

Likewise, we must also redefine what we think a calling from God looks like. As Christians, we may think sometimes that pastors and missionaries are the only Christians who are truly “called” to ministry for the Lord. Yes, certain people are called and ordained to do full time ministry, but in reality, all of us are called to a life of full time service to God, and for some of us that means that we are pastors, and for others that means that we are small business owners. William Perkins stated in his book Treatise on the Vocations or Callings of Men, “The main end of our lives is to serve God in the serving of men in the works of our callings.” As Christians, we should not think that living a life of ministry in our careers is any less important and sacred, than living our lives as a missionary in Africa. As Perkins puts it, the main purpose of our lives is to serve God by serving men through our calling.

There is no greater purpose than fulfilling God’s call in your career and personal life. Though some may not be able to understand why you are living the way you are, you can know that the world’s standard of success truly does not hold up to God’s standard of success. Now, ask yourself, what is ultimately holding you back from embracing God’s calling in your life?
In the last several years, social media has become a buzzword not only in society but also in the business world. Social Media Platforms are, of course, primarily for individuals, but that hasn’t stopped companies from jumping on the bandwagon. Sometimes companies think that the act of having a social media account is enough and will attract their target market. This mentality, however, is sometimes the breeding ground for poor and unengaging content.

From both personal and academic observations, I have compiled a list of general social media tips to help you develop a social media strategy and create engaging content for your business.

Use an active and friendly voice. Using an active voice makes content interesting, and when content is interesting, people will read it.

Use proper grammar and punctuation. Not only is using improper grammar and punctuation unprofessional, but it also causes you to lose some of your credibility with your followers.

Be concise. There is a time and place for long-winded posts, but if you regularly post content with a lot of text, more often than not, your followers will just keep scrolling. Research shows that the average attention span is eight seconds. It is up to you to strategize how to grab and keep your viewers attention in eight seconds or less.

Define a goal and brand for your social media. Think of what you want to accomplish through social media, and then try to use text and images that reflect your goal and ultimately convey your brand.

Know your target audience and post appealing content. Begin with defining your target audience; as previously discussed, try to create a persona and determine what type of content that person would be attracted to. Then, think of ways you can effectively engage them with your visuals and text.

Have fun. Break up your normal routine and post a funny picture or video, or even do a behind the scenes shot. Not only will this help break up your routine, but will also help make your brand feel more authentic.

Study how other brands use social media. Make a habit of studying how other brands use social media, and write down what you liked and did not like about their social media accounts. Make sure to study not only brands in your particular industry, but also brands that do social media well in other unrelated industries.

Be interactive. Ask questions, engage with your audience, host giveaways, and so on.

Be approachable. Respond to people’s questions as best you can, tweet back and forth with people, and be kind. Do not be a mindless machine that only creates content but does not interact or contribute.

Use social media scheduling services. There are several sites such as HootSuite that enable you to plan out your posts with various social media platform accounts. Some platforms, like Facebook actually have this feature built into its pages. With Facebook scheduling feature, and sites like HootSuite, all you have to do is insert your content, schedule a time for it to post, and those services will automatically post the content for you.

Know peak times. Every platform has a different peak time. Research the different peak times for every social media platform, and then plan your posts according to those peak times. This is when using a social media scheduling service will very useful.
Creative Live
Creative Live brings workshops from the leading photographers, entrepreneurs, graphic designers, business gurus, and many other experts right to your living room. Creative Live is completely free to sign up, but the only catch is that in order to watch a workshop for free you have to watch it live, hence the name Creative Live. However, if you would like to watch a previously aired workshop, you can buy it for around $80.00-$300.00. Make sure to check their calendar regularly to take advantage of these free workshops and to sign up for their email alerts to receive upcoming classes right in your inbox. Visit www.creativelive.com for more information.

Skillshare
Much like Creative Live, Skillshare offers short classes to satisfy your creative and entrepreneurial appetite. In two hours or less, learn how to do modern calligraphy or learn marketing strategy from one of the top experts like Seth Godin. Unlike Creative Live, you do not have to watch live content in order to get it free. There are, however, a limited amount of free courses on Skillshare’s site, but the subscription to unlock all of the courses is only $10 a month. For further information visit www.skillshare.com.

