

The Instagram Interviews



An interview series by: wolnicat | photography



15 Photographers

83 Questions

2.3 Million Followers





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Kirsten Alana

1. In another interview, you mention that Instagram and Twitter played important parts in your success as a travel photographer, content creator, digital marketer, and speaker. When did you start on Instagram, and how has your account grown since then?

I posted my first photo on October 19th, 2010 and it grew very steadily for years, a few followers a week. Gaining 100 followers in a month was a really good month for a long time. Once in a while a blog would feature me as someone people should follow on Instagram and it was incredible every time it happened. People asked me to speak in public about mobile photography and best practices for Instagram and of course I always said yes, and that helped a bit with growth. But then in very early 2014 when I'd managed to get myself to 10K completely organically and all on my own -- all of the sudden the followers started pouring in and instead of a 100 a month it was suddenly 1,000 a week.

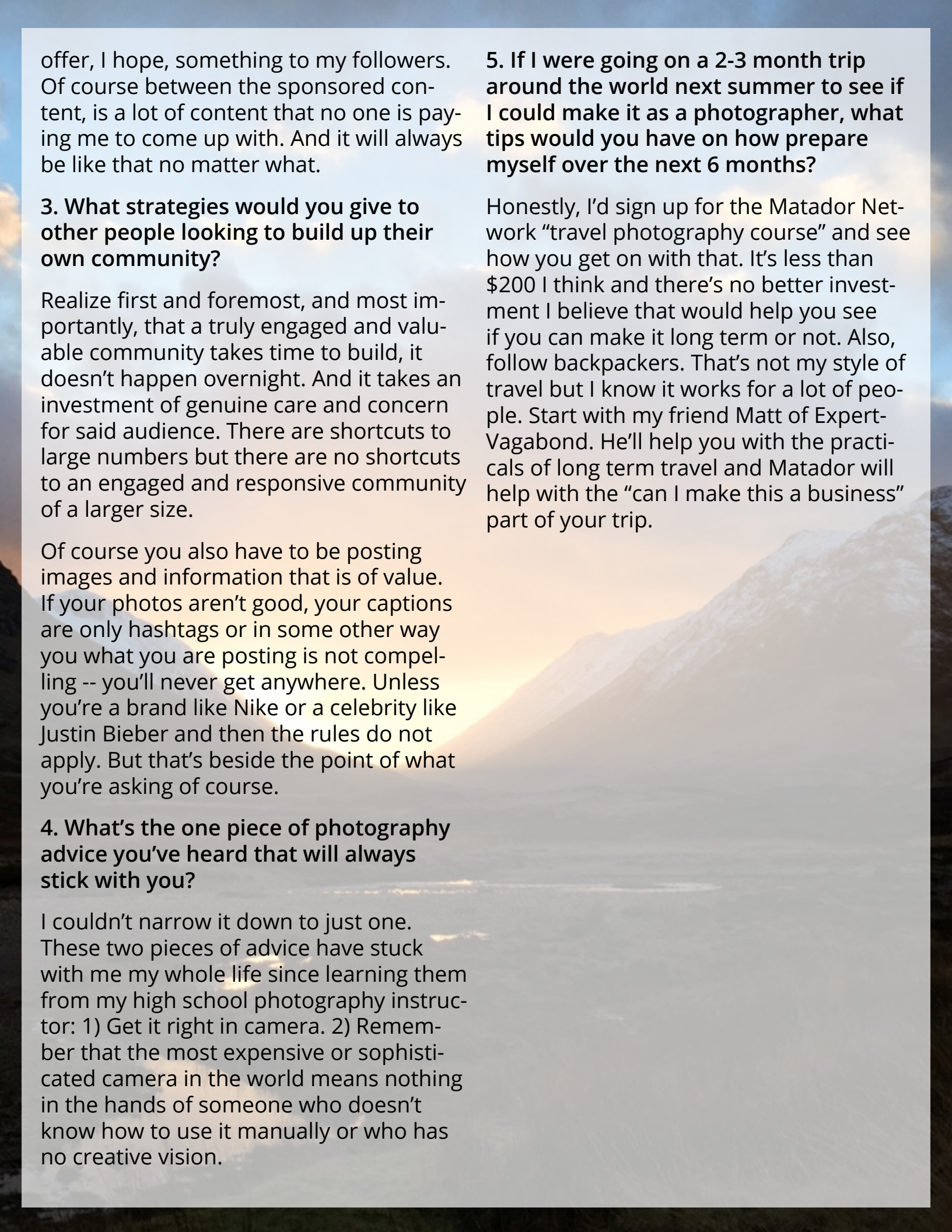
I did some Google tracking and found that I was being featured by the likes of Huffington Post, Grazia, British Airways High Life, Paste Magazine, American Photo, Marie Claire, and even some German, Turkish and Brazilian magazines. All of the sudden, I'd hit 60K and then 75K and at this point I have no idea if it will continue to grow or not. I'm just incredibly hum-

bled and grateful that it's gotten to where it is now. I never really believed that I'd have more followers than my friends, family members and maybe a few colleagues in the travel industry!

2. How would you compare your usage of Instagram to Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Tumblr? Which ones do you spend the most time on, and which ones result in the majority of your revenue?

I spend the most time on Instagram without a doubt. I look at it as short form storytelling. A sort of blog really. And I endeavor to always give something of value with each image I post beyond just the photo. So whether that's a bit of history, some travel advice, tech advice or just a story that people can connect with -- there's something. There's a caption that's more than a few sentences of empty words.

Because I approach it so differently I think that's why so many people contact me, interested in paying me to post. If I said yes to every opportunity, Instagram would most definitely be my biggest income generator. And then my stream would be nothing more than a glorified billboard for brand messages. I'm trying really hard to not have that happen by continuing to curate as I've always done, and saying yes only to the sponsorship or paid promotion that genuinely makes sense and can



offer, I hope, something to my followers. Of course between the sponsored content, is a lot of content that no one is paying me to come up with. And it will always be like that no matter what.

3. What strategies would you give to other people looking to build up their own community?

Realize first and foremost, and most importantly, that a truly engaged and valuable community takes time to build, it doesn't happen overnight. And it takes an investment of genuine care and concern for said audience. There are shortcuts to large numbers but there are no shortcuts to an engaged and responsive community of a larger size.

Of course you also have to be posting images and information that is of value. If your photos aren't good, your captions are only hashtags or in some other way you what you are posting is not compelling -- you'll never get anywhere. Unless you're a brand like Nike or a celebrity like Justin Bieber and then the rules do not apply. But that's beside the point of what you're asking of course.

