

STUDIO

BULLETIN

Supporting Your Business

Issue 13 - November 2020

Guaranteed Family Portrait Appointments • Cost-Free Facebook marketing

Portrait Studios will Bounce Back

On the day I am writing this there is great excitement in the media that a Coronavirus vaccine may be on the way!

There will be hiccups to overcome but because of many different factors (social distancing, improved treatments, tracking and tracing, vaccines etc), there is likely to be a steady improvement in the COVID-19 situation, leading to a brighter 2021 for all Portrait Studios.

In many ways, we have been incredibly lucky. Other fields of photography have faced far worse, and in many, cases annihilation.

45 years ago I started an advertising and commercial photographic business which became the largest in East Anglia, and was still, until March 23rd 2020. During the last few years, the business had moved largely into supplying exhibitions and display work. On the day Lockdown was announced two vans were full of exhibition stands due to be delivered that weekend.

Those exhibitions and stands were immediately cancelled, along with a £100,000 a year contract with a university. A new £30,000 piece of equipment had just been delivered. This was a highly successful company which was just about to pay £35,000 corporation tax on a very profitable 2019 with 2020 looking like it was going to get even better.

But, overnight income ceased with no prospect of returning any time soon and, with a £45,000 rent and ten staff, it quickly became apparent that continuing was not an option.

One of the employees having to be made redundant was 67 years old. I had originally employed him in 1973. A very sad day.

Family Portrait photography has always been incredibly resilient and this continues to be true. I believe that studios will come back stronger than ever. It quickly became very clear during the brief period between lockdowns that average order values had rocketed. In many cases completely negating any drop in volumes.

“Family portrait photography has always been incredibly resilient and this continues to be true. I believe that studios will come back stronger than ever.”

Those that have not been too adversely financially affected, for example, those who work for a state organisation, have cash that has not been spent on holidays, days out, and restaurants.

Many families have had more time for each other and grown closer. Because of this, the professional Family Portrait will become more valued than it ever has been.

Looking back at records from our portrait studio just after World War One and later World War Two, portraits were in great demand and these were very successful years for our business.

One benefit of the Lockdown has been the opportunity to take stock, think and plan. This is often quite difficult to do when things are going well. We are just too busy to plan and think.



Some of the greatest successes come out adversity. One has to completely reorganise and create new initiatives. Tough times are a brilliant catalyst for getting us to move forward and create something dynamic which we would not have normally thought of.

In this issue of the *Studio Bulletin*, our amazing, talented, and very experienced team have put together several different ways that we can support studios. We have tried to create a variety of different services to suit the requirements of studios.

Our team, led by Elaine, sets out various ways in which we can assist studios to get up and running, and be more successful than ever before.

The most exciting new product being PortraitBook where we pay the upfront cost, we do all the work, and the studio only gets charged when you have a deposit paid appointment in your diary!

Andrew Coe

Due to the current situation, we regret to say that we won't be sending out gifts or Christmas cards this year, BUT we do send our sincerest wishes to you all for a Happy Christmas and a Happier, Healthier and More Prosperous 2021!

Introducing PortraitBook

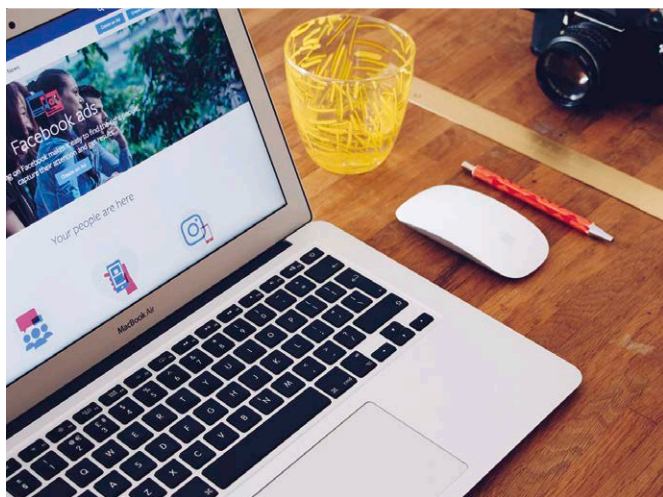
Following on from the recent launch, Elaine Sheppard takes you through the concept and benefits of Portrait Appointments latest offering to help you and your business.

