

# Photography Business — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into the tools and decisions that make a photography business profitable: a Cost of Doing Business and pricing calculator, a contract and copyright checklist, a booking-to-delivery workflow you can run for every client, and a full-time transition plan built on real numbers. Work through one section per module, filling each worksheet and checklist with your own figures. By the end you will have your required day rate, three profitable packages, a contract and CRM set up, and a measured plan for going full-time.

## Pricing for Profit, Not for Hope

Calculate your Cost of Doing Business, set a required day rate, and build three packages priced to actually make money.

### Worksheet: Cost of Doing Business (CODB) Calculator

Total each cost for a full year, including slow months. Add the four buckets to get your annual CODB, then divide by the billable shoot days you can realistically deliver to find your break-even day rate.

Desired annual salary for yourself (e.g. 50,000)

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Annual overhead (insurance, software, website, rent, accounting)

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Annual gear depreciation and repairs (kit cost / replacement years)

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Annual per-job costs (second shooter, travel, props, processing fees)

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TOTAL annual CODB (sum of the four)

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Realistic billable shoot days this year (not calendar days)

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Break-even day rate (CODB / billable days)

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Target day rate (break-even + 15 to 30 percent profit)

### Exercise: Build Your Three-Tier Package Grid

Design good-better-best packages with the middle priced for healthy profit as your target. Set the middle first, then anchor with a premium tier above it and a deliberately limited entry tier below it. Use anchor pricing so the middle looks like the obvious value.

- What is your middle (target) package price, and what does it include based on your target day rate plus deliverables?

- What does your premium anchor include, priced 50 to 80 percent above the middle, that a few clients will happily buy?

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- What is left out of your entry tier so it gives budget clients a yes without destroying your margin or time?

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- Listed side by side, does the middle column visibly carry the most value and checkmarks?

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### Exercise: Rehearse the Three Price Objections

Write your own one to two sentence response to each common objection. Practise saying each out loud until your price sounds ordinary, and always trade scope rather than slashing the rate.

- That is more than we budgeted: how do you offer the entry tier without apologising or discounting the middle?

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- Another photographer quoted less: how do you explain what your price reflects without criticising the competitor?

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- Can you do it cheaper for a friend or for exposure: what specific off-peak or value-add concession will you offer instead of a cash discount?

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### Checklist: Pricing Readiness Checklist

- I have totalled all four CODB buckets for a full year including salary
- I know my break-even day rate and added profit to set a target rate
- My middle package is priced at or above my target day rate plus deliverables
- My premium tier anchors the middle and my entry tier is clearly limited
- My packages are shown as a side-by-side grid, not a paragraph
- I can state my price as one sentence and then stay silent
- I have a published price-increase date to create gentle urgency

## Contracts, Copyright, and Protecting Your Work

Build a client contract, set your licensing terms, and put the releases and insurance in place that keep you out of court.

### Worksheet: Contract Clause Builder

Draft or adapt the core clauses every booking needs. Start from a vetted template (The Law Tog, Rachel Brenke, or your CRM) and fill in your own terms, then have a local attorney review it for your jurisdiction. Scope and deliverables (hours, edited image count, format, turnaround days)

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Total fee and non-refundable retainer amount and percentage

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Final balance due date (e.g. 14 to 30 days before a wedding)

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Cancellation and rescheduling terms (who keeps the retainer)

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Copyright retained by photographer (yes) and license granted to client

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Model release / portfolio-use permission or opt-out

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Limitation of liability cap (e.g. amount paid)

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## Exercise: Set Your Licensing Tiers

Decide what use each client type receives and what triggers a higher price. The license, not the file, is the product, so price commercial use by reach, duration, and exclusivity.

- What does your default personal-use license allow, and what does it forbid (resale, advertising)?

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- How will you price commercial use differently based on reach and how long the images run?

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- When would you offer an exclusive license or a full buyout, and at what premium over your base?

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- What print release wording lets portrait clients legally print without transferring copyright?

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## Checklist: Releases and Insurance Checklist

- I have a model release ready to sign at every commercial or portfolio shoot
- I get a parent or guardian signature for any subject under 18
- I secure a property release when recognisable property or branded products feature commercially
- I retain copyright in writing and grant a defined license per client type
- In the US, I register valuable shoots with the Copyright Office to enable statutory damages
- I carry general liability insurance (1 to 2 million) plus equipment coverage
- I can send a certificate of insurance when a venue or client requests one

## Worksheet: Retainer and Payment Schedule Planner

Set the payment timeline for each shoot type so you are never working unpaid. Confirm the date only after the retainer clears, and release final files only after the balance is paid.

Shoot type (wedding / portrait / commercial)

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Retainer amount or percentage to hold the date

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Balance due date relative to the shoot

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Trigger for releasing final files (balance paid in full)

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Late-payment or rescheduling fee, if any

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Where the signed contract and invoice are stored (CRM record)

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## Booking Systems and Client Workflow

Map the seven-stage client workflow, choose and set up a CRM, and turn delivery into print sales and referrals.

## Worksheet: Seven-Stage Workflow and Service Standards

Write the action and the time standard you commit to for each stage of a booking. Publish the standards you can keep, then meet them every time so you compete on experience, not price.