Creative Mornings
In essence, Creative Mornings are presentations by creatives for creatives. Presenters range from graphic designers, entrepreneurs, and musicians. There are over two thousand free videos in the Creative Mornings database ranging from topics such as art to collaboration. To check out the thousands of presentations visit www.creativemornings.com.

Influence Network
The Influence Network Podcasts features creative insights from Christian women. The Podcasts are thirty minutes long and are published every other Thursday. The topics range from spiritual growth to blogging tips. Visit www.theinfluencenetwork.com to access the podcasts.

Contagious: Why Things Catch On – Jonah Berger
I have read many marketing books in the past few years, but none were as interesting and enlightening as Jonah Berger's Contagious. As the title of the book suggests, the book focuses on why ideas catch on. The book is separated into six chapters and is around two hundred pages in length. Berger’s style of writing is very conversational and avoids the unnecessary mumbo-jumbo sometimes present in marketing books.

Platform: Get Noticed in a Noisy World – Michael Hyatt
Platform explores the world of social media and how you can use it as a platform for your ideas and products. The book shares stories and tactics of best-selling authors, public speakers, entrepreneurs, musicians, and other creatives to attract buyers in today’s crowded marketplace. The book is broken into five sections, in order to help you begin and launch your platform.

Make it Happen – Lara Casey
If there is one book that every female entrepreneur should read, it would be Make it Happen by Lara Casey. The purpose of the book is to encourage women to stop chasing perfection, but to instead be present in the everyday moments and live intentional lives. Casey shares her own story of how she chased perfection and how, as a result of surrendering her life to the Lord, she now lives an intentional and full life. By the end of the two hundred-page book, Casey will seem like a personal friend rather than an author of a book.

Thirty One Days of Prayer for the Dreamer and Doer – Jenn Sprinkle and Kelly Rucker
Thirty One Days of Prayer for the Dreamer and Doer is a practical devotional for all female businesses owners. It combines topics like social media, family, and busyness with your faith. The book has thirty-chapters and includes topics such as seasons, simplicity, confidence, creativity, and many more. Plus, it features stories from business owners on these topics and the like.
MARKETING 101: HOW TO DEFINE YOUR TARGET MARKET

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY: ANA CAMPBELL

Defining your target audience is one of the most crucial steps in developing a strategic marketing plan, but yet it is often sadly one of the most neglected aspects of developing a marketing plan. I am ashamed to say that when I started my first ever official “small business” at the age of sixteen, I had no clue what a target market was, let alone how to market my products. I do not claim to know everything about marketing or defining a target market, but I have learned a lot since I started my first small business many years ago.

What is a target market?
In its simplest form, a target market is the population of people that your company is trying to reach with your products. Another way to think of it is that your target market is the sector of the public that your brand or company fulfills a need for.

Why you should define a target market
It has been said many times that, “mass marketing is marketing to everyone and pleasing no one.” The idea around this statement is that, if you expect everyone to like your product or brand, you will be disappointed when no one likes your product or brand. By defining a target market, you are narrowing down the number of potential customers from everyone to people who will actually buy your product. Consequently, defining a target market will help you create a more focused and, in theory, effective marketing strategy. Nonetheless, defining your target market does not guarantee that you will hit the “mark” every time, but it does help you define better goals and tactics.

How to define your target
Defining your target market is simple. You can begin with some simple demographics and psychographics. Start by determining your target’s gender, age, family and relationship status, income, location, personality, hobbies, interests, values, etc.

Create a persona
After you’ve defined who your target market is, the next step is to create a persona. Creating a persona makes your target market more personable. When defining a target market, you are essentially describing a certain group of people, but with defining a persona you are describing a certain person.