As I sit here again in Lockdown my mind constantly goes to all those businesses and their owners who have again been forced to close under the current Government guidelines in order to try and stop the spread of this horrid virus, and protect the NHS and those who are at the most risk.

Regardless of your opinion on Covid or your political persuasion, we all find ourselves in the same boat as owners or employees of portrait studios.

In the last Lockdown, there was no end in sight, and we didn't know if we would ever be able to return to our businesses or even have any clients to photograph. This time it is different, and we know that when we can get back, we do have a target market and potential clients still willing to spend, and spend more in our experience!

The issue of being closed brings a complete lack of income, so how can you plan for the future or maintain continuity in marketing when you have no budget – enter PortraitBook!



Over the last few months, we have been trialling a service with three studios where Dominic Stasi (Design and Digital Manager) has spent around three weeks helping them to get their business Facebook page 'up to scratch' and providing soft content for them to post daily to increase the level of engagement on the page.

Once this has been done he takes over and runs, monitors and manages an ad from start to finish to generate leads. Portrait Appointments fund the initial £50 marketing budget and we strategically use this to maximise results (these can be found on the opposite page).



“The only time you pay is when Portrait Appointments books a deposit-paid family portrait session direct into your diary.”

If a studio wishes to increase the spend then they are of course able to contribute over and above this level.

The success of this trial has led us to now rolling out the service to our network, as one of the key attractions will be the fact that there is absolutely no up-front marketing budget required from the studio, so the entire campaign is risk-free. The only time you pay is when Portrait Appointments books a deposit-paid family portrait session direct into your diary.

Since the recent launch on 11th November, we have received an overwhelming response from studios who want to take part, so much so, that the initial five we were planning are likely to be extended to more in additional phases so that we can offer this service to as many who require it. **Elaine Sheppard**

If this sounds like something that is of interest to you too then please visit www.portraitappointments.co.uk/portraitbook and register your details. We will then be in touch to advise when we will start the process and generate deposit-paid family portrait bookings in their diaries to help you hit the ground running in 2021!

Risk-free Marketing For Your Studio!

Guaranteed Family Portrait Appointments to fill your diary in January, February and March 2021!

PortraitBook provides an appointment making service which is unique to the world of professional photography. The service creates instant engagement for your studio Facebook page.

In addition, we'll plan and implement three weeks of content for your page and then manage a complete advertising campaign designed to generate leads and family bookings for your studio.

This paid advertising allows you to reach a much wider audience and increase awareness of your services in the local area. We combine this with our knowledge of running proven promotions that will drive appointments to your diary.

- Deposit-paid Family Portrait Appointments delivered directly to your diary
- A complete, managed Facebook advertising campaign
- The only cost to you is £27.50 + vat when you receive a deposit-paid booking in your diary
- Initial Facebook advertising cost included

PortraitBook includes:



Review and Report

Full review of your current Facebook business page with a complete report detailing findings and suggested tweaks improvements



Prepared Posts

A complete schedule of soft and hard content spread over 3 weeks, designed to increase engagement on your page



Additional Ideas

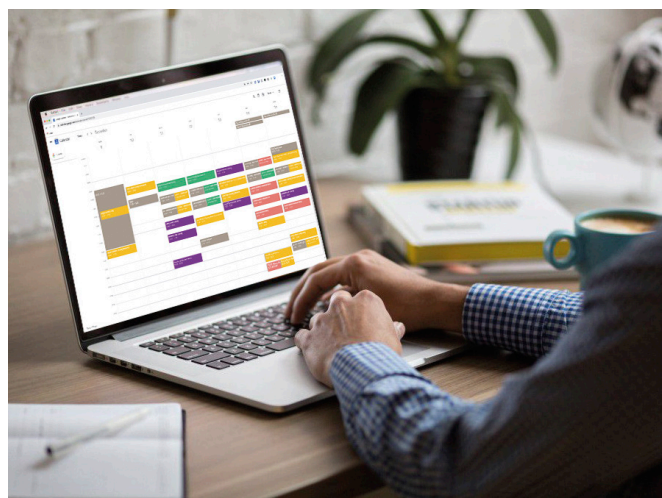
Additional suggestions for soft content that you can implement on a local level