4. What's the one piece of photography advice you've heard that will always stick with you?

I couldn't narrow it down to just one. These two pieces of advice have stuck with me my whole life since learning them from my high school photography instructor: 1) Get it right in camera. 2) Remember that the most expensive or sophisticated camera in the world means nothing in the hands of someone who doesn't know how to use it manually or who has no creative vision.

5. If I were going on a 2-3 month trip around the world next summer to see if I could make it as a photographer, what tips would you have on how prepare myself over the next 6 months?

Honestly, I'd sign up for the Matador Network "travel photography course" and see how you get on with that. It's less than \$200 I think and there's no better investment I believe that would help you see if you can make it long term or not. Also, follow backpackers. That's not my style of travel but I know it works for a lot of people. Start with my friend Matt of Expert-Vagabond. He'll help you with the practicals of long term travel and Matador will help with the "can I make this a business" part of your trip.

Lauren Bath

1. Could you share a little bit about yourself and how you got started in photography?

Sure. Most people don't realize this but I actually got into photography through using Instagram, not the other way around. I was an early adopter on the platform starting in August 2011. Before too long I found myself hooked on taking and sharing mobile images and decided to try my hand with a dslr. After purchasing my first camera, a Nikon D7000, I fell head over heels with photography and this was a love affair that I was able to share with my already burgeoning Instagram community.

Before Instagram I was a chef with 15 years in that industry. Despite what many think I actually enjoyed this career for many years and I find myself incredibly fortunate to have found and worked at two passions consecutively. I made the transition from chef to photographer/instagrammer two and a half years ago and I've never looked back.

I describe my work as more of a marketing role than a photographer although my photography does factor in. I work within the tourism industry promoting destinations to my social media communities using pictures and telling stories. I've transitioned into project management, consultancy and education as well which

means from job to job I am constantly challenged. I'm passionate about travel and the tourism industry, which makes me strive towards creating quality images to share my experiences.

2. There's lots of ways to market yourself as a photographer these days. What platforms do you use? Do you use different strategies to reach your audience with each platform?

One thing that I will say is that I really don't like it when photographers put exactly the same content out to all of their platforms at the same time. If I follow someone on, say, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Google+ I might be subjected to seeing the same photo and story four times in 24 hours. What photographers should be striving towards is driving their followers to different platforms and giving them the incentive to cross over.

I personally use Twitter, Instagram, Personal and Business Facebook, Google+ and Steller. In addition I write for several online publications and have just launched my own website. I try new platforms regularly and occasionally pick a new one up for regular use. The latest was Steller.

I use Twitter to retweet interesting tidbits about my career and announcements on upcoming events I am involved in. I use

business Facebook for “highlight” album posts of travel campaigns, usually one to two albums per destination with up to ten images per album. I use personal Facebook for people that I know where I post funny and interesting behind the scenes stories and snaps. I use Google+ for high resolution and hero shots and Steller for creating funny little stories than encompass behind the scenes shots, selfies, field notes and settings.

Instagram is my main place where I post up to four images daily and tell the story of my travels and the destination I am in. I’m very engaged here and it’s the best place to ask me a question and expect an answer.

When I write articles the topics can be anything from travel/destination writing to how I got into this industry to photography specific pieces. What I’m trying to achieve is that people who are genuinely interested in me can learn more about me on every platform.

3. What advice would you give to someone looking to build up their own community of followers on Instagram?

This is a tough one for me to answer because everything that I did on Instagram was organic and the thought of being a professional instagrammer was unheard of. I find that the problem now is that professionals are starting Instagram with the firm goal of using the platform to monetize or attract opportunities and for this reason their approach isn’t natural.

If you truly want to succeed on Instagram you need to love Instagram. Building a strong community, sharing and putting yourself out there take time and effort

and nobody wants to invest that kind of time into something they don’t love. When I first started using Instagram it wasn’t uncommon to spend 6-8 hours a day on there and even now I’m usually present on the app for at least two hours a day.

The trick is to use Instagram because you want to. Seek out amazing people to follow, be interested and invested in others, give back and be SOCIAL. I think Instagram is a lot less about photography than many believe. Instagram is about community, support and inspiration, the pictures are just the cherry on top.

4. As a travel photographer, you get to go on a lot of cool trips. How do you manage planning trips, exploring, taking photos, editing, and business inquiries while on the road?

This is a great question and something that I’m not asked often enough. Balancing my life is tough! Everybody sees the cool trips and experiences and assumes that I have the best life ever when in reality I work my butt off every minute of every day.

Yes, I love what I do and I believe I have the best job in the world but I work for it. For every laugh and amazing shot captured and career highlight is a Saturday night spent on the computer or a missed family engagement or a decline in my health. This year I am focused on bringing more balance into my life and my fingers are crossed that I can achieve this.

To answer this question more helpfully, this is my current workflow on trips. I wake up early every day for sunrise and the time varies significantly from country

to country and season to season. After a sunrise shoot I eat breakfast with my laptop where I edit the mornings “keepers” and make my first Instagram post for the day. If I’m lucky I grab a shower and a half an hour break but more often than not I’m on the road straight after breakfast. Throughout the day I am shooting, scouting for places to shoot and spending more time on Instagram.

Afternoons are spent on my laptop again and I usually try to keep on top of emails while I’m away. Considering my average time spent on emails is 2 hours a day this can be tough. Reporting, book keeping, new pitches and other business tasks are usually left for my limited time at home. I shoot sunset daily and occasionally manage a night shoot too. I like an early dinner, a beer or two and an early night. Catching 8 hours sleep is important for my energy levels.

When I am the project manager for a trip and I’m also hosting I can find that my photography suffers as I put the needs of my influencers first.

5. If there’s one thing that has changed the way you work as a photographer, what would it be?

I guess I’m a funny case because the way that I work as a photographer has been dictated by learning in front of an audience. From my very first post using an iPhone 4 to learning my dslr to up-grades and more, it has all been on public display. So in saying that, nothing has changed for me.

It was always very important to me as I monetized off my social media reach that I would never “sell out”. I wanted to con-

tinue to do the things that made people interested in me only in cooler places. I’m honest, I over share, I’ve always got a funny story to tell and I put it all out there.

The only thing that has really changed is that now I play with more expensive toys. ;)

6. Anything else you’d like to add?

For those that are interested my kit is:

Camera and Lenses

Nikon D800

Nikon D750

14-24 f2.8 Nikkor lens

24-70 f2.8 Nikkor lens

70-200 f2.8 Nikkor lens

50mm prime

85mm prime

(Nikon does not sponsor me.)

Tripod

Manfrotto (sponsored)

Current model is a carbon fiber with a ball head.