Inquiry: response action and time standard (e.g. same day, within 24h)

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Proposal and pricing: what you send and within how long (e.g. 48h)

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Contract and retainer: e-signature and payment step to lock the date

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Pre-shoot prep: questionnaire, timeline, location and outfit guidance

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The shoot: what the client receives on the day

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Editing and delivery: sneak-peek time and full-gallery turnaround

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Follow-up: review request, print or album offer, referral ask timing

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### Exercise: Choose and Set Up Your CRM

Compare the leading photography CRMs against your real workflow during a free trial, then build one automated flow for your most common shoot type before adding others.

- Which CRM (HoneyBook, Dubsado, Studio Ninja, Sprout Studio, Tave) best fits your volume and how much customisation you want?
  - Which single shoot type will you automate first, and what are its inquiry, proposal, contract, and scheduling steps?
  - How will galleries be delivered and sold (Pixieset, ShootProof, CloudSpot, or the CRM's own)?
  - What scheduling link will you use so clients book calls without email tag?
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### Exercise: Design Your Delivery and Print-Sales Flow

Turn gallery delivery into a sales tool. Curate a strong selection, enable an integrated print lab, and add gentle urgency so clients order wall art and albums, not just digital files.

- Which platform will host the gallery with an integrated print store turned on?
  - How will you curate the selection so choices do not paralyse buyers?
  - Which products that clients cannot make themselves (albums, framed wall art) will you feature?
  - What deadline or early-order discount will you use to nudge print decisions?
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### Checklist: Booking System Go-Live Checklist

- [ ] My three packages, contract, and invoice are loaded into one CRM
- [ ] One automated workflow runs end to end for my most common shoot type
- [ ] A scheduling link is connected so clients self-book calls
- [ ] Inquiries get a same-day or within-24-hour response, automated where possible
- [ ] A sneak peek goes out within 48 hours and the gallery within my stated turnaround
- [ ] Galleries deliver through a platform with an integrated print store
- [ ] A thank-you, review request, and two-sided referral offer fire after delivery

## Going Full-Time: The Transition Plan

Build the runway and break-even numbers, a marketing engine, and the money habits that make full-time durable.

### Worksheet: Runway and Break-Even Transition Planner

Define the two numbers that make the jump safe: your break-even monthly revenue and your runway in months. Plan to go full-time when your photography income reaches roughly 60 to 80 percent of break-even with at least a six-month runway.

Personal monthly costs (rent, food, insurance, debt)

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Business monthly costs (overhead from CODB / 12)

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Break-even monthly revenue (personal + business)

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Current monthly photography income

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Replacement ratio (photography income / break-even, %)

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Total savings set aside

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Runway in months (savings / monthly costs)

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Go full-time decision date and the gap left to close

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### Exercise: Build Your Marketing Engine

Choose a niche and two or three reliable lead channels you will work every week so bookings do not depend on luck. Aim your portfolio, website, and SEO at one ideal client.

- What single niche (weddings, newborns, branding, real estate, pets) will your portfolio and website target?
  - Which two or three lead channels (Google Business Profile, website, Instagram or Pinterest, vendor referrals, email list) will you commit to?
  - What two or three vendor or referral partnerships will you build in your niche?
  - What weekly time block will you protect for reviews, partnerships, and content?
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### Worksheet: Profit First Allocation Plan

Decide the percentage of every client payment that moves into each account the day it arrives. Set the tax money aside before you can treat it as income so quarterly taxes never blindsides you.

Owner pay percentage (the salary you live on)

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Taxes percentage (25 to 30 percent of profit, separate account)

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Operating expenses percentage (overhead)

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Profit and reserve percentage (slow-month and gear buffer)

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Separate business bank account opened? (yes/no)

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Accounting tool chosen (QuickBooks Self-Employed, Wave, spreadsheet)

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Quarterly estimated tax dates noted

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### Checklist: Full-Time Readiness Checklist

- I know my break-even monthly revenue and my runway in months
- My photography income is 60 to 80 percent of break-even before I quit
- I have at least a six-month runway plus a buffer for the first slow winter
- I have chosen one niche and two to three working lead channels
- A separate business bank account runs all income and expenses
- Every payment is allocated to owner pay, taxes, operating, and profit on arrival
- I reserve 25 to 30 percent for taxes and pay quarterly estimates on time

### Your Action Plan

1. Calculate your annual Cost of Doing Business across all four buckets and divide by your realistic billable shoot days to set a break-even and target day rate
2. Design three packages as a side-by-side grid with the profitable middle as your target, a premium anchor above, and a limited entry tier below
3. Buy or adapt a vetted contract template, set a non-refundable retainer, and have a local attorney review it for your jurisdiction
4. Write your copyright and licensing terms, separating personal use from commercial use, and prepare model, minor, and property releases
5. Secure general liability and equipment insurance and save a certificate of insurance you can send to venues and clients
6. Choose one CRM, load your packages, contract, and invoice, and build one automated booking-to-delivery workflow for your most common shoot type
7. Set service-time standards (same-day inquiry reply, 48-hour sneak peek, stated gallery turnaround) and publish the ones you can keep
8. Deliver galleries through a platform with an integrated print store and add a deadline or early-order discount to drive print and album sales
9. Build your runway and break-even numbers and a weekly marketing block around one niche and two to three lead channels before planning the full-time jump
10. Open a separate business account, allocate every payment Profit First style, reserve 25 to 30 percent for taxes, and pay quarterly estimates