Ad Campaign Management

Preparation and posting of a dedicated Facebook campaign, including audience profiling, management and monitoring throughout

PortraitBook 
GUARANTEED FAMILY PORTRAIT APPOINTMENTS



We have the experience and knowledge to monitor and continually improve a campaign, making each conversion as profitable as possible.

PortraitBook is Producing Spectacular Results!

PortraitBook is a risk-free marketing strategy – no upfront payment – you only pay when you receive a deposit-paid appointment in your diary.

To register your interest visit

www.portraitappointments.co.uk/portraitbook

Bookings per month	10
Average Order Value	£467
Total Sales	£4670
Cost to Studio	£275 + vat

Life Out of Lockdown...

Well, it was good while it lasted!

The four or so months we had since the first Lockdown to the second one just flew by, didn't it? Now we find ourselves back into Lockdown but for my part at least, it feels very, very different from the first time. Let's look at some of those differences and what we have got done in the last four months or so.

The thing that makes all this easier this time around is that I am no longer worrying about if and how the business will come back - I just know it will. There will be a nasty recession, there will be less disposable income and less confidence generally and we may need to market differently and have to be better at what we do in every respect but the portrait market will still be there and still be profitable. I simply have no doubt.

If the last four months have proved anything to me it is that people will still value family portraiture, still be motivated to invest in it, and there will still be money to be spent in the studios. It was great to be back welcoming clients and to see how much people still enjoyed coming in.

Let's have a look at some of the key numbers from my studio for July to the end of October compared to the same period last year.

July - October 2020 YOY

	% Change
Bookings	-62.70
Shoots	-59.73
Viewings	-36.88
Sales NET	-20.41
Average Order Value	+26.09

There are some pretty big changes. Firstly, our team is two people smaller than it was last year. We work one less day a week now than we did. We have far fewer sessions and actually work less hard than we did (we had 209 sessions versus 519 in the same period in 2019). We have been profitable for the months we have been open. We have more cash now than we did in July.



Our biggest challenge was working with a smaller diary due to social distancing and cleaning requirements. We went from 13 sessions and eight viewings in a day on Saturdays in two rooms to four shoot and view sessions in two rooms, then five and now six. We are fortunate to have a separate camera room and viewing room so we can keep everyone separate. Every diary slot was suddenly much more precious.

We have eliminated no shows as we take a deposit for every session now. This was one of the biggest changes we made, as our mid-week baby business was very busy and we did not always take deposits, so we did suffer from no shows, but we generated enough volume that it worked.

However, having done this now, I will never go back! Sure, you get fewer bookings, but the people who come in value you more and rarely waste your time. The client values it more and so you get more mid-week baby sessions that come in with both parents and other siblings. This means you can do more instant viewings and get more sales. We now shoot over 80% of our sessions with an instant viewing and this improves sales as you can capitalise on the enthusiasm you generate at the session. I urge you all to try it!



We spend more time with our clients now and it is a more relaxed environment. We are no longer clock watching for the next session and we all generally feel this is benefiting us and our clients.

The rise in our average order reflects these changes.

In the period we were open we booked over 215 sessions. I had set a budget to have 50 bookings six weeks forward in the calendar at any one time and we pretty consistently exceeded this. We rebooked a lot of our postponed sessions pretty quickly and then we had the benefit of the bookings made by Portrait Appointments for Emma's Diary and Activity Superstore. The volumes for the latter are understandably lower and for Emma's Diary we knew the deposit requirement may well impact booking volumes, so we pulled on some marketing levers. We ran Facebook ads for Baby of the Month sessions and that generated a good number of quick bookings. I knew I was limited now to capacity for weekends so rather than make a lot of quick family bookings I wanted to create something that would be a bit longer term.