Filters

Lee (sponsored)

Various graduated and straight neutral density filters and a circular polarizer

Bag

F-stop (supported)

I have a bad back and f-stop is the first camera bag that distributes the weight of my kit and doesn’t hurt my back

I also use a Manfrotto sling bag for active days.

Tech

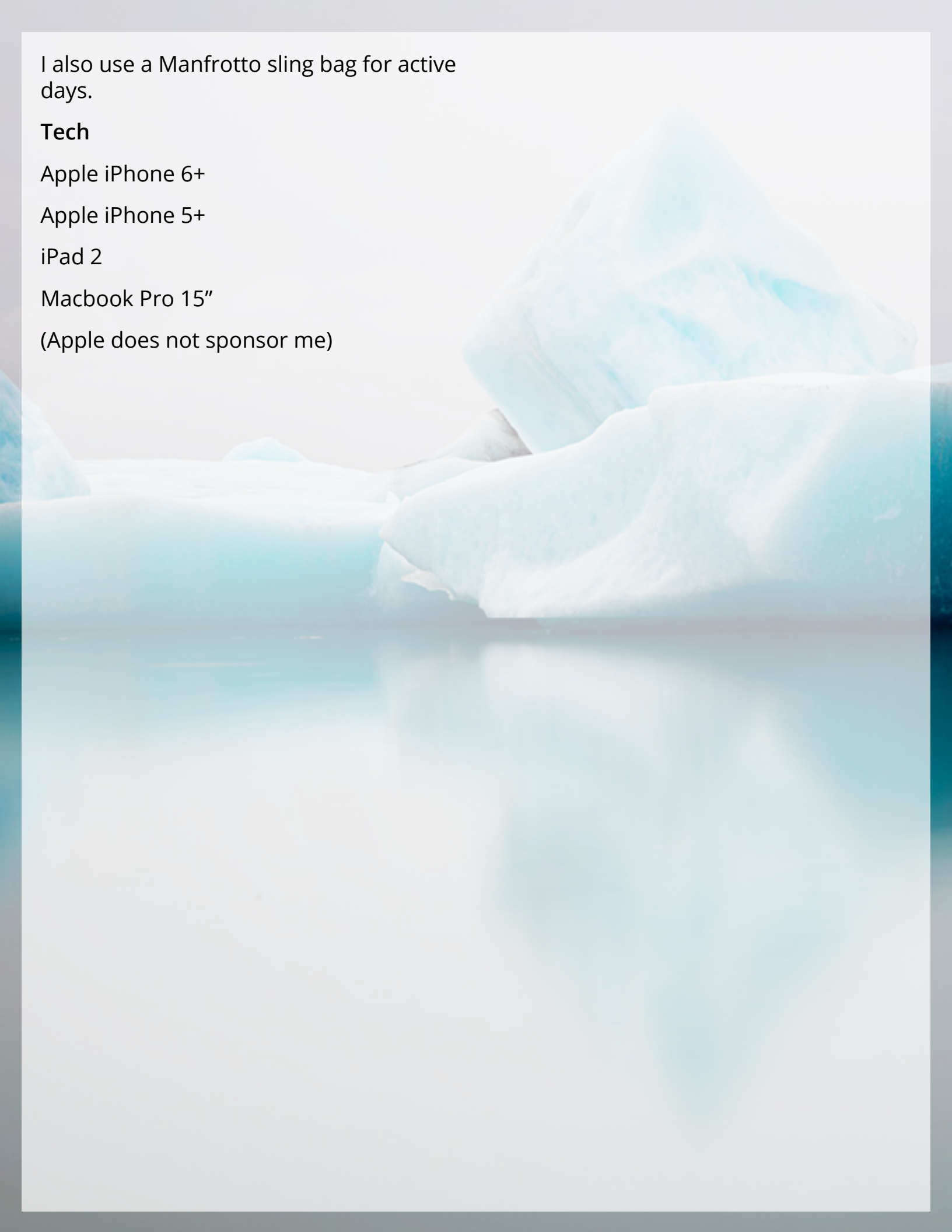
Apple iPhone 6+

Apple iPhone 5+

iPad 2

Macbook Pro 15"

(Apple does not sponsor me)



Hannes Becker

1. Could you share a little bit about yourself, how you got started in photography, and when you joined Instagram?

I am a self taught, 21 year old german photographer based out of central Germany. It's always fun exploring and capturing the beauty around me. My hometown is surrounded by fields and forest which makes it easy for me to follow my passion about landscapes.

I joined Instagram 2 ½ years ago, just for fun and sharing random stuff with my friends. Over the years Instagram got more and more serious and so the fun turned into a passion. This summer I started an education as a brand and product photographer, it feels awesome to work with photography everyday.

2. Do you use other platforms to market your photography?

No. And I don't want to be on other platforms, also just don't have the time besides Instagram to care about another platform and the community there.

The Instagram community is awesome, I met great friends through Instagram and I try to meet people very often.

3. What advice would you give to a photographer looking to increase their visibility on Instagram?

Just don't take Instagram too seriously,

give your photos a clean edit and try to specialize your Instagram on one theme, like Landscapes, Streetphotography or Portrait, etc. And don't try to copy somebody. Try to find your own style. People will love it and you will get attention on your photos.

4. What one thing would you say has made the biggest impact on you as a photographer?

I think my family and friends had made the biggest impact on me. They always believe in me and help when I need it.

5. Could you share a little about your shooting and editing process?

I shoot with a Canon 5D Mark II and mirrorless Olympus OmD Em10 camera.

Resulting photos are processed in Lightroom 5. Except the ones I take with my iPhone; I edit those shots just with VSCO Cam and Snapseed.

Andy Best

1. Could you share a little bit about yourself and how you got started in photography?

I am a third generation photographer. My dad was always into photography and I took to it at an early age.

2. When did you start on Instagram, and how has your account grown since then?

I started my first account in 2010. It grew quickly and I had an awesome community of followers. It was deleted in 2013 by Instagram because of some unknown issue. Very long frustrating story. My account now I started at the end of 2013 and at the end of June I was around 7k followers. Today I'm over 100k.

3. Between Twitter, Tumblr, Vimeo, Instagram, word of mouth, and a personal website, there are lots of ways to market yourself as a photographer. How would you compare your usage of Instagram to the other marketing channels?

I use them all equally. I know Instagram is my primary marketing channel, but it's important to keep everything current. The more places you can show your work the easier you are to find.