Study the best ways to reach your target
Now that you have created a target market and persona, study that target and find out the best ways to reach them. One of the ways to study marketing strategies is by doing traditional research. Another way that you can study and come up with marketing strategies is by studying other companies who are already attracting and engaging your target market. Again, do not copy, but learn from their marketing successes and failures. Take notice of how these companies engage their clients with their branding, social media, etc. Then, formulate an overall marketing plan and tactics to reach and engage your target market with your brand.
Invest in a DSLR

There is a time and place for iPhone photos, but there is also a time and place for professional quality photos. There are two ways to get high-quality professional images for your brand: hire a professional photographer or invest in a DSLR. If you have no desire to invest in a DSLR or invest your time in learning how to use it, then hire a professional photographer. If you are interested, however, and have the time and money to invest in a DSLR, then learn how to take professional photos yourself. Thanks to the Internet, there are many free resources where you can learn how to take professional quality photos with a DSLR. Start by learning the different program modes on your camera and what each one does. Also, learn how to set your ISO, aperture, and shutter speed, and learn how to properly light your photo. Likewise, invest in and learn how to use a program like Adobe Lightroom or Photoshop.

Learn design basics

Often times the one thing that is lacking in small businesses is good typography and design. Yet, often times this is what people look at first when they are browsing your brand’s website or social media accounts. Again, thanks to the Internet there are many free resources to help you learn graphic design. Start by learning the basics of graphic design, learn how to use colors, learn the different types of fonts and how to use them together, and invest and learn how to use design software such as Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, or Illustrator.

Develop a plan

Before you even take a single photo or open design software, set aside time to brainstorm and strategize what you want your visuals to look like. Think about whether you want to take photos inside or outside, what kind of backdrop you want, and so on. Likewise, think about how much text you want to include in each visual, what kind of font you want to use, what colors you want to incorporate, etc. Decide what you want your final result to look like, and then strategize how you will accomplish that particular look and feel. By planning ahead you will not only have better results and a better understanding of what you want, but you will also save yourself a lot of time and frustration.

Hire a professional designer/photographer

Not everyone is cut out to be a photographer or graphic designer. In your case, maybe you are a savvy photographer, but a terrible graphic designer. Recognize your areas of weakness and consider subcontracting those areas out to a professional in the field. Maybe you are a graphic designer and create killer designs, but you cannot photograph your own products. So, in order to get good photography that may mean you need to hire a photographer. Don’t be afraid to own up to your own weaknesses and allow someone else to create good content for you. In the end, it doesn’t matter whether or not you took your own product photos or someone else took them, what matters is that you have good photography that make your products visually appealing and stand out.

HOW TO VISUALLY REPRESENT YOUR BRAND

WORDS AND IMAGE BY: ANA CAMPBELL

Branding encompasses many different aspects of your business, but the visual representation of your brand is maybe more noticeable to the outsider than any other aspect of your branding. Having strong, cohesive visuals for your brand is important because visuals are one of the main contributors to people’s first impression of your company.

Although having skills like graphic design and photography are helpful for creating an effective visual representation of your brand, it not necessary for you to be a professional graphic designer or photographer. However, the below tips are meant to encourage and inspire you in creating visuals for your brand.

Create interesting visuals

Good photography and good graphic design create interesting visuals. Good photography can’t compensate for poor design, and good design can’t compensate for poor photography. To create interesting visuals, you must have good design and photography.
“Creativity is inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes, and having fun.”

— Mary Lou Cook
APPENDIX A: COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS

From: simplysui
Date: Tuesday, February 2, 2016 at 1:52 PM
To: Ana Campbell
Subject: Re: Permission to Reproduce images

Hi Ana,

I give you permission to print and reproduce my images in your wonderful thesis.

Again, awesome job on your thesis!

- Sui Tin

On Feb 2, 2016, at 1:09 PM, Campbell, Ana Petra wrote:

Hey Sui!

I am contacting you because I would like to ask permission to reproduce the attached photos in my thesis published in the article, “An Interview with Sui Tin.”

The honors program requires me to submit my thesis for publication in the Liberty University’s open-access institutional repository, the Digital Commons, and in the Proquest thesis and dissertation subscription research database. If you allow this, I will provide a citation of your work as follows: Sung S. (2015). An interview with Sui Tin. Used with permission from copyright holder. See Appendix A.

Thank you!

Ana Campbell