Charity fundraising and school fêtes are a big volume pipeline driver for us this time of year but for obvious reasons, this was not going to be possible. I really needed to have a pipeline of leads into 2021 to replicate what we would normally have in January and February (two of our best months over the last few years).

On Facebook, we started with a special offer to purchase a session at £9. This pulled in some bookings, but we still lacked any meaningful volume coming in, so we switched to a competition. We held a random draw for a wall hanging and a free session (combined value £695) along with a bunch of runners up prizes which are our normal £160 Family Photography Gift Experience packs. We made it clear that we would be picking runner up's each day and then holding the prize draw. We had a very tight process to contact the winners and get them started on our booking process.

We ran this in August and then again in September and generated 187 leads for a total spend of £650. We have had over £15,000 of sales so far with an average order over £700 and we are still booking sessions and I expect we will do so well into next year. It has really generated a good pipeline of quality family sessions. We are now doing the same with Pet shoots and that is also working very well so far and will generate another pipeline of leads.

One thing to consider when you pick your winner from the competition is to use the opportunity for some great marketing. This client will be very happy to give you a great review and some behind the scenes footage. We managed to create a really nice set of marketing images and a video from this session as well as a wonderful review.

“ If the last four months have proved anything to me it is that people will still value family portraiture, still be motivated to invest in it, and there will still be money to be spent in the studios. It was great to be back welcoming clients and to see how much people still enjoyed coming in.



The client also upgraded their product so we still managed to make a little bit of extra on the competition winner. This gives your future competitions more social proof, showing it is real and that people love what you do.

Since Lockdown 2 started I have been working on my marketing pretty much full time. I have cleaned and prepared my mailing list I am selling our £160 Family Photography Gift Experience packs in the run-up to Christmas with both an email and Facebook ad campaigns. This will run-up to Christmas and hopefully generate sessions for the new year.

The next challenge will be to come up with new competitions and offers to continue to generate leads and this is very much in my mind going forward.

We do expect there to be a large amount of Activity Superstore leads to come back into the pipeline next year too. They are there but are not all being redeemed in light of the pandemic. Hopefully, the new year will bring good news and a return more to normal and these bookings will start to flood through. **Peter Evans**

Emma's Diary Data

The UK's most reliable source of GDPR approved baby data.

emma's
diary®

Emma's Diary have spent the past 27 years making sure that every mum-to-be and new parent has the information and tools needed to provide them with the support to make those all-important decisions.

Endorsed by The Royal College of Midwives, Emma's Diary provides unlimited access to a wealth of the latest pregnancy and baby advice and information, along with a range of member-only benefits which includes four free Emma's Diary packs full of freebies from big pregnancy and baby brands, and access to their pregnancy app with more exclusive offers.

Mums-to-be can register by filling in a form in the first Emma's Diary publication they receive from their GP or by registering online. Once they have done this then they can access the offers, of which Barrett & Coe provide an exclusive baby photography experience that they can take advantage of. We know post-GDPR that the process involved to register for this means that those doing so really want to have their baby professionally photographed.

Our agreement with Emma's Diary means we have access to all the details of expectant mums who register so we can promote our offer straight to them and so could you! The data is provided to us on monthly basis and you have the opportunity along with over 100 other photographers to purchase these records on a postcode area basis.

To take Emma's Diary data please call Jenny or Sharon on 01603 629739 or email enquire@barrettandcoe.co.uk

“Emma's Diary data provides a foundation for me to build my business on.

The leads come in and the bookings happen through Portrait Appointments.

It leaves me to focus on the bricks and mortar of my own family local marketing.



The Key Numbers

11	average number of registrations/data records per postcode per month
100%	of data records with a postal address
30%	average number of data records with telephone numbers
80%	average number of data records with email addresses
£2.04 + vat	the cost per data record
10%	conversion to registration from sending direct mail to data records
78%	conversion to booking from mailshot registrations
18%	conversion to booking achieved from calling data with telephone numbers
25%	target cancellation/postponement rate from booking to session
£384	average order (currently) being achieved across our controlled and monitored studios

Emma's Diary and Baby of the Month

These two brands work hand in hand with each other and together will give your studio the leading edge over all your competitors and ensure your studio is the number one baby photography venue in your area.