4. What is the one thing that has had the biggest impact on your work as a photographer?

I'd have to say that the biggest impact

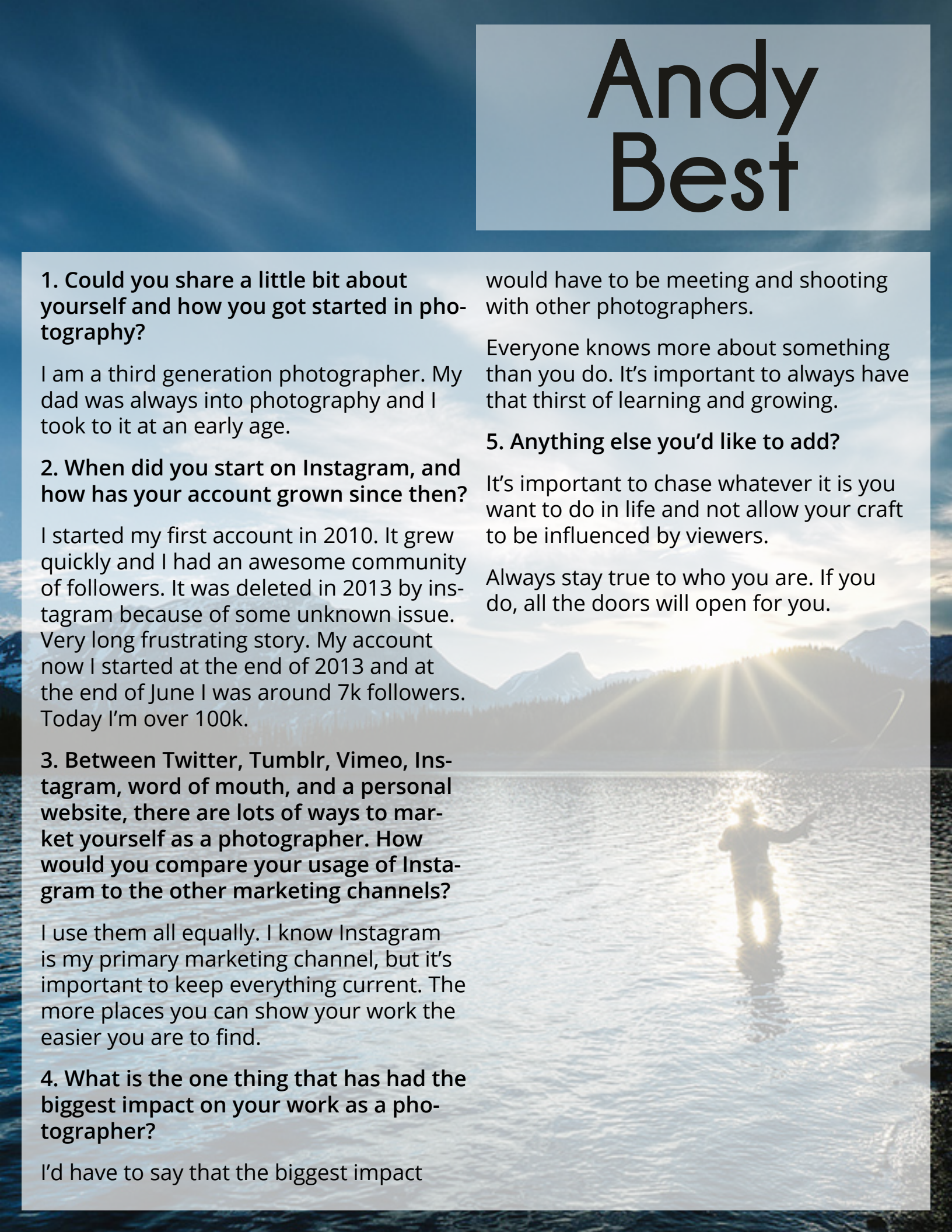
would have to be meeting and shooting with other photographers.

Everyone knows more about something than you do. It's important to always have that thirst of learning and growing.

5. Anything else you'd like to add?

It's important to chase whatever it is you want to do in life and not allow your craft to be influenced by viewers.

Always stay true to who you are. If you do, all the doors will open for you.



Karan Bhatia

1. What piqued your interest in photography, and how long after that did you join Instagram?

I have long been an avid rock climber. Climbing takes me around to quite a few places and I decided to buy a camera to try and capture a couple memories while on climbing trips. I never intended to get into photography...I just wanted snapshots of things happening and views, to remember the climbs by. I soon learned that there was much more the camera could do and immediately fell in love with the process behind photography. I joined Instagram about 9 months later.

2. How has your account grown since you first started on Instagram?

When I first started, it was mostly just friends and family following me. It was rare to get more than 10 likes on a photo. I kept posting once a day, every morning, and slowly just started noticing people following me. I eventually started picking up on the community behind Instagram and became more involved and outgoing, as far as looking for other Instagrammers around the globe and meeting them whenever I could.

3. How would you compare your usage of Instagram to other social media outlets? Which ones do you spend the most time on, and which ones seem to generate the most exposure?

I definitely spend the most time on Instagram. I have a Tumblr and Twitter that I rarely use and a Facebook which I use far less, since Instagram. I would say 95% of my time spent on social media is spent on Instagram. As far as generating exposure, I can't think of a better outlet. I know a lot of people who've built entire careers around Instagram and their photos.

4. Speaking of different marketing approaches, what advice would you give to a photographer looking to market themselves on Instagram?

If you're trying to market yourself on Instagram, the most important thing to do is engage with the community. Find locals and others and engage with them. A lot of my best friends were made through this app. The community recognizes people active in it and is welcoming. Integrating in the network that this app has created is a great way to build a reputation. It's also obviously important to have stand out work.

5. If you could choose just one thing that has made the most impact on your work as a photographer, what would it be?

Rock climbing has definitely had the biggest impact on my photography. It opened me up to a world of landscapes and that spilled right over into my photography. Landscape is my favorite subject to shoot and that has everything to do with me already having spent a lot of time outdoors before hand.

6. Anything else you'd like to add?

Photography is a constant learning process. You never finish learning to shoot. There is always room to grow and improve. Embrace that and don't be discouraged if your work isn't where you want it to be. Use it as motivation to get better and never stop trying to get better.

Taylor Burk

1. Could you share a little bit about yourself and how you got started in photography?

My name is Taylor Burk, I am an adventurer and photographer of sorts! I got started in photography by being out in nature and experiencing unique places that not many people get to see. I wanted to take back photos of the places I visit and share them to inspire others to get out. I got introduced to Instagram and started posting my iPod touch photos. I then upgraded to iPhone and eventually a DSLR.

2. When did you join Instagram, and how has your account grown since then?

I joined a couple years ago, I started off posting what I was up to on my travels and random selfies. Once I started learning more about photography, posting higher quality photos and got involved into the community I saw a substantial growth.

3. How would you compare your usage of Instagram to other social media platforms?

My goto apps are Instagram and Snapchat, I have the most fun with those. Instagram is my main form of income out of all the apps I use.

4. What advice would you give to a photographer looking to market himself on Instagram?

Post what you love, post what inspires you and stick to you. Don't market yourself to things you are not interested in. Make it organic!

6. Anything else you'd like to add?

Have a great day and don't forget to smile!

Chris Burkard

1. You once stated your work is split up into three ways: commercial, editorial, and social endorsements. How does Instagram fit into your workflow as a professional photographer?

Instagram is pretty much my personal advertising consultant but I get to be the one making the decisions and yet I can still reach thousands of people. It's now become a very big part of my workflow in that I will push content out on a regular basis so that my friends and fans can see continued new, curated work on the daily and be inspired to get out and see what our world has to offer.

2. How has your experience with Instagram changed since your first started using it as a medium to share your photos back in 2012? Has your style as a photographer changed as well?

At first, I was pretty resistant to social media but I soon learned that I could reach many people and share my work on a global level as opposed to just my website or in print form at an art gallery. Now though, Instagram keeps me from staying stagnant by constantly pushing out content and continually challenging myself to shoot better photos at new destinations.

3. To make a living as a photographer, you need to know how to manage both the artistic and the business aspects of photography. Comparing Instagram,

Facebook, ChrisBurkard.com, and word of mouth, which channel would you say is responsible for the majority of your revenue?

I'd say definitely Instagram and Facebook has helped me reach the masses. With that, all my fans talk amongst each other and through word of mouth I find many new folks being introduced to my work. This alone brings lots of people out to my book events or film screenings. Aside from my fans though, IG and FB have helped me book many commercial clients because at a glance they are able to see my portfolio and the fan base I can potentially reach out to for them.

4. Where do you see the future of how people share photography heading to?

I see it growing more and more as a user-based experience that can bridge the gap between professionals and amateurs. Before, we could not directly get in contact with the big names of photography but with the likes of Instagram and Facebook we can easily direct message anyone and start a relationship from that way.

5. If I were going on a 2-3 month trip around the world next summer to see if I could make it as a photographer, what tips would you have on how prepare myself over the next 6 months?

To prepare yourself for the next 6 months (or even 6 years), I'd say you should definitely plan every aspect of your trip beforehand. Yes, the spontaneity and surprising elements can make for a great photo, but more likely than not, bad weather conditions or travel hiccups can ruin any shoot or image. Also, find your inspiration from other people's works but don't directly shoot what they've shot -- find your own angle and vision and keep it true to yourself. It'll translate and show on the photograph!



Peter Carey

1. Could you share a little bit about yourself and how you got started in photography?

I have been into photography for quite a while. I used to always purchase disposable cameras when I was in middle school and take shots of my friends and I skateboarding around town. When I became an archaeologist and began participating in surveys in the outdoors, I started to really enjoy landscape photography. I was hiking around while working in some beautiful places and had a strong desire to capture them.

2. When did you first hear about Instagram, and how has your account grown since then?

I first heard about Instagram in early 2011. At that time it was only an Apple app and I had an Android. I picked up an iPhone 3GS in September of that year (not specifically for Instagram, but that was one of the first apps I DLed). For the first year or so I used Instagram like 99% of people do, for pictures of things I was doing and my friends and I, stuff like that. I would occasionally post some of my landscape shots and began to realize people were responding to them. I decided in probably January of 2013 to change what I used Instagram for, and since then I've gained the approximately 22,000 followers I have now.

3. Do you use other platforms besides Instagram to share your photography? If so, how does your usage of them compare to Instagram?

The only other platform I use to share my photography is Facebook, and that is solely for my friends and family. I still use Instagram way more than Facebook, though.

4. What advice would you give to photographers looking to make the most out of using Instagram?

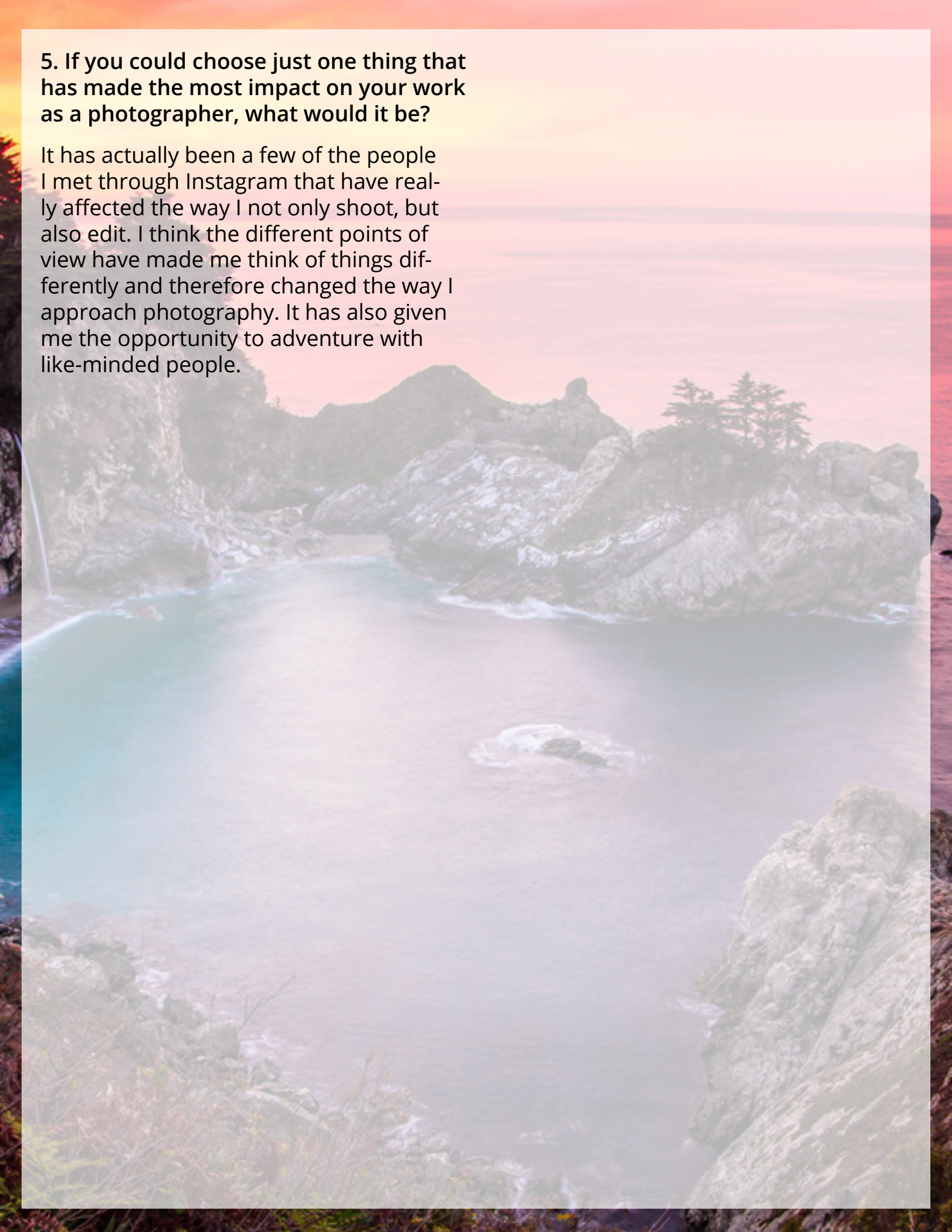
Really, it just depends on what you are looking to get out of Instagram. If you are just looking for something to share your daily moments, what you are eating, who you are hanging out with, etc., etc., then just post and that's all you have to do.