Emma's Diary Mailshot

We can facilitate the send of branded and personalised letters to your data records with our Mailshot. This tried and tested method warms up your data and generates additional registrations to turn into bookings. Each mailshot costs £1.29 + VAT and includes a letter, silver voucher, coloured envelope and postage.



BluePrint 2.0 Programme **BluePrint 2**

Supporting Your Business

A complete support programme dedicated to massively increasing your profits for just £139 +VAT per month.

Our original BluePrint programme supported existing studios for two years with outstanding success.

The studios that participated reported back increased sales across the board, record individual sales, increased average order and improved processes and photographic quality.

There was a big focus on achieving marginal gains to make the difference to bottom lines, with some even jumping up and past the VAT threshold with no impact on costs or cashflow.

BluePrint 2.0 quickly followed in December 2018 by popular demand and set out to achieve the same objectives but through a more focused, detailed, personalised, 1:1 approach.



A focused and detailed programme, personalised to you



- > We guarantee to **increase your profits**
- > A **bespoke business programme** focused for your studio
- > **Monthly meetings** covering photography business, sales and marketing
- > Enjoy being **part of a group of studios** sharing ideas and experiences
- > **Personalised studio visits** and support from Elaine Sheppard
- > Dedicated **exclusive area**
- > **Access to family, baby and pet portrait appointments** from our national contracts. On average, BluePrint 2 members receive more than £70,000 sales from these appointments.
- > Access to **proven marketing literature**
- > **Facebook marketing campaigns** creating appointments for your diary via our calling service

To join the BluePrint 2.0 Programme call Jenny or Sharon on 01603 629739 or email enquire@barrettandcoe.co.uk

Portrait Appointments

PORTRAIT
Appointments

Portrait Appointments was founded in August 2019 and supports the Barrett & Coe and Approved & Recommended network of portrait studios, distributing registrations and making bookings for over 70 UK based studios.

The contact centre is based at Barrett & Coe Head Office in Norwich and owned and operated in whole by Barrett & Coe under the watchful eye of Elaine Sheppard. The day to day running is in the hands of Helen Andrews, Centre Manager, who leads the team of booking agents, all of whom have worked in the business for a number of years and have extensive experience and expertise in what they do.

Emmas Diary Elite

This scheme is brought to you in association with Barrett & Coe and Portrait Appointments (in conjunction with Baby of the Month) and has the primary objective of helping you to maximise the number of quality baby portrait bookings you can achieve from your Emma's Diary data and improve your ultimate sales potential.

It was relaunched last year in order to meet the ever changing demands of using Emma's Diary data and the baby market and combines dedicated mail and email marketing with a sophisticated calling programme.

It is based on over 15 years' experience of making appointments from Emma's Diary data using telephone numbers, as well as our practical application of best practice processes and techniques tried and tested throughout our Franchise operation and network of independent photographers.



We know that mums are prepared to take up the offer of a professional photography session for their baby with an authorised Emma's Diary photographer and also want the added opportunity of being able to enter the Baby of the Month competition for a chance that their baby may win the prestigious title!

The marketing process that we use promotes both of these opportunities via the use of all of the elements of the data that we receive. Names, addresses and a combination of telephone numbers and email addresses provide comprehensive data records for us to 'hit' and we do this as follows:

- Initial warm-up email
- Mailshot
- 3 further warm-up emails
- Calling programme (alongside warm-up emails)
- 4 Fire-up emails



“ Our approach is to become a part of your studio team so the more we know about you and your studio, the better.”

The mailshot and emails provide an opportunity for the recipient to register their interest in having a baby session and entering the competition. These are always prioritised and called and booked at the start of a day before calling then starts to work through the remaining bought data for each photographer on a rotational basis between the hours of 9am to 7pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 6pm on a Friday.