If you are looking to grow and gain exposure then it becomes a lot different. First of all, I think posting good pictures is important. Second, being very engaging (e.g., liking and commenting on peoples pictures, commenting back to people who comment on your pictures, etc.) is important.

There are always exceptions to those "rules," but those are the things I have found work well and get attention in a good way, rather than a bad way.

5. If you could choose just one thing that has made the most impact on your work as a photographer, what would it be?

It has actually been a few of the people I met through Instagram that have really affected the way I not only shoot, but also edit. I think the different points of view have made me think of things differently and therefore changed the way I approach photography. It has also given me the opportunity to adventure with like-minded people.



Nicole Hunziker

1. Could you share a little about yourself and how you got started with photography?

My name is Nicole Hunziker from Switzerland. I'm working as an accountant with a local auditing company. Photography was a passion since I was 15 years old. In my late teens I forgot about that passion and rediscovered it in 2012 when I first downloaded Instagram.

2. How has photography and Instagram affected your life?

Without a doubt Instagram changed my life. I've found 2 very good friends through this fancy little app and I met a lot of interesting people from all over the world. Before I started to use Instagram I was something like a fine weather photographer. These days I love to be outdoors even when the fog is thick or when it rains. The mood can even be much better on a cloudy day, than on a day when there is not a single cloud in the blue sky.

3. Speaking of social media, there are many ways to share your work with your fans and community these days. What platforms do you use, and how do you tailor your marketing strategies to each platform?

I'm a passionate Instagrammer. I use Twitter as well, but I'm not a huge fan. If I have time I sometimes use the new app

@stellerstories. It's great to write stories and combine it with my pictures. I will then share it with my community. On the other side I love to read the stories of other people and their impressions from all over the world.

4. Any advice for someone looking to make a living from Instagram?

I'm not yet living from photography. I still need a job with a regular income. I had the chance to earn some extra money through a few campaigns I shot last year though. It was a very cool experience.

5. If you had to pick one thing that has had the most impact on you as a photographer, what would it be?

The moment I started using Instagram! I can say it changed my life in a positive way.



Sylvia Matzkowiak

1. Could you share a little bit about yourself and how you got started in photography?

I started about 4 years ago just with doing some random pics on instagram. I started to follow people with beautiful Landscape images and discovered the first HDR pics. My goal was to one day create a HDR picture like I saw before.

I bought a DSLR and started to practice and improve my skills in photography by watching tutorials, asking real photographers and practicing every day. I was fascinated by the results and this is how I started with Landscape photography at all.

2. Could you share a little bit about your shooting/editing style as a photographer and how it's evolved over time?

My style is just simple : Nature & Landscape & Lifestyle, it's all about the colors in the world and fantastic places.

I take pics with different Cameras - DSLR, Compact or sometimes Gopro - it's all about the situation and the light conditions. I love to do long exposure, HDR and action pics too. I don't think about what to capture, I just take a look around me and always find a special place to capture. The world always gives you many chances to capture something beautiful. It's not about complaining you missed

something, it's about capturing the beauty you see forever. I don't edit that much as I use either Lightroom or Snapped just to brighten up the images and add some colors.

I don't like faded colors as they look sad to me - that's why my pics will be colorful - that means happiness to me.

3. What has your social media journey been like since you started taking photos?

You should focus on one main platform and use this to create add-ons - you can't be on 2 journeys at the same time.

I started with Instagram and the reach is very big right now, but I put a lot of work and effort into this. After a certain time I created my fanpage on Facebook to show my images uncorked. And least and def. the last (for a long time) is my Blog, where you find all behind the scenes pics from all my journey.

I will focus on Instagram and my Blog in the future, as I think that this is the best composition to show my travel experiences. The choice of a platform is related to a goal that everyone has and a special vertical (Fashion, Food, Travel, Automotive).

4. Speaking of social media, what advice would you give to someone looking to reach more people with their photos?

It's always the same and will stay the same: focus on one thing and do it regularly with PASSION. You can't be successful without living and loving what you do. If you are not passionate about what you do, you will stay average, even if you put in more effort than others.

You have to love what you do :-)

5. What one thing has made the biggest impact on you as a photographer?

There are different impacts, but the biggest impact is, to see what spectacular images other photographers made - that's my goal. When I think I can achieve one day the same - I will try it!

6. Anything else you'd like to add?

Just believe you can - and you are halfway there.



Christian McLeod

1. Could you tell me a little bit about yourself and how you got into photography?

I was originally born in Montana in the US of A, and was raised in Ireland since I was 8. Didn't hit photography until I was 18, and since then it's been a rollercoaster love affair still on it's way up.

At 18, I picked up a camera lying in my room, as I was bored on that day, and then I just started bringing it to college, as I studied Engineering, and the camera slowly started to consume my life.

2. When did you first hear about Instagram and how has your account grown since then?

I first heard about it about 3 1/2 years ago, and joined up. However I didn't get as great of a response as I was initially hoping for, and it turned me off immediately as I was quite impatient back then. However just under a year ago, I started uploading regularly to instagram, and have managed to build a decent following which I hope will grow larger.

3. How would you compare your usage of Instagram to your usage of Facebook?

I've essentially bailed on my Facebook page, due to the extremely poor interaction percentages and just letting my Instagram posts fly over to it, to keep it

populated. Facebook is great if you have links to share, however with having over 6000 followers and only getting 80-190 likes on an image or link post, I can't justify my time spent on it. As they say, time is money. Even writing this Q&A is emptying my pockets.

4. Speaking of strategies, what advice would you give to photographers looking to build up a following on Instagram?

Connect.

Plain and simple. Connect with Brands, People, and Pages. Find people whose work you truly enjoy, follow them and continue to interact, talk to them, learn from them, encourage them, collaborate with them, and help each other. That's how this works. #CommunityNOTCompetition

5. If you could choose just one thing that has made the most impact on your work as a photographer, what would it be?

Sharing. If you're in a position to help someone, or teach someone, or lend a hand, DO IT. It's invaluable, it's exactly what our society is missing and it's the very thing that helps you, even though you're the one aiming to help.

6. Any advice for someone considering a career in photography?

One HUGE tip.

The most dangerous risk of all is the risk of not spending your life doing what you want on the bet you can buy yourself the freedom to do it later.

If you love something and focus on something enough, you can make it happen. That's something they don't teach you in school.

7. Anything else you'd like to add?

Enjoy Instagram and don't take it too seriously. But one big thing for any photographer out there looking to use Instagram as a good marketing tool is to ONLY upload your best work, show your strict style, show a lifestyle others would like to live, and make them crave it, then they will follow, and when they follow, treat them with every ounce of respect and interact.



Andrew Pavlidis

1. Could you share a little bit about yourself and how you got started in photography?

I started getting into photography during high school. I had my dad's old Canon AE-1 film camera that I played around with for a few years but after I lost access to the dark rooms I eventually picked up a digital SLR which I used mostly for hiking with friends.

It's when I started to take my camera on adventures with me is when I really fell in love with photography. It allowed for me to share my experiences with friends and family back home because if you knew me you would know I'm pretty shit at telling stories!

2. As a photographer, there are plenty of ways to market yourself these days. Do you use different strategies to reach your audience with each platform?

There are so many ways to get your photos out to people these days. I have used several different methods but nothing has been as useful as Instagram.

Instagram has been the only platform (for me) which has successfully connected the general public to the photographers themselves. All other social platforms such as 500px are great for finding amazing photography but they aren't regularly used by anyone but photographers. As

of right now I have only been focusing on Instagram to get my photos out on social media as it seems to be providing the most opportunities.

3. What advice would you give to someone looking to build up their own community of followers on Instagram?

When trying to build a following the only thing you can do is post often and be active with whatever social community you are trying to be apart of. After that, all you can do is hope that people enjoy your style of photography or story that you are sharing.

4. Your website mentions you spend your summers in Canada and your winters traveling around the world. How do you manage exploring, taking photos, editing, and business inquiries when on the road versus when you're home?

Trying to balance work and travel is a full time job in itself...especially since I don't make any money from any of my travel work. To be moving year round I have been trying to pick up weddings to fund plane tickets.

Trying to balance business enquiries and advertising when your living in a car on the road is can be quite difficult but you learn to be quite efficient with limited battery life and you learn pretty quick which cafes have free internet.

5. If there's one thing that has changed the way you work as a photographer, what would it be?

Nothing has really changed over the years towards my outlook on photography. The kit gets bigger and ideas get better but in the end I'm still just taking photos of what I enjoy doing everyday. The one thing that has changed is the push to create something different. Through social media, we are surrounded by so many talented people making beautiful things everyday and its hard to create unique images daily.



Eric Rubens

1. Could you share a little bit about yourself and how you got started in photography?

My name is Eric Rubens. I'm 28 years old, live in San Diego and work full time as an electrical engineer. I traveled a ton playing tennis growing up so photography was a way to remember the places I visited.

2. When did you start uploading to Instagram, and how has your account grown since then?

I started a few years ago but only started posting higher quality pictures about a year or year and a half ago. My account has grown pretty fast lately since I put a larger emphasis on building relationships and engagement with the people who follow me.

3. How would you compare Instagram to other marketing channels?

I only use Instagram as a source of marketing my photography. I post pics occasionally on Twitter and Facebook but don't put any effort into growing on those platforms. I think Twitter could be the most effective but I invested my time in learning Instagram more so I don't understand how to use my time effectively on Twitter.

4. You mentioned you're an engineer as well as a photographer. Is there a point where you would ever give up engineering to pursue photography full time?

I don't think I'd ever give up engineering for photography. Obviously photography is more fun but it would be hard for me to justify throwing away all my years in school. Also, I don't like the lighting in the middle of the day so photography as a hobby fits well into my schedule.

5. What advice would you give to a photographer looking to market himself better on Instagram?

I would advise people to respond to comments and actively comment on other's feeds. I started growing much faster when I began networking and responding to people who spent the time to comment on my pics.

Callum Snape

1. Could you share a little bit about yourself and how you got started in photography?

My name is Callum Snape, I'm 23 and I'm a full time Adventure, Travel and Landscape Photographer based out of Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada. I independently immigrated to Canada from England at the age of 18 and bought a camera to document the experience. My first Summer in Banff I discovered a passion for hiking and back-country camping, after a few trips I started to take my camera to share the incredible views with my friends and family on social media. Over time my technique got better and better and it slowly transitioned into a full time job within 3 years.

2. When did you first start sharing photos on Instagram, and how has your community grown since then?

I was very hesitant to join Instagram in the beginning because of a lot of the 'rights' attention it was getting with stolen photos and usage licenses, etc. In February 2014 I introduced it into my workflow on a daily basis. The first few months were very slow and this was because I didn't quite understand the community aspect of the platform.

As soon as I started meeting up with other users I noticed people shared the same passion for the outdoors. Alberta

has a very strong outdoor community and small groups of adventures started to form, meeting up on a weekly basis to hike, climb, ski, kayak and just generally have fun while documenting it along the way. I met my 5 closest friends through Instagram and have since become business partners with one of them. I also created the #WildMe hashtag for people to share their adventures with me. In just 9 months this grew from 5 hashtag uses to over 30,000.

3. With a myriad of different options for a photographer to market himself these days, which marketing channel seems to be the main source of your revenue?

In terms of social media, Instagram is my main source of revenue. Art directors, brands and potential clients used to find me primarily through 500px and Facebook, now its Instagram. The issue with 500px is that you're directly marketing to other photographers, which isn't my audience, so this works well for photographers using workshops as their main source of income. Facebook has become too limited to pursue properly with its paid reach system. Instagram is a well rounded platform to directly reach the public, art directors, clients and and many forms of potential work.