Our purpose-built Telephone Information System (TIS) enables all Emma's Diary data to be loaded called via this organised calling structure which is linked to patterns and knowledge gained from the many years of experience we have gained from calling Mums. All contacts and call outcomes are then recorded for further analysis and form the basis of a monthly outcome report that you receive so you can see exactly how your data is performing.

All the calls we make are done from a local number which is leased on the individual studios behalf. This helps us to achieve a better 'calls answered' ratio as a lot of people these days now screen their calls to their mobiles and are more likely to answer their phone if they see their local STD code, as opposed to a 0330 number or our local Norwich code.

The process we have in place works simultaneously with the provision of your latest set of monthly data from Barrett & Coe. We manage the whole thing so that the timings are spot on. You are also able to send us additional past data

if you wish to add to your mailshot too. Any data we can't reach by phone will remain in our TIS system and we will continue to call until such a point as it is deemed no longer viable.



Barrett & Coe and Portrait Appointments provide practical and on-going assistance in order to help you to be successful. We don't just view ourselves as simply 'data providers', but as

a source of support that becomes an integral part of your marketing and sales processes. Our approach at Portrait Appointments is to become a part of your studio team so the more we know about you and your studio, the better.

This is why we set up studio pages that can be accessed by the team while they call your data with photographs of you, your studio, parking details, what else they can do in the area if they want to make a day of it.

Our calls will be made as though we are calling from your studio. We are also able to discuss and take relevant deposits for you (via Worldpay or similar) if it is deemed necessary, and book other Barrett & Coe Platinum appointments into your Google calendar at no additional cost if you join Elite and are of course a member of the Platinum Group.

Elite is a scheme that will not be for everyone, but if you are interested and would like to discuss it further, then Elaine can take you through the recruitment process in order to see whether it is right for you and your business, as it relies on a minimum amount of data and full commitment, understanding and professionalism at every stage.

If you are ever in Norwich then we highly recommend a visit to meet the team as those photographers that have done so in the past have greatly appreciated the set-up, what the team do, and how they can help their businesses.

For more details please call Elaine on 01603 629739 or email info@portraitappointments.co.uk

Introducing Helen Andrews

As Centre Manager, Helen manages and oversees the Portrait Appointments Contact Centre based in Norwich.

Together with my team we speak to a variety of different people from all walks of life - from first-time mums to *'I've done this before, I've got this'* mums to families trying to convince their teenager that the shoot will be fun, and to please smile!

It's all about being polite, friendly and managing the customers' expectations. Building a rapport with the customer in such a short space of time is important, understanding what it is they want from the session and how the photographer can capture their individual personalities and to include their little furry friends - we all know they're just as important as any child!

We are the first point of contact, so it's important we clearly communicate what happens on the day. One of the most important things is knowing enough about the studio. We have a lot of information on our studio pages and that enables us to know about the location, parking at the studio, what facilities they have, nearby bus stops and train stations.

“ Building a rapport with the customer in such a short space of time is important, understanding what it is they want from their photography session.

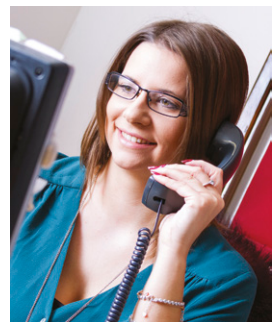
Studios also provide information about the surrounding area so the customer can really make a day of it.

Having been to a couple of the studios myself, I have a full understanding of what takes place on the day, making it easier for me to get that information across to the customer.

My experience from speaking to different people on a daily basis is they haven't always done this before. We offer pet, family and baby sessions and often a question I get asked is *'Do I have to be included? I'll ruin the photos!'*.

It's important to make the customer feel at ease prior to attending the session, explaining it will be fun for all the family and the photographer will capture a variety of special moments.

One of the team spoke to a new mum a few weeks ago, she only got as far as saying 'hello' when the mum said *'bear with me my son just hit me over the head with a plastic dinosaur'*. It's never the right time to call a mum with a new baby but with our experience, it's just about being friendly patient and understanding. **Helen Andrews**



Baby of the Month

Become the no. 1 photographer in your local area with our national promotion



Baby of the Month began in January 2015 and has become the UK's leading baby photography competition. Run on Facebook, with a reach of over 500,000 each month and almost 115,000 Page Likes and Followers, participating photographers gain a massive advantage over their competitors.

Since its launch, the competition has grown massively and most mums in the UK know all about it and are keen to book a photography session with a Recommended & Approved studio so they can enter their baby. Clients attending a baby photography appointment in your studio (from any marketing source) can choose to enter one image from their session into a future competition.

Approved & Recommended studios receive registrations from mums who want baby photography via their listings on the Emma's Diary website and the Emma's Diary app. On average there are 12 registrations per postcode.

What are the Baby of the Month studio benefits?

- Unlimited PR opportunities
- Each image you enter into the competition is watermarked with your studio name
- Extensive marketing support to create an average order value of £385
- Studios can use this promotion free of charge in their own marketing on Facebook / Instagram etc.
- Certificates presented to winning baby's and studios
- Clients can win 5 x £100 Boots vouchers
- £5000 Annual Prize

Recommended and Approved studios receive an exclusive area for Emma's Diary data records where a mum has specifically opted in for baby photography at a professional portrait studio. All the records are fully GDPR compliant and contain a name and postal address, as well as many email addresses and telephone numbers.



Photographed by
the picture box

Ruben - 2019 Baby of the Year Winner - Photographed by Justine McMillan (The Picture Box)



114,000+
Page likes since Jan 2015



500,000
Monthly Page reach
and Post Engagement



1.3m+
Competition votes

One image from each session may be entered into the competition via a £1.50 entry fee. This goes directly to our nominated charity, the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, who care for orphan elephants in Kenya. Each baby receives a 'Tembo' soft toy elephant, which can include an attached label displaying the studio's contact details.

Once a competition goes live, Mums contact all their friends/family to encourage votes for her baby, for a chance to win a £100 Boots vouchers and certificates for both the baby and the photographer. There are also 5 x runners-up prizes sponsored by Baby of the Month supporters.

The results are determined from votes on Facebook and three panels of judges consisting of five mum's, five photographers and competition sponsors which are published on www.babyphotographers.co.uk. At the end of each year, one baby's image is chosen as the annual winner and are presented with a cheque for £5,000! This truly is the fastest way of ensuring that your studio is the most well-known baby photographer studio in your area.

To become a recommended Baby of the Month photographer call Jenny or Sharon on 01603 629739.

Glowing Feedback from Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

We're thrilled to share the kind words of the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust after we presented them with a cheque for £5000 from Baby of the Month clients' entry donations.

"Family is everything to elephants and, for female elephants in particular, nothing is more precious than a baby. It's a sentiment we know all mums and dads will relate to, especially for those who have captured lasting memories of their own precious bundles through a baby photography experience."

Through your entry fees into the Baby of the Month competition, you have helped raise a further £5,000 for the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and we are so incredibly grateful for this support, which will help us to provide care for rescued orphan elephants who have lost their mothers, so that one day they can return to the wild and begin families of their own."



**To watch the video visit
<https://bit.ly/swtbom20>**

Platinum Group

Platinum Group

Launched back in 2011, the scheme provides photographers with high-quality portrait appointments which make up a key part of the turnover of many of our members studios.

The majority of Platinum appointments are generated from the purchase of a Portrait Gift Experience via Activity Superstore. These are available for the general public to buy online but also from a network of national high street retailers which include WH Smith, Debenhams, Boots, Sainsbury's and Morrisons.

As a photographer operating an independent business, the advantages of having your name linked to a well-known brand is massive. The exposure and credibility this links you with gives you a significant advantage over your competitors. You would never be able to achieve such a business relationship or tie-up in your own right. Platinum enables you to access national promotions which will create a great additional income stream.

Based on figures taken across the group last year, studios received an average of 127 appointments from their dedicated areas where the average order across our Barrett & Coe franchised studios was £485 for all Activity Superstore generated clients.

This is slightly lower than the £500+ achieved for self-generated shoots, however, it is important to bear in mind that these purchased experiences are bought in the main as gifts to give to family and friends.