4. If you had to choose just one thing that made the biggest impact on you as a photographer, what would it be?

Instagram has had the biggest impact on me. I was getting sucked into the egocentric world of fine art photography where “professional” photographers would pat themselves and each other on their backs on a regular basis. Instagram took me away from this side of the industry and introduced me to some incredible people and clients who have taught me to be humble about the work I do, to help and be helped by people who genuinely want to see you succeed.

5. What advice would you give to someone looking to make a career out of photography?

There's a saying 'Jack of all trades, master of none'. This is true to photography, my advice would to pursue one genre of photography and not to branch out to multiple ones. Generally good portrait photographers are rarely good landscape photographers and vice versa, this applies to all genres. After selecting your focus in photographer, hone your technique and skills. Reach out to a local client base, make them aware of you. After time your work will branch out to a regional market and eventually on a national or even global level.

6. How do you find the time to manage business inquiries and edit photos while on the road?

That's a good question and one I'm still trying to find an easier solution too. I have to leave emails for up to 7 days sometimes and then (like I'm doing right now) when I get a couple of free hours I'll go

through them all or let clients know that I will get back to them as soon as I get chance to sit down and review everything. Wifi and 3G are non-existent in the back country around here, as much as I look forward to my next project and working with new clients, I also appreciate disconnecting from it all and focusing on enjoying my time out in the wild.

7. Anything else you would like to add?

Social media is the biggest asset to yourself as well as clients at the moment, however, it shouldn't be relied upon as a sole source of income for a photographer. No one should use just one platform either. Photographers source their income from multiple sources including but not limited to: Licensing, Assignments, Workshops, Writing, etc. Good business manners will also take you a lot further.

Krystle Wright

1. Could you share a little bit about yourself and how you got started in photography?

My name is Krystle Wright and I am an Adventure Photographer sponsored by Canon Australia, F-Stop Gear, AquaTech and KEEN. Its been a wild ride and quite the journey the past 7-8years in getting to this position.

I've always been a sports fanatic and would play anything I could get access to whether it was rock climbing, soccer, athletics etc etc. When it came time to finishing highschool, I knew I wanted to be outdoors and it was my Mum who suggested photography to study at university since I was always trying to take a good photo on camping trips. I was hopeless in the degree as I couldn't stand theory but through finding mentors, I was able to really pursue photography. I began my work experience at the local paper, The Sunshine Coast Daily, during my second year at university and that in turn lead to occasional shifts and from there I began to build contacts, a folio and the rest is history.

2. There's lots of ways to market yourself as a photographer these days. Do you use different strategies to reach your audience with each platform?

There's only so much I can handle when it comes to an online presence. I am cur-

rently re-launching my website and the four networks I primarily use are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. I tend to have all the accounts linked together so that I only need to update one page. I am not a big expert on this and I know that there are other photographers who are much more savvy at having an online presence. I post a mixture of work and personal stuff and let people follow me naturally if they enjoy my work. An online presence I feel has not secured me a whole lot of extra work and so I put my energy elsewhere that does secure me work. I'd say its definitely important to have an online presence but be careful not to expend too much energy if its not rewarding you in the right way.

3. As an adventure photographer, you get to go on some pretty awesome trips. How do you manage planning, exploring, taking photos, editing, and business inquiries while on the road?

Its a big challenge! Some expeditions I do, I am completely offline with no connection whatsoever except a satellite phone for emergency. To be honest, I look forward to these trips and putting the auto response on as its great to be solely focussed on the task at hand and deal with all the other daily distractions when the trip is finished. With oher trips where I can access email as that is my primary source of communication, it's a tricky

balance but it all comes down to time management.

No doubt I am guilty of being sidetracked whether its checking out videos on Vimeo or chatting to friends on Facebook but if I am strict with my time on the computer, I try to choose the right time such as being stuck indoors when a storm rages outside or in airports. I'm certainly still learning and always trying to improve my time management skills so that I can spend more time doing what I love most which is taking photos on adventure.

The key is being self proactive. As a freelancer, you create your own hours and you create alot of your own opportunities. I was taught to never expect an editor to come knocking at my door, instead I continually knock on theirs with new ideas and new images which ultimately leads to more work.

4. What one thing has made the biggest impact on you as a photographer?

Perhaps it would have to be the moment I came across Adam Pretty's work in a magazine. I had enrolled into a University course and successfully made it through the entry process and I remember one day in town picking up photography magazines as I really had no idea (I didn't even know what a shutter or aperture was). I saw the folio of Adam Pretty and immediately I knew that was what I wanted to do. I began my career chasing sports photography in the main stream media and sure things have changed slightly as I now focus on adventure sports but even so, that was a defining moment in figuring out what path I wanted to go down in life.

5. What advice would you give to someone looking to make a career out of photography?

I love to encourage others to get into photography and as for making a career, its tough to give a straight answer as so many of us take different paths in etching out a career. I'd say be patient and persistent as it takes time. But rather than become overwhelmed in focusing on the end goal, more so focus on the present tense... always take time on the side to pursue personal projects to keep the creative juices flowing. Make sure you do have something stable to help pay the bills which might be anything from assisting other photographers, working at a newspaper etc. Photography is a journey and just take it one step at a time. Eventually you can enjoy looking back on where you've come from.

6. If you were going on a 3 month trip around the world, what countries and/or experiences would you be sure to include?

Thats a tough one but funny that you ask as the other night, our group here in Colombia was staring at a giant world map asking each other where do we want to go next. The problem is, your list never ends as the curiosity is far too great. We then tried a challenge of listing which next 5 countries do we want to visit most. If I were to do a 3 month trip... Maybe I take this question too serious but rather than trying to cram in as many countries as possible, instead I love visiting places and spending at least 4 weeks there minimum if I can afford that luxury of time. I love experiencing the local culture through meeting people and that takes time. So I

know at this moment that I would return to Mongolia for another expedition as its a country that I've fallen in love with. I would start there on a 4 week expedition. Next I would spend a month exploring Bhutan and then the final 4 weeks I would spend getting lost in Iceland. 3 months isn't a very long time as I consistently done 3 month stints in the west coast states and I keep returning because there is so much to explore. I love the expeditions but in general travel, I love the places that are often off the beaten trail and take effort to get to as its always worth the reward.



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A note to the reader

This whole thing started with a question; "Is it possible to make a living from photography by using Instagram to market your work?"

That question got me in contact with some amazing people who taught me a lot about photography and life. I'm glad to be able to give those thoughts out to the rest of the photography community through this publication.

Never underestimate the power of curiosity.

If any of these photographer's caught your attention with their words or photographs (which are displayed behind their interviews), give their Instagram feeds a look. I promise you won't be disappointed.