“I receive Activity Superstore appointments nearly every day. Most of the customers are large families, and some with pets, which have proven to be one of our best sellers!

Photographer Faye Collyer Rolls, Phase Photography

A photography experience is a great gift to receive as most people don't wake up in the morning and think "I know what we'll do today! We'll have a family portrait taken!" This type of gift (or loss leader offer) is provided in order to give the recipient a "Why now?"

This means that it might be something they have been thinking about doing for a while but never got around to it. Having the voucher gives them the reason for getting it organised and all Activity Superstore vouchers have an expiry date of 1st December in each retail season giving them plenty of time.



Due to the 'gift' element of the experience, you will always need to ensure that you educate your new clients from the start, providing them with full details and information on what to expect, when, why and how. The best results are achieved when all of this is fully explained and the gift soon becomes an opportunity to spend an hour in a studio with a professional photographer, as opposed to just an 8" x 6" or 10" x 8" portrait.

The studios most successful with these appointments treat them in exactly this way. It is possible to receive a family, baby or pet shoot, all of which include an hour-long shoot, personalised viewing and gift portrait, however, it is including the whole family and making the most of every opportunity that drives average order. If Auntie Beryl only wants to bring her dog along for her pet shoot then explain it is designed for the whole family to take part and that the dog will be photographed separately as part of that. If this still doesn't work then get it booked in a mid-week, off-peak slot and manage your diary accordingly.

Over the years we have built up a vast knowledge of this area and are therefore happy to share any information or advice to any of our members or photographers wishing to take part. Our comprehensive Resource Area is always available to be accessed and one of our team is available at the end of a phone or email.

If you would like a more hands-on approach, our Managing Director Elaine Sheppard can visit your studio for a day to provide consultancy for a reduced rate of £500 + VAT.

To join the Platinum Group please call Jenny or Sharon on 01603 629739 or email enquire@barrettandcoe.co.uk

Bi-Monthly Tips

Elaine Sheppard shares her top tips to give you an edge on your competitors!



Make the Most of Your 'Down-time'

Some of you may say what is down-time when you run a small business?! What I actually mean is the time in this Lockdown that is being spent at home away from our studios.

As I mentioned earlier on, we are in a more positive position this time in that we have an end to this Lockdown in sight and it is a much shorter period of time. This all means that we need to make sure we stay on top of our marketing. As if being closed in our most crucial and profitable quarter of the year isn't enough, we don't want to lose momentum on the good things that have been happening since 15th June when we were able to re-open.

Even if there is no budget in the 'marketing pot' at the moment then make sure that you keep doing things that will help you to get up and running quickly when you can afford to market. The main and obvious answer is your Facebook page.

Continuing to post soft content and staying in touch with your clients and audience is vital in order to keep them up to date, but also to ensure that your engagement on your pages remains good so when you do run an ad it will perform.

If you are someone who doesn't use Facebook to the max or understand it then try and use some of this time to set yourself targets to get more familiar with it – it really is a cheap source of leads and one not to be dismissed prematurely.



“Continuing to post soft content and staying in touch with your audience is vital to keep them up to date and to ensure engagement remains good

Review Your Studio

Those of you who know me or have heard me speak will be familiar with 'the money coat'. This is an exercise which involves you imaging that you are wearing a coat with £20 notes attached to it to the value of your own average order. You then 'wear' this coat on entrance to your studio and move around the studio looking at everything through the eyes of your clients. If you see anything that you think is out of place or not right then take £20 off the coat for each thing.

This might be some tidying up that needs to be done, a wall that needs painting, some out of date products or portraits that need removing and replacing with newer versions. All of these things affect average order and tend to be jobs or tasks that we never normally find the time to do, or get pushed to the bottom of the 'to-do' list. If you have time in Lockdown then try and get some of these jobs ticked off the list. Review your studio in the same way as I would do if I came and visited and really be critical. If you've put off tweaking your pricing then do it.

If you've always wanted to try a brand new product then add it to your offering. This is the best time to take action and go in fresh again when we're safe and able.

